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Pathways to higher education: Apprenticeships

To	Heads of publicly funded higher education institutions in the UK Heads of publicly funded further education colleges in the UK
Of interest to those responsible for	Student data, widening participation, learning and teaching, work-based learning
Reference	2009/17
Publication date	May 2009
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Executive summary

Purpose

1. This report describes the attributes and progression to higher education (HE) of those who have undertaken apprenticeships at further education level.

Key points

2. As employees, apprentices work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills as well as studying for qualifications with a local training provider such as a further education college, usually on a day release basis.
3. The number who completed an apprenticeship increased from 37,460 in 2002-03 to 90,130 in 2005-06.
4. There were a number of apprenticeship and apprentice characteristics that affected the rate of progression to higher education within four years for those who completed their apprenticeship in 2002-03. These included:

Apprenticeship attributes

- a. Level of apprenticeship: a greater proportion of those on the advanced apprenticeship progressed (6 per cent) than those on the foundation apprenticeship (4 per cent).
- b. Industry sector of apprenticeship: a much greater proportion of those studying accountancy progressed (67 per cent of advanced apprentices) than those studying any other subject. This increased progression rate is in part due to structured Level 3 to Level 4 progression routes for accounting.
- c. Region of local training provider: the patterns of progression to higher education varied depending on level of apprenticeship and the region of the institution at which the apprenticeship was taught.

Apprentice attributes

- d. Gender: a greater proportion of females progressed to HE. This applies to both advanced and foundation apprenticeship completers.
- e. Age group: there was no clear relationship between the proportion of apprentices who progressed to HE and their age.
- f. Ethnicity: a greater proportion of non-White completers compared to White entered HE.
- g. Disability: of the 275 completers with a disability, 9 per cent progressed to higher education. This compares to a progression rate of 5 per cent for the 35,645 completers without a disability.
- h. Background: for those completing advanced apprenticeships, the highest rates of progression to higher education were seen for individuals domiciled in areas with high rates of participation in higher education. For foundation apprenticeships, the relationship was less clear.

Action required

- 5. No action is required in response to this document.

Introduction

6. This is the third of a series of reports providing information on pathways into higher education (HE). The first was 'Pathways to higher education: Access courses' (HEFCE 2006/16); the second was 'Pathways to higher education: BTEC courses' (HEFCE 2007/35). The series describes the alternatives to the historically 'standard' pathway of progression from school or college at age 18 or 19, having acquired A-level qualifications, to the first year of an undergraduate programme of study.

7. This report describes the attributes and progression to higher education of individuals who have undertaken apprenticeships at further education (FE) level.

8. As employees, apprentices work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills as well as studying for qualifications with a local training provider such as a further education college, usually on a day release basis. These qualifications will typically be a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), with possibly some key skills and a technical certificate.

9. During the period we examined (academic years 2002-03 to 2005-06), there were two levels of apprenticeship: advanced and non-advanced. The non-advanced apprenticeship was formerly referred to as a 'foundation' apprenticeship and we have used this term in this report. Individuals studying on a foundation apprenticeship typically study a Level 2 NVQ; those on an advanced programme usually study a Level 3 NVQ. The difference between these level of apprenticeships is important enough that we consider them separately for this report.

10. Key skills certificates aim to give apprentices general skills that will be useful in the workplace. The most common skills aimed for are numerical skills, communication skills and ICT skills. There are also different levels of key skills, equating to NVQ levels. Level 2 key skills in 'application of number' and communications are compulsory in all advanced apprenticeships starting after September 2001, and Level 1 key skill certificates in the same areas are compulsory for foundation apprenticeships¹. Alternatively, individuals can have a GCSE grade A*-C, and – as we will see later – not all do key skills within their apprenticeship (see Figure 2).

11. Technical certificates are similar to key skills, but whereas key skills build general abilities, technical certificates are aimed at a specific industry sector. For example, some of the most popular certificates are related to construction, customer service and food hygiene. In some cases there are advanced and non-advanced versions of the certificate.

¹ For more information see www.apprenticeships.org.uk under Apprentices/What's it all about?/Apprenticeship levels.

Data sources and definition of cohort

Data sources

12. Data have been drawn from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student records, Learning and Skills Council (LSC) individualised and work-based learner records from 2001-02 through to 2006-07.

13. Individuals were tracked within and through each annual student data set using a number of personal characteristics. For exact data definitions and further explanation of how individuals are tracked, see Annex B of 'Pathways to higher education: access courses' (HEFCE 2006/16).

Definition of cohort

14. In this report we consider the cohort of individuals who were recorded as completing an apprenticeship in a particular year.

Selecting completers

15. The main difficulty in carrying out this analysis has been to identify accurately which individuals have completed their apprenticeships. The approach we have taken for the cohort of completers has been to ensure, as far as possible, that all the records used refer to individuals who have completed apprenticeships, at the cost of probably missing some completers.

