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Part-time, distance and flexible study in Higher Education: Setting the Scene

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Aim and objectives

To explore the factors impacting on the supply of part-time Higher Education

- describe the nature of part-time provision of higher education and the part-time student population
- map the geography of part-time undergraduate provision
- identify the external and internal factors both facilitating and inhibiting the growth of part-time provision
- identify the implications for policy.

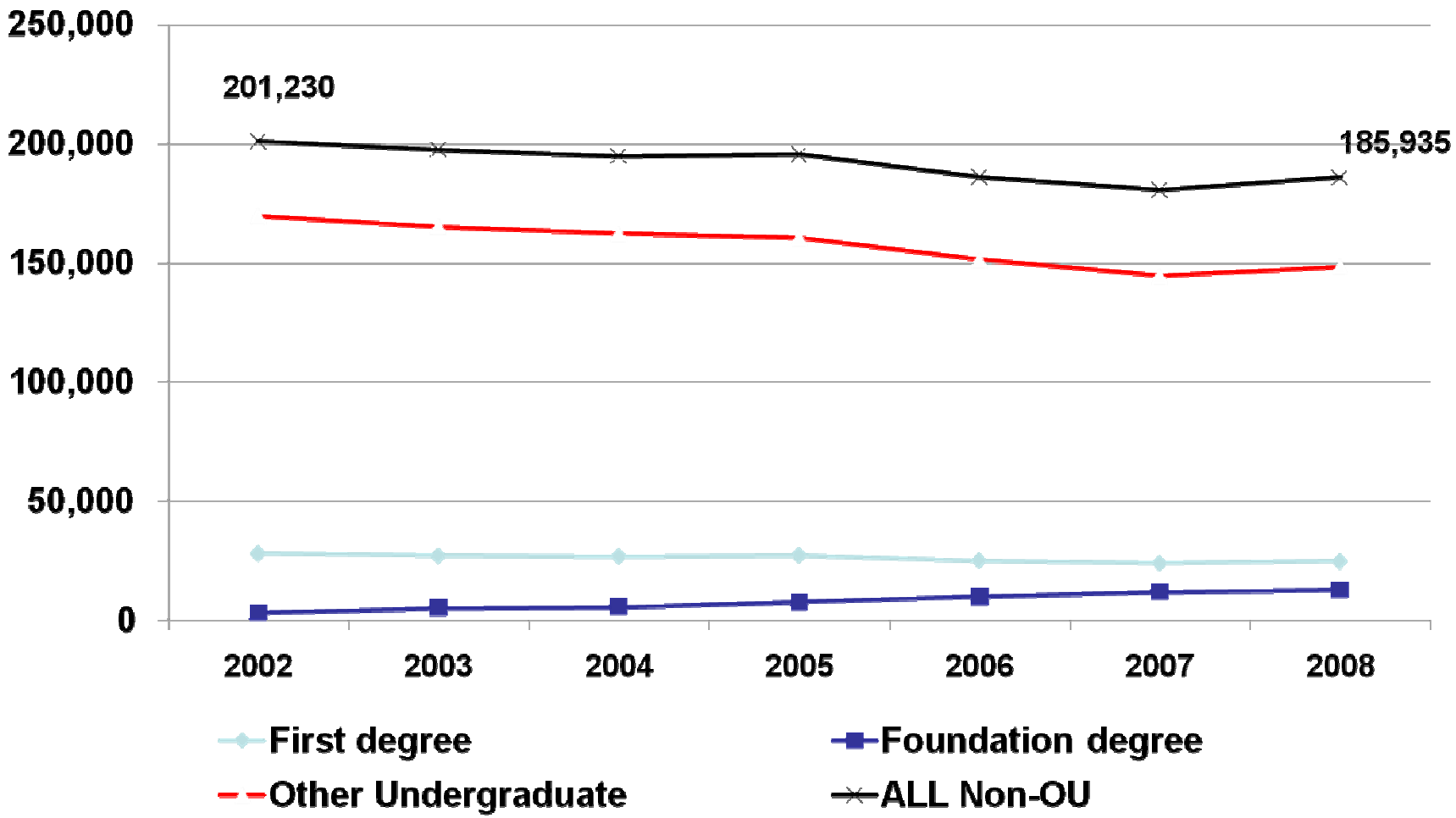
Our approach

Study consists of 2 inter-linked elements:

