



Project: evaluating changes in the perceptions held by students progressing from HNQs of their individual preparedness to undertake degree-level study.

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B Definition of terms and acronyms.

- Bridging programme: pre-induction programme intended to provide orientation to the campus and facilities and address skills gaps / different study approaches useful in moving to degree-level study.
- Degree-level study: study at SCQF level 8, 9 or 10, following study at levels 7 or 8.
- Direct entrant: student joining degree courses at years 2, 3, or 4, generally having completed an HNQ qualification.
- HE: higher education – study at level 6+ under the SCQF.
- HN(C/D/Q): Higher National (Certificate / Diploma / Qualification).
- Pre-induction: period immediately prior to the start of the academic session.
- SCQF: Scottish Qualifications and Credit Framework.

C Executive summary.

1. The aim of the research project was to identify points in students' transition from HN to degree-level study at which direct entrants felt less prepared to cope with the demands of a degree course. Specifically, it aimed to evaluate changes in students' perceptions in their individual preparedness between the closing months of their HN course to the end of the first semester of their degree. Its objectives were: to assess the cumulative advantage to students of participating in multiple pre-entry programmes; to assess the significance of the timing of pre-entry activities; and to compare outputs with those of equivalent projects.
2. In the first phase of the research, questionnaires were used to gauge students' opinions. The second stage used semi-structured interviews to review the initial conclusions drawn from analysis of the questionnaire returns and to add greater depth to the findings.
3. The main conclusions of the project are that HN students are competent and capable and can largely be expected to think ahead realistically to degree-level studies. Where they have anxieties, these are largely well founded but not necessarily insuperable. There is a value in providing transition support over an extended period from the closing months of HN programmes to at least the end of semester one of degree courses, although students should ideally be offered support at several opportunities and in a range of formats.

D Introduction.

4. Scotland is well accustomed to higher education delivered across a range of institutions and across a range of types of institution. To show for the maturity of the national approach is its unitary funding council covering both further and higher education within a single tertiary sector and the credit and qualifications framework [SCQF], which continues to set an example within the United Kingdom, Europe and beyond. Within this sophisticated, ordered system live students who study on courses, the academics who teach them and the institutions that host them. Institutions – colleges and universities – co-operate as well as compete for students through top-level memoranda of agreement and course-level articulation agreements that facilitate students' movement between institutions and the coordinated programmes of study they offer as they advance their education up the SCQF. The planned functional heterogeneity of the Scottish system of higher education provision has been a significant factor in the country's achievement of widening participation to higher education ahead of the other nations within the UK (Woodrow 2002; SFC 2005).
5. While for students the flexibility available within the tertiary education sector can offer advantages, those wishing to exploit more fully such opportunities to individualise their study career and course choices can experience hindrances. The SCQF provides guidance to institutions; it is not definitive. So the currency of a student's HN qualification might be worth more at one institution, where it might earn entry to year 2 of a degree course, than another, where it would merit no more than entry to year 1. Institutions delivering HN courses can find that their students typically can choose to progress to a range of relevant degree programmes offered by several institutions. In those circumstances, agreeing and implementing articulation agreements that can be effective in the practical terms most likely to benefit students is hugely difficult if not impossible (SACCA 2004). The quantity and quality of staff liaison across courses and institutions is difficult and expensive to achieve. Even when colleagues manage that, students can still experience difficulties moving on to a degree, feeling that their educational experience to date has not fully prepared them for their next level of study (Knox, H. and Massie, E. 2005 p. 8).
6. All that is well known and understood by researchers and practitioners working to realise the potential of the system to offer accessible higher education by enhancing the support available to learners to overcome such difficulties. Bridging programmes targeted at direct entrants progressing from an HNQ to a degree course at a new institution with advanced standing are a long-standing feature at many Scottish universities in the annual run-up to the start of the new academic session. They typically address differences in study approaches and emphases in core skills, such as the greater responsibility on the student as an independent learner to research and read critically rather than receive much of the information they need to complete assignments. Some programmes also offer subject-related content, either to familiarise new students with the expectations of their new course or to cover shortfalls in students' knowledge. Much development work is being undertaken regionally and across institutions, too, including:

- a. The North Forum's **Supporting the Bridge** activities - on the potential cumulative advantage to students participating in a number of transition support activities;
- b. The University of Paisley's **Next Steps** programme - on the timing of interventions;
- c. **On Track** - on the relevance of the location of delivery;
- d. Dundee University's pilot with Dundee College of a VLE-based transition support module - on the benefits of different modes of delivery.

With no standard model of bridging support, the value of those programmes to students will vary across the sector but can be quantified (Knox 2005).

- 7. In seeking to enhance the support it offered to direct entrants joining its on-campus degree programmes, the Student Academic Support unit of the University of Abertay Dundee consulted with regional partner colleges on the possible benefits to students of extending the period in which support was pro-actively made available, bringing it forward into the final months of HN courses. Bridging is typically considered a pre-induction activity, requiring students either to have been pro-active in their preparation for their new course, new institution and new ways of studying or to be able to adapt in a relatively short and busy period. Under consideration was a co-ordinated sequence of supported learner-directed bridging activities, commencing with spring-time workshops held in colleges to encourage and assist students to commence preparing for their new course. By starting them on the bridging process so much earlier than normal, they would benefit from being able to use the final months of their current course as a relatively safe environment in which to experiment with the new ways of working that they would require on their new course. Existing pre-induction bridging activities in the pre- and post-induction periods could then serve a more realistic role of offering opportunities for revision and reinforcement of lessons addressed in the spring.
- 8. While seemingly attractive, and supported by research studies and identified models of good practice, the approach raised interesting issues deserving formal research, not least whether there were optimal moments at which students might benefit more, or be more open to, advice and guidance on moving from their HN course to a degree. In short, what information to offer prospective degree students and when. A working hypothesis was developed, drawing on college partners' knowledge of their students, experiences of delivering of the Abertay bridging programme, and patterns of direct entrants' applications for degree courses, which typically peak mid-summer as students reflect on their positive experience of their college studies and find the confidence to look ahead of continuing their education. The early working hypothesis suggested that direct entrants' confidence and sense of preparedness to engage in degree-level study rose from the final months of the HN course through to the induction period for the degree and then fell back, recovering as they gained more experience of their new study patterns.
- 9. For the past year, a project has run, supported by the Fife & Tayside Wider Access Forum, following students as they pick up bridging support on their individual journey from HN to degree-level study, probing their perceptions at each stage of how well prepared they were to continue their education at that level.

10. The purpose of the study was strictly limited. The intention was simply to follow students as they progressed from their HN course and to ask at a series of stages how well prepared they felt they were for studying at degree level, with a final retrospective survey asking the same questions but asking the students to reflect with the benefit of hindsight on how well prepared they had actually been. Asking the same questions a series of times offered the possibility of an insight into changes in students' attitudes towards continuing their studies. The careful planning behind the focus of each of the questions allowed the chance for more detailed insights into how students foresaw the distinctive challenges of degree-level study.
11. In addition, the approach offered chances to assess the cumulative advantage of participation in multiple pre-entry programmes where students were surveyed twice in the pre-entry stages. It was hoped that there might also be useful information gained on the significance of the timing of pre-entry activities and opportunities to compare outputs with those of equivalent projects, if only to facilitate a more nuanced interpretation and understanding of their research findings.

E Literature Review.

Background:

12. The aim of the current research is to identify points (if any) in the transition process from HN to degree-level study when direct entrants felt less prepared to cope with the demands of degree level study. That would provide evidence on which to base the informed development of additional bridging support.
13. The study hopes to build on previous research in the tertiary education literature committed to making the transition process as smooth as possible and bridge the cultural and organizational gaps between the two types of institutions. To understand fully why the problems of articulation have to be addressed it is useful to trace how the links between HN and degree provision has developed.
14. As Tait & Godfrey (2001) point out, universities historically drew their students almost exclusively from 17–18 year old school leavers from predominately middle-class educated families. These students had originated from schools that focused on coaching their pupils for higher education.
15. For universities, the main purpose of an induction period traditionally was social: it gave the new student an opportunity to meet new friends and made them feel welcomed. The first week would also hopefully give them a chance to orientate themselves to their new surroundings. The new more diverse nature of the modern student body necessitates an approach to induction that will support students from non-traditional backgrounds to the study culture of degree-level education. Transition should entail the provision of useful information and skills training for students at all levels of entry. Induction is being viewed more as a continuing process throughout the degree, as opposed to being limited to a week before lectures start.
16. Harwood & Harwood (2004) highlight the New Labour government's twin commitment to the expansion of higher education and their drive to forge stronger links between the different tiers of tertiary education to widen participation in higher-level studies. However, proposed cooperation between different types of institution has been made problematic by differences in both the teaching and organisational cultures between educational systems. There are also perceived differences in professional identities: college lecturers' professional identity is more rooted in teaching, with less association with research in specific disciplines. There is a consensus among commentators that teachers working below higher qualification levels view themselves more as interpreters rather than creators of subject matter.
17. Watt and Patterson (2000) outline the view of an opposing camp. They report reservations among university staff arising from the perception that the administration and admission of direct entrants from colleges require additional time and effort. One problem is matching qualifications gained at college with the university's entry requirements. Tutors view qualifications achieved at school as a good indicator of performance in higher education. The type of curricula and teaching in colleges make the transition of students between HNQs and degree courses problematic.