16. Therefore the following groups of individuals are excluded from our initial cohort of completers:

- a. Those who studied an HE course at the same time as their apprenticeship.
- b. Those whose apprenticeship's planned length was less than six months.
- c. Those whose planned length was more than three years for foundation apprenticeships or more than five for advanced apprenticeships.
- d. Those who left within one month of commencing the apprenticeship.
- e. Those who studied an unusual National Vocational Qualification level for level of apprenticeship (see paragraph 9).
- f. Those who completed an apprenticeship within three months.
- g. Those who completed an apprenticeship in longer than three years for foundation apprenticeships, or longer than five years for advanced apprenticeships.
- h. Those who completed an apprenticeship without completing an NVQ.
- i. Those in 2002-03 who reached 25 years of age and were recorded (on the LSC return) as leaving because they were no longer eligible for funding.

17. Table 1 shows the initial and final populations for the 2002-03 completers, as well as the number of individuals excluded for each reason. Note that all numbers reported in this report are rounded to the nearest five.

Table 1 Exclusions to the 2002-03 cohort of completers

	Individuals
Original population	43,070
Already in higher education	1,180
Planned apprenticeship length less than six months	1,565
Planned apprenticeship length more than three/five years	485
Left within a month of commencing the apprenticeship	50
Unusual level of study for framework	60
Completed within three months	870
Completed in longer than three/five years	680
Completed without an NVQ	420
Counted as leaving because over 25	300
Final population	37,460

Trends in numbers

18. In this section we look at changes to the number who completed their apprenticeships over time. Table 2 shows the numbers who completed an apprenticeship in each year.

Table 2 Number who completed an apprenticeship 2002-03 to 2005-06

Apprenticeship	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Advanced	15,390	13,900	16,875	26,215
Foundation	22,070	29,360	44,185	63,915
Total	37,460	43,255	61,060	90,130

19. From this we can see that the number who completed an apprenticeship increased each year, with a large increase from 2004-05 to 2005-06. Other sources indicate that

some of the increase in the number who completed was associated with an increase in the completion rate for apprentices².

Profile and pathways to higher education of apprentices

Introduction

20. We now consider the cohort who completed their apprenticeship and whether they progressed to higher education. We look mainly at the cohort who completed in 2002-03, as these had the most time to potentially enter higher education. We recorded them as entering higher education if they started by 2006-07.

21. There are different levels of higher education that individuals can study:

- postgraduate
- first degree
- foundation degrees, Higher National Certificates (HNCs), Higher National Diplomas
- Diploma of Higher Education (or equivalent)
- higher education credit, for example studying a module at the Open University.

22. Additionally, individuals can study some higher education within the context of work-based learning (WBL) We refer to this type as 'work-based higher education' (WB HE), as opposed to 'non-work-based higher education' (non-WB HE).

23. Note that, due to the timing of this analysis, we only consider work-based HE until 2005-06, whereas for non-work-based HE we consider it until 2006-07.

24. The following section is split into three parts, which are then further categorised.

- overall progression:
 - progression to higher education
 - level of higher education entered
 - year of entry to higher education
- apprenticeships considered by:
 - length of apprenticeship
 - apprenticeship components

² This is supported by LSC paper 45/2007, which shows the completion rate increased from 24 per cent in 2001-02 to 53 per cent in 2005-06. See http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/45_-_2007_apprenticeships.pdf for more details.

- industry sector of apprenticeship
- region of local training provider
- apprenticeships considered by an individual's attributes:
 - gender
 - age group
 - ethnicity
 - disability and learning difficulty status
 - background of individual.

Overall progression

Progression to higher education for 2002-03 completers

25. Table 3 shows the number who completed their apprenticeship in 2002-03 who progressed into HE. For example, we can see that 445 advanced apprentices had entered work-based HE by 2005-06 and 520 had entered non-work-based HE by 2006-07. Together, they made up 6 per cent of the 15,390 advanced apprentices who completed in 2002-03.

Table 3 Progression into HE for those who completed their apprenticeship in 2002-03

	Advanced	Foundation	Total
Non-WB HE	520	615	1,140
WB HE	445	200	645
No HE	14,425	21,250	35,675
Total	15,390	22,070	37,460
Into HE	6%	4%	5%
Into non-WB HE	3%	3%	3%

26. Table 3 shows that 5 per cent of those who completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03 had progressed to some form of higher education by 2006-07 (or 2005-06 for work-based HE).

27. A greater proportion of apprentices who completed an advanced programme progressed to HE: 6 per cent compared to 4 per cent of those who completed a foundation apprenticeship.

28. For individuals who completed an advanced apprenticeship, 75 more entered non-work-based HE than work-based HE. But for foundation apprentices, more than three times as many apprentices entered non-work-based HE as work-based HE.

Level of higher education study entered

29. Table 4 splits the progression to HE into the categories mentioned in paragraph 21.

Table 4 HE progression split into categories for the 2002-03 completing cohort

		Advanced	Foundation	Total
HE	First degree or above	240	315	560
	Foundation degree, HNC/D	110	100	205
	Diploma of HE	150	170	320
	HE credit	20	30	55
	WB HE	445	200	645
	Total in HE	965	820	1,785
	No HE	14,425	21,250	35,675
	Total	15,390	22,070	37,460
First degree or above:	Of those in HE	25%	39%	31%
	Of total	2%	1%	1%

30. Table 4 shows that 31 per cent of the apprentices who progressed to HE studied for a first degree or above, mostly for the first degree. Overall, 1 per cent of individuals who completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03 had started to study for a first degree or a postgraduate degree by 2006-07.

