National Foundation
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Use of an Aptitude Test in University Entrance -

a Validity Study:

updated analyses of higher education destinations, including 2007 entrants

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Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Sutton Trust or the College Board.

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1 Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

In 2005, the NFER was commissioned to evaluate the potential value of using an aptitude test[1] as an additional tool in the selection of candidates for admission to higher education (HE). This five-year study is co-funded by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Sutton Trust and the College Board.

The primary aim of the study is to examine whether the addition of the SAT® alongside A levels is better able to predict HE participation and outcomes than A levels alone. The main strand of this evaluation (reporting in 2010) will be based on those participating students who entered HE in 2006 and completed three-year degrees in 2009.

This report updates the initial findings from the analysis of the 2006 HE entry data to include students who entered higher education in 2007. It also reports on a survey of participating students and young people carried out in December 2008. (Both of these aspects of the study were funded solely by the NFER.)

For the full background to this study, details of the methodology employed in earlier parts of the research and key findings from the initial analyses of the student data please see the reports published in 2007 and 2008 (Kirkup *et al.*, 2007, Kirkup *et al.*, 2008).

1.2 Key findings

The findings from the analysis of the combined 2006 and 2007 HE entry data are very similar to those reported previously for 2006 entrants. Where differences have been found these are highlighted in the report.

The number of students in the sample likely to graduate in 2009 is estimated to be around 3100 (revised figure), with approximately 2400 further students completing their degrees in 2010. The 2009 figure represents the likely dataset for the main analysis in 2010, which will explore relationships between prior attainment, SAT® scores and degree outcomes.

Performance at A level was the strongest predictor of participation in HE and of obtaining a place on a course with high entry point requirements. Prior attainment at

[1] For the purposes of the study, the SAT Reasoning Test™ (known as the SAT®) was chosen because in an earlier pilot (McDonald *et al*, 2001a) this had been shown to be an appropriate test to use with UK students.

GCSE and SAT®) scores were also significant. Relationships between HE destinations and students' background characteristics were as follows:

- Comparing participants in the study with similar prior attainment:
    - Girls were more likely to be in HE than boys.
    - Asian and Black participants were more likely to be in HE and Chinese participants less likely to be in HE compared to White participants.
    - Participants with English as an additional language (EAL) were more likely to be in HE than those with English as a first language. (This was not the case using 2006 entry data only.)
    - Within HE, girls tended to enter courses with lower entry requirements than would be expected compared to boys.
    - Asian students and EAL students tended to enter courses with higher entry requirements than would be expected compared to white students and non-EAL students respectively.

- Comparing students in HE from maintained schools:
    - Students from more deprived areas were on average just as likely to be studying at more prestigious institutions (or on courses for which there is fierce competition), as students from less deprived areas with similar attainment and background characteristics.
    - Students in grammar schools tended to enter slightly less prestigious courses than would be predicted from their attainment.

- Comparing students in HE from both maintained and non-maintained schools (regression analysis using an affluence measure based on students' survey responses):
    - More affluent students were more likely to be studying on courses with high entry point requirements.
    - The overall GCSE performance of schools was positively related to the entry points of students' HE courses; i.e. students from higher-performing schools were more likely to achieve places on courses with high entry requirements than students from lower-performing schools when comparing students with the same level of attainment.
    - Students in grammar schools tended to enter less prestigious courses than would be predicted from their attainment, while those in independent schools tended to achieve places on more prestigious courses.

1.2.1 Findings relating to the potential use of the SAT®

Although small, the SAT® appears to offer some potential for providing additional information to aid the selection of HE candidates over and above the information provided by performance at GCSE and A level. Relationships between HE destinations and SAT® scores were as follows:

- For participants in the study with similar A level and GCSE attainment and similar background characteristics, but different SAT® scores, those with higher SAT® scores were more likely to be in HE.
- For students with similar attainment from similar schools, those with higher SAT® scores were more likely to have achieved places on courses with higher entry point requirements than students with similar attainment but lower SAT® scores. The difference in course entry points was greater between students from low-performing schools compared to students from high-performing schools.

Differences in SAT® scores may be useful in differentiating between students with similar attainment from schools within the same GCSE band (and that the utility of the SAT® for this purpose may be greatest within low-performing schools). The SAT® appears to be reflecting factors identified by admissions tutors on the most selective courses. The value of this information will depend on whether students with higher SAT® scores achieve better HE outcomes than similar students (attainment, background characteristics, etc) with lower SAT® scores. It will also be necessary to determine whether this information can be used to identify young people who would benefit from accessing these selective courses.

1.2.2 Findings from the 2008 survey

Of the 1427 participants who responded to the most recent survey, almost all (1315) were HE students. Although this represents only around 20 per cent of the participants known to be in HE, these survey respondents may provide a useful sub-set of students for more detailed analysis. For example, it may be possible to examine the effect of taking some of the survey findings into account when the relationships between prior attainment, SAT® scores and degree outcomes are explored.

There were some very large differences between students in their reported activities and ratings of their universities, e.g.:

- the number of hours spent attending tutorials, lectures, etc and carrying out private study (even allowing for some intentional misreporting).
- the number of hours in paid employment during term-time
- the amount / quality of pastoral care / support
- the amount / quality of feedback on work / progress.

Approximately half of respondents reported at least one issue that had had a major impact on their likely degree classification and 18 per cent had asked for such issues to be taken into consideration.

1.3 Structure of the report

Section 2 repeats a very brief summary of the aims and objectives of the research and the representation of the student sample. Section 3 describes the HE destinations of participating students entering HE in 2006 and 2007 including the relationships between HE, prior attainment and background characteristics. Section 4 details the findings from the 2008 survey and future phases of the study are outlined in the final section.

2 Introduction

In 2005, the NFER was commissioned to evaluate the potential value of using an aptitude test as an additional tool in the selection of candidates for admission to higher education (HE). For the purposes of the study, the SAT Reasoning Test™ (known as the SAT®) was chosen because in an earlier pilot (McDonald *et al*, 2001) this had been shown to be an appropriate test to use with UK students. This five-year study is co-funded by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills (BIS), the Sutton Trust and the College Board.

The primary aim of the study is to examine whether the addition of the SAT® alongside A levels is better able to predict HE participation and outcomes than A levels alone. The main strand of this evaluation (reporting in 2010) will be based on those participating students who entered HE in 2006 and completed three-year degrees in 2009. A supplementary data collection of the outcomes of 2007 HE entrants (funded solely by NFER) will enable a more complete evaluation to be finalised in 2011 (i.e. it will include 2006 entrants on four-year courses and some gap-year students).

For the full background to this study, details of the methodology employed in earlier parts of the research and key findings from the initial analyses of the student data please see the reports published in 2007 and 2008 (Kirkup *et al.*, 2007, Kirkup *et al.*, 2008).

In the 2007 report the analysis of the attainment data focused on the broad relationships between SAT® scores and total scores at A level and GCSE. These analyses showed that there were wide variations in SAT® scores amongst high-ability students with two or three A grades at A level, particularly in the Critical Reading and Maths scores. The 2008 report focussed on three issues: further exploration of the relationships between SAT® scores and attainment in particular individual A level subjects; analysis of HE 2006 entry data, using both Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) data and HESA / ILR data; and more complex modelling of the background data of students to create more sensitive measures of economic and educational disadvantage.

This report updates the findings from the analysis of the destination data to include students who entered higher education in 2007. It also reports on a survey of participating students and young people carried out in December 2008. (Both of these aspects of the study were funded solely by the NFER.)

