

Missed Opportunities?

Non-placed applicants (NPAs) in the UCAS data

Project completed for UCAS by
Oxford University Department of Education

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PUBLISHED BY: UCAS ROSEHILL NEW BARN LANE CHELTENHAM GL52 3LZ

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UCAS REGISTERED IN ENGLAND NUMBER: 2839815
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER (ENGLAND AND WALES): 1024741
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER (SCOTLAND): SC038598

PUBLICATION REFERENCE: 07_223
ISBN: 978 184 361 0984

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FOREWORD



I am delighted to present the findings of analysis undertaken in respect of UK-domiciled applicants through the UCAS system who, for years of entry 2003 to 2006 inclusive, have not, by the end of an admissions cycle, been successfully placed on a full-time course at a UK higher education institution (HEI). This report is the first of a number of studies, to be conducted by UCAS alone or in collaboration with a range of

research partners, into this important area and focuses primarily on the identification of key characteristics of the applicants involved.

The findings are both positive and negative: positive because some 38% of those unplaced from 2003-2006 subsequently re-applied, with 80% of those being successfully placed, but negative because over this four year period, this still means that somewhere in the region of 240,000 people who have initially indicated a definite interest in HE study have been 'lost'. Of course, some of these may have applied direct to HEIs, or chosen to undertake part-time study, but UCAS data can not detect these.

UCAS chose, in the first instance, to concentrate on confirmation of the characteristics of this group of applicants in order to determine whether or not they aligned with what might be termed the 'traditional' entrant to HE, ie around the age of 18, school or sixth-form college based, from higher socio-economic groups, and taking qualifications which are widely accepted and well-understood by admissions staff in HEIs. The findings suggest that in practice non-placed applicants do not conform to this stereotype in that they tend to be older, to be from intermediate occupations and lower social classes, to apply when they are not attached to a school or sixth-form college, and to hold qualifications which are either not in the UCAS Tariff or are vocationally-related. The analysis confirms that the non-placed applicants who decline offers (or

put another way make a conscious decision not to proceed within a cycle) are more likely to hold A levels, or an A level/vocational qualification combination, so taking the above characteristics into account, this may mean that those falling into the decliners sub-group may be those who subsequently, and successfully, re-apply.

Also of interest is that the analysis reveals that those non-placed applicants who withdrew or who received no offers were more likely to have made an average of three or less choices within their application; indeed, 35% of those who did not get an offer only made one choice. This may indicate a lack of confidence in making a larger number of applications or perhaps a desire to study only at a local level. Of particular concern is confirmation that in terms of ethnic origin, a far greater proportion (48.7% compared to 37.5% of non-placed applicants overall) of those classified as falling into the 'Black' category do not get an offer.

As the report suggests, all the above factors indicate a need for a greater level of support to be provided to potential entrants to HE who fall into the different categories confirmed by identification of the characteristics of non-placed applicants. These findings must be of great interest to those responsible for widening participation and more general outreach activities, but government and relevant agencies, too, must take heed of the indicators of a requirement for additional encouragement to be given to those who may otherwise be 'lost' to HE completely, with all the associated consequences for both the individuals concerned and the wider economy.

Jill Johnson
Director of Policy and Communications
UCAS
November 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The proportion of UK-domiciled applicants to higher education (HE) who are non-placed applicants (NPAs) has remained relatively stable over recent years at around 19%. This involves absolute numbers of some 87,000 NPAs in 2006, up from some 84,000 in 2005. NPA refers to those applicants who complete and submit the UCAS application form, but are not placed in higher education by the end of the application cycle.

A number of reasons may lead to an applicant being non-placed. The different sub-groups of NPAs referred to in this analysis are:

- Those who received no offer from any of the courses or institutions they applied to (37.5%),
- Those who withdrew from the process (6.1%),
- Those who declined at least one offer (51.9%), and
- Those where the decision process is unknown (4.6%).

Two other relevant groups are:

- Those who do not meet their offers and
- The re-applicants who make further applications in other years.

The former group could not be identified using the available datasets and is therefore not separately analysed in this report.

The re-applicants were analysed using further information to make it possible to identify them. It emerged that some 38% of all NPAs from 2003-2006 re-applied at some stage and, of those, 80% were placed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NPAs

Gender

Women are over-represented in the full NPA dataset as a whole, and particularly in the withdrawn (67.1%) and no offer (66.2%) categories for 2003-2006.

Ethnicity

Black and minority ethnic groups are over-represented in the NPA dataset, with blacks particularly heavily over-represented in the no offers group, with 48.7% in this group (2003-2006) compared with 37.5% of NPAs overall.

Age

Younger applicants are under-represented in the NPA dataset. For example, 76.6% of all applicants are 20 and under, but only 60.7% of the non-placed applicant category fall into this age group, with the concomitant increases for non-placed applicants in the older age categories.

'RISK FACTORS' FOR THE NON-PLACED APPLICANT (NPA) GROUP

Results of the multivariate analysis in this report show that:

- older people run a higher risk of being non-placed
- women run a higher risk of being non-placed
- the higher an applicant's socio-economic status, the higher their likelihood of being accepted
- if there is missing information about tariff points, pre-HE institution and prior qualifications, this seems to have a negative impact on the likelihood of an applicant being placed
- applicants without A-level equivalent qualifications are less likely to be placed than those with those traditional qualifications. In particular, there is an increased risk of NPA status for applicants with 'only vocational' and 'only Foundation or Access' courses.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Qualitative research on applicants' perspectives would be needed to shed light on the reasons behind their NPA status, which, in some cases, may be related to, for example, positive labour market, family or caring decisions. This is particularly important since more than half of the NPAs get an offer and decline it.

Further, more research into part-time study routes is required. It may be the case that a significant proportion of the NPAs are, in fact, following part-time studies and are, therefore, not non-placed at all.

Longitudinal research would also be needed, to account for some of the issues affecting NPAs beginning at a much earlier stage than the application process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing support work and professional development with institutions and admissions staff is needed to explore issues of the reception of non-traditional prior qualifications.

Specific consultation work on the issues particularly affecting women applicants (especially those in older age categories) is recommended in view of the over-representation of women in the NPA dataset (especially in the no offer and withdrawn categories).

Perhaps UCAS might consider innovative ways of improving the integration of non-traditional qualifications into the information on applicants, especially with regard to the tariff point system.

Within the context of increasing and widening participation in higher education in the UK, consultation on the significance of the non-placed applicant group is essential. Is 19% too high a proportion or not?

NON-PLACED APPLICANTS (NPAS) IN THE UCAS DATA

INTRODUCTION: AIMS AND QUESTIONS

A significant percentage of applicants to higher education in the UK are not placed – some 19% of applicants from the UK (and 27% of overseas applicants in 2005). For the 2006 application cycle, for example, this means that approximately 87,000 UK-domiciled applicants were so-called non-placed applicants (NPAs) in the UCAS system, an increase from some 84,000 in 2005, 79,000 in 2004 and 76,000 in 2003.

The reasons why applicants take on non-placed applicant (NPA) status are potentially highly complex. This study divides NPA status into four main categories – applicants who received no offers, applicants who declined their offers, applicants who withdrew their application from UCAS, and applicants about whom no clear information about why they remained unplaced is held.

Some applicants go on to make further applications in other years. This group amounts to some 38% of the NPAs between 2003 and 2006 and, of those, some 80% are placed in higher education. This group is analysed in a separate chapter of this report. They are included as NPAs in the earlier analysis, as they had NPA status at a particular point of their application process.

The situation the non-placed applicants find themselves in may be of their own volition (i.e. if they decline the offer of a place, or withdraw from the process), or may be determined externally (i.e. if they receive no offers). This study presents analysis of the data available on the NPA group, and outlines some of the characteristics of the applicants in this group, as well as presenting initial analysis on how these characteristics interact with each other.

The study aims to present some of the characteristics of the applicants in the non-placed applicant (NPA) group, including: age, gender, jacs (joint academic coding system) group applied for, socio-economic group, ethnicity, pre-HE institution and prior qualifications.

In the first section of the findings, it presents overall descriptive statistics showing who is in the overall NPA group. The next section moves on to describe the differences between the applicants in each of the four NPA sub-groups (no offers, declined, withdrawn and unknown), before, in the final stage of the analysis, using multivariate analysis to explore the likelihood of certain applicants belonging to particular NPA sub-groups. Where possible, the NPA dataset is compared with data on all applications. A further section outlines the re-applier group, including multivariate analysis.

The aim of this investigation is to raise awareness of the non-placed applicants. They have engaged with the application process, selecting courses and institutions, but have NPA status at the end of the application cycle. The current study shows that this group is heterogeneous,

and that therefore attempts to reduce the proportion of NPAs in each applying cohort will need to be varied and flexible. Within the current context of interest in widening participation, and the aspiration for 50% of 18-30 year-olds to have some experience of higher education, this should be a policy imperative.

More attention needs to be given to those applicants who are not placed in higher education, although they go through the application process and make the relevant decisions. There may be a need for improved support for these applicants before and during the application process, as well as during the initial transition phase, and improved continuing professional development for admissions staff. Further, the high numbers of applicants who apply in more than one year show the need for repeated cycles of support and guidance.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

This analysis is built upon in-depth statistical analysis (using SPSS) of data held by UCAS on those applicants who are not placed in higher education. The data used were those referring to UK-domiciled applicants in the application years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006, and were made fully available, within the constraints of data protection legislation (names were not used, for example). Descriptive statistical work was carried out, as well as analysis of potential correlations and over-represented groups among the non-placed applicants.¹

The statistical analysis is embedded and contextualised within the available literature, reported in the brief literature review that follows. Additional, in-depth qualitative research would be required in order to access the perceptions, experiences and understandings of the applicants who do not enter higher education, in order to contextualise these quantitative findings, and to find out more about why these applicants are not placed in higher education. This would represent a further phase of the current research, with semi-structured interview schedules being informed by the results of this quantitative part of the study.

This current study used the following data sources:

- The datasets held by UCAS on non-placed applicants for the application years 2003-2006
- Comparison between the non-placed applicant datasets and the full UCAS datasets for 2003 and 2004
- Additional data for 2005, available on the UCAS website
- Additional data from UCAS on applications between 2002 and 2007, in order to allow for the identification of re-appliers (the re-appliers group is analysed in a separate chapter)
- For the most recent dataset, 2006, the analysis focuses on the non-placed applicants, which did not allow for comparisons with accepted applicants.

¹ For comparison purposes data available on the UCAS website about all applicants were used.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW: NON-PLACED APPLICANTS



Gorard (2006) points out how quickly most studies concerning higher education focus on the players rather than the non-players. Watson (2006) also raises a number of points about the widening participation agenda, including the need to 'consider the position of those who do not participate' (p. 2), and also argues that: 'There is not enough research on the feelings and capabilities of the non-engaged.'

This, of course, applies to people who have not had any opportunity to engage with higher education, whatever the reasons for that may be. This current study, however, focuses on those people who have gone to the considerable effort of completing all the various bureaucratic requirements for applying to higher education, and making all the relevant choices, but have remained unplaced within the system at the end of that application cycle.

Being a non-placed applicant (NPA), as we have chosen to term it in this paper, is a potentially complex situation. Some applicants will have chosen this situation (say, because they found employment that was more attractive to them than full-time study; they withdrew from the UCAS process altogether, for various potential family, personal, financial or employment reasons; they declined an offer from the courses they had initially selected; they decided to re-apply another year, and any number of other permutations). Other applicants, however, have not chosen this situation, but have been forced into it through, for example, not receiving any offers from the courses and institutions to which they applied. This study aims to shed some light, through statistical analysis, on the group of people who are non-placed applicants (NPAs).

However, there are clear limitations of this investigation. It examines the 'snapshot' of a person's application process to higher education, with that examination limited by the data available on those NPAs. The deeper reasons behind a person's decision to withdraw from the process or to decline a particular offer, or behind poor performance in level 2 and level 3 qualifications, for example, cannot be explored.

The persistent proportion of applicants who are non-placed in higher education is an issue of policy concern, particularly in the context of the agenda on widening, and increasing, participation. It will be essential to shed further light on the reasons behind the non-placed status of this group of applicants, in order to design effective support and information structures to facilitate the application process for these applicants, and the smooth transition of many more of them to higher education study.

Bowl (2001) highlights in her qualitative study some of the problems faced by mature, so-called 'non-traditional' students. She outlines some of the institutional and financial barriers to participation. Some of these barriers lie behind the bald statistics of this paper on non-placed applicants (NPAs). Bowl (2001) highlights the unresponsiveness of the institutional context, and the tendency to problematise the student,

rather than the educational institutions responsible for their progress. This may apply to the application stage, as well as to later study.

Analysis of demand and supply for higher education courses from 1996/97 to 1999/2000 (Abbott and Leslie, 2004) showed that applications are sensitive to institutional reputation and the location of the university within the UK. The focus of that paper is on the ratio of applications to acceptances, used as a proxy for the quality and popularity of a given institution, and the focus is on the choices and decisions of the HEIs (information about the ratio of applications and acceptances are available on the UCAS website for each institution).

However, further attention should also be given to those people who apply to higher education and do not get a place, particularly within the context of the government aspiration of 50% of 18-30 year-olds to experience higher education of some kind. There are many potential reasons why a particular applicant does not get a place for their chosen course in a given year, or chooses to decline the place(s) they are offered. In this context, the 'compatibility' between the course, higher education institution and applicant is key (see Ozga and Sukhandan, 1998). Their work refers to the likelihood of students completing their courses, but the importance of the mutual compatibility between student, course and HEI also applies to the application process.

The debate over post qualification application (PQA) is also relevant here. Price (2002) views PQA as a tool to empower the applicant, allowing them greater say in and greater influence on their application trail. However, other observers would argue against this, as PQA might penalise some groups whose potential might not be matched by their examination performance.

Coates and Adnett (2003) investigate the impact of policy on competition between HEIs, and the difficulty of promoting widening participation without appropriate funding for the institutions, in view of the fact that part-time students, mature students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds are more expensive to recruit, teach and retain (p. 203). They cite Glennerster's (2002) argument that schools now '...face incentives to favour high ability entrants and those with fewer problems' (p. 208), and argue that this situation might also occur within HE because '...the failure to fully fund the higher costs of non-traditional entrants means that HEIs face the same incentives to favour traditionally qualified entrants and those with fewer problems as we noted in the secondary schooling sector' (p. 215). They also cite Johnes and McNabb (2001), who find a correlation between those with non-traditional qualifications and drop-out. Arulampalam et al. (2002) also argue that the less-well qualified students were less likely to complete the course.

There is also the issue of people from non-traditional backgrounds not applying in the first place because they worry that they will not fit in. Belfield and Morris (1999) point out that first generation entrants to HE are less likely to relocate to attend an HEI, perhaps reducing the number of institutions they are prepared to consider attending, or even applying to.

Blasko et al (2003) show that entering HE after the age of 24 has negative labour market effects for female and male graduates, including increased risk of unemployment, poor career prospects and a lower likelihood of achieving a graduate level job. Egerton and Parry (2001) found that the rates of financial return for mature graduate women were 5%-6% and for mature graduate men it was only about 1%, compared with not entering higher education. Egerton and Parry (2001) estimate that the additional and increasing costs of higher education will mean that new mature male graduates will make a sizeable overall loss from participating in HE.

Those who do not participate are excluded, as Gorard et al. point out: 'Non-participants are largely ignored in the research literature – excluded both from education and also from the very research intended to address their exclusion.' (Gorard et al., 2006, p. 116).

This current study, for example, considers those applicants who are non-placed, but this group has already taken the step of submitting an application, and as such are participants in the process. Initial education, pre-entry support and particular support for non-traditional groups are all relevant to the issues under consideration. This study investigates a specific, but very important, group – those who place applications to higher education but who remain non-placed.

