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Issues paper

This report is for information

This report considers students in 2006-07 and 2007-08 who undertook study provided as part of a Lifelong Learning Network. The profiles and characteristics of Lifelong Learning Network students, as well as the characteristics of the networks themselves, are examined.

Lifelong Learning Networks

**Attributes of students and networks,
2006-07 and 2007-08**

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Lifelong Learning Networks

Attributes of students and networks, 2006-07 and 2007-08

To	Heads of publicly funded higher education institutions in England Heads of publicly funded further education colleges in England
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Executive summary

Purpose

1. This report considers students undertaking study provided as part of a Lifelong Learning Network (LLN). We look at the profiles and characteristics of LLN students, as well as the networks themselves, to improve knowledge and understanding of learning undertaken within these arrangements. Cohorts of LLN students in 2006-07 and 2007-08 are considered.

Key points

2. LLNs are a relatively new initiative: the first of these networks of institutions, which include higher education institutions (HEIs) and further education colleges (FECs), were established in 2005 and operational in academic year 2006-07. They were funded to 'improve the coherence, clarity and certainty of progression opportunities for vocational learners into and through higher education' (HE).

3. Currently, data regarding individuals undertaking LLN provision are available for 2006-07 and 2007-08. Cohorts of LLN students in these two years have been examined in this report and demonstrate the development of the initiative. Expansions in student numbers; the range of subjects studied; and the types of qualifications undertaken by LLN students have all been observed between 2006-07 and 2007-08.

LLN and institution characteristics

4. One HEI may be a partner of a number of different Lifelong Learning Networks, and this makes it hard to examine LLN students by institution and/or network. It is most common for institutions to return a total of 50 or fewer LLN students, and for LLN activity to be found in one or two subject areas.

5. Among the 2007-08 cohort of LLN students, general colleges, specialist HEIs and FECs returned more than half of the students. In 2006-07, almost two-thirds of LLN students were registered at these types of institutions. Research-orientated universities

returned around a tenth of the LLN students in 2007-08, and around one in five in 2006-07.

Qualifications on entry

6. There are substantial differences between the attributes of LLN students and the courses they undertake, depending on whether individuals held a higher education qualification prior to entry to the LLN provision.

7. The proportion of LLN students that held higher education (HE) level qualifications on entry was around a quarter for both cohorts examined. In both years A-level or equivalent qualifications¹ were the most commonly held.

Student characteristics

8. Among students whose qualifications on entry were below HE level, three out of five LLN students were female. One-third of such students in 2007-08 were aged between 16 and 19.

9. Among LLN students who held HE-level qualifications on entry, three out of five were female. However, students tended to be older. In 2007-08 38 per cent of these students were aged between 20 and 29, and 85 per cent of the cohort were between 20 and 49.

10. That male LLN students were outnumbered by their female counterparts is found to be associated with the subject area of study. Some of the subject areas most frequently studied by LLN students (such as 'Education') are found to have been studied predominantly by female students.

11. Around 85 per cent of each of the 2007-08 cohorts were returned as being from a White ethnic background. Ten per cent of each cohort were known to come from a non-White ethnic background.

Qualification aims

12. The most frequent qualifications being studied by LLN students in both 2006-07 and 2007-08 were foundation degrees. Among students who held qualifications on entry that were below HE level, 44 per cent studied for a foundation degree in 2007-08. First degrees were the second most common qualification aim, studied by 26 per cent of the cohort.

13. Among those LLN students who held HE-level qualifications on entry, the most commonly studied qualification aims were also foundation degrees (29 per cent of this cohort in 2007-08) and first degrees (28 per cent).

Patterns of study

14. Full-time study was most common among LLN students that held below HE-level qualifications on entry: in 2006-07 62 per cent of such students studied full-time and in

¹ Equivalent qualifications include Scottish Highers, NVQs, GNVQs and AVCEs. BTEC National Certificates/Diplomas and Scottish Qualifications Authority equivalents are considered in a separate category. HNDs/HNCs are not included in either of these categorisations: these qualifications are HE level and are considered separately.

2007-08 58 per cent did so. Conversely, among students holding HE-level qualifications on entry, part-time study was more common: 77 per cent and 65 per cent studied part-time in 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively.

15. Analysis has shown that the majority of LLN students commenced study in the academic year considered. For more than half of such starters who held below HE-level qualifications on entry we found no evidence of recent study in the two academic years before they started their studies at LLNs. They had not gained a further education (FE) level qualification in that period, nor had they actively studied in FE, or indeed HE, during that time.

16. In 2007-08, 94 per cent of students can be considered to have followed a typical progression route through their studies, in that their qualification aim in 2007-08 was at a higher level than that of their previous highest qualification held. Further, 88 per cent of students studied at a higher level in their LLN learning than in any study undertaken in the previous two academic years (regardless of whether or not this recent study was their highest qualification they held). In 2006-07 these proportions were 90 per cent and 94 per cent respectively.

Action required

17. No action is required in response to this document.

Introduction

18. In 2004 HEFCE, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) were working to develop a joint strategy to 'advance vocational and workplace progression into and through higher education' (the Joint Progression Strategy). This strategy included Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs), envisaged as 'groups of institutions, including higher education institutions (HEIs) and further education colleges (FECs), that come together across a city, area or region to offer new progression opportunities for vocational learners'.

19. The aim of LLNs was to provide a focus on vocational routes into and through higher education, in the context of lifelong learning (HEFCE Circular letter 12/2004)² and through HEIs and FECs working in partnership. In June 2004 HEFCE and the LSC invited all publicly funded HEIs and FECs in England to consider establishing LLNs. HEFCE did not have a single model for LLNs; we anticipated that the specific approaches proposed by LLNs to fulfil their objectives would vary, reacting in part to local economic and regional skills factors.

20. The first LLNs were established in 2005, with additional student numbers (ASNs) allocated for academic year 2006-07. By January 2009, approximately £105 million and 16,000 ASNs had been allocated to fund 30 networks.

21. The scope for LLNs was developed by HEFCE working in partnership with national, regional and local providers as well as other partners. Discussions and consultation with the HE sector were invited to assist in the development of proposals for LLN partnerships across the country. As a result of this, LLNs were initially given a choice of two models of ASN distribution:

- a. The model 1 route was for ASNs to be allocated to individual institutions within an LLN partnership as part of mainstream teaching grant.
- b. The model 2 route involved ASNs being held by one lead institution for the LLN: these numbers would be held as a ring-fenced pool outside the mainstream teaching grant in order that they could be distributed and re-distributed among partners according to LLN priorities.

22. LLNs could only receive model 2 ASNs for their Strategic Development Fund (SDF) period of funding (normally a three-year period), after which they would be 'mainstreamed' to the model 1 route. For the majority of the first LLNs established, this mainstreaming would occur in 2007-08 or 2008-09.

23. The lack of boundaries set by HEFCE to define the approaches and structures of LLNs mean that individual networks vary in their size, nature and interests. For example, while some LLNs' activities involve learners within a particular geographic area and across a variety of subject areas, the National Arts Learning Network and VETNET both focus on one particular subject area (arts and veterinary-related HE respectively) and operate on a national scale.

² HEFCE circular letters are available at www.hefce.ac.uk under Publications/Circular letters.

24. These factors, combined with the fact that LLNs are a relatively new initiative, mean that there has been little in the way of overall review of the learning undertaken within LLN arrangements. Currently little is known about the provision undertaken by LLN students, and indeed the make-up of the LLN student population. This report goes some way to filling this gap. We consider the profiles and characteristics of Lifelong Learning Network students, as well as the networks themselves, to improve knowledge and understanding of learning undertaken through these arrangements.

Data source and definition of the cohort

25. Data are drawn from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) individualised student records from 2004-05 through to 2007-08, the most recent data collection available. In addition, data are drawn from the Learning and Skills Council's individualised learner records (ILR) for the same period.

26. For both the HESA and ILR student records, individual students are tracked within and through each of the annual student data sets using a number of personal characteristics. Further, students are tracked across both types of student record, linking instances of further education study to those of higher education study for each student within our cohort. For exact data definitions and further explanation of how students are tracked see Annex A.

27. Identification of LLN students is difficult: whether or not a student is active on a course provided by a LLN is not currently captured directly by either HESA or ILR student records³. Given the current lack of defined structures in which to record LLN students, HEIs and FECs record such students in a number of ways. While some HEIs highlight students as being LLN students through the 'programme of study title', others simply maintain a list of appropriate student identifiers. As a result of these difficulties we needed to develop a methodology to identify these students unambiguously.

28. LLNs that wished to adopt the model 2 funding option were obliged to provide us with details explaining how we could unambiguously identify LLN numbers through their HESA or LSC returns. Our desire for model 1 LLNs to identify their students on HESA returns was also communicated to the sector⁴. This, and input from the institutions involved concerning the practices and identifications they used, has enabled us to identify LLN students by applying a methodology appropriate to the institutions at which they were studying. The methodologies used are described in more detail at Annex A.

29. During the process of mainstreaming of ASNs from the model 2 route to the model 1 route, at least one HEI was unable to meet their obligation to identify LLN students to HEFCE in their 2007-08 HESA data returns. While LLN students were known to be present at the institution in this year, the individuals could not be unambiguously

³ Whether or not a student can be attributed to a particular initiative, such as Lifelong Learning Networks, will be captured in the 2009-10 and later HESA data collections.

⁴ These obligations were communicated in the November 2005 'Lifelong Learning Network: Update' to stakeholders and practitioners. See www.hefce.ac.uk under Widening participation/Lifelong Learning Networks, for further details.

identified. This should be noted when considering year-on-year changes discussed in this paper, particularly at an institutional level.

30. In addition, the mainstreaming process could potentially lead to inconsistencies in the returning of LLN students on the HESA student records. A change in responsibility for such returns from a lead HEI of a network (under model 2 arrangements) to individual partner HEIs (under model 1 arrangements), may result in exaggerated year-on-year changes over the transition period. That is, the lead institution may show an extreme drop in the number of LLN students over that period, while the partners show numbers increasing beyond what might otherwise be expected.

