

# Aimhigher...

## greater manchester

## Guide to Planning and Evaluation 2006-2008

This guide is for schools, colleges, clusters and collegiates to provide a framework for activity planning and evaluation for Aimhigher in 2006-2008. It aims to:

- integrate evaluation into planning and activity delivery
- make evaluation simple, fun and effective
- generate and collect data to show the impact of Aimhigher across Greater Manchester and to share good practice
- produce evidence for the Higher Education Funding Council and the DfES

This is a working document. All Aimhigher delivery partners – which includes universities, colleges, schools, LEAs, workbased learning providers, Connexions, EBPs and other organisations – are invited to add further examples to the practical examples in this document.

Copies of the document and PDF versions of the examples and pro-formas can be downloaded from the Aimhigher partnership website at [www.aimhighergreatermanchester.com](http://www.aimhighergreatermanchester.com)

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# Aimhigher Guide to Planning and Evaluation of Activities

Acknowledgement: thank you to the University of Manchester for permission to borrow and adapt examples and ideas from their Guide to Evaluation of Widening Participation activities.

## 1. Introduction to Aimhigher planning and evaluation

### 1.1. Why do we plan and why do we evaluate?

Planning and evaluation are inevitably linked. We plan in order to be sure that activities reach the target groups, achieve the objectives and are cost effective. We evaluate in order to show that activities have reached the target groups, achieved the objectives and were cost effective. Evaluation changes what we do next time – so informs the next round of planning. Evaluation is an integral part of the plan and is most effective when undertaken as part of the activity itself. For your information we have produced a timetable showing key dates for 06/07 Monitoring and Evaluation – please see Appendix 1.

In addition, we must evaluate in order to demonstrate that Aimhigher is adding value to mainstream educational activity in order to provide evidence to DfES and HEFCE that will ensure continued resource for this work. Over 80% of the Greater Manchester funding for Aimhigher is devolved to the ten local boroughs and it is vitally important that we are able to demonstrate that these resources are being used to meet the objectives of Aimhigher to increase actual progression and the potential to progress to higher education amongst learners in key target groups. Appendix 2, "Planning Your Evaluation" is a checklist of questions to consider when planning your project evaluation.

### 1.2. Evaluation that is simple and effective

In order to maximise the value of the evaluation and minimise the burden it creates, we suggest below a number of quick and easy evaluations which will be fun to work with, plus see examples Appendix 3 to 11. The time that is needed for these is mainly in the design of the questions – even if there are only three questions asked, it is crucially important to ask the right ones. Secondly, it takes a little time to write up and collate the evaluations. If the evaluation can be useful for in-school reports as well as for Aimhigher, so much the better. If it can help to demonstrate school and college work towards the Every Child Matters outcomes (especially Enjoyment and Achievement and Economic Well-Being), even better still. It makes sense to look for evaluation strategies that will meet several objectives at once.

### 1.3. Interim measures – short and medium term

There are many steps along the route to higher education for learners from families and communities with little or no history of higher education – those for whom it remains a strange country with unfamiliar customs and language. Much of Aimhigher work is with younger learners whose progress to higher education is a way down the line. Therefore, we have impact measures for Aimhigher that will measure changes in their attitudes, motivation and achievement – and in their intention and ability to progress to higher education.

## 2. A common approach across Greater Manchester

### 2.1. area-wide impact measures

Schools and colleges, clusters and collegiates, are all required to provide evidence to measure the impact in accordance with the criteria in the table below. In this way we will be able to collate evidence to provide a picture of the impact of the whole of the devolved funding and write a much bigger and better story of the opportunities we are opening up to learners in Greater Manchester.

## 2.2. using the typology

HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) also require us to report within their activity typology. All planning should locate activities within the typology categories on a 'best-fit' basis according to the potential for the activity to help to meet the impact measures outlined in the grid below. For the full typology of impact measures see Appendix 12.

It is the responsibility of all budget holders and activity planners to evaluate against the short-term measures above.

