



Applying for Higher Education – Career Choices and Plans

WORK IN PROGRESS

Preliminary Findings from the Wave 1 investigation of the
'class of 2006' applicants for Higher Education who
applied through the Universities and Colleges Admissions
Service to study on full-time courses

This research was undertaken on behalf of the Higher Education Career
Services Unit (HECSU) in conjunction with the Universities and Colleges
Admissions Service (UCAS)

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Introduction

In 2005, the Higher Education Careers Service Unit (HECSU) launched an ambitious programme of research, designed to explore the process of entry into and through higher education in more detail than had hitherto been attempted. This programme, *Career-making*, has at its core a major longitudinal study, Futuretrack, of all applicants to full-time UK higher education courses who applied through the Universities and Colleges Admissions service (UCAS) in 2006. This report contains outline details and preliminary findings from the first stage of this, the Futuretrack census study of 2006 applicants, which was conducted in summer 2006 at the point where the majority of respondents aspired to embark on a full-time higher education undergraduate or sub-degree course in autumn 2006.

In summer 2006, after an extensive series of exploratory research and consultation that included a pilot survey of 2005 applicants¹ and questionnaire-testing workshops with groups of students in a wide range of schools and colleges around Britain, all 2006 UCAS applicants were invited to participate in the study. The invitation email contained a link to an online questionnaire and, by agreeing to participate, respondents gave permission for basic data from their UCAS application to be merged with their questionnaire response data.

When the survey was closed, there were 121,429 usable responses. As we had anticipated, those applicants who had not proceeded into higher education were under-represented in the response and because we were concerned to amplify response for this group, non-respondents who, according to UCAS data, had not accepted places, were invited to complete a short online questionnaire in Winter 2006-7. This generated a further 7,591 responses, taking the Futuretrack Wave 1 sample to 129,020, of whom 23,000 had not proceeded directly to full-time HE study. A comparison of the profile of respondents and the population is provided in Annex 1.

There are two respects in which the achieved sample varied significantly from the population from which it was drawn: a higher proportion of women than men responded (as is characteristic of survey response patterns generally), and a higher proportion of those with high university entry qualifications responded than those at the less highly-qualified end of the spectrum. The data have been weighted to take account of these biases in the analysis. Full methodological details will be provided in the full Wave 1 report, which will be published towards the end of this year.

Futuretrack is the most ambitious investigation of the relationship between higher education and career development ever undertaken in the UK, although it is very much in line with research initiatives in Europe and more widely to assess the extent to which labour market trends reflect and require the development of a knowledge-based economy. The longitudinal findings will throw light on the variables associated with different educational and subsequent career routes, and the advantages and obstacles encountered in different contexts and by different groups. They will facilitate exploration of the interaction of the variables that impact on the experience of higher education and its outcomes. For the first time, they will provide the opportunity for comparison between similarly-qualified candidates who did, or did not, take gap years between school and university or college and who chose, or rejected, the opportunity to study full-time in higher education. They also allow for more comprehensive comparison between 'traditional'² higher education applicants and those from under-represented groups or making the transition from secondary to tertiary education as mature students.

The UCAS merged data necessary for full analysis were received by the research team in April 2007 and analyses are ongoing. Here, we provide a broad outline of the potential of the Futuretrack investigation to draw a new map of the routes into UK higher education, through

¹ This Futuretrack2005 survey – a sample survey of 2005 UCAS applicants - was designed as a longitudinal pilot for the 2006 census study and a study, in itself, of the last cohort to enter higher education prior to the introduction of variable fees. The Futuretrack2005 Wave 1 report can be accessed on www.hecsu.ac.uk

² 'Traditional HE applicants' is an imprecise but useful (and commonly-used) shorthand term to refer to secondary school students from communities where the transition from school to university or college is the norm rather than the exception.

the diverse terrain that it encompasses and out, into the increasingly complex graduate labour market. We also present the first findings from the information provided by 2006 HE applicants as they went through the application process, to illustrate the scope of analyses that the study is generating. Most of the analysis that follows is of applicants who obtained and accepted HE places, but we also present some of the information provided by non-participants who completed the short non-participant questionnaire in Winter 2006/07.

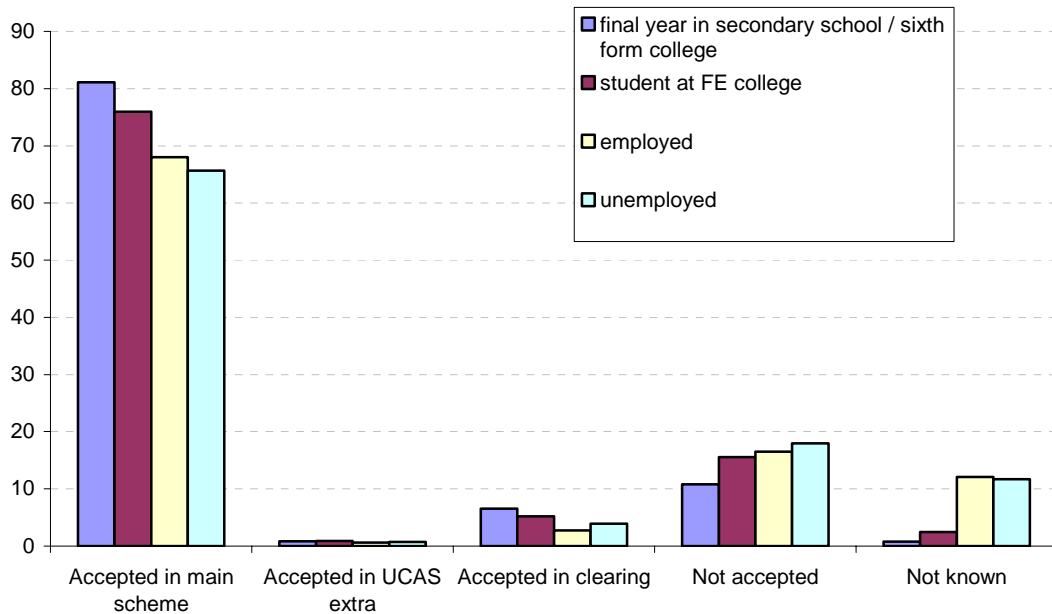
1. The Futuretrack respondents: where did they come from and what did they plan to do next?

Success and failure in obtaining HE places

All applicants for full-time undergraduate and sub-degree-level courses³ were invited to participate in the study. Four per cent of respondents had applied for Foundation degree programmes, just under 3 per cent for an HND or DipHE course, 0.9 per cent to study full-time for an additional year to transfer for HND to undergraduate status, 61 per cent to study on a three-year undergraduate programme, 24 per cent on four year or sandwich degree courses and 6 per cent on an undergraduate programme lasting more than four years. The residual 'other' responses almost all require reclassification within the above categories.

Some applicants found the process more straightforward than others, and we will be able to assess the impact of transition on HE integration and subsequent educational careers. Of Futuretrack participants who completed the full survey, 91 per cent had expected to embark on a full-time higher education course in Autumn 2006, but in the event, 89 per cent did. Over three quarters were accepted under the main scheme, but we know that most of the others experienced greater obstacles in obtaining places – and the data show that 'traditional' applicants were more likely to succeed than others. Those applying as secondary school students, those under 21, white rather than ethnic minority and UK rather than EU or other overseas students had a greater propensity to have received offers and accepted places under the main UCAS scheme, were less likely to enter through 'clearing', and less likely to end up without a place. Figures 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 illustrate these differences in origins and outcomes.

Figure 1.1: Differences in patterns of integration to HE by previous situation

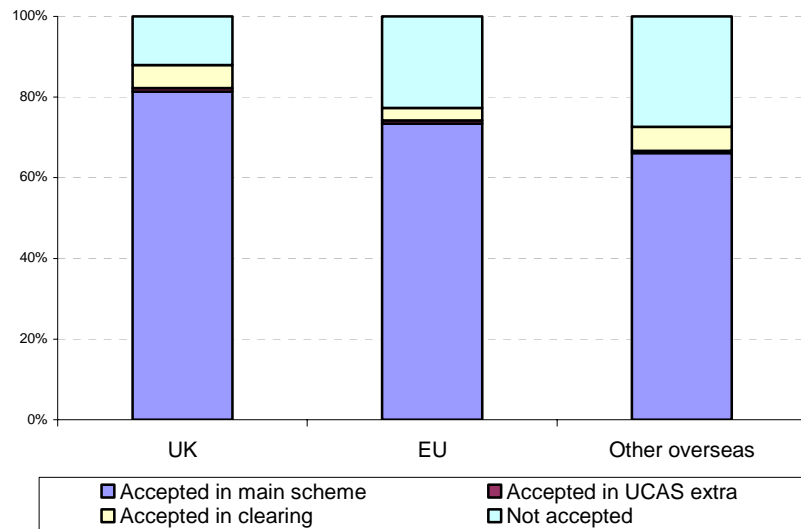


Source: Futuretrack 200: all respondents to full survey, weighted.

As far as UK applicants were concerned, those with a higher propensity to have accepted places were male, coming from a professional or managerial background, 18 or under, applying from a sixth form college that was part of a secondary school. In terms of ethnicity, white and Asian applicants were more likely than black candidates to have accepted places.

³ All UCAS applicants who had provided email addresses in their UCAS application were emailed with an invitation to participate and link to the online questionnaire. In addition, a general invitation and information were posted to all applicants and reminders in both hard copy and by email were issued.

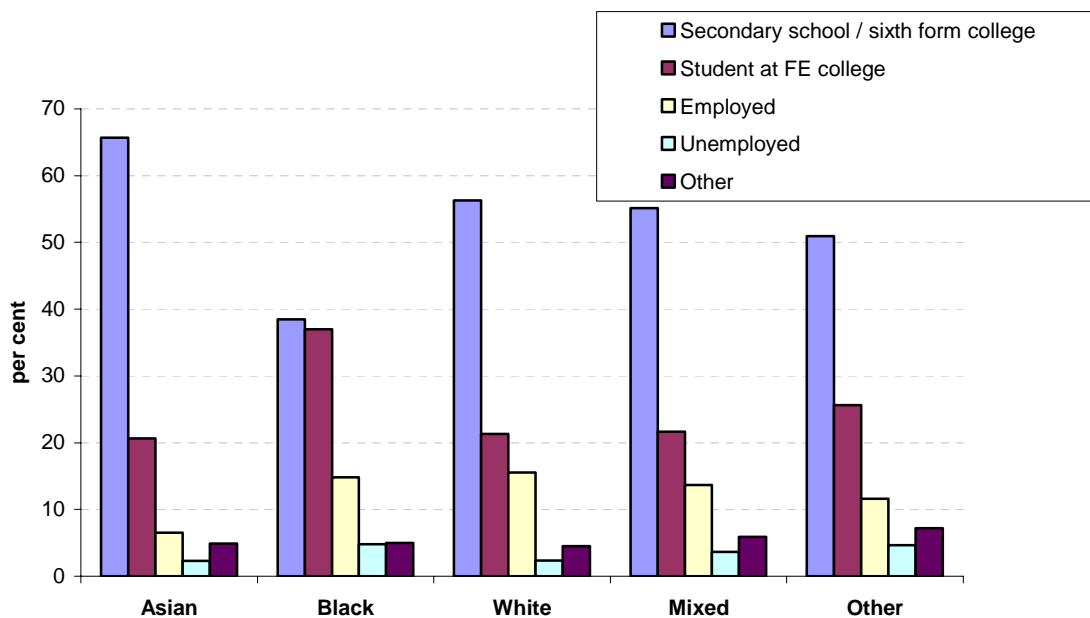
Figure 1.2 Differences in HE acceptance patterns, comparing UK, EU and other overseas students



Source: Futuretrack 2006: all respondents to full survey, weighted.

The discussion in Section 10, based on data collected in the short non-participant survey indicates that significant proportions of EU and other overseas students proceeded to university places in other countries, which might have been either because they chose not to accept an offered UK place or failed to obtain one. The Stage 2 investigation will provide more information about this and the reasons for decisions made.

Figure 1.3: Situation at time of HE application of accepted place applicants

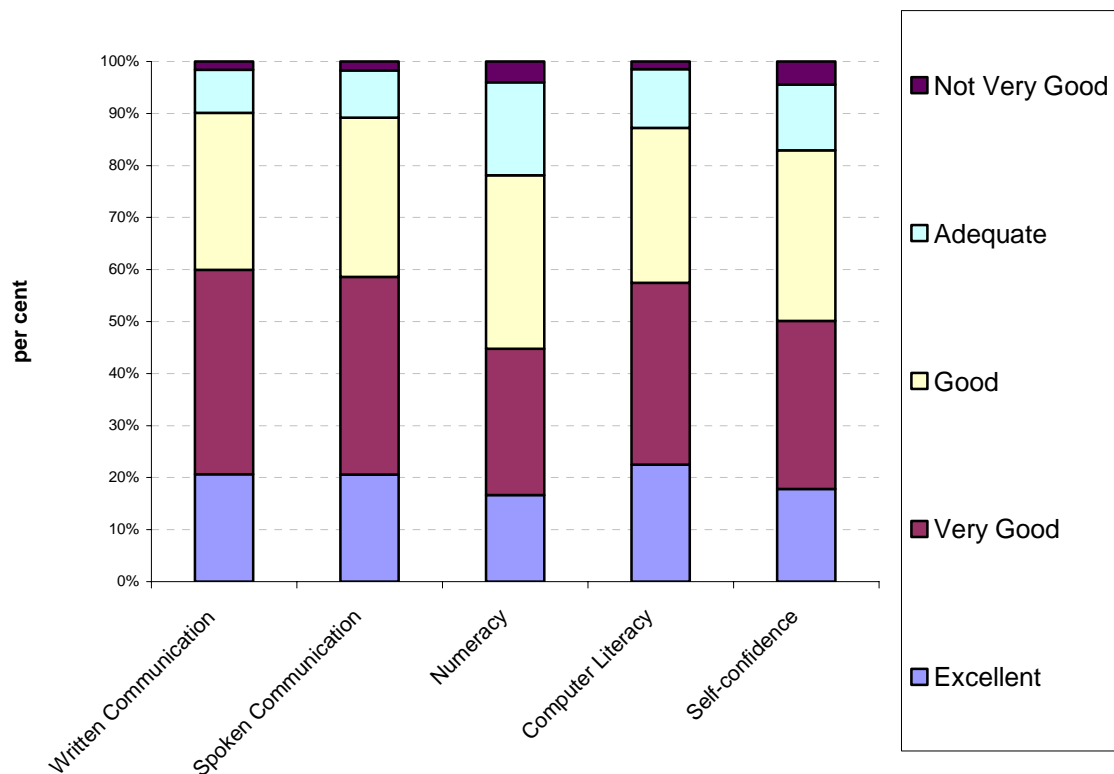


Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted.