31. Analysis of LLN students from specific LLNs is difficult for several reasons. Given the differing interests and coverage of the different networks it is not uncommon for one institution to be a partner of more than one LLN. Institutions were not obliged to attribute an LLN student directly to a specific LLN in their data returns. Therefore, if an HEI is a partner of two LLNs all of the LLN students identified from its HESA return have the potential to belong to one or the other of these networks: we are unable to determine which of the two LLNs an individual student belongs to.

32. In addition, it is particularly difficult for us to accurately determine numbers of LLN students active both within individual institutions and within LLNs themselves if an LLN chose to adopt the model 2 route during its SDF funding period. LLN students in institutions following the model 2 route were not returned on the HESA records of any of the partner institutions of that LLN regardless of where the provision was undertaken. Therefore a number of partner institutions will not have their LLN activity acknowledged in any institutional breakdown of LLN provision occurring during that SDF funding period.

33. As a result of this, the analysis in this report of students by LLN should be treated with caution, and we make no attempt to consider an institutional breakdown. It is unsafe to make any inferences about the size, capacity or coverage of any one LLN based on the results reported here.

34. The population of interest to this analysis is that of students identified as being active Lifelong Learning Network students in 2006-07 or 2007-08 through the process described in paragraph 28. Table 1 shows that 3,170 and 8,080 students were found to be registered as LLN students in 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively. The vast majority of these were registered at HEIs.

35. The smaller number of students identified in 2006-07 is likely to result partially from the fewer ASNs allocated to LLNs for 2006-07 (2,265) in comparison to 2007-08 (7,007). However, data reporting issues are also likely to have had an impact. 2006-07 was the first year in which LLNs were in operation, and data reported in the first year of an initiative are often found to be of lower quality than those reported in later years. In addition, a number of LLNs remained in the developmental stage at the start of the 2006-07 academic year and so are unlikely to have been in a position to report student activity until 2007-08.

36. In the analysis in this report we do not distinguish between students registered at HEIs and those registered at FECs. This is because there are relatively few LLN students registered at FECs: Table 1 shows that 70 and 440 LLN students were registered with

FECs for 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively. Further, the analysis showed few differences between LLN students registered at the two types of institution.

Table 1 Cohorts of LLN students by type of institution, 2006-07 and 2007-08

Students registered at...	Academic year	
	2006-07	2007-08
HEIs	3,100	7,640
FECs	70	440
Total	3,170	8,080

37. In this report, all counts of entrants are given in terms of headcount, rounded up or down to the nearest five⁵. Counts that round to zero will be shown as a zero in the tables. If there are no students in a particular categorisation, no value will be entered into the table for that categorisation: the cell will be blank. This approach is taken because of there being only small numbers in some categorisations, and the need to distinguish where there is no activity from where activity is present, regardless of how low the level of that activity might be.

Attributes of LLN courses, course providers and students

38. To gain an understanding of LLN students and the studies they undertake we consider a number of attributes relating to the students, courses and course providers (including the Lifelong Learning Network itself). The profiles and characteristics of students identified as being LLN students in 2006-07 or 2007-08 are examined with regard to the following attributes:

Composition of the provision

- a. Lifelong Learning Network.
- b. Institution.
- c. Institution type.
- d. Subject area and institution.

Student attributes

- e. Qualifications on entry.
- f. Age.
- g. Sex.
- h. Ethnicity.
- i. Disability.
- j. Socio-economic background.
- k. Local area participation in HE.
- l. Region of domicile.

⁵ Totals and sub-totals are calculated based on un-rounded values, and then rounded to the nearest five accordingly. For this reason, the sum of the values given in a table may not be equal to the total shown in that table.

Course attributes

- m. Qualification aim.
- n. Commencement of course.
- o. Mode of study.
- p. Subject area of study.
- q. Region of institution.

39. For a number of the student and course attributes considered, we compare the profiles observed among our cohorts of LLN students to those observed in the wider population of HE students. This approach is taken in order provide an indication of the ways in which the population of LLN students may be different to that of others studying in HE. The wider population we consider is that of UK domiciled undergraduates registered at UK HEIs⁶.

40. We recognise that our cohorts of LLN students have not been restricted to exclude those studying at postgraduate level (whom we would therefore expect to have held HE-level qualifications on entry) or those domiciled outside the UK. The proportions of both non-UK domiciled LLN students and postgraduate LLN students within our cohorts are both small. Of the 8,080 LLN students in our 2007-08 cohort, 120 were non-UK domiciled and 100 studied at postgraduate level. There were 115 non-UK domiciled LLN students in our 2006-07 cohort, and 70 studying at postgraduate level. Where the inclusion of these students in our cohorts have an effect on the comparisons made to the wider population of HE students this will be clearly stated.

41. In addition, the students within the LLN cohorts have been tracked within and through both the ILR and HESA student records for two years prior to their identification as LLN students. For example, for 2006-07 the cohort has been tracked within and through the student records for 2004-05 to 2005-06: for each LLN student we have sought to identify the most recent instance of previous study recorded on either of the student records. For the 2007-08 cohort we identify recent study in the period 2005-06 to 2006-07.

42. It is intended that this will further our understanding of how students come to LLNs. Analysis of qualifications on entry shows the highest qualifications held by LLN students on entry, but this qualification may not be the result of the most recent instance of study. As such, if a lower-level qualification was identified from a recent instance of study, movement to study higher education via an LLN may still be considered as progression.

Composition of LLN provision

Lifelong Learning Network

43. Our analysis considered LLN students registered at institutions that, between them, are partners of 30 Lifelong Learning Networks. Of the 50 different HEIs and FECs that

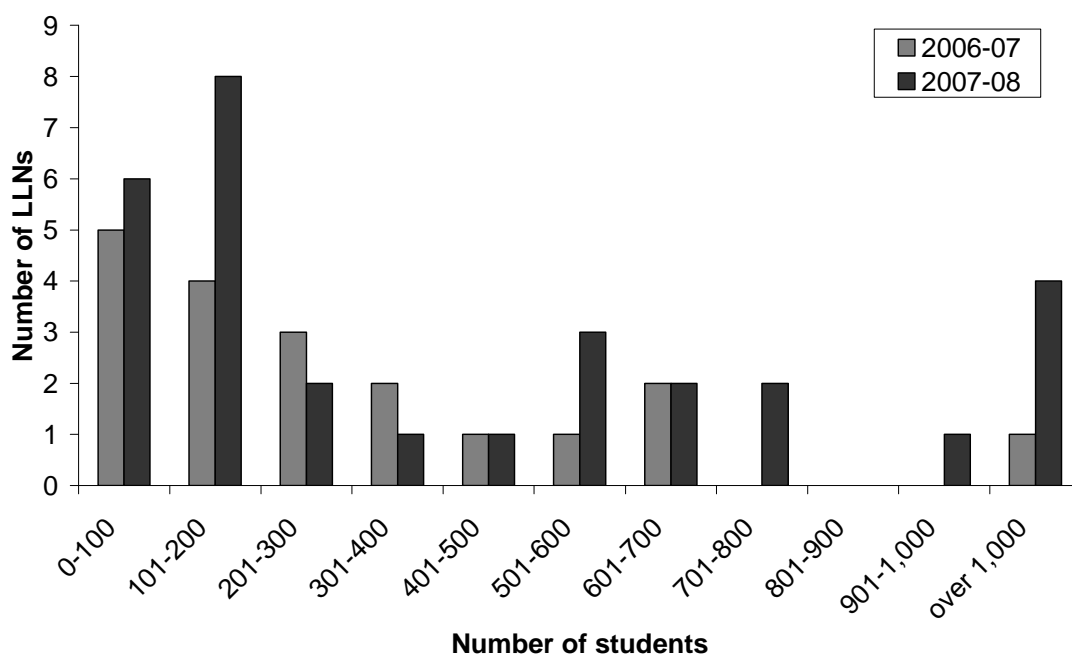
⁶ Data for comparisons made to the population of UK-domiciled undergraduates is drawn from 'Students in Higher Education Institutions', volumes 2006-07 and 2007-08, published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Further information is available at www.hesa.ac.uk under Publications and products.

the 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts we reviewed are registered at, 24 of the institutions operated as a partner in multiple networks: up to four different LLNs in one instance.

44. The distribution of student numbers by each specific LLN is unknown: although a particular institution may return a number of LLN students, we are unable to determine the LLN in which those individual students are operating. It therefore follows that institutions, and numbers of students, appear under more than one LLN in several instances. For example, LLN students were identified at the University of Bristol in 2007-08 and are counted under both VETNET and Western Vocational LLNs since this HEI was active in both networks. Given this overlap, and double counting of students, the following analysis considers the maximum potential coverage of an LLN: the maximum student numbers observed at any HEI active within that LLN.

45. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the maximum potential number of LLN students registered under an LLN arrangement. It shows that nine of the 19 networks returning LLN students in 2006-07 returned a potential 200 or fewer such students, and in 2007-08 14 of the 30 networks returning LLN students in that year did the same.

Figure 1 Distribution of maximum number of students returned under an LLN

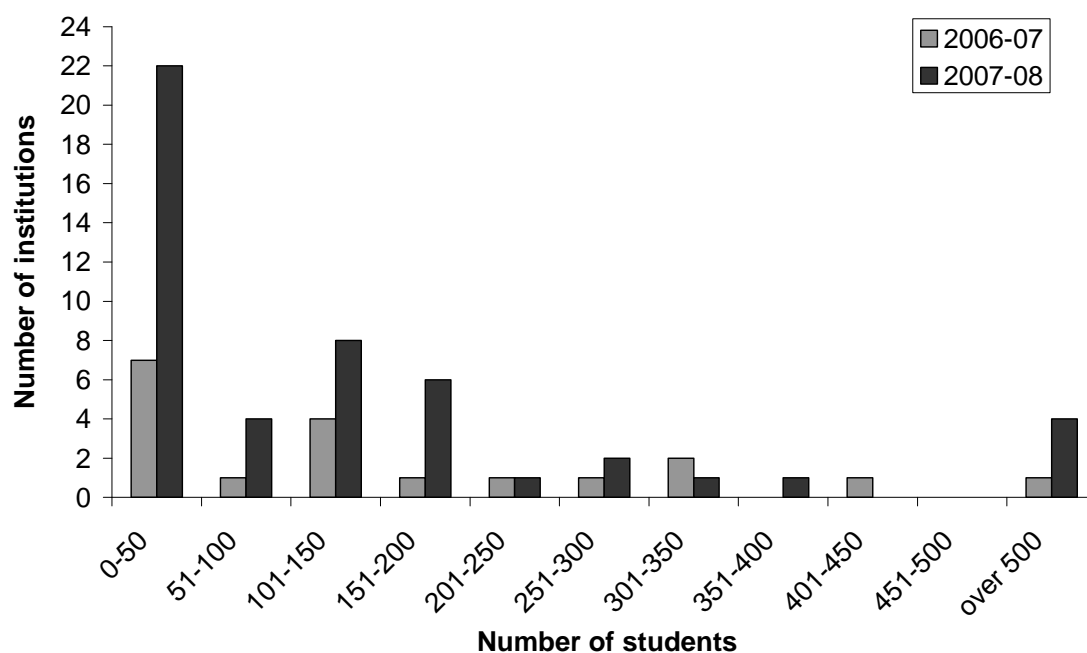


Institution

46. Our analysis considers LLN students at 50 different HEIs and FECs in 2006-07 and 2007-08 (as stated in paragraph 43, 24 of the institutions we consider operated as a partner in multiple networks).