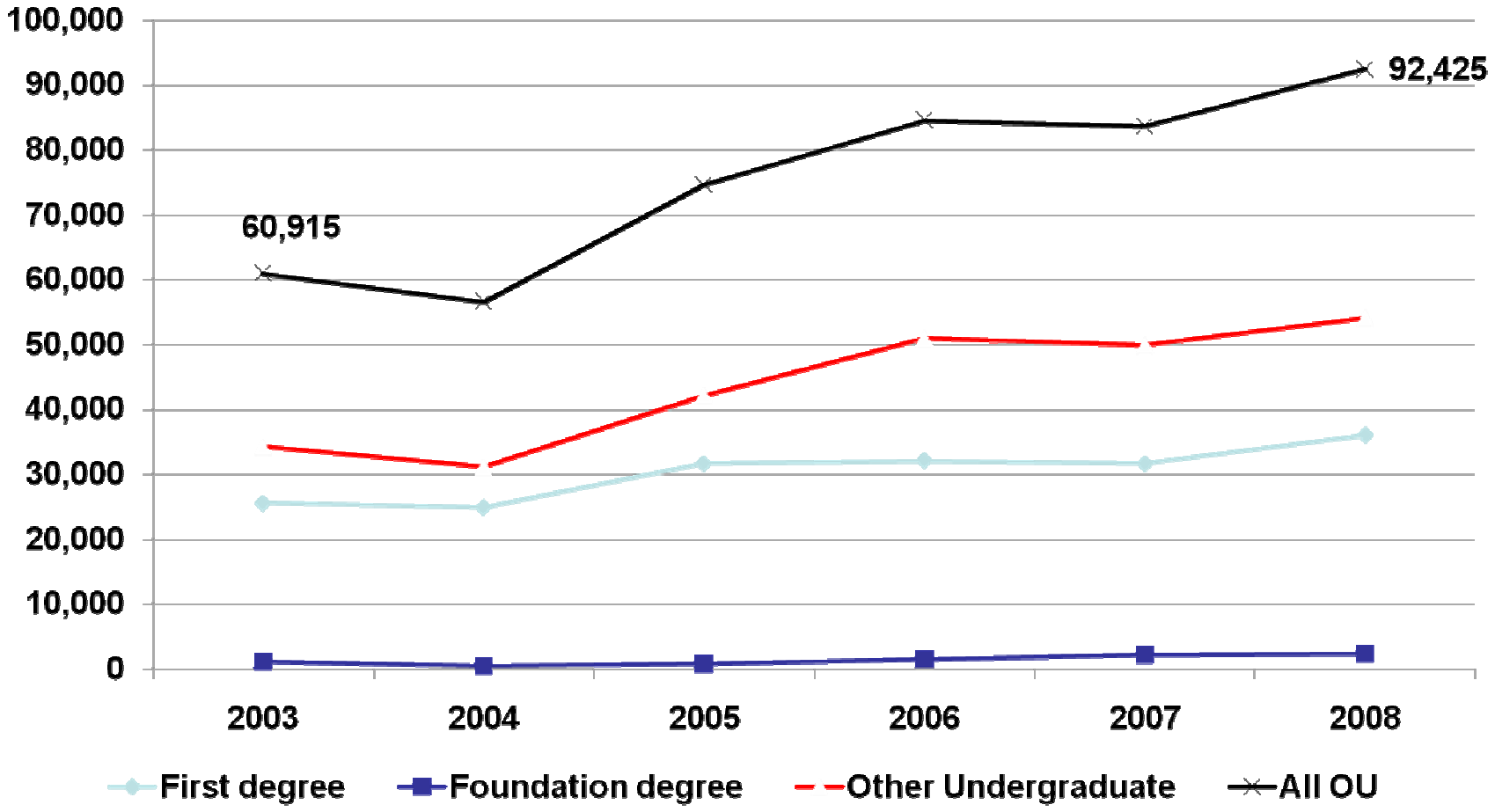
1. A statistical review
   - Characteristics of part-time HE students concentrating on variations by their qualification aim
   - Regional distribution of part-time undergraduate provision
2. Case studies of HEIs
   - Interviewing HEIs in regions with high and low part-time undergraduate provision

Part-time undergraduates: trends in enrolment

Trends in part-time non-OU enrolments 2002-2008, England



Trends in part-time OU enrolments 2002-2008, England



Regional distribution of part-time undergraduate provision

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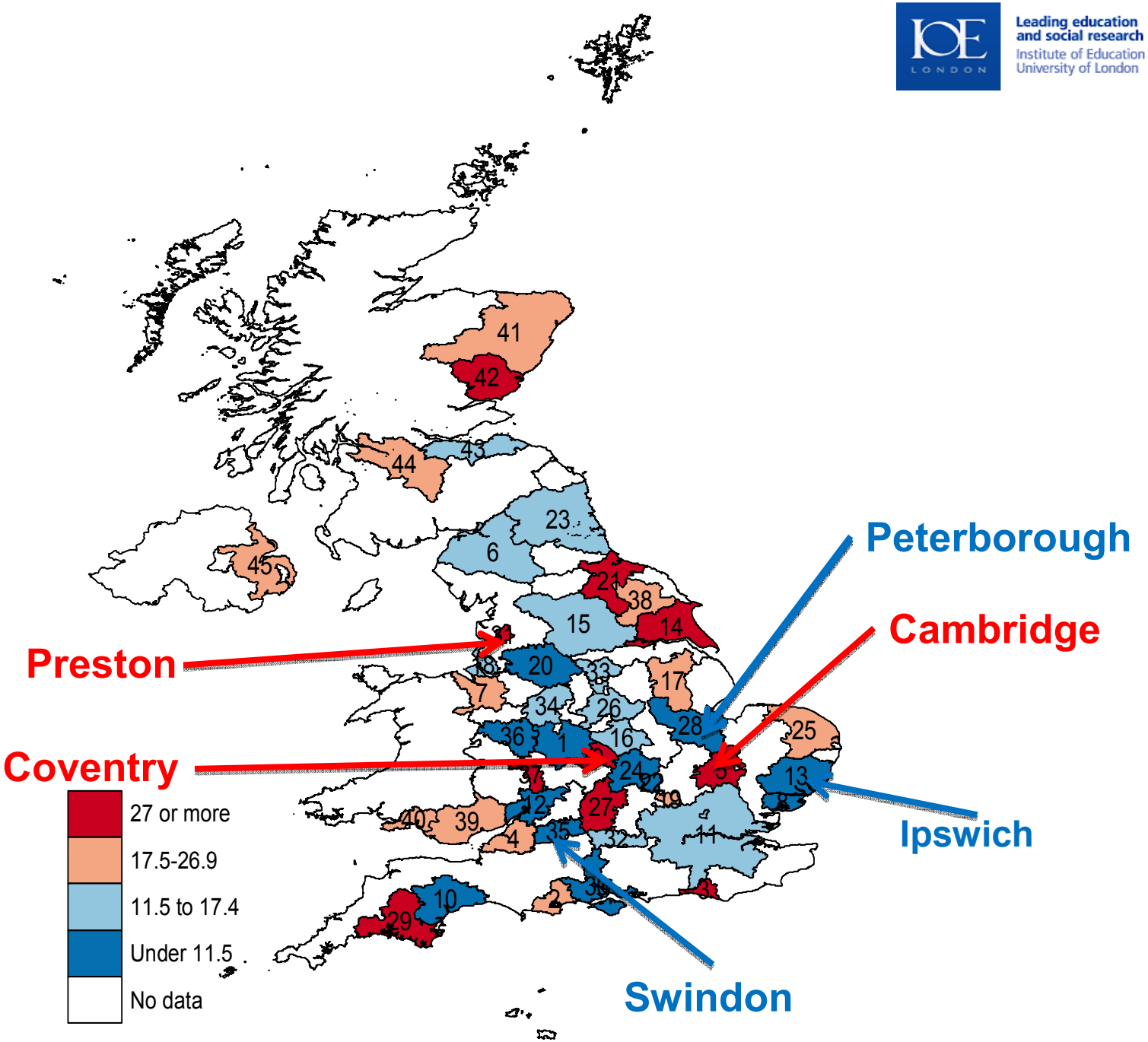

Total part-time undergraduate students per 1000 working-age population without NVQ4 qualifications

Most important factors impacting on the supply of part-time provision

- HEI's legacy and mission
- Government policies
  - How HEIs delivering part-time HE are funded
  - How students studying part-time are funded

Part-time student financial support

Part-time student support, 2009/10 England

Fees not regulated & paid upfront – PT HE *not free* at the point of access

1. **Fee grant:** full grant ranges from £805 to £1,210 – amount depends on students' hours of study - with incomes <£16,510
2. **Course grant:** up to £260 - full grant for students with incomes <£25,509
3. **Access to Learning Fund**

Part-time student support, 2009/10 England

Eligibility criteria

1. Entry qualification: Non-ELQ - does not already have a level 4 qualification
2. Intensity of study: more than 50% of FTE
3. Household Income

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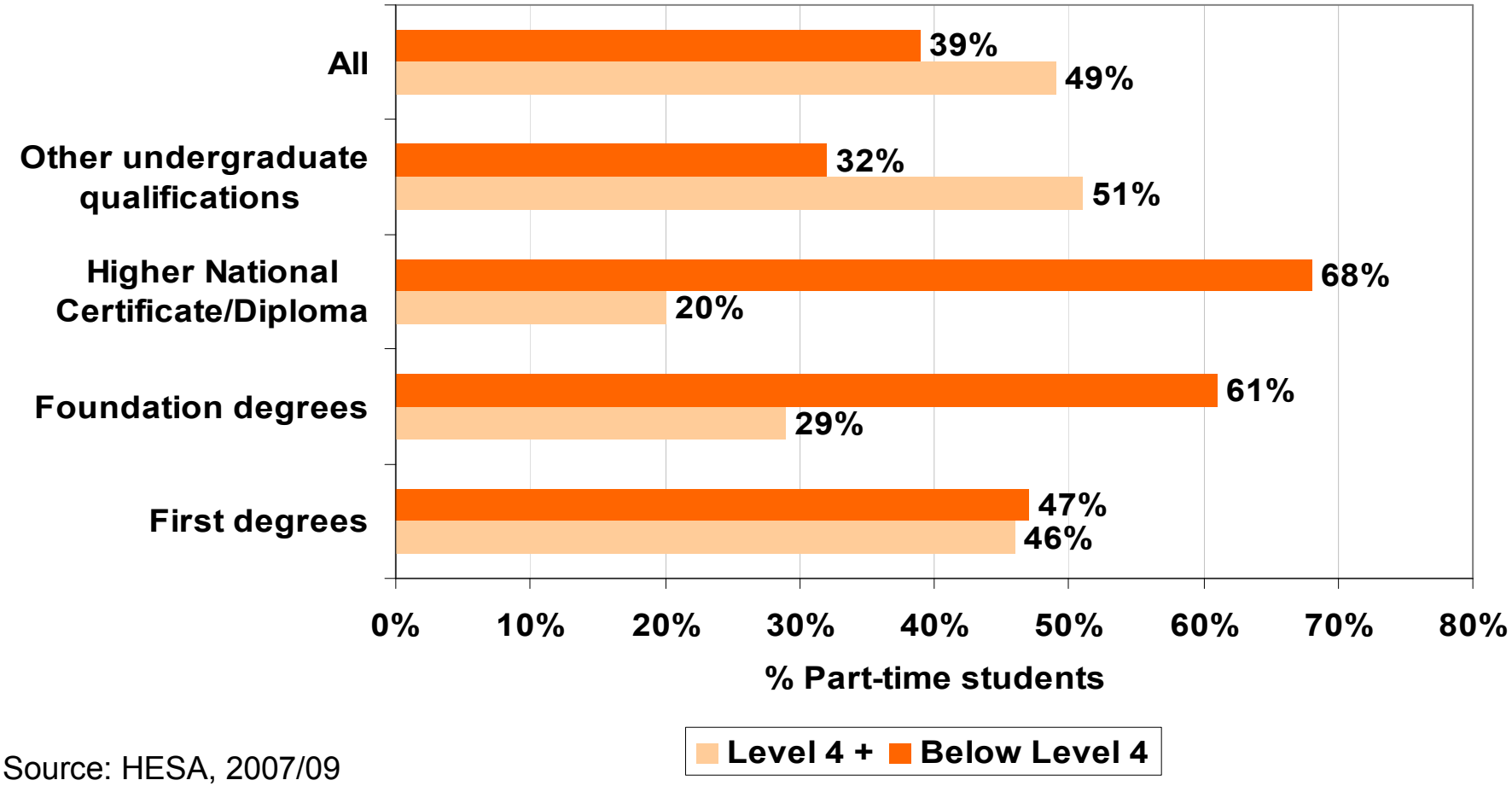
Part-time students' highest entry qualification by qualification aim, 2007/08 UK domiciled



Source: HESA, 2007/09

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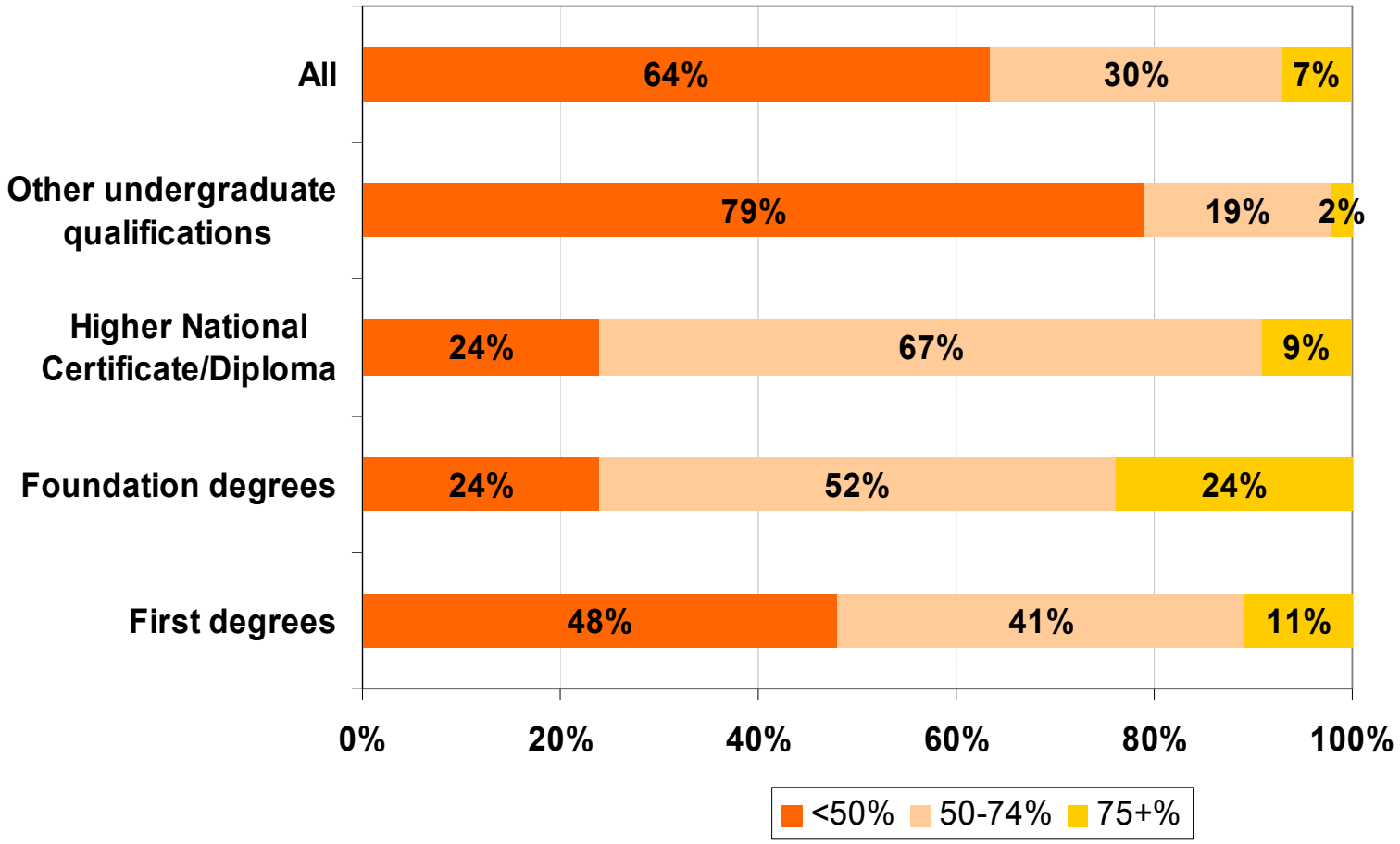
Part-time students' intensity of study by qualification aim, 2007/08 UK domiciled



Source: HESA, 2007/08

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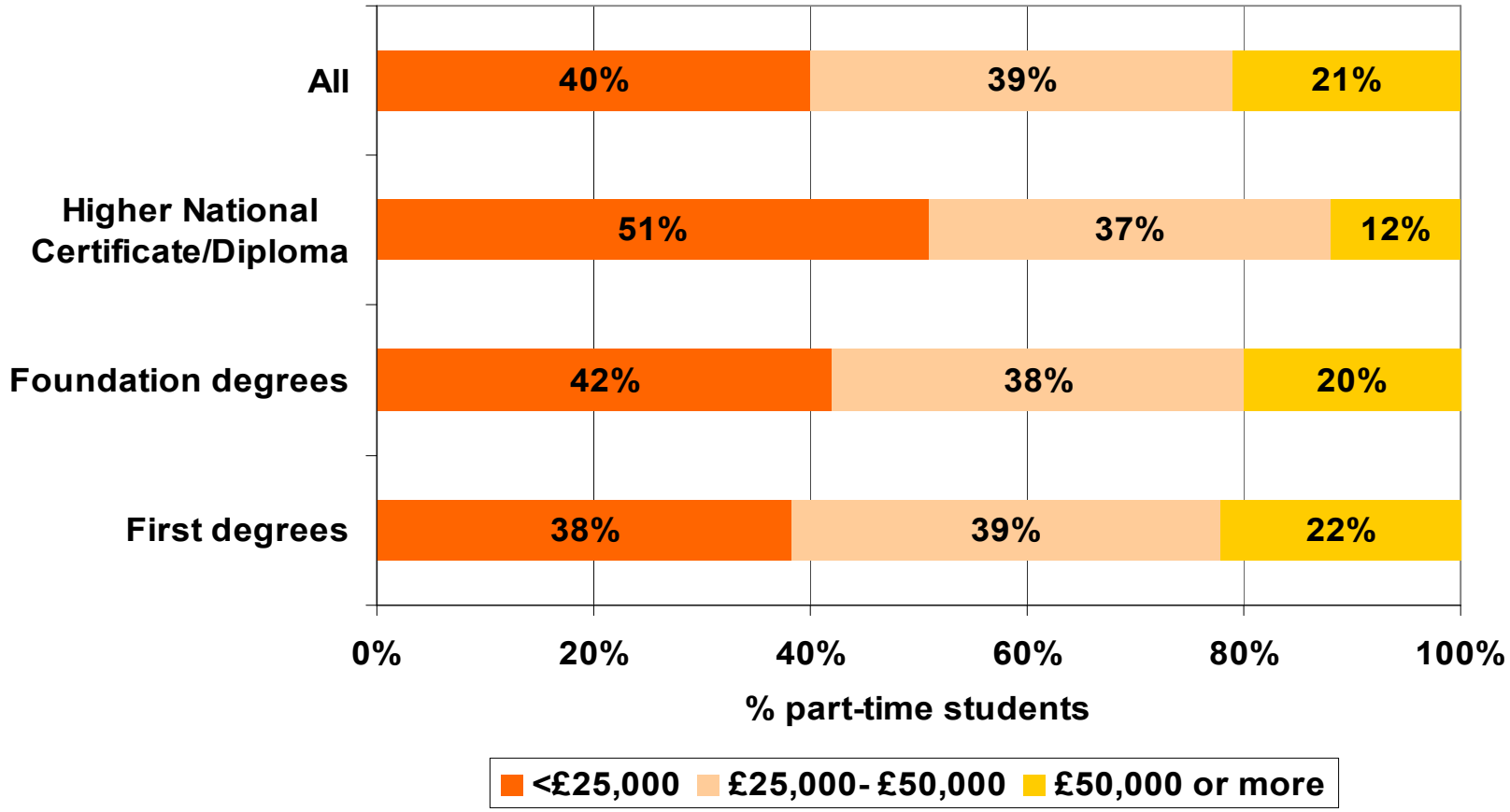
Part-time students' household income by qualification aim, 2007/08 UK domiciled



Source: HECSU/BIS Future track part-time, 2008

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Part-time undergraduate student financial support: problems

- Government support inadequate
  - 43% students awarded a fee grant, had fees greater than fee grant received – average shortfall of £576
  - 68% students awarded course grant, had course costs greater than the course grant received – average shortfall of £729.
- Employers only support a minority of students – about 1/3 - highly selective who support – FT time high earning employees taking vocational qualifications

Source: HECSU, 2007-08