<b>Table 1. Working with the HEFCE typology: Short Term Impact Measures</b>		
<b>Activity typology category</b>	<b>Short term impact measures</b>	<b>Examples of activities</b>
<b>Awareness and aspiration-raising</b>	Increased positive attitudes towards HE progression; Increased awareness of HE as an option.	Visits to universities, theatre, student ambassadors, summer schools
<b>Attainment-raising</b>	Increased motivation to succeed in studies; increase in predicted grades.	Subject or curriculum based activities linked to recorded achievements, specialist summer schools
<b>Vocational</b>	Increased involvement or interest in higher education	Progression into work or progression support for workbased learners/apprentices.
<b>Information advice and guidance</b>	Increased knowledge of HE options and procedures. Intent to progress.	Careers or education option information sessions. Uni4me, finance or similar presentations.
<b>Staff development and training</b>	Increase understanding of policy and good practice. Increased understanding of HE options and procedures.	Careers and higher education information for teachers, Connexions PAs and others.
<b>Progression</b>	Increased confidence in applying and at entry to HE.	Bridging courses, transition support for learners progressing from L3 to higher education and from KS4 to L3.
<b>Research and dissemination</b>	Feedback on publications shows relevance and value.	Publications, evaluation reports, conferences, events; newsletters and support for area, national and regional Aimhigher dissemination.

Aimhigher borough partnerships and activity working groups will work together to identify particular initiatives or projects which might be targeted to measure the medium term impact by tracking participants through to and beyond transition or examination stages. Long term impact measures will be collated by the area team on behalf of the whole partnership, mainly working with nationally available or purchased statistical data. This will be published to the partnership in the annual report and in the monitoring report to HEFCE. Individual partner schools and colleges are welcome to contact the area coordination unit if they would like copies of data for their own institution.

## 2.3. Outputs

Quantitative information about the numbers of people who have been involved in activities and the profile of those involved is essential to justify the cost and provide evidence that things are working according to the plan. Outputs from Aimhigher activities will also include

project reports, evaluation reports, and work generated by participants in the activity – folders, designs, certificates and awards etc. Evaluation questions which ask whether participants enjoyed the session or evaluate the extent of their engagement, plus those which ask about the venue, food etc. are output-related evaluations. These may or may not be helpful to participant organisers – often this is information that is gleaned from the reaction at the time and of limited value in the evaluation report.

**Questions to demonstrate outputs:**

- How many activities were run?
- What was the duration of the activity (e.g. 2 hours weekly for 10 weeks etc.)
- How many people attended? What age/year group/s attended?
- What was the proportion of male/female, ethnic minority students, students with additional needs, and those with no HE heritage?
- Where did those attending come from (e.g. postcodes, cohorts etc)?
- What was the overall cost? Can you identify cost per participant?
- What is there to show for the activity? For participants? (curriculum folders, coursework materials, achievement records, certificates). For the project? (reports, portfolios of work, designs, products etc.)
- In your view, was the activity value for money?

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## Appendix 1

### Monitoring and evaluation timeframes for Aimhigher 2006-2007

Note: cycle in blue is the current planning/evaluation cycle. Entries in black relate to evaluation of 05-06 activity and planning for 07-08. Schools/colleges/clusters may be required to submit reports locally in advance of these dates.

May 1 <sup>st</sup> to June	School/college/collegiate/cluster allocations notified and plans written.
July 1 <sup>st</sup> 2006	Detailed borough plans, incorporating school/cluster/college plans, to area coordination team for collation into overall action plan for Greater Manchester.
July 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	Area Steering Group meets to approve detailed plans
July 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2006	Monitoring reports for year August 1 <sup>st</sup> 2005 to July 31 <sup>st</sup> 2006 submitted to area coordination unit for collation into overall monitoring report for Greater Manchester
August 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2006	Aimhigher activity year begins
September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	Greater Manchester monitoring report for 05-06 submitted to HEFCE for approval by regional and national partnership boards.
January 2007	Borough and project interim monitoring reports to area coordination team for collation to include update on progress and spending.
February 2007	Funding allocations for 07-08 confirmed and notified and revisions to action plans requested.
April 2007	Revised borough action plans submitted for collation into Greater Manchester revised action plan for 07-08
July 2007	End of year borough monitoring and evaluation reports submitted to area coordination unit for collation in overall Greater Manchester report
August 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2007	Aimhigher activity year begins
Early September 2007	Greater Manchester monitoring report for 06-07 submitted to HEFCE.