47. The distribution of the number of LLN students registered at an institution is shown in Figure 2. It shows that in both 2006-07 and 2007-08 most institutions were found to have between 0 and 250 LLN students registered with them. For example, in 2007-08, 22 of the 49 institutions that offered LLN provision in that year recorded fewer than 50 students registered at their institution.

Figure 2 Distribution of numbers of LLN students returned by an institution



48. Two slightly anomalous institutions returned a very large number of students (more than 400) in 2006-07: these were the Universities of Kent and Chester. These institutions were the lead HEIs for the Cheshire and Warrington, and Kent and Medway LLNs respectively. This status as the lead HEI may account for the high number of students returned, particularly in the case of the University of Chester since the Cheshire and Warrington LLN was funded by the model 2 route⁷.

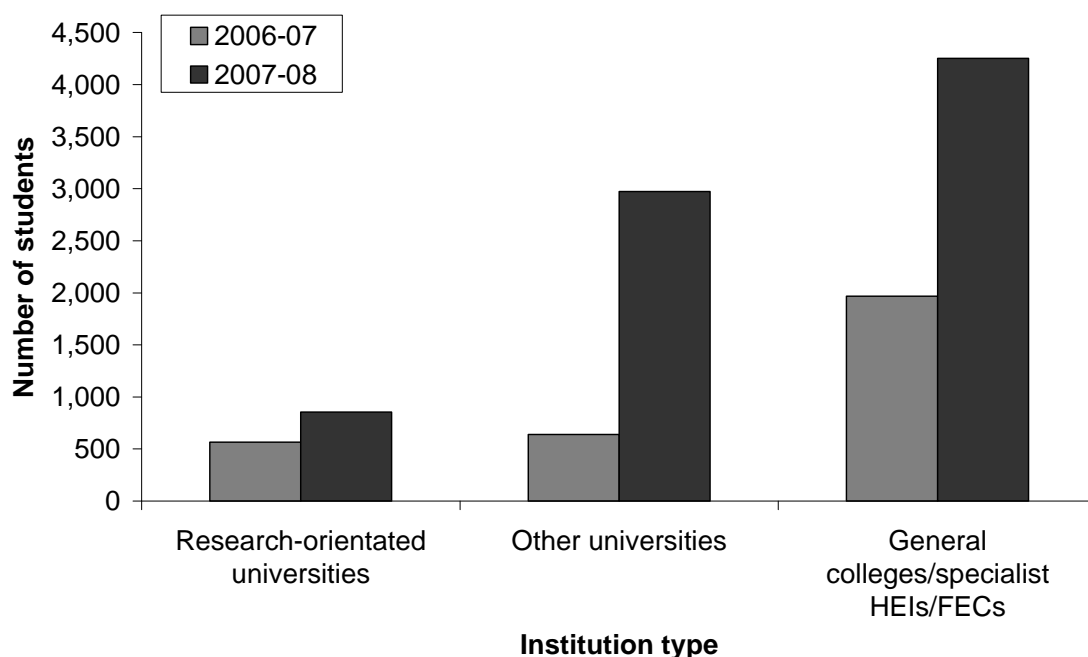
49. Among the 2007-08 cohort, Edge Hill University, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Teesside and York St John University each returned more than 500 LLN students. These institutions were the lead HEIs of Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN; Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance; North East Higher Skills Network; and Higher York LLN respectively. Each of these LLNs operated using the model 2 funding route in 2007-08.

Institution type

50. Figure 3 shows the numbers of LLN students in 2006-07 and 2007-08 by the type of institution those students are registered at. It shows that in 2006-07 the largest proportion of students were registered at general colleges, specialist HEIs and FECs. In 2006-07 and 2007-08 similar numbers of LLN students were registered at research-orientated universities. Other universities, and general colleges, specialist HEIs and FECs, both increased their numbers of LLN students by more than 2,000 over the period.

⁷ In adopting the model 2 route, the lead HEI returned all students counting towards the delivery of LLN ASNs on the HESA record. The LLN students were not returned on the HESA records of any of the partner institutions, regardless of where the provision was undertaken.

Figure 3 Distribution of numbers of LLN students returned by type of institution

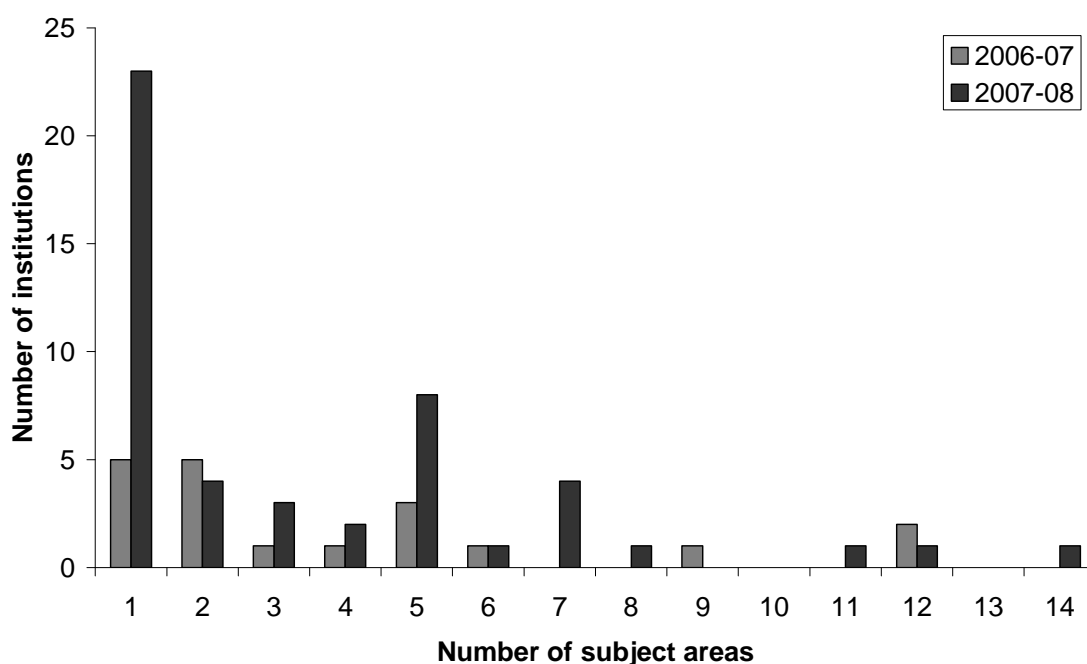


Subject area and institution

51. While analysis has shown variation in the range of subject areas studied by LLN students registered at different institutions, 'Creative arts and design' was the most frequently studied subject area studied by LLN students in 2006-07. In 2007-08, 'Combined subjects and unknown' was the subject area most commonly returned for LLN students.

52. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the number of subject areas studied by LLN students at an institution, and confirms that there was variation in the number of subject areas studied. While several institutions' provision was limited to only one or two subject areas, others are seen to have had LLN students active in up to 14 different subject areas.

Figure 4 LLN students, by common subject areas of study and institution



53. Figure 4 provides an indication of the development of LLN provision between 2006-07 and 2007-08. While only four institutions in 2006-07 offered LLN studies in more than five subject areas, this more than doubled to nine institutions in 2007-08.

54. Figure 4 shows that in 2007-08 it was most common for an institution to return LLN students in only one subject area, with activity in five subject areas being second most common. LLN activity in either one or two subject areas was the most common in 2006-07.

Student attributes

Qualifications on entry

55. Among UK-domiciled undergraduates registered at UK HEIs and entering their first year of study in 2007-08, 28 per cent of students held HE-level qualifications on entry. For equivalent students in 2006-07 this proportion was the same. (Given the nature of the attribute, we consider only students entering their first year of study when making comparisons with regard to qualifications held on entry.)

56. The highest qualifications held on entry to a programme of study are shown in Table 2 for LLN students in 2006-07 and 2007-08. It shows that, in each year, A-level or equivalent qualifications were the most commonly held by LLN students. In 2006-07, 23 per cent of students held these as their highest qualifications, and in 2007-08 the proportion rose to 31 per cent.

Table 2 LLN students by highest qualification held on entry

Highest qualification on entry		2006-07		2007-08	
		Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Level 4 and above	Postgraduate qualifications	90	3%	255	3%
	First degree (UK institution)	250	8%	300	4%
	Graduate of non-UK institution	15	0%	40	0%
	Certificate/Diploma of education	40	1%	135	2%
	HNC/HND	115	4%	425	5%
	Foundation degree	80	3%	125	2%
	Other undergraduate qualifications	185	6%	405	5%
	Level 4 NVQ/GNVQ	75	2%	105	1%
Sub-total		850	27%	1,785	22%
Level 3 and below	Level 3 A-level/Higher/NVQ/GNVQ or equivalent	715	23%	2,485	31%
	Level 3 National Certificate/Diploma (BTECs or SQA equivalents)	480	15%	1,140	14%
	Level 3 foundation course	80	3%	95	1%
	Access courses	85	3%	205	3%
	GCSE and other non-advanced qualifications	410	13%	1,060	13%
	APEL or previous experience	100	3%	195	2%
	No formal qualification	20	1%	105	1%
	Not known	435	14%	1,010	12%
Sub-total		2,325	73%	6,295	78%
Total		3,170	100%	8,080	100%

57. We see from Table 2 that, in both years, around three-quarters of LLN students held a highest qualification that is at Level 3 or below⁸. The remaining quarter of students had previously undertaken HE study and held a qualification at Level 4 or above. (Note that while this was the highest qualification held, it may not be the most recently gained.)

