

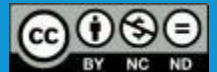
Flexible academic support to enhance student retention and success

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What can higher education contribute to improving social mobility in the UK?
HEA conference, 26 and 27 March 2013

Available at: goo.gl/MkfRI



Introduction and context

Changing HE Landscape

Widening participation in particular means that students have more diverse expectations, learning styles and needs (e.g. BIS, 2010; Milburn, 2009)

Increased focussed on employability and the development of transferable skills(e.g. Browne, 2010; Leitch, 2006; Pegg et al, 2002)

This is being addressed at one institution through dialogue with students and their inclusion as practitioners in the provision of skills development (Myers & Gibsen, 2010)

Increased fees for students at English universities, attainment and employability have become key measure for students and university reputation and status

Introduction and context

Kingston University

The university in South West London has 5 faculties across 4 campuses. It has a high proportion of students from non traditional backgrounds.

24500 students of whom 20000 are undergraduates.

50% of students from ethnic minorities

39% of young first UG entrants with parents from lower socioeconomic classes (WP)

Development of ASC

Academic Skills Centres

Developed as part of the Kingston University Teaching and Learning strategy (2009)

Diversity of student population -> diverse needs -> diversified approach

Campus based centres - different identities, faculty based

Provision through consultation (academic advisor) and online materials

Delivery and tools informed by dialogue with students, partly designed by students

Academic mentors mixture of faculty staff and >2nd students

Support offered include: essay and report writing, referencing, mathematics and programming

Evaluation of the ASC

Attendance data and SITS

Attendance data (2011-12)

Supplemented with student information records (SITS)

Main research questions:

1. To what extent do the ASCs reach out to students from non traditional backgrounds?
2. Which skills are sought by students from traditional and non-traditional backgrounds?
3. Do the ASCs enhance progression and attainment?

Demographics of ASC (non)attendees

		ASC attendees		Non ASC attendees	
Mode	Full time	1552	95%	20038	83%
	Part time	77	5%	4125	17%
Level	Sub degree	108	7%	2912	12%
	Hons degree	1238	76%	15398	65%
	Masters degree	280	17%	5445	23%
Age on entry	Under 21	881	54%	12995	54%
	Over 21	748	46%	11168	46%
Gender	Female	1095	67%	12481	52%
	Male	534	33%	11682	48%

Demographics of ASC (non)attendees

		ASC attendees		Non ASC attendees	
Ethnic background where known	BME	977	61%	11749	49%
	White	615	39%	11989	51%
Socio economic class of young students (NS-SEC)	1-3	285	59%	4950	59%
	4-7 (WP)	200	41%	3394	41%
Neighbourhood quintile of young students (Polar 3)	Q1 (WP)	39	5%	633	5%
	Q2 (WP)	77	10%	1166	10%
	Q3	185	25%	2758	24%
	Q4	184	25%	2918	25%
	Q5	254	34%	4221	36%

Skills sought

Skills assessed	visits	Eth group		Age group		NS-SEC (young)		Quin group (young)	
		BME	White	m	y	1-3	4-7 (WP)	1-2 (WP)	3-5
Referencing	2418	59%	41%	47%	53%	58%	42%	13%	87%
Grammar and punctuation	1199	57%	43%	51%	49%	59%	41%	13%	87%
Other English	2078	60%	40%	53%	47%	56%	44%	15%	85%
Mathematics	173	68%	32%	46%	54%	45%	55%	35%	65%
Computing	313	75%	25%	37%	63%	47%	53%	48%	52%
General discussion	475	68%	32%	55%	45%	55%	45%	16%	84%
Employability	71	67%	33%	40%	60%	45%	55%	14%	86%
Dyslexia and disability	63	48%	52%	54%	46%	50%	50%	30%	70%
Other skills	192	70%	30%	38%	62%	61%	39%	13%	87%
Sum of Skills All visits	3547	59%	41%	51%	49%	56%	44%	15%	85%

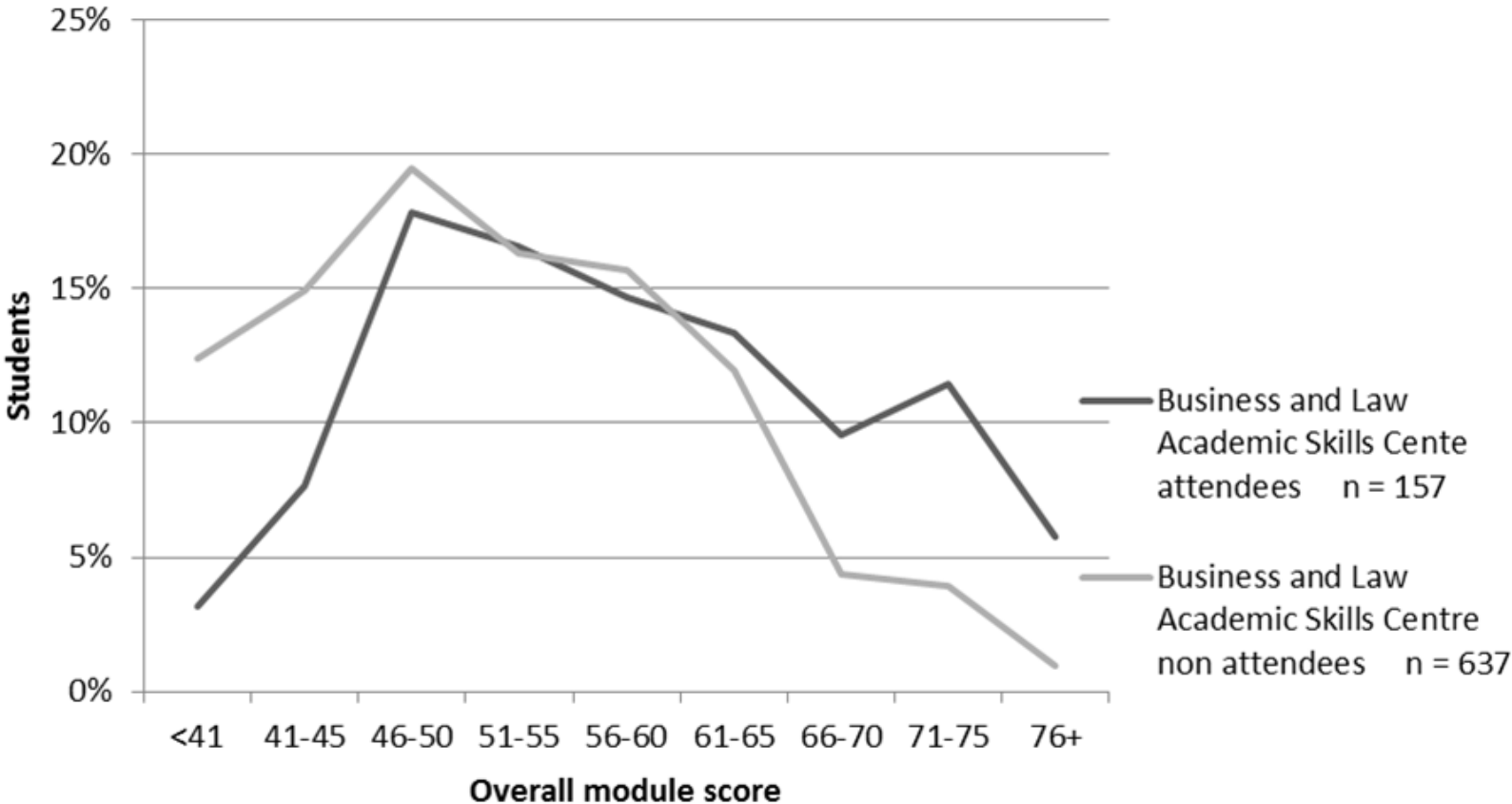
Impact on progression

First year progression rates of ASC attendees and non attendees (Full time, Honours degree only)

		ASC attendees		Non ASC attendees	
		n	progressed	n	progressed
All		540	91%	5905	78%
Gender	Female	351	92%	3033	84%
	Male	189	89%	2872	71%
Age on entry	Under 21	341	91%	4235	77%
	Over 21	199	90%	1670	81%
Ethnic background where known	BME	288	88%	2821	72%
	White	233	94%	2956	84%
SEC (NS-SEC) of young students where known	1-3	105	90%	1658	79%
	4-7 (WP)	71	93%	1123	73%

Impact on Attainment, faculty of Business and Law, 'Business Environment'

"Business Environment" module attainment



Summary & Discussion

Attendance

Visited by full time, undergraduate, with higher representation of female and BME students

Skills most sought are around English and academic writing

Significant relationship between visiting and likelihood of progression

Positive effect on attainment

Discussion and future direction

Voluntary attendance more self aware and motivated?

Changing landscape, increased competition, raising entry criteria