## Appendix 2

### Planning Your Evaluation: A Checklist

Use this to devise simple and effective evaluation questions.

- ❖ Have you planned for your evaluation before you start the activity?
- ❖ Have you set aside some time for evaluation as part of the activity?
- ❖ Do you know what you will do with the evaluation and how it needs writing up afterwards?
- ❖ What information/evidence will be useful for Aimhigher, for school reports, for others?
  
- ❖ Who is the activity meant to have an impact on?
- ❖ What is the most practical way to evaluate – questionnaire? Or group discussion? Tests or teacher assessments?
- ❖ Is there a fun way to do it? – post-it stickers? Flipcharts? Paper tablecloths to write on? Students interview each other and record responses? Use pictures?
  
- ❖ Have you kept the questions simple – only one question at a time?
- ❖ Have you made sure that most questions are easy to answer – yes/no or true/false or boxes to tick?
- ❖ Have you also left space for them to give their views on anything else?
  
- ❖ Have you noted what worked well and less well in the evaluation for use in planning next time?

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Examples of Aimhigher activities are available from Aimhigher Borough Coordinators, other schools and colleges, and from the Aimhigher DfES website: [www.teachernet.com](http://www.teachernet.com)

Below are some examples of evaluation activities. Adapt these to fit your own circumstances. Please do let us have copies of other ideas that have worked well for you – to pass on to others. Remember that PDF versions of all the examples are available on the Aimhigher Greater Manchester website.

### Appendix 3

#### Examples of evidence of impact and approaches to evaluation.

Outcome	Impact Measure	Data Source(s)	Practicalities
<i>Increase in participant ambitions and motivation to progress to HE</i>	Evidence of change in participant ambitions and desire to progress to FE and HE  Evidence of change in participants confidence to progress to FE and HE	Feedback from participants, teachers, parents -questionnaire -interviews -discussion/focus groups	This could be advised using <b>pre and post event questionnaires.</b>  Before the event, ask them where they see themselves at age 19 – what will they be doing? After the event, ask the same question again – do more of them mention university?
<i>Increase in participant subject-specific knowledge and understanding or increase in particular skill</i>	Evidence of change in participant subject-specific knowledge and understanding	Assessment or Testing  Feedback from participants, teachers, parents -questionnaire -interviews -discussion/focus groups  Compare predicted exam grades with actual results. Improvement over a previous level of testing	For longer term or more intensive activities this could be as a pre and post test/assessment – set a simple task before and after the activity.  Ask participants whether <u>they think</u> their knowledge and understanding of the topic has changed as a result of the activity.  What grades do you predict each participant will get at the start of the activity? What grade would you give them for motivation/effort at the outset? Review this at the end of the activity – has it changed?  Record evidence of change in behaviour and attitudes as well as in achievement.
<i>Increase in knowledge of higher education options, courses and qualifications With increase in motivation to progress</i>	Evidence of increased knowledge and understanding of the wide range of HE options.  Evidence of increase in motivation to progress	Quiz/testing  Pre-session assessment of sources of information available to the learners.  Feedback from learners and others  Personalised learning plans	Quick quiz or exercise at outset to test knowledge of range of HE options - e.g. students name one course for each letter of the alphabet. Repeat at end of session and record difference.  Ask learners – what do you want to be? So what will you be doing when you leave school/college? Repeat at end of session. Record differences.  Ask learners – have you found out something new? If so, what? And what else do they need to know?

<i>Increase in successful applications to higher education</i>	Percentage of applications from target group increased.  Percentage of successful applications increased.	UCAS data, student records.  Follow up/tracking of students	Data  Telephone, email, text or written follow-up after one term in HE .
<i>Further outcomes?</i>	Etc.		

**Appendix 4**

**Aimhigher Greater Manchester**

**Teacher/Tutor evaluation**

**Activity:**

**Name:**

**Please take some time to think about the impact of this Aimhigher activity on the learners involved and on your own work. Specific examples are more helpful than general comments.**

What do you think the students have learnt?

What subject/curriculum areas is this relevant to?

How will it help students to achieve their targets?

What school/college/teacher targets will it help to achieve?

Is there any individual or group that this project has made a particular difference to? Please describe the difference you have noticed?

Is there any individual or group for whom this project has not had an impact? Why do you think this is?

What follow up do you plan to do?

Would you support/organise the project again?

What would you do differently next time?

Do you have any other comments?

**Thank you for your support and help.**

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**Appendix 5**

**Aimhigher Greater Manchester**

**Teacher Assessment of the impact on achievement and motivation.**

**Activity:**

**Teacher Name:**.....

**Return to:**

Please complete the following table **both before and after** your students have attended the sessions. Assign a numerical value (where 1 = lowest and 10 = highest) for your students re the following:  
 student motivation in studies; student quality of work; likely grade in upcoming examinations/assessments; students general attitude.

Assessment Before Attending the activity					Assessment After Attending the activity				Comment
Student name	Motivation	Work	Predicted grades	Attitude	Motivation	Work	Predicted grades	Attitude	

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**General impressions of the training (For each question below, tick the box which most closely matches your view**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	What did they learn?
1. The training they received was linked to and relevant to the classroom curriculum					
2. The students have learnt at least one new skill during the event					
3. Student attainment is likely to increase as a result of the training					
4. Awareness of H.E. opportunities has increased.					
5. The training has had a positive impact on the students.					

**Appendix 6**

**Aimhigher Greater Manchester**

**Student feedback!**

We'd like to know what you thought of the session at the .....

Today's date:.....

	<b>I definitely agree</b>	<b>I think I agree</b>	<b>I am not sure. I have not made up my mind</b>	<b>I don't agree with this</b>	<b>I definitely don't agree with this</b>
1. I found out something about university that I did not know before					
2. I like the sound of university more than I did before					
3. I want to go to university					
4. I know just what I want to do in the future					
5. I need more information and help to decide					
6. In my own words, I would describe this session as ...					
7. Now I am going to talk to...					
8. I am going to find out about ...					
9. I would also like to tell you ....					

Your name.....

Thank you for your help.

Please return this form at the end of the session or after the session to:

\*\*\*\*\*

.....

## Appendix 7

### Aimhigher Greater Manchester

#### Learner Responses – impact on progression intentions Before and After Questions

Before and After questions (note that this may be delivered as a group exercise with learners recording their responses to questions on post-it stickers or paper, or as individual questionnaires)

**The same questions are asked before and after the session.**

Please answer the questions below. Answer them quickly –no need to think too long about it.

#### About you

1. When you are 18 and leaving school, what will you do?
2. What will you be doing when you are 20? /in three/five years time?
3. List three different jobs that you would like to do ...
4. What job are you aiming for?
5. Will you need a university qualification for this job?

#### About universities

6. Can you name 3 universities?
7. Which universities have you visited?
8. Who do you know who has been to university?
9. What is the best thing about university?
10. What is the worst thing about university?
11. What word would you use to describe a university student?

These questions should always be followed up with further opportunities to explore individual options through personalised learning or further Aimhigher activities. If the views of university are particularly negative, students should be offered opportunities to visit local colleges and alternative provision and/or introduced to role models who do not conform to their stereotype – perhaps through the student ambassador or mentoring programme or through uni4me presentations.

The same questionnaire can be used with the same group perhaps twice as a before and after evaluation – after that it becomes too stale and new questions need to be devised.

## Appendix 8

### Aimhigher Greater Manchester

#### Understanding higher education

##### A learner quiz

##### Before and after questions

(note that these questions are taken from the Young Person's A-Z Guide called *On the road to uni*. Copies of the guide are available from the Aimhigher area co-ordination unit or can be downloaded from the website)

1. What is a sandwich degree?
  - A. a degree about cooking
  - B. a degree that includes a year working in a real job
  - C. a course that is studied at the weekends
  