Year of progression to HE

31. Table 5 shows the year that those who completed in 2002-03 entered non-work-based higher education (note that those who started in 2002-03 finished their apprenticeship before they started in HE).

Table 5 Year of entry to non-work-based HE for 2002-03 completing cohort

Year of entry to HE	Advanced	Of total	Foundation	Of total	Overall	Of total
2002-03	90	18%	75	12%	165	14%
2004-05	160	31%	140	22%	300	26%
2005-06	115	22%	165	27%	285	25%
2006-07	150	29%	240	39%	390	34%
Total	520	100%	615	100%	1,140	100%

32. Table 5 shows that there was a fairly even split between the different years in terms of when the apprentices started in non-work-based HE. Fewer started in 2002-03, possibly because they had less time to enter after they finished their apprenticeship. There were around 400 apprentices who started an HE course in 2006-07. This suggests that if we extended the study beyond 2006-07 we would see that more of the apprentices entered HE.

33. Table 6 shows the same for work-based HE.

Table 6 Year of entry to work-based HE for 2002-03 completing cohort

Year of entry to HE	Advanced	Of total	Foundation	Of total	Overall	Of total
2002-03	405	91%	5	1%	405	63%
2003-04	30	7%	150	74%	180	28%
2004-05	5	1%	30	15%	35	6%
2005-06	5	1%	20	9%	20	3%
Total	445	100%	200	100%	645	100%

34. Table 6 shows that most advanced apprentices (91 per cent) who entered work-based HE entered in the following year, whereas for most foundation apprentices (74 per cent) there was a year gap, and very few entered in the year directly after they completed.

Progression to HE for different years

35. In this section we consider progression to HE for those who completed their apprenticeship in different years. Clearly, apprentices who completed in 2002-03 had more time to enter HE than those who completed in 2004-05, so in order to compare the different cohorts we look at the progression within one, and then two years.

36. Table 7 shows the number who entered HE within one year of completing their apprenticeship. Note that because we do not have the data for work-based higher education in 2006-07 we only show those who completed their apprenticeship by 2004-05.

Table 7 Number of completing apprentices who progressed to HE within one year of completing

	Year of completion	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
Advanced	2002-03	150	425	14,810	15,390	4%
	2003-04	160	615	13,120	13,900	6%
	2004-05	235	570	16,070	16,875	5%
Foundation	2002-03	130	85	21,850	22,070	1%
	2003-04	215	95	29,045	29,360	1%
	2004-05	370	185	43,630	44,185	1%

37. Table 7 shows that the number of apprentices who entered HE in the year after they completed increased each year. The proportion of apprentices who progressed within one varied over the period for advanced apprentices, with a maximum of 6 per cent in 2003-04. The proportion of foundation apprentices who progressed within one year remained at around 1 per cent for each completing cohort.

38. Table 8 shows the same as Table 7, but showing progression within two years of completing an apprenticeship.

Table 8 Number of completing apprentices who progressed to HE within two years of completing

	Year of completion	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
Advanced	2002-03	290	440	14,655	15,390	5%
	2003-04	290	625	12,985	13,900	7%
Foundation	2002-03	275	175	21,615	22,070	2%
	2003-04	460	255	28,645	29,360	2%

39. Table 8 shows that the proportion who entered HE within two years of completing increased over the two completing cohorts of advanced apprentices (from 5 to 7 per cent) and remained at around two per cent for foundation apprentices.

40. Comparing Table 8 to Table 7 shows that most of the advanced apprentices who progressed to work-based HE within two years progressed in the first year. For example, of the 440 advanced apprentices from 2002-03 who progressed to work-based HE within two years, 425 progressed in the first year and only 15 in the second year after they qualified.

41. In comparison, progression to non-work-based HE and foundation progression to work-based HE was more evenly split between the two years.

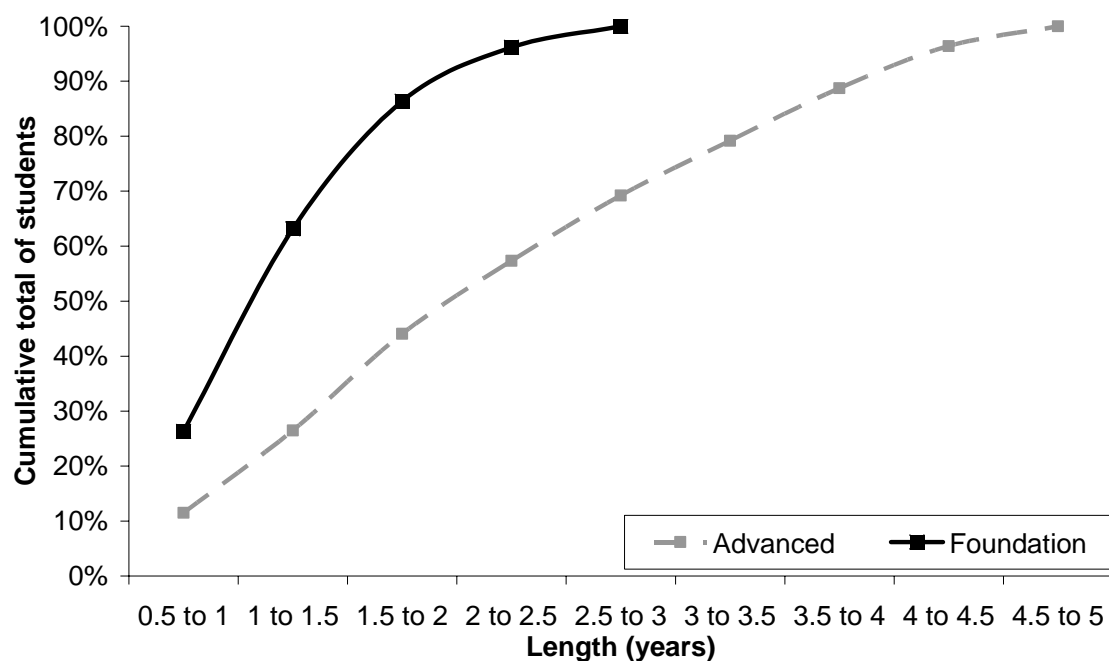
Apprenticeships considered by attributes