18. In the view of Knox (2005) it is widely accepted that there are essential and significant differences between institutions operating at different levels of the tertiary sector. Many universities have developed transition programmes to address those differences in support of students, including 'bridging' activities delivered during the induction period for people new to degree-level study, and colleges host equivalent courses and workshops. However, scant quantitative evidence exists of their efficacy.
19. Knox and Massie (2005) explored significant differences between disciplines and variations in the expectations and experiences of students moving from HNQs to degrees. A key emphasis was on institutional issues affecting smooth student progression and solutions offered tended to be institution-focused also, such as greater staff exchange between institutions to support the fleshing out of articulation agreements.
20. Consideration must also be given to significant characteristics of students typically moving from HN to degree courses. Universities certainly have to make accommodation for the extent to which those students differ from the first-year entrants they are typically more accustomed to receiving. Direct entrants might be more highly motivated, more experienced and better qualified but can lack academic self-confidence. Negative experience of school is common and it cannot be taken for granted that they are orientated or prepared for higher-level study (Tait & Godfrey 2001).
21. Some studies have investigated the reasons why students struggle on degree-level courses and even fail to complete. For example, Kember (2001) argues that students have a fixed set of beliefs about what constitutes knowledge, a specific notion of learning and a view about how teaching should be delivered. Those beliefs can affect significantly students' capacity to cope with study in higher education. Students moving directly on to stages two or three of a degree course from an HN programme will have had a different experience of education than students who began that degree at stage one.
22. Hatt, Baxter & Kimberley (2002) report on a study of drop-out rates for sub-groups within a particular cohort. The independent variable in the comparative study was age group. Students in the 18-20 age group had the best completion rates and almost 75% of the students in that subset were awarded a degree. The age group accounted for two thirds of those in total leaving the programme, a total of 178 students. The younger age group is, therefore, also the most significant in terms of the absolute numbers who did not complete. The mature students had lower completion rates than the young students but made up a smaller percentage of students who did not complete.
23. There were three types of routes onto the programme for the mature students: traditional 'A' levels, Higher National Diploma/Certificates (HNC/Ds) and through access programmes devised for adults. There were differences in the progression and completion rates of these three qualification-based sub-groups: those with traditional A-levels had better completion rates than access students who, in turn, performed better than the HNC/D group. The figures suggest that students with college qualifications might be most at risk of failure in the mature student category.

24. Studies such as that by Hatt, Baxter & Kimberley instigated a debate about what factors caused non-completion. If the causes of non-completion were seen to originate from the student, then the suggestion was that completion rates could only be augmented if students changed their attitudes. When interviewed, some tutors favoured a “deficit and compensatory approach” to the problem. They suggested that non-completion was a result of a hedonistic student ‘culture’ of pubs and clubs that clashed with the rigours of academic work. Low completion rates would continue until students altered their lifestyle. Other tutors suggested that non-completion occurred through the inability of students to cope with pressures of the course. In that case, completion rates would only improve if students were better primed for entry at that level of study or if they worked harder. These examples are indicative of a perception among some university staff that the causes of non-completion derive more from the students themselves. It is useful to consider the presence of such perceptions even if they are not necessarily borne out by experience or further research.
25. When an account of non-completion includes consideration of the institution as well, actions to address the problem can take a ‘transformative approach’ and embrace institutional change as part of the solution. As higher education staff began to be more conscious of the problems some students experienced moving to a model of study more centred on independent learning, the emphasis grew on ensuring that the first year of the degree course was of the highest quality and included support for students making that transition. To cater for the diversity of qualifications and the increasingly heterogeneous nature of entrants, institutions had to employ a less didactic approach to teaching and learning or to provide study skills support. In this scenario, the institution and the student are jointly responsible for addressing the problem of progression (MacDonald & Stratta 2001).
26. Having established that induction and study skills support might be needed by sub-groups of entrants, many institutions have gravitated to a more transformative approach in dealing with the transition of non-traditional entrants into higher education. There remain problems in addressing differences in the teaching in the two types of institution of transferable skills; these will be couched in different language to serve different teaching methods and assessment as well as accommodating the requirements of different types of employers. In college, students are typically taught core skills: Communication, I.T., numeracy, problem solving and working in groups. According to Lizzio & Wilson (2004), university academics tended to categorise skills into five groupings: general scholarship, research and problem-solving, written and oral communication, intellectual capability (e.g. critical thinking) and personal attributes. To survive the transition to degree-level study, direct entrants are more likely to be taught study skills directly related to assessment, exams or coursework.
27. Bamber (2002) makes the point that to help direct entrants to acclimatize to degree-level study it is necessary to appreciate their previous experience of learning and the help that they might need to make the transition process easier as they enter a new learning environment.

F Aims and objectives.

Aim:

- To evaluate changes in students' perceptions of their individual preparedness.

Objectives:

- To assess the cumulative advantage of participation in multiple pre-entry programmes.
- To assess the significance of the timing of pre-entry activities.
- To compare outputs with those of equivalent projects.

G Methodology.

28. The project took the form of a largely inductive extensive survey centred on quantitative data. Work addressing the main focus for the study, on students' perception of their preparedness for degree-level study, was based on information gathered through questionnaires issued to participants after each pre-entry activity and towards the close of the research period. Semi-structured interviews were also held in the final stage of the research period to add depth through qualitative evidence, building on preliminary analysis of the quantitative data.
29. The approach for the research phase of the project comprised:
- Desk-based research on equivalent transition support activities and studies.
 - Standard questionnaire on participants' perception of their preparedness for degree-level study.
 - Semi-structured interviews: same focus as the questionnaire, intended to add depth to the initial analysis of the quantitative data.

Desk research.

30. The opening stage of the project sought to build on the project reports and research literature covered as preparation for the proposal and move beyond Scotland to explore relevant projects undertaken elsewhere. The intention was not to produce hypotheses that might be tested by deductive means but to inform the framing of questions to structure the questionnaire (and, ultimately, focus groups) intended to follow.
31. Especially important in the opening stage of the project was to survey the relevant literature to derive a consensus on what were the key issues facing students moving from an HNQ to a degree.

Questionnaires.

32. The HN to degree questionnaire used in the research at the three points in the transition cycle was divided into three sections. Part one of the questionnaire asked for basic demographics about the participant's name, address, ethnicity, whether they were disabled and which school they attended. Part two asked participants for their previous educational institution and whether their study was part-time or full-time. The third part of the questionnaire asked the participants to respond to seven Likert scale questions.
33. The focus of each of the seven Likert scale questions was carefully chosen based on the desk research and a focus group of degree students who had previously studied at HN level. The use of the word 'prepared' was addressed explicitly during the focus group to ensure that the students understood it in the sense in which it was intended. Several questions were rephrased to make them apply more generically across discipline areas and so encourage responses from students on their individual perceptions of their personal preparedness, the key focus for the project. Students' subject backgrounds were not an especially relevant issue for this project, although clearly important in itself as a matter for separate study.
34. The questionnaire was issued to students at three points in the transition from HN to degree. There were two versions of the questionnaire. One version, used at stage 1 in workshops towards the close of the HN course and again at stage 2 in

the pre-induction period bridging programme, which had the questions in the future tense. The other version had the same questions but the wording was couched in the past tense (see appendix for sample copies of the stage 1/2 questionnaire and an excerpt of the revised portion of the stage 3 questionnaire).

35. A risk identified in the original proposal was that by asking the same set of questions at each of the three stages, specific stage-related information might be lost. In balance, it was suggested that the approach was sufficiently well suited to the principal task of gauging changes in student perceptions' as they progressed from an HNQ to a degree and that argument was borne out in the execution of the project.

Semi-structured interviews.

36. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of seven direct entrants to Abertay University after stage 3 to ascertain what kind of information about making the transition from an HN course to a degree course that would have prepared them better for degree-level work. The interviews were reviewed using a loose form of content analysis that measured word or phrase frequencies to uncover underlying categories or themes that with which respondents consistently had issue.
37. At the very close of the project semi-structured interviews were undertaken with eight students who had progressed from HNQs to degree courses delivered at Adam Smith College. The interviewees were asked similar questions as the interviews carried out on the direct entrants: some variations were made to gather information on what assistance was received during the transition process from HN to degree and what information might have made them better prepared for degree level study. A content analysis approach was taken with the data gathered here, as during the earlier semi-structured interviews.

1H Survey population.