In the following sections, the main features of the SAT®, a brief description of the sample and details of the data matching process are repeated in order to provide sufficient context relevant to an understanding of the analyses described within this report. For fuller details please see the 2007 and 2008 reports cited above.

2.1 The SAT Reasoning Test™

The SAT Reasoning Test™ comprises three main components: Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing. The Critical Reading section of the SAT® contains two types of multiple-choice items: sentence completion questions and passage-based reading questions. The Mathematics section contains predominantly multiple-choice items but also a small number of student-produced open response questions. Four areas of mathematics content are covered: number and operations; algebra and functions; geometry and measurement; and data analysis, statistics and probability. The Writing section includes multiple-choice items addressing the mechanical aspects of writing (e.g. recognising errors in sentence structure and grammar) and a 25 minute essay on an assigned topic.

2.2 Student sample

All schools and colleges in England with students taking two or more A levels were invited to participate in the study[2]. Approximately 9000 students agreed to participate and took the SAT® in autumn 2005. In January 2007 the data for these students was matched with the 2005/06 National Pupil Database supplied by the DfES[3]. The dataset included A level data, GCSE prior attainment data and, for any student educated within the maintained sector, Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data. The number of students with valid data on all three main variables (SAT® scores, A levels and GCSEs) was 8041, thereafter referred to as the 'main sample'. The 'national population' was derived from the same National Pupil Dataset by extracting those students taking two or more GCE A levels. Background characteristics for the sample were obtained by combining information from the PLASC data for students from maintained schools with information supplied by individual FE colleges and independent schools. A comparison between the main sample and the 'national population is presented in Table 1 of Appendix 1 and a comparison with the latest survey sample is given in section 4.

[2] For reasons of economy, A level students were chosen as the population that would be most likely to be affected should a test such as the SAT® ever be introduced (although inevitably this means that students following other routes into HE are excluded from the study).

[3] The DfES was replaced in June 2007 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). The latter has now become the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

3 Destinations after school or college

In early 2008 The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) matched participants in the SAT® study to the HESA and ILR databases of 2006 entrants to HE courses. According to their records, 5808 of the 8041 participants were enrolled on HE courses in the academic year 2006/07. In 2009 a further matching exercise took place, using the HESA/ILR databases for the 2007/08 academic year. In that year 6414 of the 8041 students in the sample were successfully matched to an HE course, largely at higher education institutions but with a very small number studying within the Further Education (FE) sector.

Based on the 2006 entrant data it was estimated that approximately 3400 students on three-year courses would graduate in 2009 and approximately 2400 in 2010. Taking into account the more recent data, the predicted figure for 2009 is now slightly lower. It now appears likely that around 3100 students will graduate in 2009, 2400 in 2010 and 770 after 2010. It is therefore predicted that the data set for the main analysis, based on 2009 graduates, will comprise a maximum of 3100 students and that the follow-up analysis, based on both 2009 and 2010 graduates, will have a sample size of approximately 5500.

3.1 Relationships between attainment, SAT® scores, background characteristics and HE destinations.

Based on the combined 2006 and 2007 entry data a comparison was made between the attainment and background characteristics of students currently in HE (including HE courses in FE) and those not (or not yet) in HE.

Comparing students who are currently in HE with those not in HE according to a number of broad background characteristics, it was found that:

- Female students were more likely to be in HE than male students.
- Asian or Asian British students were more likely, and Chinese students were less likely, to be in HE than other ethnic groups.
- Students with English as an additional language were more likely to be in HE than students with English as a first language.
- Students with missing data relating to eligibility for free school meals (generally students who attended independent schools for which there is no PLASC data) were more likely to be in HE than students with FSM data. However for students with PLASC data in the maintained school sector there was no significant difference between students eligible for FSM and those not eligible.
- Students from grammar schools and independent schools were more likely to be in HE than students from comprehensive schools and FE colleges.

These findings differ slightly from those carried out using 2006 entry data only. However, these initial results were based on simple comparisons only, looking at one background factor at a time (e.g. males versus females). A more sophisticated approach to examining this question is to use logistic regression[4]. This type of analysis takes into account all background characteristics simultaneously, including prior attainment. For example, are female students more likely to be in HE than male students with similar A level results, SAT® scores and background characteristics?

The results of a regression model are expressed as positive or negative factors, e.g. characteristics more likely to predict that a student will be in HE are positive and those less likely to predict a student will be in HE are negative.

The model was able to correctly predict students as being within HE or not, according to their attainment and background characteristics, in 81 per cent of cases. The factors likely to predict a student would be in HE (the significant positive factors) in order of importance were:

- total A level points
  (i.e. the higher the total the more likely the student will be in HE)
- mean SAT® score
- average GCSE attainment
- Asian ethnicity
- English as an additional language
- being female
- Black ethnicity.

Negative factors were:

- Chinese ethnicity.

Although many factors were included in the model not all of these were statistically significant. Non-significant factors suggest there will be no difference in the likelihood of being in HE between students with or without that particular background characteristic. Interestingly, some of the background variables in the simpler comparisons, which indicated students who were more likely to go into HE, are not

[4] Logistic regression is a variation of linear regression where the measure of interest (dependent variable) is binary, only taking the values of 0 or 1, indicating either possessing an attribute or not. In logistic regression the probability of possessing the attribute of interest is predicted, given the values of one or more related measures. For example, here we are predicting the probability that a student is in HE, given various background factors like the type of school they go to, their prior attainment measure and whether or not they are eligible for free school meals.

significant when attainment is taken into account. For example, different institution types, e.g. independent schools, were included in the regression but were non-significant factors. This means that students from independent schools would be no more likely, or no less likely, to be in HE than students from comprehensive schools with similar attainment and otherwise similar background characteristics. (However, whether students in comprehensive schools have an equal chance of achieving the same level of attainment is not considered here.)

Other non-significant factors were eligibility for free school meals or missing free school meals data, having Mixed or Other ethnicity, missing ethnicity data, having special educational needs, attending a grammar school or FE college.

These combined 2006 and 2007 findings are similar but not the same as those based on the 2006 HE entry data only. Average GCSE attainment and having English as an additional language were not significant positive factors in the 2006 data analysis and Chinese ethnicity was not a negative factor. In the analysis of the 2006 entry data, students with missing data on ethnicity or free school meals (generally students from independent schools) were found to be less likely to be in HE than students with similar attainment and otherwise similar background characteristics. This is not now the case using the combined entry data, suggesting that a higher proportion of such students entered HE in 2007, possibly following a gap year.

3.1.2 HE entry requirements

Having ascertained the institutions at which the students were registered and the courses they were taking from the HESA and ILR databases, the HE entry points for each student were estimated. These were based on the minimum standard tariff entry requirements for each particular course of study using information supplied by UCAS. High entry requirements may suggest a more academically demanding course or that competition for the institution or the particular course is such that the institution can restrict access to the most able candidates. In both cases high entry requirements indicate more that places on such courses are likely to be more difficult to obtain.

Of the 6414 students in our sample studying an HE course in the 2007/08 academic year, 5614 students were matched to the minimum entry points for their particular course. Not all 6414 students could be matched, in some cases because courses had no minimum requirements or because entry point information was not available. This subset of 5614 students compares to a dataset of approximately 4600 students used in the analyses reported in 2008. Although approximately 550 students from the 2006 HE data could no longer be matched, approximately 1600 students have been added by using the most recent HE data, a net gain of over 1000 students. This slightly larger sample increases the robustness of the findings.

