

# **Student Withdrawal from The University of Edinburgh, 2003/4**

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27<sup>th</sup> May 2005

# Executive Summary

## 1. Introduction

The University of Edinburgh has always had high retention but for those students who do withdraw it can be a disappointing and costly outcome. As the University continues to seek to widen access, it is especially important to gain a better understanding of who withdraws and why. In particular, it is important to know whether 'wider access students' (i.e. students from social groups with low-participation in higher education and students entering degree programmes via non-traditional routes) are more likely than others to withdraw and why this might be, to enable the University to develop appropriate interventions to support students who might be at risk. Interventions should improve retention generally and support 'wider access' students to the completion of their degrees, so that they will indeed have had equal access to higher education. Such support should also improve the student experience and further enhance the already good reputation of The University of Edinburgh.

## 2. Methodology

Questionnaires were sent to all Withdrawers from the 2003/4 session. Questions covered a variety of student characteristics; pre-entry decision-making and contact with the University; use of support services; the student experience; why they withdrew; how the University might retain students. A similar questionnaire was sent to a sample of continuing students (Continuers), matched to the Withdrawers in terms of degree programme school and year of study, so that comparisons could be made between characteristics and experiences of Withdrawers and Continuers.

The questionnaires also contained open-ended questions inviting students to give accounts of why they withdrew, suggestions for improving student support and any other comments. A sample of 30 Withdrawers was also interviewed for fuller, deeper accounts of their experiences and of why they withdrew.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Introduction

The total withdrawal rate was 4.2% (N=705): in CHSS, 3.9% (N=392), in CSE 5.8% (N=297) and in CMVM, 0.8% (N=15). There were wide variations between Schools, from 0.6% in Medicine to 8.7% in both Informatics and Divinity. 61% of withdrawals took place in the student's first year of study and 25% in the second year. Throughout this section we refer to the charts and tables that follow on pages VIII to XXIII, and also appear in relevant sections in the main text of this report.

### 3.2. Characteristics of Withdrawers

Withdrawal was 4.7% among males and 3.7% among females. Age does not appear to have been a factor in withdrawal except at the upper end, with 14.9% of Withdrawers in the over 20 age group, but only 9.6% of Continuers

(**Chart 1**). Ethnicity and disability do not appear to have been factors in withdrawal.

The Office for National Statistics Socio-Economic Classifications were used to classify students according to parents' occupation. The vast majority of both Continuers and Withdrawers were from SEC 1 but a higher proportion of Withdrawers (16.2%) than Continuers (13.2%) were from SECs 2-4 (**Chart 2**).

Students from Scotland were more likely to withdraw than students from elsewhere; there were 8.7% more students from Scotland in the Withdrawers group than in the Continuers group (**Chart 3**). Related to this, students with A Levels were less likely to withdraw than students with Highers (**Table 1**). Those with other UK qualifications were the most likely to withdraw. Among the students entering with Highers or A Levels those with entrance qualifications that were lower than the most common minimum were more likely to withdraw (**Chart 4**). Students from independent schools were less likely to be among the Withdrawers than those from Comprehensive schools and students from FE Colleges were over-represented among the withdrawers (**Table 2**). 7% of Withdrawers and 4.5% of Continuers had taken part in activities such as those offered by LEAPS or Access courses.

Withdrawers were slightly more likely (3%) than Continuers to be 'first generation degree students' and less likely again to have two parents/carers with degrees (**Table 3**). They were also less likely to have siblings who went to, or planned to go to, university (**Table 4**).

Most students from both the Withdrawers and the Continuers groups reported that they had supported themselves by more than one source of funding. Withdrawers were 7.5% more likely to report supporting themselves by student loans and 3.7% less likely to report being supported by parents/family. 50.3% of Continuers reported supporting themselves by paid work but only 43.1% of Withdrawers did so (**Table 6**). However, Withdrawers in paid employment were more likely to report working long hours than Continuers did (**Chart 5**).

These findings suggest that students from under-represented social groups and students entering via non-traditional routes were slightly more likely to withdraw than others.

### **3.3. Withdrawal, retention and pre-entry decision-making**

Continuers gave more reasons for deciding to go to university and almost all of the reasons suggested were given by more Continuers than Withdrawers, suggesting that Continuers may have been more strongly pulled towards going to university than Withdrawers (**Table 7**). Continuers gave more reasons than Withdrawers for choosing The University of Edinburgh and significantly more of them ticked options that were based on some knowledge of the University, including recommendations by family/friends (**Table 8**). A higher proportion of students entering through Clearing were in the Withdrawers group (12.7%) than in the Continuers group (4.8%).

The Continuers were more likely to report having had a lot of contact with the University prior to entry than the Withdrawers, such as attending an Open Day, visiting the Department or talking to students from the University (**Table 9**).

### **3.4. Reasons for withdrawal**

#### 3.4.1. Introduction

Withdrawal factors were grouped into six categories: 'Unsatisfactory experience relating to wrong choice'; 'Unsatisfactory experience of academic life relating to programme organisation, teaching and support'; 'Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme'; 'Dissatisfaction with the social environment of the University'; 'Financial and practical problems'; 'Personal problems'.