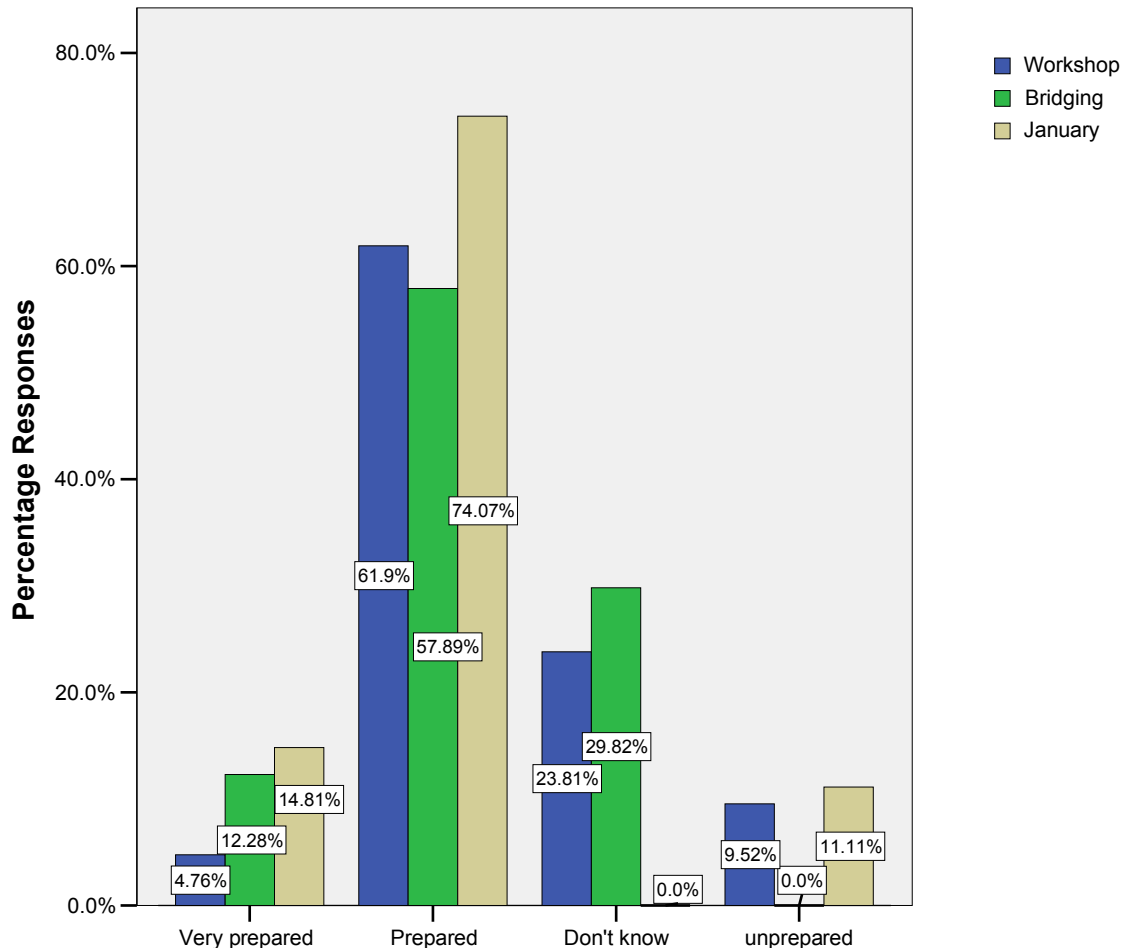
38. The survey population in stage 1 of the project comprised HN students from Angus, Elmwood and Fife Colleges participating in workshops designed to introduce key distinctive features of degree-level study and to encourage them to plan ahead for the next stage of the education. The content, timing and targeting of the workshops were formulated in discussion between staff at each of the colleges and members of the Abertay University Student Academic Support team, which delivered the workshops in each of the colleges between March and May 2005. The survey population in stage 2 included participants at stage 1 plus additional students attending the bridging programme at Abertay, in line with the original funding proposal. The population at stage 3 comprised students from both stages 1 and 2.
39. The survey populations at each of the stages were as follows:
- Stage 1: 21.
 - Stage 2: 57.
 - Stage 3: 27.
- Seven Abertay and eight Adam Smith College students participated in the semi-structured interviews towards the close of the project. In total, 95 students participated in the project in either one or more stages of the questionnaire research or during the semi-structured interviews.
40. The number of students participating at stage 1 was disappointing. Additional proposed workshops at Dundee and Perth Colleges were called off due to difficulties in raising sufficient interest among students. The risk of poor recruitment of participants had been anticipated in the planning stage, with the original proposal accepting that additional participants would have to be recruited at subsequent stages. The shift from very early notions of producing a classic tracking type exercise, in which the same group of students would be followed and their progress analysed during a given period, were dropped for the same reason. Instead, it was decided to operate a 'snapshot' approach, through which a sample of opinions could be gauged at each stage
41. Though small and self-selected, the stage 1 sample was not necessarily unrepresentative. The experience of college staff attending the workshops was that those attending covered a broad range of students, from those sure they wanted to progress to a degree and confident that they knew what they had to do to achieve their goals, to others seriously lacking in the confidence and ambition to continue their formal education. Nonetheless, care is required in interpreting results from stage 1 because of the small numbers who responded to those questionnaires.
42. The sample size dipped in stage 3 also, despite the use of incentives to encourage all participating students to complete and return their questionnaires. Again, while disappointing, that fall in numbers did not significantly impair the value of the data gathered at that stage. Numbers did not fall so far as to require concern about the sample size could continue to be considered representative. The corroboration of preliminary findings through subsequent focus groups was intended to address such issues.

43. No sub-divisions were made in the survey populations at stages 2 and 3, either in terms of the disciplines students' degree courses focused on, or in terms of where they had or would be studying. On the first matter, the nature of the questions included in the questionnaires at each stage was deliberately generic, covering issues typically found by students to present challenges when first moving from an HN to a degree course. That was one of the upshots from the focus group used early on to refine that questionnaire. While variations in experiences between students studying in different subject areas is interesting, and a key focus for Knox and Massie (2005), that was not a relevant area of investigation for this study, which was focused tightly on students' perceptions of their preparedness for degree-level study and the significance of the timing of interventions intended to support them in their progression from their HN course. Similarly, on the second matter, students' institutions of origin and destination were recorded but not of primary relevance to the study. While stage 2 saw the addition of students coming to Abertay to study, as outlined in the original proposal, they did not comprise the whole sample: all those involved in stage 1 were posted questionnaires again in stages 2 and 3. In one respect, an Abertay bias to a project focused on Fife and Tayside was inevitable given the fact that that university secures the greatest number of students progressing to degree-level studies from an HN course of all institutions in the region. In addition, significant efforts were made by colleagues at Adam Smith, Dundee and Perth Colleges to arrange additional focus groups with their own on-campus degree students to allow conclusions drawn after stage 3 to be challenged and, where necessary, adjusted.
44. Students' starting stage of study – HNC or HND – was also not recorded, treating HN-level study as an homogenous experience. That decision, in hindsight, was based more on the precedent of previous research and lacked rigorous basis in evidence. Further studies could usefully explore that factor.

I Results.

Question 1: Degree students generally receive less help from tutors than at HNC and HND level. How well prepared have you been to work on your own?

Figure 1: Cluster bar chart of percentage responses for the three transitions points for question 1.

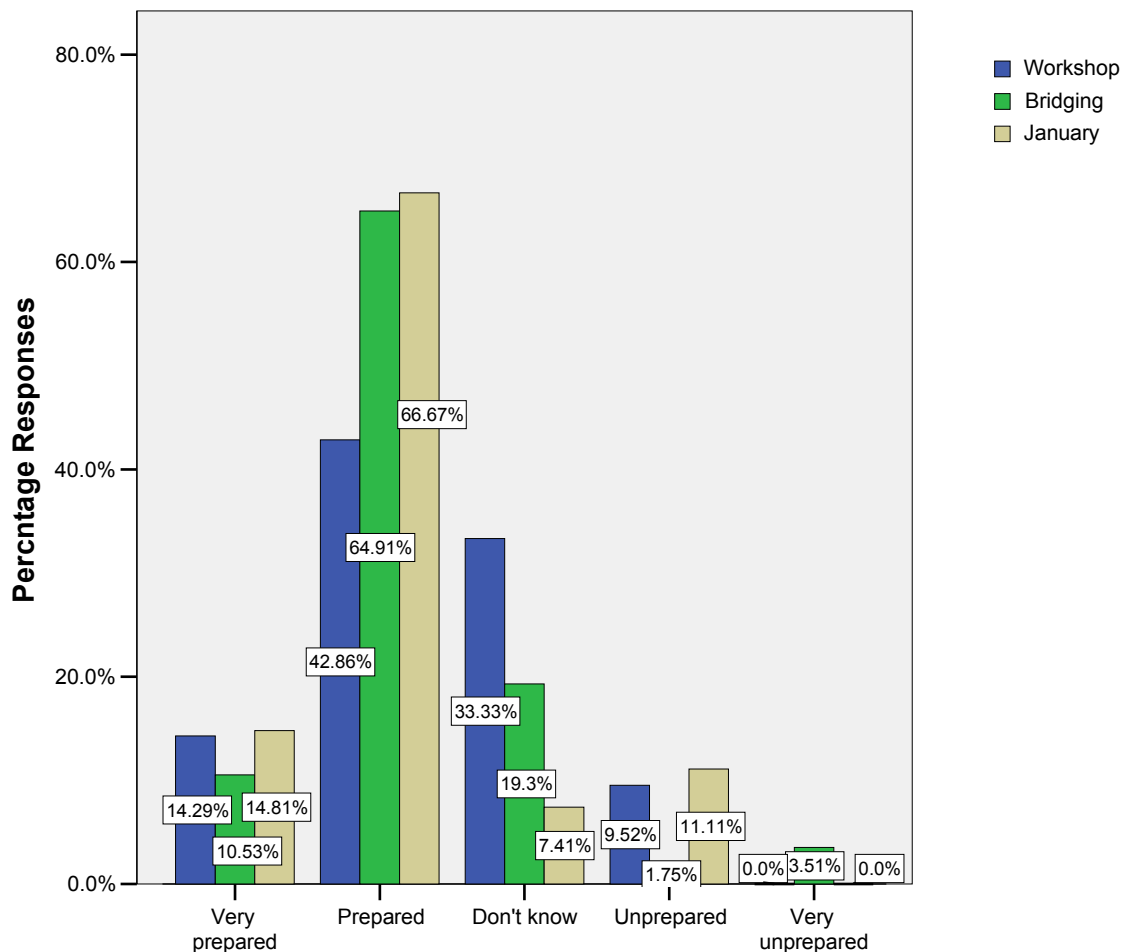


45. Figure 1 illustrates the response patterns of the participants surveyed using the standard questionnaire at the different transition points in the cycle. As can be seen from the graph, the response rates followed a roughly similar pattern with most respondents feeling that they were prepared to work on their own in all three positions in the cycle with the highest level of 70% of the respondents from the January period feeling with hindsight that they had been prepared for working on their own. The percentage of respondents who felt very prepared was smaller in all transitions phases with again the January respondents having the highest figure of 14%. The don't knows were between 20% and 30% at the workshop and bridging programme but none of the respondents in January felt unsure about this question. No one in the pre-induction period felt unprepared but 9.5% in the workshops did and 11.11% who responded to the question in January still felt unprepared.