Correlations between the entry points of the courses being studied and key attainment measures (total A level points, mean SAT® score, total GCSE points and average GSCE points) were calculated. Entry points were most closely associated with total A

level points (0.58) and average GCSE attainment (0.58). The correlation between mean SAT® score and entry points was 0.46. Students were then grouped into four roughly equal-sized groups according to the minimum entry points of the course for which they were registered and the attainment of these groups was compared. There were significant differences in the mean scores of the four attainment measures (total GCSE points, average GCSE points, total A level points and SAT® scores) between the four 'entry points' groups as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Students' mean attainment grouped by HE course entry point requirements

Entry points*	Total A level points*	Mean SAT® score	Total GCSE points	Average GCSE points	N
0-230	***694***	***460***	***455***	***43.7***	1225
240-290	***812***	***487***	***480***	***46.3***	1467
300-320	***942***	***527***	***511***	***49.5***	1529
325+	***1104***	***578***	***545***	***53.3***	1393
Total	***894***	***515***	***499***	***48.3***	5614

Values significantly different at the 5 per cent level are shown bold and in italics.

**See Table A2 in Appendix 1 for details of how the UCAS tariff and the QCA scales are related for GCSE, AS and A level.*

A regression model was used to predict the factors most likely to be associated with students studying courses with high entry point requirements. This is similar to the analysis reported in section 3.1, except that here the outcome measure is the course entry point requirements.

The significant predictors of students being on courses with high entry point requirements were (in order of importance):

- total A level points (i.e. the higher the total the more likely the student will be on a course with high entry requirements)
- average GCSE points
- missing FSM data (generally students from independent schools)
- Asian ethnicity
- having English as an additional language
- mean SAT® score

The factors negatively associated with being on a course with high entry point requirements were:

- being female
- attending a grammar school.

Example 1: although generally female students are more likely to be in HE than similar male students (see section 3.1), amongst those in HE, male students are more likely to be on courses with higher entry requirements than equivalent female students.

Example 2: students who attended a grammar school are less likely to be on courses with high entry requirements than students from comprehensive schools with similar attainment and background characteristics. It is possible that the latter are particularly high achieving students within their schools and therefore either have high aspirations or have been encouraged to aim high with regard to HE destinations.

This regression analysis implies that 42 per cent of the variance in whether students are on a course with high entry points requirements or not can be explained by the eight factors listed above.

Non-significant factors in the regression were eligibility for free school meals, Black, Chinese, Mixed, Other or missing ethnicity, special educational needs, attending an independent school of FE college. (Mixed ethnicity was significant in the analysis based on 2006 entry data alone.)

In the next section similar analyses are carried out with the addition of a measure of either affluence or deprivation.

The entry point requirement data was also matched to specific responses on the first 2006 student questionnaire[5] for those students who had participated (approximately 2000 students only).

The results were as follows:

- Students who achieved their first choice of higher education institution (HEI) were more likely to have places on 'high entry points' courses and those who went through clearing were more likely to have places on 'low entry points' courses.
- Students on courses with a requirement of 325+ entry points were more likely to be on a course with a duration of more than four years.
- Students on courses with 'low entry points' requirements were more likely to be living closer to home and to be living with parents.
- Students on courses with higher 'entry points' groups were more likely to say they were 'very confident' in their ability to complete the course.

[5] Full details of the 2006 survey: the sample, the findings and a copy of the questionnaire annotated with students' responses are given in the spring 2007 report.

3.2 Analysis of Higher Education destinations using additional affluence / disadvantage measures

The entry points required for courses offered to students in the sample (according to the data obtained from HESA) were also analysed taking into account not only attainment data and background characteristics but also two additional affluence / disadvantage indicators. Two measures of affluence/deprivation were used: one (IDACI – Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) was from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), and the other was based on students' 2006 questionnaire responses. As the IDACI measure is taken from PLASC data, it is not available for students who have attended independent schools. The affluence measure was therefore developed in order to include students for whom PLASC data was not available. This group is relatively small compared to the sample as a whole because not all participants completed the relevant student survey. (For an explanation of how this measure was developed see the 2008 report.)

The analyses were run separately for the group with IDACI (3990 students) and the affluence indicator (3489 students). The number of students in each of the combined 2006 and 2007 analyses represents an increase of about 600 students compared with the analyses based on the 2006 entry data. Some additional 'interaction' terms were included in order to see if there was any apparent difference in the relationship between entry points and SAT® score for different levels of IDACI, affluence measure, or school GCSE performance.

Table 3.2 shows the increase in the course entry points associated with each of the background factors, for the analysis using the IDACI measure.

For the non-categorical variables, presented above the dashed line, the figure is the difference in entry points associated with an increase in attainment by one grade in the respective attainment measure. For example, for each increase of one grade in average GCSE attainment, there is likely to be an increase of 18 points in the entry requirements of the course on which the student has achieved a place. For categorical variables, presented below the dashed line, the figure in the course entry points column is the difference in entry requirements between one category of pupils and another. For example, male students are likely to be on courses with entry requirements that are 10 points higher than similar attaining female students. The last five rows show how course entry points are related to the interaction between students' SAT® performance and their school's GCSE performance.

Table 3.2: Relationship between course entry points and background variables, including IDACI measure

Background variable	Course entry points
A level total points (per grade)	3
GCSE average points (per grade)	18
Total SAT® score (per 100 points)	7
IDACI measure	
School GCSE band (per 20% band)	
Sex (female)	-10
Eligible for FSM	
Black (v. white)	
Asian (v. white)	18
Chinese (v. white)	
Mixed (v. white)	
Other ethnicity (v. white)	
Missing ethnicity	
English as an additional language (EAL)	14
Special educational needs (SEN)	
Grammar school	-6
Interaction SAT® by IDACI	
Interaction SAT® by school GCSE band:	
per 100 points for a student in an average school	0
per 100 points for a student in better school	-2
per 100 points for a student in a top performing school	-5
per 100 points for a student in a below average school	2
per 100 points for a student in a bottom performing school	5

Table 3 in Appendix 1 shows the significant β coefficients from the regression analysis. These show the relative strength of each of the variables.

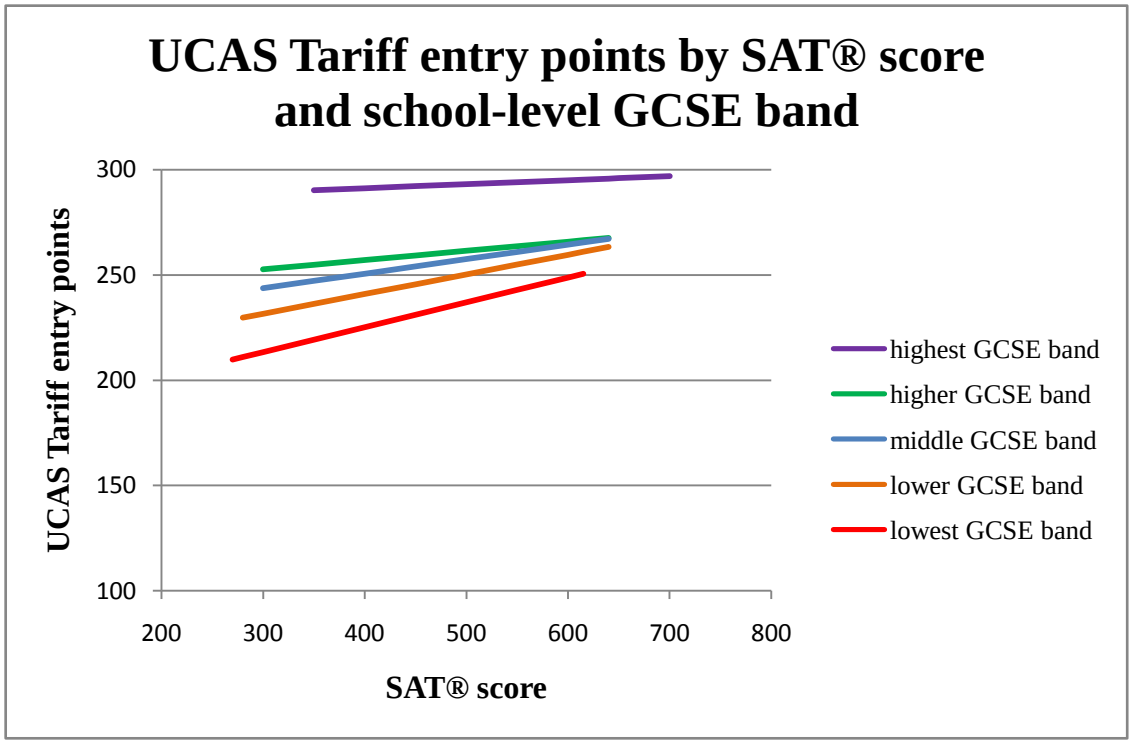
According to this model 39 per cent of the variance in students' destinations (in terms of their course entry point requirements) can be explained by the significant predictors above.