Most Withdrawers ticked reasons in more than one category and Withdrawers were more likely to tick factors across several categories than those Continuers who had seriously considered leaving (SCL Continuers). Withdrawers were 13.9% more likely than SCL Continuers to tick 'Wrong choice' factors, 13.7% more likely to tick 'Unsatisfactory experience of academic life' factors and 23.8% more likely to tick factors from 'Dissatisfaction with the social environment'. 'Personal reasons' factors were ticked by similar proportions from each group and slightly more (3.3%) of the SCL Continuers ticked factors in the 'Financial and practical problems' category (**Chart 6**).

#### 3.4.3. Unsatisfactory experience relating to wrong choice

71% of Withdrawers ticked one or more factors from this category, and 'Course not what I expected' was ticked by 47.2% of them but only 29.1% of SCL Continuers. Equal proportions from each group ticked 'My commitment to the course was low' (**Table 10**).

The written accounts of why Withdrawers left, and the interview accounts, revealed that many had had little, or inaccurate, knowledge and understanding of what a programme involved before they began it. Some reported that they had been ill informed regarding their programme's content, structure or teaching, by University staff, the Prospectus or Website. Withdrawers who gave 'Wrong choice' reasons for withdrawing were *more* likely to have reported contact with the University or Department than other Withdrawers. The most popular choice from a list of suggestions in the questionnaire for how the University might help students to stay on course was "Provide more (or better) information on what the courses involve". Early provision of good information is important as popular courses within programmes quickly become over-subscribed.

Some students explained that only through experiencing a course of study were they able to recognise that it was inappropriate for them. Some students gave positive accounts of the support they had received at this stage, others clearly felt aggrieved. Good support and advice might help many such

students to transfer to another course and remain at the University. Where this is not appropriate, support and information given at this stage can ensure that the student leaves with a good opinion of the University and is able to continue on a suitable educational/career path.

#### 3.4.3. Unsatisfactory experience of academic life

Factors in this category were ticked by 58.2% of students who withdrew, with “Didn’t like the way the course was organized” ticked by 36.5% of all Withdrawers. 44.7% of SCL Continuers ticked factors in this category (**Table 11**). The written accounts discussed discontentment related to course content, the ways in which programmes were arranged, and teaching methods. Insufficient student/staff contact, impersonal teaching methods and lack of feedback on students’ work were related issues that were frequently mentioned.

Lack of academic or personal support were also referred to in students’ accounts, including lack of advice on alternative courses, insufficient time given by staff to listen to students who encountered difficulties either in the course-work itself or other problems affecting course-work, and lack of timely recognition and intervention when students were struggling. Questionnaire responses showed less satisfaction with approachability of lecturers and tutors, and helpfulness of Directors of Studies among Withdrawers than Continuers (**Table 12**). Withdrawers were more likely than Continuers to agree that most teaching staff were too busy to have time for them and that there was no member of staff they could talk to about problems with the course or other problems that affected their studies (**Table 13**).

A number of students praised the University and its staff for their support and for providing excellent teaching. However, others clearly had major issues with course organisation, teaching and support.

#### 3.4.4. Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme.

Reasons falling into this category were given by 45.8% of Withdrawers. “I didn’t really feel confident” was the second most frequently ticked single factor, ticked by 38.2%, but each of the other factors was ticked by less than 20% (**Table 14**). SCL Continuers were more likely to tick factors in this category. However, the written accounts of why they withdrew suggest that some Withdrawers under-reported factors in this category. 54.8% of students from the College of Science and Engineering did so, but only 38.2% of those from Humanities and Social Sciences.

In the written accounts and interviews, some Withdrawers reported that they had insufficient background knowledge or understanding to cope with some of their courses. Students entering with Highers were more likely than those with A Levels to cite this as a reason for withdrawal but less likely than those with A Levels to report that their course was too difficult (**Chart 7**). 27.6% of Withdrawers from CSE who entered with Highers gave “Insufficient background in some subjects” as a reason for withdrawal (**Chart 8**).

Nearly 30% of Withdrawers ticked “Provide more help with study skills” as a suggestion for improving retention. Over-stretching due to poor organisation of study time or competing demands on time were also a problem for a number of students (**Tables 15 & 16**).

Again, some Withdrawers gave accounts of what they perceived as the inadequacies of the University in helping them to deal with their academic problems. Written and interview accounts demonstrated how personal and social problems led to the development of academic problems, and how the combination of types of factor could result in withdrawal.

#### 3.4.5. Dissatisfaction with the social environment

Reasons in this category were given by 40.6% of Withdrawers but only 16.8% of SCL Continuers. Among Withdrawers, “I didn’t feel that I fitted in at EU” was the fifth most frequently ticked factor (32.5%), ticked by 21.3% more Withdrawers than SCL Continuers (**Table 17**).

Many Withdrawers reported that they had felt uncomfortable in a social environment characterised by divisions of wealth, social class, educational background and nationality. Many referred specifically to a social scene dominated by cliques of wealthy students from English public schools who separated themselves off from other students and maintained a superior attitude creating an intimidating atmosphere that permeated all aspects of life at the University.