Figure 1.3 shows that Asian students were the most likely to have applied straight from secondary school, with black students least likely to have done so and considerably more likely than any other group to have applied as FE students (37 per cent compared with 21 per cent of all the other main sub-groups).

In addition to questions about their reasons for applying for HE places and the courses they hoped to study on, we asked applicants about their wider attitudes about higher education, and at each stage of the investigation we will ask about their career plans and longer-term aspirations and their evaluations of how their career plans may be changing. We hope to obtain some insight into these more subjective aspects of career development that are less easy to research – and related to these, self-confidence and self-evaluation of skills and personal development. As a first stage, we asked respondents to rate themselves on self-confidence and the core skills of written and spoken communication, numeracy and computing skills. As the programme of research proceeds, these will be related to career decision-making and options perceived and followed, and we will ask the same questions again at a later stage of the longitudinal study to assess the subjectively-perceived impact of HE participation in different programmes of study. Along with the follow-up interviews that will be carried out at each stage, these will help to illuminate and extent the survey analyses.

Figure 1.4: Self-rating on self-confidence and core skills



Source: Futuretrack 2006, all respondents to full survey

For the sections that follow, we focus on accepted applicants who had completed the full survey. Some of these may have accepted deferred places prior to taking a gap year, but the majority are currently first year students.

2. Mapping undergraduate education and the graduate labour market

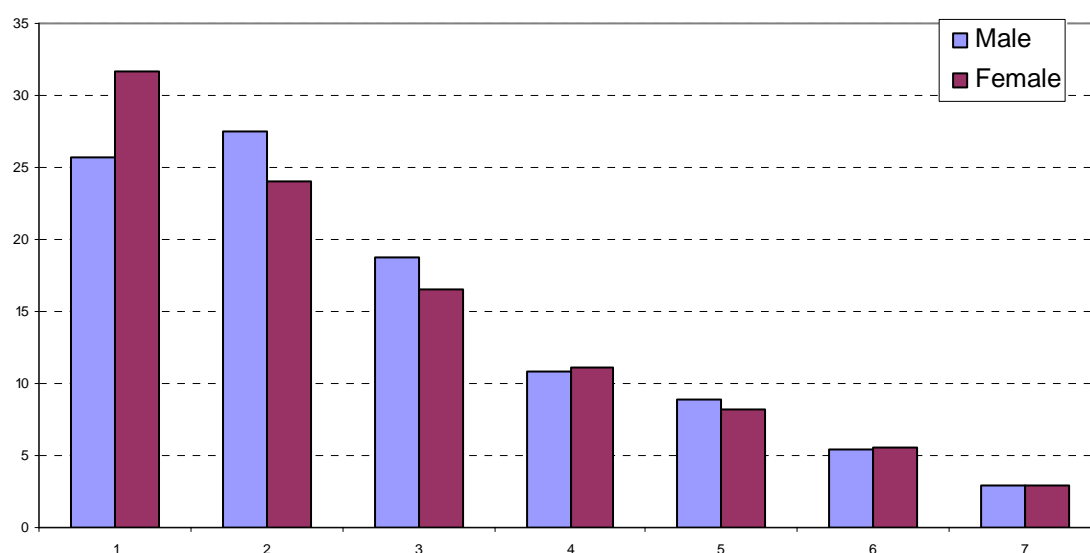
Making sense of the diversity of courses

Relatively recent studies of higher education decision-making (Connor *et al.* 1998) and higher education outcomes (Purcell *et al.* 2005) have drawn attention to the diversity of the higher education undergraduate population and the importance of social and demographic characteristics for choices made options and career trajectories. There has been little investigation until recently (Bekharadnia *et al.* 2006) of the range and complexity of what undergraduate study involves and the relationship between this complexity and the graduate labour market – either in terms of the students who study in UK higher education institutions (HEIs), the skills and knowledge that are inculcated in the course of the higher education experience or the opportunities to which HE qualifications provide access. Much that is written about the graduate labour market both in the popular press and in academic and policy discourse implicitly posits a single and theoretically-meritocratic contest where, on the supply side, graduates compete for the best jobs (and often end up ‘under-employed’) and on the demand side, employers compete for ‘talent’ (and complain about both over-supply and shortages of particular skills). The reality, however, is a complex interlocking series of parallel specialist and generalist, local/national/global labour markets, where graduates with different educational histories and achievements have access to some opportunities but not to others. Graduate employers range from seekers of highly-specialist graduate skills to those who simply seek flexible, adaptable problem-solvers who can communicate effectively. They are not much concerned about the subject area in which qualifications have been achieved (Harvey *et al.* 1997).

In the same way, aspiring students ranged from those who had clear ambitions and well-reasoned career plans to those who were drifting into higher education without having given much thought to where it might lead and or what they would do subsequently .

Figure 2.1 provides the overall picture, by gender, of respondents’ assessment of where they would put themselves, on a scale of 1-7 where 1 means ‘I have a clear idea about the occupation I hope to enter and the qualifications required for it’ and 7 means ‘I have no idea what I will do when I complete my course’.

Figure 2.1: Clarity of ideas about career prior to course*

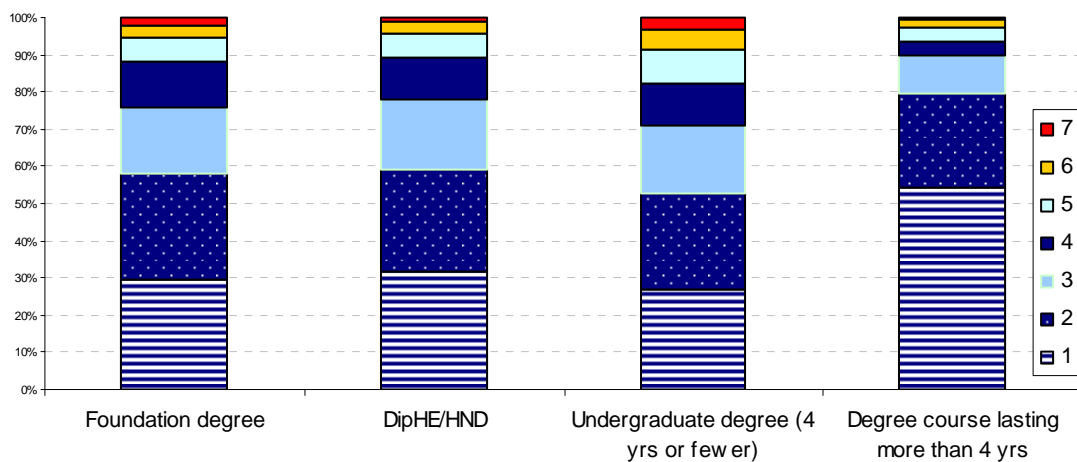


*Where 1 means 'I have a clear idea about occupation and qualifications required' and 7 means 'I have no idea'

Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

This distribution of responses illustrates a stronger bias towards the 'instrumental' rather than the 'drifter' end of the scale than reported by previous generations of students, and may well reflect the increased awareness of higher education and the labour force as markets within which participants compete – and where education is seen as an investment by students and their families who have increasingly been required to contribute to its cost. It is perhaps not surprising that there is an association between the type of course applied for and the degree to which applicants had clear vocational perspectives – with just under 80 per cent of those embarking on courses lasting more than four years scoring themselves as 1 or 2, those doing Foundation degrees or HNDs next most likely to do so, with just under 60 per cent respectively. Just over half of those doing 3 or 4 year undergraduate degrees were similarly focused and they were more likely than others to be at the 'no idea' end of the spectrum. Figure 2.2 shows this, but perhaps one of the most interesting findings on this variable is the extent to which age is significant. Figure 2.2 shows a clear relationship between age and likelihood of embarking on HE with a clear sense of where it is designed to lead to, shown in Figure 2.3.

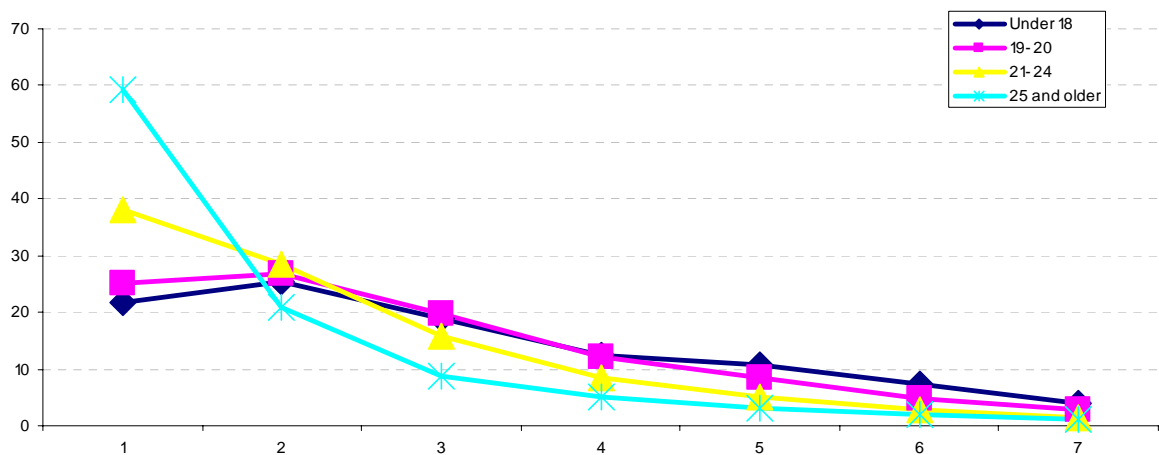
Figure 2.2: Clarity of ideas about career prior to course* by type of course



* Where 1 means 'I have a clear idea about occupations and qualifications required' and 7 means 'I have no idea'

Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

Figure 2.3: Clarity of ideas about career prior to course* by age-group

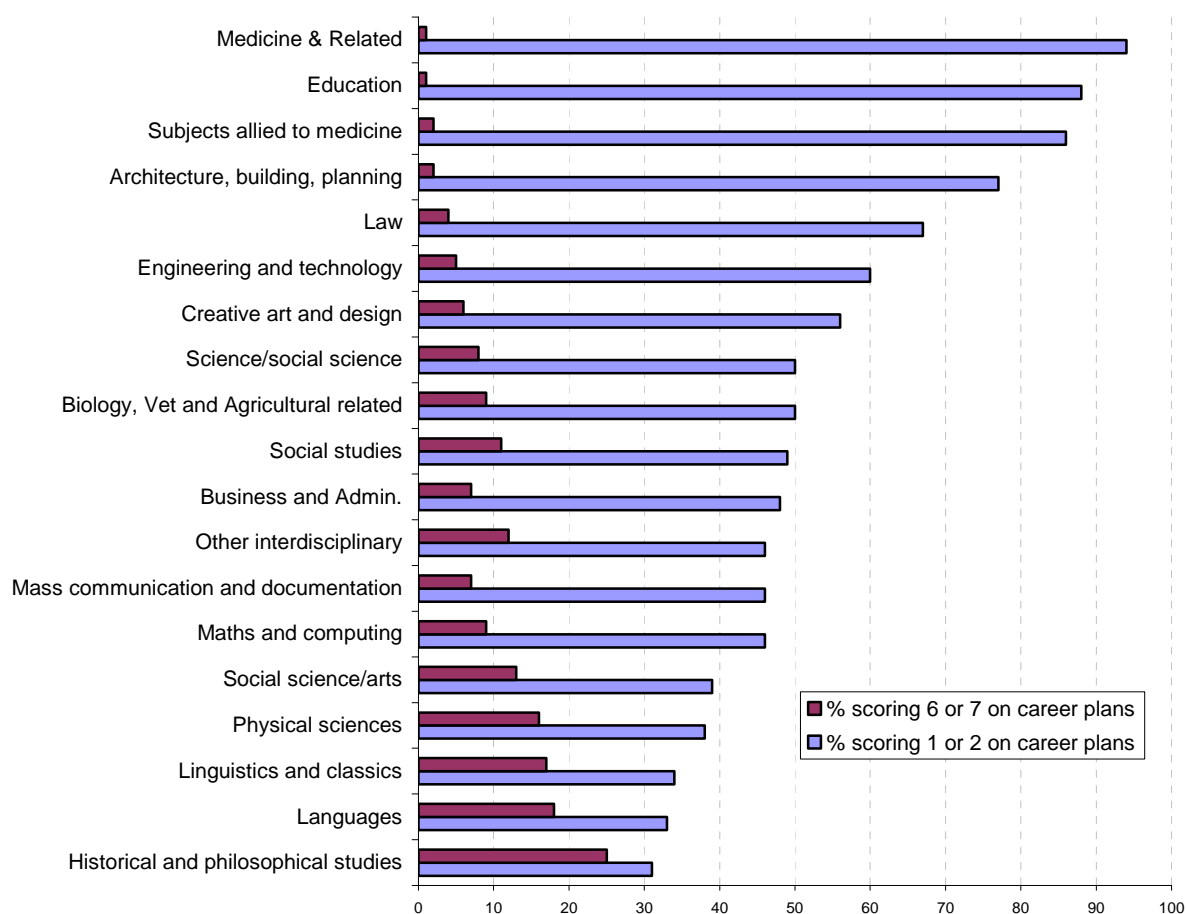


*Where 1 means 'I have a clear idea about occupation and qualifications required' and 7 means 'I have no idea'

Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

There has been considerable debate over the years about the relative values of vocational and more general academic courses. In the Leitch Report last year (HM Treasury 2006) it was argued that the needs of the economy would be better met by increased participation in vocational higher education programmes, with greater involvement of employers in higher-education planning from a national level to individual course-content level. The existing UK system is predominantly based on student demand, which has resulted in both vocational and more general higher education expansion. 'Vocational' is a broad category, but if we examine the extent to which 2006 UCAS applicants chose their course believing that they would lead directly to particular occupations, it is possible to classify courses into different broad categories – and this is something that we will be seeking to do as we collect successive waves of information from the student population. In Figure 2.4, below, we do this according to the standard 19 broad categories used by UCAS and HESA to allocate courses to broad discipline/subject groups, but given the scale of this investigation, we are also able to consider responses at a considerably disaggregated level, since we can identify 183 categories of course. These range from 'Clinical medicine and dentistry' and 'Metallurgy', where 100 per cent of respondents scored themselves at the 'career-planner' end of a 7-point scale where 1 = 'I have a clear idea of the occupation I eventually want to enter and the qualifications required to do so' and 7 = 'I have no idea what I will do after I complete the course I have applied for' to 'American Studies', where only 19 per cent did, and 'Combinations within non-European languages and related', where only 8 per cent did. In the meantime, Figure 2.4 provides a preliminary picture, by broad subject group, of where students did and did not have clear career plans.