46. A Kurksal Wallis k independent samples test was carried out on the data to test for significant differences in the responses at the three transitions points for this question. The result was not significant at the 5% level.

Question 2: For every hour in class, degree students are expected to spend much more time studying on their own. How well prepared are you to set time aside each week to study?

Figure 2: Cluster bar chart of percentage responses for the three transitions points for question 2.

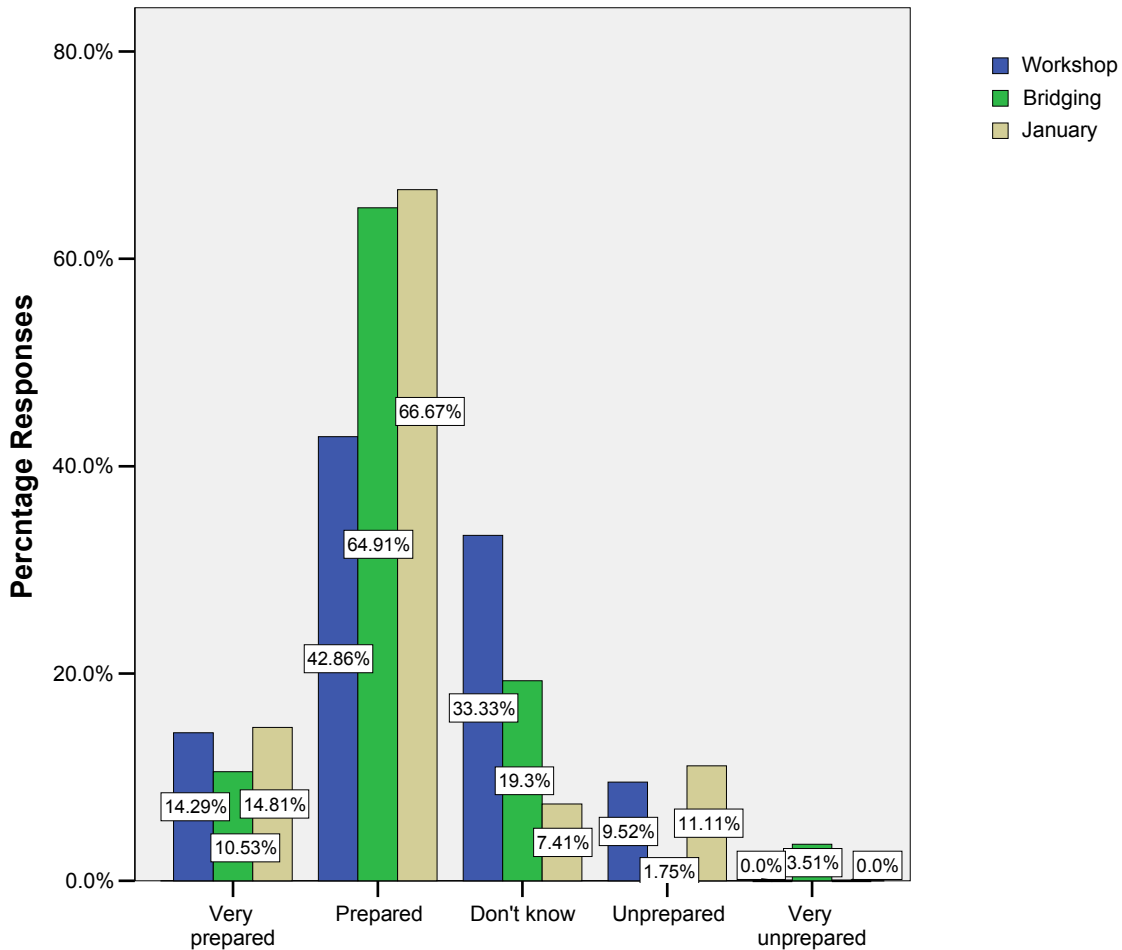


47. Figure 2 illustrates a similar pattern of responses as for question 1. Again the pattern of responses was roughly similar for the three transition points. A majority of the respondents at each stage felt prepared to set time aside to study. The graph above shows that over 10% at each of the transition points felt very prepared to set time aside. Over 60% at both the bridging and in January (with hindsight) felt prepared but in contrast slightly more than 40% at the workshops felt prepared. As well as this 33% of the respondents in the workshops did not know if they were prepared to set time aside to study. Very few respondents felt unprepared at bridging but about 10% felt unprepared at the workshops and 11% of respondents still felt unprepared in January. Only a very small percentage felt very unprepared to set time aside to study at all the transition points.

48. A Kurksal Wallis k independent samples test was carried out on the data to test for significant differences in the responses at the three transitions points for this question. The result was not significant at the 5% level.

Question 3: At degree level, students are taught the basics of a subject; learning about the subject in more depth is the students' own responsibility. How well prepared are you to take responsibility for your own learning in this way?

Figure 3: Cluster bar chart of percentage responses for the three transitions points for question 3.

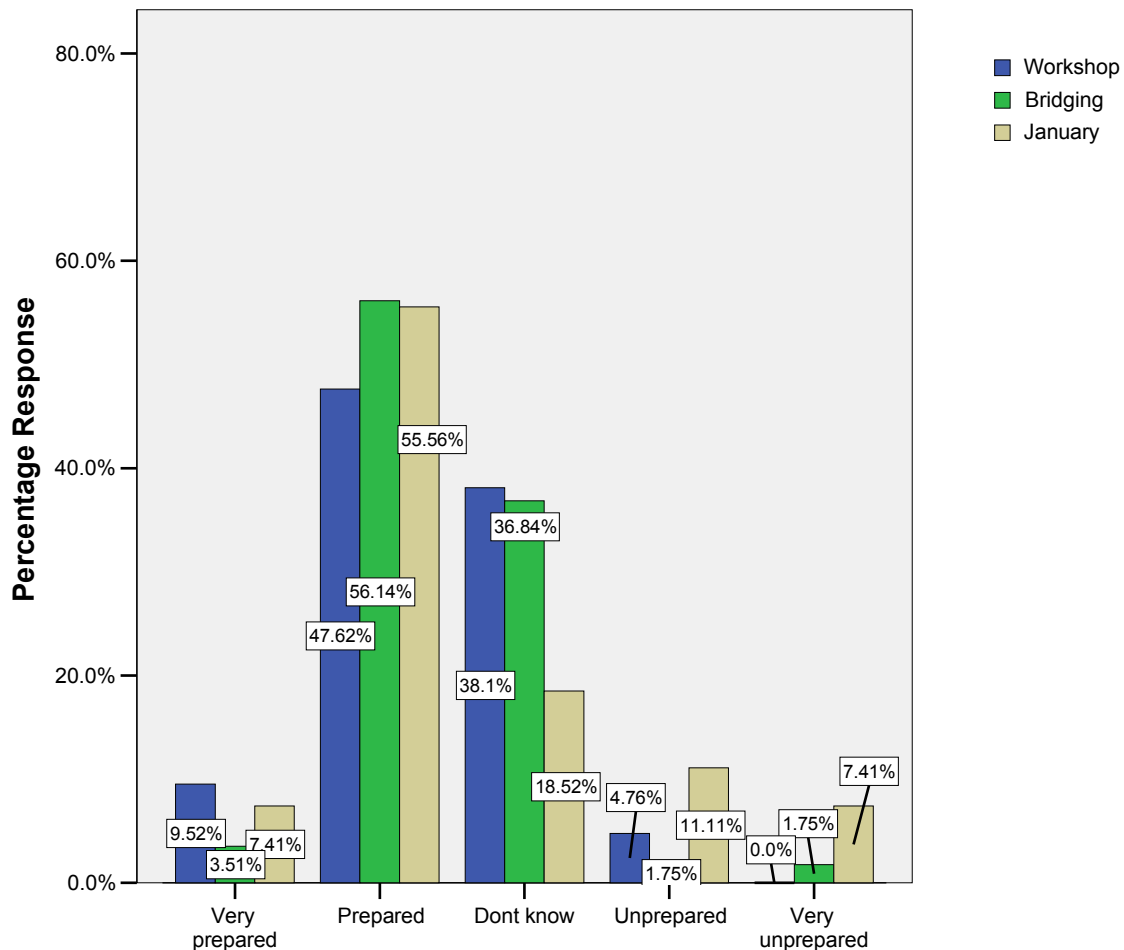


49. As shown in figure 3, the pattern of responses has roughly the same shape as the previous two questions. The cluster bar chart above indicates that over 20% of respondents in January felt very prepared to take responsibility for their own learning. A majority of the respondents felt prepared at each of the transition points in the survey. Unlike the previous two questions, most respondents at the workshops felt prepared and with hindsight in January. More than 20% of the people at the bridging did not know if they were prepared to take responsibility for that aspect of their learning. This was a question where few respondents felt unprepared for, the highest figure being 7.4% reporting having felt unprepared with hindsight in January. Even fewer felt unprepared to take responsibility for their own learning.