Length of apprenticeship

Profile

42. Figure 1 shows the length of the apprenticeship for those who completed their apprenticeship in 2002-03.

Figure 1 Length of apprenticeship for those who completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03



Note: Foundation apprentices are excluded if their apprenticeship lasts longer than three years, which is why the line does not continue beyond three years.

43. Figure 1 shows that the advanced apprenticeships who completed in 2002-03 took longer than those who did the foundation apprenticeship: 86 per cent of the foundation completers completed their degree within two years, compared to 44 per cent of the advanced apprenticeships.

Progression

44. Table 9 shows the number who completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03 who progressed to HE, split by apprenticeship length.

Table 9 Progression to HE for the 2002-03 cohort of completers, split by length of apprenticeship

Apprenticeship	Length (years)	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
Advanced	0.5 to 1	80	75	1,620	1,770	9%
	1 to 1.5	95	135	2,075	2,305	10%
	1.5 to 2	115	100	2,495	2,710	8%
	2 to 2.5	65	75	1,905	2,040	7%
	2.5 to 3	45	40	1,740	1,830	5%
	3 to 3.5	40	15	1,475	1,530	4%
	3.5 to 5	80	10	3,115	3,205	3%
Foundation	0.5 to 1	215	65	5,525	5,805	5%
	1 to 1.5	245	105	7,785	8,130	4%
	1.5 to 2	115	25	4,980	5,120	3%
	2 to 3	45	5	2,960	3,010	1%
Total		1,140	645	35,675	37,460	5%

45. Table 9 shows that there is substantial variation between the different apprenticeship lengths in the proportion of apprentices who progressed to HE. For example, of the advanced apprentices who completed in 2002-03 after studying for one to one-and-a-half years, 10 per cent progressed to HE, compared to just 3 per cent of those who completed in 2002-03 after studying for three-and-a-half to five years. The proportion of completers who progressed generally decreased the longer the apprenticeship was.

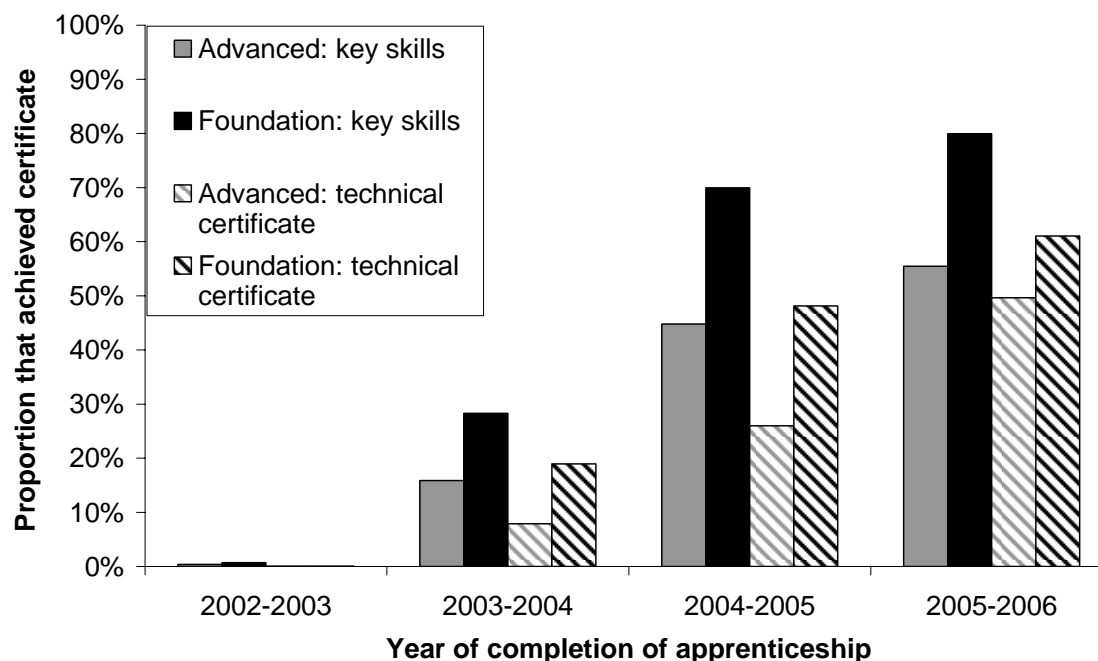
Apprenticeship components

46. As discussed in paragraphs 6-11, many apprenticeships have different components, such as an NVQ, a key skills award and a technical certificate. While all the apprentices whom we consider as completers achieved an NVQ, not all achieved the other components.

