

Working Paper 13

ANALYSES OF SQA DATA ON HIGHER STILL FOR 1999-2002

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This is the thirteenth Working Paper of the research project on *The Introduction of a Unified System* (IUS), funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

INTRODUCTION

The IUS project

This paper presents analyses of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) data for 1999-2002, carried out as part of the ESRC research project on *The Introduction of a Unified System of Post-Compulsory Education in Scotland* (IUS project), based in the Centre for Educational Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. The project followed the Higher Still reform of post-16 education through the first four years of implementation, in order to address four main research questions

1. What model of a unified system is emerging in Scotland?
2. What are the main features of the Higher Still policy process?
3. What is the role of schools and colleges in shaping the reform?
4. What issues arise in defining the boundaries of a unified system, and in articulating the system with sectors outside this boundary?

In addition to the SQA analyses, reported here, the project conducted surveys of all secondary schools and colleges in Scotland in 2000-01 and 2002-03, case studies of four schools and two colleges in 2001-03, interviews with key informants and documentary analysis. Further details of the IUS project are provided in other Working Papers on the project web site (www.ces.ed.ac.uk/IUS/iusindex.htm).

The main purpose of this Working Paper is to report on the analyses of SQA data and place in the public domain the detailed information to which we refer in other project publications. It consists of a brief introduction followed by a series of tables, each accompanied by a brief commentary. We do not attempt to discuss our findings in detail or assess their further implications. This is done in other Working Papers, especially WPs 10, 14 and 15.

Higher Still

More information on Higher Still and the context of its introduction is presented in other Working Papers, especially WPs 2 and 3. Here we offer a brief summary. Higher Still replaced existing post-16 school and college provision below higher education level with a 'unified curriculum and assessment' system of new National Qualifications (NQs). This system aimed to offer 'Opportunity for All', in the form of a 'climbing frame' structure of provision to support access and progression. It was designed to allow evolutionary change from the system it replaced. It was based on (40-hour) National Units, which corresponded to former National Certificate modules, which could be grouped into (160-hour) National Courses, which corresponded to former Highers and Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS) courses. A National Course comprised three normal-sized National Units and a fourth credit which included a graded external assessment. National Units could also be studied and certificated separately. The new system was available at seven levels (Access 1-3, Intermediate 1-2, Higher and Advanced Higher). Access 3, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 corresponded to Standard Grade Foundation, General and Credit levels respectively. Higher and Advanced Higher corresponded to Higher and CSYS respectively.

Compared with the provision it replaced Higher Still extended opportunities below Higher level, in the form of new units and courses at Intermediate level, or units and clusters at Access level (a cluster comprised three unit credits with no external assessment credit). Unlike the old NC modules, the new courses/clusters and units were formally 'levelled', they shared the same architecture as Highers and CSYS and they were designed to articulate with them and provide opportunities for progression to them. They were designed to cater especially for middle- and lower-attaining 16 year olds, with General or Foundation awards at Standard grade. Previously these students had had to choose between 'difficult' Highers and modules which were more appropriate in level but which had low status, less external recognition and an approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment which articulated poorly with Highers. Higher Still's climbing frame aimed to allow these students to access more appropriate opportunities as part of mainstream provision. It allowed for progression up one rung of the frame at a time, both within Higher Still and between Standard grade and Higher Still. Specifically, students entering S5 could now expect to progress from Foundation to Intermediate 1, from General to Intermediate 2 or from Credit to Higher. In the analyses below we describe these as the 'expected' progression steps.

Higher Still similarly aimed to include students with learning difficulties or other special needs within mainstream provision, especially through Access. It also aimed to promote parity of esteem for vocational and academic learning, and included vocational courses within its unified system. It introduced new National Courses in vocational subjects at Higher level: previously many vocational subjects had been only available as modules rather than courses. The new framework covered schools and colleges, in order to facilitate collaboration, to enhance progression and to raise the status of college provision.

Higher Still was phased in, beginning in the 1999-2000 session. To begin with the new NQs coexisted with 'old' NQs including old Highers, CSYS and unlevelled units (former NC modules). In the first year the priority was to replace existing 'academic' Highers and the newer forms of provision, such as Intermediate National Courses and vocational Highers tended to be added later. It is not possible to compare Higher Still directly with the system it

replaced, on the basis of SQA data: there are no integrated datasets and, in any case, some of the relevant measures would not be comparable. However in this paper we compare the first and third years of Higher Still implementation (1999-2000 and 2001-02 respectively). During this period more new NQs became available, especially in the new levels and new subjects not covered by the pre-existing provision. Our trend comparisons therefore show the impact of the development of the ‘climbing frame’ during the early years of Higher Still. They will underestimate the effect of Higher Still to the extent that the reform either had an immediate impact in its first year, or had a continuing impact after 2002.

The tables below cover:

- The volume of NQ study (as an indicator of opportunity for all)
- The structure of programmes: National Courses and separate National Units
- Levels of study
- Pass rates
- The balance of vocational and academic study
- Progression within the NQ framework: S5 to S6 (volumes, levels and pass rates)
- Progression within the NQ framework: into and within FE
- School-college collaboration
- The use of new NQs in S3 and S4
- The use of new NQs in special schools

We are particularly interested in the differences between schools and colleges, and among students with different levels of Standard grade attainment.

Data and definitions

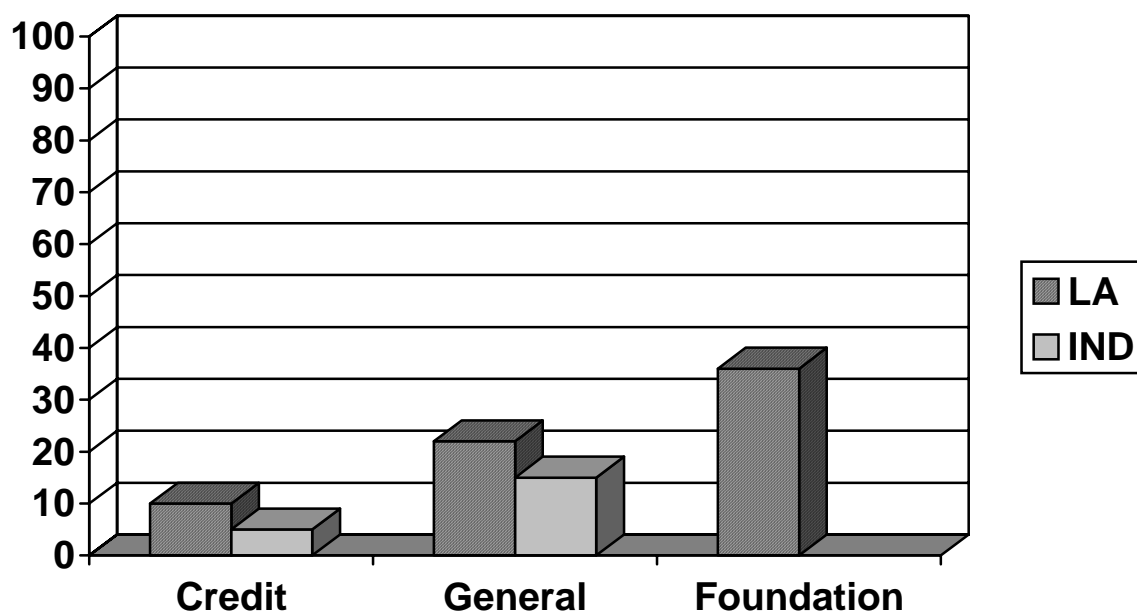
We use three SQA datasets: for 1999-00 (referred to as 2000), 2000-01 (referred to as 2001) and 2001-02 (referred to as 2002). The first part of the paper presents trends analyses based on the 2000 and 2002 datasets. The further analysis of progression uses data for 2001 and 2002, since more Higher Still provision was in place in these years. Data were provided by the SQA on all candidates who presented at least one new NQ unit in the relevant session. The data include full details of NQs, including old Highers and CSYS. For all three datasets information was also provided on prior Standard grade attainment. The information identified the gender and age of each student. The datasets include students presented by local authority (LA) schools, independent schools, colleges of Further Education (FE) and special schools.

We have created additional variables as follows:

- **School stage** was calculated from year of Standard grades and age. This method worked best for students in LA schools. It left about 1 in 10 independent school and 1 in 5 special school students unclassified (see Appendix).
- **Average Standard grade attainment** (Credit, General, Foundation) was based on S4 Standard grade attainment. This was mostly not available for those aged 21 or more in FE.

- **Volume of study** refers to NQ units and courses for which the student has enrolled in the relevant session. It is based on a simple measure which allocates four credits to each course, three credits to each cluster and one credit to each separate unit. It includes old Highers and CSYS courses and unlevelled units (former NC modules); it does not include Standard grades. Our measure of volume does not take account of the fact that some units were actually worth half an SQA credit and others were worth two or even three credits. This variability does not affect clusters and courses which were always worth three and four credits respectively. Our volume measure does not correspond precisely to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, which awards a higher credit value to units at Advanced Higher than to units at lower levels.
- **Pass rates** are calculated as (volume passed/volume of study), with volume measured as above. Overall pass rates can be calculated by two different methods. The method we use most often gives no credit for a failed course, even if some of the course component units (CCUs) have been passed. The second method, referred to as **pass rate (2)**, takes account of CCUs passed where a course was failed. Pass rate (2) is not available for 2000, as the dataset for this year does not provide details of CCUs.
- **Modal level of attainment** is the level at which the greatest volume of NQ attainment was achieved.
- **Mode of study** in FE was based on the total volume of NQ study, including old Highers and unlevelled units. Students whose volume of study in the session was 12 or more credits are classified as full-time.
- **Academic, vocational and other subjects** were defined for courses only, based on the following categorisation:

Academic		Vocational		Other
English	Geology	Administration	Hospitality	Physical Education
Maths	Classical Studies	Accountancy and Finance	Travel & Tourism	Religious and Moral
Biology	Greek	Business Management	Secretarial	Art and Design
Chemistry	Gaelic	Computing	Care	Drama
Physics	Psychology	Craft & Design	Engineering	Music
Geography	Sociology	Graphic Communication	Craft Skills	Personal and Social Education
History	Philosophy	Woodwork	Management Info. Systems	
Modern Languages	Media Studies	Technology		
Modern Studies		Info. Systems		
Human Biology		Home Economics		
Economics				
Latin				
Biotechnology				



All tables are based on the total numbers shown in Appendix A1 unless otherwise stated. A ‘-’ symbol is used in tables to indicate that there were fewer than 100 cases per cell. Where not otherwise specified base N’s are as shown in the Appendices.

VOLUME OF STUDY

Table 1: Average volume of study

(a) S5 students

	LA schools		Independent schools	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	19.69	20.07	19.71	19.87
General	16.88	19.28	17.12	18.24
Foundation	11.75	16.88	-	-

(b) S6 students

	LA schools		Independent schools	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	13.1	14.07	11.8	12.56
General	12.5	14.65	13.4	14.22
Foundation	7.6	13.54	-	-

(c) Full-time FE students

	Aged 15-17		Aged 18-20		Aged 21+*	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	15.89	16.11	15.49	15.92		
General	16.69	16.84	16.18	16.13		
Foundation	16.72	16.93	16.03	16.71		
Fewer than 5 SGs	17.00	15.92	16.32	16.05		
Unclassified	16.70	16.13	16.26	16.27	16.66	16.58

* Prior SG attainment was not available for this group

Table 1 shows students' average volume of NQ study. It compares different categories of students in 2000 and 2002, the first and third years of Higher Still implementation. The comparison shows the extent to which the development of the 'climbing frame' of mainstream provision at all levels increased 'opportunities for all' for SQA-certificated study.

- In 2000 the volume of study among S5 students in LA schools was strongly correlated with average Standard grade attainment.
- Between 2000 and 2002 the volume of study increased among all attainment levels, but it increased much more among General and (especially) Foundation students than Credit students. As a result the difference between the three groups became much smaller. There was a similar but weaker trend in independent schools, possibly reflecting their more limited use of the new Higher Still levels.
- Volumes of study in S6 were generally lower, but the trend was similar. The volume of study increased more among General and (especially) Foundation students than among Credit students.
- If the volume of study is an indicator of the availability of provision matched to students' prior levels of attainment, then we may conclude that Higher Still extended 'opportunity for all'.
- There was very little change in the volume of NQ study in the FE sector. This may reflect the more limited implementation in this sector and the fact that unlevelled units already met the needs of FE students at different levels more effectively than those of school students.

THE STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMMES: COURSE AND UNITS

Table 2: Courses as average percentage of volume of study

	2000	2002
S5 students, LA schools	63	77
S6 students, LA schools	71	80
S5 students, independent schools	92	94
S6 students, independent schools	88	86
Full-time FE students, aged 15-17	6	14
Full-time FE students, aged 18-20	8	17
Full-time FE students, aged 21+	5	14

Table 2 shows the average percentage of the volume of NQ study that comprised full courses (including old Highers and CSYS). This is an average percentage rather than an overall percentage: it does not weight students according to their volume of study. The remainder of the total volume of study comprised separate units, including the unlevelled units inherited from the old National Certificate system.

- As Higher Still provision was expanded between 2000 and 2002, the proportion of provision delivered through courses rather than units increased in LA schools and in colleges, but not significantly in independent schools.
- School provision became increasingly course-based; despite a proportionately large increase in course provision, full-time college provision remained predominantly unit-based.

Table 3: Courses as average percentage of study, by average Standard grade attainment

(a) S5 students

	LA schools		Independent schools	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	91	94	96	96
General	60	74	82	86
Foundation	18	42	-	-

(b) S6 students

	LA schools		Independent schools	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	86	85	88	85
General	66	77	87	88
Foundation	23	57	-	-

(c) Full-time FE students

	Aged 15-17		Aged 18-20		Aged 21+*	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	25	38	-	23	-	-
General	7	15	-	17	-	-
Foundation	2	9	-	13	-	-
Fewer than 5 SGs	-	8	-	12	-	-
Unclassified	-	14	-	19	-	14

Table 3 helps to explain these trends, by showing how course-based rather than unit-based provision varied across students with different levels of S4 Standard grade attainment.

- In LA schools the increase in course-based study occurred primarily among Foundation- and General-qualified students, probably because they were most likely to take advantage of the new National Courses at levels below Higher. Previously a relatively large proportion of their programmes had been unit-based.
- There was little net trend in independent schools, partly because there were fewer Foundation- or General-qualified students (see Appendix 1), and partly because General-qualified students already took predominantly course-based programmes.
- Among full-time FE students those with Credit-level qualifications were most likely to take courses (but they constituted only a small proportion of full-time FE students: see Appendix).

Table 4: Percent of students taking courses (2002)

	LA schools		Independent schools		Full-time FE		
	S5	S6	S5	S6	15-17	18-20	21+
Credit	99	96	99.6	95	53	35	-
General	85	90	95	97	31	32	-
Foundation	54	74	-	-	23	32	-
Fewer than 5 SGs	-	-	-	-	18	23	-
Unclassified	-	-	-	-	28	31	30

Table 4 shows, for 2002 only, the percentage of students who took at least one course.

- Most school students took at least one course, although Foundation-qualified students were still less likely than other students to do so.
- No more than a third of FE students took any courses, except among the handful with average Credit level at Standard grade.

LEVELS OF STUDY

Table 5: Average percentage of study at each level

(a) S5, LA schools

		Acc1	Acc2	Acc3	Int1	Int2	Higher	Unlev- elled
Credit	2000		Access: 1		1	6	90	2
	2002	<1	<1	<1	1	9	89	<1
General	2000		Access: 1		12	33	47	7
	2002	<1	<1	<1	13	50	36	<1
Foundation	2000		Access: 3		42	31	5	18
	2002	0	<1	2	57	37	3	<1

(b) S5, Independent schools

		Acc1	Acc2	Acc3	Int1	Int2	Higher	Unlev- elled
Credit	2000		<1		<1	2	97	1
	2002	0	0	<1	<1	3	96	<1
General	2000		<1		2	23	73	2
	2002	0	0	<1	2	33	64	1

(c) S6, LA schools

		Acc1	Acc2	Acc3	Int1	Int2	Higher	AH/ CSYS	Unlev- elled
Credit	2000		Access: 1		3	6	59	28	3
	2002	<1	<1	<1	2	7	58	32	<1
General	2000		Access: 1		6	16	69	4	5
	2002	<1	<1	<1	5	23	67	5	<1
Foundation	2000		Access: 3		24	37	25	<1	12
	2002	0	<1	1	30	51	17	<1	<1

(d) S6, Independent schools

		Acc1	Acc2	Acc3	Int1	Int2	Higher	AH/ CSYS	Unlev- elled
Credit	2000		<1		1	3	55	38	3
	2002	0	0	<1	1	5	49	44	1
General	2000		<1		<1	7	83	7	2
	2002	0	0	<1	1	9	80	9	1

(e) Full-time FE students, aged 15-17

		Acc1	Acc2	Acc3	Int1	Int2	Higher	AH/ CSYS	Unlev- elled
Credit	2000		1		7	24	46		23
	2002	0	<1	<1	6	29	60	2	2
General	2000		1		10	31	26		31
	2002	<1	<1	2	18	48	28	<1	3
Foundation	2000		3		13	32	15		37
	2002	<1	1	5	27	50	14	<1	3

(f) Full-time FE students, aged 18-20

		Acc1	Acc2	Acc3	Int1	Int2	Higher	AH/ CSYS	Unlev- elled
Credit	2000		<1		6	26	40		27
	2002	0	<1	<1	6	35	52	2	5
General	2000		1		8	28	35		29
	2002	0	<1	1	11	41	41	<1	5
Foundation	2000		2		12	31	23		31
	2002	<1	<1	3	19	49	23	<1	5

(g) Full-time FE students, aged 21+

		Acc1	Acc2	Acc3	Int1	Int2	Higher	AH/ CSYS	Unlev- elled
Credit	2000		1		12	34	27		26
	2002	<1	<1	2	16	45	31	<1	4

Table 5 shows the average percentage of the volume of study at each of the Higher Still levels. Unlevelled study refers to the old National Certificate modules incorporated into the NQ framework. The percentages are averaged across students and not weighted according to the total volume of study of each student. Because it shows averages the table does not reveal the extent to which individual students mixed levels within their programmes.

As described in the introduction, the ‘expected’ progression of S5 students is from Foundation to Intermediate 1, from General to Intermediate 2 and from Credit to Higher. As the provision of new courses below Higher expanded between 2000 and 2002, Foundation- and General-qualified students should have been able to choose more opportunities that matched this expected progression pattern. The Standard grade attainment levels are averages across all subjects. Actual attainment levels could vary across subjects, so a student with a given average level of Standard grade attainment might take courses at more than one Higher Still level in S5. If students tended to choose the subjects in which they had done best at Standard grade for study in S5, we might find slightly higher than ‘expected’ average levels of S5 study.

- Between 2000 and 2002 there was an increase in the average proportion of school students’ programmes at levels below Higher.
- S5 students with average Foundation and General attainments at Standard grade took programmes of study at levels that were more consistent with the expected progression from Standard grade, and by implication more suited to their prior levels of attainment.
- There was a much weaker relationship between Standard grade attainment and level of study in FE than in school, even among younger students. The main change in FE was the replacement of unlevelled units; this makes the net changes in level of programmes harder to interpret.

Table 6: Average volume of NQ study: total, by course/unit and by level (S5 students in LA schools)

Average Standard Grade attainment	Credit		General		Foundation	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Total volume	19.69	20.07	16.88	19.28	11.75	16.88
Full courses	18.1	18.81	11.1	14.8	3	8
Separate units	1.6	1.30	5.8	4.5	8.7	8.8
Access 1-3	.09	.04	.19	.08	.38	.33
Intermediate 1	.27	.2	2.03	2.5	4.95	9.6
Intermediate 2	1.2	1.9	5.6	9.7	3.65	6.3
Higher	17.8	17.9	7.9	6.9	.65	.54
Unlevelled	.34	.03	1.1	.05	2.13	.08
N	12192	14756	23098	21906	4905	4126

Table 6 summarises the information from Tables 1-5 (on the total volume of study, the breakdown between courses and units and the level of study) for S5 students in LA schools. The first row of Table 6 presents identical figures to those in part of Table 1. The remaining rows differ from the earlier tables because they show average volume measures rather than percentages of total volume.

- The volume of NQ study in S5 increased among all attainment levels between 2000 and 2002, but it increased much more among General- and (especially) Foundation-qualified students than Credit students.
- The average General student in 2002 took almost one more course than in 2000 (each course is worth four ‘credits’). The average Foundation-qualified student took more than one more course.
- The average General-qualified student in 2002 increased their study at Intermediate 2 by the equivalent of one course. The average Foundation-qualified student increased their volume of study at both Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 levels. Both groups slightly reduced their volume study at Higher level and of unlevelled units.

PASS RATES

Table 7: Pass rates: S5, LA schools

(a) Courses

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.88	.84	.94	.93	.90	.96
<i>N</i>	12066	14550	2218	4570	146	302
General	.51	.47	.67	.70	.80	.74
<i>N</i>	15815	13490	13346	17195	3561	6139
Foundation	.20	.21	.41	.45	.49	.38
<i>N</i>	253	150	1052	1621	1386	2072

(b) Separate units (Intermediate 1 to Higher)

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.45	.37	.75	.66	.85	.72
<i>N</i>	2501	3321	2765	3013	1890	1122
General	.41	.27	.61	.33	.75	.44
<i>N</i>	10344	8717	15297	10794	12882	5466
Foundation	.41	.34	.39	.23	.50	.24
<i>N</i>	1141	802	3655	2807	4032	2871

(c) Other levels (2002 only)

	Acc3 clusters	Acc3 extra units	Unlevelled
Credit	-	.79	.79
<i>N</i>		441	369
General	-	.72	.65
<i>N</i>		1100	960
Foundation	.89	.53	.39
<i>N</i>	132	482	263

(d) Overall pass rates (2000)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit	.89	.69	.87	18.1	19.69	16.1	17.1
<i>N</i>	12069	6169					
General	.59	.59	.56	11.1	16.88	6.7	9.7
<i>N</i>	19070	20824					
Foundation	.43	.43	.39	3	11.8	1.3	5
<i>N</i>	1877	4894					

(e) Overall pass rates (2002)

		Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Pass rate: course component units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit		.85	.55	.97	.83	18.8	20.07	16.2	16.7
	<i>N</i>	14564	6455	14563					
General		.62	.35	.93	.52	14.8	19.28	9.3	10.3
	<i>N</i>	18627	16121	18611					
Foundation		.40	.26	.85	.27	8	16.88	3.3	4.8
	<i>N</i>	2241	3742	2233					

(f) Additional data (2002)

		Volume passed: CCUs	Pass rate (2): incl completed CCUs in failed courses	Total volume passed: inc CCUs
Credit		14.35	.91	18.91
	<i>N</i>			
General		11.02	.70	14.41
	<i>N</i>			
Foundation		5.84	.41	8.14
	<i>N</i>			

Tables 7-13 show pass rates for each category of school and FE student. Each pass rate is presented as an average across students: it does not weight students according to the total volume of study. Overall pass rates follow the definition in the introduction, and do not give credit for completed course component units (CCUs) of failed courses. However, Table 7f indicates (for S5 LA students in 2002 only) the likely implications of this definition. It shows the pass rates for course component units (excluding the external assessment), whether or not courses were completed; the pass rates defined to include completed course component units (CCUs) of failed courses; and the total volume of attainment including completed CCUs. However, these data are less reliable than the other estimates (and may not add up precisely as expected) because they do not allow for the varying size of units and assume that each unit is worth one credit.

Higher Still aimed to improve attainment by, among other things, providing opportunities that matched students' prior levels of attainment. Among S5 students, therefore, we are particularly interested in the pass rates of students studying at their 'expected' levels.

- S5 students in LA schools had higher pass rates in courses, the lower the level of the course and the higher their own Standard grade attainment level.
- However, there was a gradient of success, related to Standard grade attainment, even among students studying at their 'expected' levels. That is, pass rates were higher among Credit-qualified students progressing to Higher than among General-qualified students progressing to Intermediate 2, and they were particularly low among Foundation-qualified students progressing to Intermediate 1. This gradient did not become less steep between 2000 and 2002.
- Pass rates for separate units were less strongly correlated with Standard grade attainment, especially at Higher level. They tended to be lower than for courses, especially among Credit-qualified students, and they declined between 2000 and 2002. This may reflect the

lower importance attached to units given the emphasis on courses (at least, within schools).

- The gradient of success in overall pass rates did not improve between 2000 and 2002 (and the position of Foundation students became worse). However, these pass rates must be related to the higher volumes of study. The total volume of successful study was relatively stable: it increased slightly for General-qualified students and fell slightly for Credit- and Foundation-qualified students. However, the total volume of attainment in National Courses increased, especially for General- and Foundation-qualified students.
- In 2002, the average Credit-qualified student in S5 achieved four courses and one unit; the average General-qualified student achieved rather more than two courses and one unit; the average Foundation-qualified student achieved less than one course and one and a half units. (These figures exclude completed units of failed courses.)
- Pass rates in component units of courses were much higher than in courses. (Students who failed courses more often failed the external assessment.)
- If credit is given for completed component units of failed courses, there is still a gradient of success in pass rates and in the total volume of attainment, but it is not as steep as otherwise. Overall pass rates look better.

Table 8: Pass rates: S6, LA schools

(a) Courses (Intermediate 1 to Higher)

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.90	.84	.89	.91	.95	.91
<i>N</i>	8301	10261	837	1698	170	435
General	.57	.48	.68	.68	.83	.78
<i>N</i>	10715	9960	3010	4952	655	983
Foundation	.14	.22	.43	.38	.57	.47
<i>N</i>	253	193	259	456	141	318

(b) Separate units (Intermediate 1 to Higher)

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.41	.34	.65	.53	.84	.62
<i>N</i>	1793	3241	1996	2478	1733	1328
General	.32	.22	.60	.35	.79	.49
<i>N</i>	4815	4716	5092	3824	3790	1611
Foundation	.41	.22	.54	.28	.73	.37
<i>N</i>	329	205	626	442	641	281

(c) Other levels (2002 only)

	Acc3 extra units	Unlevellled	Adv Higher/ CSYS courses	Adv Higher extra units
Credit	.78	.64	.72	.22
<i>N</i>	433	238	7307	2371
General	.71	.48	.54	.20
<i>N</i>	392	331	1643	876
Foundation	-	-	-	-
<i>N</i>				

(d) Overall pass rates (2000)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit <i>N</i>	.86 9114	.65 5113	.82	11.5	13.1	9.9	10.9
General <i>N</i>	.59 11092	.57 10344	.58	9.4	12.5	5.7	7.2
Foundation <i>N</i>	.35 443	.63 1147	.58	3	7.6	1.1	3.3

(e) Overall pass rates (2002)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Pass rate: course component units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit <i>N</i>	.80 11446	.40 6956	.94 11399	.73	12.1	14.07	9.7	10.3
General <i>N</i>	.53 10667	.31 7883	.89 10593	.47	11.7	14.65	6.4	7
Foundation <i>N</i>	.38 549	.29 608	.83 546	.33	8.8	13.54	3.4	4.5

Table 8 describes S6 students. In 2000 the S6 curriculum was less affected than the S5 curriculum by Higher Still; Advanced Highers were not phased in until the following year, but many students took courses or units at other levels (see Table 5).

- For each level of course, pass rates in S6 were similar to those in S5 among members of the same Standard grade attainment group, despite the fact that S6 students were a year older.
- As in S5, pass rates for separate units were less strongly correlated with Standard grade attainment (especially at Higher level), they tended to be lower than for courses and they declined between 2000 and 2002.
- Overall pass rates fell sharply between 2000 and 2002, and the gradient across Standard grade attainment levels tended to become steeper. This was partly due to the fall in pass rates for separate units.
- The decline in overall pass rates was largely compensated by the increase in volume of NQ study, and the total volume of attainment changed less.
- In 2002, the average Credit-qualified student in S6 achieved nearly two and a half courses and half a unit; the average General-qualified student achieved more than one and a half courses and half a unit; the average Foundation-qualified student achieved less than one course and one unit. These figures exclude completed units of failed courses.

Table 9: S5, Independent schools**(a) Courses (Intermediate 2 and Higher)**

	Higher		Int2	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.93	.91	-	.93
<i>N</i>	1846	1992		209
General	.52	.51	.70	.80
<i>N</i>	466	271	261	220

(b) Separate units (Intermediate 2 and Higher)

	Higher		Int2	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.36	.46	.75	.72
<i>N</i>	257	588	180	157
General	.38	.33	.55	-
<i>N</i>	263	133	158	

(c) Overall pass rates (2000)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit	.94	.65	.92				
<i>N</i>	1846	580	1856	19.0	19.7	17.9	18.3
General	.58	.47	.56				
<i>N</i>	502	360	517	14.4	17.1	8.6	9.7

(d) Overall pass rates (2002)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Pass rate: course component units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit	.92	.55	.98	.90	19.1	19.9	17.6	18.0
<i>N</i>	1994	775	1993					
General	.61	.38	.95	.56	15.9	18.2	9.8	10.4
<i>N</i>	299	195	299					

Table 9 describes S5 students in independent schools. Data for Foundation students and Intermediate 1 students are not shown except as part of overall totals because numbers are too small.

- Compared with LA schools, pass rates were slightly higher in independent schools and there was less change between 2000 and 2002. However the same gradient of success between Credit and General students is present.
- In 2002, the average Credit student in S5 achieved slightly more (about a third of a course) than his or her LA counterpart. There was no difference in attainment among General-qualified students.

Table 10: S6, Independent schools

(a) Courses (Intermediate 1 to Higher)

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.93	.88	-	-	-	-
<i>N</i>	1194	1179				
General	.64	.55	-	-	-	-
<i>N</i>	351	256				

(b) Separate units (Intermediate 1 to Higher)

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.45	.56	.80	.78	.93	.86
<i>N</i>	243	360	209	453	106	149
General	.37	-	-	-		-
<i>N</i>	109					

(c) Other levels (2002 only)

	Unlevelled	Adv Higher/ CSYS courses	Adv Higher extra units
Credit	.60	.84	.30
<i>N</i>	136	1101	261
General	-	-	-
<i>N</i>			

(d) Overall pass rates (2000)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit	.91	.73	.88	10.7	11.8	9.7	10.4
<i>N</i>	1422	695	1488				
General	.65	.52	.63	12.0	13.4	7.9	8.5
<i>N</i>	358	191	367				

(e) Overall pass rates (2002)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Pass rate: course component units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit	.87	.62	.97	.81	11	12.6	9.5	10.3
<i>N</i>	1529	991	1522					
General	.56	.43	.93	.53	12.7	14.2	7.3	7.7
<i>N</i>	262	153	260					

Table 10 describes S6 students in independent schools.

- As for S5, S6 pass rates were slightly higher in independent schools than in LA schools, although they fell between 2002 and 2002. Total volumes of attainment were similar to LA schools.

Table 11: Full-time FE students, aged 15-17

(a) Courses

	Higher		Int2	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit <i>N</i>	-	.63 189	-	-
General <i>N</i>	.40 274	.32 592	.59 237	.50 920
Foundation <i>N</i>	-	-	-	.27 347

(b) Separate units (Intermediate 1 to Higher)

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit <i>N</i>	.82 145	.69 293	.86 153	.80 293	-	.77 163
General <i>N</i>	.67 3183	.63 3309	.73 3806	.69 4416	.75 2640	.71 3419
Foundation <i>N</i>	.58 961	.50 999	.63 1405	.55 1793	.67 1216	.58 1638

(c) Other levels (2002 only)

	Acc2 separate units	Acc3 separate units	Unlevelled	Adv H separate units
Credit <i>N</i>	-	-	-	-
General <i>N</i>	.55 118	.74 843	.71 1333	.59 107
Foundation <i>N</i>	.60 140	.65 606	.56 565	-

(d) Overall pass rates (2000)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit <i>N</i>	-	.80 168	.81	3.8	15.9	2.8	13.0
General <i>N</i>	.51 495	.71 4015	.71	1.0	16.7	0.5	11.8
Foundation <i>N</i>	.35 100	.61 1584	.61	0.4	16.7	0.1	10.3
Fewer than 5 SGs <i>N</i>	-	.51 222	.51	0.6	17	0.3	8.9
Unclassified <i>N</i>	.51 134	.64 1373	.63	0.8	16.7	0.4	10.6

(e) Overall pass rates (2002)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Pass rate: course component units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit N	.63 217	.70 345	.81 215	.73	5.8	16.11	3.7	11.8
General N	.45 1434	.68 4535	.76 1426	.65	2.4	16.84	1.1	11.0
Foundation N	.28 425	.56 1845	.65 422	.54	1.5	16.93	0.4	9.1
Fewer than 5 SGs N	-	.44 294	-	.42	1.3	15.92	0.3	6.9
Unclassified N	.37 419	.59 1450	.75 413	.56	2.2	16.13	0.9	9.3

Table 11 describes full-time FE students aged 15-17. It does not include school students who studied particular subjects in FE, who were presented through their school.

- Compared with S5 students in LA schools (Table 7), FE students had lower pass rates in courses but much higher pass rates in units. Many more FE students studied units than studied courses.
- FE students had higher pass rates in units, the lower the level of the course and the higher their own Standard grade attainment level. However, both relationships were much weaker than with respect to course pass rates among S5 school students.
- There was still a gradient of success among students studying at their 'expected' levels. That is, pass rates were higher among Credit students studying at Higher level than among General students studying at Intermediate 2, and they were lowest among Foundation students studying at Intermediate 1. This gradient was less steep than the gradient in course pass rates among S5 school students.
- Pass rates declined between 2000 and 2002. The total volume of study remained relatively constant, so there was a decline in the total volume of FE attainment among students in each Standard grade attainment group.

Table 12: Full-time FE students, aged 18-20

(a) Courses

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit N	-	-	-	-	-	-
General N	.45 275	.40 552	.60 120	.55 318	-	-
Foundation N	-	-	-	.34 166	-	-

(b) Separate units

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Credit	.86	.79	.89	.83	-	-
<i>N</i>	191	167	200	167		
General	.73	.68	.78	.71	.78	.73
<i>N</i>	2364	2095	2532	2373	1412	1454
Foundation	.58	.53	.64	.59	.67	.63
<i>N</i>	537	483	654	705	484	555

(c) Other levels (2002 only)

	Acc3 extra units	Unlevelled
Credit	-	-
<i>N</i>		
General	.82	.71
<i>N</i>	319	690
Foundation	.77	.55
<i>N</i>	151	243

(d) Overall pass rates (2000)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit	-	.87	.87	1.4	15.5	1.1	13.5
<i>N</i>		206					
General	.50	.75	.75	1.2	16.2	0.6	12.1
<i>N</i>	365	2659					
Foundation	-	.63	.63	0.6	16	0.2	10.1
<i>N</i>		704					
Fewer than 5 SGs	-	.59	.59	0.7	16.3	0.4	9.8
<i>N</i>		152					
Unclassified	.59	.63	.63	1.5	16.3	1	10.4
<i>N</i>	145	976					

(e) Overall pass rates (2002)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Pass rate: course component units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Credit	-	.79	-	.77	3.5	15.9	2	12.4
<i>N</i>		179						
General	.46	.69	.76	.67	2.8	16.1	1.3	10.9
<i>N</i>	819	2478	807					
Foundation	.33	.60	.69	.56	2.3	16.7	0.7	9.3
<i>N</i>	234	731	234					
Fewer than 5 SGs	-	.58	-	.56	1.9	16.1	0.8	9
<i>N</i>		141						
Unclassified	.49	.62	.74	.61	3	16.3	1.5	10
<i>N</i>	601	1772	597					

Table 12 describes full-time FE students aged 18-20

- Unit pass rates show a similar pattern to those among younger students. As for the younger group, pass rates and total volumes of attainment tended to fall.

Table 13: Full-time FE students, aged 21+**(a) Courses**

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Unclassified	.69	.55	.70	.62	-	.68
<i>N</i>	307	946	332	1196		158

(b) Separate units (Intermediate 1 to Higher)

	Higher		Int2		Int1	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Unclassified	.78	.75	.81	.77	.82	.78
<i>N</i>	5152	5312	5910	6590	4214	5151

(c) Other levels (2002 only)

	Acc2 extra units	Acc3 extra units	Unlevelled	Adv Higher extra units
Unclassified	.64	.82	.77	.63
<i>N</i>	179	1413	2319	213

(d) Overall pass rates (2000)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Unclassified	.70	.79	.79	0.8	16.7	0.5	13.2
<i>N</i>	618	6111					

(e) Overall pass rates (2002)

	Pass rate: courses	Pass rate: separate units	Pass rate: course component units	Overall pass rate	Volume of courses studied	Total volume of study	Volume of courses passed	Total volume passed
Unclassified	.60	.76	.85	.74	2.3	16.6	1.4	12.4
<i>N</i>	2056	6789	2047					

Table 13 describes full-time FE students aged 21 and over. Precise comparisons with younger students are not possible because Standard grade attainment data are not available for this group.

- Pass rates declined slightly between 2000 and 2002, leading to a lower average volume of attainment.

ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL LEARNING

Table 14: Average percentage of academic, vocational and other subjects among S5 courses

Average Standard Grade attainment	Credit		General		Foundation	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
<i>LA schools</i>						
Academic	83	80	66	65	53	56
Vocational	10	12	22	24	36	34
Other	7	8	12	12	11	11
<i>N</i>	12069	14564	19070	18618	1877	2221
<i>Independent schools</i>						
Academic	90	87	74	72	-	-
Vocational	5	7	15	17	-	-
Other	5	5	11	10	-	-
<i>N</i>	1846	1994	502	299		

Table 14 shows academic, vocational and other subjects as a proportion of the S5 curriculum. The table is based on courses only, and may therefore underestimate the total amount of vocational and ‘other’ learning if this was more likely to be delivered as units. However the table may overestimate any trend towards vocational subjects if it includes new vocational courses which simply displaced old vocational units.

- Students with lower Standard grade attainments took more vocational courses in S5.
- The average proportion of courses in vocational subjects increased very slightly (by 2 percentage points) among Credit and general students between 2000 and 2002. It declined by the same amount among Foundation students, possibly reflecting the increased availability of ‘academic’ subjects below Higher levels.
- As a result the correlation between prior attainment and the type of curriculum – an indicator of the inequality of esteem – grew very slightly weaker.
- Students in independent schools took fewer vocational courses than in LA schools; like LA students they very slightly increased their study of vocational subjects.

PROGRESSION WITHIN THE NQ FRAMEWORK: S5 TO S6

Table 15: Volume of study at each level in S6 (in 2002) by modal level of attainment in S5 (in 2001)

(a) LA schools

Modal level of attainment in 2001	N	Total volume	Access	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher	unlevelled
Int 1	1524	14.2	0.08	2.7	7.4	3.8	0.1	0.04
Int 2	7414	14.8	0.04	0.6	3.5	10.2	0.5	0.03
Higher	14947	14.1	0.04	0.4	1.2	8.6	3.9	0.03

(b) Independent schools

Modal level of attainment in 2001	N	Total volume	Access	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher	unlevelled
Int 2	168	15.1	0.06	0.2	1.4	12.96	0.44	0.1
Higher	1744	12.5	0.06	0.12	0.63	6.3	5.2	0.13

Percentages are based on students with records in both years

The next set of Tables examines patterns of progression within the NQ framework among school students who took NQ units and/or courses in S5 in 2001 and in S6 in 2002. Appendix 2 shows the numbers of students involved.

Table 15 relates levels of study in S6 to the modal level of attainment in S5, that is as the level at which the largest volume of attainment in S5 was achieved.

- Between S5 and S6, students typically progressed from Intermediate 1 to Intermediate 2 or from Intermediate 2 to Higher. However students whose S5 attainment was mainly at Higher level tended to continue to study at Higher level more than at Advanced Higher level in S6.

Table 16: Pass rate at each level of study in S6 by modal level of attainment in S5: LA schools

(a) Courses only

Modal level of S5 attainment		Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher
Int 1		0.54	0.48	0.33	-
	N	493	1033	648	
Int 2		0.80	0.70	0.43	0.51
	N	575	3261	6306	612
Higher		0.90	0.84	0.79	0.70
	N	601	2564	12999	8253

(b) Separate units only

Modal level of S5 attainment		Acc 3	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher
Int 1		-	0.43	0.27	0.23	-
	<i>N</i>		434	845	494	
Int 2		0.71	0.48	0.36	0.22	0.23
	<i>N</i>	247	994	2413	3068	394
Higher		0.76	0.60	0.50	0.31	0.22
	<i>N</i>	532	1667	3210	4325	2794

(c) Courses and units

Modal level of S5 attainment		Overall pass rate	Acc 3	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher	unlevelled
Int 1		0.38	-	0.50	0.39	0.28	-	-
	<i>N</i>	1524		775	1395	958		
Int 2		0.45	0.71	0.60	0.57	0.39	0.41	0.50
	<i>N</i>	7414	250	1470	4676	7126	927	198
Higher		0.69	0.77	0.68	0.66	0.72	0.61	0.60
	<i>N</i>	14947	534	2207	5240	13974	9502	315

(d) Courses and units: pass rate (2) (incl completed CCUs of failed courses)

Modal level of S5 attainment		Acc 3	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher	unlevelled
Int 1		-	0.61	0.57	0.52	-	
	<i>N</i>		775	1396	971		
Int 2		0.71	0.62	0.65	0.65	0.61	0.50
	<i>N</i>	250	1470	4681	7145	990	198
Higher		0.77	0.69	0.69	0.80	0.77	0.60
	<i>N</i>	534	2207	5246	13975	9569	315

Table 16 shows pass rates at each level of study in S6, in LA schools.

- Students did better in S6 courses, the higher their modal level of S5 attainment, and the lower the level of the S6 course. The one exception was that Intermediate-2-qualified students had a lower average pass rate at Higher than at Advanced Higher.
- There was a similar pattern with respect to units, although unit pass rates tended to be lower especially at the higher levels.
- Higher Still's climbing frame did not appear to be easy to climb except for the best-qualified students. Among students following the 'expected' progression path, up one rung of the climbing frame, we find a pass rate of only 39 per cent at Intermediate 2 among Intermediate-1-qualified students, and the same pass rate at Higher among Intermediate-2-qualified students (based on courses and units in Table 15c).
- However, pass rates look considerably better if credit is given for completed units of failed courses (Table 15d: the two pass rates of 39 per cent in Table 15c, mentioned above, become 57 per cent and 65 per cent respectively).

Table 17: Pass rate at each level of study in S6 by modal level of attainment in S5: Independent schools

(a) Courses only

Modal level of S5 attainment		Higher	Adv Higher
Int 2		0.56	-
	<i>N</i>	161	
Higher		0.85	0.84
	<i>N</i>	1302	1164

(b) Separate units only

Modal level of S5 attainment	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher
Higher	0.87	0.77	0.54	0.29
	<i>N</i>	156	509	273

(c) Courses and units

Modal level of S5 attainment	Overall pass rate	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher	unlevelled
Int 2	0.57	-	-	0.54	-	-
	<i>N</i>	168		165		
Higher	0.79	0.87	0.79	0.81	0.77	0.60
	<i>N</i>	1744	161	589	1439	1245

(d) Courses and units: pass rate (2) (incl completed CCUs of failed courses)

Modal level of S5 attainment	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher	unlevelled
Int 2	-	-	0.79	-	-
	<i>N</i>		166		
Higher	0.87	0.80	0.87	0.86	0.60
	<i>N</i>	161	589	1439	1257

Table 17 similarly shows pass rates at each level of study in S6 in independent schools.

- S6 pass rates in independent schools were generally higher than in LA schools, but it is hard to compare the pattern across different levels of S5 attainment because of smaller student numbers in the levels below Higher.

Table 18: Overall pass rates and volumes of study by modal level of S5 attainment

(a) LA schools

Modal level of S5 attainment	Volume of courses	Volume of separate units	Pass rate courses	Pass rate separate units	Pass rate CCUs	Overall pass rate (2)	Vol courses passed	Vol separate units passed	Vol CCUs passed
Int 1	9.91	4.30	0.45	0.30	0.85	0.56	4.59	.91	6.3
	<i>N</i>	1524	1524	1208	1188	1199	1524	1524	1524
Int 2	11.85	3.00	0.51	0.31	0.89	0.66	6.16	0.66	7.65
	<i>N</i>	7414	7414	6658	4956	6628	7414	7414	7414
Higher	12.05	2.06	0.76	0.38	0.93	0.79	9.25	0.66	7.65
	<i>N</i>	14947	14947	14266	8811	14185	14947	14947	14947

(b) Independent schools

Modal level of S5 attainment	Volume of courses	Volume of separate units	Pass rate courses	Pass rate separate units	Pass rate CCUs	Overall pass rate (2)	Vol courses passed	Vol separate units passed	Vol CCUs passed
Int 2	13.62	1.53	0.59	-	0.93	0.80	8.33	0.49	9.64
	168	168	165		164	168	168	168	168
Higher	10.88	1.60	0.85	0.61	0.97	0.86	9.20	0.77	7.16
	1744	1744	1662	1083	1654	1744	1744	1744	1744

Table 18 shows the overall S6 pass rates, not controlling for the level of S6 study, and summarises the total volume of courses and units attempted and passed. The definition of pass rates gives credit for completed component units of failed courses.

- As in S5, there was a gradient of success across S6 students with different levels of attainment from the previous sessions, despite the tendency for students to take courses and units matched to their prior attainments. This gradient was steepest with respect to course attainment.
- Pass rates were lower for separate units than for courses. Pass rates in course component units (CCUs) were high (in other words students who failed courses tended to fail the external assessment).
- The average LA-school S6 student with Intermediate 1 qualifications from S5 achieved just over one full course and nearly one separate unit. The average Intermediate-2-qualified student achieved one and a half courses and two-thirds of a separate unit. The average Higher-qualified student achieved more than two courses and two-thirds of a separate unit.
- Pass rates in independent schools in S6 were higher, compensating for a smaller average volume of study among Highers-qualified students.

PROGRESSION WITHIN THE NQ FRAMEWORK: INTO AND WITHIN FE

Table 19: Volume of study at each level in 2002 by modal level of attainment in 2001 (full-time FE students aged 15-17 years in 2002)

Modal level of attainment in 2001	N	Total volume	Acc 1	Acc 2	Acc 3	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Adv Higher	unlevelled
Acc 3	595	17.28	0.08	0.36	0.90	4.27	8.34	2.82	0.01	0.49
Int 1	1286	16.75	0.02	0.08	0.43	3.72	8.44	3.50	0.04	0.52
Int 2	1735	16.68	0.00	0.01	0.19	2.39	7.71	5.76	0.05	0.57
Higher	624	15.98	0.00	0.05	0.15	1.12	5.30	8.60	0.27	0.49
Unlevelled	603	17.05	0.01	0.07	0.53	3.73	8.38	3.46	0.03	0.85

The tables in this section similarly examine progression patterns in FE. They cover full-time FE students aged 15-17 years in 2002, who had taken at least one new NQ, whether at school or college, in 2001. Table 19 relates levels of FE study to the modal level of attainment in the previous session.

- The level of study of college students was much less strongly correlated with the level of attainment than that of school students.
- The modal level of study in 2002 was Intermediate 2, among colleges students with all levels of 2001 qualification except Higher. College students with Higher qualifications from 2001 tended to continue to study at Higher level in 2002.

Table 20: Pass rates at each level of study in 2002 by modal level of attainment in 2001 (full-time FE students aged 15-17 years in 2002)

(a) Courses

Modal level of attainment in 2001	Int 2	Higher
Acc3	0.34	-
<i>N</i>	113	
Int 1	0.40	-
<i>N</i>	297	
Int 2	0.48	0.33
<i>N</i>	350	278
Higher	-	0.55
<i>N</i>		240
Unlevelled	0.48	-
<i>N</i>	141	

(b) Separate units

Modal level of attainment in 2001	Acc3	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	unlevelled
Acc3	0.65	0.61	0.60	0.56	0.62
<i>N</i>	189	526	568	341	172
Int 1	0.69	0.67	0.65	0.63	0.67
<i>N</i>	286	1031	1251	802	384
Int 2	0.76	0.74	0.73	0.66	0.70
<i>N</i>	225	1193	1656	1315	508
Higher	-	0.72	0.76	0.68	0.76
<i>N</i>		264	491	485	122
Unlevelled	0.71	0.68	0.64	0.58	0.69
<i>N</i>	148	499	576	383	206

(c) Courses and units

Modal level of attainment in 2001		Overall pass rate	Acc 3	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	unlevelled
Acc3		0.57	0.65	0.60	0.58	0.55	0.62
	<i>N</i>		190	526	574	347	172
Int 1		0.63	0.69	0.67	0.62	0.62	0.67
	<i>N</i>		286	1036	1259	819	384
Int 2		0.68	0.76	0.74	0.70	0.62	0.70
	<i>N</i>		225	1200	1680	1398	508
Higher		0.69	-	0.72	0.75	0.67	0.76
	<i>N</i>			264	509	593	122
Unlevelled		0.62	0.71	0.68	0.62	0.55	0.69
	<i>N</i>		148	501	586	396	206

(d) Courses and units: pass rates (2) (incl completed CCUs of failed courses)

Modal level of attainment in 2001		Acc 3	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	unlevelled
Acc3		0.65	0.61	0.61	0.57	0.62
	<i>N</i>	190	526	574	347	172
Int 1		0.69	0.67	0.65	0.64	0.67
	<i>N</i>	286	1036	1259	819	384
Int 2		0.76	0.74	0.73	0.67	0.70
	<i>N</i>	225	1200	1680	1398	508
Higher		-	0.72	0.76	0.72	0.76
	<i>N</i>		264	509	593	122
Unlevelled		0.71	0.68	0.64	0.58	0.69
	<i>N</i>	148	501	586	396	206

Table 20 shows pass rates.

- Most college students took programmes of units rather than courses.
- College students had higher average unit pass rates, the lower the level of units attempted, and the higher their own modal attainment level from the previous session. However in both cases the relationships were very weak: much weaker than in respect of school courses (Table 16 above).
- The gradient in overall pass rates across prior attainment levels was less steep than in schools. College students with modal qualifications below Higher had better overall pass rates in college than their contemporaries in S6 in schools. College students with modal qualifications at Higher had the same overall pass rate as S6 students with modal S5 qualifications at Higher.

Table 21: Overall pass rates and volumes of study in 2002 by modal level of attainment in 2001 (full-time FE students aged 15-17 years in 2002)

Modal level of attainment in 2001	Volume of courses	Volume of separate units	Pass rate courses	Pass rate separate units	Pass rate CCUs	Overall pass rate (2)	Vol courses passed	Vol separate units passed	Vol CCUs passed
Acc 3	1.74	15.54	0.34	0.59	0.73	0.59	0.55	9.22	0.94
<i>N</i>	595	595	144	593	144	595	595	595	595
Int 1	2.16	14.59	0.39	0.66	0.72	0.66	0.88	9.66	1.20
<i>N</i>	1286	1286	385	1276	384	1286	1286	1286	1286
Int 2	2.61	14.07	0.43	0.71	0.78	0.72	1.10	10.25	1.56
<i>N</i>	1735	1735	583	1700	581	1735	1735	1735	1735
Higher	4.40	11.58	0.55	0.70	0.74	0.73	2.53	8.65	2.28
<i>N</i>	624	624	271	545	266	624	624	624	624
Unlevelled	2.25	14.80	0.45	0.64	0.72	0.65	0.95	9.71	1.22
<i>N</i>	603	603	177	594	175	603	603	603	603

Table 21 shows overall pass rates – not broken down, as in Table 20, by the level of presentation in 2002. The ‘overall pass rate (2)’ covers all courses and units taken in 2002; unlike the overall pass rate in Table 20(c), with which it may be compared, it gives credit for completed component units of failed courses.

- For each level of attainment in 2001, average pass rates in courses in 2002 were lower, and average pass rates in units were higher, than among S6 school students (Table 18(a)). Overall pass rates were slightly higher than for S6 students, except among those with Highers qualifications.
- There was an overall gradient of success related to prior attainment, but this was less steep than among S6 school students.

SCHOOL-COLLEGE COLLABORATION

Table 22: Percent of school students taking NQs (including old Highers and unlevelled units) at college or other centre in 2002

	LA schools				Independent schools			
	S3	S4	S5	S6	S3	S4	S5	S6
Credit			4	12			<1	2
General			8	10			<1	1
Foundation			13	7			-	-
Unclassified	<1	1	-	-	<1	<1	-	-

Table 22 shows the percentage of school students taking NQs at a college or other centre.

- In S5, 4 per cent of Credit-qualified students, 8 per cent of General-qualified students and 7 per cent of Foundation-qualified students took NQs at college. The S6 figure was higher, especially for Credit-qualified students.
- Very few independent school students took NQs at college.

Table 23: Average volume of study at college or other centre (LA school students studying at college/other centre only)

	S5		S6	
	Total volume	Volume at college/other centre	Total volume	Volume at college/other centre
Credit	21 587	2.7	15 1386	3
General	21 1660	4.2	16 1147	3.3
Foundation	19 522	4.3	-	-

- The average S5 student studying at college took the equivalent of two-thirds of a course among Credit-qualified students, or just over one course among other students.

USE IN S3 AND S4

Table 24: NQ presentations in S3/S4 (2002)

	% taking 1+ NNQ units (incl. unlevelled)	Of those taking HS, % taking full courses	Average volume presented (all)	Average volume presented (those taking 1+ NNQ)
S3 LA	100	6	1.8	1.8
S4 LA	76	11	1.8	2.4
		44327		44327
S3 Ind	100	3	1.4	1.4
S4 Ind	43	23	1.1	2.6
		1180		1180

Table 24 shows the NQ presentations by S3 and S4 pupils in 2002, including unlevelled units inherited from the old NC system (but excluding Standard grade).

- NQs other than Standard grades were taken by all pupils in S3, and in S4 by three-quarters of LA school pupils and nearly half of independent school pupils. A large majority of these took only units. The average student taking any NQ units took between one and two units in S3 and between two and three units in S4.

Table 25: Average percentage of study at each level in S3 and S4 (2002)

	Acc1	Acc2	Acc3	Int1	Int2	Higher	Unlev- elled	Level mostly taken*	% taking this level
S3 LA	<1	7	20	36	7	<1	29	Unl	38
S4 LA	0	2	27	37	13	1	21	2 levels equal	44
S3 Ind	0	2	5	20	27	7	38	Unl	43
S4 Ind	0	2	10	6	56	13	13	2 levels equal	58

* Level with highest volume presented

- The most common levels of NQ presentations in S3 and S4 in LA schools were Intermediate 1, Access 3 and 'unlevelled'. Presentations in independent schools tended to be about a level higher.

Table 26: Pass rates in S3 and S4 (2002)

	Courses	Separate units	Course component units	Overall pass rate
S3 LA	.81	.69	.94	.70
S4 LA	.75	.71	.93	.71
S3 Ind	-	.83	-	.84
S4 Ind	.94	.80	.97	.82

- Overall pass rates were around 70 per cent in LA schools and over 80 per cent in independent schools.

USE OF NQS IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Table 27: Volume of study by school stage and year (special school students)

	S3/S4**	S3	S4	S5		S6		age 16-18 no SGs*	
	2000	2002	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Total volume of study	5.00	7.95	7.04	6.13	9.11	4.90	10.70	4.00	9.06
Volume of courses and clusters***	0.01	1.02	1.91	0.41	2.13	0.26	4.02	0.01	.74
Volume of separate units	4.99	6.93	5.12	5.71	6.99	4.64	6.67	3.99	8.33
Volume at:									
Access 1	0.01	0.85	0.10	0.00	0.26	0.00	0.16	0.03	2.31
Access 2	2.37	4.67	2.97	1.68	3.87	1.94	5.60	3.03	5.16
Access 3	1.14	2.05	2.85	2.04	2.81	1.29	2.67	0.88	1.34
Intermediate 1	0.36	0.24	0.83	0.85	1.38	0.43	1.16	0.23	0.16
Intermediate 2	0.09	0.08	0.14	0.42	0.59	0.27	0.55	0.09	0.05
Higher	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.20	0.14	0.30	0.53	0.00	0.02
Unlevelled	1.01	0.05	0.13	0.93	0.07	0.67	0.02	0.73	0.03
<i>N</i>	1253	1107	536	224	263	122	123	375	486

* Because school stage was derived from age and year of standard grades, this left a significant number of students in special schools unclassified. This category is included because it was reasonably large.

** It was not possible to distinguish S3 and S4 in the 2000 dataset because Standard grade information was not available

*** This shows courses only for 2000 dataset since no information was available on clusters.

The final set of tables describe the use of NQs in special schools. These include independent special schools as well as those run by local authorities. Information on clusters was not available for 2000. However, the component units of clusters are described in the data, so the volume measures are not affected (more precisely, they are only affected to the extent that the data assume that each unit is worth a single whole credit, ie takes no account of half or double units).

- In 2002 the average S3/S4 student in special schools studied seven or eight units (or equivalent), and the average S5/S6 student studied between nine and eleven units. These programmes mainly comprised separate units (see table 29, below).
- The most common levels of study at all ages and stages were Access 2 and Access 3.

Table 28: Pass rates by school stage and year (special school students)

	S3/S4	S3	S4	S5		S6		age 16-18 no SGs	
	2000	2002	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Overall pass rate	.64	.73	.66	.66	.69	.67	.69	.70	.70
Overall pass rate (inc CCUs passed)	na	.74	.67	na	.70	na	.74	na	.70
Pass rate courses* N	-	.76 238	.80 186	-	(.88 84)	-	(.81 74)	-	(.86 77)
Pass rate separate units	.64	.74 1103	.66 469	.67 224	.68 262	.67 122	.70 123	.70 375	.69 484
Pass rate: CCUs (excl. ext. assts)	na	.95 219	.87 182	na	(.95 84)	na	(.98 73)	na	(.90 74)
Pass rate at:									
Access 1	-	.78 274	-	-	-	-	-	-	.74 216
Access 2	.67 775	.76 837	.74 265	.66 128	.76 178	-	.71 108	.72 245	.70 375
Access 3	.72 757	.70 635	.67 371	.74 177	.65 201	-	-	.78 185	.67 197
Int 1	.76 343	.62 140	.56 189	-	.68 126	-	-	-	-
Int 2	.68 111	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unlevelled	.50 643	-	-	.61 112	-	-	-	-	.55 169
Overall N	1253	1107	536	224	263	122	123	375	486

*Courses only in 2000 since no information was available on clusters.

- Special school students achieved pass rates of around two-thirds, and in some cases up to three-quarters. There was a slight improvement between 2000 and 2002.

Table 29: Average percent of presentations that were full courses or clusters (special school students)

	2000*	2002
S3		09
S4	0.1	17
S5	2.5	15
S6	3	29
16-18, no SGs	0.1	06

*Courses only since no information was available on clusters in the 2000 dataset.

Table 30: Percent of students that took any full courses or clusters (special school students)

	2000*	2002
S3		21
S4	0.3	35
S5	5	32
S6	4	60
16-18, no SGs	0.3	16

Tables 29 and 30 describe the structure of courses.

- Special school students took mainly units rather than clusters or courses. More S6 students took courses/clusters but these comprised less than a third of their average volume of study.

CONCLUSION

The data presented here are interpreted and discussed in further detail in other Working Papers. Here we simply draw attention to three general themes:

- *Opportunity for All.* The volume of study by school students increased as Higher Still was implemented, especially for students with Foundation or General attainments at Standard grade. This increase was largely due to an increased volume of study at 'expected' NQ levels, that is at levels which appear to be better matched to students' prior attainments.
- *Attainment.* Despite this achievement, there continued to be a 'gradient of success'. Students achieved higher pass rates, the higher their levels of prior attainment, even if they were studying at the 'expected' NQ levels which, in principle, matched their earlier attainments. This was true both among students progressing from S4 to S5 and among those progressing from S5 to S6.
- *School college differences.* There were pervasive differences between schools and colleges in the use of new NQs and in patterns of attainment:
 - school programmes were predominantly and increasingly based on courses; full-time college programmes remained largely based on units;
 - compared with schools, the volume and level of full-time college programmes varied much less according to the prior attainment levels of students;
 - college attainment was generally higher in units than in courses; school attainment was generally higher in courses than in schools;
 - there was a 'gradient of success' (see attainment, above) in colleges as well as schools, but it was much less steep in colleges;
 - there was a general trend for less-qualified students to do better in college and for better-qualified students to do better in school;
 - nevertheless the NQ framework supported school-college collaboration.

APPENDIX 1

NUMBERS OF STUDENTS COVERED BY THE DATASETS

Numbers of students (2000): schools

Stage	LA schools	Independent schools	Special (LA and Ind)	Total
S3 or S4	72542	1305	1253	75100
S5	40844	2442	224	43510
S6	24340	1989	122	26451
unclassified	4090 (3%)	599 (9%)	414 (21%)	5103 (3%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>141816</i>	<i>6335</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>150164</i>

Numbers of students (2001): schools

Stage	LA schools	Independent schools	Special (LA and Ind)	Total
S3	23801	722	1041	25564
S4	58263	2776	540	61579
S5	39748	2446	232	42426
S6	24092	1855	91	26038
unclassified	4132 (3%)	831 (10%)	538 (22%)	5501 (3%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>150036</i>	<i>8630</i>	<i>2442</i>	<i>161108</i>

Numbers of students (2002): schools

Stage	LA schools	Independent schools	Special (LA and Ind)	Total
S3	26601	929	1107	28637
S4	58029	2741	536	61306
S5	41369	2451	263	44083
S6	24653	1970	123	26746
unclassified	2983 (2%)	600 (7%)	577 (22%)	4160
<i>Total</i>	<i>153635</i>	<i>8691</i>	<i>2606</i>	<i>164932</i>

Numbers by average S4 Standard Grade attainment (2000): schools

	S5		S6	
	LA	Independent	LA	Independent
Credit	12192	1856	9507	1488
General	23098	517	13549	367
Foundation	4905	-	1182	-
<i>Total</i>	<i>40195</i>	<i>2373</i>	<i>24238</i>	<i>1855</i>

Numbers by average S4 Standard Grade attainment (2001): schools

	S5		S6	
	LA	Independent	LA	Independent
Credit	14361	1971	10198	1452
General	20976	335	12889	348
Foundation	3890	-	936	-
<i>Total</i>	<i>39227</i>	<i>2306</i>	<i>24023</i>	<i>1800</i>

Numbers by average S4 Standard Grade attainment (2002): schools

	S5		S6	
	LA	Independent	LA	Independent
Credit	14756	2003	11951	1602
General	21906	315	11867	271
Foundation	4126	-	741	-
<i>Total</i>	<i>40788</i>	<i>2318</i>	<i>24559</i>	<i>1873</i>

Numbers of students (2000): FE

Age	Part time*	Full time*
15-17	17109	7504
18-20	25620	4848
21+	68594	6180
<i>Total</i>	<i>111323</i>	<i>18532</i>

*Part-time/full-time: fewer than/more than 12 units respectively (based on total volume of NQ study including old Highers and unlevelled units)

Numbers of students (2001): FE

Age	Part time	Full time
15-17	11580	6253
18-20	11262	4088
21+	50767	5575
<i>Total</i>	<i>73609</i>	<i>15916</i>

Numbers of students (2002): FE

Age	Part time	Full time
15-17	11449	8688
18-20	11757	5573
21+	57654	6901
<i>Total</i>	<i>80860</i>	<i>21162</i>

Numbers by average S4 Standard Grade attainment (2000): full-time FE students

	15-17	18-20	21+
Credit	200	222	
General	4099	2727	
Foundation	1584	705	
Fewer than 5 SGs	223	153	
Unclassified	1398	1041	6156
<i>Total</i>	<i>7504</i>	<i>4848</i>	<i>6156</i>

Numbers by average S4 Standard Grade attainment (2001): full-time FE students

	15-17	18-20	21+
Credit	256	159	
General	3635	1955	
Foundation	1247	493	
Fewer than 5 SGs	179	112	
Unclassified	936	1369	5575
<i>Total</i>	<i>6253</i>	<i>4088</i>	<i>5575</i>

Numbers by average S4 Standard Grade attainment (2002): full-time FE students

	15-17	18-20	21+
Credit	410	200	
General	4635	2578	
Foundation	1846	735	
Fewer than 5 SGs	297	144	
Unclassified	1500	1916	6899
<i>Total</i>	<i>8688</i>	<i>5573</i>	<i>6899</i>

APPENDIX 2

NUMBERS OF STUDENTS WITH RECORDS IN BOTH 2001 AND 2002 DATASETS

Whether or not had record in 2001 dataset by main centre type in 2002

Main centre type in 2002	Record in 2001	Total (2002 dataset)
Other	6231	10207
LA secondary	90577	153635
LA special	1161	2061
Indep secondary	5364	8691
Indep special	257	545
FE centre	239	1020
FE college	39792	102787
2+ centres	443	1011
Total	144064	279957

Whether or not had record in 2001 dataset by stage/age by centre type in 2002

		Record in 2001	Total
LA secondary	S3	462 (1.7%)	26601
	S4	22138 (38.1%)	58029
	S5	41341 (99.9%)	41369
	S6	24592 (99.8%)	24653
Independent secondary	S3	8 (0.9%)	929
	S4	652 (23.8%)	2741
	S5	2448 (99.9%)	2451
	S6	1937 (98.3%)	1970
FE students (FT & PT)	15-17	14791 (73.5%)	20137
	18-20	9436 (54.4%)	17330
	21+	15542 (24.1%)	64555