Figure 2.4: Broad subject by extent to which applicants had clear occupationally-focused career plans



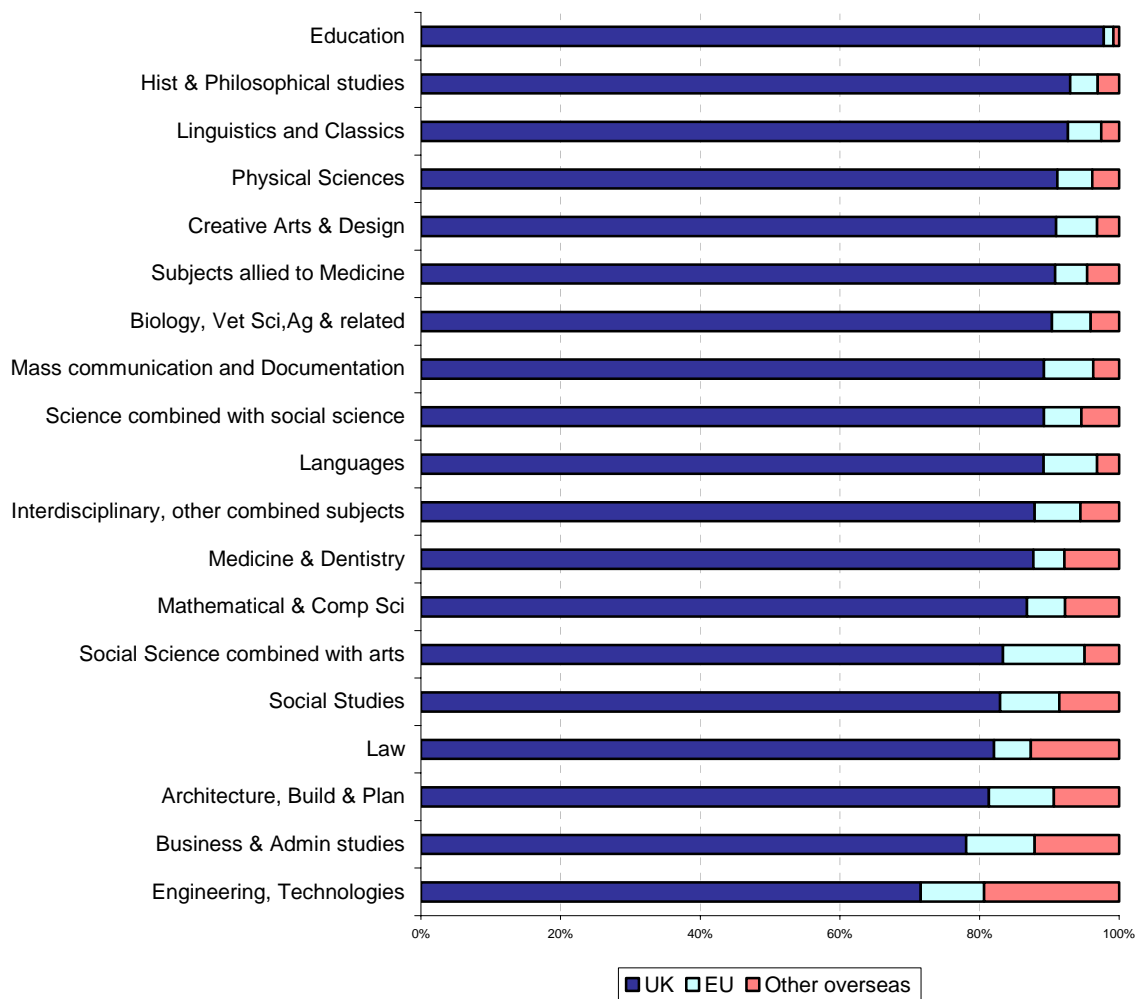
* where 1 = 'I have a clear idea of the occupation I eventually want to enter and the qualifications required to do so' and 7= 'I have no idea what I will do after I complete the course I have applied for'

Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted.

These are subjective evaluations, but whether or not courses are vocational is to some extent relative to the aspirations of students undertaking them. The fact that there are minorities of respondents at both ends of the spectrum (for example, applicants planning to study history because they have a firm ambition to be a history teacher or lecturer) illustrates this well. However, on the basis of this distribution and further investigation of relevant variables, it will be possible to group courses into three or four broad categories: those that are clearly most often specialist vocational ones – medicine, education, subjects allied to medicine, and architecture and related – where the skills and knowledge acquired on courses is geared to development of a particular professional occupational corpus of knowledge; those where there is a clear occupational orientation (which varies within the broad group according to particular courses); Law through to Business and Administration, perhaps (and this category is likely to divide into two as course progress, ideas about options change, and the realities of employment opportunities are encountered); and the remainder, which again, may or may not contain two distinct sub-groups – where the focus of study, in terms of knowledge, is more likely to be intrinsically rather than extrinsically-focused, and the skills general transferable skills rather than specialist occupational ones.

The other way in which courses differ is in the profile of those whom they recruit. Further analysis is planned on this, but initial investigation of accepted applicants reveals very different distributions in terms of gender, the extent to which members of different ethnic groups opted to study on them, and the extent to which they attract students from outside the UK. Figure 2.5 and Table 2.1 illustrate these different profiles.

Figure 2.5: Subject by location prior to application, showing shares of UK, EU and other overseas applicants



Source: Futuretrack 2006: accepted applicants (weighted).

Table 2.1: Comparison of key characteristics of accepted applicants in selected subject/discipline groups

<i>Item</i>	All accepted applicants%	Medicine & dentistry %	Education %	Subjects allied to medicine %	Engineering & Tech. (%)	Business & Admin. %	Physical Sciences %	Languages %	Historical & Philosophical Studies%
Per cent female	54	57	86	74	14	48	40	72	50
Per cent aged 25 or over	12	15	20	31	9	8	6	6	9
Per cent high soc-econ. ⁴	15	30	11	12	15	12	20	21	22
Reasons for HE:									
- normal thing...	35	44	20	27	39	36	42	47	44
- part of career plans	78	91	87	85	78	78	73	65	71
- to get good job	79	69	75	73	81	84	83	80	74
- to study subject	78	87	66	72	78	54	78	81	79
- friends doing it	14	14	9	9	15	13	18	20	21
Reasons for subject									
- enjoy studying it	78	76	57	59	78	68	89	91	93
- get good grades	41	50	14	26	44	35	55	58	54
- to enter profession	44	90	80	77	48	30	32	23	16
- difficulty deciding	8	3	4	5	8	9	11	10	10
Excellent written communication*	20	27	15	19	14	15	16	35	32
Excellent numeracy skills*	17	36	8	16	34	18	30	7	
Average UCAS tariff ⁵	5.5	7.5	4.5	4.6	5.4	4.8	6.8	6.7	6.8
Average career plan score ⁶	2.8	1.3	1.5	1.6	2.5	2.9	3.4	3.6	3.9

* Self-evaluation on range of 'Excellent', 'Very good', 'Good' 'Adequate' or 'Not very good' ⁴ From higher managerial or professional household (SES1)

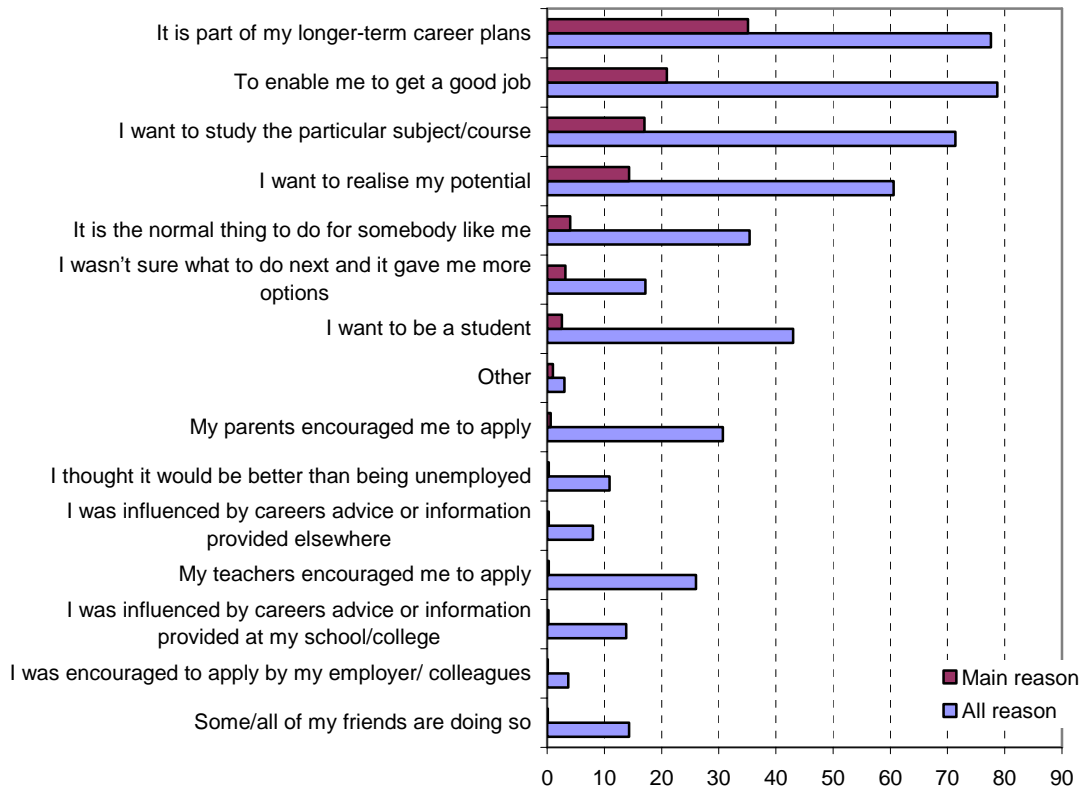
⁵ From categories 0- 11, where 0 = 0 and 11 = 540+ (NB overseas and non-standard qualifications zero-rated)

⁶ On scale of 1-7 as in previous figures.

3. Why did students decide to apply to enter HE?

The preceding figures indicate clearly that choices of higher education programmes of study reflect a combination of social, educational and cultural factors. We know, also, that similar factors affect whether or not higher education is considered as an option at all. In this section, accepted applicants' reasons for opting for HE, and their main reasons, are outlined. In the main report, we will compare these with the reasons given by 2006 HE applicants who subsequently opted not accept places or failed to do so.

Figure 3.1: All reasons and main reasons for apply to enter higher education



Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

The findings at a more detailed level indicate that socio-economic and cultural factors clearly impact significantly on the decision to proceed to HE and how decisions to attend specific institutions and courses are made. Looking in more detail at these reasons behind decisions to apply for a HE course, applicants whose parents had participated in HE (second generation applicants) were twice as likely as first generation applicants to have given as a reason 'it is the normal thing for somebody like me' (52 per cent compared to 27 per cent). Furthermore, two fifths (40 per cent) of the second generation applicants stated that their parents had encouraged them to apply, compared to just 25 per cent of first generation applicants. The study reinforces well-established findings that family background and social context are important factors in choosing to enter HE and in determining the amount of support and information available to applicants. Significantly, 19 per cent of second generation applicants gave 'because some / all of my friends are doing so' as a reason, compared to 12 per cent of first generation applicants and they were also more likely to have been encouraged by their teachers to apply.

