



# MMU Foundation Year

## Attendance Management

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Foundation Year Network Event 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007



Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University

# Attendance Management

- The Manchester Metropolitan University Foundation Year
- Attendance Monitoring
  - Why do we do it?
  - How do we do it?
  - What is the effect?
- Attendance Research Project
  - Methodology
  - Results
- Open Discussion



# MMU Foundation Year

- Originated in 2001 as a HEFCE Widening Participation Special Project
- Students enrol onto a Year Zero programme tailored to allow them to progress onto a named linked degree
- Links to 139 degrees plus Combined Honours, across seven faculties
- Delivered in 2006/07 at three centres: MMU, MMU Cheshire and MANCAT



# MMU Foundation Year

- Grown from 240 students in 2000 to 817 in 2006 (almost all full time)
- In 2004/2005
  - 97% of students came from state schools
  - 45% came from socio-economic groups 4,5,6 or 7
  - 22% came from low participation neighbourhoods
  - 30-40% higher numbers of students from ethnic minority back grounds as compared to Year 1 entrants to the same degrees
- Progression to link degree rose from 49% in 2000 to 71% in 2006



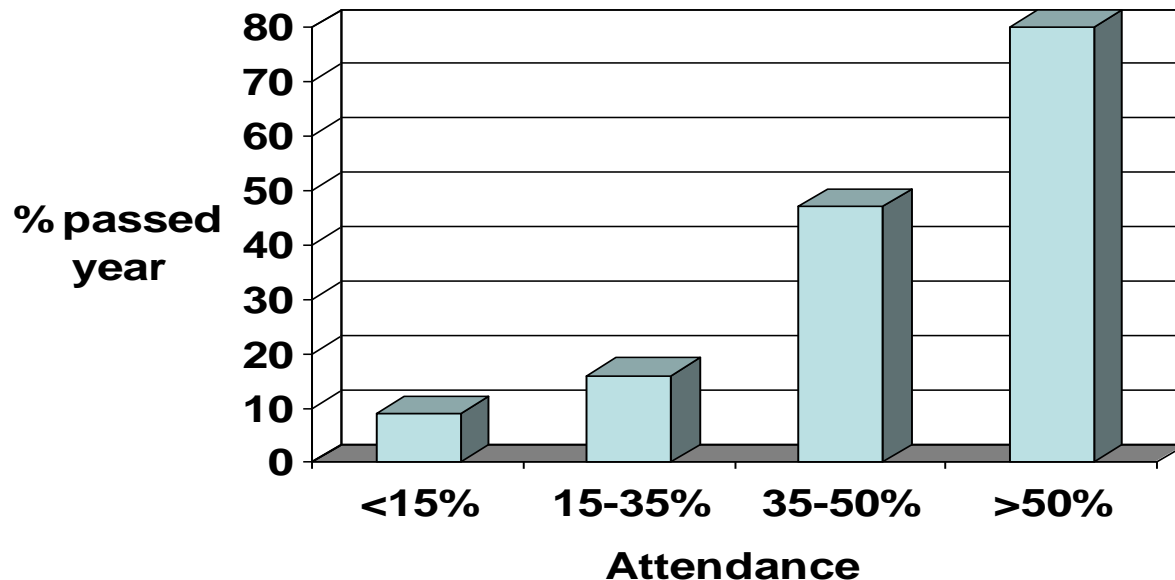
# Attendance Monitoring – Why do we do it?

- Part of Programme’s “Student Success Strategy”
- A measure of student motivation and engagement
- Enables identification of (and thus potentially an opportunity to intervene)
  - students with difficulties – academic and/or personal
  - programme structural issues



# Attendance monitoring – Why do we do it?

- Link between attendance (April) and success



# Attendance Monitoring – How do we do it?

- Data collection
  - Register submitted for each unit each week
  - Entered onto a central database
- Intervention protocol
  - Two main survey dates – Oct/Nov and January
  - Nature of intervention varies depending upon the general level of attendance
    - Less than 15% - withdrawal warning letter
    - 15 – 35% - called in for interview
    - 35 – 50% - “danger of failing” warning letter
    - Also pick up, and write to, students with poor attendance in just one unit