Profile

47. Figure 2 shows the proportion of completing apprentices from 2002-03 to 2005-06 who completed a key skills qualification or a technical certificate at some point during their apprenticeship. For example, in 2005-06, 80 per cent of those who completed the foundation apprenticeship had completed a key skills certificate during their apprenticeship.

Figure 2 Proportion of completing cohort of apprentices who achieved a key skills or technical certificate 2002-03 to 2005-06



48. Figure 2 shows that the proportion of completers who completed a key skills or technical certificate increased by a large amount from 2002-03 to 2005-06. Based on the administrative data, few studied for a key skills certificate in 2002-03, but by 2005-06 this increased to 80 per cent for foundation apprentices and 55 per cent for advanced apprentices.

49. Similarly, the proportion who studied for a technical certificate increased from near zero in 2002-03 to 51 per cent of advanced and 61 per cent of foundation completers in 2005-06.

Progression

50. We do not consider progression in this section because there are too few who completed in 2002-03 with a key skills or technical certificate to draw conclusions (as shown in Figure 2).

Industry sector of apprenticeship

51. In this part we look at the most frequent industry sectors in 2002-03 (those in which at least 500 apprentices completed). These are different for advanced and foundation apprentices and so these are discussed separately.

Profile

52. Table 10 shows the all the industry sectors with at least 500 apprentices who completed an advanced apprenticeship in 2002-03.

Table 10 Most frequent industry sectors for advanced apprentices

Sector: advanced	Apprentices	Of total
Engineering manufacture	2,175	14%
Motor industry	1,960	13%
Business administration	1,425	9%
Customer service	985	6%
Hairdressing	970	6%
Early years care and education	930	6%
National electrotechnical industry	870	6%
Travel services	770	5%
Hospitality	725	5%
Construction	670	4%
Health and social care	630	4%
Accountancy	600	4%
Others	2,680	17%
Total	15,390	100%

53. From Table 10 we can see that 83 per cent of the advanced apprentices who completed in 2002-03 were in one of the top 12 industry sectors, and 27 per cent were in one of the top two. The sector with the most advanced completers was engineering manufacture.

54. Table 11 shows the same as Table 10, but for foundation apprentices.

Table 11 Most frequent industry sectors for foundation apprentices

Sector: foundation	Apprentices	Of total
Business administration	4,205	19%
Hospitality	2,620	12%
Retailing	2,440	11%
Hairdressing	2,270	10%
Customer service	2,075	9%
Information technology	1,310	6%
Construction	1,120	5%
Engineering manufacture	805	4%
Early years care and education	715	3%
Health and social care	675	3%
Others	3,830	17%
Total	22,070	100%

55. Table 11 shows that 83 per cent of foundation apprentices were in the top 10 industry sectors, with 31 per cent in the top two. The sector with the most foundation completers was business administration.

Progression

56. Table 12 shows the number of advanced apprentices from each of the main industry sectors who progressed to HE by 2006-07.

Table 12 Progression to HE for the advanced apprentices who completed in 2002-03, split by industry sector of apprenticeship

Sector: advanced	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
Engineering manufacture	105	0	2,070	2,175	5%
Motor industry	20	0	1,945	1,960	1%
Business administration	70	35	1,320	1,425	7%
Customer service	35	0	950	985	4%
Hairdressing	5	0	960	970	1%
Early years care and education	50	5	880	930	5%
National electrotechnical industry	10	0	860	870	1%
Travel services	25	0	745	770	4%
Hospitality	10	5	710	725	2%
Construction	5	0	660	670	1%
Health and social care	80	10	540	630	14%
Accountancy	35	365	200	600	67%
Others	70	25	2,585	2,680	4%
Total	520	445	14,425	15,390	6%

57. Table 12 shows significant variation in progression rates between the sectors. Of those who completed an advanced accountancy apprenticeship, 67 per cent progressed to higher education, mainly work-based. These advanced accountancy completers made up the majority of apprentices who progressed to work-based HE. This high progression rate is in part due to structured Level 3 to Level 4 progression routes for accounting awarded by the Association of Accounting Technicians³.

58. In comparison, 1 per cent of those who completed an advanced apprenticeship in the motor industry in 2002-03 had entered higher education by 2006-07.

59. Table 13 shows the same as Table 12, but for foundation apprentices.

³ See www.aat.org.uk for details.

Table 13 Progression to HE for foundation apprentices who completed in 2002-03, split by industry sector of HE apprenticeship

Sector: Foundation	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
Business administration	170	30	4,005	4,205	5%
Hospitality	75	0	2,545	2,620	3%
Retailing	55	0	2,385	2,440	2%
Hairdressing	15	0	2,260	2,270	1%
Customer service	70	0	2,005	2,075	3%
Information technology	20	5	1,285	1,310	2%
Construction	10	0	1,115	1,120	1%
Engineering manufacture	5	0	800	805	1%
Early years care and education	40	0	675	715	6%
Health and social care	55	0	615	675	8%
Others	105	160	3,565	3,830	7%
Total	615	200	21,250	22,070	4%

60. Table 13 shows that there is also significant variation in progression rates between the industry sectors for foundation apprentices. Of those who completed a foundation apprenticeship in health and social care, 8 per cent progressed to HE, compared to 1 per cent of those who completed a foundation apprenticeship in hairdressing.