50. A Kurksal Wallis k independent samples test was carried out on the data to test for significant differences in the responses at the three transitions points for this question. The result was not significant at the 5% level.

Question 4: Tutors teaching in the second or third year of a degree level course may refer to work covered in a previous year you did not cover at HNC and HND level. How well prepared are you to cover material you might have missed from the first or second year of your degree course?

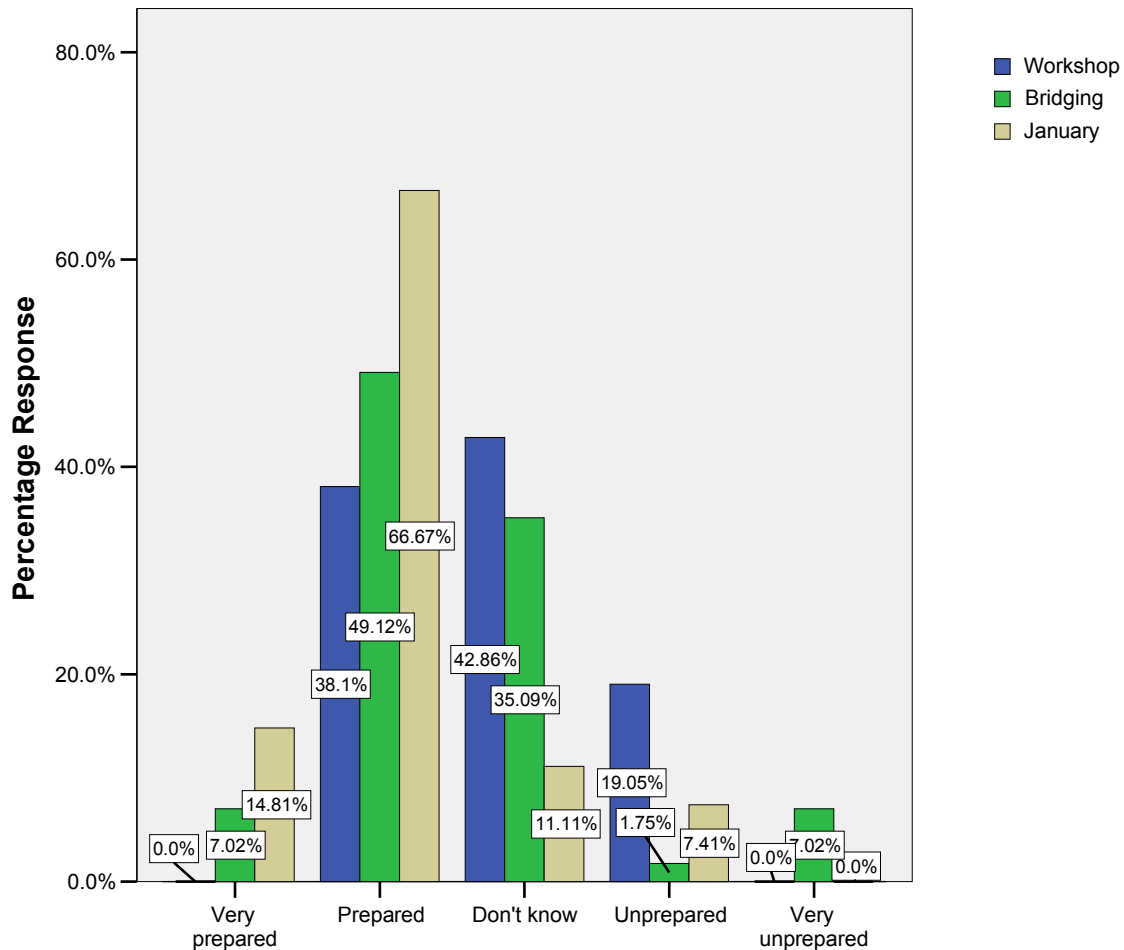
Figure 4: Cluster bar chart of percentage responses for the three transitions points for question 4.



51. Figure 4 illustrates a slightly different pattern of response to that of previous questions. Whereas the pattern for very prepared, unprepared and very unprepared were similar to previous questions, the pattern for prepared and don't know were dissimilar. The numbers that felt prepared dropped at all three survey stages to below 60%, the level fell to lower than 50% at the workshops. However, the number of respondents that reported that they did not know if they were prepared for covering additional material was much higher than the 'don't-knows' in previous questions. In the workshops, more than 38% felt unprepared whereas the figure for the respondents who did not know if they were prepared was half this in January was less than half this figure.
52. Again a Kurksal Wallis k independent samples test was carried out on the data to test for significant differences in the responses at the three transitions points for question four. The result was not significant at the 5% level.

Question 5: Assessment at degree level usually involves coursework and exams. How well prepared are you for the number of exams and courseworks you may face?

Figure 5: Cluster bar chart of percentage responses for the three transitions points for question 5.

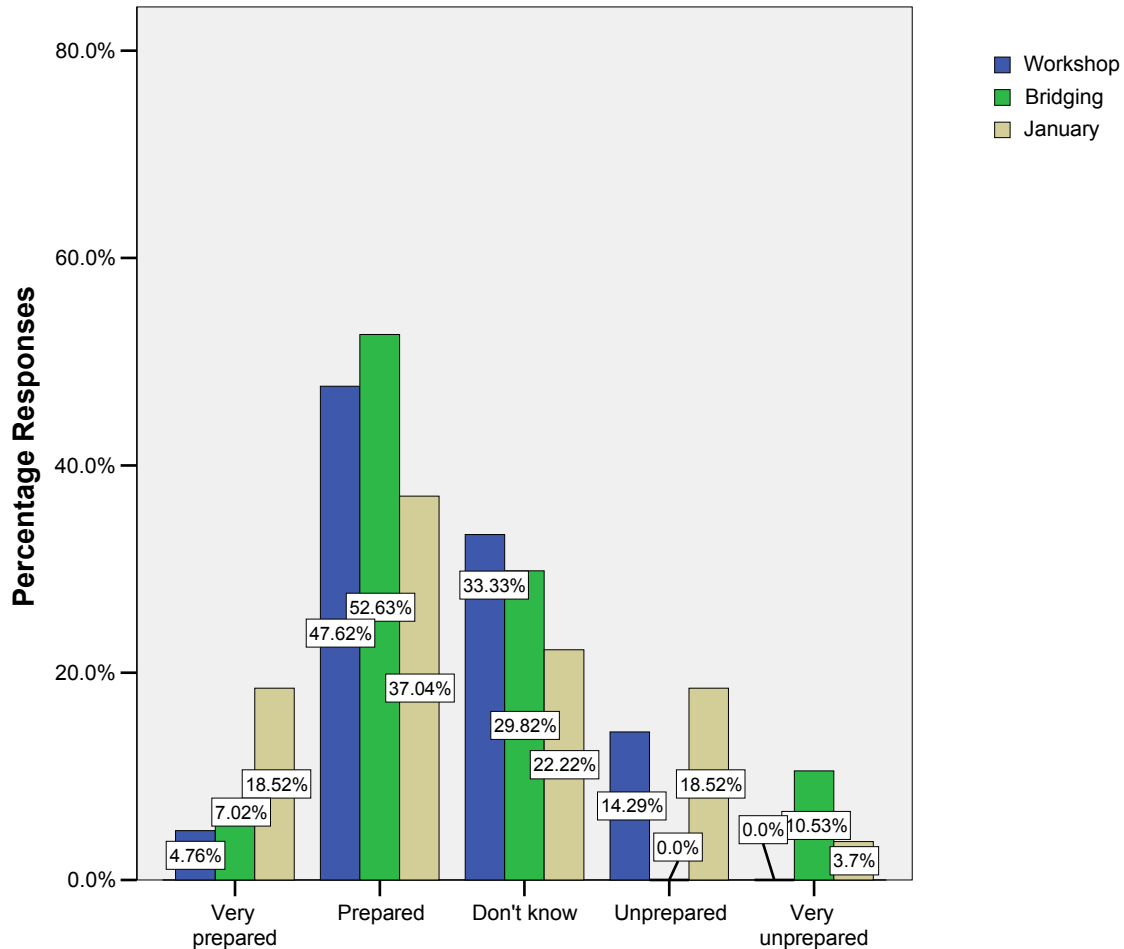


53. Figure 5 indicates a different pattern of responses at the three survey stages to question 5. Most respondents at pre-induction and again with hindsight in January felt prepared for the number of exams and assessments they would face. However, slightly more than 42% at the workshops did not know if they were prepared, a larger percentage than those who felt prepared at the workshops. More than a third of the respondents at the bridging programme did not know if they would be prepared for the number of assessments they would face.