# Attendance Monitoring – Effect of interventions

- Intervention has a positive effect amongst the poorest attending students:
  - In the <15% group
    - More students suspend voluntarily
    - Pass rates improve from 9% to 15%
  - Tracking of individual students in 15-35% group shows:
    - 40% improve their attendance
    - Pass rates improve from 16% to 34%

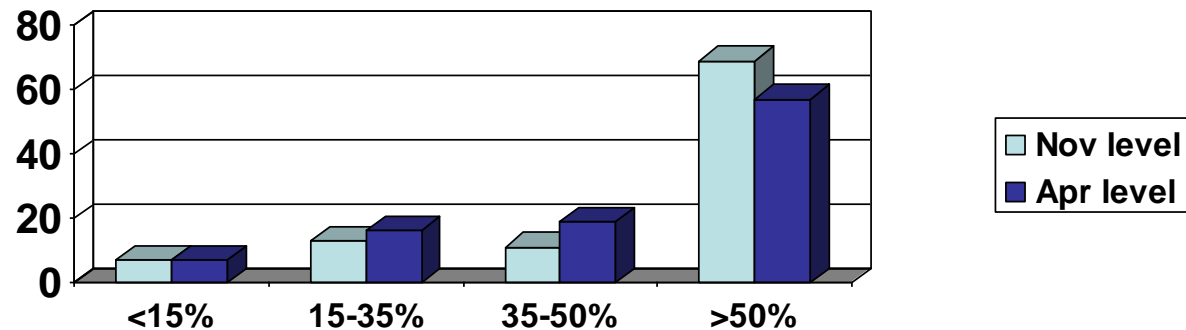




# Attendance Monitoring – Effect of interventions

- **But** - despite intervention, attendance levels for the cohort as a whole actually decline from November to April

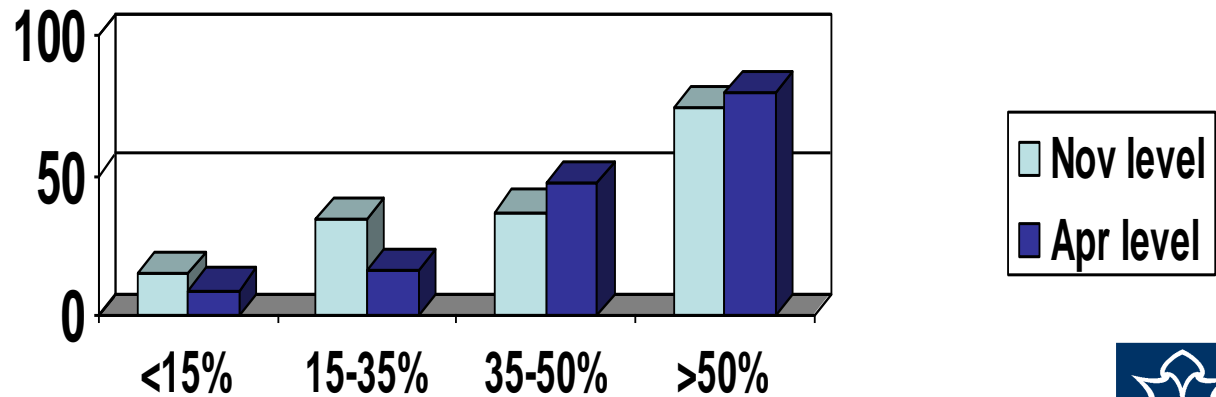
Percentage of students in each attendance group in November and April



# Attendance Monitoring – Effect of interventions

- **Even so** – the likelihood of success of students found in the higher attending groups increases!