58. While the aim of LLNs was to focus on vocational learners, the details of vocational qualifications are often grouped with their non-vocational equivalents in student data

⁸ Level 3 qualifications are those at one level below HE. Level 4 and higher qualifications are those undertaken as part of higher education.

returns. This makes it particularly difficult to consider specific vocational qualifications in terms of qualifications held on entry to LLN studies.

59. In 2007-08 14 per cent of LLN students held a highest qualification on entry that was a National Certificate/Diploma (including BTECs and SQA equivalents at Level 3). Higher National Certificates/Diplomas (including BTECs and equivalents at Level 4) were held by 5 per cent of this cohort.

60. Analysis shows substantial differences between LLN students when we consider whether or not they had prior experience of HE (and hence held a highest qualification that is at Level 4 or above). For this reason we present further profiles and distributions of LLN students for those who held qualifications at 'Level 4 and above' separately to those who held highest qualifications at 'Level 3 and below'.

Age

61. We show the age distribution of LLN students in the following tables, considering separately those holding 'Level 4 and above' and 'Level 3 and below' highest qualifications on entry to their LLN studies. Considering age at the commencement of their studies, 40 per cent of UK domiciled undergraduates entering their first year in 2007-08 were aged 19 and under. For those entering their first year of study in 2006-07 this proportion was 39 per cent.

62. As one might expect, students with qualifications at Level 4 and above as their highest qualification tend to be older than those who enter with lower-level qualifications. Table 3 shows that most LLN students within our cohorts who held a highest qualification at 'Level 4 and above' were aged between 20 and 49. In 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively, 86 per cent and 85 per cent of LLN students fell into this age range.

Table 3 LLN students holding 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry, by age group

Age group	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
16-19	25	3%	120	7%
20-29	300	35%	680	38%
30-39	245	29%	445	25%
40-49	190	22%	385	22%
50-59	70	8%	130	7%
60 plus	25	3%	20	1%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

63. The age distribution of students within the cohorts we reviewed is shown in Table 4 for those who held a highest qualification at 'Level 3 and below'. We see that the profile of students here was younger than for those already holding HE-level qualifications. While only 3 per cent and 7 per cent of 'Level 4 and above' LLN students fell into the 16-

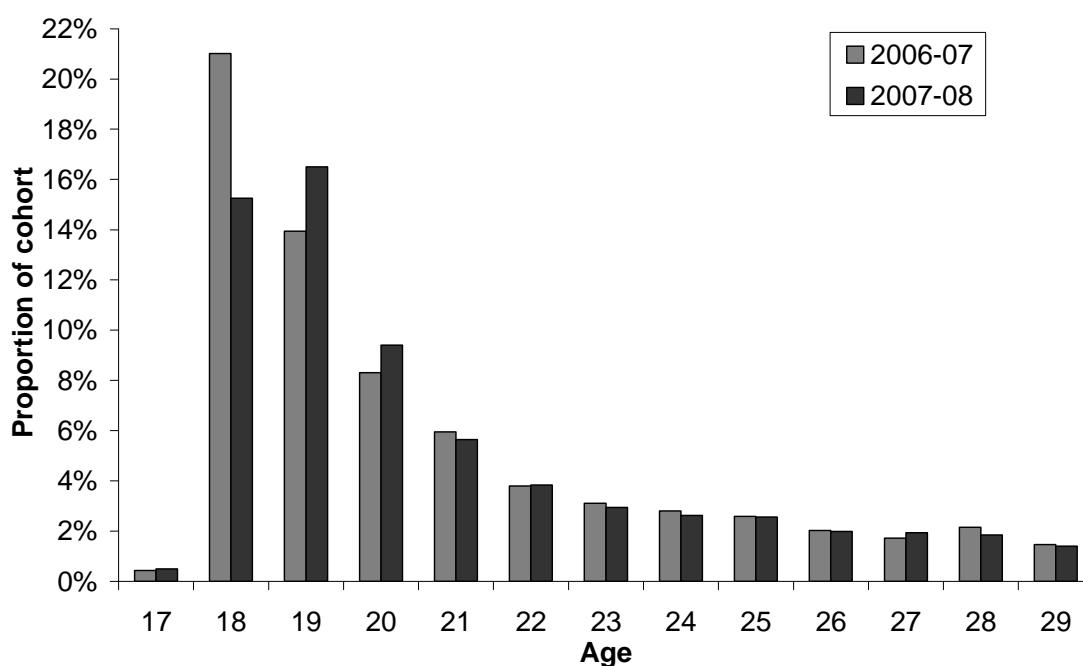
19 age group in 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively, 35 and 32 per cent fell into this age group when we consider 'Level 3 and below' students.

Table 4 LLN students holding 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry, by age group

Age group	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
16-19	820	35%	2,030	32%
20-29	785	34%	2,150	34%
30-39	345	15%	920	15%
40-49	255	11%	900	14%
50-59	95	4%	250	4%
60 plus	25	1%	45	1%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

64. We see from Table 4 that 69 per cent and 66 per cent of LLN students whose highest qualification was at 'Level 3 and below' were aged under 30. This group of students are shown in Figure 5, further broken down by age.

Figure 5 LLN students holding 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry and aged under 30, by age



65. Figure 5 shows that most LLN students who held a highest qualification at 'Level 3 and below' were aged 18 or 19: 15 per cent of such students in 2007-08 were aged 18,

and a further 17 per cent were aged 19. For LLN students in 2006-07 these two age groups also hold the greatest proportions of such students: 21 per cent and 14 per cent were aged 18 and 19 respectively.

Sex

66. In Table 5 we consider the LLN students who held 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry, split by sex. It shows that in 2007-08 female students outnumbered males: 61 per cent of the cohort were female compared to 39 per cent being male. We see that there was a similar breakdown in 2006-07, when 63 per cent of such students were female.

Table 5 LLN students holding 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry, by sex

Sex	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Male	315	37%	695	39%
Female	530	63%	1,090	61%
Total	850	100%	1,740	100%

67. LLN students who held 'Level 3 and below' qualifications are considered in Table 6 split by sex. As with students holding higher-level qualifications, the larger proportion of the cohort was female in each year. In 2007-08, 59 per cent of these students were female (compared to 41 per cent being male) and in 2006-07 the proportion was 54 per cent (compared to 46 per cent being male).

Table 6 LLN students holding 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry, by sex

Sex	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Male	1,065	46%	2,610	41%
Female	1,255	54%	3,685	59%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

68. Among UK domiciled undergraduates registered at UK HEIs in both 2006-07 and 2007-08, 59 per cent of students were female.

69. The cohorts of LLN students are seen to be similar to the wider population of HE students in that female students outnumbered males in each population we have considered. Analysis (discussed at paragraphs 115 to 117) suggests that the sex difference observed among LLN students can be explained, at least in part, by the subject areas studied.

Ethnicity

70. The ethnicity profile of LLN students in 2006-07 and 2007-08 is shown in Tables 7 and 8 for those who held 'Level 4 and above' and 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry respectively. For both groups of students, and in each year, most students were returned as having a White ethnic background.

71. In both the 2006-07 and the 2007-08 cohorts of UK-domiciled undergraduates, 83 per cent of students with known ethnicity were returned as being from a White ethnic background.

72. Table 7 shows that the proportion of LLN students who held a qualification at 'Level 4 and above' and with unknown ethnicity is high in the earlier year: the ethnic background of almost a quarter (23 per cent) of students in 2006-07 was unknown, and in 2007-08 this proportion dropped to 5 per cent. In 2006-07 and 2007-08, 7 per cent and 10 per cent of the respective cohorts were from a non-White ethnic background.

Table 7 LLN students holding 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry, by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
White	590	70%	1,520	85%
Asian or Asian British	15	2%	70	4%
Black or Black British	30	4%	65	4%
Chinese	5	0%	5	0%
Other (including mixed)	10	1%	25	2%
Unknown ethnicity	195	23%	95	5%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

73. In Table 8 we see that the ethnicity profile of LLN students does not differ by whether they held 'Level 3 and below' qualifications or higher-level qualifications. In 2006-07 and 2007-08, 9 per cent and 10 per cent respectively were reported as having a non-White ethnic background, and the proportions of White students were 77 per cent and 83 per cent respectively.

Table 8 LLN students holding ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry, by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
White	1,785	77%	5,210	83%
Asian or Asian British	65	3%	200	3%
Black or Black British	70	3%	210	3%
Chinese	15	1%	35	1%
Other (including mixed)	55	2%	180	3%
Unknown ethnicity	325	14%	460	7%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

Disability

74. The number of LLN students recorded as having a disability is small (see Tables 9 and 10). When we consider LLN students who held ‘Level 4 and above’ and ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications respectively we see that 92 per cent and 90 per cent of students in 2006-07 were not disabled. In 2007-08 the equivalent proportions were slightly higher at 93 and 90 per cent. Numbers of students recorded as having a disability and being in receipt of Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) are small in each instance: 2 per cent of the cohorts who held HE-level qualifications on entry were recorded in this way, and 3 per cent of the cohorts who held ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications.

Table 9 LLN students holding ‘Level 4 and above’ qualifications on entry, by disability status

Disability status	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Not disabled	780	92%	1,660	93%
Disabled and in receipt of DSA	15	2%	40	2%
Disabled and not in receipt of DSA	25	3%	60	3%
Disabled and DSA receipt not known/not sought	25	3%	25	1%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

Table 10 LLN students holding ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry, by disability status

Disability status	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Not disabled	2,095	90%	5,680	90%
Disabled and in receipt of DSA	70	3%	185	3%
Disabled and not in receipt of DSA	90	4%	235	4%
Disabled and DSA receipt not known/not sought	70	3%	180	3%
Disability status not known	0	0	20	0%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

75. In both 2006-07 and 2007-08, 8 per cent of UK-domiciled undergraduates registered at UK HEIs were known to have a (self-declared) disability.