FINDINGS FROM THIS INVESTIGATION: THE DATA AVAILABLE ON ALL NPAs

IV

This section presents the overall data on non-placed applicants from the years 2003-2006. It profiles the NPAs based on analysis of the quantitative data, using variables such as: age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, pre-HE institution type, type of qualifications gained, and type of course applied for (so-called 'joint academic coding system' group or jacs group).

The following table provides an overview of the numbers of applications, applicants and accepted applicants, from 2003 to 2006.

Table 1

Summary statistics: the numbers of applicants, accepted applicants and applications

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Choices	2,046,131	2,098,710	2,285,596	2,215,434
Applicants	476,467	486,028	522,155	506,304
Accepted applicants	374,307	377,544	405,369	390,890
Main scheme	308,435	317,496	342,765	325,072
Extra	2,463	2,621	3,391	3,262
Clearing	38,666	34,862	37,197	38,032
Direct entrants	24,743	22,565	22,016	24,524
Choices to acceptances ratio	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.7
Applicants to acceptances ratio	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Average choices per applicant	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4

² These and all following figures refer, unless otherwise stated, to UK-domiciled applicants only. Also most tables, unless otherwise stated, show data for the years 2003-2006. Further data are available in the appendix, showing the figures upon which the graphics are based.

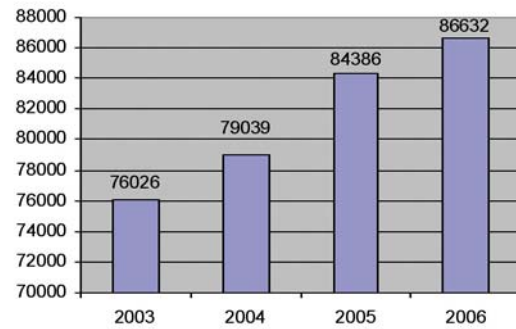
³ At the time this report was prepared the data for all applicants for 2006 was not available yet, therefore in some of the tables and graphs this year is missing.

This table provides an initial insight into the patterns of application, and the absolute numbers involved.

The following figure illustrates the upward trend in absolute numbers of non-placed applicants.²

Figure 1

Increase in absolute numbers of non-placed applicants (UK-domiciled, 2003-2006)



However, this increase must be seen within the context of the *proportion* of applicants who are non-placed – and this has remained fairly stable over the period under consideration, at around 19% (see the following figure).³

Figure 2

Percentage of non-placed applicants (2003-2005)

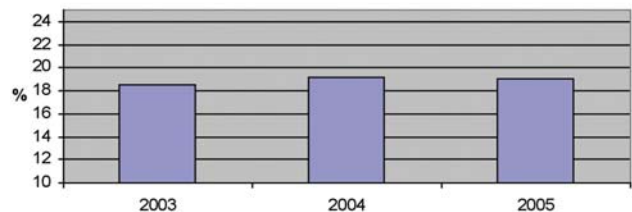


Figure 2: In the next sections we present the distribution of different characteristics within the NPA dataset and, where the data are available, compare this with all UCAS applicants. The characteristics under analysis are mainly socio-demographic variables (gender, age, ethnicity), some information about prior qualifications, the pre-HE institution attended, and some information about the applications themselves (number of applications, subject groups applied to).

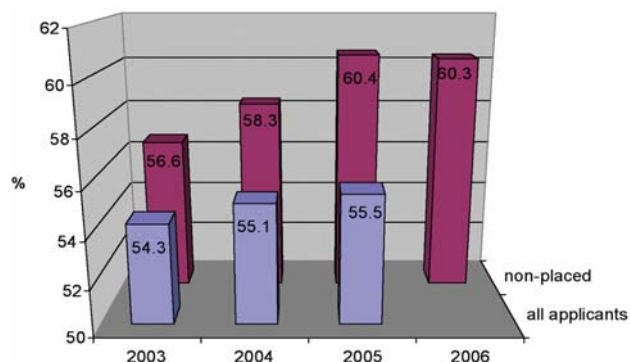
GENDER

Women are over-represented in the application population in comparison with the overall population (rising from 52.74% of applicants in 2001 to 54.29% of applicants in 2005, see www.ucas.ac.uk).

However, they are even more over-represented in the non-placed applicants group, and the difference has increased in recent years.

Figure 3

Percentage of women within all applicants and non-placed applicants over years)

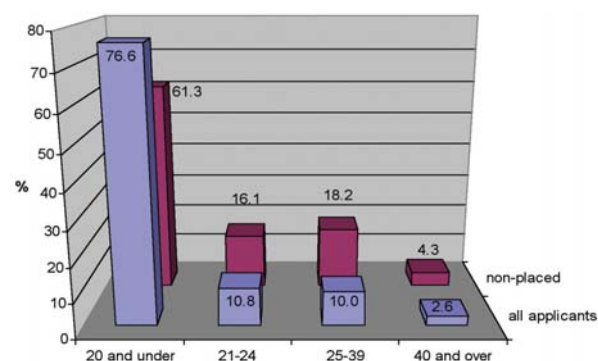


AGE

In recent years, the mean age of NPAs has risen slightly, with a slight dip between 2005 and 2006. ⁴ Non-placed applicants are older in comparison with all applicants, as shown in the following figure, for 2005.

Figure 4

Comparison of age-groups within all applicants and non-placed applicants (2005)



SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

The socio-economic status of applicants has been given a good deal of attention within the context of the widening participation agenda. This analysis aims to shed some light on developments within the socio-economic status of non-placed applicants. However, the usefulness of these data is constrained by the fact that the 'unknown' category of socio-economic status is the largest one and, at the time of writing, no data were available on socio-economic status for the 2006 NPA dataset.

The overview of the findings concerning the socio-economic status of NPAs is as follows:

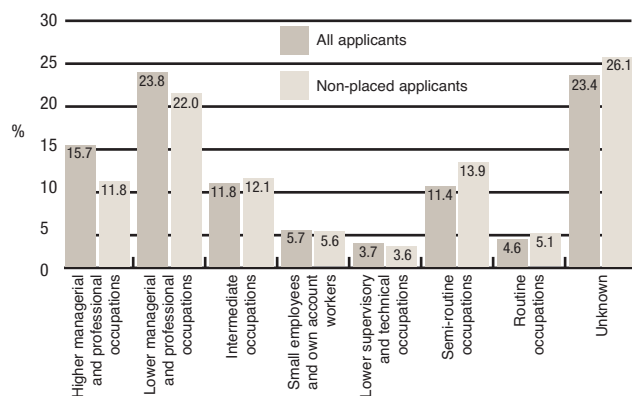
- 50 % of all applications, where socio-economic status is given, come from the two highest social classes; this has not changed in recent years. Non-placed applicants (NPAs) are slightly under-re-

presented in these two upper groups, and over-represented in the two lowest groups.

- NPAs are also slightly over-represented in the intermediate occupations.
- There is no significant discernible trend over time.

Figure 5

Socio-economic status of all applicants and non-placed applicants (2005)



COUNTRY OF APPLICATION

The percentages of applicants from the different parts of the UK have remained relatively stable over time. Applicants from Scotland and Northern Ireland are slightly over-represented in the NPAs.

Table 2

Non-placed applicants by home country over years (column percentages)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
England	79.8	79.6	79.4	79.5
Northern Ireland	4.7	5.3	5.3	5.7
Scotland	11.4	11	10.8	10
Wales	4.1	4.2	4.5	4.9

Some 25% of NPAs are overseas applicants (making them an over-represented group). In terms of applications, home-domiciled applicants accounted for some 85% in 2005, while EU and other overseas accounted for some 15% (see: <http://www.ucas.com/figures/ucasdata/region/domicile1.html>). For the most part, however, the current analysis focuses on UK-domiciled applicants.

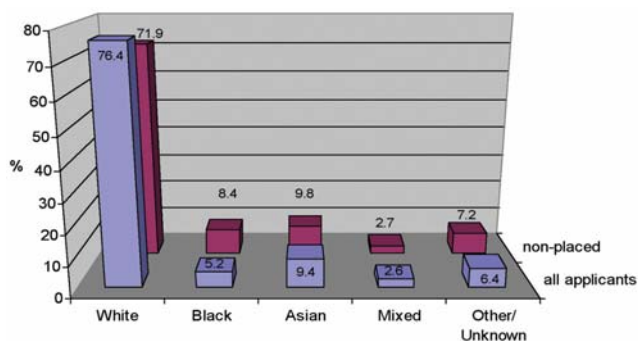
ETHNICITY

According to the analysis of the data (for UK-domiciled applicants), black and minority ethnic groups are highly over-represented in the non-placed applicant group. The percentage of non-placed black applicants is increasing, with some 30.5% of black applicants being non-placed in 2005. Whites are under-represented, with 17.9% of white applicants being non-placed in 2005, compared with the overall NPA percentage of 19% (and Chinese, at 16%, for the one year for which data are available). However, for these data a caveat must also be issued because of the high numbers in the 'unknown' category.

⁴ UCAS provides age-groups on the website. As we do not know if the applicants are equally distributed within the age-groups, the mean age for all applicants in 2005 and 2006 could not be calculated.

Figure 6

Ethnic groups within accepted applicants and non-placed applicants (percentage, 2005)

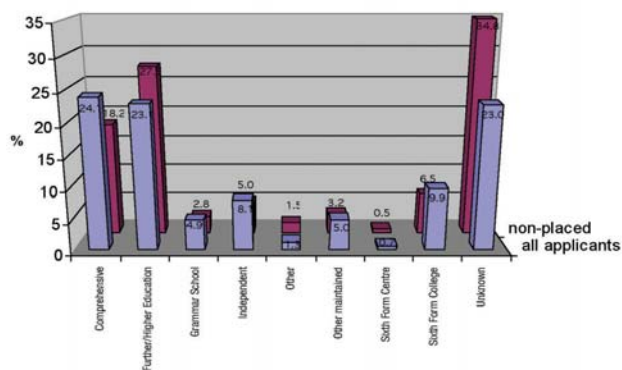


PRE-HE INSTITUTION

The largest groups of pre-HE institution in the non-placed applicant dataset for 2005 are: comprehensive (18.2%), Further/Higher Education (27.5%) and Unknown (34.8%). The 'unknown' group performs least well in terms of application success, with some 30% of them falling into the NPA group (compared with 19% overall), while the 'Other' and the "Further/Higher Education" groups have 22-23% in the NPA group. The high proportion of NPAs from further/higher education may highlight a need for better information in those institutions. Those applicants have the potential benefit of an institutional context and infrastructure to support their applications, and yet some 22-23% are in the NPA group.⁵

Figure 7

Prior school type of non-placed applicants (percentages of all applicants from that school form, 2005)



JOINT ACADEMIC CODING SYSTEM GROUPS (JACS GROUPS)

UCAS groups the different subjects into the so called Joint Academic coding system groups (JACS groups) in order to get a better overview of the subjects the applicants are applying for. There are 19 groups.⁶ The majority of applicants apply to one (60%) or two (23.2%) jacs groups (see data in appendix).⁷

The distribution of the applications over the different JACS groups within the non-placed applicants is as follows⁸: (see Table 3 next page)

FINDINGS FROM THIS INVESTIGATION: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AVAILABLE ON THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF NPAs

As described above, each applicant can place up to seven different applications each year.¹¹ A decision is available on each application, made either by the institution (i.e. rejected) or by the individual (i.e. decline offer). The different decisions about all applications from each applicant were aggregated on the level of this applicant.¹² The report uses the following different types of NPA:¹³

'UNKNOWN'

- no information about the decision on any of the applications is available and
- the applicant has not withdrawn from the application process

'WITHDRAWN'

The applicant

- has withdrawn from the process and
- has not declined any offer

'NO OFFER'

The applicant

- has been rejected in all his/her valid applications

'DECLINE'

The applicant

- has declined at least one of his/her offers

It would also be useful to analyse two other groups for developing a strategy to integrate non-placed applicants. These are the 'offers not met' group and the 're-apppliers' group. However, the dataset used did not allow for the identification of those who did not meet their offers.

Different types of 're-apppliers' are possible. Applicants are 're-apppliers', if they are not placed in one particular year, but

- re-apply in a subsequent year
 - and are placed or
 - are again among the non-placed applicant group
- have already applied in a previous year and
 - were placed and already hold a place in HE or
 - were among the non-placed applicant group

(Continued on page10.)

⁵ There is also a high proportion of NPAs with a Foundation course or an Access course as prior qualification.

⁶ An "unknown" category is added for those with no information about their JACS group.

⁷ Some of those with different JACS-groups nevertheless might apply for quite similar subjects that are only placed in different JACS-groups by definition.

⁸ See the appendix for an analysis of the distribution of applicants computed on the basis of data from the UCAS website.

¹¹ Normally an applicant can apply to up to six courses/institutions (four for certain subjects, such as medicine). UCAS then has one (2006) or two (2003-2005) additional variables for the "Clearing" and "Extra" applications. Nevertheless, one can find "Clearing/ Clearing declined" as decisions in each of the applications. Also the eighth application has no codes at all in any of the years (the only explanation would be that all "extra" applications were successful). Therefore we based our definitions and analyses on all seven applications.

¹² See the appendix for a list of all the possible decisions and an outline of how they were recorded for the report.

¹³ See the appendix for a description of the different NPA types.

Table 3

Distribution of applications over JACS-groups, 2005 (column percentages)

	First NPA applications		All NPA applications		All applications (2005) ⁹
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	%
Medicine & Dentistry	20283	6.5	76599	6.1	3.6
Subjects allied to Medicine	51651	16.6	180463	14.3	8.2
Biological Sciences	22628	7.3	109466	8.7	8.8
Vet Sci, Agriculture & related	3096	1.0	10466	0.8	0.8
Physical Sciences	5298	1.7	25577	2.0	3.7
Mathematical & Comp Sci	13618	4.4	61258	4.8	5.4
Engineering	9097	2.9	40805	3.2	4.1
Technologies	1970	0.6	7024	0.6	0.5
Architecture, Build & Plan	4255	1.4	19340	1.5	1.9
Social Studies	31515	10.1	126806	10.0	7.8
Law	11472	3.7	55647	4.4	5.0
Business & Admin studies	25140	8.1	121096	9.6	10.3
Mass Comms and Documentation	6722	2.2	34389	2.7	2.5
Linguistics, Classics & related	9566	3.1	47169	3.7	3.5
European Langs, Lit & related	2158	0.7	10796	0.9	1.1
Non-European Langs and related	1284	0.4	5463	0.4	0.5
Hist & Philosophical studies	8639	2.8	41796	3.3	4.1
Creative Arts & Design	32381	10.4	129776	10.3	10.5
Education	17927	5.8	64847	5.1	3.5
Unknown	32355	10.4	95072	7.5	combined: 14.1
Total	311055	100.0	1263855	100.0	100.0

The first column gives the names of the different JACS groups. The second and third column refer to the first application of the NPAs of 2003-2006, giving the total figures and the percentage.¹⁰ The fourth and fifth column hold the same information for all applications placed by NPAs. The last column shows the percentage of applicants within the JACS groups for all applicants (placed and non-placed) in 2005.

Some of the subjects, like Physical Sciences or Engineering, show a favourable ratio between applications and acceptances (the percentage in "all applications" is higher than the percentage in the NPA), and some, especially Medicine and Subjects allied to medicine, show a strong over-representation of non-placed applications.

⁹ The figures are derived from the UCAS webpage (<http://www.ucas.ac.uk/figures/ucasdata/subject/jacs.html>), which has some additional categories dealing with combinations of JACS groups. These add up to 14.1% for 2005, which is more than the "unknown" group in the NPA-dataset. The figures for the NPA are therefore slightly "overestimated" in comparison to all applications in 2005.

¹⁰ The "first" application is not necessarily the 'first choice', as the applications within each applicant are sorted in alphabetical order of the institution codes. Nevertheless, as some applicants placed only one application, the "first" application data field holds the most information. However, the differences between the first and all choices are only small.