54. To investigate these observed differences a Kruskal-Wallis k independent samples test was carried out on the data. This test was significant at the 5% level. Post hoc Mann-Whitney independent samples tests were carried out and the results indicated a significant difference in response patterns between the workshops and January plus a significant response pattern between bridging and January. However there was no significant difference in the response pattern at the workshops and bridging.

Question 6: Written coursework, such as essays and reports, are more detailed and require more research and analysis of a topic (rather than just description) at degree level than at HNC and HND level. How well prepared are you to write like this?

Figure 6: Cluster bar chart of percentage responses for the three transitions points for question 6.

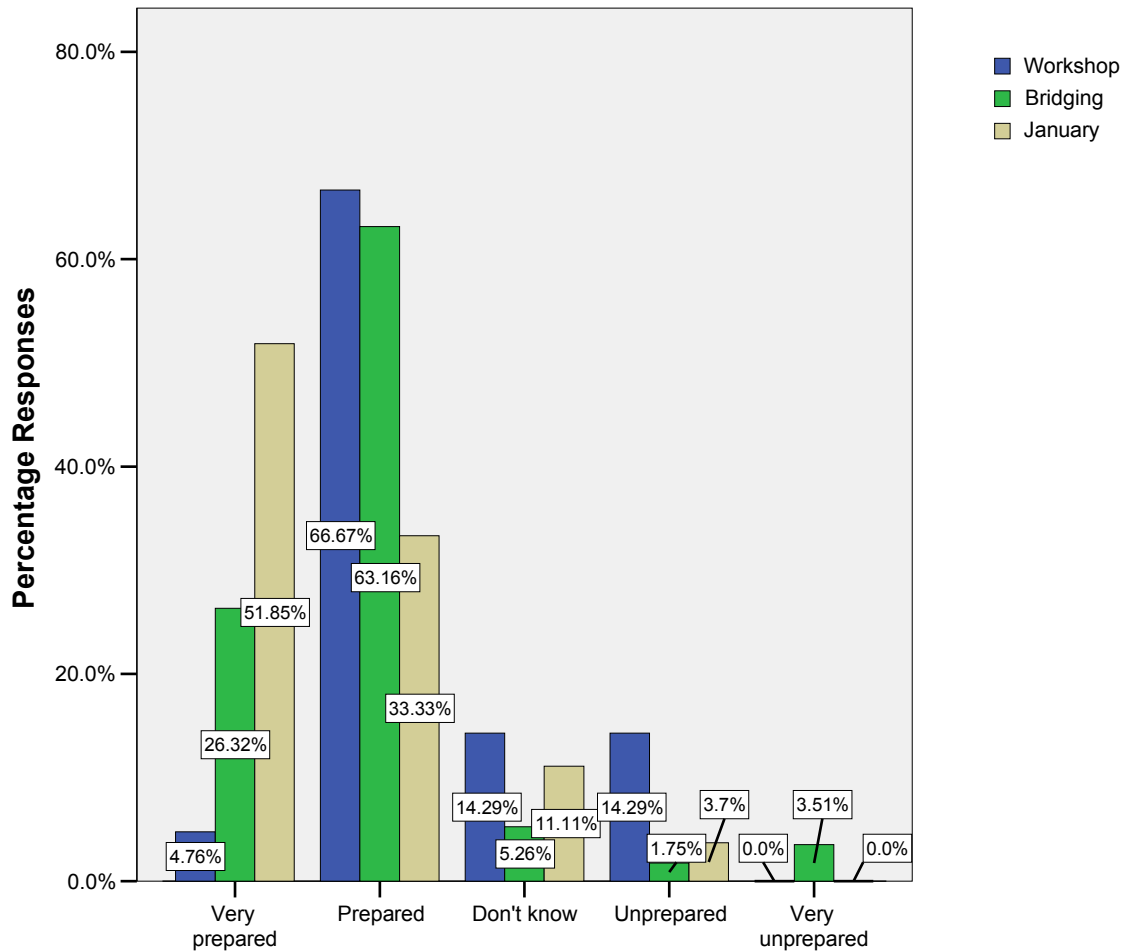


55. As shown in figure 6 the pattern of responses for question 6 has similarities between the survey stages but with significant exceptions. Most respondents felt prepared or very prepared to write a degree-level coursework with the highest figure of more than 52% at the workshops. The pattern of responses for the bridging and the workshops were roughly the same, however the pattern at January was different. Only 37% in January felt that they had been prepared and 22% did not know, on the other hand, 18.5% felt that they had been very prepared although the same proportion of respondents felt that they had been very unprepared.

56. To test these observed differences a Kurksal Wallis k independent samples test was carried out on the data to test for significant differences in the responses at the three transitions points for question six. The result was not significant at the 5% level.

Question 7: Degree students will be given deadlines for handing in coursework and work submitted late will lose marks. How well prepared are you to work to deadlines?

Figure 7: Cluster bar chart of percentage responses for the three transition points for question 7.



57. Figure 7 illustrates the patterns of responses for the three transition points for question 7. There are marked differences between the response patterns at each point. 51.8% of the respondents in January felt with hindsight that they had been very prepared to meet deadlines, with 33% reporting that they had been prepared. Although nearly 67% in the workshops felt prepared to work to deadlines, 14.3% did not know if they would be prepared and the same percentage felt unprepared.

58. To analyse these differences further, a Kurksal- Wallis k independent samples test was carried out on the data. This test was significant at the 5% level. Post hoc Mann-Whitney independent samples tests were carried out and as with question 5 the results indicated a significant difference in response patterns between the workshops and January plus a significant response pattern between bridging and January. However, there was no significant difference in the response pattern at the workshops and bridging.

Semi-structured interviews.

Table 1: Results of content analysis of semi-structured interviews with Abertay direct entrants.

Category:	Frequency of mention:
Information from university about course content was limited.	3
Aware of differences between college and university study and assessment.	2
Limited info about university from college.	3
Not enough information about degree level essays and exams	4
Did know what to expect at university.	2
Should have had more information about details about reading lists.	2
Would have liked to have known earlier about timetables.	4
Felt there was a mismatch between HN course and degree course.	2
There should be more cooperation between colleges and university in the transition process.	2
More information about the study culture and workload should be given at induction.	2
Reported initial problems with researching courseworks.	2
Induction was not helpful for gaining information about course being studied.	2
Reported continuing problems with independent learning.	2
Struggled with difference in teaching methods.	3

59. The main supportive event in transition from HN to degree offered to FE direct entrants onto courses at Abertay University is the bridging programme, which normally takes place in the week prior to induction week. Attendance on the programme is voluntary and includes study skills sessions on writing coursework, time management, research practice and taking notes from lectures and books. The students also receive orientation sessions from the library about the library facilities and sessions with I.T. trainers inform the students about what I.T. facilities and software are available to them. Students can make their personal selection from up to three full day's worth of sessions, with repeat sessions available.

60. Table 1 displays a content analysis of the notes taken from comments made by the seven direct entrants. The information in the table represents the frequency of recurring categories or themes students mentioned while answering the questions in the semi-structured interviews. As the table indicates, several students commented of the differences in teaching and learning which is always mentioned in the literature as a problem for direct entrants.
61. Interviewees mentioned lack of knowledge of academic coursework writing and assessment, another theme covered by higher education journals. Three interviewees felt that they had not had enough information about the content of degree courses they were about to embark upon, an issue relatively poorly covered in the research literature. Other information that students felt they needed included timetables before the start of the term, reading lists from the modules they were about to study and reading lists for modules in the previous year(s) of the degree that their HN course had shadowed. The early issue of timetables would have been very beneficial to students who had to organise childcare or who had to commit to working hours in part-time jobs.
62. Two other general themes that emerged from these interviews are extensively covered in the literature: the lack of institutional coordination between colleges and universities and the course induction process. Students saw the latter as being uninformative about what they were about to face at university in terms of study culture and course content.

Table 2: Results of content analysis of semi-structured interviews with Adam Smith College students.

Category.	Frequency of mention.
Received adequate information about content of degree course before start.	5
Adequately informed about difference in teaching style and learning culture between HN and degree.	5
Felt prepared for degree course after induction.	5
Informed about the gap between HN and degree level at Summer school/induction.	4
Induction/summer school did not prepare students for the size of gap between HN and Degree level.	3
Need for smoother transition of teaching and assessment between HN and degree level.	3
Not enough information about Harvard referencing in induction sessions.	3
Not adequately informed about time pressures that degree study would entail.	3
Would liked to have attended the summer school but could not enrol through lack of early information about dates.	2
Felt prepared after induction for degree but still a bit apprehensive.	2
Hampered in studying and using intranet-based research resources by early delays.	2
Induction sessions did not give enough information about how to do oral presentations.	2
Transition sessions came after the specific study skill they were meant to support.	2

63. Adam Smith College has support systems in place for students progressing from HN to degree-level study, including a summer school and an extended transition period. The summer school is normally held in August and is open to all students who have signed up for a degree programme for that session. It comprises two main sections. The first section involves sessions in study skills, research and project work, assessment techniques general to all subject areas plus information about what a degree experience in the college entails. The second section deals with course or subject specific information reflecting the content of the student's chosen degree programme.