Socio-economic background

76. In Tables 11 and 12 we consider the cohorts of LLN students by the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)⁹ of their parents’ employment. When we consider the cohorts split by the level of their highest qualification on entry, numbers in the socio-economic classifications are very low. This is a result of large numbers of students failing to provide details of their parents’ employment and recorded as ‘not classified’. For this reason we instead consider the 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts split by young and mature age ranges in the following tables. Based on findings presented at Tables 3 and 4 we define the ‘young’ age group as being aged under 20, ‘mature’ relates to those aged 20 and over.

77. Table 11 shows that 41 per cent and 47 per cent of the young 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts respectively were returned with the NS-SEC of their parents’ employment not being classified. Most students for whom NS-SEC was classified fall into the higher socio-economic classifications: 29 per cent of the young 2006-07 cohort, and 25 per cent of the young 2007-08 cohort had parents employed in higher or lower managerial and professional occupations.

⁹ See the Office for National Statistics web-site for further details: www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/classifications/current/ns-sec/index.html

Table 11 Young LLN students (aged under 20), by NS-SEC of parents' employment

NS-SEC classification	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Higher managerial and professional occupations	95	11%	220	10%
Lower managerial and professional occupations	155	18%	320	15%
Small employers and own account workers	60	7%	110	5%
Intermediate occupations	65	7%	150	7%
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	30	4%	80	4%
Semi-routine occupations	65	8%	170	8%
Routine occupations	35	4%	90	4%
Never worked and long-term unemployed	0	0%	5	0%
Not classified	350	41%	1,000	47%
Total	845	100%	2,150	100%

78. Among the mature cohorts we observe that a greater proportion were returned with the NS-SEC of their parents' employment not being classified: 84 per cent in both years considered. This low response rate, and the likely bias associated with it, means that caution should be exercised in the use and interpretation of the data shown below.

79. 'Lower managerial and professional occupations' was the most common classification in both years among those whose NS-SEC information was known: 5 per cent and 4 per cent of the mature cohorts in 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively were returned with this classification of their parents' employment.

Table 12 Mature LLN students (aged 20 and over), by NS-SEC of parents' employment

NS-SEC classification	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Higher managerial and professional occupations	40	2%	120	2%
Lower managerial and professional occupations	120	5%	265	4%
Small employers and own account workers	40	2%	105	2%
Intermediate occupations	55	2%	130	2%
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	20	1%	60	1%
Semi-routine occupations	60	2%	180	3%
Routine occupations	35	2%	85	1%
Never worked and long-term unemployed	5	0%	5	0%
Not classified	1,950	84%	4,980	84%
Total	2,325	100%	5,930	100%

Local area participation in HE

80. In the following tables we consider the participation rates in HE for the area that students were living in before their LLN studies began. As with our consideration of LLN students by their socio-economic background, we consider a split by the young and mature age ranges. We use different measures for young (aged under 20) and mature (20 and over) students.

81. For young students we use Participation Of Local Areas (POLAR¹⁰), a measure of the level of 'young participation' in HE for the areas in which the students lived before they started their LLN programme of study. Put simply, young participation is the proportion of young people in an area (the 'cohort') who go on to enter higher education aged 18 or 19.

82. The POLAR classification gives five quintiles of areas ordered from '1' (those wards with the lowest participation in HE) to '5' (those wards with the highest participation), each representing 20 per cent of the UK young cohort. We use the students' home postcodes to assign them to one of the five POLAR quintiles.

83. Table 13 shows the numbers of young students in each of these quintiles for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts of LLN students. It shows that among both cohorts the

¹⁰ POLAR in this report refers to the updated measure POLAR2. For more information see www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/polar/polar2

smallest proportions of students were from the lowest POLAR quintiles: 12 per cent of the 2006-07 cohort and 17 per cent of the 2007-08 cohort were from POLAR quintile 1.

Table 13 Young LLN students (aged under 20), by participation in HE of local area

Polar quintile	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
1 (lowest)	105	12%	355	17%
2	160	19%	385	18%
3	175	21%	435	20%
4	210	25%	495	23%
5 (highest)	185	22%	420	19%
Unknown	15	2%	65	3%
Total	845	100%	2,150	100%

84. For mature students we calculate the proportion of 16-74 year-olds with an HE qualification for the UK 2001 Census Area Statistics wards. These wards are then ranked by this proportion to give the adult HE qualification quintiles, with each quintile covering 20 per cent of the English 16-74 year-old population. As for young students, we assign mature students to one of these quintiles based on their home postcodes.

85. Table 14 shows the numbers of mature students in each of these quintiles for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts of LLN students. It shows that the spread of mature students across these quintiles is relatively even and consistent. Among both cohorts around a fifth of the mature LLN students fall into each adult HE qualification quintile.

Table 14 Mature LLN students (aged 20 and over), by adult HE qualification rate of local area

Adult HE qualification quintile	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
1 (lowest)	395	17%	1,250	21%
2	420	18%	1,160	20%
3	485	21%	1,280	22%
4	450	19%	1,115	19%
5 (highest)	420	18%	950	16%
Unknown	155	7%	175	3%
Total	2,325	100%	5,930	100%

Region of domicile

86. In Table 15 we show the LLN students who held HE-level qualifications on entry, split by student domicile. For students domiciled within the UK, the table considers the region of domicile.

Table 15 LLN students holding ‘Level 4 and above’ qualifications on entry, by region of student domicile

Region of student domicile	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
UK				
East of England	95	11%	105	6%
East Midlands	15	2%	25	1%
London	70	8%	135	8%
North East	85	10%	375	21%
North West	280	33%	430	24%
South East	70	8%	265	15%
South West	85	10%	120	7%
West Midlands	20	3%	85	5%
Yorkshire and the Humber	30	3%	100	6%
England unknown region	60	7%	75	4%
Northern Ireland	0	0%	5	0%
Scotland	5	1%	10	1%
Wales	15	2%	5	0%
Total UK	830	98%	1,745	98%
Non-UK	20	2%	40	2%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

87. Table 15 shows that numbers of non-UK domiciled LLN students were small: 20 and 40 students in 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively were domiciled outside of the UK. In addition, the number and proportions of students domiciled outside of England are small: 3 per cent and 1 per cent of these students were domiciled in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales when we consider the 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts respectively.

88. In both years, Table 15 shows that the largest proportion of students were domiciled in the North West: 33 per cent of these students in 2006-07, and 24 per cent in 2007-08. Of the English regions, we see that the smallest proportion of students was domiciled in the East Midlands: 2 per cent in 2006-07 and 1 per cent in 2007-08.

89. We consider the equivalent information for the cohort of LLN students whose qualifications on entry were at 'Level 3 and below' in Table 16. It shows that the numbers of students domiciled outside England are again small.

Table 16 LLN students holding 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry, by region of student domicile

Region of student domicile	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
UK				
East of England	350	15%	630	7%
East Midlands	60	3%	160	3%
London	205	9%	475	8%
North East	190	8%	650	11%
North West	640	27%	1,415	25%
South East	290	14%	825	15%
South West	135	6%	500	9%
West Midlands	55	2%	510	9%
Yorkshire and the Humber	215	9%	500	9%
England unknown region	50	0%	465	1%
Northern Ireland	5	0%	10	0%
Scotland	10	0%	30	1%
Wales	35	2%	45	1%
Total UK	2,235	96%	6,215	98%
Non-UK	85	4%	80	1%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

90. In line with the findings for students with higher-level qualifications, Table 16 shows that these students are most commonly domiciled in the North West. Twenty-seven per cent of the 2006-07 cohort, and 25 per cent of students in the 2007-08 cohort were domiciled in the North West in 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively. Similarly, the East Midlands remained the English region of domicile for the smallest proportion of students in 2007-08: 3 per cent of each cohort was domiciled here.

Course attributes

Qualification aim

91. The cohorts of LLN students who held 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry are shown in Table 17, split by their qualification aim. We see that among LLN students

in 2006-07 the most popular qualifications undertaken were foundation degrees and undergraduate certificates/diplomas: 30 per cent of the cohort were studying towards each of these qualifications. In 2007-08 the largest proportion (29 per cent) of LLN students who held HE-level qualifications on entry studied for a foundation degree. A first degree was studied by another 28 per cent of this cohort.

Table 17 LLN students holding ‘Level 4 and above’ qualifications on entry, by qualification aim¹¹

Qualification aim	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Postgraduate	50	6%	90	5%
First degree	170	20%	500	28%
UG certificates and diplomas	250	30%	220	12%
HNC/HND	15	2%	70	4%
Foundation degree	255	30%	515	29%
Credit	85	10%	285	16%
Other undergraduate	25	3%	90	5%
NVQ level 4/5	0	0%	5	0%
FE	0	0%	5	0%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

92. In Table 18 we consider the equivalent to Table 17 for students who held ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry. It shows that foundation degrees were once again the most popular qualification aim: in 2006-07 48 per cent of the cohort were studying towards this qualification and in 2007-08 this proportion was 44 per cent.

¹¹ In Tables 17-18, UG denotes ‘Undergraduate’. ‘Other undergraduate’ includes qualification aims such as: professional qualifications at undergraduate level, with or without an academic qualification; teaching certificate through the medium of Welsh; post-registration health and social care; and other formal HE qualification less than degree standard.

Table 18 LLN students holding ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry, by qualification aim

Qualification aim	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Postgraduate	20	1%	10	0%
First degree	785	34%	1,780	28%
UG certificates and diplomas	190	8%	185	3%
HNC/HND	65	3%	415	7%
Foundation degree	1,120	48%	2,775	44%
Credit	70	3%	640	10%
Other undergraduate	70	3%	460	7%
NVQ level 4/5	0	0%	15	0%
FE	0	0%	15	0%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

93. Table 18 shows that among the 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts of LLN students who held ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry, a first degree was another popular qualification aim. In 2006-07, a third of the cohort (34 per cent) was studying for a first degree, and in 2007-08 this proportion was 28 per cent.