However, on the basis of the data provided in the first instance it was not possible to identify the re-applicants either, as there was insufficient information to identify individuals unambiguously. As the re-applicants are “non-placed” in the specific years they appear in the NPA dataset, they were included in the following analyses within the above mentioned NPA types.¹⁴ A later chapter of this report analyses the re-applicants and their characteristics separately, based on access to additional data that made it possible to identify them.

One problem with the combination of the different applications is that some applicants may decline one offer, be rejected from another application, not meet their offer from another one and then withdraw from the whole process. Therefore, there is some overlapping of types. As ‘declined’ and ‘no offer’ gives more information about the applicant than the ‘withdrawn’ information, applicants that withdrew but also fell into the “declined” or “no offer” group were coded as belonging to these other groups. Thereby the process of coding described above produces distinct groups.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GROUPS

The different groups may well need different strategies in order to support them to move out of the NPA group.

UNKNOWN:

For this group, the initial aim must be better data collection within the institutions and UCAS. With more accurate available data, those applicants in the ‘unknown’ category can be placed into one of the other groups, thereby improving the quality of data analysis possible.

WITHDRAWN:

These applicants considered going into HE, but later withdrew from the process. The question ‘why’ cannot be answered with the available data, but potential reasons might include: attractive alternatives, incomplete information about courses or institutions, not getting the offers they wanted, structural factors and potential barriers to HE study.

NO OFFER:

These applicants have been rejected and might be frustrated (although some of them may re-apply the following year). Potential reasons may include: applying to unrealistically competitive courses or institutions; lack of flexibility in their applications, for personal, family or health reasons; coming from a non-traditional pathway and the HEIs applied to struggled to assess their prior qualifications.

DECLINE:

These applicants get an offer from at least one institution, but decline it. They at least have the choice. They may decline an offer because the conditional grades required seem too high, or because they are rethinking their course or institution choice. Again, it is only possible to

speculate on the reasons behind these decisions. Nevertheless they are not taking up full-time higher education study.¹⁵ The ‘decline’ group turn down at least one specific offer of a course at a particular institution. This is different from at least some of the ‘withdrawn’ group, who withdraw from the whole UCAS process, rather than from a specific course. This means that the reasons behind these decisions may be very different, but again we can only speculate on what they might be. A fuller range of explanations would need to draw on qualitative research.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIFFERENT NON-PLACED APPLICANTS GROUPS (NPAs)

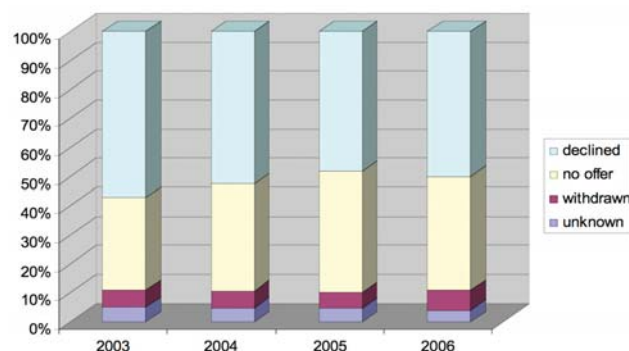
VI

On the basis of the working definitions of the different non-placed applicant groups, the current study now examines the characteristics of these groups. The following sections show bivariate distributions, describing the distribution of age, gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, number of applications, the chosen subjects (jacs groups), prior qualifications and pre-HE institutions of the non-placed applicants in these different groups¹⁶. However, caution must be exercised when attempting to draw conclusions, because some of these characteristics may be correlated. Therefore, the following sections include multivariate analyses.

A comparison of the distribution of the groups within the different years reveals minor fluctuations. While the ‘no offer’ group seems to have increased between 2002 and 2005, and the ‘declined’ group decreased, this trend reversed in 2006. These two groups account for the vast majority of the NPAs.

Figure 8

Non-placed applicants groups over years¹⁷



In the following sections various characteristics of the NPAs in the distinct groups are presented, in order to show any differences between them.

¹⁴ If the re-applicants are not placed in their application in the other year, they appear twice (or even more often) in the dataset, which, depending on the number of these, might influence the statistical analyses. However, most of the re-applicants are successful.

¹⁵ UCAS does not hold data on part-time studies.

¹⁶ This analysis does not test for “significant” differences between the groups, because we not only have a sample but a full dataset (including all non-placed applicants). The concept of “significance” only makes sense in order to test if a difference or a relationship in a sample also holds true for the full population or might only occur by chance (see for a discussion of significance testing for full samples /Behnke, 2005 #1164).

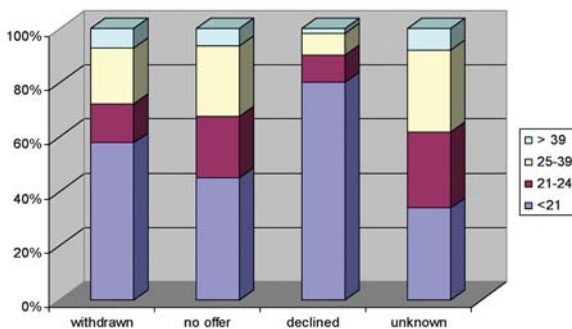
¹⁷ This and the following figures show, unless otherwise stated, the percentages within each of the non-placed applicants groups for the combined years 2003-2006.

AGE

Looking at the age of the applicants in the various groups clear differences emerge. The vast majority of those in the 'declined' are in the youngest age group. Over 80 % are under 21, and only 1.7 % are 40 or older. 'Withdrawn', 'no offer' and 'unknown' all follow a common pattern: the youngest age group is still the largest, but substantial numbers also come also from the other age groups. While 'withdrawn' is most similar to the 'declined' group, in the 'no offer' and 'unknown' groups the older age groups are heavily over-represented (see the following figure).

Figure 9

Distribution of age groups of within the non-placed applicants groups

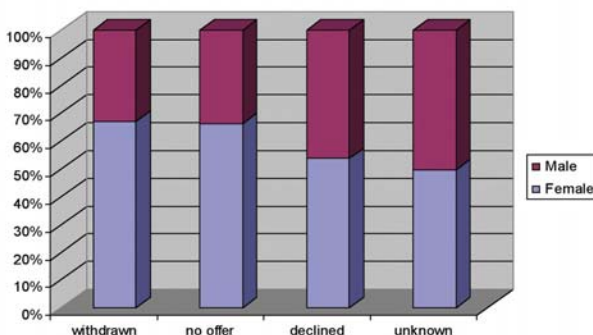


GENDER

As the analysis of the full NPA dataset revealed, women are heavily over-represented in the non-placed applicant group. Looking now at the differentiated NPA groups, it emerges that women are particularly over-represented in two of the NPA groups – 'no offers' and 'withdrawn'. This reveals the gendered nature of the NPA groups, but further research would be required in order to find out the reasons behind this. In addition, better information about the 'unknown' group is essential.

Figure 10

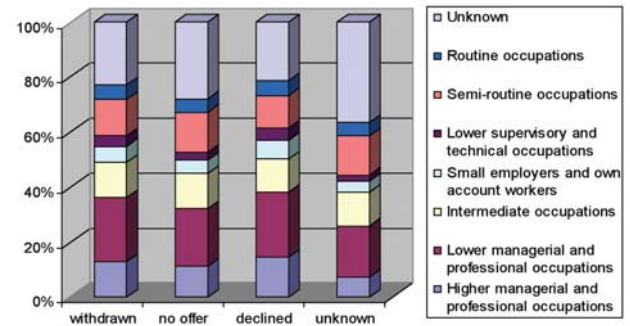
Gender distribution within non-placed applicants groups



SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (2003-2005)

Figure 11

Socioeconomic status groups within non-placed applicants groups (2003-2005)



Turning now to socio-economic status, it emerges, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the 'unknown' group also has the highest proportion of unknown socio-economic status. On average, the 'withdrawn' and 'declined' groups have the highest socio-economic status. However, overall the differences between the groups are not very large.

However, as mentioned before, it is important to be cautious with drawing conclusions using these data, as the largest group of all is that with 'unknown' socio-economic status.

ETHNICITY

With regard to ethnicity, it emerges that whites are under-represented in the 'no offer' and 'unknown' groups, and over-represented in the 'withdrawn' and 'declined' groups.

Blacks are over-represented in the 'no offer' and 'unknown' groups, while Asians are slightly under-represented in the 'no offer' group.

Figure 12

Ethnic groups within non-placed applicants groups

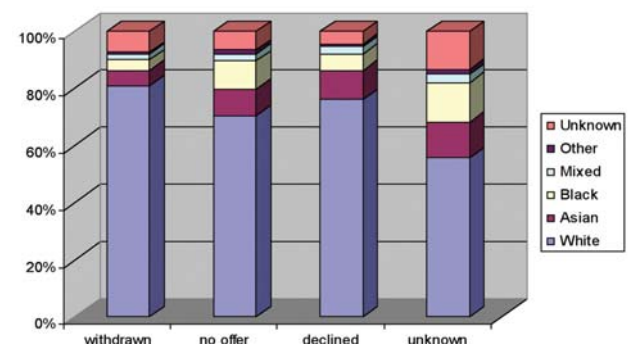


Table 29 in the appendix shows the same data by percentage of each ethnic group. This reveals that 48.7 % of 'Blacks' in the NPA dataset do not get an offer (compared to 37.5 % of all NPAs overall). This is by far the highest percentage.

MEAN NUMBER OF TOTAL APPLICATIONS (FOR 2003-2006)

With regard to ethnicity, it emerges that whites are under-represented in the 'no offer' and 'unknown' groups, and over-represented in the 'withdrawn' and 'declined' groups.

The mean number of applications for all applicants was 4.4 in 2005 and 2006 (see www.ucas.ac.uk). Therefore, the mean number of applications for all NPAs, at 4.1, is below that for all applicants, and the mean number of applications for withdrawn and no offer is much lower still. (This analysis excludes those in the 'unknown' group, as no information is held on the number of their applications).

Table 4

Number of average applications per applicant by non-placed applicants groups

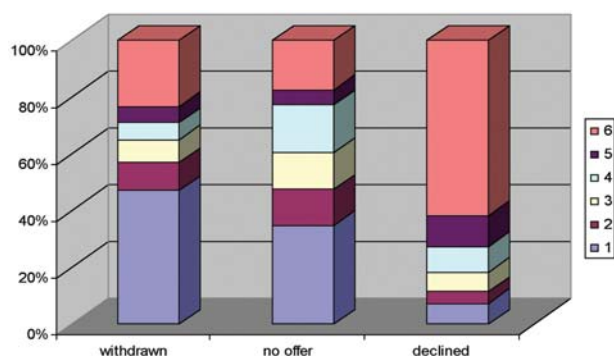
	Mean number of Applications
withdrawn	2.7
no offer	3.0
declined	5.0
Mean for all NPAs	4.1

The differences between the groups are self-evident: those who receive and decline an offer have by far the most applications, while those in the withdrawn and no offer groups have not made full use of the maximum possible number of applications.

This is shown particularly clearly by a comparison between the percentages of these groups having placed only one or the full six applications. For example, 35% of those getting no offer have placed only one application, and 16% have placed six applications. In the declined-group 7% placed only one application, and 60% placed six. Of those placing only one application two thirds get no offer, and 20% are in a position to decline an offer. Of those placing six applications, 16% still get no offer, but 81% decline their offer(s) (see appendix for all figures).

Figure 13

Distribution of number of applications within non-placed applicants groups¹⁸



¹⁸ The "Unknown" category was dropped due to missing data in the "No. of applications" variable. The seventh application (Clearing) is not taken into account. A little bit more than 1% of applicants within the "no offer" and the "declined" groups place such an application as well.

¹⁹ Some of those with different JACS-groups nevertheless might apply for quite similar subjects that are only placed in different JACS-groups by definition.

²⁰ Nevertheless, the overall picture stays the same when one takes the number of applications into account. (See appendix.)

²¹ UCAS has a sophisticated system of coding for these decisions, sometimes based on the decision of the institutions (i.e. rejected), sometimes on the basis of the individual (i.e. declined), sometimes as a combination of both decisions (i.e. conditional offer insurance). For the purposes of this report they were all recoded to "unknown", "withdrawn", "declined" and "no offer".

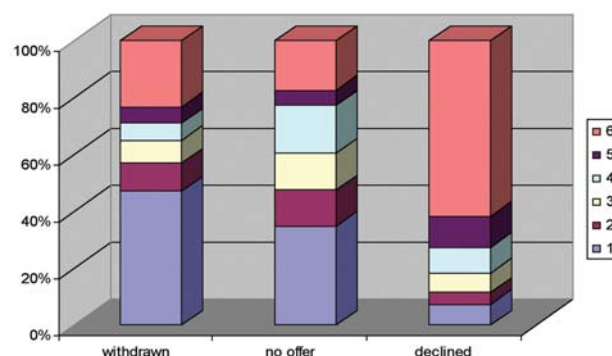
Again, however, this analysis cannot provide an explanation. Why did these applicants only place one application? Were they fully aware of the possibility of applying to a number of courses and institutions? It is possible that the single application may have to do with a reluctance or inability to move city or region, or applicants not being sure of the course they wish to follow.

JOINT ACADEMIC CODING SYSTEM GROUPS (JACS GROUPS)

The majority of applicants apply only to one (60%) or two (23.2%) jacs groups, as shown in the following figure.¹⁹

Figure 14

No. of different JACS-subjects chosen per applicant within non-placed applicants groups

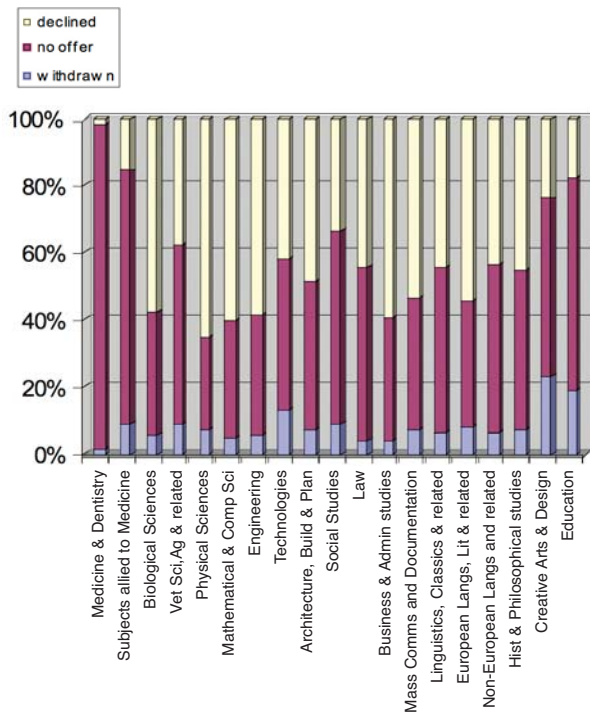


The 'no offer' group not only places the lowest number of applications, but also applies for the lowest number of different subjects.²⁰ However, the 'withdrawn' group also has quite a large number of applicants applying for only one subject. The largest number of different subjects is chosen by the 'declined' group. This may increase their chances of getting an offer, but it might be, however, that it also increases the risk that they are not content with the offer they receive and then decline it.

The figure overleaf shows the distribution of the "withdrawn", "no offer" and "declined" decisions for all applications from non-placed applicants across the different JACS groups.²¹

Figure 15

Distribution of NPA groups within the different JACS groups



As can be seen above, there are major differences between the jacs groups. For example "Medicine and Dentistry" is dominated by 'no offer', while "Physical Sciences" is dominated by the 'decline' group of NPA.