Region of local training provider

Profile

61. In this section we consider the region of the further education college or work-based learning institution where the apprentice is taught. If an institution had teaching locations in more than one region, we took the region where the most apprentices completed in 2002-03.

62. Table 14 shows the number who completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03 in each region.

Table 14 Number of 2002-03 completers by region of local training provider

Region	Advanced	Of total	Foundation	Of total	Total	Of total
South East	990	6%	1,565	7%	2,555	7%
South West	1,605	10%	2,050	9%	3,655	10%
London	575	4%	765	3%	1,345	4%
East of England	1,110	7%	2,040	9%	3,150	8%
East Midlands	1,090	7%	1,615	7%	2,700	7%
West Midlands	1,560	10%	2,335	11%	3,895	10%
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,125	7%	2,265	10%	3,390	9%
North East	840	5%	1,165	5%	2,005	5%
North West	1,925	13%	2,660	12%	4,585	12%
Unknown	4,565	30%	5,605	25%	10,175	27%
Total	15,390	100%	22,070	100%	37,460	100%

63. Table 14 shows that 12 per cent of all the apprentices who completed in 2002-03 studied in the North West, which meant it was the region with the most completers. The region within England with the fewest completers was London, with 4 per cent of the total.

Progression

64. Table 15 shows the number of advanced apprentices who progressed to HE after they completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03, by region of local training provider.

Table 15 Number of 2002-03 advanced completers who progressed to HE by region of local training provider

Region	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
South East	35	10	950	990	4%
South West	60	55	1,495	1,605	7%
London	25	25	530	575	8%
East of England	20	35	1,055	1,110	5%
East Midlands	45	55	985	1,090	9%
West Midlands	60	35	1,465	1,560	6%
Yorkshire and the Humber	30	55	1,040	1,125	8%
North East	40	20	780	840	7%
North West	80	75	1,770	1,925	8%
Unknown	125	85	4,360	4,565	5%
Total	520	445	14,425	15,390	6%

65. Table 15 shows that there were some differences in the progression rates for advanced apprenticeships between different regions. The East Midlands was the region from which the greatest proportion of advanced completers progressed to HE, with 9 per cent. The lowest rate of progression within England came from institutions in the South East, with 4 per cent.

66. The table also shows that advanced apprentices who progressed to work-based HE were not limited to a particular region, but spread fairly evenly across the country.

67. Table 16 shows the same as Table 15, but for foundation apprentices.

Table 16 Number of 2002-03 foundation completers who progressed to HE by region of local training provider

Region	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
South East	35	5	1,525	1,565	3%
South West	45	20	1,990	2,050	3%
London	15	5	745	765	3%
East of England	55	5	1,980	2,040	3%
East Midlands	50	45	1,520	1,615	6%
West Midlands	95	15	2,225	2,335	5%
Yorkshire and the Humber	55	20	2,190	2,265	3%
North East	35	15	1,115	1,165	4%
North West	80	30	2,550	2,660	4%
Unknown	150	50	5,385	5,605	4%
Total	615	200	21,250	22,070	4%

68. Table 16 shows that there is less of a difference to the progression rates for foundation apprentices. The West Midlands was the English region from which the greatest proportion of foundation completers progressed to HE, with 6 per cent. The lowest rate of progression was from the South East, with 3 per cent.

Apprenticeships considered by an individual's attributes

Gender

Profile

69. Table 17 shows the gender of the completing cohort for 2002-03.

Table 17 Gender of completing apprentices in 2002-03

Gender	Advanced	Foundation	Total
Female	6,575	12,870	19,445
Male	8,815	9,195	18,015
Total	15,390	22,070	37,460
Female	43%	58%	52%

70. Table 17 shows that most apprentices who completed an advanced apprenticeship were male, whereas most of those who completed a foundation apprenticeship were female. Overall, there were slightly more females who completed in 2002-03 than males.

71. There was a very strong link between certain industry sectors and gender. For example, considering the main sectors for completing advanced apprentices in 2002-03 (see Table 10), less than 2 per cent of those who studied in the motor or electrotechnical industries, or in construction, were female. In contrast to this, at least 97 per cent of those who completed an apprenticeship in hairdressing or early years care and education were female. Other sectors, such as hospitality (52 per cent female) and accountancy (63 per cent female) had a more even split.

Progression

72. Table 18 shows the number of each gender who completed their apprenticeship in 2002-03 that progressed to HE.

Table 18 Progression to HE for 2002-03 completing cohort, split by gender

Progression	Female		Male	
	Advanced	Foundation	Advanced	Foundation
Non-WBL HE	275	415	245	200
WBL HE	285	140	165	65
No HE	6,015	12,320	8,410	8,930
Total	6,575	12,870	8,815	9,195
Into HE	9%	4%	5%	3%

73. Table 18 shows that a greater proportion of females progressed to HE after they completed their apprenticeship than males. The difference is more significant for those who completed an advanced apprenticeship, where 9 per cent of females entered HE by 2006-07 but only 5 per cent of males. However, some of this difference could be related to the difference in sector splits between the genders (see paragraph 71).