94. Of the 2.3 million students registered at UK HEIs and studying for an HE qualification in 2007-08, 57 per cent were recorded as studying for a first degree. A further 3 per cent were studying towards a foundation degree. In 2006-07 the equivalent figures were 56 per cent for first degrees and 2 per cent for foundation degrees.

95. In Tables B1 and B2 at Annex B we show the relationship between a student’s qualification aim and the highest qualification they held on entry in more detail¹². The tables show, for example, that 25 students were returned in 2006-07 with a qualification aim of ‘Postgraduate qualification’ and their highest qualification on entry being a ‘First degree’. This could be deemed a ‘typical’ relationship between the two attributes: a student is progressing to a qualification aim that is at a level higher than that of their highest qualification held.

96. Among the 2006-07 cohort 90 per cent of students are found to have the more typical relationship between their qualification aim and their highest qualification on entry. Among the 2007-08 cohort this proportion is six percentage points higher.

97. However, Tables B1 and B2 also show atypical relationships between these two course attributes. For example, of the 3,295 students whose qualification aim in 2007-08 was ‘Foundation degree’, 195 already held either a first degree or Postgraduate

¹² Table B1 considers the 2006-07 cohort of LLN students, and the equivalent information for the 2007-08 cohort is shown in Table B2.

qualification. In another example, there were 15 students studying towards an ‘other undergraduate’ qualification in 2007-08 who held a postgraduate qualification as their highest qualification on entry.

98. As noted in paragraph 57 the highest qualifications held on entry may not have been the most recent qualifications obtained: a more recently gained lower-level qualification will not show up in our data when there is an earlier, higher qualification. It may be that a student was progressing from such a lower-level qualification to the qualification aim identified here. To explore such a scenario further we have tracked our LLN students within and through the individualised student records¹³. We have sought to obtain any evidence of recent study in the two academic years prior to LLN activity. This evidence is discussed further at Annex B, paragraphs 1 to 8.

99. The analysis at Annex B shows that almost half of our cohorts did not undertake recent study in the two academic years prior to their LLN studies. Among the 2007-08 cohort, 40 per cent of students had undertaken no such study and this proportion is nine percentage points higher among the 2006-07. Where previous study was identified, relatively small numbers are observed in each qualification group and most movement into LLN study is found to demonstrate an act of progression. Tables B5 and B6 show that 94 per cent of the 2006-07, and 88 per cent of the 2007-08 cohort, undertake a higher level of study in their LLN learning than in any recent study identified.

Commencement of course

100. In Tables 19 and 20 we consider whether or not students in our 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts commenced their programmes of study (were entrants) in that academic year. Table 19 shows that most students who held HE-level qualifications on entry and were identified as being an LLN student in 2006-07 began their course in that year: 4 per cent of LLN students began their course prior to that academic year. In 2007-08 Table 19 shows that the proportion of students that began their course prior to the 2007-08 academic year was higher (15 per cent). This might be expected given the inclusion of all LLN students in our cohort, rather than only entrants.

Table 19 LLN students holding ‘Level 4 and above’ qualifications on entry, by whether or not they commenced their course in the academic year considered

Entrant?	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
No	35	4%	265	15%
Yes	815	96%	1,520	85%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

101. Table 20 shows that 8 per cent of LLN students in 2006-07 who held ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry commenced their studies prior to that academic year. Among the 2007-08 cohort the equivalent proportion more than doubled.

¹³ This process is described further at Annex A.

Table 20 LLN students holding ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry, by whether or not they commenced their course in the academic year considered

Entrant?	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
No	175	8%	1,225	19%
Yes	2,150	92%	5,070	81%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

102. Given the large proportions of LLN students being identified as entrants, we consider their recent study experience in Tables 21 and 22. Table 21 shows that two-thirds of entrants within our cohorts who held HE-level qualifications on entry had no recent experience of HE-level study.

103. In the 2006-07 cohort of entrants, Table 21 shows that there were 125 students (15 per cent) who had recently undertaken FE or non-advanced study previously. Among the 2007-08 cohort 320 of the starters (21 per cent) had recently undertaken such study.

Table 21 LLN students who began their course in the academic year considered and held ‘Level 4 and above’ qualifications on entry, by recent study experience

Recent study experience?		2006-07		2007-08	
		Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Yes	HE level	275	34%	525	34%
	FE level	120	15%	316	21%
	Non-advanced study	5	0%	5	0%
No		410	50%	680	45%
Total		815	100%	1,520	100%

104. In Table 22 we consider the equivalent information to Table 21 for students who held ‘Level 3 or below’ qualifications on entry. It shows that 10 per cent and 12 per cent of the 2006-07 and 2007-08 cohorts of starters respectively had recent experience of HE-level study. Their highest qualification on entry classification suggests that these students had not gained a qualification from this recent study on commencement of their LLN studies.

105. Table 22 also shows that among both cohorts of starters who held ‘Level 3 or below’ qualifications on entry, more than half had not undertaken any study in the two academic years before starting their LLN studies.

Table 22 LLN students who began their course in the academic year considered and held 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry, by recent study experience

Recent study experience?		2006-07		2007-08	
		Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Yes	HE level	210	10%	625	12%
	FE level	770	36%	1,855	37%
	Non-advanced study	10	0%	30	1%
No		1,160	54%	2,560	51%
Total		2,150	100%	5,070	100%

Mode of study

106. The cohorts of LLN students who held HE-level qualifications are shown in Table 23, split by mode of study. It shows that most of these students studied on a part-time basis: in 2006-07 more than three-quarters of these students (77 per cent) studied part-time, and in 2007-08 64 per cent did so.

Table 23 LLN students holding 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry, by mode of study

Mode of study	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Full-time	195	23%	640	36%
Part-time	650	77%	1,145	64%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

107. Table 24 shows the mode of study for LLN students in 2006-07 and 2007-08 who held 'Level 3 and below' qualifications as their highest on entry. It shows that, in contrast to LLN students who held higher-level qualifications, most of these students were found to be studying on a full-time basis. In 2006-07 62 per cent of students were studying full-time and in 2007-08 this proportion was 60 per cent.

Table 24 LLN students holding ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry, by mode of study

Mode of study	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Full-time	1,445	62%	3,770	60%
Part-time	880	38%	2,525	40%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

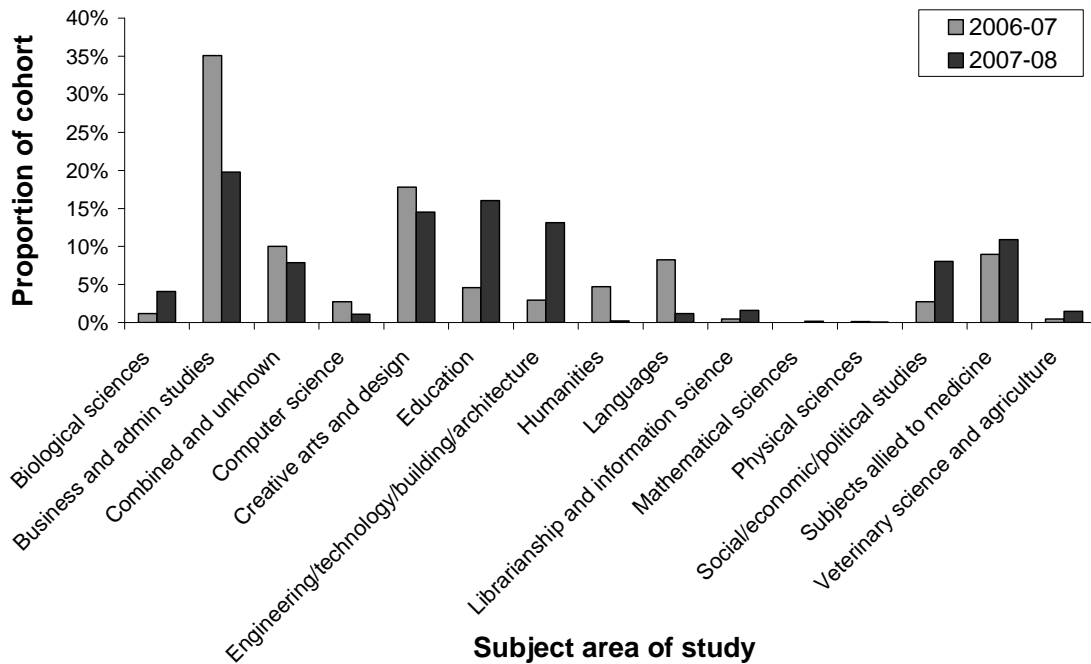
108. Among the 2007-08 cohort of UK domiciled undergraduates registered at UK HEIs, 67 per cent were studying on a full-time basis. This proportion was two percentage points higher than that observed among the equivalent cohort in 2006-07 where 65 per cent studied full-time.

Subject area of study

109. Figure 6 shows subject distribution among the cohorts of LLN students who held ‘Level 4 and above’ qualifications on entry. It shows that in 2006-07 the subject areas of ‘Business and administrative studies’, ‘Creative arts and design’ and ‘Combined and unknown’ were the most common (with 35 per cent, 18 per cent and 10 per cent of the cohort respectively): all others were each studied by less than 10 per cent of the cohort.