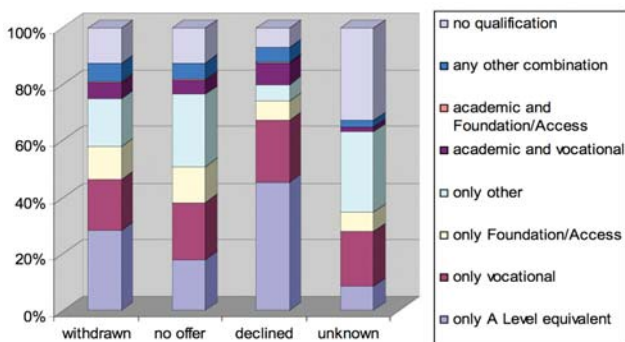
PRIOR QUALIFICATIONS (2003-2005)

With regard to prior qualifications, the 'declined' group has by far the largest proportion of A-level and A-level/vocational applicants. The 'unknown' group has large proportions of 'no qualification' and 'only other' qualifications.

In addition, 'only other' and 'only Foundation/Access' are over-represented in the 'no offer' category. This is, however, difficult to interpret, as some applicants may go through internal application processes.

Figure 16

Prior qualifications in different NPA groups (2003-2005: in percent of the group)



TARIFF POINTS

Those applicants without any information about their tariff points are much more likely to be in the "no offer" group. Only the "unknown" group has an even higher percentage of applicants without any tariff point information. There is tariff point information on 76% of those who receive an offer, but decline it, although this percentage is still lower than that for all applicants (at around 78%).

Those with fewer than 80 tariff points, often set as the minimal qualification for HE entry, are quite evenly distributed over the NPA groups, and their proportion is again higher (at 10%) than for the accepted applicants (at 4%).

Figure 17

Tariff point information in non-placed applicants groups (2003-2005)

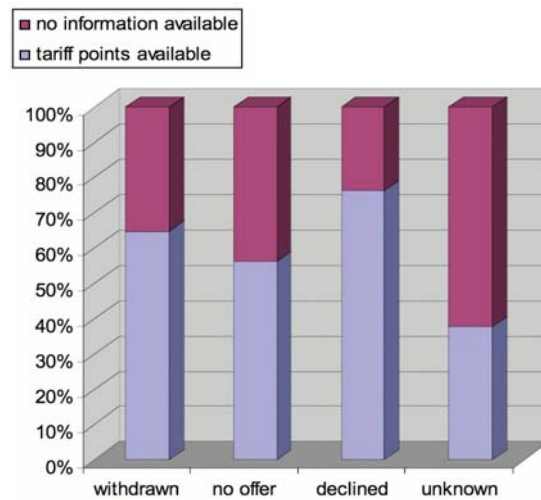


Figure 18

Percentage of applicants with fewer than 80 Tariff points within non-placed applicants groups (2003-2005)

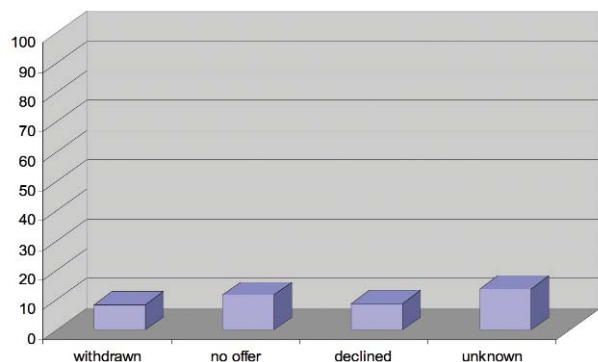
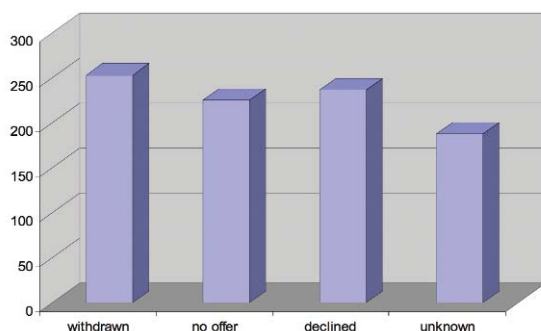


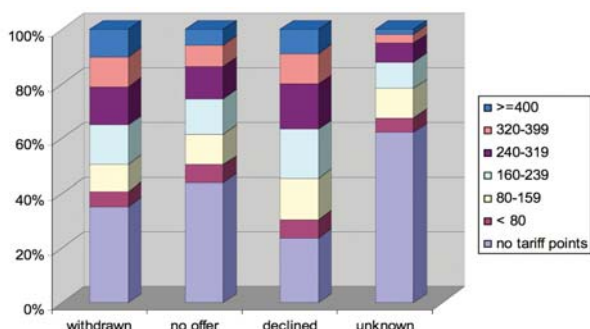
Figure 19

Mean tariff points within non-placed applicants groups (2003-2005, only those with information available were taken into account)



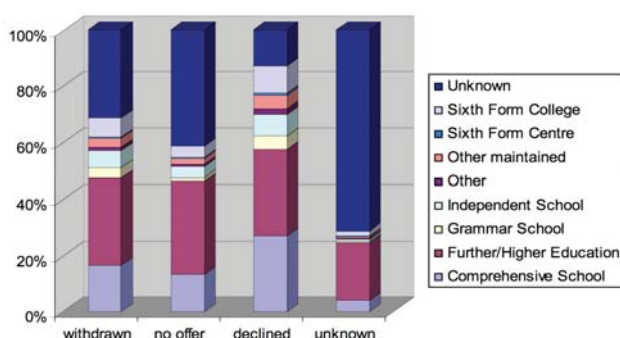
Amongst those with tariff point information, the 'no offer' group has the lowest mean score. However, the differences between the groups are quite small, compared to the difference with the accepted applicants (who, according to the full dataset, have a mean tariff point score of 303).

Figure 20
Distribution of tariff points within NPA groups (2003-2005 combined)



PRE- HE INSTITUTION

Figure 21
Pre-HE institution within non-placed applicant groups



The data available on the pre-HE institutions of the NPAs show that, for a large number of them, no information about their pre-HE institution is available. Most of these, perhaps unsurprisingly, are mature students.²² This group, with 'unknown' pre-HE institution is under-represented in the "declined" group. Those institutions traditionally offering A-Level provision are over-represented in the "declined" group and under-represented in the "no-offer" group. The opposite is the case for those coming from HE/FE.

This study has so far described the characteristics of the non-placed applicants as a whole and various sub-groups of them. The reasons why these applicants remained non-placed applicants are more elusive. The most appropriate way to do this would be a targeted study, looking specifically and in more detail at the reasons. A mixed method approach would be advisable, as the combination of a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews would, on the one hand, offer a representative sample, allowing the study to draw reliable conclusions for the whole group of non-placed applicants and, on the other, offer analysis of the main reasons in more depth, as such a decision is often very difficult to take, and is embedded in private circumstances.²³ This kind of work is, however, beyond the scope of the current report, which focuses on the analysis of the data held by UCAS on the NPAs.

This section analyses the influence of the different characteristics of the NPAs on the chance of being in one of the particular NPA-groups compared to being accepted. The analysis involves a multinomial logistic regression. This allows us to take all the characteristics into account in one step and compute the influence of each explanatory variable independently while everything else is held constant. On the basis of the variables included in the full datasets for 2003 to 2006 different explanations for being in the non-placed group can be integrated. There are differences concerning age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, tariff points, type of prior qualification and of pre-HE institution. We use all of this information about the applicants as explanatory variables in one single analysis.²⁴ The dependent variable is a categorical variable: belonging to the accepted-group or to one of the different NPA-groups.²⁵ Therefore a multinomial logistic regression is appropriate. By taking all of them into account in one step, we can see if there are dependencies between the different explanations. It could, for example, be the case that the over-representation of women in the NPAs is a result of their higher age (20.94 compared to 20.33 for men). Testing for all explanations simultaneously allows therefore for testing which explanations really hold true, when taking the others into account.²⁶

The analysis was divided into two parts. The first one does not take the re-applicants into account and only distinguishes between the above-mentioned other NPA-groups. The second table, however, does takes the re-applicants into account and compares them as an additional group with the placed applicants.²⁷

²² The mean age for the different sectors is 26.5 years for "unknown" and 23 for those with a background in Further/Higher education. All other groups have an average age below 20.

²³ As our results suggest, most non-placed applicants withdrew or declined offers they got for different reasons.

²⁴ As the dependent variable (accepted: yes/no) has only two possible values (a so-called dummy variable), a logistic regression is appropriate.

²⁵ We did not include the "Unknown" and the "Withdrawn" group in this analysis, because both groups are quite small and their inclusion would make the presentation of the results confusing.

²⁶ Applicants without information about their socio-economic status are excluded from the analyses (168,941 or 20.5 % of all applicants). All other variables have full data, although within age there are some strange cases (as young as 13 and as old as 99). We also did not take data from 2006 into account, as there is a problem with the coding of prior qualifications within that year.

²⁷ Only those re-applicants were taken into account who were not successful in the specific year (so that they belong to the NPA in the other analyses), although they might have been successful in a former or later year.

The tables below read as follows:

- The first section of the table shows the influence of the different independent variables on the distinction between the 'no offers' group and the 'accepted' applicants, the second section shows the influence on the distinction between the 'decline' group and the 'accepted' group.
- In the first column the names of the independent variables are given.
- Three categorical variables (Pre-HE institution, Ethnicity, Prior qualifications) are transformed into different dummy-variables.²⁸ Each dummy within these variables (i.e. "no qualification", "only vocational" etc.) compares the influence of this specific category with a reference category (i.e. "A-level equivalent academic qualifications").
- The 'B' is the regression coefficient for the logistic regression. A positive value shows that high values of the variable for an applicant result in a higher chance of him/her being in the specific NPA-group, as the reference category for the whole analysis is 'Accepted: yes'.
- Standard Errors (S.E.), Wald, and Degrees of Freedom (df) are measures of the significance of the influence of an independent variable. As we have a full sample, these measures cannot be interpreted in the normal way. However they give an impression of the reliability of the coefficients.
- While the beta coefficients have no straightforward interpretation in the logistic regression,²⁹ the so called odd ratios, shown under Exp(B), give the predicted change in odds for a unit increase in the corresponding independent variable. The odd describes the chance of being in one group compared to being in the reference group. For example, being a man decreases the ratio of the probability of being in the 'no offer' group by the factor 0.63. Values over one therefore indicate a higher risk, values under one a lower risk of being in one of the NPA groups.
- All of these are shown for different comparisons, as the sub-headings show. The data for the "No offer"-group are presented first, then for the "Decline"-group, always in comparison with the "Accepted"-group.

Table 16

Influences on the risk of being not accepted (results of multinomial logistic regression)³⁰

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (B)
'No offer' a)						
Age	.017	.001	846.567	1	.000	1.017
Socio-economic status b)	.007	.001	25.593	1	.000	1.017
Gender (male)	-.462	.008	3123.590	1	.000	.630
Tariff-points (z-standardised)	-.418	.006	4623.022	1	.000	.658
No tariff point information	.443	.011	1596.535	1	.000	1.557
Pre-HE institution c)						
Further/Higher Education	.352	.014	612.231	1	.000	1.422
Grammar/Independent	-.106	.022	22.817	1	.000	.899
Other/Sixth form	-.197	.020	98.920	1	.000	.821
Unknown	1.131	.015	6032.940	1	.000	3.097
Ethnicity d)						
Other/Unknown	-.088	.013	48.091	1	.000	.916
Black	.282	.014	395.189	1	.000	1.326
Asian	-.026	.014	3.645	1	.000	.974
Prior Qualifications e)						
No qualification	-.502	.016	948.079	1	.000	.605
Only vocational	.552	.014	1531.134	1	.000	1.737
Only Foundation/Access	.568	.017	1168.164	1	.000	1.765
Other qual./combination	.850	.013	4369.196	1	.000	2.339

²⁸ Ethnicity, pre-HE institution and prior qualifications have nominal scales. Every category becomes its own variable, coded "1" if the characteristic is present, "0" if not. For example ethnicity: The four categories "Asian", "black", "white" and "others/unknown" form four variables. An Asian applicant would be coded "1" in the first, "0" in the next three variables. Some of the categories have had to be collapsed because otherwise the number of variables would have been too big (see appendix). For each original variable one of the categories had to be chosen as a reference category, otherwise the information would be redundant. The co-efficient then gives the difference for an applicant holding a specific characteristic (i.e. coming from a grammar school) compared to this reference category (in this case comprehensive school).

²⁹ Because the relationship is not linear and direct as in normal linear regression, they do not give the direct influence of the independent on the dependent variable. They also cannot be compared to each other to see the strength of the influence of each variable by this means.

³⁰ The tariff points are z-standardised (without the missing ones = 0, therefore the standard-deviation is not 1 any more...) and then for all those without tariff points this new ztariff-variable is set to 0 => the d_tariff parameter gives now the difference for them to the mean tariff points (and not to those with 0 tariff points). The analysis is done only with those having applicants whose information about their socio-economic status is available and for the years 2003-2005 (due to problems with qualifications in 2006 data).

‘Declined’ ^{a)}						
Age	-.019	.001	561.890	1	.000	.981
Socio-economic status ^{b)}	-.001	.001	.373	1	.541	.999
Gender (male)	-.032	.007	23.099	1	.000	.968
Tariff-points (z-standardised)	-.629	.005	17875.921	1	.000	.533
No tariff point information	.763	.011	4937.022	1	.000	2.145
Pre-HE institution ^{c)}						
Further/Higher Education	-.248	.010	582.139	1	.000	.781
Grammar/Independent	.121	.012	102.246	1	.000	1.128
Other/Sixth form	-.081	.011	52.111	1	.000	.922
Unknown	-.546	.013	1651.368	1	.000	.579
Ethnicity ^{d)}						
Other/Unknown	-.084	.012	48.797	1	.000	.919
Black	.091	.014	39.816	1	.000	1.096
Asian	-.115	.011	110.869	1	.000	.891
Prior Qualifications ^{e)}						
No qualification	-.829	.015	3180.385	1	.000	.436
Only vocational	.123	.010	144.181	1	.000	1.131
Only Foundation/Access	-.152	.016	95.582	1	.000	.859
Other qual./combination	.047	.010	22.176	1	.000	1.048

^{a)} The overall reference category is ‘Accepted’

^{b)} We treat this as a quasi-metric variable, which seems to be justifiable when comparing it with the ordinal results

^{c)} Reference category is ‘Comprehensive School’

^{d)} Reference category is ‘White’

^{e)} Reference category is ‘Only A-level equivalent academic qualification’

Overall, we can explain around 13% of the variance with the above variables. Prior achievements seem to have by far the biggest influence. Leaving tariff-points, prior qualifications or the type of pre-HE institution out of the model reduces its explanatory power. Without gender or age, there is only a very small change, while taking ethnicity or socio-economic status into account or not does not change anything, when all other variables are included.³¹ This does, however, not mean that the latter are unimportant for assessing the likelihood of an applicant being placed in HE. Rather, prior achievement is highly influenced by ethnicity or socio-economic status, and as we see they have an independent influence in the model.³²

Looking at the two NPA-groups “no offer” and “declined”, the results of the multivariate analysis in more detail are —³³

For both groups:

- Women run a higher risk of getting no offer or declining their offers. Men are especially under-represented within the “no offer” group.
- Higher tariff points reduce the risk of being not placed.³⁴
- If there is no information regarding applicants’ tariff points this increases the likelihood of their receiving no offers or declining any offers they may receive.
- Applicants from black minorities have an increased risk of being not accepted and, although not that strong, an increased risk of declining offers. The influence of an Asian background is negligible.

³¹ It is difficult to identify the comparative influence of the independent variables in a logistic regression model, because the beta-values can not be compared directly. One way of approximation is to look at the change in Nagelkerke’s R² when leaving one of the variables out. It goes down from 0.128 to 0.098 without the two tariff-variables, down to 0.106 without prior qualifications, down to 0.112 without pre-HE institution, down to 0.124 without gender, down to 0.126 without age and stays the same without ethnicity or socio-economic status. However, as there is multicollinearity between the variables, this procedure is only an approximation.

³² Structural equation modelling would be able to take these relationships into account better, but is beyond the scope of this report.

³³ Some “unknown” and “other”-categories are not interpreted, as their meaning is not clear.

³⁴ The tariff points have been z-standardised, this means they now have a mean of 0 and a standard-deviation of one. By this, those without any tariff-point information are compared to those with an average tariff point score, and not with those having “0” points. Also the parameters (B/Exp[B]) are now related to a change of one standard-deviation, and not to a change in tariff points directly.

For the “no offer” group:

- Older people run a higher risk of not being accepted.
- The higher an applicant’s socio-economic status, the higher their chance of being accepted, although the effect is not very large.
- Coming from Further/Higher Education or, especially, from an unknown prior learning background, increases the risk of not being placed, compared with someone from a comprehensive school, quite much. A background of an independent or grammar school decreases the risk slightly.
- Other than A-level equivalent qualifications are overrepresented in the “No offer”-group, and this influence is quite high.

For the “declined” group:

- Older people are less likely to decline offers they get.
- People from Further/Higher education or from an unknown educational background are less likely to turn offers down.

ANALYSIS OF THE ‘RE-APPLIERS’ VIII

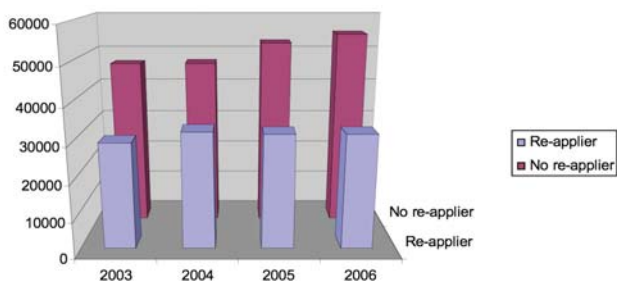
This report has, thus far, considered the non-placed applicants within each application year. The next sections look at possible re-applications by non-placed applicants in subsequent years.³⁵ These so-called ‘re-appliers’ therefore reduce the overall numbers of NPAs if they are successful in subsequent years. Re-appliers are defined as those who make at least one other application in another year, be it in a previous or in a later year. A re-applying non-placed applicant in this report refers to someone who applied in at least one of the years 2003-2006 without being placed in HE, and who applied at least a second time in the years 2002-2007, and was either placed in HE, or was in the NPA group.³⁶

RE-APPLIERS IN THE NPA DATASET

Overall, around 20% of all applicants (placed and non-placed) re-apply. Within the NPA dataset the proportion of re-appliers is even higher: some 38% of all NPAs 2003-06 (124,978) re-applied at least once in a previous or later year.³⁷

Figure 22

Re-appliers and non re-appliers within non-placed applicants over years



³⁵ Until now “applications” in this report meant the different applications for different institutions, subjects etc. one applicant made within one year. For this chapter, however, the plural “applications” indicates that someone has applied in different years.

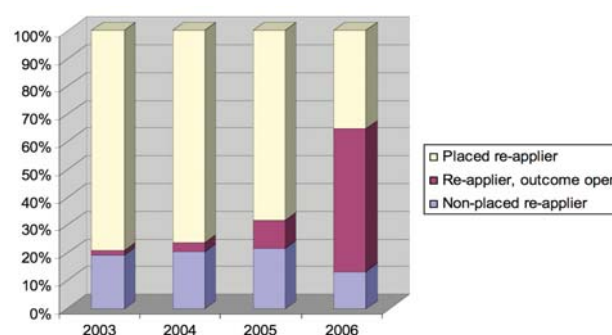
³⁶ As the dataset for 2007 was not yet fully available at the time of writing of the report, there may be some more re-appliers who could not be identified. Further issues with the identification of re-appliers are outlined in the Appendix.

³⁷ As will be shown later, most re-applications are made in the following year. However, some people take more time between applications. Therefore, the figure for the year 2004 seems to be the most appropriate, because re-applicants from this year are in the middle of the time-span under investigation.

Although most of the re-appliers only re-apply once, some re-apply twice or even more times. Of those re-applying 86% do this once, 12% twice, and only two percent four, five or even six times. The vast majority of non-placed applicants re-apply in one of the following years (71%), but 22% had already applied in a former year, and 7% re-apply in a former and a later year. Most re-applications (nearly 70%) are made in the following year, but some are made after two, three or even four years. How many of the re-appliers are successful with one of their other applications and are placed in HE? The following table shows the proportion of placed re-appliers within all re-appliers of the NPA dataset. Those re-applying in 2007 are described as “outcome open”.

Figure 23

Proportion of placed re-appliers within all re-applying NPAs

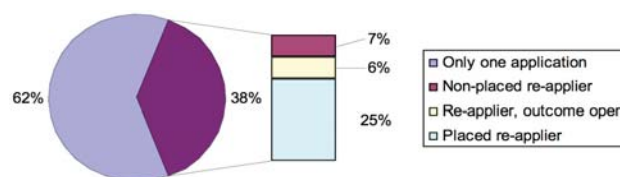


As the table above shows, in 2003 and 2004 around three quarters of the NPAs who re-applied were placed in another year. The figures are smaller for 2005 and 2006, but this is due to re-applications which are still open. Some NPAs are actually placed more than once (around five percent).

Combining these results leads to the following proportions. The “re-applier, outcome open” group are mostly from 2006.

Figure 24

Re-applier groups and non re-appliers within non-placed applicants (2003-2006)

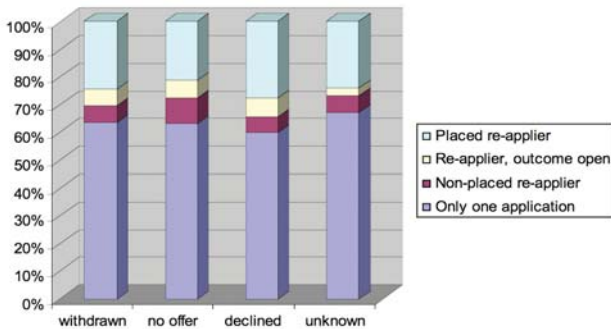


CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NPA RE-APPLIERS

IX

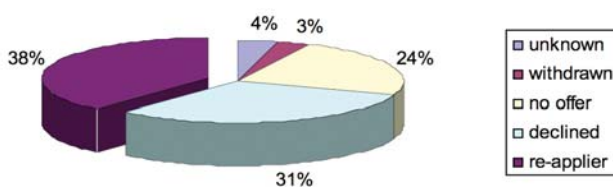
The following sections show the characteristics of the NPA re-applicants, following the same lines as the previous description of the characteristics of the NPAs: age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, mean number of applications within each year, and their prior qualifications. The re-applicants are fairly evenly distributed across the different NPA categories used in this report, as shown in the following figure.

Figure 25
Proportion of re-applier types within non-placed applicants groups



Taking the re-applicants into account as an extra category reduces the other categories of NPA considerably. The pie-chart below shows the percentages of the NPA-groups in the years 2003-2006, when one takes the re-applicants into account. Of the 38% re-applicants, some 80% are placed.

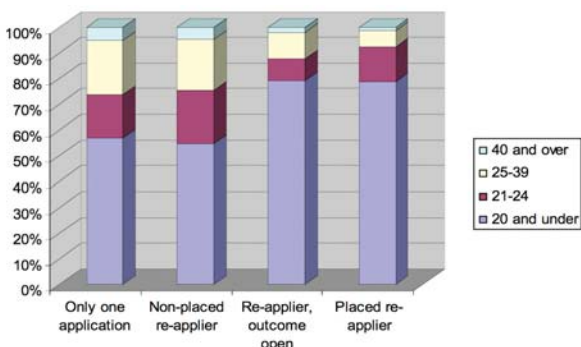
Figure 26
Non-placed applicants groups with re-applicants



AGE

With regard to age, the following figure shows that the re-applicants who are 20 and under are likely to be placed upon re-application, while there is rather less likelihood for the older re-applicants to be placed.

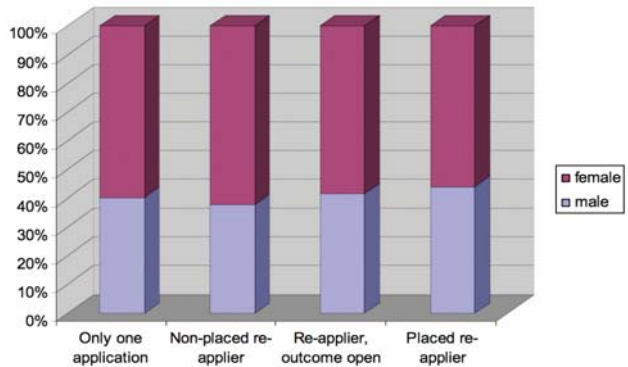
Figure 27
Age groups within the different re-applier groups 2003-2006



GENDER

With regard to gender, it can be seen below that men are slightly over-represented within the placed re-applicants.

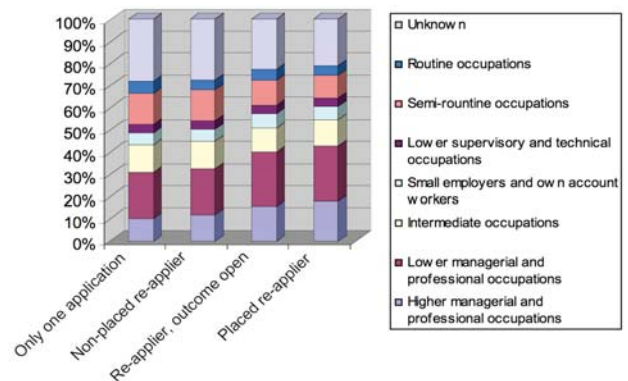
Figure 28
Gender distribution within re-applicants groups



SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

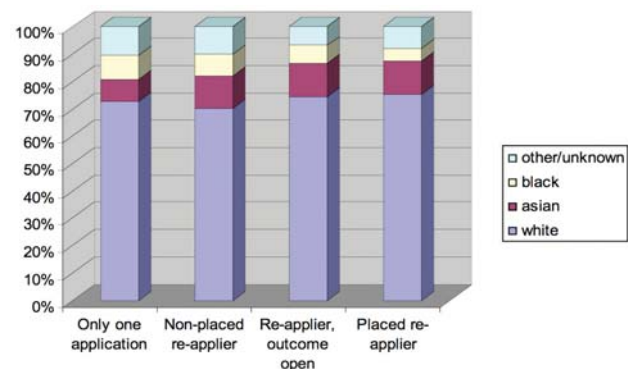
The higher the socio-economic status of an applicant, the higher the likelihood of their re-applying. The semi-routine and routine groups show a significantly lower rate of re-applicants.

Figure 29
Socio-economic status within re-applicants groups



SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Figure 30
Ethnic groups within re-applier groups



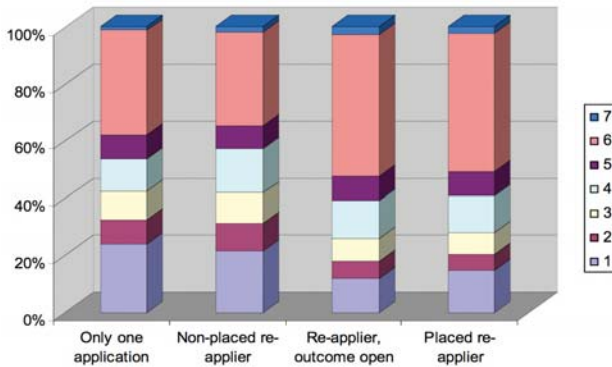
Asian NPAs are more likely to re-apply than other ethnicities. Black NPAs, who are over-represented in the NPA dataset, tend to re-apply at below average rates. Nearly 50% of Asian NPAs re-apply, while this figure is only 28% for black NPAs.

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS WITHIN ONE YEAR

Re-apppliers, and especially placed re-apppliers, also have more applications within one year. The difference is mainly due to the difference in those with only one application and those placing six applications within one year.

Figure 31

Average number of applications for one year within re-appplier groups

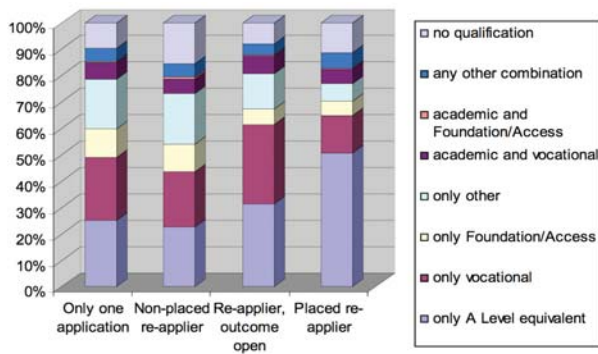


PRIOR QUALIFICATIONS

A-level equivalent prior qualifications are over-represented within the placed re-apppliers. While more than half of those with an A-level equivalent prior qualification re-apply, the percentage for those with only vocational, only Foundation/Access-course or only other is much lower (at around or under 30%).

Figure 32

Qualificational pathways within re-appplier groups

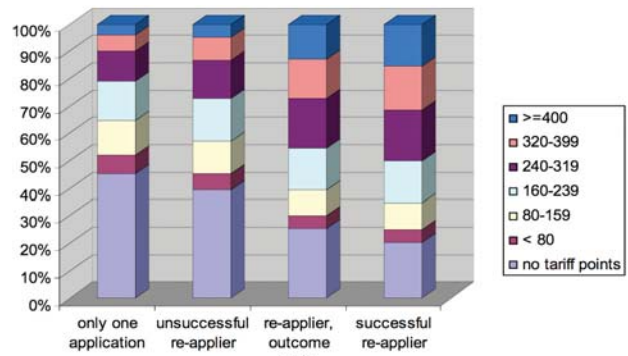


TARIFF POINTS

Placed re-apppliers not only have the lowest percentage of applicants without tariff points at all, but are also overrepresented within the highest tariff points groups. On the other hand, more than 50 % of those with only one application do not have any information or fewer than 80 tariff points.

Figure 33

Tariff points groups within re-appplier groups



MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS, INCLUDING RE-APPLIERS



The analyses so far showed that re-applying NPAs, especially the placed ones, are much more similar to the placed applicants than the non-re-apppliers. Re-apppliers are younger, are more likely to have higher tariff-points and A-Level qualifications and so on, than non-re-applying NPAs. Again, as for the NPA groups above, analysis of how the different characteristics influence the chance of being in a specific re-appplier group when all other characteristics are taken into account simultaneously is necessary. The following table reports the results of a multinomial logistic regression, checking for all the different factors at the same time. Three groups are compared: the reference group are those with only one application, and they are compared with the non-placed re-apppliers (first part of the table) and with the placed re-apppliers (second part of the table).³⁸ The appendix includes the results of two additional analyses: firstly, a comparison of re-applying and non-re-applying NPAs (combining the two in the table below separated groups) and, secondly, a comparison of the NPA groups, including the re-apppliers as a separate group, with the accepted applicants (supplementing the multivariate analysis from chapter VII).

³⁸ See page 14 ff. for a more detailed explanation of how to read the table. The "re-apppliers, outcome open" have been dropped for this analysis, as their primary characteristic is that they re-applied in 2007. In relation to all the other characteristics they are a mixture of the placed- and non-placed re-apppliers.

Table 17

Comparison of different re-applier groups within the non-placed applicants (multinomial logistic regression)

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (B)
'Non-placed re-applier' ^{a)}						
Age	-.007	.001	27.595	1	.000	.993
Socio-economic status ^{b)}	-.008	.003	9.503	1	.002	.992
Gender (male)	-.088	.016	29.573	1	.000	.916
Tariff-points (z-standardised)	.181	.011	277.909	1	.000	1.199
No tariff point information	-.495	.020	591.118	1	.000	.610
Pre-HE institution ^{c)}						
Further/Higher Education	.240	.028	75.948	1	.000	1.271
Grammar/Independent	.106	.039	7.515	1	.006	1.111
Other/Sixth form	-.074	.033	5.032	1	.025	.929
Unknown	.493	.030	273.488	1	.000	1.638
Ethnicity ^{d)}						
Asian	.438	.026	290.698	1	.000	1.550
Black	.075	.031	6.009	1	.014	1.078
Other/Unknown	.037	.026	1.977	1	.160	1.038
Prior Qualifications ^{e)}						
Only vocational	.119	.026	20.207	1	.000	1.126
Only FaA	.288	.035	68.514	1	.000	1.334
Only other	.088	.032	7.552	1	.006	1.092
Academic and vocational	.023	.037	.373	1	.541	1.023
All other combinations	.191	.038	25.222	1	.000	1.211
Unknown	.455	.030	224.457	1	.000	1.577
'Placed re-applier' ^{a)}						
Age	-.046	.001	1244.614	1	.000	.955
Socio-economic status ^{b)}	-.030	.002	270.346	1	.000	.971
Gender (male)	.128	.010	158.076	1	.000	1.136
Tariff-points (z-standardised)	.522	.006	6720.373	1	.000	1.685
No tariff point information	-.741	.015	2455.072	1	.000	.477
Pre-HE institution ^{c)}						
Further/Higher Education	-.048	.016	8.842	1	.003	.953
Grammar/Independent	.226	.019	143.937	1	.000	1.254
Other/Sixth form	-.032	.017	3.615	1	.057	.969
Unknown	.199	.019	110.673	1	.000	1.220
Ethnicity ^{d)}						
Asian	.633	.017	1425.180	1	.000	1.883
Black	.213	.023	88.556	1	.000	1.238
Other/Unknown	.108	.018	35.132	1	.000	1.114
Prior Qualifications ^{e)}						
Only vocational	-.589	.016	1385.469	1	.000	.555
Only FaA	-.393	.024	258.948	1	.000	.675
Only other	-1.065	.023	2098.712	1	.000	.345
Academic and vocational	-.478	.021	502.494	1	.000	.620
All other combinations	-.273	.023	140.288	1	.000	.761
Unknown	-.210	.019	117.756	1	.000	.811

^{a)} The overall reference category is 'Only one application', "re-applier, outcome open" have been dropped for this analysis

^{b)} We treat this as a quasi-metric variable, which seems to be justifiable when comparing it with the ordinal results

^{c)} Reference category is 'Comprehensive School'

^{d)} Reference category is 'White'

^{e)} Reference category is 'Only A-level equivalent academic qualification'

The logistic regression reveals the following:

- Age has a clear negative effect on the likelihood of re-applying. If mature students re-apply, they are much more likely to be non-placed.
 - Those with a higher socio-economic status are more likely to re-apply, and are more likely to be placed when they do.
 - Overall men are over-represented in the re-applicants (see table 62 in the appendix) and especially in the placed re-applicants. They are less likely to re-apply without getting a place. Women, therefore, are under-represented in the re-applicants and are less likely to re-apply and be placed than men.
 - Tariff points play, perhaps unsurprisingly, a crucial role as well.³⁹ Firstly, someone without any tariff point information is much more likely to apply just once. Secondly, the number of tariff points has a strong influence on the likelihood of re-applying and particularly on being placed after re-applying.
 - The influence of the pre-HE institution is only small (see also table 62 in the appendix). Those from independent/grammar schools are slightly more likely to re-apply and are then often placed. The “unknown” group is more likely to re-apply, but often without being placed.
- In relation to ethnicity, those with an Asian background are much more likely to re-apply. The same holds true, but to a much lesser extent, for black applicants.
 - Overall students coming through an A-Level route are much more likely than those with other prior qualifications to re-apply (see table 62). This effect is especially strong for placed re-applicants. However, in the non-placed re-applicants A-Level applicants are under-represented. Those with “only other” and “only vocational” qualifications have the lowest likelihood of being a placed re-applicant.

Overall, most of the results of the multivariate analysis reveal approximately the same picture as the descriptive bivariate analyses. The one major change, taking all characteristics into account simultaneously, is that black applicants, compared to whites, are slightly more likely to re-apply, and are also more likely to get a place by re-applying, whereas the bivariate analysis above showed an over-representation within the “non-re-applicants”. The advantage is that the logistic regression gives detailed estimates of how big the influences of the different factors are.⁴⁰

³⁹ The tariff points have been z-standardised, this means they now have a mean of 0 and a standard-deviation of one. By this, those without any tariff-point information are compared to those with an average tariff point score, and not with those having “0” points. Also the parameters (B/Exp[B]) are now related to a change of one standard-deviation, and not to a change in tariff points directly.

⁴⁰ Although, as mentioned above, the parameters (B/Exp[B]) cannot be compared directly.

What could be done to improve the chances of these people to enter HE? The analysis of the data has revealed some of the factors that may militate against successful application to higher education. One over-arching strategy would certainly be improved information, advice and guidance, and better support for those applying to HE without a current institutional infrastructure to guide them. The analysis also reveals the need for improved pathways from non-traditional qualifications to higher education. This will require effective information, advice and guidance for students, applicants, teachers, lecturers and admissions staff.

The question of why these applicants remain unplaced in higher education cannot be answered in this investigation. The precise blend of reasons is highly individualised, and qualitative, longitudinal work would be required to access those more closely. However, the analysis of the re-applicants shows that 80% of those who do re-apply are placed, suggesting that applying more often leads to a higher likelihood of being placed.

There may be key issues concerning information, advice and guidance, as well as support in the application process. Are these applicants choosing courses or institutions with unrealistically high demands in terms of achievement? Or is it possible that they are applying for HE without being fully committed to that pathway? Further, qualitative and mixed method, research would be required to begin to answer these questions in more detail.

Further questions include the role and extent of direct entry to HE (bypassing UCAS), for example through internal progression, as well as the role and extent of part-time study (also bypassing UCAS). Part-time study may be of particular interest to women, and it is possible that the over-representation of women in the NPA dataset could be partly explained by the appeal of part-time study.

What could be done to maximise the chances of these people continuing into HE, and succeeding there? This overview highlights the need for particular types of support for older, independent applicants, and for women (for example, with regard to sensitivity to carer roles, to the need for childcare, and to the need for fitting part-time employment around the course, and so on). More guided advice may be required on the number of applications submitted, in order to make it clearer to applicants that submitting fewer applications will reduce their chances of success. For example, it may be worth considering contacting applicants directly who only make one or two applications, to discuss, (if they are interested, of course), various alternatives in terms of other courses or other institutions that they might still consider.

The analysis of re-applicants highlights the high rates of placement (around 80%) among those applicants who do place a further application. Therefore, there is a strong argument for providing further support and encouragement for applicants to re-apply in later years. There may be a need to maintain contact between applications.

Overall, it seems similar processes are at work at all stages of the application process. Those applicants who are younger, with A-Level equivalent qualifications and with high socio-economic status are more likely to apply, be placed, and, if not, to re-apply. Blacks are less likely to be placed.

Finally, this report highlights the need for good quality, up-to-date, longitudinal data on the NPAs, as well as the full datasets for all applications and for acceptances. This analysis emphasizes some of the difficulties involved in interpreting the decision variable, and there is a need for greater clarity in this context, particularly with regard to the high proportion of applicants in the 'unknown' category.

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APPENDICES

Chapter IV

Findings from this investigation: Overview of Non-placed applicants (NPA)

TABLE 5

Accepted and non-placed applicants (absolute numbers) (referring to Figure 1 in the main text)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
accepted	333942	334295	360244	
non-placed	76026	79039	84386	86632
all applicants	409968	413334	444630	

TABLE 6

Accepted and non-placed applicants (column percentages) (referring to Figure 2 in the main text)

	2003	2004	2005
accepted	81.5	80.9	81.0
non-placed	18.5	19.1	19.0

TABLE 7

Women within accepted and non-placed applicants (percentage within all applicants of the specific groups) (referring to Figure 3 in the main text)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
accepted	53.7	54.4	54.4	
non-placed	56.6	58.3	60.4	60.3
all applicants	54.3	55.1	55.5	

TABLE 8

Age of accepted and non-placed applicants (MEAN years)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
accepted	20.4	20.4		
non-placed	21.8	22.0	22.5	22.2
all applicants	20.7	20.7		

TABLE 9

Age groups within non-placed applicants (4 age categories, column percentages) (referring to Figure 4 in the main text)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
20 and under	67.1	65.0	61.3	62.9
21-24	14.4	15.3	16.1	15.9
25-39	15.0	15.9	18.2	16.9
40 and over	3.4	3.8	4.3	4.2

TABLE 10

Age groups within non-placed applicants (11 age categories, column percentages)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
17 and under	3.7	3.4	3.2	3.0
18	42.2	39.8	36.7	39.5
19	14.1	14.6	14.0	13.2
20	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.3
21	5.0	5.4	5.4	5.5
22	4.0	4.1	4.4	4.4
23	3.1	3.2	3.6	3.4
24	2.3	2.6	2.8	2.7
25-29	7.2	7.8	9.1	8.5
30-39	7.8	8.2	9.1	8.5
40 and over	3.4	3.8	4.3	4.2

TABLE 11

Socio-economic status groups within all applicants and non-placed applicants (row percentages, 2005) (referring to Figure 5 in the main text)

	HIGHER MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS	LOWER MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS	INTERMEDIATE OCCUPATIONS	SMALL EMPLOYERS AND OWN ACCOUNT WORKERS	LOWER SUPERVISORY AND TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS	SEMI-ROUTINE OCCUPATIONS	ROUTINE OCCUPATIONS	UNKNOWN
all applicants	15.7	23.8	11.8	5.7	3.7	11.4	4.6	23.4
non-placed	11.8	22.0	12.1	5.6	3.4	13.9	5.1	26.1

TABLE 12

Socio-economic status of non-placed applicants over years (column percentages)

	2003	2004	2005
HIGHER MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS	13.5	13.1	11.8
LOWER MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS	22.8	22.9	22.0
INTERMEDIATE OCCUPATIONS	12.1	12.3	12.1
SMALL EMPLOYERS AND OWN ACCOUNT WORKERS	6.1	6.1	5.6
LOWER SUPERVISORY AND TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS	4.1	3.7	3.4
SEMI-ROUTINE OCCUPATIONS	12.6	13.0	13.9
ROUTINE OCCUPATIONS	5.3	5.3	5.1
UNKNOWN	23.5	23.6	26.1

TABLE 13

Home and overseas applicants over years (column percentages, all applicants)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
UK Home	74.4	72.9	72.3	75.1
Overseas	25.6	27.1	27.7	24.9

TABLE 14

Ethnic groups within accepted applicants and non-placed applicants (row percentages, 2005)
(referring to Figure 6 in the main text)

	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Other/unknown
accepted	77.5	4.5	9.3	2.6	6.2
non-placed	71.9	8.4	9.8	2.7	7.2
all applicants	76.4	5.2	9.4	2.6	6.4

TABLE 15

Non-placed applicants within the different ethnic groups (percentages of all applicants)

	2003	2004	2005
White	17.9	18.2	17.9
Asian	18.6	19.9	19.8
Chinese		16.0	
Black	27.3	29.7	30.5
Mixed	19.5	19.6	19.9
Other	23.5	24.8	23.6
Unknown	19.2	21.3	21.1
<i>ALL NPAs</i>	<i>18.5</i>	<i>19.1</i>	<i>19.0</i>

TABLE 16

Ethnic groups within non-placed applicants over years (column percentages)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
White	73.5	72.3	71.9	75.6
Asian	9.5	9.8	9.8	9.6
Black	6.1	7.0	8.4	8.3
Other/Unknown	10.9	10.9	9.9	6.5

TABLE 17

Ethnic groups within non-placed applicants over years (absolute figures)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	<i>Total</i>
White	55861	57112	60663	65506	<i>239142</i>
Asian	7231	7767	8275	8319	<i>31592</i>
Black	4647	5531	7055	7169	<i>24402</i>
Other	8287	8629	8393	5638	<i>30947</i>

TABLE 18

Different pre-HE institutions within accepted applicants and non-placed applicants (row percentages, 2005)
(referring to Figure 7 in the main text)

	COMPREHENSIVE	FURTHER / HIGHER EDUCATION	GRAMMAR SCHOOL	INDEPENDENT	OTHER	OTHER MAINTAINED	SIXTH FORM CENTRE	SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
accepted	25.5	22.1	5.3	8.8	1.3	5.4	0.8	10.6	20.2
non-placed	18.2	27.5	2.8	5.0	1.5	3.2	0.5	6.5	34.8
all applicants	24.1	23.1	4.9	8.1	1.3	5.0	0.7	9.9	23.0

TABLE 19

Different pre-HE institutions of non-placed applicants over years (column percentages)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL	20.7	19.9	18.2	21.9
FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION	31.2	29.9	27.5	35.0
GRAMMAR SCHOOL	3.2	3.2	2.8	3.6
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL	6.3	6.0	5.0	6.0
OTHER	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.8
OTHER MAINTAINED	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.5
SIXTH FORM CENTRE	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	7.1	6.9	6.5	7.7
UNKNOWN	26.1	28.4	34.8	20.1

TABLE 20

Non-placed applicants' pre-HE institutions

(percentage of all applicants from each institutional form, based on the information on the UCAS website)

	2002	2003	2004	2005
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL	14.5	15.7	15.6	14.3
FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION	22.7	23.3	23.2	22.6
GRAMMAR SCHOOL	11.3	12.1	12.4	10.9
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL	12.9	13.5	13.1	11.8
OTHER	21.4	21.6	22.8	22.1
OTHER MAINTAINED	12.9	13.5	13.6	12.3
SIXTH FORM CENTRE	15.2	14.9	15.5	13.2
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	13.2	13.9	13.7	12.5
UNKNOWN	20.6	23.1	26.3	28.8
<i>ALL NPAS</i>	<i>17.5</i>	<i>18.5</i>	<i>19.1</i>	<i>19.0</i>

Source: www.ucas.com (Statistics)

TABLE 21

Distribution of all applicants over different JACS groups and percentage of non-placed applicants within the different subjects (2005, data from UCAS website)

	APPLICANTS (N)	% OF ALL APPLICANTS	NPA (N)	PROPORTION OF NPA WITHIN ALL APPLICANTS IN THIS SUBJECT (N %)
Medicine & Dentistry	17920	4.0	9700	54.1
Subjects allied to Medicine	37252	8.4	12580	33.8
Biological Sciences	32537	7.3	1875	5.8
Vet Sci, Ag & related	4035	0.9	-72	-1.8
Physical Sciences	13159	3.0	-905	-6.9
Mathematical & Comp Sci	21929	4.9	-280	-1.3
Engineering	14913	3.4	-998	-6.7
Technologies	1219	0.3	-898	-73.7
Architecture, Build & Plan	7286	1.6	-195	-2.7
Social Studies	31526	7.1	4610	14.6
Law	18451	4.1	1619	8.8
Business & Admin studies	40772	9.2	2142	5.3
Mass Comms and Documentation	9475	2.1	252	2.7
Linguistics, Classics & related	12122	2.7	821	6.8
European Langs, Lit & related	4076	0.9	239	5.9
Non-European Langs and related	1320	0.3	-493	-37.3
Hist & Philosophical studies	14791	3.3	1237	8.4
Creative Arts & Design	54166	12.2	12143	22.4
Education	16671	3.7	3573	21.4
Combinations	91010	20.5	37436	41.1
Total	444630	100.0	84386	19.0

Note: Due to differences in the coding of the “Combinations” category by UCAS, it seems that, in some subjects, more people get a place than actually applied. This explains the negative NPA numbers.