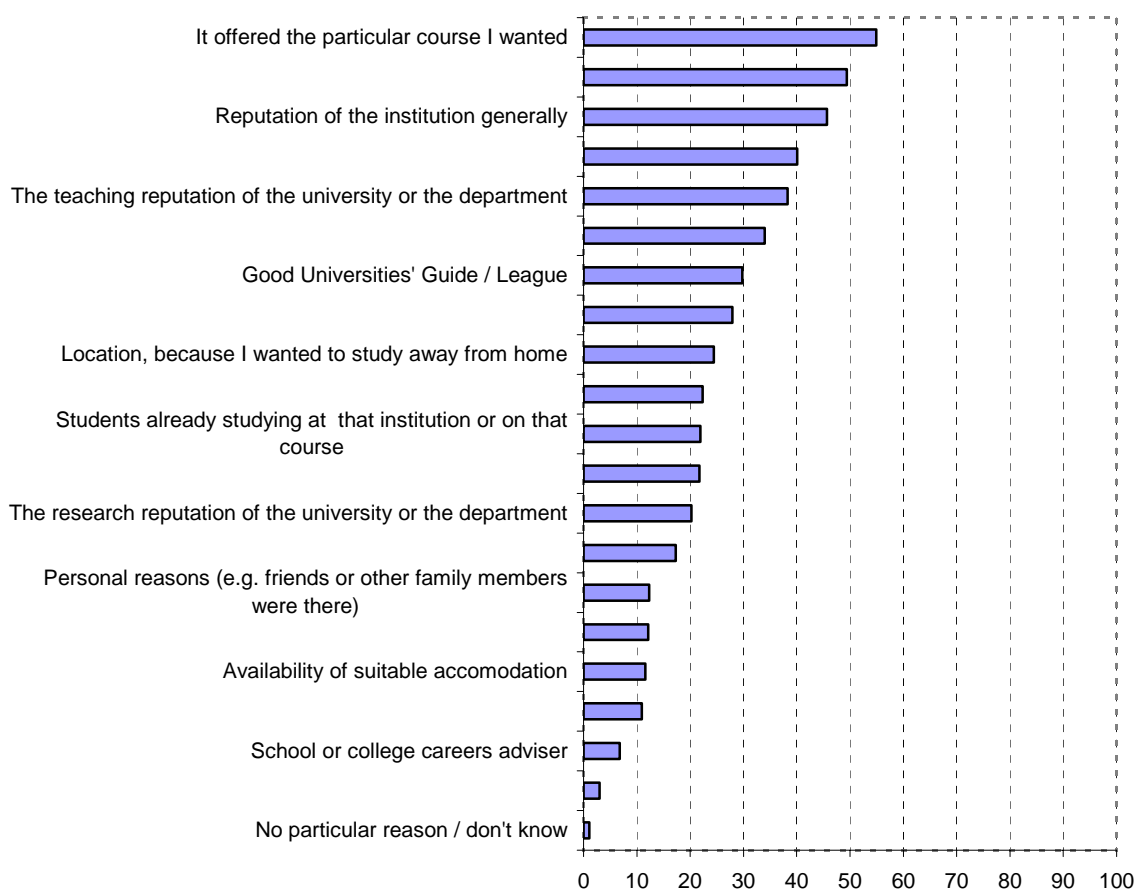
Conversely, first generation applicants were more likely to give career or employment-orientated reasons for their HE application. Looking at *main* reasons for applying to HE, 37 per cent of applicants for whom neither parent had experience of HE gave 'it is part of my longer term career plans' as their main reason, and 22 per cent 'to enable me to get a good job'. This compares to 31 per cent and 18 per cent respectively of applicants whose parents had both attended HE. Overseas and EU students were somewhat less likely than UK applicants to see themselves as applying for HE in order 'to get a good job', which also varied by subject opted for – with those

who had applied for Maths & Computing, Law and Physical Sciences (interestingly, the discipline areas found in the recent graduate cohort studies as likely to lead to relatively high earnings) most likely to give this option – whereas those opting for the more vocational subjects were more likely to indicate that their studies are part of a longer term career plan.

Conversely, those studying less vocationally-oriented subjects, as suggested in the preceding section, were among the more likely to have given desire to study the particular subject as an option. Teachers' encouragement was most likely to have been mentioned by those opting for these subjects too: Physical sciences, Linguistics and Classics, Languages, and Historical and Philosophical subjects. Conversely, careers advice was most likely to have been regarded as influential by those opting for Engineering and Technology , Mass Communication and Documentation, and most likely to have influenced those in the highest socio-economic category – as was the desire to be a student. However, the strongest factor appears to be parental experience of HE, as will be discussed further.

4. How did students choose their higher education institutions (HEIs)?

Figure 4.1: Which of the following influenced your choice of university or college?



Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

It is not surprising that the most frequent influence on choice of higher education institution was that it offered the course sought, or that visits to universities and colleges were important for many, or that general reputation, teaching reputation and location figured strongly.

Behind these general patterns, parental experience of HE had a significant effect on the reasons why students chose their institutions. To a considerable extent, parental experience of HE and socio-economic background are strongly related, but parental HE experience appears to have a stronger impact on responses throughout the questionnaire than social background itself. Indeed, 34 per cent of students whose parents both had HE experience reported that their parents/partners or other family members influenced their choice of university compared to 25 per cent of students where neither father nor mother had HE experience.

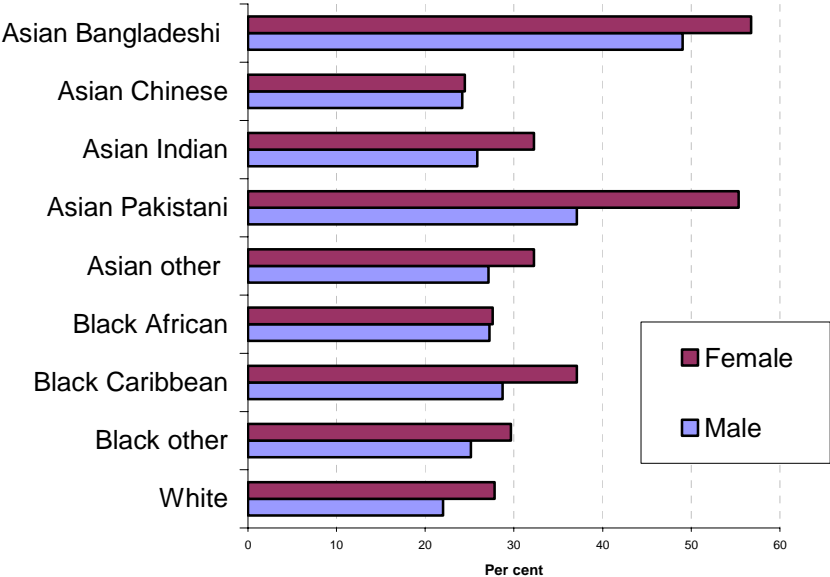
The greater likelihood of second-generation HE applicants consulting sources of 'consumer information' about HE was also apparent, with the Good University Guide more likely to have been influential: 39 per cent of student with parents with HE experiences say that it influenced their choice – compared with only 25 per cent of students whose parents did not (and 33 per cent of those from higher socio-economic backgrounds), which presumably had something to do with the type of school and community of origin, newspapers accessed and general 'cultural capital' that their relative environments provided (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Compared with HE applicants as a whole, the reputation of the institution generally was also more likely to be cited as influencing choice of university or college for students whose parents had HE experiences (54 per cent - compared with 50 per cent of those from the socially-advantaged backgrounds generally), as was the teaching reputation of the institution (39 per cent).

The simple correlation of parental HE, socio-economic advantage and wider boundaries of (or opportunities for) choice is illustrated by three further significant differences:

- more students whose parents had HE experience (48 per cent) chose the university or college because it was an attractive or interesting place than those whose parents didn't have any HE experience (36 per cent), suggesting consideration of the wider attractions of HE study beyond its intrinsic educational or 'employability-development' value;
- more students whose parents did not have any HE experience chose the university or college because they could continue to live at home (28 per cent, compared with 10 per cent of students whose parents *had* HE experiences);
- also, course fees and/or available bursaries and cost of living considerations were more important for students whose parents did not have any HE experiences – related to both socio-economic differences and the higher average age of first generation HE applicants.

It is perhaps not surprising, but certainly a very important consideration in analysing the options available to different group of HE applicants and students, that around half of all students over 25 years of age stated that they chose their university/ college because they wanted to continue to live at home. Many of these had already set up adult households which made moving difficult, but they are generally more likely to be integrated within a community and social networks which make mobility difficult or less attractive. A third of Asian students chose on the basis of wanting to continue to live at home, compared to 28per cent of black students and 22 per cent of all applicants. As a whole, younger students were more likely to have been influenced in their choice of institution by the location because they wanted to study away from home (30 per cent of those 18 and under gave this as a factor). Figure 4.2, distinguishing among ethnic sub-groups, reveals the potential for more detailed exploration of similarities and differences among these groups – and variation of gender differences in different communities.

Figure 4.2: Percentage giving 'it will enable me to stay at home' as reason for choice of HEI, comparing ethnic origin by gender



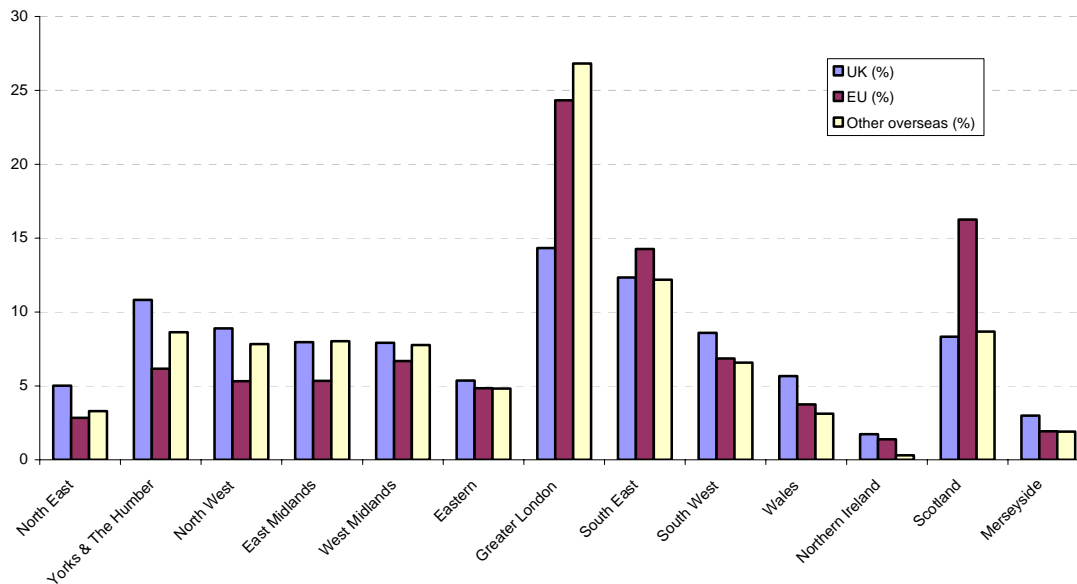
Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

Interestingly, black students cited fewer influences on choice of HEI than the other groups, almost as if HEI was less important to them than the course that they aspired to study – which certainly reflects more employment and vocationally-orientated motivations and may also reflect a less consumerist approach. Further analysis of the data and follow-up interviews is required to explore this.

UK / EU / Overseas students

86.5 per cent of respondents are UK students, 6.5 per cent EU students and 7.0 per cent of the sample comes from other overseas countries. There was little variation between EU and UK students in reasons for choice of HEI (although responses to questions about debt and working during courses suggest that the former are more affluent, on average, than the latter).

Figure 4.3: Region of study, comparing UK, EU and other overseas applicants



Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

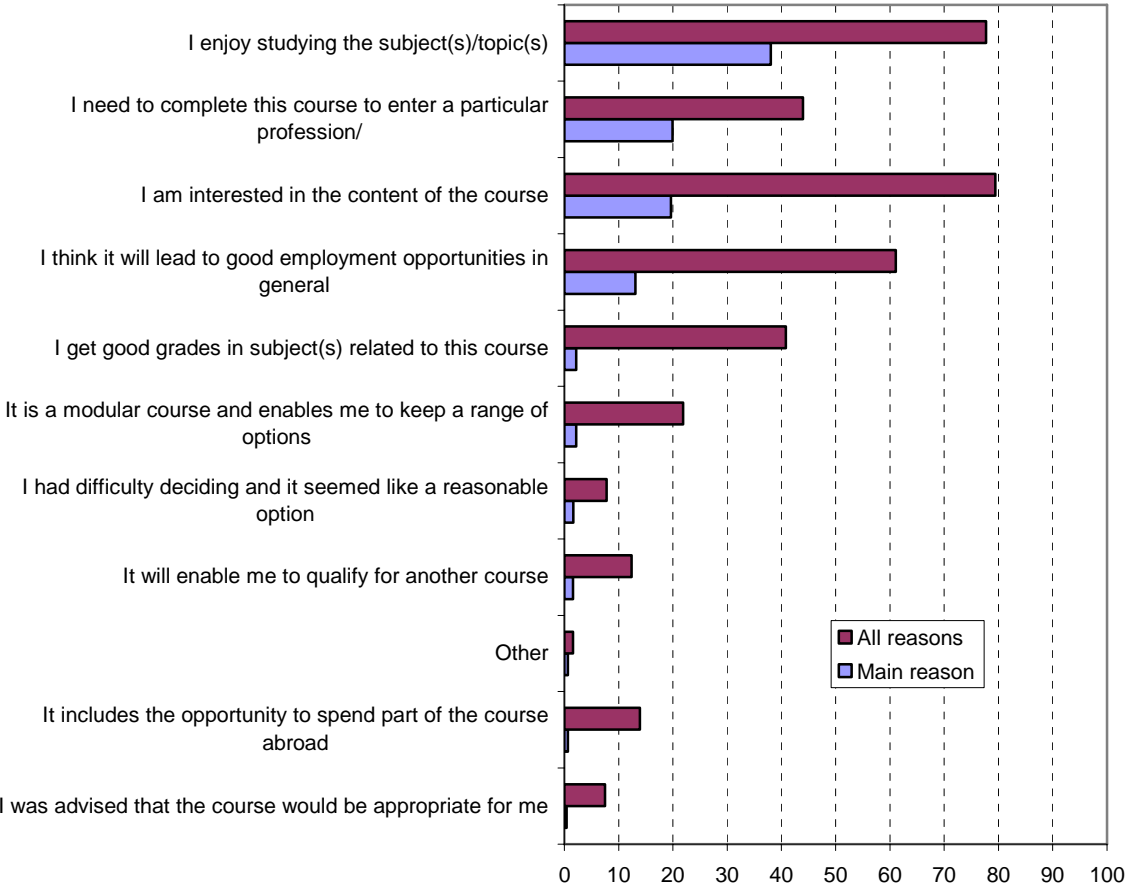
As Figure 4.3 shows, educational migration from outside the UK – although affecting all regions apart from Northern Ireland – is most concentrated in London and Scotland in the case of EU applicants and Greater London in the case of other overseas applicants. These patterns are interesting in relation to the responses to the question about influences on choice of HEI, where ‘location because it was an attractive or interesting place’ was more often important to EU students (46 per cent) than UK students (40 per cent) or other overseas students (37 per cent).