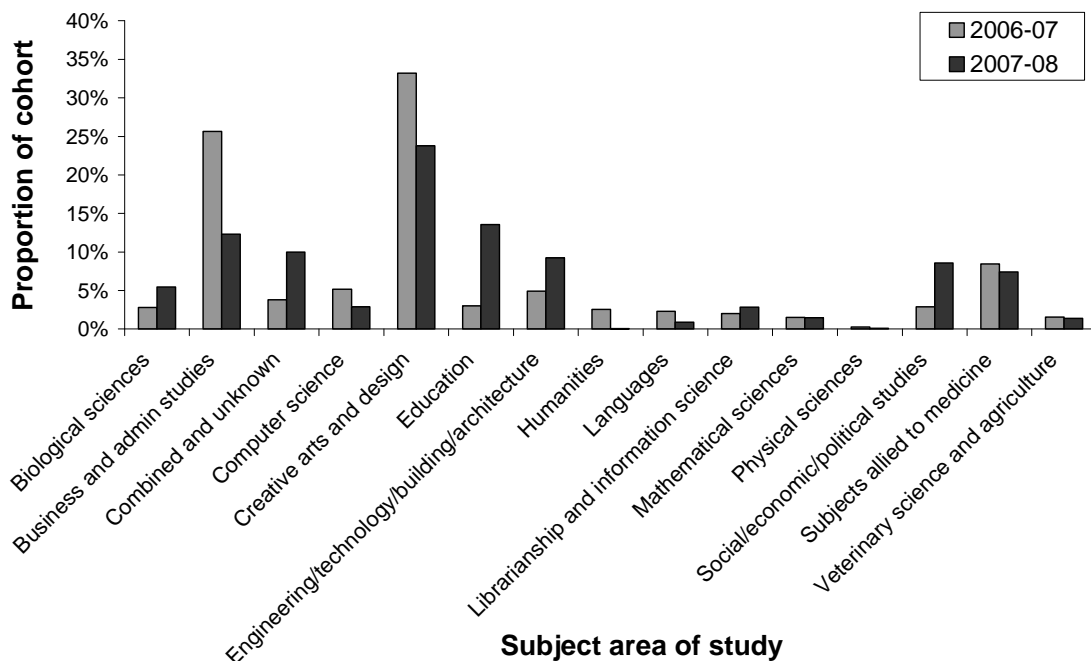
110. ‘Business and administrative studies’ remained the most frequently studied subject area in 2007-08 (studied by 20 per cent of the cohort). However, the spread of subject areas being studied was somewhat greater. Figure 6 shows that, in that year, ‘Business and administrative studies’, ‘Creative arts and design’, ‘Education’, ‘Engineering/technology/building/architecture’ and ‘Subjects allied to medicine’ were each studied by greater than 10 per cent of the LLN cohort.

Figure 6 LLN students holding 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry, by subject area of study



111. Figure 7 shows the equivalent to Figure 6 for LLN students who held 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry.

Figure 7 LLN students holding 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry, by subject area of study



112. We see from Figure 7 that, as with students holding higher-level qualifications, two subject areas dominate when we consider the subject distribution in 2006-07. While Figure 6 showed that 'Business and administrative studies' was studied by the largest proportion of students with higher-level qualifications, followed by 'Creative arts and

design', here we see the latter was the more commonly studied in 2006-07. Figure 7 shows that 33 per cent of the cohort studied 'Creative arts and design', and 26 per cent studied 'Business and administrative studies'.

113. In 2007-08, 'Creative arts and design' remains the most common subject area of study (24 per cent) but there is a greater range of subjects being studied in this year compared to 2006-07. 'Education', studied by 855 of these students (14 per cent of the cohort), was the second most frequently studied subject area.

114. 'Subjects allied to medicine' was the most commonly studied subject area among UK-domiciled undergraduates in both 2006-07 (15 per cent of the cohort) and 2007-08 (14 per cent). The proportions studying 'Creative arts and design', 'Business and administrative studies' and 'Education' were lower than observed among LLN students. In both years, 8 per cent of the cohort studied 'Creative arts and design' and 10 per cent studied 'Business and administrative studies'. 'Education' was studied by 6 per cent of the 2006-07 cohort and 7 per cent of the 2007-08 cohort.

115. Paragraphs 66 to 69 discuss the differences observed among LLN students by sex: namely that female students within our cohorts outnumbered their male counterparts. The association of this difference in sex with the subject area of study is considered in Table 25 for students who held HE level qualifications on entry, and Table 26 for students who held qualifications on entry at level 3 and below.

Table 25 Proportion of LLN students holding 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry that were female, by subject area of study

Subject area of study	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	% female	Number of students	% female
Biological sciences	10	20%	75	42%
Business and administrative studies	300	58%	355	63%
Combined and unknown	85	79%	140	51%
Computer science	25	30%	20	47%
Creative arts and design	150	56%	260	55%
Education	40	67%	285	94%
Engineering, technology, building and architecture	25	4%	235	12%
Humanities	40	63%	5	50%
Languages	70	91%	20	71%
Librarianship and information science	5	0%	30	18%
Mathematical sciences	0	0%	5	33%
Physical sciences	0	100%	0	100%
Social, economic and political studies	25	78%	145	85%

Subjects allied to medicine	75	82%	195	80%
Veterinary science and agriculture	5	50%	25	62%
Total	850	63%	1,785	61%

116. Table 25 suggests that the observed sex difference is, at least in part, explained by occupational segregation. It shows that, for 2007-08 particularly, some of the subject areas most commonly studied by students who held HE-level qualifications on entry were studied predominantly by females. For example, 94 per cent of students in this cohort who studied 'Education' (the second most common subject area) were female.

117. For LLN students who held qualifications on entry that were at 'Level 3 and below', Table 26 further demonstrates the likelihood that the observed difference by sex is associated with the subject areas studied. In 2007-08 'Education' was again the second most frequently studied subject area and 96 per cent of these LLN students were female.

Table 26 Proportion of LLN students holding 'Level 3 and below' qualifications on entry that were female, by subject area of study

Subject area of study	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	% female	Number of students	% female
Biological sciences	65	43%	345	36%
Business and administrative studies	595	54%	775	55%
Combined and unknown	90	72%	630	64%
Computer science	120	16%	185	25%
Creative arts and design	770	51%	1,495	50%
Education	70	86%	855	96%
Engineering, technology, building and architecture	115	9%	580	13%
Humanities	60	64%	5	25%
Languages	55	87%	55	81%
Librarianship and information science	45	38%	180	34%
Mathematical sciences	35	40%	95	34%
Physical sciences	5	50%	5	0%
Social, economic and political studies	65	79%	540	90%
Subjects allied to medicine	195	82%	465	81%
Veterinary science and agriculture	35	72%	90	57%
Total	2,325	54%	6,295	59%

Region of institution

118. Tables 27 and 28 show the cohorts of LLN students by the region of the HEI at which they are registered. In Table 27 we consider this information for LLN students who held 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry. It shows that most such students were registered at institutions in the North West: 38 per cent of the 2006-07 cohort, and 28 per cent of the 2007-08 cohort were studying in this region.

Table 27 LLN students holding 'Level 4 and above' qualifications on entry, by region of institution

Region of institution	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
East Midlands			35	2%
East of England	100	12%	100	6%
Greater London	40	4%	160	9%
North East	80	9%	445	25%
North West	325	38%	490	28%
South East	185	22%	315	18%
South West	90	11%	80	4%
West Midlands	15	2%	95	5%
Yorkshire and Humberside	15	2%	65	4%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

119. Table 28 shows the equivalent information for students who held qualifications on entry that are below HE level. It shows that the North West remains the region in which the largest proportion of LLN students were studying: among these students 31 per cent in 2006-07 and 26 per cent in 2007-08 were registered at institutions in this region.

Table 28 LLN students holding ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry, by region of institution

Region of institution	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
East Midlands			95	2%
East of England	370	16%	600	10%
Greater London	125	5%	505	8%
North East	150	6%	675	11%
North West	720	31%	1,640	26%
South East	475	20%	860	14%
South West	125	5%	555	9%
West Midlands	25	1%	430	7%
Yorkshire and Humberside	335	14%	935	15%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

120. There are some substantial differences between the profiles shown in Tables 27 and 28. For example, in 2006-07 the Yorkshire and Humberside region accounted for 2 per cent of LLN students holding HE-level entry qualifications, but when we consider those holding ‘Level 3 and below’ qualifications on entry 14 per cent of LLN students studied in this region.

Annex A

Data definitions and outline of overall linking process

1. The definitions and process outlined below enabled us to identify individual students progressing into and through an LLN.

Data definitions

2. The original population, for year X, is made up of students who are recorded on the Higher Education Statistics Agency's (HESA's) individualised student record and identified as an LLN student.

3. LLNs wishing to adopt the model 2 funding option were obliged to provide HEFCE with details explaining how the Council could unambiguously identify LLN numbers through their HESA or LSC returns¹⁴. The methodologies used by the LLN partner institutions are described below. Except where specified the methodology is the same for 2006-07 and 2007-08.

4. The following HESA fields are used in the institutional methodologies:

- OWNSTU: Institution's own identifier for student
- HUSID: Student Identifier
- INSTCAMP: Institution's own campus identifier
- PTITLE: Programme of study title (2006-07 HESA student records)
- CTITLE: Course title (2007-08 HESA student records)
- OWNPSD: Institution's own programme of study identifier
- COURSEID: Course identifier
- QUALENT2: Highest qualification on entry
- PREVINST: Previous institution attended.

Outline of overall linking process

5. In order to link all available HESA records, a unique longitudinal identifier is created for each individual that appears at any point in the HESA record. This identifier is created as follows:

- a. All students in a HESA individualised student record (year X) are matched to the following record (year X+1) using a number of match processes:
 - records with matching HESA fields HUSID, HESAINST and NUMHUS (HIN linked)

¹⁴ The obligation was specified in the November 2005 'Lifelong Learning Network: Update' to stakeholders and practitioners. The document is available at www.hefce.ac.uk under Widening participation/Lifelong Learning Networks/LLN updates.

- records matched on sex, birth date, first name and surname, with restriction for common names and an allowance for maiden name changes and spelling errors
- records matched on HUSID and either postcode, birth date, surname or first name
- records matched on HESAINST, HUSID, sex and surname with potential spelling errors or maiden name changes
- records matched on birth date, sex and first part of postcode. A combination of first name, HUSID and second part of postcode is further used to eliminate/select potential matches.

b. These five matching processes are also used to internally match up records belonging to the same student within a single academic year's HESA record. This internal matching is done for both year X and year X+1.

c. The identified matches are then resolved so that a single person identifier exists for year X and year X+1.

d. The process is repeated for matching between all pairs of years (X+1 and X+2, X and X+2, and so on).

e. The final step is to resolve all found links across all the years to produce a single HESA longitudinal identifier.