TABLE 22

Number of different jacs groups chosen (absolute figures and column percentages)

	Frequency	Percent
1	196373	60.2
2	75676	23.2
3	29622	9.1
4	7793	2.4
5	1441	0.4
6	150	0.0
0 ('unknown')	15028	4.6

Chapter V

Findings from this investigation: Characteristics of different non-placed applicants groups

The table below shows the different decision results for the applications appearing within the NPA dataset (more codes are available for placed applicants). They were aggregated to five groups:

- Unknown: There is an application, but no code is available for the decision
- Conditions not met: The application shows a conditional offer, but the applicant a) has not withdrawn in this application, b) has not declined the offer and c) is not placed (However, this coding is tentative, as no information about the offer and the results of the applicant were available. As it appears that only a very small number fell into this category, this category was collapsed with the “Unknown” group)
- No offer: The application was rejected in one or the other way
- Declined: The application was successful, but the applicant declined the offer from this application, either actively or passively (as might be the case with “decline by default”, which means that the applicant didn’t get back in time).
- Withdrawn: The decision is a) coded as withdrawn or b) seems to be a successful application (i.e. Clearing accept) and is inferred as withdrawn as the applicant is in the NPA dataset. UCAS has an extra field for coding withdrawing, which was used as additional information.

The vast majority of the decisions can be recoded without problems. There are, however, some ambiguities about these recordings, as additional information is missing, for example about the reasons for “reject by default”.

TABLE 23

Decision codes by UCAS and recoding scheme

Decision type	Code	Label (UCAS)
Unknown	No code	
Conditions not met	C	Conditional Offer
Conditions not met	CF	Conditional Firm
Conditions not met	CI	Conditional Insurance
Conditions not met	CK	Conditional Keep
No offer	F	Course Full
No offer	NCNC	New Cancelled
No offer	R	(no code available)
No offer	RBD	Reject by default
No offer	RCNC	Refer cancelled
No offer	REF	Referred
No offer	REJ	Reject
Declined	CD	Conditional Decline
Declined	CDBD	Conditional DBD
Declined	CLAD	Clearing Accept Decline
Declined	UCCD	Unconditional Change Course Decline
Declined	UCCDBD	Unconditional Change Course DBD
Declined	UD	Unconditional decline
Declined	UDBD	Unconditional decline by default
Withdrawn	CLA	Clearing Accept
Withdrawn	U	Unconditional offer
Withdrawn	UCC	Unconditional Change Course
Withdrawn	UCCF	Unconditional Change Course Firm
Withdrawn	UF	Unconditional firm
Withdrawn	UI	Unconditional insurance
Withdrawn	W	Withdrawn

For each applicant there are up to seven different decisions, one for each application. The distribution of the results over the different choices the applicants had is as follows:

TABLE 24

Decisions within the different choices (column percentages, combined years 2003-2006)

	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3	Choice 4	Choice 5	Choice 6	Choice 7
Conditions not met	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.9	0.8
Declined	29.4	33.6	35.8	38.1	41.8	42.6	24.4
No offer	59.3	55.4	52.7	51.1	46.7	46.2	63.2
Withdrawn	9.9	9.5	9.9	9.2	9.7	9.3	11.6
<i>Total N</i>	<i>309841</i>	<i>246392</i>	<i>222507</i>	<i>193410</i>	<i>156576</i>	<i>130468</i>	<i>4913</i>

Note: The table above shows the decisions at the level of the individual choices, and not at the level of the applicants, as is the norm throughout this report. “Conditions not met” could not be identified unambiguously and are included into the “Unknown” group in other tables. “Unknown” is not shown, because no information about the choices of these applicants was available.

DEFINITIONS OF THE DIFFERENT NPA TYPES

Decisions within the different choices (column percentages, combined years 2003-2006)

The choices of an applicant were combined in the following way to build different types of NPA:

‘UNKNOWN’

- no information about the decision on any of the applications is available and
- they have not withdrawn from the application process (no “C” or “W” in the variable “cwd_flag” [2003-2005], no “90” in the variable appref [2006]; there were some cases that did not withdraw from the process, but held unconditional offers, which they did not decline either. As one does not know why they are in the “Non-placed applicants” data set, they were coded as “unknown” as well.

‘WITHDRAWN’

The applicant

- has withdrawn, either through one of the decisions (Variables “dec1” – “dec7” = “W”) or through another way, such as “C” or “W” in the variable “cwd_flag” [2003-2005], or “90” in the variable “appref” [2006]
- has not declined any offer

‘NO OFFER’

The applicant

- has been rejected in all his/her valid applications (decision type “no offer” in all valid [without “unknown” and “with-drawn” applications] applications)

‘DECLINE’

The applicant

- has declined at least one of his/her offers

‘CONDITIONS NOT MET’

The applicant

- gets at least one conditional offer and does not decline this offer (“conditions not met” in at least one of the variables “dec1” – “dec7”
- does not decline offers anywhere else

The 'offers not met'-group has not been analysed here as a distinct group in comparison to the other ones, because they can't be identify properly with the given data. One cannot be sure if they really did not meet their offers. Their number, however, is very small and they were included in the "Unknown" group.

'RE-APPLIERS'

The applicant

- is not placed in one particular year, but
 - re-applies in a subsequent year or
 - already applied in a former year

Re-applier could not be identified within the NPA dataset. An additional analysis was done on the full UCAS dataset in Cheltenham and is presented as an extra chapter of the report. As they are "non-placed" in the specific years they appear in the NPA dataset, they were included in the analyses within the above mentioned NPA types.

Overall, the decisions were aggregated in a hierarchical way, resulting in four groups:

- Unknown: No (interpretable) information available in any decision ("unknown" or "conditions not met" in all decisions)
- Withdrawn: Did not have an offer or a "no offer" in any decision and a "withdrawn" in at least one decision or in the "cwd-flag"-variable
- No offer: Got a "no offer" in at least one decision and did not decline any offer
- Declined: Did get at least one offer, but declined it ("declined" in at least one decision)

TABLE 25

Aggregation of decisions to NPA types

NPA types	Decision results			
	UNKNOWN/COND. NOT MET	WITHDRAWN	NO OFFER	DECLINED
unknown	at least once	-	-	-
withdrawn	might	at least once	-	-
no offer	might	might	at least once	-
declined	might	might	might	at least once

TABLE 26

Aggregation of decisions to NPA types

	2003	2004	2005	2006
unknown	4.9	4.8	4.6	4.0
withdrawn	6.0	5.8	5.5	6.9
no offer	32.0	36.7	41.6	39.1
declined	57.2	52.7	48.3	50.0

TABLE 27

Non-placed applicant groups over years (absolute figures)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
unknown	3,738	3,776	3,921	3,481	14,916
withdrawn	4,526	4,616	4,606	5,981	19,729
no offer	24,302	29,029	35,063	33,851	122,245
declined	43,460	41,618	40,796	43,319	169,193

More applicants than the shown approximately 6% withdrew from the process, but were coded as “no offer” or “declined”, when additional information was available. Overall, 82,690 applicants withdrew from the process (25.4%, all years combined). Of these, 21,085 were rejected in at least one of their applications, and 46,617 declined an offer before withdrawing.

TABLE 28

Age groups within non-placed applicants groups (4 categories, column percentages) (referring to Figure 9 in the main text)

	withdrawn	no offer	declined	unknown	<i>Total</i>
<21	57.8	45.1	80.2	33.7	63.6
21-24	14.5	22.3	10.1	28.3	15.8
25-39	20.7	26.3	8.1	29.9	16.7
> 39	6.9	6.2	1.7	8.1	4.0

TABLE 29

Age groups within non-placed applicants groups (11 categories, column percentages)

	withdrawn	no offer	declined	unknown	<i>Total</i>
17 and under	1.9	2.6	3.5	1.0	2.9
18	35.3	21.8	51.6	7.7	37.5
19	14.1	12.8	18.0	12.8	15.6
20	6.5	8.0	7.1	12.2	7.6
21	4.9	7.0	3.9	10.0	5.4
22	3.7	6.2	2.7	7.7	4.3
23	3.2	5.1	1.9	5.9	3.4
24	2.7	4.0	1.5	4.7	2.7
25-29	9.2	12.8	4.2	14.9	8.2
30-39	11.4	13.5	3.9	15.0	8.4
40 and over	6.9	6.2	1.7	8.1	4.0

TABLE 30

Non-placed applicants groups within age groups (4 categories, row percentages)

	withdrawn	no offer	declined	unknown
20 and under	5.5	26.6	65.4	2.4
21-24	5.6	53.1	33.1	8.2
25-39	7.5	59.1	25.1	8.2
40 and over	10.5	58.4	21.9	9.2
Total	6.1	37.5	51.9	4.6

TABLE 31

Gender distribution within the non-placed applicants groups (column percentages) (referring to Figure 10 in the main text)

	withdrawn	no offer	declined	unknown	<i>Total</i>
Female	67.1	66.2	53.6	49.6	59.0
Male	32.9	33.8	46.4	50.4	41.0

TABLE 32

Socioeconomic status groups within non-placed applicants groups (column percentages, 2003-2005)
(referring to Figure 11 in the main text)

	withdrawn	no offer	declined	unknown	Total
HIGHER MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS	12.7	11.1	14.4	7.1	12.8
LOWER MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS	23.3	21.1	23.9	18.8	22.6
INTERMEDIATE OCCUPATIONS	12.9	12.6	11.8	12.2	12.2
SMALL EMPLOYERS AND OWN ACCOUNT WORKERS	5.8	4.8	6.9	4.0	5.9
LOWER SUPERVISORY AND TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS	3.8	2.9	4.5	2.3	3.7
SEMI-ROUTINE OCCUPATIONS	13.4	14.8	11.9	14.3	13.2
ROUTINE OCCUPATIONS	5.1	4.8	5.6	4.9	5.2
UNKNOWN	23.0	27.9	21.1	36.4	24.4

TABLE 33

Ethnic groups within non-placed applicants groups (column percentages)
(referring to Figure 12 in the main text)

	withdrawn	no offer	declined	unknown	Total
White	80.9	70.4	76.1	55.7	73.3
Asian	5.3	9.4	10.2	12.4	9.7
Black	3.6	9.7	5.8	13.9	7.5
Mixed	2.3	2.6	2.5	2.9	2.5
Other	0.6	1.4	1.1	1.8	1.2
Unknown	7.2	6.6	4.4	13.3	5.8

TABLE 34

Non-placed applicants groups within ethnic groups (column percentages)

	White	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	Unknown	Total
withdrawn	6.7	3.3	2.9	5.4	3.2	7.6	6.1
no offer	36.0	36.3	48.7	38.4	43.1	42.6	37.5
declined	53.9	54.5	39.9	51.0	46.8	39.3	51.9
unknown	3.5	5.8	8.5	5.3	6.9	10.6	4.6

TABLE 35

Number of applications per applicant by non-placed applicants groups (row percentages)
(referring to Figure 13 in the main text)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
unknown	19.0	38.1	9.5	9.5			23.8	
withdrawn	3.3	45.4	9.6	7.8	5.7	5.6	22.1	0.4
no offer		34.8	12.6	13.0	16.8	5.4	16.0	1.4
declined		7.3	4.0	7.0	9.0	11.0	59.9	1.8
Total	0.2	20.5	7.8	9.4	11.9	8.4	40.2	1.6

Note: The "0" applications (n = 14916) are due to coding by UCAS, as there is no information available about these applications.

TABLE 36

Comparison of non-placed applicants groups within those with only one / six applications (column percentages)

	only one	six	Total
withdrawn	14.0	3.5	6.3
no offer	66.7	15.6	39.3
declined	19.3	80.9	54.4

TABLE 37

No. of different JACS-subjects chosen per applicant within non-placed applicants groups (row percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
withdrawn	77.4	16.0	4.9	0.9	0.1	0.0
no offer	84.9	11.7	2.7	0.6	0.1	0.0
declined	45.7	34.4	15.0	4.0	0.8	0.1
Total	60.2	23.2	9.1	2.4	0.4	0.0

Note: The "Unknown" group has been dropped due to missing data on this variable.

TABLE 38

Distribution of numbers of different JACS groups applied for by individual applicants within different non-placed applicants groups (row percentages) (referring to Figure 14 in the main text):

	1	2	3	4	5	6
withdrawn	77.4	16.0	4.9	0.9	0.1	0.0
no offer	84.9	11.7	2.7	0.6	0.1	0.0
declined	45.7	34.4	15.0	4.0	0.8	0.1
Total	60.2	23.2	9.1	2.4	0.4	0.0

Looking only at the applicants in each group that have the same number of applications does not change the picture above:

TABLE 39

Number of different JACS groups for non-placed applicants with two applications within different non-placed applicants groups (row percentages)

	1	2
withdrawn	77.90	22.10
no offer	84.20	15.80
declined	67.20	32.80
Total	78.90	21.10

TABLE 40

Number of different JACS groups for non-placed applicants with six applications within different non-placed applicants groups (row percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
withdrawn	50.00%	33.40%	13.10%	3.00%	0.40%	0.10%
no offer	64.30%	24.30%	8.20%	2.50%	0.50%	0.10%
declined	39.00%	36.60%	17.80%	5.40%	1.10%	0.10%
Total	43.40%	34.50%	16.20%	4.80%	1.00%	0.10%

TABLE 41

Comparison of non-placed applicants groups within those with only one / six applications (column percentages)

	withdrawn	no offer	declined
Medicine & Dentistry	1.9	96.5	1.5
Subjects allied to Medicine	9.0	75.8	15.1
Biological Sciences	5.8	37.0	57.2
Vet Sci, Ag & related	9.6	53.6	36.9
Physical Sciences	7.5	27.6	64.9
Mathematical & Comp Sci	4.9	35.2	59.9
Engineering	5.9	36.1	57.9
Technologies	13.3	45.5	41.2
Architecture, Build & Plan	7.8	43.9	48.4
Social Studies	9.6	57.4	32.9
Law	4.2	51.7	44.2
Business & Admin studies	4.6	36.3	59.1
Mass Comms and Documentation	7.4	39.4	53.2
Linguistics, Classics & related	6.9	49.4	43.7
European Langs, Lit & related	8.5	37.3	54.1
Non-European Langs and related	6.6	50.2	43.2
Hist & Philosophical studies	7.4	48.2	44.4
Creative Arts & Design	23.2	53.3	23.5
Education	19.5	63.2	17.3
Combinations	16.4	53.2	30.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>9.8</i>	<i>54.1</i>	<i>36.2</i>

TABLE 42

Qualifications within non-placed applicants groups (row percentages, 2003-2005)
(referring to Figure 16 in the main text)

	ONLY A LEVEL EQUIVALENT	ONLY VOCATIONAL	ONLY FOUNDATION/ ACCESS	ONLY OTHER	ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL	ACADEMIC AND FOUNDATION/ ACCESS	ANY OTHER COMBINATION	NO QUALIFICATION
withdrawn	28.3	17.8	11.6	17.0	5.7	0.5	6.2	12.8
no offer	18.1	20.2	12.5	25.8	4.7	0.5	5.8	12.4
declined	45.3	21.9	6.7	6.0	7.6	0.3	5.1	7.1
unknown	8.5	19.6	6.7	28.4	1.6	0.1	2.2	32.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>32.5</i>	<i>20.9</i>	<i>9.1</i>	<i>15.0</i>	<i>6.2</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>10.6</i>

TABLE 43

Tariff points information within non-placed applicants (row percentages, 2003-2005)
(referring to Figure 17 in the main text)

	Tariff points available	No Tariff points
withdrawn	64.9	35.1
no offer	56.2	43.8
declined	76.3	23.7
unknown	37.8	62.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>66.4</i>	<i>33.6</i>

TABLE 44

Percentage of applicants with less than 80 Tariff points within non-placed applicants groups (row percentages, 2003-2005) (referring to Figure 18 in the main text)

	<80	>79
withdrawn	8.6	91.4
no offer	11.8	88.2
declined	8.9	91.1
unknown	13.9	86.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>9.9</i>	<i>90.1</i>

Note: The mean is calculated on those applicants with information about their tariff points only (missing tariff points are not calculated as "0").