64. Instead of having a traditional stand-alone induction week the college has adopted a 'bite-size' approach, with transition topics delivered in stages at times in the academic year best suited to the needs of students, such as expectations

of studying for a degree, which is covered in week one. There is also an introduction to the library and learning resources available to students. This week also offers students a chance to formulate a plan of action to enhance their skills in I.T. and research. Further transition events take place at points throughout the degree course during non-teaching periods to provide additional support just as it is needed; for example, study and research tuition is provided prior to coursework or projects as well as the provision of examination technique before exams.

65. Eight students from Adam Smith College participated in semi-structured interviews in which they were asked questions similar to those asked to the Abertay students. Content analysis undertaken on the interviews identified common themes or issues prompted by the questions; the frequency of themes is presented in table 2. A majority of the interviewees mentioned that they had received adequate or more than adequate information about the content of their degree course from the induction and summer school. One student said this information was detailed enough to help her decide to study the degree. Five out of the eight interviewees felt that they received adequate information about the difference between teaching styles on HN and degree courses from the support activities. Four of the students reported that they were pre-warned about the gap or difference in learning cultures between HN and degree.
66. According to the research literature, culture shock arising from differences between the two learning styles causes the most problems for HN students changing institution to progress to degree-level study. Three of the interviewees thought that the summer school and the initial induction week did not prepare them enough for the gap between the two learning regimes. One student likened the culture shock of moving from an HN course to a degree course to “having your umbilical cord cut”. That lends credence to the college’s incorporation in term one of ‘bite-size’ induction support. Three of the students thought that the transition between HN and degree level could be made smoother through adjustments towards the close of the HN course, such as firmer adherence to deadlines and the introduction of formal Harvard referencing. Two students would have liked more advice on time management advice as they felt under constant time pressure studying for the degree.
67. The research literature mentions the difficulties direct entrants have with degree-level assessment; both sets of students interviewed encountered that problem. The Adam Smith students seemed on the whole happy that they received enough information on how to do a degree level coursework, although two students thought that not enough was done at induction to prepare them for oral presentations.
68. The importance of providing students with an effective broad-ranging induction is demonstrated by two students who reported early difficulties in accessing online research materials. As a result, one so used to acquiring information for assessment from alternative sources that he never used Abertay’s intranet resources.

J Discussion.

General issues.

69. Preliminary analysis of the questionnaire data explored whether there were significant sub-groups within the survey population that faced particular difficulties. Main factors considered included college attended, gender, age group, ethnicity and disability. No significant groupings could be found. Checks were also made on whether participants had used the questionnaire as intended. No respondent made the same response to all the questions, which might have suggested that a convenient rather than thoughtful approach had been taken. Respondents also changed their answers at each stage: for example, all participants at stage 3 who had completed a questionnaire at stage 2 changed at least one of their responses and some changed as many as six.
70. An issue arose during the analysis of the stage 3 data regarding participants' use of the 'don't know' option in the questionnaire. Students were asked to reflect at that stage on the basis of their experiences on their first term. Given that they had experiences on which to reflect, it seems more likely that respondents were using that as the middle option on the Likert scale, akin to reporting that their experience had been moderate – no serious problems to report but equally no great success story.

Question 1.

71. One of the major cultural differences between HN and degree courses noted in the literature is that students have problems shifting their work from the more directed learning environment of HN courses to the independent learning culture common to degree courses. In question one on the questionnaire, respondents were informed of the difference between the level of help that they could receive on HN courses and the level of help typically available on degree courses from tutors. They were then asked how well prepared they would be to work on their own. The results indicated that at each of the transition points students felt prepared to work on their own; some even felt very prepared. A number at the workshops and in the pre-induction period did not know if they were prepared. Few felt unprepared to study on their own, with no-one in the pre-induction period
72. The responses from students in January were the most distinctive with about 15% feeling very prepared, more than 70% feeling prepared, none reporting not knowing and more than 10% feeling unprepared. The latter statistic is interesting since it supports statements made in the semi-structured interviews when students commented that they still had problems with the independent learning environment of degree courses. There might be students who miss preparatory workshops and bridging activities who would benefit from a supportive event that took place during the first term or even at the beginning of the second term.

Question 2.

73. There should perhaps be little surprise at the pattern of responses to question 2, which asked students about how well prepared they were to set aside their personal time for additional work, again alluding to the increased emphasis on independent study at degree level. The population group of HN students considering degree-level study are among the most capable and committed. By the pre-induction period, they would have received their HN qualification and already be relatively highly qualified: the increased confidence in time management skills suggested by the fall in numbers at stage 2 responding that they did not know how prepared they would be or feeling unprepared or very unprepared supports that argument. Most would already have had to have developed successful time management skills to have been able to achieve those academic successes. The message to draw from the small minority of students who reported before the start of the degree course that they were unprepared or very unprepared to set time aside each week for independent study is perhaps more that they doubted their ability to set aside enough time each week as they braced themselves for a more demanding course.
74. The response to the question in January, with the benefit of hindsight, adds credence to that interpretation. The majority of students' experience was that they were adequately prepared for greater independent study: they knew what was expected of them and they had the skills to meet those expectations. Teaching and support staff can acknowledge that for most HN students, time management and independent study issues are not serious concerns or problems. Reassurance should be given to students during an extended bridging period to boost students' self-confidence. Consideration should be given to the slightly more than 10% of respondents in January who felt that they had been unprepared, perhaps through offers of individualised support to help them address their personal work-study-private life balance.

Question 3.

75. The third question in the questionnaire presented the respondents with a statement about the nature of teaching at degree level being about the basics of the topic area, with students responsible for learning about the subject in more depth. The respondents were then asked to state their preparedness to learn that way. The results of the analysis of the question indicated that a majority of students at each of the survey stages felt prepared to study their subject in greater detail, with the respondents at the workshops feeling the most prepared. Nearly 15% of the students in the workshops and 20% of students at the pre-induction stage did not know if they would be prepared to do this, which suggests that the concept of independent research might be unfamiliar to some of them. The literature supports the possibility that HN students are not always primed or well enough prepared for degree level study.
76. Respondents at the January survey stage mostly felt with hindsight that they had been either prepared or very prepared for that style of independent of study. The students were able to adjust from the less research-orientated environment of HN courses to the more research-intensive culture of a degree course. However, about 10% of students in January expressed the view that they had been either unprepared or very unprepared to do further research on their own. That finding tallies with comments made by students in the semi-structured interviews, who reported initial difficulties with researching a coursework. Other students in interviews expressed the view that they did not get enough information about how to write degree-level essays before they started a degree-level course. For many degree courses, the essay is one of the main forms of assessment. A major difference between HN-level coursework and coursework at degree level is the volume of independent research required for the latter. It might be that inadequate research skills continued to cause students problems into the second semester.

Question 4.

77. Curriculum mismatch between HN and degree courses is a significant issue for students and institutions alike and an area in which articulation agreements and dialogue between teaching staff have had limited success in alleviating. The increasing complexity of inter-institutional collaborations and the concomitant growth in course articulation routes might make the problem only more intractable. With hindsight in January, slightly more than a third of students reported that they had not been prepared to cover material that they might have missed by articulating direct into stages 2 or 3 of the degree course. Interestingly, confidence levels on this issue, which would seem to rise for many students as they approach the start of the course, fell back once term had started. Almost a fifth reported being unprepared or very unprepared for the work they needed to do to fill in gaps in their knowledge.
78. Students' expectations of how well the content of their HN course will prepare them to progress to a degree course, especially for direct entry, are largely realistic. As capable students of proven abilities, many are content that they will be able to face the challenges presented by their new course. Teaching staff can help by continuing to ensure that students are made aware of potential problems that could arise from curriculum mismatch from towards the end of their HN course and given reassurances that their proven educational achievements demonstrate that they are capable of addressing those problems.
79. Degree providers, however, could do much more to assist students to identify shortfalls in their knowledge by making much more detailed information readily available to students. The information already exists within institutions, frequently packaged neatly as module descriptors. Institutions should move from considering descriptors as quality assurance documents, primarily a product produced by teaching staff to satisfy audit demands, and realise their potential for helping students to guide their studies responsibly and to help themselves address potential problems pro-actively.
80. The Robert Gordon University provides a good example of how that can be done: course descriptions on the online prospectus provide links to module descriptors, either directly or indirectly via a (less user friendly) database. As at most institutions, RGU descriptors provide information on main module aims, content, student workload and include a basic reading list. The terminology used is standard across the sector but could be revised to make it more easily understood to students who might not be so well versed in academic obtuse. 'Indicative content' could be 'what you will study'; 'learning outcomes' could become 'what you will learn'. Nonetheless, RGU sets a standard other institutions receiving direct entrants, arguably any entrants, would do well to follow.

Question 5.

81. The volume of work involved on a degree course – not just its difficulty – is a concern to HN students as they prepare to progress to their new course. The statistical analysis shows a significant shift in students' perceptions of their preparedness on the issue, however. Whereas little more than one third felt themselves to be prepared when questioned at the time of the spring workshops, more than half felt either prepared or very prepared by pre-induction. With hindsight in January, more than two-fifths of students felt that had been prepared or very prepared to cope with their new workload.
82. Again, the responses suggest the maturity and capacity of HN students to move successfully to degree level work. Their own abilities, with support to boost confidence and help them realise their potential successfully, are sufficient to see them thrive in a degree environment.

Question 6.