Annex B

Extended and additional tables

Table B1 LLN students in 2006-07 by qualification aim and highest qualifications on entry

Highest qualification on entry		Qualification aim							Total	
		Postgraduate	First degree	Undergraduate Certificates or Diplomas	HND/HNC	Foundation degree	Credit	Other undergraduate		FE
Level 4 qualifications and above	Postgraduate qualifications	5	5	50		20	5	5		90
	First degree (UK institution)	25	0	70	5	120	25	10		250
	Graduate of non-UK institution	5	5	0		0		5		15
	Certificate/Diploma of education	5	5	20	0	5	0	0		40
	HNC/HND	10	55	5	5	25	10	5		115
	Foundation degree		70	5		10				80
	Other undergraduate qualifications	5	35	55	0	55	35	0		185
	Level 4 NVQ/GNVQ		0	40	0	15	10	0		75
Sub-total		50	170	250	15	255	85	25	0	840
Level 3 qualifications and below	Level 3 A level/Higher/NVQ/GNVQ or equivalent		285	50	10	340	10	20		715
	Level 3 National Certificate/Diploma (BTECs or SQA equivalents)		265	5	15	195	0			480
	Level 3 Foundation course	0	65		0	10				80

Highest qualification on entry	Qualification aim								Total
	Postgraduate	First degree	Undergraduate Certificates or Diplomas	HND/ HNC	Foundation degree	Credit	Other undergraduate	FE	
Access courses	0	65		0	10		5		85
GCSE and other non-advanced qualifications	0	45	20	5	305		30		410
APEL or previous experience	15	30	10		25	5	10		100
No formal qualification	0		5	0	15		0	0	20
Not known	0	25	100	30	220	55	5		435
Sub-total	20	785	190	65	1,120	70	70	0	2,325
Total	70	955	440	80	1,375	160	95	0	3,170

Table B2 LLN students in 2007-08 by qualification aim and highest qualifications on entry

Highest qualification on entry		Qualification aim									Total
		Postgraduate	First degree	Undergraduate Certificates or Diplomas	HND / HNC	Foundation degree	Credit	Other undergraduate	NVQ level 4/5	FE	
	Postgraduate qualifications	25	20	35	10	105	45	15	0	5	255
	First degree (UK institution)	40	20	50	10	90	75	10	0		300
	Graduate of non-UK institution	5	10	0	0	10	5	5			40
Level 4 qualifications and above	Certificate/Diploma of education	0	20	25	10	45	25	5	0		135
	HNC/HND	5	210	15	15	115	35	35	0		425
	Foundation degree		95	10		5	10	0			125
	Other undergraduate qualifications	10	120	40	15	115	80	20	0		405
	Level 4 NVQ/GNVQ		5	40	5	35	10	5			105
Sub-total		90	500	220	70	515	285	90	5	5	1,785
Level 3 qualifications and below	Level 3 A level/Higher/NVQ/GNVQ or equivalent		775	90	120	1,165	220	115		0	2,485
	Level 3 National Certificate / Diploma (BTECs or SQA equivalents)		515	10	55	495	10	50			1,140
	Level 3 Foundation course	0	55	0	5	25	5	0			95

Highest qualification on entry	Qualification aim										Total
	Postgraduate	First degree	Undergraduate Certificates or Diplomas	HND / HNC	Foundation degree	Credit	Other undergraduate	NVQ level 4/5	FE		
Access courses	0	150	0	0	35	0	15				205
GCSE and other non-advanced qualifications		140	25	20	360	345	170				1,060
APEL or previous experience	5	50	10	30	95	0	5				195
No formal qualification	0	10	5	35	25	20	5				105
Not known	0	90	35	150	570	35	95	15	15		1,010
Sub-total	10	1,780	185	415	2,775	640	460	15	15		6,295
Total	80	2,280	405	490	3,295	925	550	20	20		8,080

Recent study experience

1. These tables show recent study undertaken by our cohorts of LLN students in the two academic years prior to the one considered for LLN study¹⁵.

Table B3 LLN students holding ‘Level 4 and above’ qualifications, by recent study identified

Recent study identified	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Postgraduate	70	8%	85	5%
First degree	65	7%	175	10%
Foundation degree	90	10%	180	10%
HND/HNC	10	1%	100	5%
Other undergraduate	80	10%	235	13%
A levels and equivalents	0	0%	5	0%
NVQ/GNVQ/BTEC and equivalents	45	6%	150	8%
Access and foundation courses	5	0%	10	0%
Other FE	70	8%	155	9%
GCSE and equivalents	5	0%	5	0%
None	410	48%	685	39%
Total	850	100%	1,785	100%

2. Table B3 shows that large proportions of LLN students holding highest qualifications on entry that are at ‘Level 4 and above’ had undertaken no study recorded in the two academic years prior to their LLN studies. Among the 2006-07 cohort, the proportion of these students with no recent study identified was 48 per cent. Where previous study was identified, relatively small numbers are observed in each qualification group. Foundation degrees and ‘Other undergraduate’ qualifications were each studied by 10 per cent of these LLN students, the largest proportion observed.

3. Other qualification groups were more widely studied by LLN students who held ‘Level 4 and above’ qualifications on entry in the 2007-08 cohort, although 39 per cent were still found to have undertaken no recent study. The qualification group of ‘Other undergraduate’ was the most common qualification group: 13 per cent of this cohort were found to have studied such qualifications in the two years prior to their LLN activity.

¹⁵ For LLN students within the 2006-07 cohort, we consider study identified from the HESA individualised student records and LSC’s individualised learner records for 2004-05 and 2005-06. For the 2007-08 cohort we consider study identified in 2005-06 and 2006-07.

4. LLN students whose highest qualification on entry was at 'Level 3 and below' are shown in Table B4 by recent study identified. It shows that 50 per cent of these LLN students in 2006-07 had undertaken no recent study in the two years prior to their LLN studies. Among the 2007-08 cohort this proportion is nine percentage points lower. In both years, 'NVQ/GNVQ/BTEC and equivalents' were the most popular qualifications previously studied: 19 per cent of the 2006-07 cohort, and 17 per cent of the 2007-08 cohort, had undertaken such study.

Table B4 LLN students holding 'Level 3 and below' qualifications, by recent study identified

Recent studies identified	2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Postgraduate	15	1%	30	0%
First degree	185	8%	715	11%
Foundation degree	75	3%	790	13%
HND/HNC	15	1%	80	1%
Other undergraduate	95	4%	235	4%
A-levels and equivalents	80	3%	120	2%
NVQ/GNVQ/BTEC and equivalents	445	19%	1,065	17%
Access and foundation courses	40	2%	95	1%
Other FE	210	9%	580	9%
GCSE and equivalents	10	0%	30	0%
None	1,160	50%	2,565	41%
Total	2,325	100%	6,295	100%

5. The relationship between the qualification aim of a student in their LLN studies, and recent study identified, is shown in Table B5 for LLN students in the 2006-07 cohort. Note that we do not consider the cohort split by level of highest qualification on entry here because of the small numbers involved when breaking down to that level.

6. Table B5 shows, for example, that of the 495 students found to have undertaken 'NVQ/GNVQ/BTEC and equivalent' study in the previous two years, 170 progressed to a first degree in their LLN studies in 2006-07 and a further 265 progressed to a foundation degree. It shows that in most cases where recent studies are identified, movement to the 2006-07 LLN study demonstrate an act of progression.

7. However, this is not always the case: 6 per cent of students appear to study for a qualification in their LLN studies that is at a lower level than that of their recent studies. For example, 15 students found to have recently studied towards a postgraduate qualification were studying towards a foundation degree when we consider their LLN activity in 2006-07.

Table B5 LLN students in 2006-07, by recent study identified and qualification aim

Recent studies identified	Qualification aim of LLN study in 2006-07								Total
	Postgraduate	First degree	Undergraduate Certificates or Diplomas	HND/HNC	Foundation degree	Credit	Other undergraduate	FE	
Postgraduate	25	5	30		15	10	0		85
First degree	5	155	20	0	60	5	5		250
Foundation degree	0	110	5		50				165
HND/HNC		15		5	5				25
Other undergraduate	5	65	50		35	20	5		180
A-levels and equivalents		40	5	0	35		0		80
NVQ/GNVQ/BTEC and equivalents		170	10	30	265	5	15	0	495
Access and foundation courses		30	0	0	10	0	0		40
Other FE	10	50	70	5	120	15	10		280
GCSE and equivalents		5	0		5		0		10
None	25	315	250	35	775	105	60		1,565
Total	70	955	440	80	1,375	160	95	0	3,175

8. Table B6 shows the equivalent information to Table B5 for the 2007-08 cohort of LLN students. It shows that of the 4,830 students found to have undertaken recent study, most appear to have progressed to a higher level of study when we consider their LLN activity. There are however exceptions: for example, 125 students moved from a first degree in their recent studies to a foundation degree as an LLN student. Among this cohort, 12 per cent appear to have failed to progress to a higher level of study in their LLN learning.

Table B6 LLN students in 2007-08, by recent study identified and qualification aim

Recent studies identified	Qualification aim of LLN study in 2007-08									Total
	Postgraduate	First degree	Undergraduate Certificates or Diplomas	HND/HNC	Foundation degree	Credit	Other undergraduate	NVQ level 4/5	FE	
Postgraduate	50	0	15	5	10	30		0	0	115
First degree	10	675	15	15	125	30	15	0	0	895
Foundation degree		240	15	5	610	30	65			970
HND/HNC		80	0	75	15					175
Other undergraduate	15	110	100	5	80	115	40	0	0	470
A-levels and equivalents		50	0	10	55		5			125
NVQ/GNVQ/BTEC and equivalents		340	25	175	530	60	75	0	5	1,215
Access and foundation courses		60	0	5	35		0			100
Other FE	5	110	55	45	380	100	40	0		735
GCSE and equivalents		5	0	0	10	10	5			30
None	20	605	175	150	1,440	545	300	10	10	3,250
Total	100	2,280	405	490	3,295	925	550	20	20	8,080

Annex C

List of abbreviations

APEL	Accreditation of prior experiential learning
ASNs	Additional student numbers
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council (1993)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance
FE	Further education
FEC	Further education college
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HE	Higher education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher education institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HNC/HND	Higher National Certificate/Higher National Diploma
ILR	individualised learner records
LLN	Lifelong Learning Network
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NS-SEC	National Statistics Socio-economic Classification
SDF	Strategic Development Fund
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority