



**University and College Union**

**‘Further, higher, better’**

**Submission to the government’s  
second Comprehensive Spending  
Review**

**Section 20**

## 20 Learners and students

### Further education

In England, full-time learner numbers in further education have dipped, but in 2003-4 were back to their level in 1997-8; there has been a significant growth in part-time numbers. Full-time equivalent learner numbers in FE sector colleges in England have fallen fairly consistently since 1997-8. In Wales, full-time learners fluctuated around the 45,000 mark in the period 1998-9 to 2002-3; part-time numbers have grown considerably. In Scotland, there was significant growth in both modes of attendance in 1998-9 to 2002-3. In Northern Ireland, numbers of part-time and full-time learners have stayed fairly constant.

### Further education, home and overseas students, UK

	England FE in sector colleges	England (LSC only)*		Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	FTE 000s	Full- time 000s	Part- time 000s	Full- time 000s	Part- time 000s	Full-time 000s	Part- time 000s	Full-time 000s	Part- time 000s
1994-5	946								
1995-6	1,023								
1996-7	1,050								
1997-8	1,010	937	2,510						
1998-9	1,010	903	2,413	43.9	162.4	37.0	253.6	20.6	55.8
1999-0	983	872	2,374	45.3	181.5	38.2	273.7	20.7	57.3
2000-1	955	851	2,552	44.6	186.2	41.3	313.8	20.7	57.3
2001-2	979	882	2,986	45.0	210.0	45.1	345.0	21.4	58.4
2002-3	945	928	3,270	44.8	213.7	46.0	329.3	21.5	54.0
2003-4		931	3,184	44.8	214.7	47.8	304.8	23.7	75.7

\* 2003-4: Further education institution figures for England include LSC funded students only and are not directly comparable with previous years prior to 2002-3.

LSC: Learning and Skills Council; FTE: full-time equivalent

Source: England: DfES departmental report (series), Foster Review, 2005; Rest of UK: National Statistics, Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom (series)

### Comment

It is a matter of concern that full-time equivalent further education learner numbers in England have fallen consistently since 1998-9. We urge the government to aim to maintain and increase levels of participation in further education. This will be necessary given the Chancellor's goal of providing universal education or training for young people to the age of 18.

## Higher education

Total UK student numbers between 1997-98 and 2004-5 rose by 27%. Within that total, the smallest increase was in full-time undergraduates, and the largest was in part-time undergraduates and full-time postgraduates, both rising by slightly more than 50%.

### UK HE students 1997-2005

UK HE students	Full-time u/grad	Part-time u/grad	Full-time p/grad	Part-time p/grad	Grand total	Grand total FTE	Grand total FTE: % change
1997-8	1,022,606	390,457	143,521	243,480	1,800,064	1,483,096	
1998-99	1,032,897	409,520	146,367	256,973	1,845,757	1,512,511	2.0%
1999-2000	1,027,400	420,310	151,330	257,290	1,856,330	1,517,530	0.3%
2000-01	1,037,880	504,045	172,285	276,410	1,990,620	1,600,393	5.5%
2001-02	1,069,210	547,020	186,345	283,505	2,086,080	1,670,818	4.4%
2002-3	1,111,310	566,305	206,755	290,745	2,175,115	1,746,590	4.5%
2003-4	1,141,850	581,760	220,395	303,435	2,247,440	1,804,843	3.3%
2004-5	1,165,445	588,665	226,060	306,575	2,287,540	1,839,125	1.9%
<b>1997-8 to 2004-5 % change</b>	14.0%	50.8%	57.5%	25.9%	27.1%	24.0%	

u/grad: undergraduate; p/grad: postgraduate; FTE: full-time equivalent.

Source: HESA, Students in higher education institutions (series); percentage calculations by AUT. A factor of 0.5 was used in calculating the full-time equivalent.

## Comment

We support the continued expansion of UK higher education, particularly with the emphasis on widening socio-economic class participation, but we are concerned that expansion should be adequately resourced.