2. How long does a foundation degree take full time?
  - A. One year
  - B. two years
  - C. Three years
  
3. How many Universities are there in Greater Manchester?
  - A. Two
  - B. Six
  - C. Nine
  
4. What Higher Education course did Peter Kay take?
  - A. Engineering
  - B. Drama
  - C. Media Performance
  
5. How much on average did a graduate with a degree earn in a week in 2003?
  - A. £350
  - B. £450
  - C. £500

Answers: 1 - B; 2 - B; 3 - B; 4 - C; 5 - C;

## Appendix 9

### Aimhigher Greater Manchester

#### Understanding Higher Education

##### University visit – Before and after quiz

These questions can be changed according to the session – i.e. to anticipate what they will learn from the activity. Subject specific questions are also very useful. The questions can be used alongside other evaluations. They can be paper questions or group exercises. However they are done, these are not to be taken very seriously and should not be marked in any way. The point is to find out what they have learned at the end and to prepare them for the learning at the beginning. They can do the quiz in pairs or small groups. If you collect their answers (if written) at the beginning, you can quickly collate the key findings – levels of knowledge etc. Then return the question sheets so that they see for themselves how much they have learnt when the quiz is repeated at the end. Then collect the sheets again to collate changes. Whether written or not, try to quantify the level of knowledge at the beginning compared with the level of knowledge at the end.

**1. What is a Bachelor of Arts?**

- a. A man who is not married and works in a university
- b. A first degree in a humanities subject
- c. A place where students meet to find girlfriends

**2. What is a Campus?**

- a. Tents for poor students to live in
- b. A sports field near to a university
- c. The group of buildings and open space that makes up the place where university students study and socialise

**3. What is Freshers' week?**

- a. A week when people spend a lot of time outdoors
- b. A week of special activities and social events for students who have just started at university
- c. A week in the middle of term when everybody washes their clothes

**4. What is a Gap Year?**

- a. A year out taken by students between school and university
- b. A year when your teeth start to fall out
- c. The year after you finish at university

**5. What does NUS stand for?**

- a. Noisy Untidy Students
- b. No University Spaces
- c. National Union of Students

**6. What is a bursary?**

- a. A folder for carrying study papers in
- b. A fine for overdue library books
- c. A grant to help with the cost of university study

**7. What is a foundation degree?**

- a. A degree that includes work experience and provides a qualification for a particular area of work
- b. A degree that is for people who want to join a religious order
- c. A degree that qualifies people to work on building sites

**8. Who would you ask or where would you go to find the answers to these questions?**

## Appendix 10

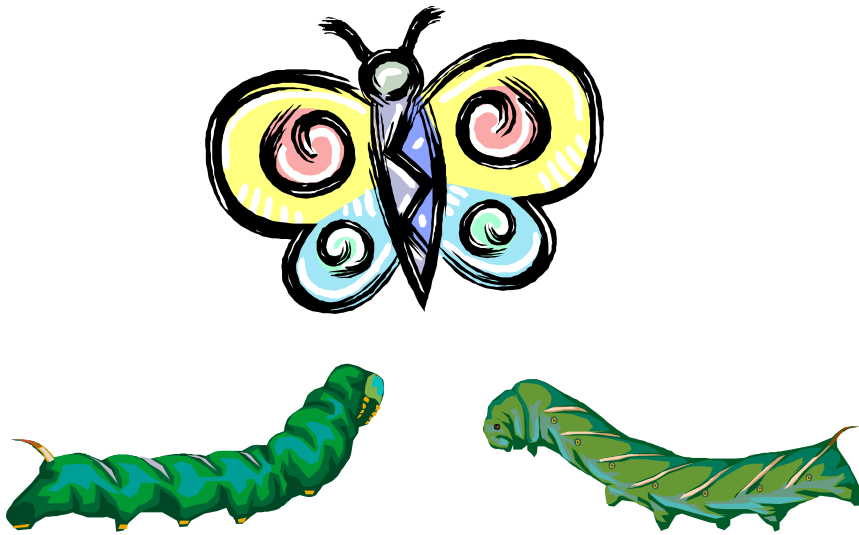
### Aimhigher Greater Manchester

#### Cartoon Captions

Every participant has a copy of the cartoon. They write the caption or they are given the caption and they discuss what it means for Aimhigher.

After the session, they rewrite the caption – this time to say what they would like to see the caterpillars saying.