IDACI was not significantly related to HE course entry points, implying that students from more deprived areas are on average just as likely to be studying at more prestigious institutions, as students with similar attainment and otherwise similar background characteristics from less deprived areas.

The predictors were similar to those resulting from the model without the IDACI measure reported in section 3.1.2. Performance at A level was the strongest predictor of entry points, with performance at GCSE the second strongest (see Table 3 in the Appendix for the β coefficients which show the relative strength of each variable). SAT® score was also significantly related to entry points, over and above A level and GCSE performance. Students from grammar schools tended to enter slightly less prestigious course than would be predicted from their attainment, implying that students from high performing comprehensive schools, with similar achievement and background characteristics, are more likely to achieve a place on a course with high entry requirements than their grammar school counterparts. Mixed ethnicity was significant in the equivalent analysis based on 2006 entry data alone but was no longer significant using the combined 2006 and 2007 data.

In the analysis based on the 2006 entry data the school's overall performance at GCSE was positively related to the level of courses entered by its students once attainment was taken into account. This is not the case using the combined 2006 and 2007 entry data. However, as before there was an interaction between a school's overall performance at GCSE and the SAT® scores of its students. The relationship between entry points and SAT® score was less strong for higher-performing schools and was stronger for students in schools which do less well at GCSE, as shown in Figure 3.1. This means that for two students with similar attainment in schools within the same GCSE band, the student with the higher SAT® scores is more likely to have achieved a place on a course with a higher entry point requirements than a student with a lower SAT® score. The difference in course entry points was greater between students in low-performing schools compared to students with the same difference in SAT® scores in high-performing schools.

Figure 3.1: Course entry points by SAT® score and school GCSE performance band



Each line in Figure 3.1 represents the interaction for an average student in a school in each GCSE band (with the average GCSE and A level point scores for that particular band). It should be noted that the numbers of students in the sample within each school GCSE band are not the same and that the average attainment within each band differs significantly. The attainment and number of students in each group are shown in Table 3.3

Table 3.3: Average attainment by school GCSE performance band

		A level	GCSE	SAT®
School-level GCSE Band	**N**	**Total points**	**Av. points.**	**Mean score**
Lowest band	388	641	42	444
2nd lowest band	691	714	44	459
Middle band	1222	743	45	471
2nd highest band	823	769	45	473
Highest band	4544	930	50	528

As noted in the 2008 report, SAT® scores were not used by students in their HE applications. It is therefore unclear why students with higher SAT® scores are more likely to have achieved places on courses with higher entry point requirements than students with similar attainment but lower SAT® scores. It is possible that the SAT® is reflecting factors that admissions tutors are already identifying and valuing (possibly demonstrated within applicants' personal statements or by means of other admissions tests and interviews for the most selective courses). If students with higher SAT® scores do better in HE than similar students with lower SAT® scores, there may be some potential for the SAT® to provide useful additional information to admissions departments (particularly where selection is by application form only), but exactly how this could be used would need to be established.

Table 3.4 shows the factors predicting course entry points that emerged from an analysis taking into account attainment data and background characteristics but replacing the IDACI measure with an affluence measure based on students' 2006 questionnaire responses. (See the 2008 report for an explanation of this measure.) In this model 42 per cent of the variance in course entry point requirements can be explained by the significant predictors.

Table 3.4: Relationship between course entry points and background variables, including affluence measure

Background variable	Course entry points
A level total points	3
GCSE average points	21
Total SAT® score (per 100 points)	4
Affluence measure (per 20% increment)	3
School GCSE band (per 20% band)	2
Sex (female)	-9
Eligible for FSM	
Black (v. white)	
Asian (v. white)	21
Chinese (v. white)	
Mixed (v. white)	
Other ethnicity (v. white)	
Missing ethnicity	
EAL	11
SEN	
Grammar school	-12
Independent school	13
Interaction SAT® by school GCSE band	
Interaction SAT® by affluence measure	

Table 4 in Appendix 1 shows the significant β coefficients from the regression analysis. These show the relative strength of each of the variables.

The results of the regression model using the affluence measure were similar to those using IDACI; however, since the dataset now included independent school pupils, this background characteristic was a significant predictor of higher course entry point requirements. Mixed ethnicity was significant in the equivalent analysis based on 2006 entry data alone but was no longer significant using the combined 2006 and 2007 data.

To summarise the results for the analysis including the affluence measure:

- The affluence measure was a significant predictor of entry points for HE courses, when attainment was taken into account, i.e. more affluent students were more likely to have obtained places on more prestigious courses (courses with higher entry point) than similar less affluent students.

- Performance at A level was the strongest predictor of UCAS entry points (see Table 4 in Appendix 1), with performance at GCSE the second strongest. SAT® score was also significantly related to entry points, once other measures of attainment and affluence had been taken into account. (SAT® score was not significant in the same analysis based on 206 entry data only.)

- As in the previous models, girls tended to enter courses with lower levels of entry qualifications than boys, while the opposite was true for Asian students and EAL students compared to white students and non-EAL respectively.

- School-level performance at GCSE was a significant predictor of entry points once attainment was taken into account.

- Students in grammar schools tended to enter less prestigious courses than would be predicted from their attainment, while those in independent schools tended to enter more prestigious courses.

As noted in the 2008 report, the overall conclusion to be drawn from both the IDACI and the affluence analyses is that there are factors related to participation in HE and also the entry point requirements of students' chosen courses at both the individual student level and the school level. At the individual level the predictors are primarily their attainment at A level and GCSE, but also elements of ethnicity and affluence. The main school-level factor is overall GCSE performance, with some evidence of students in grammar schools attending less prestigious courses than expected and the opposite for independent schools. It may be that SAT® score is a more important predictor for students in schools which do less well at GCSE.

4 Student surveys

In March 2006, students who had taken the SAT® and had agreed to participate in the study were sent a questionnaire via their school or college. The questionnaire asked them to provide some background details about their home and family circumstances and asked about their post-16 experiences of school or college, their immediate plans after A levels and their views of higher education. At the beginning of September 2006 a second questionnaire was sent to 8814 students (excluding withdrawals) who had supplied a home address for future contact. The autumn survey provided information on their likely post A level destinations.

In December 2008, study participants for whom we still had contact details (8428) were sent a third questionnaire about their experiences of work or higher education since leaving school or college.

The numbers of responses to the three surveys from participants in the main sample (with full attainment data) were 6189, 3177 and 1427 respectively. Thirty-four per cent of the sample (2750 students) responded to the first two surveys and thirteen per cent (1065 students) responded to all three.

The findings from the 2008 survey are reported below. Full details of the 2006 survey samples, findings and questionnaires are given in the spring 2007 report. Some of the details supplied by the 2006 survey respondents contributed to the development of the affluence measures used in the analysis reported in section 3.

4.1 2008 Survey sample

The background characteristics and attainment of the main sample (see section 2.2) and the 2008 survey sample are shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 and a copy of the questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix 2.

As can be seen from these two tables the respondents to the most recent survey are not representative of the main sample in terms of their background characteristics. Although all groups are represented in the survey sample, female students and White students are significantly over-represented and Asian / Asian British are under-represented. As might be expected in a study focussed on admission to HE, the mean attainment of students who responded to the survey is significantly higher than the mean for the main sample as a whole across all the relevant measures (see Table 4.2). These limitations should be borne in mind in relation to the survey findings.

Table 4.1: Background characteristics of the main sample and 2008 survey sample

		Main sample		2008 survey sample	
		N	Valid per cent	N	Valid per cent
Sex	Male	3692	45.9	470	32.9
	Female	4349	54.1	957	67.1
Ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	670	9.1	75	5.6
	Black or Black British	117	1.6	12	0.9
	Chinese	116	1.6	16	1.2
	Mixed	145	2.0	25	1.9
	White	6212	84.4	1184	88.8
	Other	104	1.4	21	1.6
	Missing	677	-	94	-
SEN	No provision	7437	97.3	1336	98.2
	School Action (A)	137	1.8	14	1.0
	School Action Plus (P)	35	0.5	4	0.3
	Statement of SEN (S)	32	0.4	6	0.4
	Missing	400	-	67	-
FSM eligibility	No	5953	96.1	1399	98.0
	Yes	243	3.9	28	2.0
	Missing	1845	-	-	-
Type of institution	Comprehensive	4200	52.2	702	49.2
	Grammar	1701	21.2	320	22.4
	Independent	1800	22.4	325	22.8
	FE college	340	4.2	80	5.6
Total		8041	100	1427	100

Valid percentages exclude missing data. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Table 4.2: Attainment of the main sample and 2008 survey sample

	Main sample		2008 survey sample	
	Mean	**sd**	**Mean**	**sd**
SAT® Reading score	500	115	548	108
SAT® Maths score	500	116	540	112
SAT® Writing score	505	88	543	82
Total A level points score	849	260	964	248
Total GCSE points score	490	80	523	74
Number	8041		1427	

4.2 Survey findings

Of the 1427 responses, 1315 participants (92 per cent of the survey respondents) reported that they were currently studying within the HE sector. Approximately two-thirds of the remaining 112 participants were in full-time employment, with smaller numbers in part-time employment, apprenticeship schemes or studying on non-HE courses. Of these 112 participants not in HE, one quarter planned to study within the HE sector at some point in the future.

Of the 1315 students in HE, 46 per cent indicated that they will graduate in 2009 and 37 per cent in 2010. Approximately 14 per cent of the 1315 students reported a change in their course of study since 2006.

Immediate plans after current course

When asked about their immediate plans after finishing their current course, over half of the students plan to go straight into some form of employment (including those working towards a professional qualification), approximately 20 per cent will take a post-degree gap year and a similar percentage will be studying for a post-graduate qualification (masters degree, PGCE etc).

Personal and academic development

Students were asked to what extent HE had enabled various aspects of their personal and academic development (see Appendix 2, Q18). Survey participants not in HE were asked to rate the extent to which employment and/or training had enabled the same aspects of development (excluding those relating to academic study)

Table 4.3 gives the percentages of respondents, for each aspect of development, who indicated that it had been enabled 'a lot' (on a scale of 'not at all', 'a little', 'a lot') by HE or employment / training respectively.

Table 4.3: Aspects of development enabled 'a lot' by HE or employment / training

Aspect of development	Participants in HE %	Participants not in HE %
increase your knowledge	88	70
become more independent	83	76
develop academic / research skills	78	-
increase your employability	76	-
do things you would not have had an opportunity to do otherwise	65	-
develop your social skills	62	66
develop confidence	62	70
develop effective study skills	57	-
improve your time management	43	50
decide on a career	28	38
maximum number of cases	1315	112

Overall, there were no statistically significant differences between participants in HE and those not in HE in respect of perceived improvements in time management, social skills and confidence, nor in the extent to which HE or employment / training had helped them decide on a career. However, as might be expected, more students considered that HE had improved their knowledge and had helped them become more independent compared to non-HE respondents.

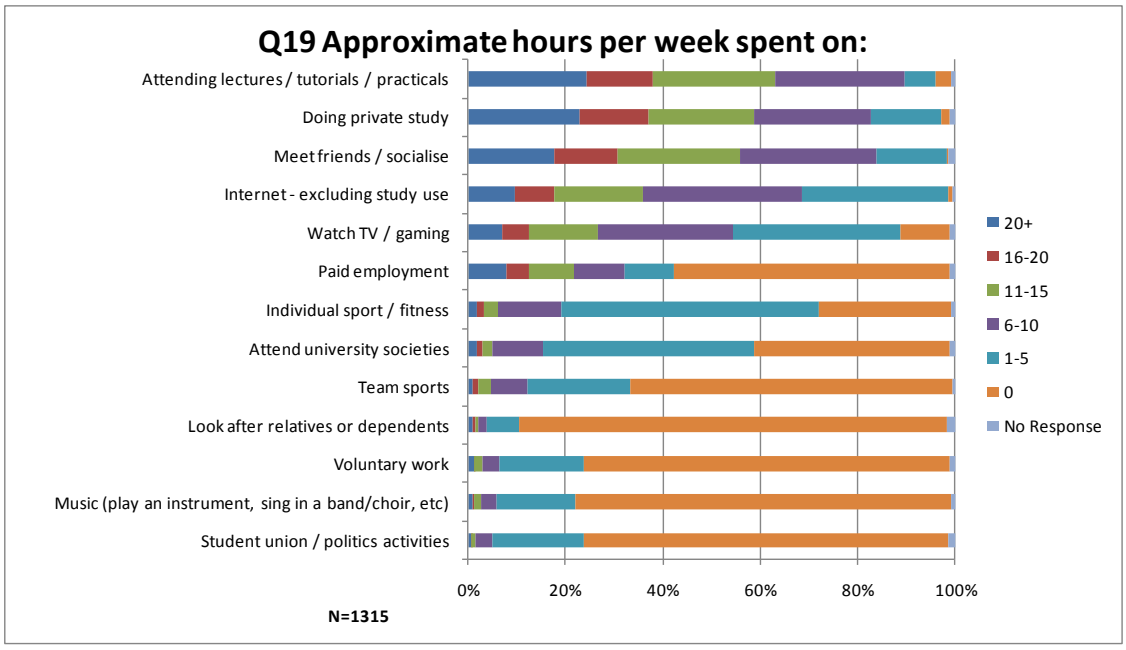
Reported activities during term time

The reported academic and social activities of the 1315 students are given in Figure 4.1.

As one might expect from any large group of students there were large differences in the reported frequencies for participation in various social and sporting activities. However, there were also extremely large differences in the numbers of hours students reported spending in attending lectures / tutorials and in carrying out private study. Even allowing for some intentional misreporting, it is interesting to note that 40 per cent of students reported private study of ten hours or less per week whereas 23 per

cent reported 20 hours or more. It will be interesting to relate the combined hours of study for these students to their eventual degree outcomes to discover if there is any relationship between these two factors. Similarly, it will be interesting to explore the impact of paid employment. Over half of the students in our survey sample reported no paid employment in term time, whereas approximately 12 per cent reported working in excess of 15 hours per week.