The reputation of the university generally was the most important influence on overseas’ students choice of university (54 per cent), with the particular course that the university offered less often important than for UK and EU applicants. Not surprisingly, Good universities’ guide/ league tables, as well as the teaching and research reputation of the institution were more important variables for overseas students than for all other students and ‘visit to the institution’ was cited by only 17 per cent of overseas students and 28 per cent of EU students compared to 54 per cent of UK students.

5. How did students choose their courses?

In workshops with groups of students at a range of schools and FE colleges, it became clear that once students had made the decision to proceed to HE, some students started by choosing the institution or location where they hoped to study, some start with the area of study or discipline they are interested in, and some have a very precise idea about the exact course they aspire to enter. The most frequent order of choice of 'traditional' students appeared to be broad subject area, followed by institution, whereas older students and others from communities where there was a less established tradition of HE participation were more likely to be restricted, or choose to restrict their options, by starting with location. The following section summarises the findings on reasons for choices of course.

Figure 5.1: All and main reasons for choosing the particular course of study

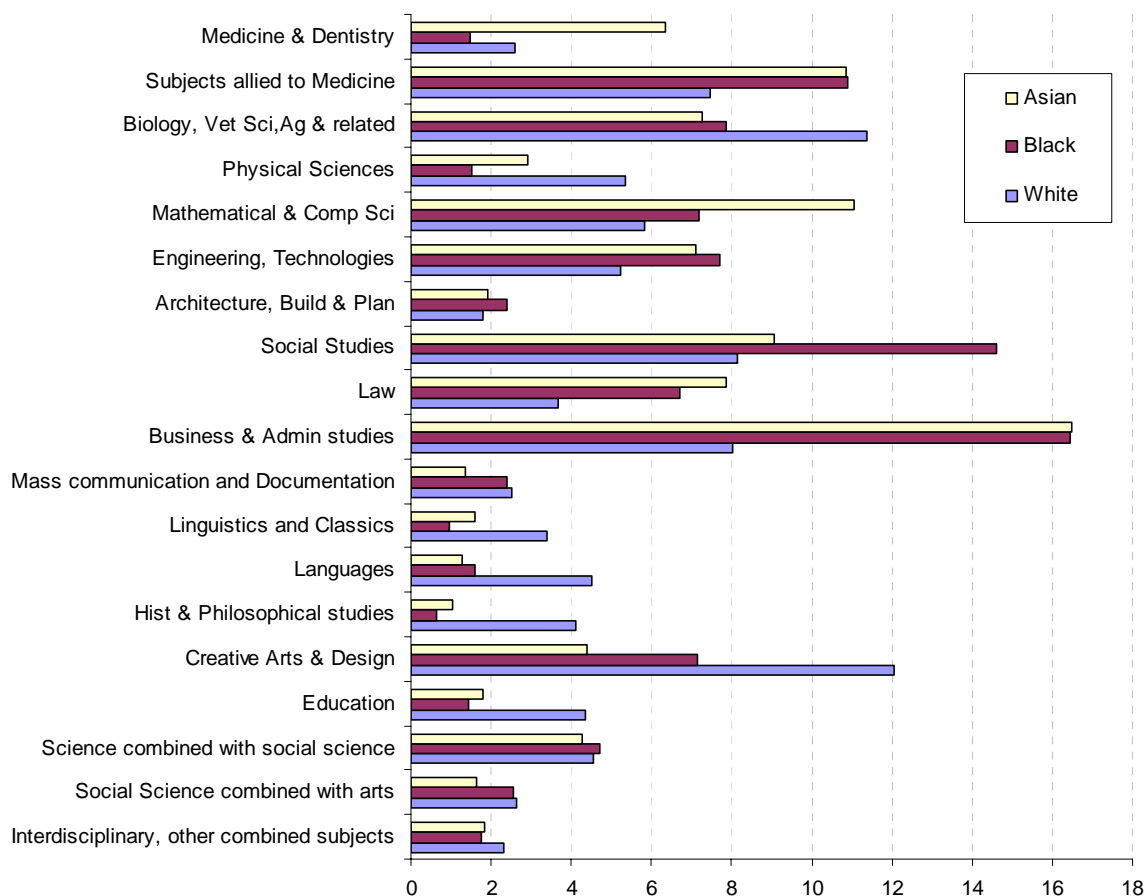


Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted applicants to full survey, weighted

The four most popular reasons, both overall and as main reasons, are the same: interest in the course and employment or career-related reasons – and these were most important for all groups across the spectrum. There were, however, differences in the extent to which reasons were more and less popular with different categories of applicant. The most distinctive difference was that applicants from a higher social class were more likely to have stated that they had already enjoyed studying the subject and were interested in the contents, whereas applicants from lower social classes were more likely to say they had chosen their course because they wanted to enter a particular profession or they thought it would lead to good employment opportunities in general.

The oldest age group (25 and over) were less likely to give enjoyment of the subject or interest in the content of the course and more likely to state that they needed to complete this course to enter a particular profession. Answers differed considerably according to broad ethnic group, as might be expected from their different choices over the subject and vocational spectrum, as illustrated in the comparison between Asian, Black and White applicants in Figure 5.2. More detailed interrogation of the data by ethnic sub-group will allow for clearer understanding of the variables involved, as illustrated in the previous section by Figure 3.2.

Figure 5.2: Subject group of course applied for, comparing Asian, Black and White applicants



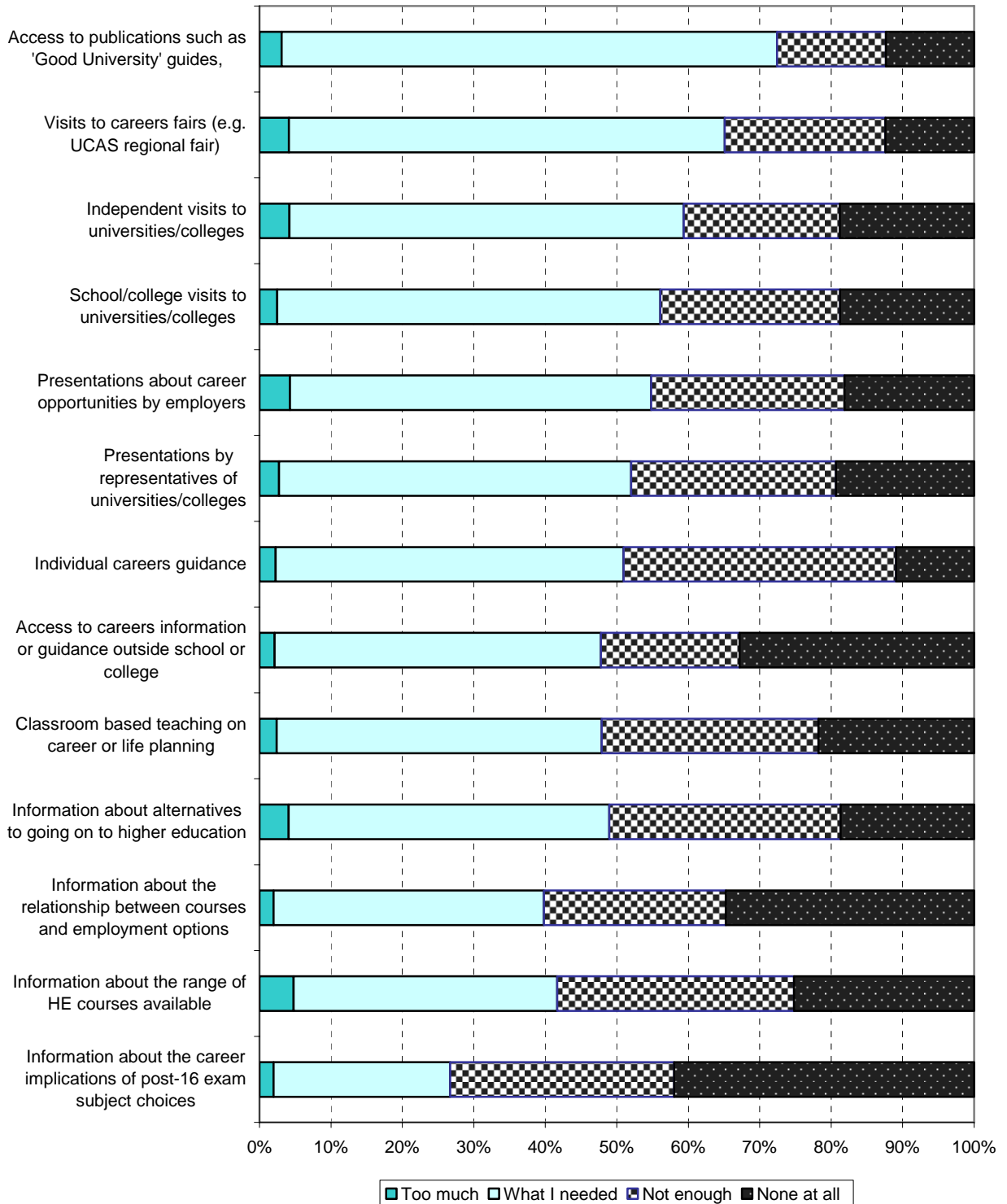
Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

The previous sections have revealed how those coming from homes where progression to HE was regarded as the norm were likely to perceive themselves as having wider choices and greater likelihood of having had encouragement from parents, teachers and friends to apply for HE. However, in addition the survey also provides evidence that those coming from homes where HE participation is the norm may be more likely to progress directly from subjects they enjoyed at school to study of these same subjects in higher education without considering the implications of choices. The subjects for which students were most likely to have applied for these reasons are also the subjects from which most recent cohorts of graduates have taken longest to become integrated into jobs that use their skills and qualifications, and were also the subjects that where students were most likely to have given, as a reason for applying for HE, that they were unsure about what to do next. 17 per cent of all accepted applicants gave this as a reason and the proportions were considerably lower among those opting for the more vocational courses but it was given by around a quarter of applicants in these subjects: physical sciences (24 per cent), linguistics and classics (25 per cent), languages (23 per cent) and historical and philosophical studies (26 per cent). Students from professional and managerial households were somewhat more likely to give this reason than those from less advantaged backgrounds. At the extreme, 67 per cent of Linguistics and Classics students indicated that having achieved good grades in their subject were one of the reasons to choose to study it and 4 per cent that this was their main reason for doing so (along with 5 per cent of Mathematical & Computer science students). Prior achievement and experience of a subject are good reasons for studying it, but there is a danger that other options – and the longer-term implications of choices – may not be considered adequately in cases where students proceed without much thought or guidance to opt for their best school subject. The sections that follow, where respondents' evaluations of the information and guidance they had access to, suggest that there is some evidence of this – and the longitudinal analyses will reveal the extent to which the basis of choices affects progress and subsequent career options.

6. Access to careers guidance and information

Clarity of career plans might be expected to reflect the extent to which applicants had access to careers information and guidance prior to making their choices of course. Figure 6.1 gives the overall picture.

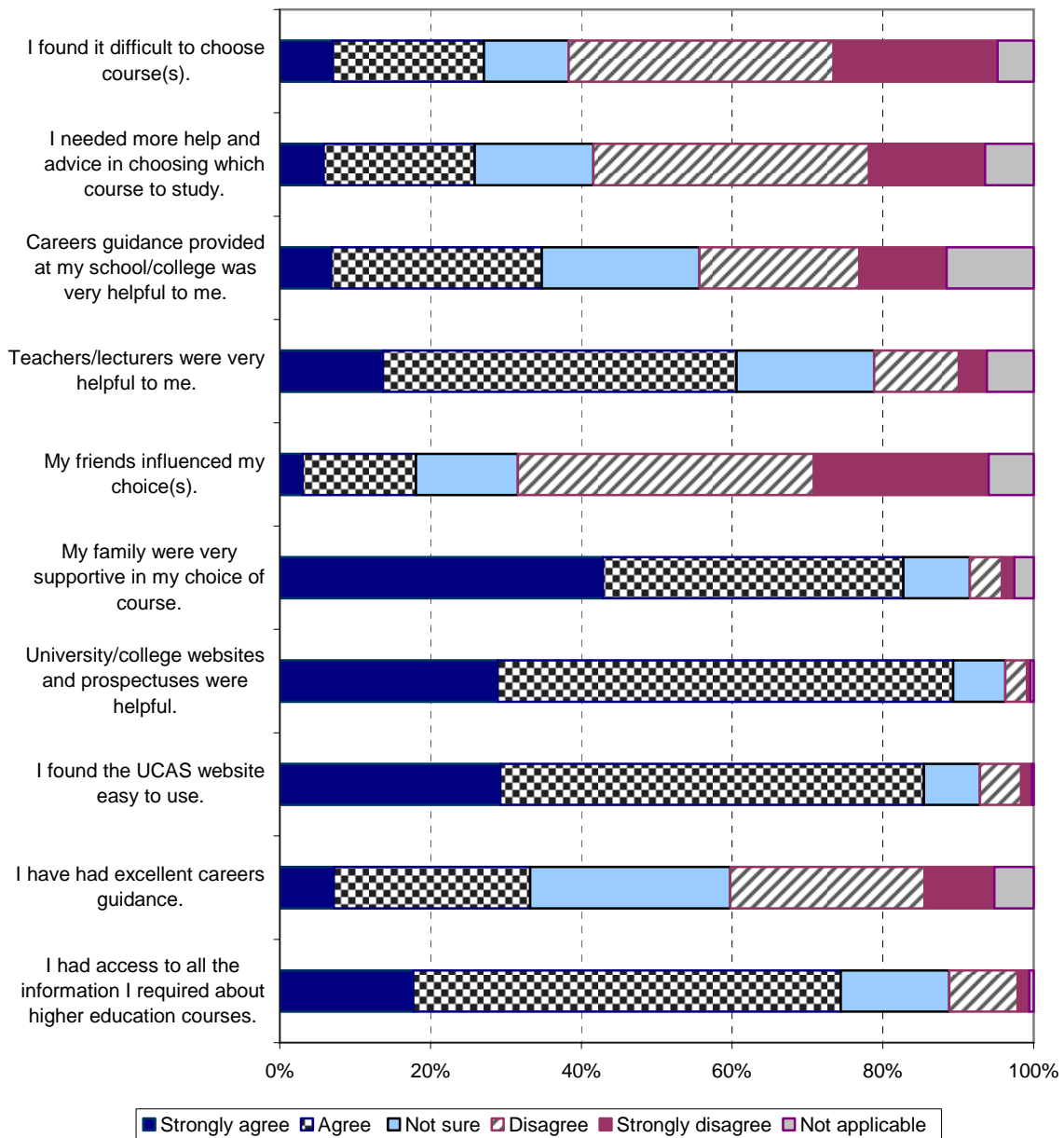
Figure 6.1: Amount of careers information and guidance prior to HE



Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

The degree to which different groups of respondents had different degrees of access to information and guidance was substantial. Some examples of this variation are given in the figures that follow, but first, Figure 6.2 shows the overall responses to statements about the experience of applying for higher education.