Then discuss the meaning of the picture in relation to what they have learnt – capture the key points on flipcharts or notes. Look for evidence that they have increased understanding or changed their views.



**One caterpillar to the other: "You won't catch me going up on one of those butterfly things"**

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Or maybe they will say:

*I'll NEVER be a butterfly because my mother was a moth.*

*I wish I could just stay as I am. All this change is too much for me.*

*I'm truly frightened at the thought of how I might get from here to there? It looks too hard to me.*

*I can't wait to grow up. It looks good up there.*

*If you had the choice, would you choose to be one of those?*

*My big brother told me about it – he said it was hard but it's worth it.*

## Appendix 11

### Aimhigher Greater Manchester

#### Integrated evaluation techniques

**1. Journals/diaries:** particularly useful for longer term activities over several weeks or several sessions. Give each student a notebook and set aside 5/10 minutes at the end of every session for them to write their own views on what they have learnt. Have a few standard questions for each week such as:

*What have I learnt this week?*

*What am I looking forward to next week?*

**2. Interviewing each other:** participants interview each other, asking the key questions from example 4 above and adding information and advice as a peer mentor. The pairs record their learning together and report to the group as a whole or to the lead member of staff.

**3. Planning the sequel:** as part of the final session, participants are given a brief paper with the original objectives for the activity plus the activity plan and asked to rewrite it for a new group of students. They are also asked to briefly justify the changes they have made. This would usually be coupled with a request that they be willing to help to run the next session, or to promote it or to write up the evaluation will illustrations of the work they have done.

If you have simple and effective ideas for evaluation, please send them to Jo Wiggans, Director of Aimhigher Greater Manchester, at The Open University in the North West, 351 Altrincham Road, Manchester M22 4UN, or email them to Jo at [j.wiggans@open.ac.uk](mailto:j.wiggans@open.ac.uk)

#### Aimhigher Evaluation and activity resources and reports

You will find other reports, newsletters and activity suggestions on the regional, national and area Aimhigher websites. Here are the links:

[www.aimhighergreatermanchester.com](http://www.aimhighergreatermanchester.com)

[www.aimhighernw.ac.uk](http://www.aimhighernw.ac.uk)

[www.aimhigher.ac.uk/practitioner](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/practitioner)

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/aimhigher](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/aimhigher)

**Appendix 12**

<b>Working within the HEFCE typology: Impact Measures</b>							
<b>HEFCE</b> Typology categories	<b>A. Awareness and aspiration- raising</b> e.g. HE tasters or visits, ambassadors	<b>B. Attainment- raising</b> e.g. masterclasses, curriculum and study skills projects	<b>C. Vocational</b> e.g. workbased learning; apprenticeships; vocational progression.	<b>D. Information, advice and guidance</b> e.g. uni4me; parent's evenings; careers talks;	<b>E. Staff development and training</b>	<b>F. Progression</b> e.g. bridging courses, HE modules, transition support	<b>G. Research and dissemination</b>
<b>1. Short term</b>	Increased positive attitudes towards HE progression;  Increased awareness of HE as an option.	Increased motivation to succeed in studies;  increase in predicted grades.	Increased involvement or interest in higher education	Increased knowledge of HE options and procedures.  Intent to progress.	Greater understanding of policy and good practice. More knowledge of HE options and procedures.	Increased confidence in applying and at entry to HE.	Feedback on publications shows relevance and value.
<b>2. Medium term</b>	Continued positive attitude towards HE. Increased focus on progression.	Raised attainment at KS3, GCSE or Level 3.	Increased retention in and progression through vocational and workbased learning qualifications.	Learners take the next steps towards HE. Intermediaries maintain their knowledge of HE options and procedures.	Evidence of changes in practice.  Increased information and support for learners.	Increased confidence in transition.	Information remains valid and in use
<b>3. Long term</b>	Increased applications to HE	Increased successful applications to HE	Increased progression to higher level learning	Increase in successful applications to HE. Increased retention from application to admission and in HE first year.	Increased impact of Aimhigher within institutions or organisation. Increase in applications and successful applications to HE.	Increase in successful applications. Increase in retention application to entry and in first term HE.	