Percentage of students passing FY in each attendance group in November and April



# Attendance Research Project

- Aim
  - Investigate the underlying reasons for poor attendance
  - Identify any pre-determined risk factors
  - Inform student support strategies

# Attendance Research Project - Methodology

- Target groups
  - Whole student cohort (677)
  - Students with 15 – 35% attendance on 14/11/05 (87)
  - Students with <15% attendance on 14/11/05 (40)
  - Also looked at the effect of age and whether students were still living at home



# Attendance Research Project - Methodology

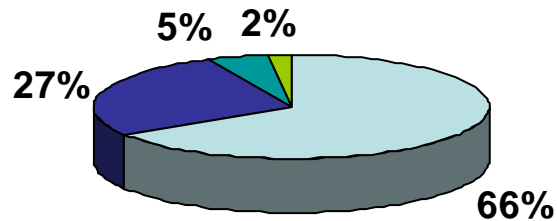
- Data Collection
  - Whole student cohort questionnaire
    - Completed in core unit October 2005
    - 246 responses (36% of cohort)
  - Attendance interview questionnaire
    - Completed in interviews with students exhibiting 15 – 35% attendance
    - Sections completed by both students and interviewers
    - 35 responses (50% of interview attendees)
  - Very low attendee questionnaire
    - Sent to students with an attendance <15%
    - None responded
  - Programme management databases
    - Attendance
    - Assessment



# Attendance Research Project - Findings

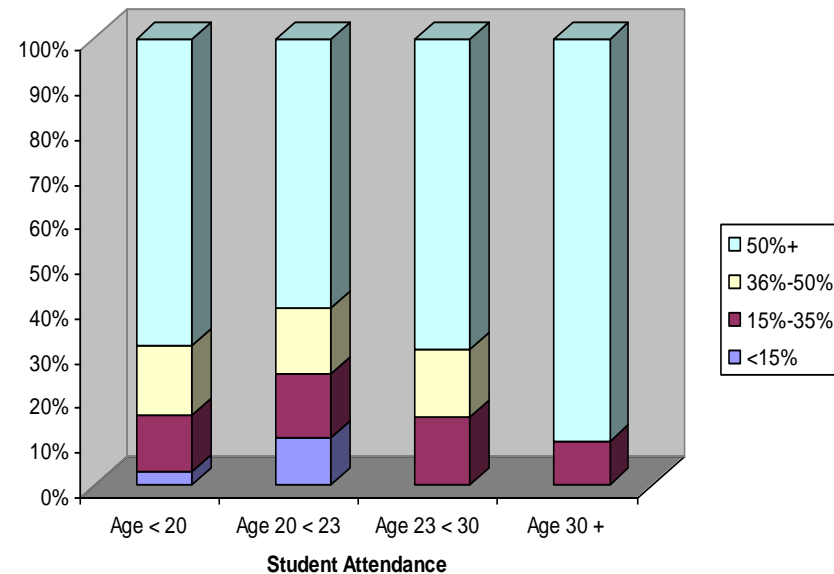
- Does age affect attendance?