Figure 4.1: Reported activities (average hours per week, during the last term)



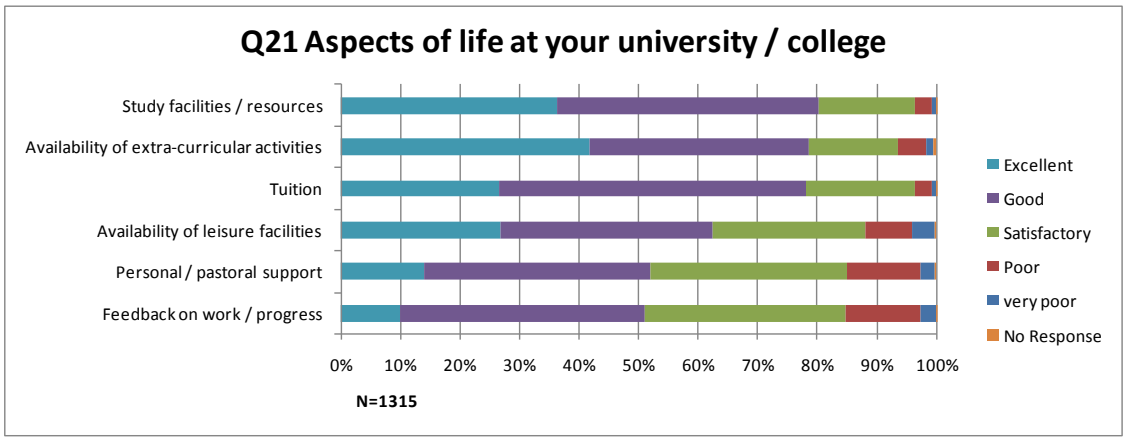
Survey participants not in HE were also asked to indicate the average number of hours spent on nine of these thirteen activities (excluding four relating to study / university life). There were no significant overall differences between HE and non-HE participants in respect of the time spent on individual sports, music, TV / gaming or voluntary work. Non-HE participants spent significantly more time in paid employment and looking after relatives or dependents than students in HE, who in turn spent significantly more time meeting friends / socialising and on the internet (non-study use) than non-HE respondents.

Views of higher education

Most students gave positive views of HE, with over three-quarters reporting that they had chosen the correct university / college, had selected the correct course for them and that studying for a degree was a good investment. However, approximately 30 per cent reported that the work had been more difficult than anticipated.

Students were then asked to rate various aspects of their studying and living at their particular university or college. These ratings are shown in Figure 4.2.

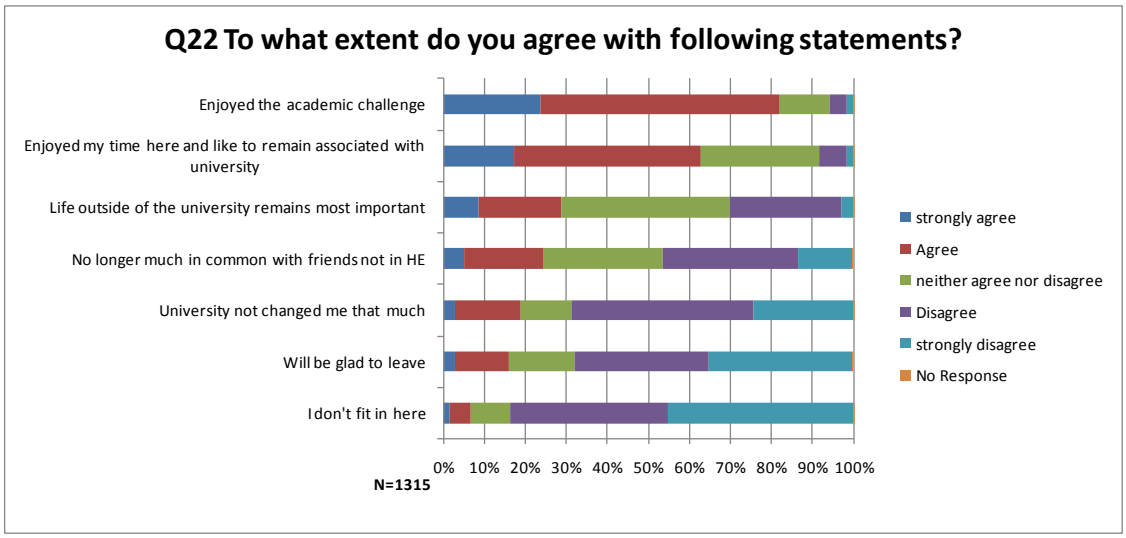
Figure 4.2: Student ratings of their university or college



All the listed aspects of life in HE were rated as 'satisfactory' or better by the majority of respondents, although approximately 15 per cent of respondents rated personal / pastoral support and feedback on work / progress as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Finally, students were asked to rate their agreement with a number of general statements about their experience of higher education as shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: General views about higher education



Very few students in this survey sample felt that they did not fit in at university or that they would be glad to leave and over 80 per cent agreed with the statement 'I have enjoyed the academic challenge offered by this university'. However, it is important to bear in mind that the views of this suvery sample may not be representative of the main sample of this study (see section 4.1).

Predicted degree outcomes

When asked about their likely degree classification, 14 per cent of students predicted that they would obtain a first-class honours degree and 68 per cent predicted they would receive a 2.1. Of those students who had also been given a predicted grade by their tutor, or another member of the teaching staff, 11 per cent of students predicted a lower classification than their tutors and only seven per cent had made higher self-predictions.

Students were also asked to indicate if their current predicted outcome was different from what they had anticipated at the beginning of their course. Approximately two-thirds of those who responded thought that the outcome would be the same, approximately 13 per cent were now predicting a higher outcome and 17 per cent a classification lower than the original. Those predicting a lower degree outcome were more likely to have indicated that they did not choose the correct univeristy or the correct course (in response to Q20i and Q20ii) and their overall ratings of both the study facilities (Q21i to Q21iv) and the leisure facilities (Q21v and Q21vi) were less favourable than those whose predicted outcomes are the same or higher than their original expectations.

Just less than half of the students reported at least one issue that might have a major adverse impact on their likely degree classification. The most frequently reported issues were as follows:

- personal family problems (16%)
- working during term time (15%)
- extra-curricular demands (14%)
- financial problems (13%)
- poor teaching (11%)
- health problems (10%).

Of the students who reported one or more problems having a major adverse impact on their studies, slightly over half indicated that their degree classification would have been higher than the one they are now predicting they will receive if they had not suffered these problems. However, only 18 per cent of students affected by one or more of the above issues had asked their university / college to take account of their problems when awarding their degrees. The main reasons for students asking for their problems to be taken into account by universities were health and family problems.

It is highly likely that issues such as these have occurred within the main sample as a whole and factors such as these may therefore impact on the relationship between prior attainment (including SAT® scores) and degree outcomes.

Progress and prior attainment

For survey participants in employment there is already a discernable trend between prior attainment and progress since school / college. Those with higher SAT®, A level

and GCSE points scores tended to be in better paid jobs and had clearer career plans. However, due to the small number of study particpants in employment it is not possible to say whether such differences are statistically significant.

Views of HE and prior attainment

At HE, those with the highest prior attainment scores tended to spend less time attending lectures and tutorials but more time in private study. They were also more likely to indicate that they had chosen the correct university or the correct course (in response to Q20i and Q20ii). Further, students with higher prior attainment scores appeared to have enjoyed HE the most. They tended to agree more strongly with statement such as:

- I no longer feel that I have much in common with friends who did not go to university
- I have enjoyed my time here and would like to remain associated with university in some way.
- I have enjoyed the academic challenge offered by this university.