83. Coursework writing at degree level is a serious concern for students before they start their degree course. Confidence grows slightly as students complete their HNQ, but still almost a third entered the pre-induction period not knowing how well prepared they might be and with more than 10% feeling very unprepared. With hindsight in January, only about half of respondents felt that they had been prepared or very prepared to write at degree-level standards. That more than a fifth still felt unsure how well prepared they had been possibly reflects the timing of the questionnaire before semester 1 results had been issued.
84. The trend across the three stages suggests that students would benefit from more reassurance and assistance in developing degree-standard research, analysis and writing skills in the final months of their HN studies as practice and preparation for studying at degree level. While already prominent in many bridging programmes, consideration could be given to ways in which extra support could be given to supporting students' development of their research and writing skills, both in the immediate induction period and through the first semester.

Question 7.

85. On a final aspect of time management – working to fixed deadlines – students expressed confidence in their abilities throughout the research period, confidence that grew as students progressed. By January, more than half of respondents felt that they had been very prepared to meet deadlines.
86. Reading that result with the others on time management-related questions, institutions can have confidence in their students' organisational skills. As stated previously, these students are successful and have progressed reasonably far already through the formal education system. For them, organisational skills are relatively low-order issues by the end of their HN courses: when given the challenge of firm deadlines, they can meet them. Support on time management can safely be given a lower priority for direct entrants, unlike, say, for school leavers. Only for a minority will additional support be beneficial, most probably because of a combination of difficult personal circumstances, such as the balancing of family and work responsibilities with study.

K Conclusions.

87. The major aim of the study was to evaluate changes in HN students' perceptions of their individual preparedness for the move to a degree level course. Results from the questionnaire research were intended to provide a snapshot of how well prepared students felt they were at key points in their transition on to a degree-level programme. In that regard, the study had three major objectives. The first objective was to assess the cumulative advantages of participation in multiple pre-entry programmes. The second objective was to assess the significance of the timing of pre-entry activities. The third objective was to compare the findings of the study with those of equivalent projects. The research tools used to investigate the research question were Likert-style questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.
88. Poor attendance at the spring workshops had been an anticipated risk to the project, hence the early decision in the planning stage to move away from a tracking study and to attempt instead to take 'snap shots' of HN students' attitudes towards degree-level study. Care should be taken in interpreting the data, especially in reading across the three survey stages. Nevertheless, the series of questionnaires has provided useful information about how well prepared students feel they are for specific aspects of their studies as they move through the transition process.
89. Although the results indicated that students questioned at the workshops and in the pre-induction period generally felt buoyant and adequately prepared in anticipation of starting their degree course, there were issues that some respondents felt unprepared for or did not know whether they were prepared for, such as covering material missed in previous stages of the degree course, coping with the number of assessments they would face or researching and writing at degree level. From that, arguments can be inferred in favour of holding events towards the close of HN courses – though not necessarily workshops – to raise students' awareness of such potential impediments to success in degree-level study, giving them time to take action to prepare themselves better and giving staff time to provide follow-up support.
90. The questionnaire research also suggests that there might be a need to provide extra supportive events later in the transition cycle for students who missed the bridging programme or for students who continue to have problems with degree level learning. For each of the questions, there was a group of about 10% to 15% of students who, with hindsight, felt that they had been unprepared for degree-level study. In particular, a small minority of students continued to struggle in January with independent learning, covering material missed from earlier stages of the degree course and the workload of assessments.
91. The semi-structured interviews attempted to ascertain what information students felt that they had missed and felt would have made them more prepared for starting a degree programme. The type of additional information that students thought that they required appeared to be a mixture of bureaucratic information and greater knowledge of the learning environment, workload, course content and assessment. Those findings partly support the findings of the questionnaire research in that it was not only that differences in the type of study environment

that caused problems for students but also that information about the degree course that they were embarking upon was needed before they started so that they could better prepare themselves for study.

92. The research did go some way in addressing the first objective, then: students accessing greater advice and information prior to progressing to degree-level study would appear to gain an advantage.
93. With regard to the second objective, information from the research also gave some information about the timings of supportive events for students in the transition. From the findings, it would seem that a small but still significant group of students could be expected to require additional support through their first semester. Pre-induction bridging serves a useful purpose but should be considered just one mid-way step in an on-going transition process. Given the nature of students' concerns, they need sufficient time if they are to be able to address them effectively, especially to make good curriculum mismatches between their HN and degree courses. Early action should be taken to alert HN students to issues that they might benefit from addressing before they start their degree. Targeting them towards the close of their HN course, as the spring workshops did, makes practical sense, then, even if the mode of delivery should be reviewed to offer students a more attractive means of accessing the information.
94. The third objective of this research was to compare the findings of the present research with equivalent studies. Relatively few studies in the research literature deal with HN to degree articulation rather than simply college to university transfer. Previous studies have highlighted differences in the teaching and assessment regimes between HN and degree courses and commented that those differences were stumbling blocks for direct entrants. The current study found evidence of such differences, especially regarding students' preparation for greater independent learning and for working at degree-level standards when completing coursework. Semi-structured interviews undertaken to support the questionnaire research showed up problems students faced starting their degree course because of a lack of information about the course they were joining. While other studies have touched on similar issues, students' emphasis in the current study, especially regarding curriculum mismatch, was interesting.

L Appendices.

HN to degree tracking questionnaire [used in stages 1 and 2].

The purpose of this research is to track students through four important stages in their transition from an HNC/HND to a degree course. The research is attempting to find out whether there are stages during the transition when students feel they are less well prepared for degree-level study. The word 'prepared' is used in the questionnaire in the sense of 'able' rather than 'willing'.

We are asking for your name and address because we want to ask you more questions later in the year to see whether your feelings about moving on to a degree change at all and we need a way of staying in touch with you. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 no personal details of participants who fill in this questionnaire will be divulged to a third party or used for any other purpose than this research.

Part 1: about you.

Name: _____ **Full Address:** _____

Gender: Male / Female (please circle) _____

Age on 1 September 2005: _____

Post Code: _____

College: _____

School Attended: _____

Ethnic origin: Please tick

11	White – British		12	White – Irish	
13	White – Scottish		19	Other White background	
21	Black or Black British – Caribbean		22	Black or Black British – African	
29	Other Black background		31	Asian or Asian British – Indian	
32	Asian or Asian British – Pakistani		33	Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	
34	Chinese		39	Other Asian background	
41	Mixed White and Black Caribbean		42	Mixed White and Black African	
43	Mixed White and Asian		49	Other Mixed background	
80	Other Ethnic background – please state what:		98	Not known	
				Decline to provide information	

Do you have a disability that affects your ability to study?

Yes

No

Part 2: your education

Did you come to college from (please tick one):

School FE Swap course Other

Are you studying (please tick one):

Part-time Full-time

Will you be the first in your family to study for a degree? Y / N (please circle)

Part 3

Independent learning. This section asks questions about how well prepared you are to work more on your own at degree level. Please read each statement and answer the associated question.

1) Degree students generally receive less help from tutors than at HNC and HND level.

How well prepared are you to work on your own?

Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very unprepared

2) For every hour in class, degree students are expected to spend much more time studying on their own.

How well prepared are you to set time aside each week to study?

Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

3) At degree level, students are taught the basics of a subject; learning about the subject in more depth is the students' own responsibility.

How well prepared are you to take responsibility for your own learning in this way? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

4). Tutors teaching in the second or third year of a degree level course may refer to work covered in a previous year you did not cover at HNC and HND level.

How well prepared are you to cover material you might have missed from the first or second year of your degree course? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

Part 4

Assessment at degree level usually involves coursework and end-of-term exams. This section asks questions about how prepared you are to face degree level assessment. Please read each statement and answer the associated question.

5) Assessment at degree level usually involves coursework and exams.

How well prepared are you for the number of exams and courseworks you may face? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

6) Written coursework, such as essays and reports, are more detailed and require more research and analysis of a topic (rather than just description) at degree level than at HNC and HND level.

How well prepared are you to write like this? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

7) Degree students will be given deadlines for handing in coursework and work submitted late will lose marks.

How well prepared are you to work to deadlines? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

Questionnaire used in stage 3

Part 3

Independent learning. This section asks questions about how well prepared you have been to work more on your own at degree level. Please read each statement and answer the associated question.

1) Degree students generally receive less help from tutors than at HNC and HND level.

How well prepared have you been to work on your own?

Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

2) For every hour in class, degree students are expected to spend much more time studying on their own.

How well prepared have you been to set time aside each week to study?

Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

3) At degree level, students are taught the basics of a subject; learning about the subject in more depth is the students' own responsibility.

How well prepared have you been you to take responsibility for your own learning in this way? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

4). Tutors teaching in the second or third year of a degree level course may refer to work covered in a previous year you did not cover at HNC and HND level.

How well prepared have you been to cover material you might have missed from the first or second year of your degree course? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

Part 4

Assessment at degree level usually involves coursework and end-of-term exams. This section asks questions about how prepared you have been to face degree level assessment. Please read each statement and answer the associated question.

5) Assessment at degree level usually involves coursework and exams.

How well prepared have you been for the number of exams and courseworks you may face? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

6) Written coursework, such as essays and reports, are more detailed and require more research and analysis of a topic (rather than just description) at degree level than at HNC and HND level.

How well prepared have you been to write like this? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

7) Degree students will be given deadlines for handing in coursework and work submitted late will lose marks.

How well prepared have you been to work to deadlines? Please tick one of the boxes below.

Very Prepared Prepared Don't Know Unprepared Very Unprepared

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