TABLE 45

Average Tariff points within non-placed applicants groups (MEAN, 2003-2005) (referring to Figure 19 in the main text)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
withdrawn	254	130.6	8920
no offer	226	125.5	49702
declined	237	125.7	96016
unknown	188	109.4	4327
<i>Total</i>	<i>233</i>	<i>125.9</i>	<i>158965</i>

Note: The mean is calculated on those applicants with information about their tariff points only (missing tariff points are not calculated as "0").

TABLE 46

Tariff-point groups within non-placed applicants groups (row percentages, 2003-2005) (referring to Figure 20 in the main text)

	no tariff points	< 80	80-159	160-239	240-319	320-399	>=400
withdrawn	35.1	5.5	10.0	14.3	13.9	11.1	10.0
no offer	43.8	6.6	11.1	13.1	11.9	7.9	5.7
declined	23.7	6.8	14.8	18.0	16.5	11.3	8.9
unknown	62.2	5.3	10.9	9.6	6.9	3.4	1.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>33.6</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>15.6</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>7.4</i>

TABLE 47

Prior educational sectors within non-placed applicants (row percentages) (referring to Figure 21 in the main text)

	COMPREHENSIVE	FURTHER / HIGHER EDUCATION	GRAMMAR SCHOOL	INDEPENDENT	OTHER	OTHER MAINTAINED	SIXTH FORM CENTRE	SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
withdrawn	16.5	31.0	3.3	6.3	1.1	3.2	0.4	6.7	31.4
no offer	13.3	32.9	1.3	3.7	1.0	1.8	0.4	4.1	41.4
declined	27.0	30.3	4.7	7.7	2.1	4.9	0.8	9.7	12.8
unknown	3.8	20.7	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.6	0.1	1.9	71.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>20.2</i>	<i>30.9</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>5.8</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>7.0</i>	<i>27.3</i>

TABLE 48

Prior educational sectors within non-placed applicants (row percentages; without "unknown educational background")

	COMPREHENSIVE	FURTHER / HIGHER EDUCATION	GRAMMAR SCHOOL	INDEPENDENT	OTHER	OTHER MAINTAINED	SIXTH FORM CENTRE	SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
withdrawn	24.1	45.2	4.8	9.2	1.7	4.7	0.6	9.7
no offer	22.7	56.2	2.3	6.3	1.7	3.1	0.7	7.0
declined	31.0	34.8	5.4	8.9	2.5	5.6	0.9	11.1
unknown	13.4	72.2	1.2	2.8	1.1	2.1	0.4	6.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>27.8</i>	<i>42.5</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>4.7</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>9.7</i>

Chapter VIII

Analysis of re-apppliers within NPA

TABLE 49

Re-apppliers within non-placed applicants over years (absolute figures)
(referring to Figure 22 in the main text)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	<i>Total</i>
No re-apppliers	46700	46732	52659	55014	<i>201105</i>
Re-apppliers	29326	32307	31727	31618	<i>124978</i>

TABLE 50

Re-apppliers within non-placed applicants over years (column percentages)
(referring to Figure 22 in the main text)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	<i>Total</i>
No re-apppliers	61.4%	59.1%	62.4%	63.5%	<i>61.7%</i>
Re-apppliers	38.6%	40.9%	37.6%	36.5%	<i>38.3%</i>

TABLE 51

Number of applications of non-placed applicants (column percentages)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent (OF THOSE WITH MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION)
1	199257	61.5	--
2	107464	33.1	86.0
3	15138	4.7	12.1
4	2024	.6	1.6
5	284	.1	.2
6	68	.0	.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>324235</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

TABLE 52

Re-applications, former and later years (total percentages, all non-placed applicants)

	Former application?		Total	
	No	Yes		
Later application?	No	61.5	8.4	69.9
	Yes	27.4	2.7	30.1
Total		88.8	11.2	100.0

TABLE 53

Re-applications, former and later years (total percentages, only re-applicants)

	Former application?		Total	
	No	Yes		
Later application?	No		21.9	21.9
	Yes	71.0	7.1	78.1
Total		71.0	29.0	100.0

TABLE 54

Time between applications (in years)

	Percent
1	68.8
2	18.9
3	9.1
4	3.1

TABLE 55

Proportion of successful re-applicants within all re-applying non-placed applicants over years (column percentages) (referring to Figure 23 in the main text)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Non-placed re-applicants	19.0	20.3	21.4	13.3	18.5
Placed re-applicants	79.4	76.2	68.1	35.2	64.5
Still open	1.6	3.5	10.4	51.4	16.9

TABLE 56

Re-applicant groups and non re-applicants within non-placed applicants (absolute figures and column percentages) (referring to Figure 24 in the main text)

	Frequency	Percent
Only one application	201105	61.7
Unplaced re-applicant	23131	7.1
Re-applicant, outcome open	21169	6.5
Placed re-applicant	80678	24.7
Total	326083	100

TABLE 57

Re-applier groups within non-placed applicants groups (column percentages)
(referring to Figure 25 in the main text)

		Non-placed applicant groups				Total
		withdrawn	no offer	declined	unknown	
Applicant groups	Only one application	63.5	63.2	59.9	66.9	61.7
	Non-placed re-applier	6.0	9.3	5.7	6.3	7.1
	Re-applier, outcome open	6.0	6.5	6.9	2.8	6.5
	Placed re-applier	24.6	21.0	27.5	23.9	24.7

TABLE 58

Non-placed applicants groups including re-applier over years (column percentages)
(referring to Figure 26 in the main text)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
unknown	4.5	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.9
withdrawn	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.5	3.0
no offer	20.8	22.5	26.3	24.8	23.7
declined	33.3	29.9	29.6	31.7	31.1
no offer	38.6	40.9	37.6	36.5	38.3

TABLE 59

Age-groups within re-appliers groups (4 categories; row percentages)
(referring to Figure 27 in the main text)

	20 and under	21-24	25-39	40 and over
Only one application	56.9	16.9	21.1	5.1
Non-placed re-applier	54.5	20.8	19.9	4.7
Re-applier, outcome open	79.2	8.5	10.2	2.0
Placed re-applier	78.6	13.5	6.3	1.5
Total	63.6	15.8	16.7	4.0

TABLE 60

Gender distribution within re-appliers groups (row percentages)
(referring to Figure 28 in the main text)

	male	female
Only one application	40.2	59.8
Unplaced re-applier	37.8	62.2
Re-applier, outcome open	41.3	58.7
Placed re-applier	43.9	56.1
Total	41.0	59.0

TABLE 61

Socio-economic status groups within re-apppliers groups (row percentages)
(referring to Figure 29 in the main text)

	HIGHER MANAGERIAL OCCUPATIONS	LOWER MANAGERIAL OCCUPATIONS	INTERMEDIATE OCCUPATIONS	SMALL EMPLOYERS	LOWER SUPERVISORY	SEMI-ROUTINE OCCUPATIONS	ROUTINE OCCUPATIONS	UNKNOWN
Only one application	10.1	20.9	12.0	5.7	3.6	14.1	5.6	28.0
Non-placed re-applier	11.7	20.9	12.3	5.4	3.5	14.2	4.7	27.3
Re-applier, outcome open	15.7	24.1	11.1	6.6	3.7	11.5	4.5	22.8
Placed re-applier	17.9	25.0	11.5	6.1	3.7	10.5	4.4	20.8
Total	12.5	22.1	11.9	5.8	3.6	13.0	5.2	25.8

TABLE 62

Ethnic groups within re-apppliers groups (row percentages)
(referring to Figure 30 in the main text)

	Asian	Black	White	Mixed	Other	Unknown
Only one application	8.2	8.7	72.7	2.5	1.1	6.8
Non-placed re-applier	11.5	8.1	70.4	2.5	1.4	6.0
Re-applier, outcome open	12.5	6.4	74.4	3.1	1.5	2.2
Placed re-applier	12.2	4.6	75.4	2.6	1.1	4.1
Total	9.7	7.5	73.3	2.5	1.2	5.8

TABLE 63

Average number of applications for one year within re-applier groups (row percentages)
(referring to Figure 31 in the main text)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Only one application	23.8	8.6	10.1	11.0	8.5	36.8	1.2
Non-placed re-applier	21.7	9.3	10.8	15.4	8.2	32.7	1.9
Re-applier, outcome open	11.9	5.9	8.1	13.2	8.4	49.7	2.8
Placed re-applier	14.6	5.9	7.6	12.7	8.4	48.8	2.1
Total	20.5	7.8	9.4	11.9	8.5	40.3	1.6

TABLE 64

Qualification pathways within re-applier groups (row percentages)
(referring to Figure 32 in the main text)

	ONLY A LEVEL EQUIVALENT	ONLY VOCATIONAL	ONLY FOUNDATION/ ACCESS	ONLY OTHER	ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL	ACADEMIC AND FOUNDATION/ ACCESS	ANY OTHER COMBINATION	NO QUALIFICATION
Only one application	25.3	23.7	11.0	18.5	6.5	0.4	5.1	9.6
Non-placed re-applier	22.5	21.0	10.5	19.1	5.5	0.6	5.2	15.6
Re-applier, outcome open	31.6	29.7	5.9	13.3	6.7	0.6	4.3	7.9
Placed re-applier	50.5	14.5	5.1	6.8	5.6	0.3	5.7	11.5
Total	32.5	20.9	9.1	15.0	6.2	0.4	5.3	10.6

Chapter X

Multivariate Analysis

TABLE 65

Comparing re-applying and non-re-applying non-placed applicants (logistic regression)

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (B)
'Re-applying NPA' ^{a)}						
Age	-.029	.001	834.414	1	.000	.971
Socio-economic status ^{b)}	-.018	.002	100.096	1	.000	.982
Gender (male)	.065	.010	44.835	1	.000	1.068
Tariff-points (z-standardised)	.465	.007	4686.075	1	.000	1.592
No tariff point information	-.921	.014	4281.310	1	.000	.398
Pre-HE institution ^{c)}						
Further/Higher Education	.000	.015	.000	1	.990	1.000
Grammar/Independent	.197	.020	95.359	1	.000	1.217
Other/Sixth form	-.099	.019	28.523	1	.000	.905
Unknown	.145	.017	76.145	1	.000	1.156
Ethnicity ^{d)}						
Other/Unknown	.069	.017	17.505	1	.000	1.072
Black	.180	.020	84.597	1	.000	1.197
Asian	.563	.016	1251.880	1	.000	1.756
Prior Qualifications ^{e)}						
No qualification	-.053	.018	8.589	1	.003	.948
Only vocational	-.379	.015	643.826	1	.000	.684
Only Foundation/Access	-.233	.022	116.629	1	.000	.792
Other qual./combination	-.459	.015	965.827	1	.000	.632

^{a)} The overall reference category is 'only one application', "withdrawn" and "unknown" have been dropped for this analysis

^{b)} We treat this as a quasi-metric variable, which seems to be justifiable when comparing it with the ordinal results

^{c)} Reference category is 'Comprehensive School'

^{d)} Reference category is 'White'

^{e)} Reference category is 'Only A-level equivalent academic qualification'

TABLE 66

Tariff point groups within re-applier groups (percentages)
(referring to Figure 33 in the main text)

	no tariff points	< 80	80-159	160-239	240-319	320-399	>=400
Only one application	45.2	6.9	12.8	14.0	11.1	6.2	3.8
Non-placed re-applier	39.3	6.2	11.8	15.7	13.6	8.5	4.9
Re-applier, outcome open	25.6	4.5	9.1	15.4	18.1	14.2	13.0
Placed re-applier	20.6	4.6	9.7	15.3	18.4	15.9	15.5
<i>Total</i>	33.6	6.6	13.0	15.6	14.2	9.6	7.4

TABLE 67

Non-placed applicant groups, including re-appliers (multinomial logistic regression)

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (B)
'No offer' ^{a)}						
Age	.020	.001	908.340	1	.000	1.020
Socio-economic status ^{b)}	.010	.002	28.848	1	.002	1.010
Gender (male)	-.497	.010	2358.861	1	.000	.609
Tariff-points (z-standardised)	-.600	.008	5063.077	1	.000	.549
No tariff point information	.826	.014	3366.759	1	.000	2.284
Pre-HE institution ^{c)}						
Further/Higher Education	.319	.019	289.745	1	.000	1.376
Grammar/Independent	-.388	.035	120.616	1	.000	.678
Other/Sixth form	-.170	.026	41.136	1	.000	.844
Unknown	1.042	.019	3002.136	1	.000	2.836
Ethnicity ^{d)}						
Other/Unknown	-.103	.015	47.035	1	.000	.902
Black	.263	.263	258.168	1	.000	1.301
Asian	-.297	.019	254.221	1	.000	.743
Prior Qualifications ^{e)}						
No qualification	-.445	.022	422.175	1	.000	.641
Only vocational	.671	.019	1281.971	1	.000	1.957
Only foundation/access	.698	.021	1077.023	1	.000	2.010
Other qual./ combinations	1.043	.017	3616.527	1	.000	2.838
'Declined' ^{a)}						
Age	-.011	.001	154.573	1	.000	.989
Socio-economic status ^{b)}	.008	.002	24.098	1	.000	1.008
Gender (male)	-.047	.008	30.440	1	.000	.955
Tariff-points (z-standardised)	-.868	.007	17715.504	1	.000	.420
No tariff point information	1.202	.014	7818.613	1	.000	3.328
Pre-HE institution ^{c)}						
Further/Higher Education	-.337	.013	666.034	1	.000	.714
Grammar/Independent	-.001	.017	.005	1	.945	.999
Other/Sixth form	-.088	.015	35.329	1	.000	.916
Unknown	-.672	.017	1614.808	1	.000	.511
Ethnicity ^{d)}						
Other/Unknown	-.080	.014	30.319	1	.000	.923
Black	.071	.017	17.514	1	.000	1.074
Asian	-.280	.014	378.704	1	.000	.756
Prior Qualifications ^{e)}						
No qualification	-1.019	.020	2526.197	1	.000	.361
Only vocational	.258	.013	398.556	1	.000	1.294
Only foundation/access	-.007	.019	.157	1	.692	.993
Other qual./ combinations	.217	.013	298.784	1	.000	1.242

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (B)
'Re-applied' ^{a)}						
Age	-.010	.001	121.998	1	.000	.990
Socio-economic status ^{b)}	-.007	.002	19.406	1	.000	.993
Gender (male)	-.156	.008	378.843	1	.000	.856
Tariff-points (z-standardised)	-.313	.005	3612.432	1	.000	.731
No tariff point information	-.020	.013	2.487	1	.115	.980
Pre-HE institution ^{c)}						
Further/Higher Education	-.027	.012	4.601	1	.032	.974
Grammar/Independent	.190	.014	188.703	1	.000	1.209
Other/Sixth form	-.140	.014	95.632	1	.000	.870
Unknown	.433	.014	922.141	1	.000	1.542
Ethnicity ^{d)}						
Other/Unknown	-.085	.015	34.048	1	.000	.918
Black	.193	.017	122.280	1	.000	1.213
Asian	.173	.012	197.753	1	.000	1.189
Prior Qualifications ^{e)}						
No qualification	-.670	.015	1884.613	1	.000	.512
Only vocational	.062	.013	23.802	1	.000	1.064
Only foundation/access	-.095	.019	25.817	1	.000	.910
Other qual./ combinations	.098	.012	72.185	1	.000	1.103

^{a)} The overall reference category is 'Accepted', "withdrawn" and "unknown" have been dropped for this analysis

^{b)} We treat this as a quasi-metric variable, which seems to be justifiable when comparing it with the ordinal results

^{c)} Reference category is 'Comprehensive School'

^{d)} Reference category is 'White'

^{e)} Reference category is 'Only A-level equivalent academic qualification'

NOTES

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