As might be expected they therefore disagreed with statements such as:

- My life outside of the university remains the most important to me.
- I don't feel that I fit in here.
- I will be quite glad to leave.
- Being at university has not changed me that much.

The opposite was true for students with lower prior attainment.

Once we have degree outcomes for students in the sample it will be interesting to explore further the relationships between students' views of HE and their academic achievement.

5 Future phases of the research

Later this year (2010) the outcomes for students graduating in 2009 will become available from HEFCE. The final report of the main study will explore the relationships between the degrees obtained, prior attainment at A level and GSCE, and students' SAT® scores, adjusting as far as possible for the loss of those not selected for HE courses. Multilevel or structural equating models will be set up to examine whether the initial SAT® test results gave significantly improved predictions of HE degree outcomes. Depending on the number of cases available, the analyses will attempt to explore the effects of different types of school and HEI. Separate analyses for some popular subjects might be possible, as well as analyses within universities. (Such analyses will of course be reported in anonymised form.) The current timescale for this report is to publish the results in the second half of 2010. The results of these analyses may change once more degree outcomes are available from students who started an HE course in 2007 and therefore it is hoped to update the main report with a supplementary report in 2011.

Once completed, this research will hopefully enable some important conclusions to be made about the use of the SAT® or similar aptitude test in HE admissions. The success of the SAT® in fulfilling the specified purpose will be demonstrated if it can be shown that the combination of the SAT® and A levels provides a better prediction of degree success than A levels alone. Beyond this, it will also be important to consider the research findings within a wider context, i.e. not only the usefulness of the SAT® but the appropriateness and consequences of its use, i.e. its consequential validity. They will also have to be considered in the light of other changes taking place within 14-19 education and within HE admissions.

6 References

Kirkup, C., Schagen, I., Wheater, R., Morrison, J. and Whetton, C. (2007). *Use of an Aptitude Test in University Entrance – a Validity Study: Relationships between SAT® Scores, Attainment Measures and Background Variables* (DfES Research Report 846). London: DfES [online]. Available: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR846.pdf [5 June, 2007].

Kirkup, C., Wheater, R., Schagen, I., Morrison, J. and Whetton, C. (2008). *Use of an Aptitude Test in University Entrance – a Validity Study: 2008 Update: Further Analyses of SAT® Data* (DIUS Research Report 09 02). London: DfES [online]. Available: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR846.pdf [5 June, 2007].

McDonald, A.S., Newton, P.E. and Whetton, C. (2001). *A Pilot of Aptitude Testing for University Entrance*. Slough: NFER.

Appendix 1: Further Tables

Table A1: Background characteristics of the main sample

		Main sample		National population*	
		N	Valid per cent	N	Valid per cent
Sex	Male	3692	45.9	98625	45.6
	Female	4349	54.1	117718	54.4
Ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	670	9.1	7799	6.9
	Black or Black British	117	1.6	2243	2.0
	Chinese	116	1.6	996	0.9
	Mixed	145	2.0	1392	1.2
	White	6212	84.4	93732	83.2
	Other	104	1.4	6499	5.8
	Missing	677	-	103682	-
SEN	No provision	7437	97.3	114818	97.9
	School Action (A)	137	1.8	1632	1.4
	School Action Plus (P)	35	0.5	474	0.4
	Statement of SEN (S)	32	0.4	384	0.3
	Missing	400	-	99035	-
FSM eligibility	No	5953	96.1	114058	97.2
	Yes	243	3.9	3250	2.8
	Missing	1845	-	99035	-
Type of institution	Comprehensive	4200	52.2	99280	45.9
	Grammar	1701	21.2	19790	9.1
	Independent	1800	22.4	32544	15.0
	FE college	340	4.2	64729	29.9
Total		8041	100	216343	100

** candidates entered for 2+ GCE A levels in 2005/06 (source: DfES)*
Valid percentages exclude missing data. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Table A2: QCA GCSE and A level points scores for each grade and relationship between QCA A level points score and UCAS Tariff for A level grades

Grade	GCSE points	AS level points	A level points	UCAS Tariff (for A level grades)
A*	58			
A	52	135	270	120
B	46	120	240	100
C	40	105	210	80
D	34	90	180	60
E	28	75	150	40
F	22			
G	16			
U	0	0	0	0

Table A3: Significant coefficients for regression of entry points based on HESA data against other factors including IDACI measure

Background variable	Course entry points
A level total points	0.12
GCSE average points	3.03
Total SAT® score	0.07
Sex (female)	-9.79
Eligible for FSM	
Black (v. white)	
Asian (v. white)	18.18
Chinese (v. white)	
Mixed (v. white)	
Other ethnicity (v. white)	
Missing ethnicity	
EAL	14.03
SEN	
Grammar school	-6.44
School GCSE band (5 pts)	
IDACI measure	
Interaction SAT® by school GCSE band	-0.025
Interaction SAT® by IDACI	

Table A4: Significant coefficients for regression of entry points based on HESA data against other factors including affluence measure

Background variable	Course entry points
A level total points	0.09
GCSE average points	3.47
Total SAT® score	0.04
Sex (female)	-8.69
Eligible for FSM	
Black (v. white)	
Asian (v. white)	20.71
Chinese (v. white)	
Mixed (v. white)	
Other ethnicity (v. white)	
Missing ethnicity	
EAL	11.31
SEN	
Grammar school	-11.53
Independent school	12.79
School GCSE band (5 pts)	2.31
Affluence measure	0.34
Interaction SAT® by school GCSE band	
Interaction SAT® by affluence measure	

Appendix 2: 2008 UNIQUE Survey

Welcome to the 2008 UNIQUE survey – part of the ongoing UNIQUE research project.

In 2005, you took part in a study looking at the use of an aptitude test (the SAT®) for university entrance. At the time, you were at school or college. Since then, we have carried out two questionnaire surveys and sent out two update leaflets about the progress of the research.

In this third and final questionnaire, we would like you to tell us about your experiences of higher education or work since leaving school or college. It is very important to our research to compare the different experiences of all people involved in the research project, whether or not you have gone on to higher education.

As a thank-you for your involvement in this research we would like to offer you a chance to win £1000 in our free-to-enter prize draw.

Full details and the rules governing the prize draw are given on a separate sheet enclosed with this questionnaire.

We should be grateful if you would now complete this questionnaire – it should take no longer than 10 minutes of your time. All your answers will be treated in complete confidence – any report arising from the study will not refer to any person individually. **Please use black ink.**

Please place your completed questionnaire in the return envelope provided and post it back to us by Friday 9th January 2009 at the latest. Thank you for your help.

You may find it easier to complete this survey online by visiting www.nfer.ac.uk/unique and log in using the login details below. You can also update your contact details online at any point.

Login:

Password:

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:
Joanne Kelly
Research Data Services
NFER
The Mere
Upton Park
Slough SL1 2DQ
Tel: 01753 637025 email: j.kelly@nfer.ac.uk

41019 (VAQ) SQ

1 Are you currently in higher education (for instance studying for a full-time or part-time degree, on a sponsored degree, doing a sandwich year as part of a degree)?

Yes ☐ 1 *go to Q13 on page 7* No ☐ 2 *go to Q2*

Questions 2 to 12 only apply if you are <u>not</u> in higher education or on a degree course.