## Age Distribution



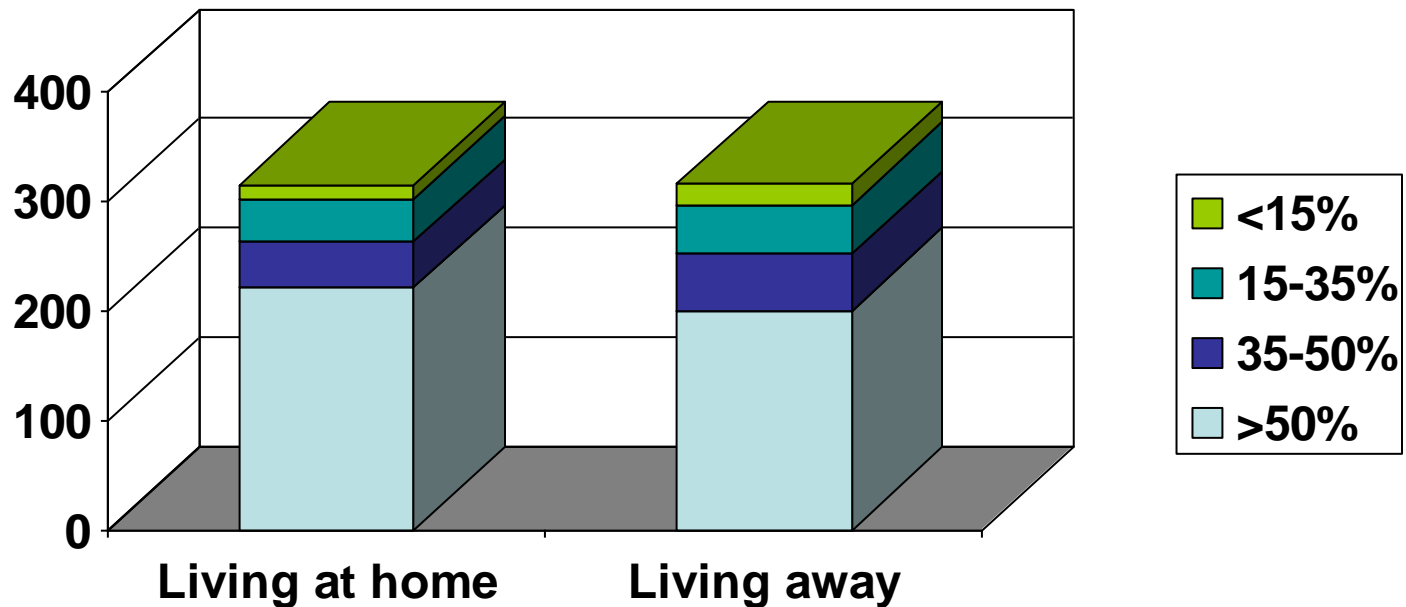
■ <20 ■ 20<23 ■ 23<30 ■ 30+

## Does Age Affect Attendance?

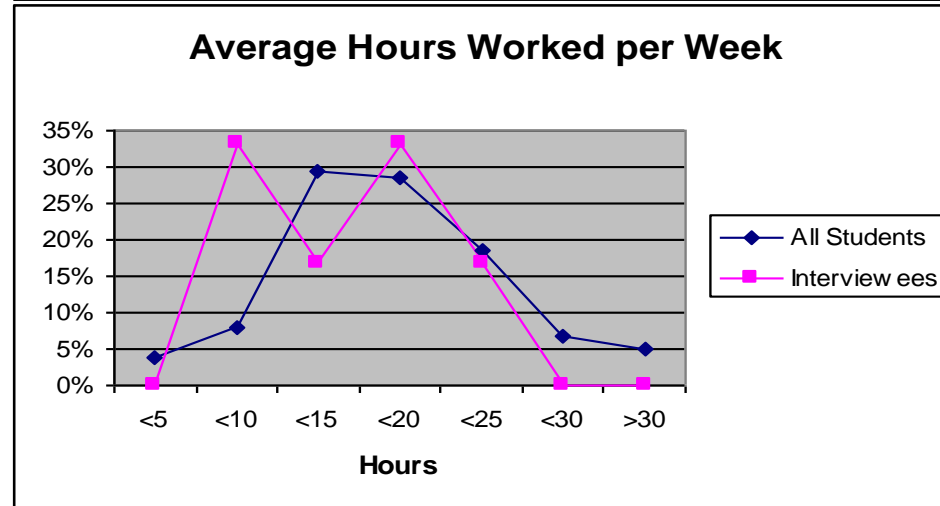
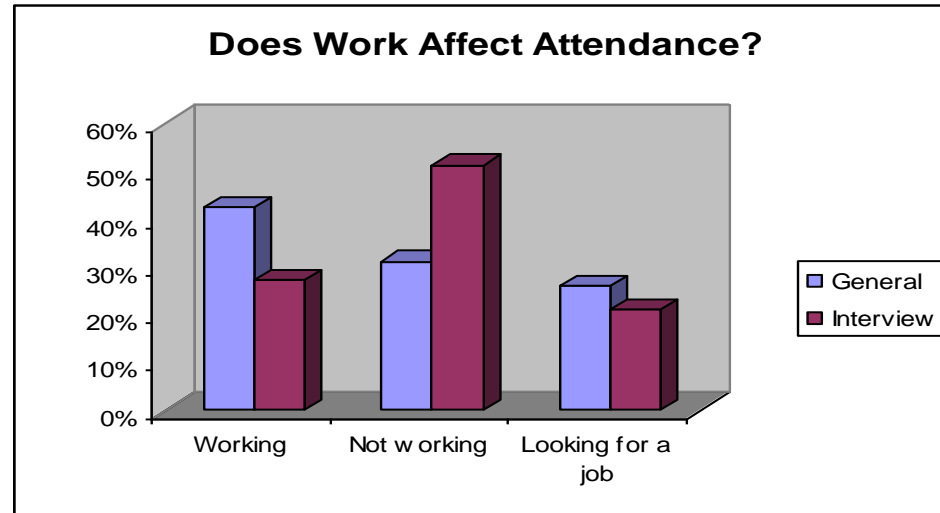