Figure 6.2: In deciding to apply for a higher education course, how far do you agree with the following statements?

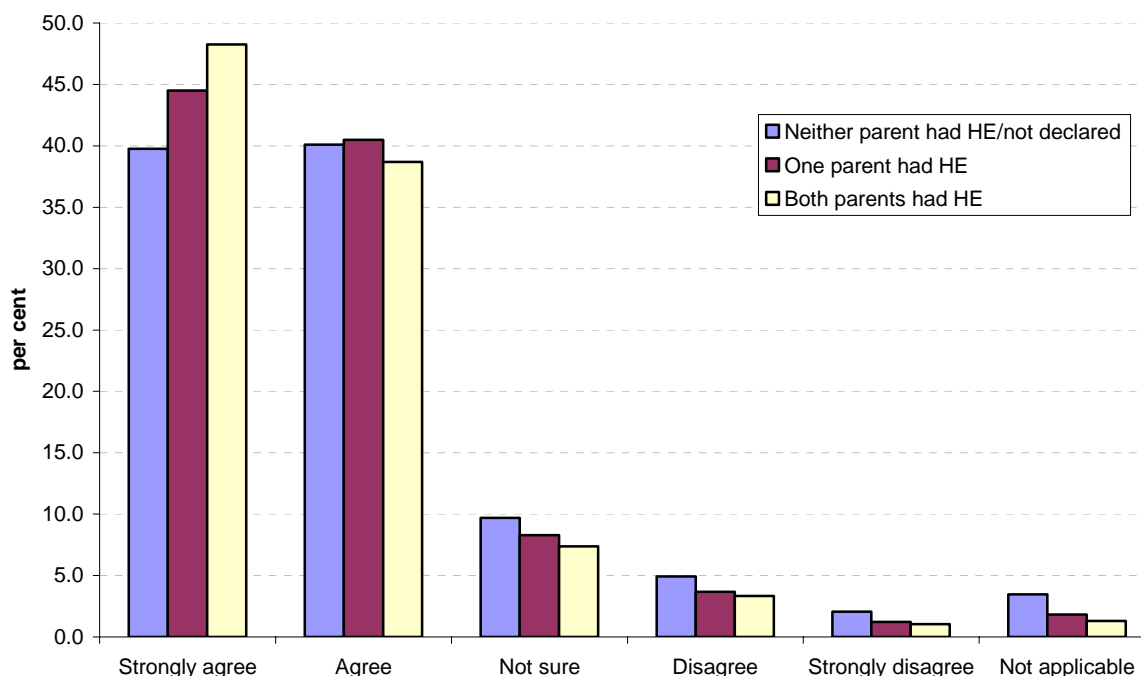


Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

We will examine some of these items, and the variance in the responses of different groups, separately. First of all, who was more likely to have reported having very supportive families in their choice of course, and who needed more help and advice? On most of these items, we find socio-economic background, ethnicity, prior educational experience and most importantly, whether respondents were first generation HE applicants were significantly related to the pattern of their responses. In deciding to apply for a HE course around a quarter, 26 per cent, agreed or strongly agreed that they needed more help and advice in choosing which course to study. The Futuretrack analysis investigates who these 26 per cent are, and the implications. There appears to be a shortfall in the careers advice applicants received from schools. Whilst 61 per cent agreed that that teachers and lecturers were very helpful to them, just 35 per cent felt the same

way about the careers guidance provided. For those with graduate parents attending schools and colleges where the majority of students go on to HE, this may be less of a problem, but for those without these advantages, lack of access to career guidance prior to HE application leaves them vulnerable to making poorer choices.

Figure 6.3: My family were very supportive of my choice of course



Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

White students were least likely to agree strongly that they needed more help and advice than those in minority ethnic groups, but also least likely to agree that they *had* had excellent careers guidance. At the other end of the scale, black students were most likely to have indicated that the advice they had received had been excellent – possibly because they were likely to be older at the time of application, seeking guidance rather than progressing to HE as ‘the normal thing’ and possibly because they were FE students, who tended to be more positive than those from other educational backgrounds about the availability of guidance during their application stage.

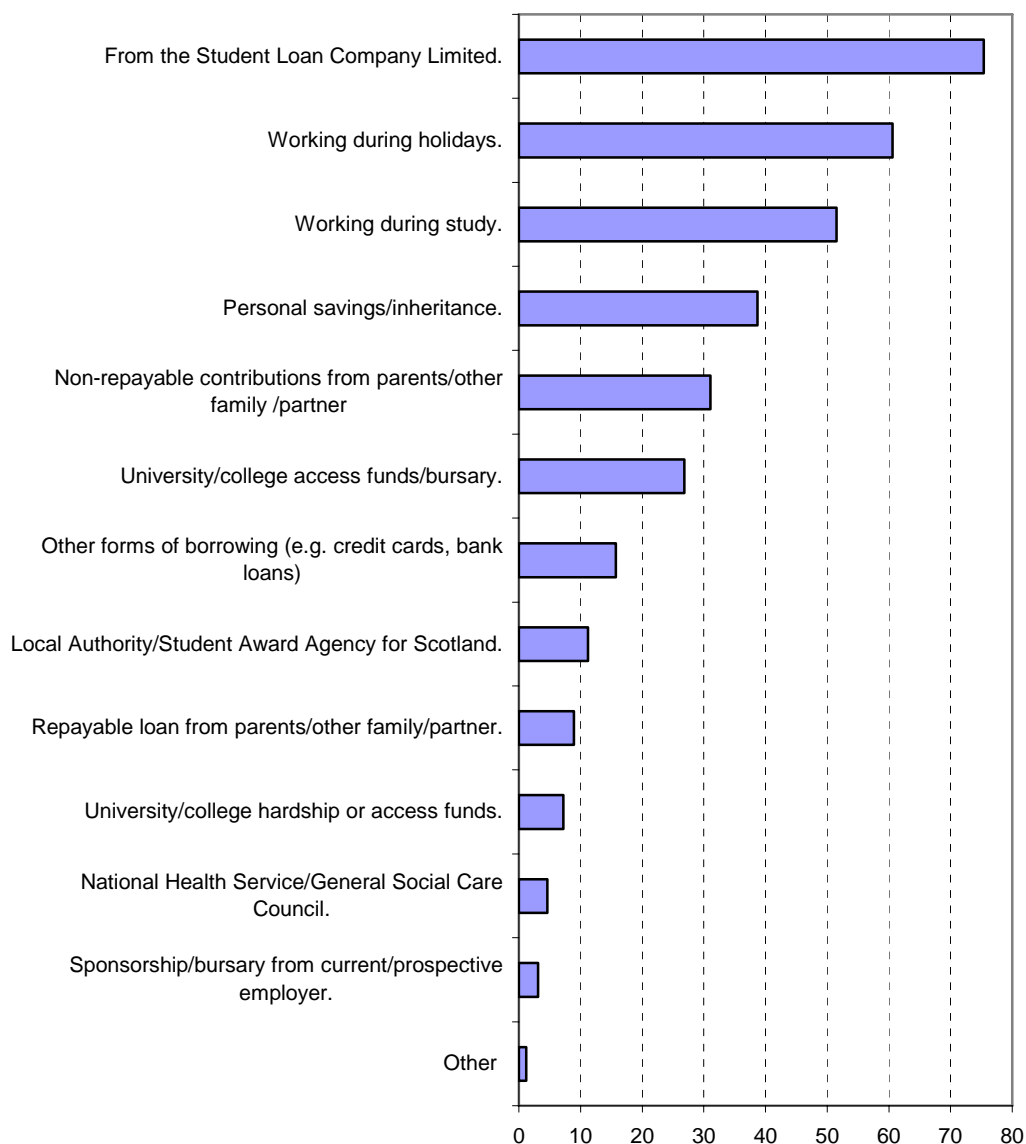
If we examine the three statements that relate to respondents themselves, an interesting picture emerges. Those who agreed with the statement ‘I worry that, as a higher education student, I will find the level of work difficult’ were most likely to be young students progressing from school to HE, but coming from backgrounds where HE participation was not the norm. Those over 21 were less than half as likely to agree as those who were 18 and under, illustrating how those returning to HE, even as ‘young mature’ students, are more likely to have a clear idea of what they are embarking on and why, and what their capabilities are. They were also significantly more likely to be female than male. The other big difference was between those whose parents had HE qualifications were significantly less likely to agree than those who did not have an HE-qualified parent (47 per cent compared to 38 per cent). Those from professional and managerial backgrounds were more likely than those from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds, but the difference between the extremes (49 per cent compared to 46 per cent, although significant, is less radical).

The pattern of response was similar for those who had difficulty choosing which course to apply for and those who felt that they needed more help and advice in choosing their course were, again, very significantly more likely to be young, school-leaver applicants but neither social class background, gender nor parental HE qualifications were particularly significant, although those opting for vocational areas of study were least likely to agree.

7. Plans to fund higher education

Higher education funding has been increasingly seen as a politically-contentious issue as students and their families have been required to contribute to its cost and to recognise it as an investment in individual and social capital. The skills and knowledge endowed by HE study and the achievement of HE qualifications have continued to lead to better employment opportunities and higher average and lifetime earnings than among those who fail to attain them, despite the expansion of higher education and some evidence of recent reduction in the graduate earnings premium (Elias and Purcell 2004, McIntosh 2004). However, this cohort is the first to be subject to the introduction of variable tuition fees, and it was clearly necessary to investigate respondents' plans for funding their higher education participation and their attitudes to HE funding and the debts that students are likely to accrue throughout the course of their studies. Figure 7.1 shows the responses to the question about funding intentions prior to embarking on courses.

Figure 7.1: How do you plan to fund your higher education?



Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

It can be seen that over three-quarters of respondents planned to take out loans from the Student Loans Company and the other most frequent option was working during holidays and, in the case of nearly half, working during term alongside their studies. Only a third anticipated obtaining non-

repayable contributions from their families, although 37 per cent were able to draw on personal savings or inheritance. These general figures, of course, mask considerable variation. As might be expected, few overseas and EU students planned to draw upon the Student Loans Company and in both cases, were more likely to have access to non-repayable or repayable loans from their families. Funding plans also varied significantly and predictably by socio-economic background, as Table 7.1 shows, and also varied by age and ethnic background.

Table 7.1: Response to the question: How do you plan to fund your higher education? By broad socio-economic background

	Managerial and Professional Occupations	Intermediate Occupations	Routine and manual Occupations
From the Student Loan Company Limited	73.6	76.1	78.6
Personal savings/inheritance	42.0	38.2	32.1
Non-repayable contributions from parents/other family/partner	38.0	26.9	19.9
Repayable loan from parents/other family/partner	10.6	7.9	6.1
Local Authority/Student Award Agency for Scotland	10.4	12.0	12.2
National Health Service/General Social Care Council	4.1	5.2	5.1
Working during study	49.0	52.9	55.8
Working during holidays	61.5	60.6	58.8
University/college hardship or access funds	5.4	8.2	10.4
Other forms of borrowing (e.g. credit cards, bank loans, overdrafts, etc)	15.5	15.6	16.1
University/college access funds/bursary	20.1	31.0	37.4
Sponsorship/bursary from current/prospective employer	3.0	3.0	3.3
Other	1.2	1.3	1.3

Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

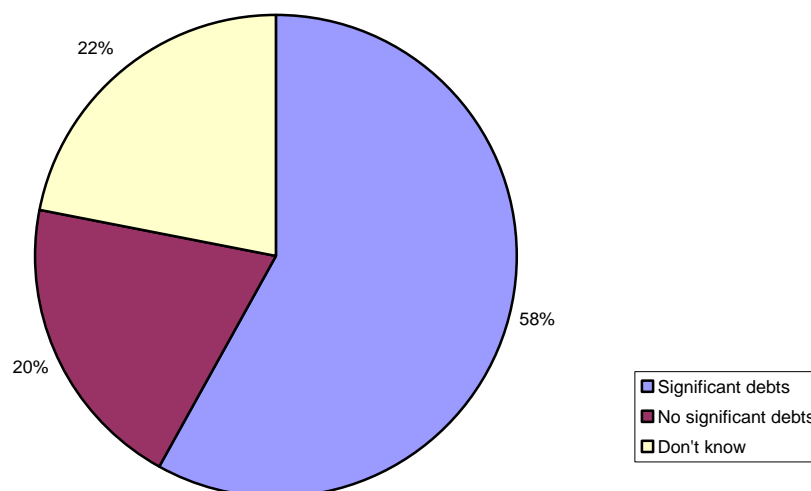
At a more detailed level, the correlation between socio-economic background and funding plans was strong, ranging from 45 per cent those from Higher Managerial and Professional backgrounds with access to personal savings or inheritance and 43 per cent anticipating non-repayable contributions from parents or other family members, to those from routine occupational backgrounds where the comparable proportions were 31 per cent and 17 per cent. Those who had attended independent schools were significantly less likely than others to anticipate borrowing from the Student Loan Company, most likely to anticipate non-repayable contributions from parents or family (48 per cent) and least likely to plan to work during their studies (34 per cent). Black students were least likely to anticipate taking out Student Loans and white most likely and age was also correlated with anticipation of taking student loans, with those 18 and under most likely and those 25 and over least likely to plan to do so. Age was also correlated with access to personal savings and inheritance (surprisingly in the same direction, with youngest most likely to have it and oldest least), as was plans to work both during study and vacations. Older applicants were more likely to anticipate recourse to other forms of borrowing, to university hardship or access funds and to sponsorship/bursary from current or prospective employers.