2 Which of the following apply to you? (Tick all that apply.)

I am in full-time employment.	☐ 1	
I am in part-time employment.	☐ 2	
I am self-employed.	☐ 3	
I am in a training scheme or an apprenticeship scheme.	☐ 4	
I am a full-time student (but not on a degree course).	☐ 5	
I am a part-time student (but not on a degree course).	☐ 6	
I am unemployed and seeking work.	☐ 7	*go to Q7*
I am neither employed nor seeking work.	☐ 8	
other – please specify:	☐ 9	

_____

3 If you are employed or self-employed, please give your job title or describe your employment role.

_____

4 Do you have opportunities to progress (e.g. to be promoted) at your current organisation?

yes ☐ 1 no ☐ 2 not sure ☐ 3 n/a ☐ 4

5 To what extent has work / training / further study enabled you to:
(Tick **one** box in each row.)

	not at all	a little	a lot
	1	2	3
improve your time management	☐	☐	☐
increase your knowledge	☐	☐	☐
become more independent	☐	☐	☐
decide on a career	☐	☐	☐
develop your social skills	☐	☐	☐
develop confidence	☐	☐	☐

6 Please indicate your approximate gross annual salary or income (before tax or any other deductions). (Tick **one** box.)

less than £10,000	☐ 1	£20,001 – £22,500	☐ 5
£10,000 – £15,000	☐ 2	£22,501 – £25,000	☐ 6
£15,001 – £17,500	☐ 3	£25,001 – £30,000	☐ 7
£17,501 – £20,000	☐ 4	more than £30,000	☐ 8

7 If you started a degree course at any time since September / October 2006 but are no longer in higher education, please indicate your reasons for leaving. (Tick all that apply.)

I didn't like the university / college.	☐ 1
I didn't enjoy the course / subject.	☐ 2
The work was too difficult.	☐ 3
I didn't get the learning support I needed.	☐ 4
The teaching quality was poor.	☐ 5
The resources / facilities for studying were poor.	☐ 6
I left because of personal problems.	☐ 7
I left because of financial problems.	☐ 8
I left because of family issues.	☐ 9
I found it difficult to make friends.	☐ 10
I felt that I didn't fit in.	☐ 11
I missed my friends / partner at home.	☐ 12
I did not like where I had to live.	☐ 13

8 Compared to people who have a degree, do you think your future job / career opportunities will be:

better ☐ 1 the same ☐ 2 worse ☐ 3

9 Do you now have a clear career plan?

yes, very clear ☐ 1 vague career plan ☐ 2 no ☐ 3

10 Do you plan to go into higher education at some point in the future?

yes ☐ 1 no ☐ 2 not sure ☐ 3

11 Approximately how many hours a week do you do each of the following?
(Tick **one** box in each row.)

	0	1-5	6-10	11-20	20+
	1	2	3	4	5
paid employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
voluntary work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
look after relatives or dependents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
team sports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
individual sport / fitness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
music (play an instrument, sing in a band / choir, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
meet friends / socialise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watch tv / gaming (PS, Xbox, Wii, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
internet (social networking, emails, etc) – excluding study use	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12a Please briefly describe what you have been doing since leaving school / college.

12b Why did you do this?

If you would like your name to be entered into the 2008/09 prize draw, please tick this box. ☐

The remaining questions in this survey relate to higher education / degree courses and do not have to be completed if this does not apply to you.

Please follow the return instructions on the front of this questionnaire.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Questions 13 to 27 only apply if you are in higher education or on a degree course.

13 Please indicate the type of course you are currently taking.

foundation degree	☐ 1
3 year undergraduate degree	☐ 2
4 year undergraduate degree (including sandwich courses)	☐ 3
undergraduate degree lasting more than 4 years	☐ 4
other – please specify:	☐ 5

_____

14 Have you changed courses since September / October 2006?

yes ☐ 1 no ☐ 2

15 When will you graduate?

summer 2009	☐ 1
summer 2010	☐ 2
summer 2011	☐ 3
2012 or beyond	☐ 4

16 Have your career plans changed since you started university?

yes ☐ 1 no ☐ 2 not sure ☐ 3

17 What are your immediate plans after you finish your current course?
(Tick **one** box.)

gap year before employment or further study	☐ 1
employment	☐ 2
postgraduate study (e.g. masters degree, PhD)	☐ 3
PGCE / teacher qualification	☐ 4
other professional qualification (law, accountancy, etc)	☐ 5
other – please specify:	☐ 6

_____

18 To what extent has higher education enabled you to:
(Tick **one** box in each row.)

	not at all 1	a little 2	a lot 3
develop academic / research skills	☐	☐	☐
develop effective study skills	☐	☐	☐
improve your time management	☐	☐	☐
increase your knowledge	☐	☐	☐
become more independent	☐	☐	☐
increase your employability	☐	☐	☐
decide on a career	☐	☐	☐
develop your social skills	☐	☐	☐
develop confidence	☐	☐	☐
do things you would not have had an opportunity to do otherwise	☐	☐	☐

19 On average, during the last term, how many hours a week (approximately) did you do each of the following? (Tick **one** box in each row.)

	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
	1	2	3	4	5	6
attend university societies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
team sports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
individual sport / fitness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
music (play an instrument, sing in a band / choir, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
student union / politics activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
voluntary work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
paid employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
look after relatives or dependents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
attending lectures / tutorials / practicals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
doing private study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
meet friends / socialise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watch tv / gaming (PS, Xbox, Wii, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
internet (social networking, emails, etc) – excluding study use	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20 Think back over your time on your current course. (Tick **one** box in each row.)

Do you believe that:

	no	not sure	yes
	1	2	3
you chose the correct university / college	☐	☐	☐
you chose the correct course / subject	☐	☐	☐
studying for a degree is a good investment	☐	☐	☐
the work was more difficult than you anticipated	☐	☐	☐

21 Please rate the following aspects of life at your university / college:

(Tick **one** box in each row.)	very poor	poor	satisfactory	good	excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
tuition (e.g. lectures / tutorials)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
personal / pastoral support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
study facilities / resources (e.g. libraries, computer access)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
feedback on work / progress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
availability of extra-curricular activities (clubs, societies, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
availability of leisure facilities (sports hall, gym, swimming pool, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(Tick **one** box in each row.)	strongly agree	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
I no longer feel that I have much in common with friends who did not go to university.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have enjoyed my time here and would like to remain associated with the university in some way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My life outside of the university remains the most important to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't feel that I fit in here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I'll be quite glad to leave.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being at university has not changed me that much.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have enjoyed the academic challenge offered by this university.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23 Please indicate the degree classification that you think you will achieve at the end of your course.

	1	2.1	2.2	3	Ord/Pass
Your own prediction	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
If you have a predicted grade from tutor(s) teaching staff, what is it?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

24 How does your prediction compare with how well you thought you would do when you started your degree course?

My latest prediction is:

higher ☐ 1 the same as ☐ 2 lower than the original ☐ 3

25a Have any of the following issues had a major adverse impact on your likely degree classification? (Tick all that apply.)

health problems ☐ 1

personal family issues ☐ 2

financial problems ☐ 3

accommodation problems ☐ 4

inadequate learning support ☐ 5

poor teaching ☐ 6

poor resources / facilities for studying ☐ 7

working during term time ☐ 8

extra-curricular demands ☐ 9

other – please specify: ☐ 10

_____ _____

25b If you have ticked any of the options in Q25a, what degree classification do you think you should have got without these problems?

1	2.1	2.2	3	Ord/Pass	n/a
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6

26c Have you asked your university to make any allowance for these issues?

yes ☐ 1 no ☐ 2

27 Please add any further comments you would like to make about your experiences of higher education.

If you would like your name to be entered into the 2008/09 prize draw, please tick this box. ☐

Please follow the return instructions on the front of this questionnaire.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.