# Attendance Research Project - Findings

- Does living at / away from home make a difference?



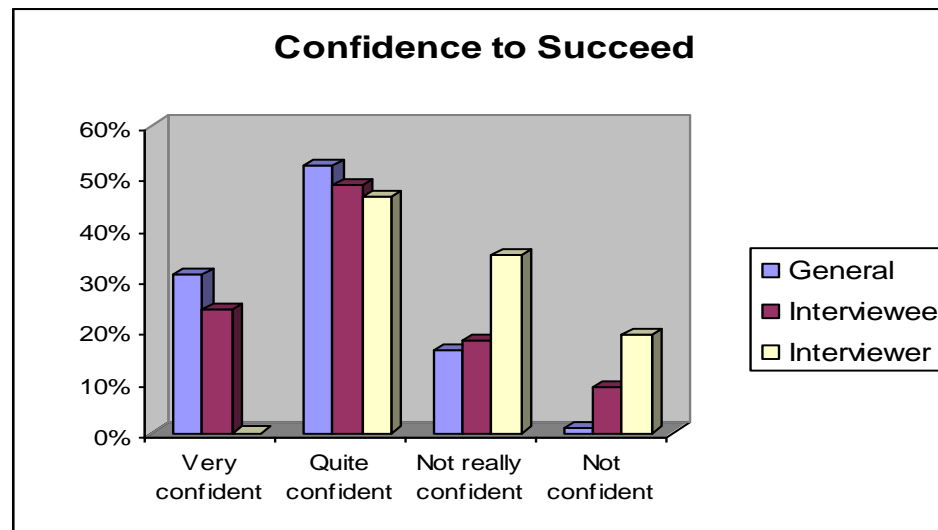
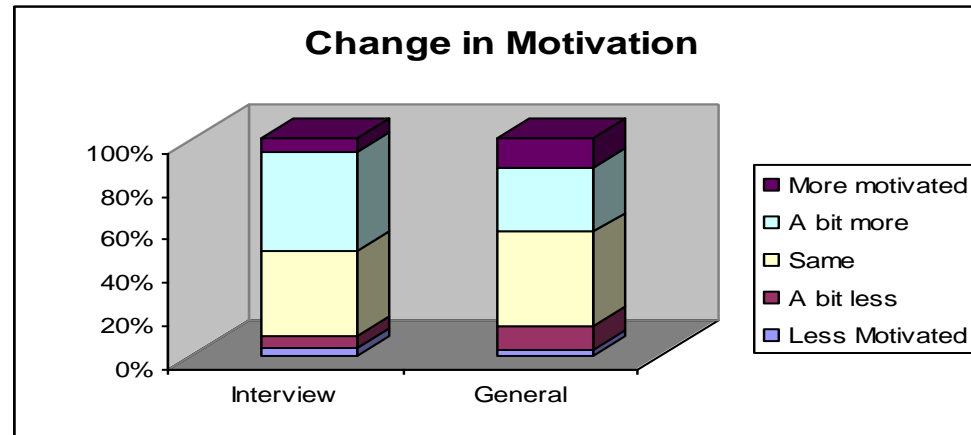
# Attendance Research Project - Employment