Older applicants more often included comments on the difficulties they anticipated in funding their higher education and concern about the debt they would be likely to accumulate. The section that follows discusses expectations of debt.

8. Expectation of significant debts

Respondents were asked whether they anticipated that they would accrue significant debts so that the extent to which these were affecting attitudes to HE participation and course choice can be explored. Only one in five did *not* anticipate significant debt, 58 per cent did so and the remainder didn't know.

Figure 8.1: Do you expect to have significant debts t the end of your course?

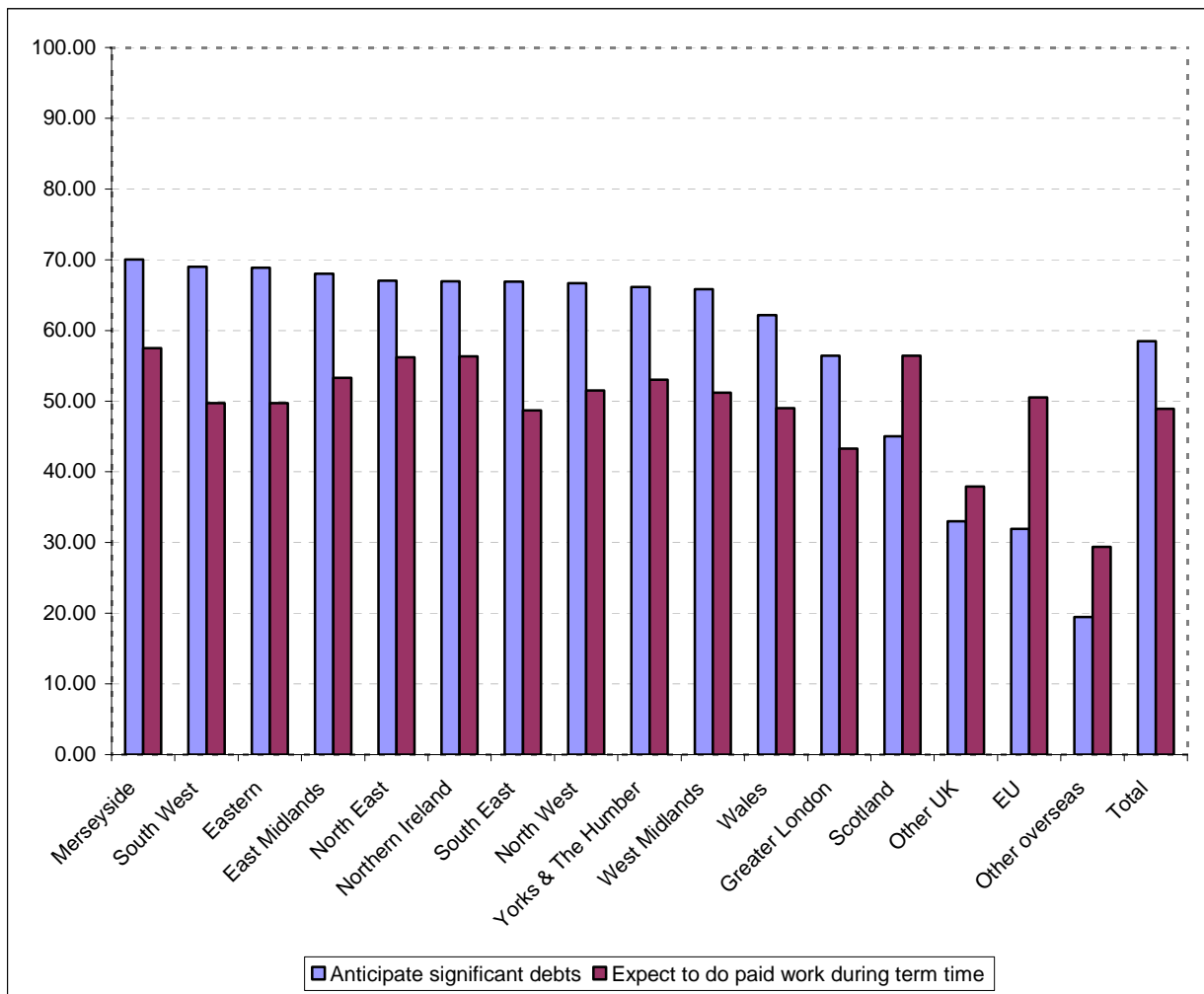


Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

Not surprisingly, length of course is correlated with expectation of debt, with those about to start Foundation degree course least likely to anticipate significant debts and those on degree courses lasting more than four years most likely to do so. 'Traditional' students studying Medicine and dentistry, Historical and Philosophical subjects, Linguistics and Classics and other subjects at the less vocational end of the spectrum were most likely to do so. Only half of Asian and black students anticipated significant debts compared to two-thirds of white and almost as high a proportion of mixed-race applicants. Disaggregating to a more detailed level, however, the likelihood ranges from only 42 per cent of Asian Pakistani and 46 per cent of Black African applicants anticipating significant debts to over 60 per cent of smaller black groups. The cell sizes are relatively small and careful further analyses are required. There was no difference according to socio-economic status, but those who had attended independent schools were least likely to anticipate significant debt of any UK sub-group (44 per cent). Of other overseas students, less than 20 per cent did so, and just over 30 per cent of EU students did so. Finally, the oldest age group, 25 and over, were less likely than their younger equivalents to do so, with 55 per cent compared to 60 per cent of 18s and under. Fear of debt was found to be a factor that had contributed to the decision not to proceed to higher education for a substantial minority of the non-participants who completed the short questionnaire, as will be discussed in Section 10.

Finally, we compare plans to engage in paid work during term to help fund their studies by domicile prior to embarking on HE, combined with a similar analysis of anticipation of significant debt, is revealing. Figure 8.2 shows the relationship between the two variables and the comparison shows clearly that although EU students like their UK peers, anticipate doing paid work, they are more like overseas students in their anticipation of debt. Scottish respondents' answers need to be interpreted in the light of the different HE funding *regime* in Scotland, but the greater likelihood that they anticipate doing paid work during term to contribute to their funding suggests a significant cultural difference. This requires further analysis. It is important to note that these responses derive from responses to the question 'How do you plan to fund your higher education?' and choice of the option 'Work during study' as opposed to 'Work during holidays'. It is likely that the Wave 2 investigation will reveal higher incidence of term-time working when a direct question asking whether respondents have done paid work during term is asked.

Figure 8.2 Anticipation of paid work during term and of significant debt, by domicile

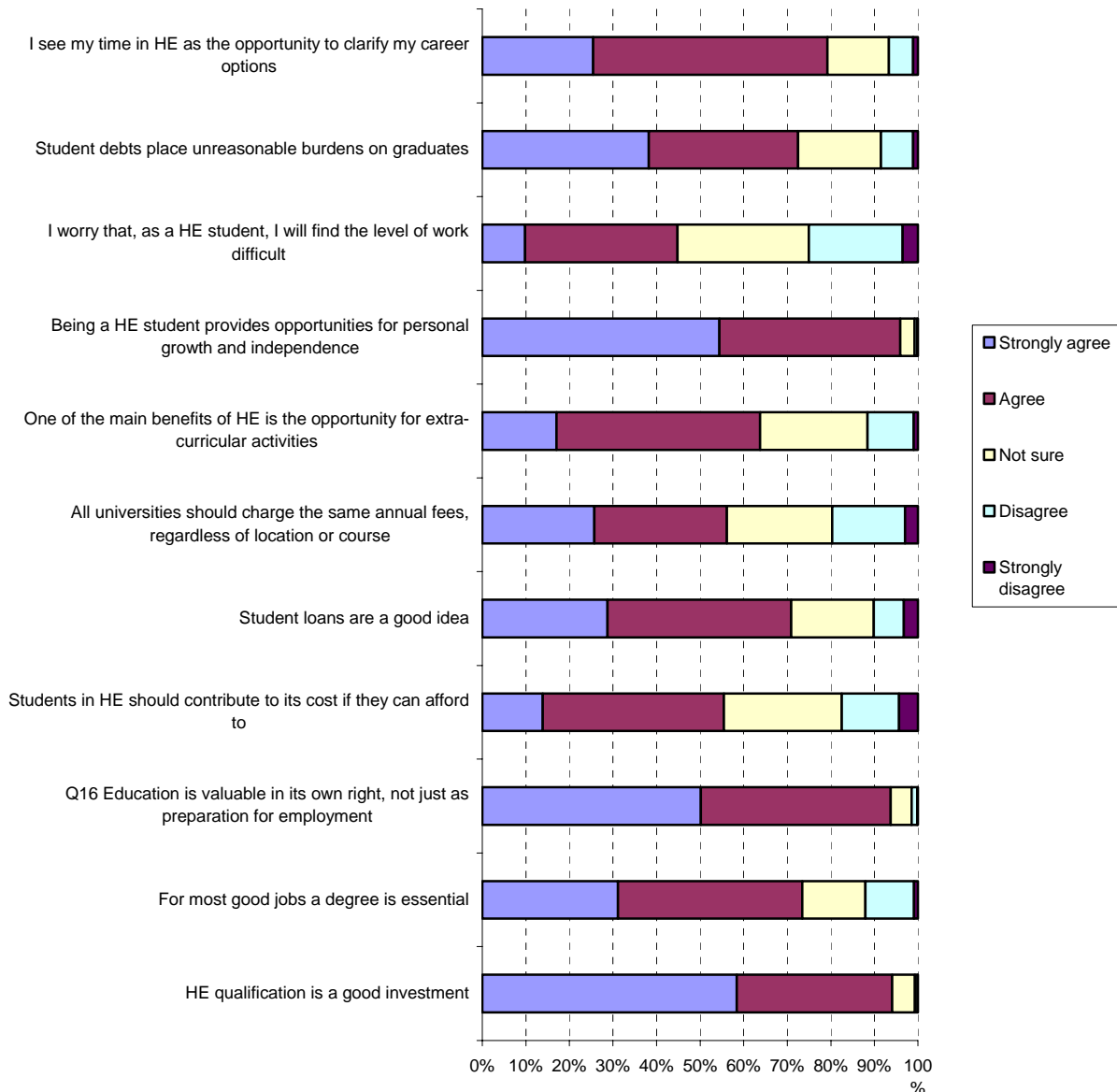


Source: Futuretrack 2006: all accepted respondents to full survey, weighted

9. Attitudes, values and views about HE policy and the value of HE

In terms of opinions about HE policy and practice, applicants reported highly positive views about the value of HE, with virtually all of them agreeing or agreeing strongly with statements that as 'Higher education is a good investment', 'Education is valuable in its own right' and 'Being a higher education student provides opportunities for personal growth and independence'. There was also remarkably high agreement that students should contribute to the cost of their HE if they could afford to, particularly among English students.

Figure 9.1: Responses to attitude statements about higher education



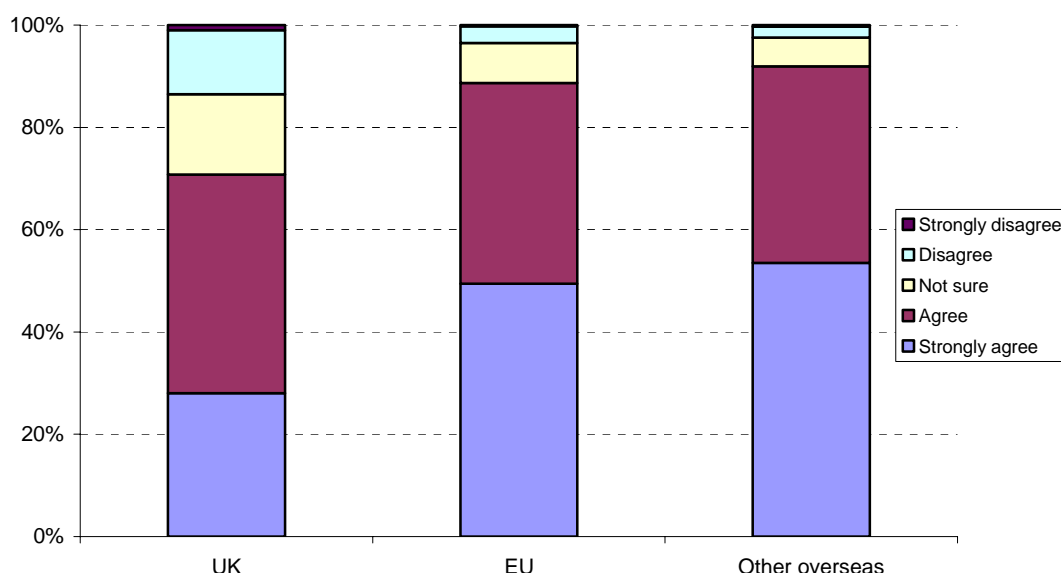
Source: Futuretrack 2006

It is not surprising that substantial minorities did not agree with the statement about clarifying options (given the high levels of career planning shown earlier), or whether they worried about finding the work difficult and had a range of views on the importance of extra-curricular activities. These last questions may be of value to analyse experiences as HE careers proceed. However, it is interesting to investigate which respondents were more likely to have been ambivalent or disagree about whether student loans area good idea, the justification for variable fees and whether, in fact, a degree is essential for most good jobs.