Age group

Profile

74. Table 19 shows the age group of the completing cohort for 2002-03.

Table 19 Age group of completing apprentices 2002-03

Age group	Advanced	Of total	Foundation	Of total	Total	Of total
Under 18	345	2%	6,800	31%	7,145	19%
18-19	5,295	34%	8,685	39%	13,980	37%
20-21	6,190	40%	3,905	18%	10,095	27%
22 and over ⁴	3,560	23%	2,680	12%	6,235	17%
Total	15,390	100%	22,070	100%	37,460	100%

75. Table 19 shows that most individuals who completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03 were between 18 and 21: 74 per cent for advanced; and 57 per cent for foundation apprentices. Thirty-one per cent of foundation apprentices were under 18 when they completed, whereas few advanced apprentices were. More advanced apprentices were over 21 when they finished.

76. One reason for the difference is that advanced apprenticeships generally take longer to complete (see Figure 1), and another is that advanced apprenticeships are at a higher level, and so individuals need an increased level of education to start it.

77. Fewer than 50 apprentices completed when they were over 24, and fewer than 30 completed when they were under 16.

Progression

78. Table 20 shows the progression rates into HE for the different age groups for the 2002-03 completing cohort.

⁴ Excludes some apprentices who were 25 and over due to LSC guidance given to work-based providers. See paragraph 16 for further details.

Table 20 Progression to HE for the 2002-03 completing cohort, split by age of apprentice

Apprenticeship	Age group	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
Advanced	Under 18	15	15	320	345	8%
	18-19	185	175	4,935	5,295	7%
	20-21	190	175	5,825	6,190	6%
	22 and over	135	85	3,340	3,560	6%
Foundation	Under 18	160	50	6,585	6,800	3%
	18-19	285	100	8,295	8,685	4%
	20-21	110	35	3,755	3,905	4%
	22 and over	55	15	2,610	2,680	3%
Total		1,140	645	35,675	37,460	5%

79. Table 20 shows that there was no clear relationship between the proportion of apprentices who progressed to HE and their age. For example, considering foundation apprentices, those aged 18-19 when they completed were more likely to progress than apprentices aged under 18, but were also more likely to progress than those aged over 20.

Ethnicity

Profile

80. Table 21 shows the number who completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03 by ethnicity. It shows that the majority who completed an apprenticeship in 2002-03 were White.

Table 21 Ethnicity of 2002-03 completing cohort

Ethnicity	Advanced	Of known	Foundation	Of known	Total	Of known
White	14,860	98%	20,960	97%	35,820	97%
Asian or Asian British	175	1%	390	2%	565	2%
Black or Black British	120	1%	230	1%	355	1%
Chinese	10	0%	20	0%	30	0%
Mixed and any other	15	0%	50	0%	65	0%
Total known	15,180	100%	21,655	100%	36,835	100%
Not known/not given	210		410		620	
Total	15,390		22,070		37,460	

81. Table 21 shows that a slightly greater proportion of those who completed a foundation apprenticeship were non-White than those who completed the advanced apprenticeship, 3 per cent compared to 2 per cent.

82. Of those apprentices who were non-White, 'Asian or Asian British' formed the largest group.

Progression

83. Table 22 shows the proportion of the 2002-03 completing cohort who progressed to HE by ethnicity. Due to the small numbers of non-White individuals, we look at all the non-White apprentices together, not splitting further by ethnic group or level of apprenticeship.

Table 22 Progression to HE for 2002-03 completing cohort, split by ethnicity of apprentice

Ethnic	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
White	1,060	630	34,130	35,820	5%
Non-White	55	10	950	1,015	7%
Not known/not given	20	5	595	620	4%
Total	1,140	645	35,675	37,460	5%

84. Table 22 shows that a greater proportion of non-White apprentices than White entered HE: 7 per cent of non-White apprentices progressed to HE, compared to 5 per cent of White apprentices, and 4 per cent of those with unknown ethnicity.

Disability

Profile

85. Table 23 shows the changes to the proportion of individuals who completed an apprenticeship with a disability or a learning difficulty from 2002-03 to 2005-06.

Table 23 Disability status of completing apprentices from 2002-03 to 2005-06

Learning difficulty or disability	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Learning difficulty or disability	275	1,710	4,445	8,065
No disability	35,645	40,035	55,555	80,840
Unknown	1,535	1,515	1,060	1,225
Total	37,460	43,255	61,060	90,130
Of apprentices with known disability	1%	4%	7%	9%

86. Table 23 shows there has been a large rise in the proportion of completing apprentices with a recorded disability or learning difficulty. This is likely to be a combination of improving data quality and an underlying change in the levels of disability within the sector.

Progression

87. Table 24 shows the proportion of the 2002-03 completing cohort who progressed to HE, by disability or learning difficulty.