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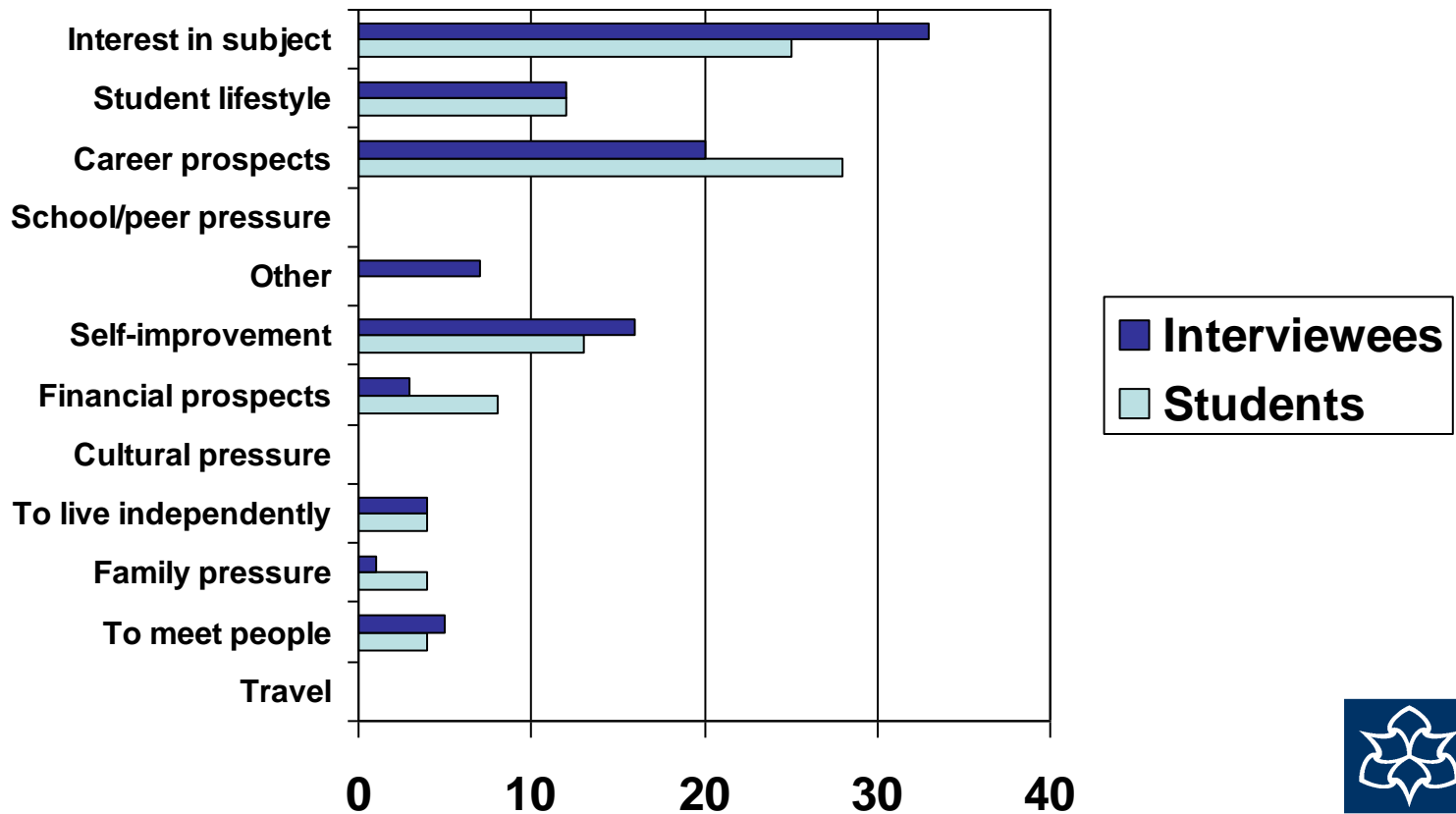


