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“Transition from VET into HE: A successful pathway?”

Transition Landscape of students with vocational background into HE

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Outline

- Background
- Introduction to the data
- Distribution over institutions
- Distribution over subjects
- Conclusion



Background

Three goals of the widening participation agenda

- Increased access: Number of students in HE overall shall go up
- Widened access: Number of students in HE from under-represented groups shall go up
- Fair access: Number of students from under-represented groups shall go up in all different forms of HE



Background

Fair access:

- Distribution over institutions
 - ⇒ Diversified system of HEI with different reputation
- Distribution over subjects
 - ⇒ Subjects have different rates of return

Question:

“Do different educational pathways primarily lead into specific sectors (subjects, institutions) of the HE system?”



Introduction to data

Administrative data

- LSC: ILR (16-19)
- UCAS: Applicants data
- HESA: Student records

Years:

- 1995 UCAS and HESA (unmatched)
- 2002/3 UCAS matched with 03/04 HESA
- 2003/4 UCAS matched with 04/05 HESA



Introduction to data

Subsample for the following analyses:

HESA data 2003/04

- full-time
- first-year
- under 21 (non-mature)
- in English institutions
- matched with UCAS data

⇒ 224,985 students



Introduction to data

Distribution of educational pathways:

	Frequency	Percent
Academic (level 3)	163,170	72.5
Academic and vocational (level 3)	25,255	11.2
Vocational (level 3)	19,580	8.7
Foundation and Access	6,035	2.7
Not level 3/not known	10,940	4.9