For most good jobs a degree is essential

There was little difference according to gender or socio-economic background but white respondents significantly less likely to agree with the statement (69 per cent) than minority ethnic groups, and variation was evident when respondents were compared on the basis of type of school/education institution attended, with those from independent schools most likely to agree with the statement (79 per cent) compared to 70 per cent of those who attended a comprehensive school. The oldest group (25 and over) were less likely to agree with the statement (68 per cent) than younger respondents (75 per cent). UK-domiciled respondents were less likely to agree with the statement than EU or other overseas applicants. Most notably, 15 per cent of UK applicants were unsure of the statement, over twice the proportion of overseas and other EU applicants. Indeed, EU and overseas respondents were consistently more positive than UK applicants about the value of higher education throughout these attitude questions and responding to the survey as a whole.

Figure 9.2: Agreement with the statement: For most good jobs a degree is essential, comparing respondents by region of domicile



Source: Futuretrack 2006

Respondents in employment at the time of completing the survey were least likely to agree with the statement (66 per cent) compared to those in education (75 per cent) and those unemployed (74 per cent). There was notable variation by UK region in the extent of agreement with the statement. Respondents from Greater London were most likely to agree (77 per cent) and those from the South West, the least (63 per cent). Perhaps significantly, seventy two per cent of those respondents who anticipated significant debts upon completion of their studies agreed with the statement compared to 80 per cent of those who did not.

Students in higher education should contribute to its cost if they can afford to

Although the majority agreed or agreed strongly with the statement that students in HE should contribute to its cost if they can afford to, there was some variation. Male respondents more likely to agree with the statement (58 per cent compared to 54 per cent of females), also reflected in the fact that 29 per cent of women were unsure compared to 24 per cent of men. There were also differences among minority ethnic groups. White respondents were among the least likely to agree with the statement (53 per cent) along with those of white/Black Caribbean and 'Black-other' origin. The most likely to agree with the statement were those from 'Asian-other' backgrounds (61 per cent) and Black Africans (60 per cent). Differences can be largely accounted for in the extent to which respondents were not sure of their agreement with the statement: it is

clearly a source of ambivalence. Respondents from Chinese backgrounds were most likely to be unsure (one-third) and those from White/Asian origins the least (26 per cent).

Those from independent schools were most likely to agree with the statement (59 per cent), presumably being accustomed to paying for their education, while respondents from comprehensive schools were least likely to agree that students should contribute to HE if they can afford to do so (52 per cent). The youngest respondents were least likely to agree (53 per cent) and those in the oldest group were the most (59 per cent). UK-domiciled applicants to HE were significantly less likely to agree with the statement than their EU and other overseas counterparts. Respondents from Scotland least likely to agree that students should contribute to costs of HE (47 per cent) and those from Greater London, most likely (57 per cent).

Respondents who were in employment or unemployed at the time of completing the survey were more likely to agree with the statement (60 per cent) compared to those in education (54 per cent) and those who did not anticipate significant debt were more likely to agree, than those who did not.

Student loans are a good idea

Respondents from Bangladeshi origins were least likely to agree with the statement that student loans were a good idea (60 per cent) and there was somewhat greater agreement among respondents from lower socio-economic groups. Most likely to agree were those from routine occupational backgrounds (75 per cent compared to 71 per cent of those from higher managerial or professional occupational backgrounds). Older applicants (those 25 and over at the time of completing the survey) were notably less likely to agree that student loans were a good idea (63 per cent compared to 71-73 per cent of younger groups).

HE applicants from the EU were most likely to agree that student loans were a good idea (76 per cent compared to 71 per cent of UK and other overseas graduates) and among UK regions, respondents from Scotland were least likely to agree with the statement (57 per cent), consistent with other responses to questions about HE funding and debt where, no doubt coloured by their different experiences of HE funding, Scottish applicants are less supportive of the idea that individuals should be expected to take responsibility for their HE funding. Those from Northern Ireland were also less likely to agree, with two-thirds of respondents from NI doing so compared to between 71 and 74 per cent for all regions in England and Wales.

Respondents who expected to leave HE with significant debts were notably more likely to agree that student loans were a good idea (73 per cent compared to 65 per cent of those graduates who did not and 71 per cent of those who were unsure) – presumably because they were more likely to anticipate finding them necessary and useful.

10. Hot off the press - Preliminary findings from the short non-participant survey

Reasons for not moving on the HE

- The most commonly cited reason for not proceeding to HE was the decision to take a gap year.
- 22.0% said that low grades accounted for not moving on to HE.
- 18.9% replied that either the costs or the prospect of incurring debts (or both) had deterred them from entering HE.

Who are the people who are put off HE by the thought of costs/debt?

Applicants from a routine and manual occupations background were the most likely to cite reasons of cost as putting them off HE (cent as compared with applicants from a managerial and professional occupations background (15 per cent and also with those from an intermediate occupations background (14 per cent).

Age was also a factor affecting perception of HE costs. The youngest age group (18 and under) were least likely to be put off HE by fears of debt (15 per cent). Across the other age groups, approximately one in five reported that costs/debts were a factor in their decision.

The fear of costs/debt was also related to the nationality of the applicant (probably reflecting different fee structures for different national groups). Debt/cost fears were a concern for 17 per cent of UK students, whereas the corresponding figures for EU students and other overseas students were higher at 19-20 per cent in both cases.

Who are taking 'gap years'?

Background is an important influence on the decision to take a gap year. The group with the highest proportion of gap year takers was those from managerial and professional background (35. per cent and the lowest (24 per cent) likelihood to do so was revealed by those from routine occupations background.

Not surprisingly, academic achievement at school proved to be a major factor influencing gap years, with achievement of high grades allowing students to plan confidently ahead and accept deferred places. Those with higher UCAS tariff scores were much more likely to take the gap year, with 54 per cent of those with the highest tariff scores of 540 points or more giving a for not to proceeding directly from secondary education to HE. At the other extreme, only 15 per cent of those with zero tariff points cited a gap year as a reason for not going on to HE.

Taking a gap year was a more common reason among UK students and also more common in the youngest age group (18 and under). Analysing gap year students by both age and nationality shows that UK students who 18 and under were the most likely (44 per cent) to give 'taking a gap year' as a reason for not moving on to HE.

Black students were less likely than both white students and Asian students to indicate that a gap year was part of their decision.

Which students did not get the grades?

These findings reinforce the analysis of non-accepted respondents to the full survey. Again there were effects by occupational background. Those from a routine and manual background were most likely (26 per cent) and those from a managerial and professional background least likely (22.1%) to indicate that low grades had caused them not to proceed to HE.

Those over 25 were much less likely than all the other age groups to cite poor grades; only 11 per cent of this group suggested grades as a reason. The pattern shows that the younger the applicant, the more likely they are to cite insufficiently high grades. This finding reflects the greater likelihood of those in the younger age groups coming through the more 'traditional' route

from school and hence being more likely than those in older age groups to have been in receipt of conditional offers of places that they failed to satisfy.

It was also the case that UK students were more likely to cite lower grades than both EU students and other overseas students, perhaps for the same reason. In terms of regional differences, students from both Scotland and Northern Ireland were more likely to indicate that poor grades influenced their decision (39 per cent and 35 per cent respectively).

Current situation of those who did not proceed to enrol on UK HE courses in Autumn 2006

- 43.9% were currently working (ft, pt or self-employed);
- 19.2% stated that they were doing something else apart from the six given options;
- More than one in eight (13.4%) were in full-time higher education outside the UK. Of this sub-sample only 15.8% are UK students. The remaining 84.2% were split approximately equally between EU and other overseas students.

Figure 10.1: Current situation of non-participants, comparing UK, EU and other overseas 2006 applicants



Source: Futuretrack short (non-participant) survey, weighted.

In the case of respondents to the non-participant survey, the majority of UK respondents who had not proceeded to higher education in 2006, 63per cent indicated that they would be applying to enter a HE course in 2007. Furthermore only a small proportion of respondents (under 3 per cent) definitively ruled out any future application for a HE course.

The next stage

This advance report has explored the tip of the iceberg. We are now able to proceed with detailed statistical analysis of the survey data where we will relate the data collected from accepted applicants and both non-accepted applicants who completed the main survey and those who completed the short one. At the same time, we will be conducting follow-up interviews with samples of respondents to both surveys to complement and further explicate the survey responses. A report on the Wave 1 investigation will be published towards the end of 2007.

Because of the scale and comprehensiveness of the survey and the level of detail that we have about students' educational and social backgrounds – and the fact that it is to be a longitudinal study that will track students' decision-making *as they make the decisions* this is an unprecedented investigation. It will enable us to see the broad picture and map the UK undergraduate population as a cohort goes through the system, to see how students are confronted by, and able to manage, the obstacles and opportunities that they encounter. It will also enable us to focus, as through a microscope, on particular issues or categories of students: which students experience particular difficulties, why have students chosen to their courses, what has been the impact of choosing to study particular subjects, who is particularly constrained by debt, what is the longer term impact of taking a gap year or deferring study for other reasons, which students go on to postgraduate study and further professional training and most importantly, help to identify where further careers and career-planning information and guidance are required and can be most effective.

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Annex 1

Table A1: Comparison of gender, age and ethnicity profiles of respondents to survey of applicants, respondents to survey of non-accepted applicants and the HE applicant population

		<i>Respondents to survey of applicants (May/June 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Respondents to survey of non-accepted applicants (Dec 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Total population (%)</i>
Gender	Male	37.4	37.6	45.3
	Female	62.6	62.4	54.7
Age	under 21	78.8	65.2	74.5
	21 to 24	10.1	15.3	12.9
	25 and over	11.1	19.5	12.5
Ethnic group	Asian	8.0	7.4	8.3
	Black	4.1	6.2	4.7
	Mixed	2.4	2.0	2.3
	Other	0.8	0.9	0.9
	Not known	14.8	27.1	18.9
	White	69.9	56.5	64.8
N		115,402	6,456	506,304

Sources: Futuretrack 2006 survey and 2006 UCAS HE applicant population data

Table A2: Comparison of socio-economic background of respondents to survey of applicants, respondents to survey of non-accepted applicants and the HE applicant population

		<i>Respondents to survey of applicants (May/June 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Respondents to survey of non-accepted applicants (Dec 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Total population (%)</i>
Parental background (NSSEC) ⁷	Higher managerial and professional occupations	16.1	10.2	13.3
	Lower managerial and professional occupations	21.2	17.0	19.3
	Intermediate occupations	10.2	8.0	9.2
	Small employers and own account workers	4.5	4.0	4.9
	Lower supervisory and technical occupations	3.1	2.4	3.0
	Semi-routine occupations	9.2	8.6	9.0
	Routine occupations	3.7	3.3	3.9
	Not known	31.9	46.4	37.4
N		115,402	6,456	506,304

Sources: Futuretrack 2006 survey and 2006 UCAS HE applicant population data

⁷ Note: NSSEC is the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification - the occupationally-based socio-economic classification used for all UK national statistics and surveys since 2001.

Table A3: Comparison of domicile of respondents to survey of applicants, respondents to survey of non-accepted applicants and the HE applicant population

		<i>Respondents to survey of applicants (May/June 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Respondents to survey of non-accepted applicants (Dec 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Total population (%)</i>
Region	North East	3.2	2.8	3.2
	Yorkshire & The Humber	6.5	4.8	6.4
	North West	7.4	5.8	7.8
	East Midlands	5.7	3.8	5.3
	West Midlands	7.3	6.2	7.2
	Eastern	7.9	6.3	6.9
	Greater London	13.0	13.6	13.8
	South East	12.4	10.0	11.2
	South West	7.5	6.2	6.9
	Wales	3.8	2.9	4.2
	Northern Ireland	2.6	4.5	3.4
	Scotland	7.3	6.6	7.0
	Merseyside	1.8	1.1	1.9
	Other UK	0.0	0.0	0.1
	EU	6.1	10.6	5.9
	Other overseas	7.3	14.7	8.7
N		115,402	6,456	506,304

Sources: Futuretrack 2006 survey and 2006 UCAS HE applicant population data

Table A4: Subject of courses accepted to, comparing respondents to survey of applicants and the HE applicant population

<i>Subjects of accepted courses</i>	<i>Respondents to survey of applicants (May/June 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Total population (%)</i>
Combined arts	3.4	3.0
Combined sciences	1.7	1.6
Combined social sciences	1.2	1.3
General other, combined & unknown	1.4	1.4
Medicine & dentistry	3.5	2.3
Subjects allied to medicine	7.6	6.8
Biological sciences	8.3	8.0
Veterinary science, agriculture & related	1.2	1.1
Physical sciences	4.6	3.8
Mathematical & computer sciences	5.8	6.2
Engineering	4.9	5.4
Technologies	0.5	0.7
Architecture building & planning	1.8	2.2
Social studies	7.8	7.6
Law	4.8	4.7
Business & administrative studies	9.6	12.1
Mass communications and documentation	2.2	2.4
Linguistics classics & related	3.4	2.9
European languages, literature & related	1.4	1.0
Non-European languages and related	0.7	0.4
History & philosophical studies	3.6	3.3
Creative arts & design	9.9	11.0
Education	3.5	3.4
Sciences combined with social sciences	4.2	4.6
Social sciences combined with arts	2.8	2.7
N	100,392	390,890

Sources: Futuretrack 2006 survey and 2006 UCAS HE applicant population data

Table A5: Comparison of tariff points of respondents to survey of applicants, respondents to survey of non-accepted applicants and the HE applicant population

		<i>Respondents to survey of applicants (May/June 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Respondents to survey of non-accepted applicants (Dec 2006) (%)</i>	<i>Total population (%)</i>
Tariff points	0	30.9	50.7	38.8
	1 to 79	2.6	3.2	3.0
	80 to 119	1.5	2.6	2.0
	120 to 179	3.9	6.1	5.1
	180 to 239	7.0	6.8	8.1
	240 to 299	10.4	8.4	10.3
	300 to 359	12.0	7.0	10.7
	360 to 419	11.9	6.2	9.1
	420 to 479	8.9	4.3	6.1
	480 to 539	6.0	2.7	3.8
	540 plus	5.0	2.0	2.8
N		115,402	6,456	506,304

Sources: Futuretrack 2006 survey and 2006 UCAS HE applicant population data