# Attendance Research Project – Motivation and Confidence



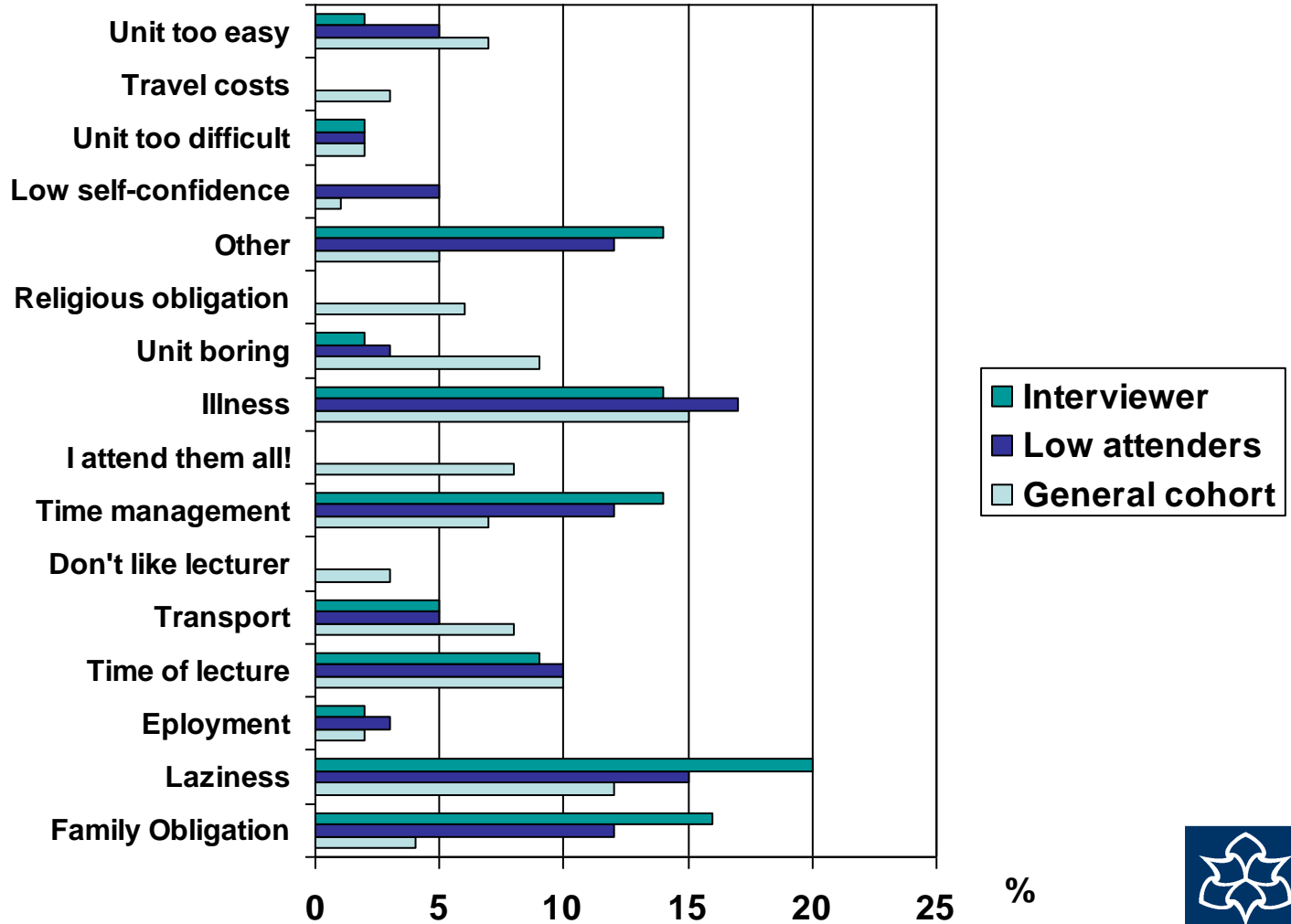
# Attendance Research Project – Motivation

Why did students come to University?



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# Reasons for Poor Attendance



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# Attendance Research Project

- Suggestions by students to improve attendance
  - “No early lectures / more afternoon classes”
  - “Avoid timetable gaps” / “Timetable classes over only 3 days”
  - “Make classes more interesting/fun”



# Where do we go next with Attendance Management?

- Are we aiming our limited resources at the wrong group of students?
- Should we concentrate more on keeping the good attendees attending?
- To what extent can we influence the main causes of poor attendance?
- What do you do? Why do you do it?