Table 24 Progression to HE for 2002-03 completing cohort, split by disability status

Learning difficulty or disability	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
Learning difficulty or disability	5	15	255	275	9%
No disability	1,075	600	33,970	35,645	5%
Unknown	55	30	1,450	1,535	6%
Total	1,140	645	35,675	37,460	5%

88. Table 24 shows that a greater proportion of the apprentices with a disability progressed to HE than those without but this was based on a relatively small number. Most of the progression for apprentices with a disability was to work-based HE.

Background of individual

89. In this section we consider Participation Of Local Areas (POLAR⁵), a measure of the level of young participation in HE for the areas in which the apprentices live. 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.

90. The POLAR classification is formed by ranking 2001 Census Area Statistics wards by their young participation rates for the combined 2000 to 2004 cohorts. This gives five quintiles of areas ordered from '1' (those wards with the lowest participation) to '5' (those wards with the highest participation), each representing 20 per cent of the UK young cohort.

91. We use the apprentices' home postcodes to put them into one of the five POLAR quintiles.

Profile

92. Table 25 shows the number of completing apprentices from 2002-03 in each of the five POLAR quintiles.

⁵ POLAR in this report refers to the updated measure POLAR2. For more information see www.hefce.ac.uk under Widening participation/POLAR and participation rates/POLAR2.

Table 25 Local area participation quintile for 2002-03 completing apprentices

POLAR quintile	Advanced	Of total	Foundation	Of total	Total	Of total
1 (Lowest part.)	3,390	22%	5,450	25%	8,840	24%
2	3,390	22%	4,785	22%	8,175	22%
3	3,255	21%	4,385	20%	7,640	20%
4	3,060	20%	3,655	17%	6,715	18%
5 (Highest part.)	2,080	14%	3,520	16%	5,595	15%
Unknown	215	1%	275	1%	490	1%
Total	15,390	100%	22,070	100%	37,460	100%

93. Table 25 shows that the lower the local area participation quintile, the greater the proportion of the cohort of completed apprentices they made up. So POLAR quintile 1, the quintile with the lowest participation, made up 24 per cent of the population of completed apprentices, whereas POLAR quintile 5 only made up 15 per cent of the population of apprentices.

Progression

94. Table 26 shows the proportion of 2002-03 completers who progressed to HE by local area participation.

Table 26 Progression to HE for 2002-03 completing apprentices by local area participation

Apprenticeship	POLAR	Non-WB HE	WB HE	No HE	Total	Into HE
Advanced	1 (Low)	85	95	3,210	3,390	5%
	2	105	85	3,205	3,390	6%
	3	125	85	3,045	3,255	6%
	4	115	105	2,835	3,060	7%
	5 (High)	90	75	1,915	2,080	8%
	Unknown	0	0	215	215	0%
Foundation	1 (Low)	125	50	5,275	5,450	3%
	2	125	45	4,610	4,785	4%
	3	150	45	4,190	4,385	4%
	4	125	35	3,495	3,655	4%
	5 (High)	90	20	3,405	3,520	3%
	Unknown	0	0	275	275	1%
Total		1,140	645	35,675	37,460	5%

95. Table 26 shows that, for advanced apprentices, the greater the local area participation the greater the proportion of completing apprentices who progressed to HE. The proportion who progressed to HE from POLAR quintile 5 was three percentage points greater than the proportion who progressed from POLAR quintile 1.

96. However, the pattern is different for foundation apprentices. POLAR quintile 3 had the greatest proportion of apprentices who progressed to HE, and the proportion of apprentices from POLAR quintiles 1 and 5 who progressed was the same.

97. Considering this in a different way, 20 per cent of the completed apprentices who progressed to HE were from POLAR quintile 1, and 16 per cent were from quintile 5. In comparison, of all the full-time first degree entrants to HE in 2006-07, just 9 per cent were from POLAR quintile 1⁶. This shows that the profile of apprentices who progressed to HE was more similar to the profile of the general young population than that of full-time first degree entrants.

Additional work-based learning below HE level

98. In this final section we consider whether individuals who complete a foundation apprenticeship go on to do more advanced work-based learning at FE level; for example an advanced apprenticeship. We look to see whether apprentices who completed in 2002-03 started on another work-based course by 2005-06.

99. Table 27 shows the number of completed foundation apprentices who later studied more advanced work-based FE or HE.

Table 27 Number from the 2002-03 completing cohort of foundation apprentices who progressed to more advanced work-based learning or HE

Progression	Apprentices	Of total
Higher Apprenticeship	5,410	25%
Higher work-based NVQ	290	1%
Total work-based progression below HE level	5,700	26%
HE progression	820	4%
No progression	15,550	70%
Total	22,070	100%

⁶ See Table T1a of www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1174/141

100. Table 27 shows that 25 per cent of those who completed a foundation apprenticeship later did an advanced apprenticeship, and another 1 per cent studied for a work-based NVQ outside of an apprenticeship framework.

101. Overall, 30 per cent of those who completed a foundation apprenticeship in 2002-03 progressed to more advanced study, HE or FE, by 2006-07. Of this, 26 per cent was more advanced FE, 4 per cent was HE.

List of abbreviations

FE	Further education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HNC/D	Higher National Certificate/Diploma
ILR	Individualised learner record
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
WB	Work-based
WBL	Work-based learning