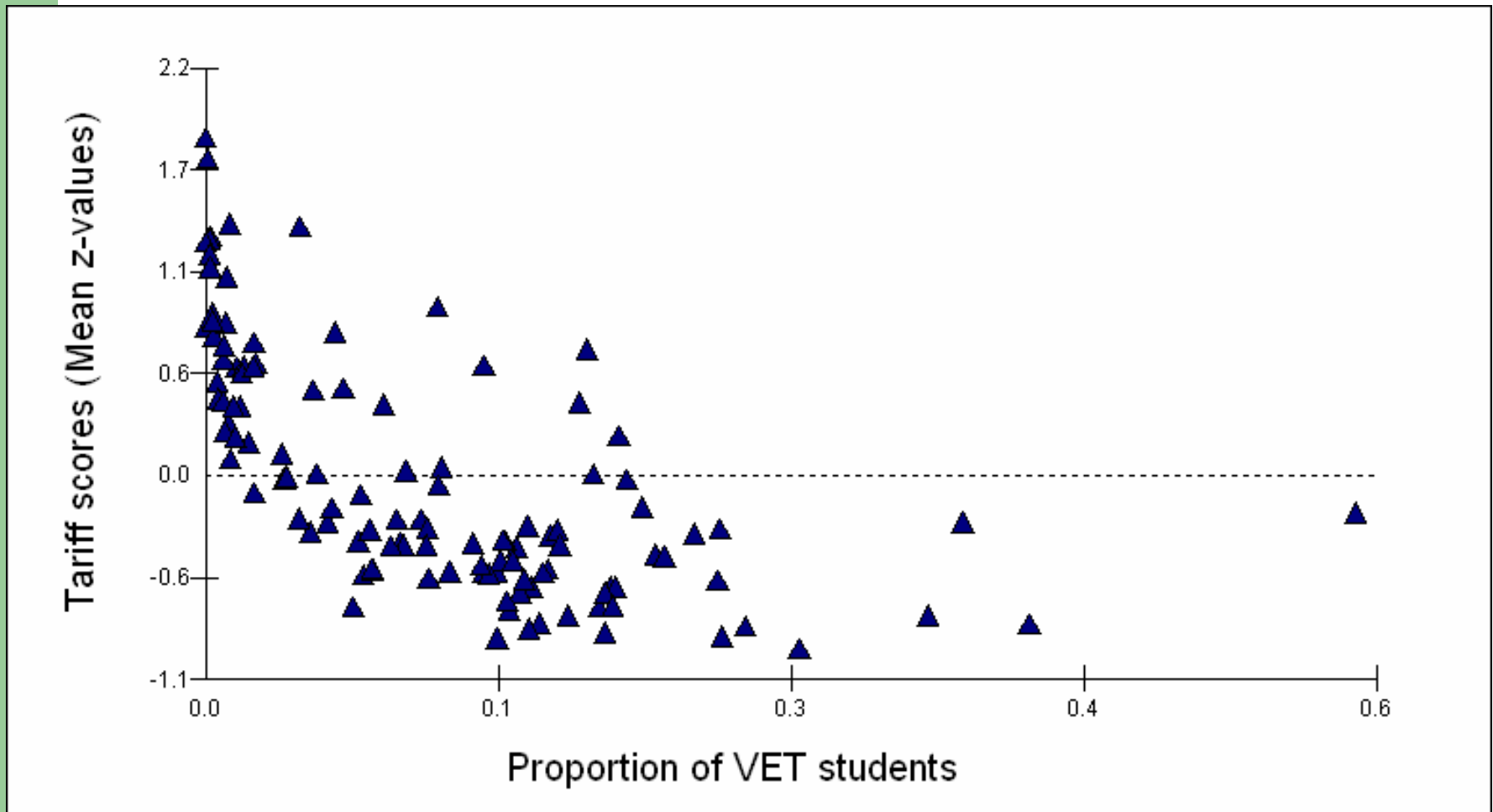
Distribution across institutions

Different prestige of institutions measured

- by selectivity of student intake (mean tariff-point score)
 - ⇒ Higher mean tariff-points signal more competitive admissions requirements
- by historic grouping (Pre-1992, Post-1992, Other HEI)
 - ⇒ Pre-1992 universities are often seen as the more prestigious institutions
- by RAE (research) and QAA (teaching) results
 - ⇒ High RAE results have an impact on earnings of graduates
 - ⇒ High QAA results should indicate better support for students



Distribution across institutions



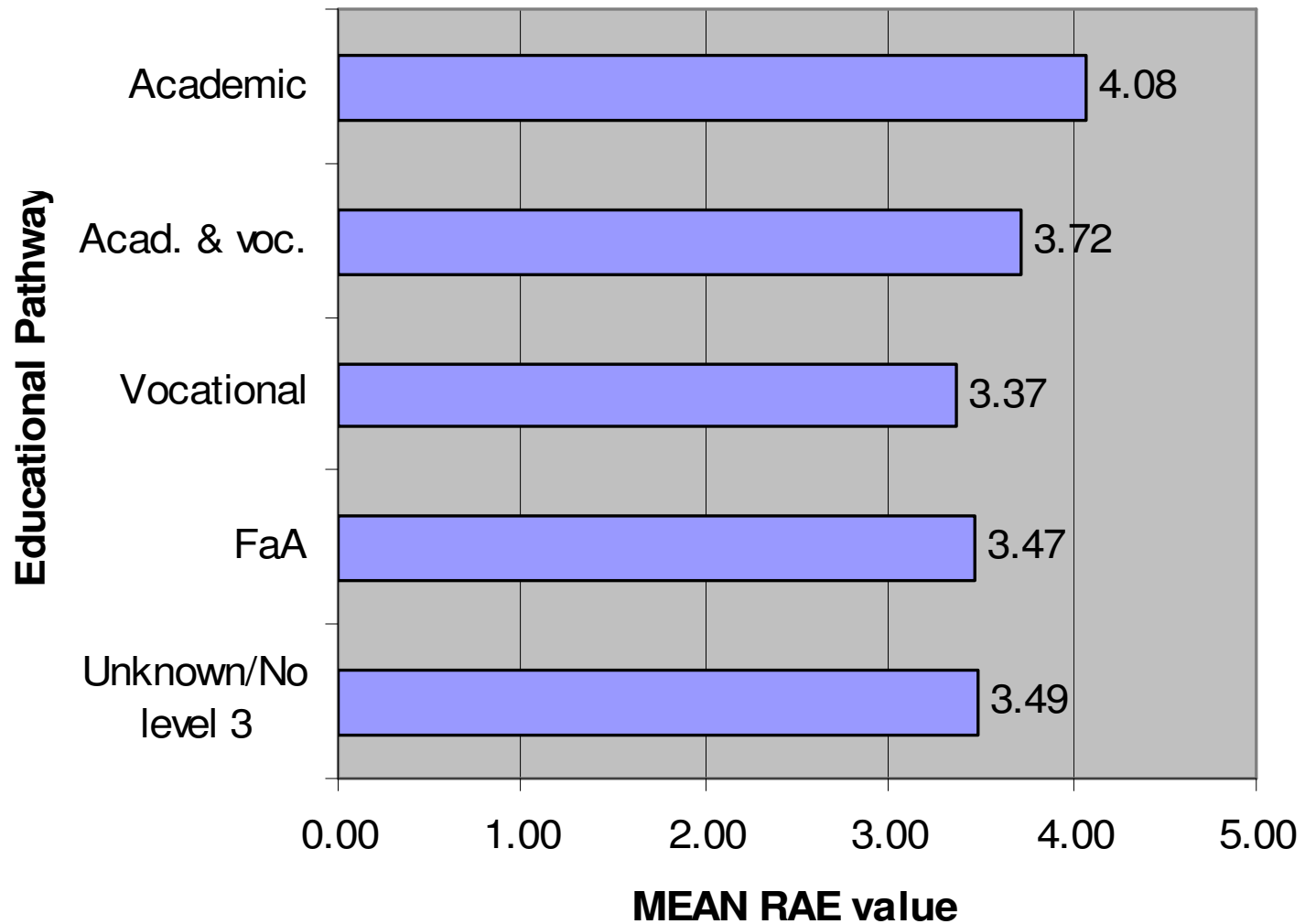
Distribution across institutions

Historic grouping

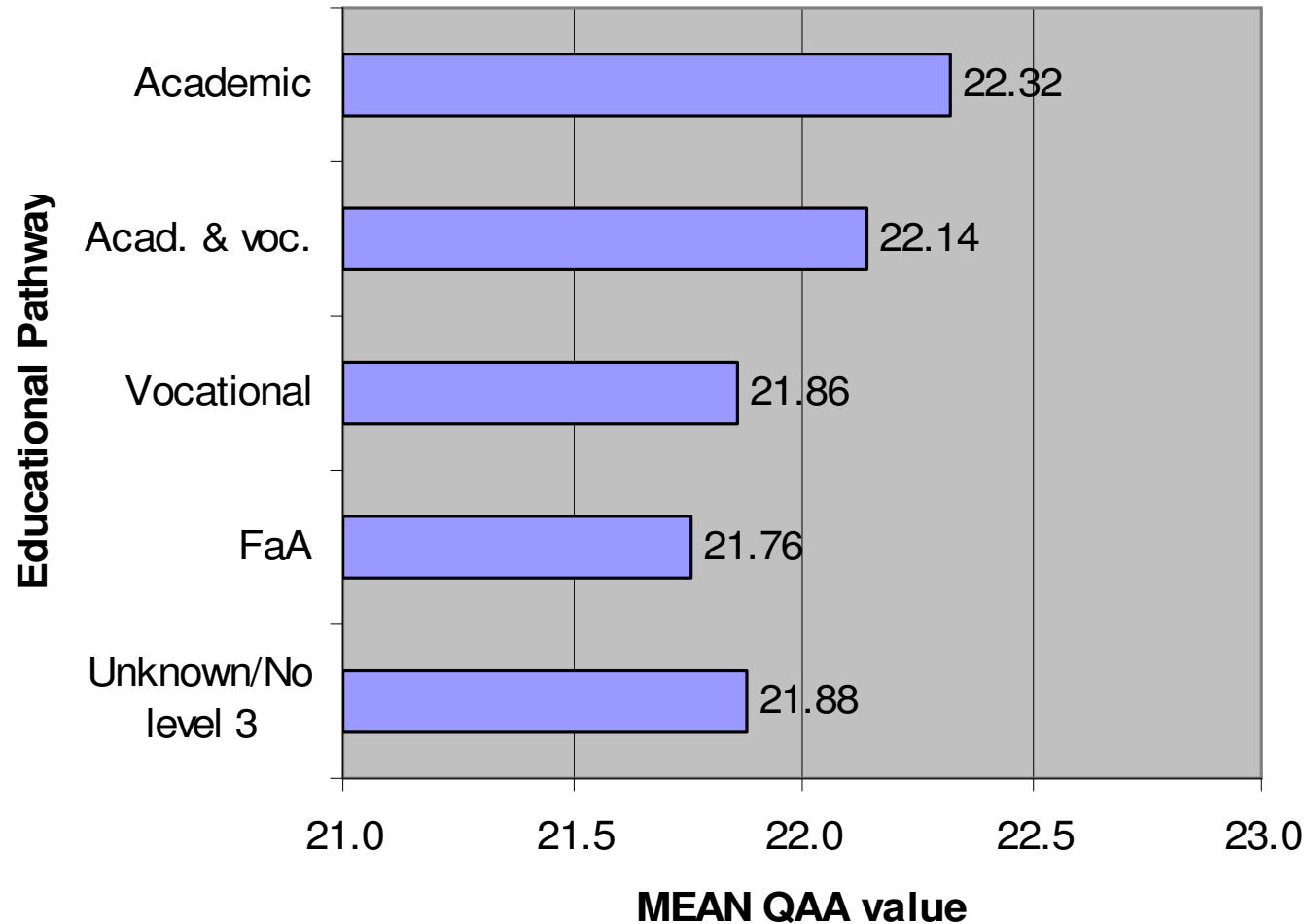
	Post 1992 Universities	Pre 1992 Universities	Other HEI
Academic	38.2%	58.0%	3.9%
Academic and vocational	57.7%	36.4%	5.9%
Vocational	75.6%	13.5%	10.9%
Foundation and Access	71.4%	7.3%	21.3%
Not level 3/ not known	77.3%	16.9%	5.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>46.4%</i>	<i>48.3%</i>	<i>5.3%</i>



Distribution across institutions



Distribution across institutions



Distribution across institutions

Results

- For all measures (tariff-points, historic grouping, RAE, QAA) students from VET background are studying at less prestigious institutions
- In most cases VET students are the most disadvantaged of all non-traditional educational pathways (beside those with no information/below level 3)



Distribution across subjects

“Ranking” of subjects

- by different rates of returns
 - ⇒ “wage premia” in the future
- by type of subject
 - ⇒ more or less applied

Distribution across subjects

Different rates of returns (wage premia)

- No clear ranking available
- Broadly three groups:
 - ⇒ High rates of returns: Medicine, Law, Business and Administration, Mathematics
 - ⇒ Medium rates of returns: most Sciences, Engineering, Architecture, Social Sciences and Subjects Allied to Medicine
 - ⇒ Low rates of returns: Arts and Design, most Humanities and Languages, Agriculture, Education

Distribution across subjects

	Academic & vocational	Vocational	Foundation & Access
Medicine & dentistry	0.44	0.04	0.09
Historical & philosophical studies	0.46	0.17	0.26
Mathematical sciences	0.69	0.20	0.12
Law	0.83	0.33	0.27
.....			
Subjects allied to medicine	1.09	0.80	0.36
Architecture, building & planning	0.89	1.11	0.45
Engineering & technology	0.87	1.45	0.91
Education	1.64	1.46	0.24
Business & administrative studies	2.03	1.76	0.86
.....			
Creative arts & design	1.01	2.40	7.90
Agriculture & related subjects	1.05	3.69	0.77
Computer science	2.30	3.83	0.88

Distribution across subjects

Results

- Students with VET background are more likely to study “applied” subjects; exception: Medicine, Law
- There is no clear sign of them being under-represented in subjects that gain higher rates of returns
- Analyses on a less aggregated subject-level would be useful



Distribution across institutions and subjects

Over-/under-representation within
pre-92 institutions

Academic

Vocational

**Foundation &
Access**

Medicine & dentistry	1.0	1.0	1.0
Historical & philosophical studies	1.0	0.4	0.1
Mathematical sciences	1.0	0.4	0.2
Law	1.1	0.2	0.1
.....			
Subjects allied to medicine	1.1	0.5	0.8
Architecture, building & planning	1.2	0.2	0.1
Engineering & technology	1.2	0.4	0.2
Education	1.2	0.7	0.5
Business & administrative studies	1.3	0.3	0.2
.....			
Creative arts & design	1.5	0.6	0.2
Agriculture & related subjects	1.4	0.5	
Computer science	1.5	0.4	0.4

Conclusion

- Students from a VET background are more likely to study applied subjects
- Their choices are not necessarily unfavourable in terms of gained wage premia
- However, they are more likely to go to less prestigious HEIs
- This holds true, even when one controls for distribution of subjects across types of institutions



Conclusion

- ⇒ VET pathways may be able to provide access to Higher Education and can contribute therefore to a *Widening Participation* agenda
- ⇒ However, they do not provide *fair access* to Higher Education, as they seem to track people into less prestigious institutions



... thank you for your interest!

More information:

- <http://www.tlrp.org/project%20sites/degrees/index.html>
- Hoelscher, M. et al.: Transition from VET to HE. A successful pathway? Forthcoming in: Research Papers in Education. Special Issue (ed. by M. David). 2008.



Table 5. ODD-Ratios for non-traditional educational pathways in different subjects in comparison to traditional academic qualifications (HESA 2003/04).

	Academic & vocational	Vocational	Foundation & Access	Below level 3/not known
Medicine & dentistry	0.44	0.04	0.09	0.26
Subjects allied to medicine	1.09	0.80	0.36	1.06
Biological sciences	0.88	0.72	0.32	0.80
Veterinary science	0.70	0.03	-	0.09
Agriculture & related subjects	1.05	3.69	0.77	2.42
Physical sciences	0.65	0.27	0.23	0.42
Mathematical sciences	0.69	0.20	0.12	0.32
Computer science	2.30	3.83	0.88	2.48
Engineering & technology	0.87	1.45	0.91	1.59
Architecture, building & planning	0.89	1.11	0.45	1.15
Social studies	0.75	0.47	0.34	0.67
Law	0.83	0.33	0.27	0.50
Business & administrative studies	2.03	1.76	0.86	1.53
Mass communications & documentation	1.02	1.11	0.52	1.36
Languages	0.53	0.16	0.19	0.29
Historical & philosophical studies	0.46	0.17	0.26	0.26
Creative arts & design	1.01	2.40	7.90	1.83
Education	1.64	1.46	0.24	2.31
Combined	1.10	1.67	0.08	