Difficulties in getting to know other students were also attributed to the daunting environment of Halls of Residence as well as lecture theatres and tutorials. 32.2% of Withdrawers ticked “Provide more opportunities to meet other students” as a suggestion for improving retention. The interaction between problems with the social environment and difficulties in engaging with, or remaining committed to, a degree programme, were clearly demonstrated in the written accounts of why students withdrew and in the interviews.

#### 3.4.6. Financial and practical problems

Factors in this category were less frequently ticked by Withdrawers than any other, although “Financial difficulties” was the eighth most frequently ticked factor (**Table 18**). Financial problems alone seemed to very rarely result in withdrawal but were usually combined with other factors across the categories.

More Continuers than Withdrawers were in paid employment but they were less likely than the Withdrawers to work more than ten hours per week during term time. The written accounts and interviews revealed that mature students with family commitments were particularly vulnerable to withdrawal because their financial problems affected other family members and tensions between the demands of study, family and paid work could be acute.

Accommodation problems were sometimes related to financial need and some students pointed out that accommodation in Edinburgh, including student accommodation, was relatively expensive.

#### 3.4.7. Personal reasons

Approximately half of all Withdrawers and SCL Continuers ticked factors in this category (**Table 19**). Most descriptions were of combinations of factors in which personal problems (such as homesickness), or strategies for dealing with them, resulted in a loss of momentum in dealing with course-work. Some students clearly felt that if they had received better support from the University they might not have withdrawn.

It is important that academic staff are aware of the impact that personal problems can have on students' academic experiences and deal sensitively with students who are experiencing such problems.

### **3.5. Why do 'wider access students' withdraw?**

Students with characteristics associated with 'wider access' (students from under-represented social groups and those entering via non-traditional routes) were found to be more vulnerable to withdrawal than other students, although this was not very marked. This Section refers to **Charts 9-15**.

Students from lower social classes, first generation degree students, mature students and students entering via non-traditional routes and students from Scotland were all significantly more likely than others to report that they withdrew because of 'Financial and practical problems'. This was most marked among mature students. Withdrawers from lower social classes were also more likely than those in SEC 1 to have had more than ten hours paid employment per week during term time (**Chart 10**).

'First generation degree students' and students from lower social classes were also more likely than others to give reasons in the 'Dissatisfaction with the social environment' category for withdrawing, as were students from Scotland and students from comprehensive schools.

Generally, 'wider access students' were less likely to give reasons for withdrawal from the 'Wrong choice' category. Students entering via non-traditional routes were less likely than others to give reasons from the 'Wrong choice', 'Unsatisfactory experience of academic life' and 'Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme' categories than other Withdrawers. Students from Scotland were more likely than others to give reasons from the 'Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme' category.

### **3.6. Withdrawal, retention and student support**

A number of students suggested that it was a combination of factors rather than one alone that resulted in their withdrawal, and that if timely, appropriate and effective support had been offered to help them with some of these problems they might still be studying at the University. This Section refers to **Table 20**.

3.6.1. Improving information on courses (content, structure, workload and teaching methods) was a popular suggestion, as was the provision of information on the relationship between programmes and career paths.

3.6.2. Improving support given by Directors of Studies was an option selected by 40% of withdrawers and, although a number of Withdrawers singled out their Director of Studies as supportive and helpful, others complained that theirs was: unhelpful; unavailable; unapproachable; ill-informed; unsympathetic. It is important that Directors of Studies are knowledgeable about programmes of study and systems of student support and understand the relationships between social, personal, financial and practical problems and the academic experience.

3.6.3. Improvements in teaching and academic support that were suggested by Withdrawers tended to involve more 'interactive' methods and face-to-face contact between students and staff. Nearly 30% advocated that a certain level of attendance be demanded and 45.5% of Withdrawers had reported that they did not think that they organised their study time well, so monitoring of attendance might be beneficial in the early stages of a degree programme to help students to adjust to more self-directed study. Greater sensitivity and alertness among academic staff to personal problems and their impact might also improve the student experience and reduce withdrawal.

3.6.4. Encouraging more social interaction between students might improve their integration into University life and consequently help them to become more engaged with their academic programmes. 28.9% ticked "Provide more opportunities to meet other students", and number of SCL Continuers revealed the positive impact that getting to know their fellow students had had on their studies.

3.6.5. The alleviation of financial pressure would clearly benefit many students, and 'wider access students' in particular.

3.6.6. Managing withdrawal and providing exit guidance. Nearly a quarter of Withdrawers reported that they had not discussed their intention to withdraw with a member of staff yet support at this stage might keep some on course. More than half reported that they had had no meeting with staff to discuss their future options, yet many of these reported that they would have liked one. Guidance at this stage would help them to make appropriate decisions about their future educational and career paths. Most Withdrawers reported that they were in formal education or planned to return to it soon, demonstrating that Withdrawal does not usually signal an end to an educational path.

## **4. Discussion and Conclusions**

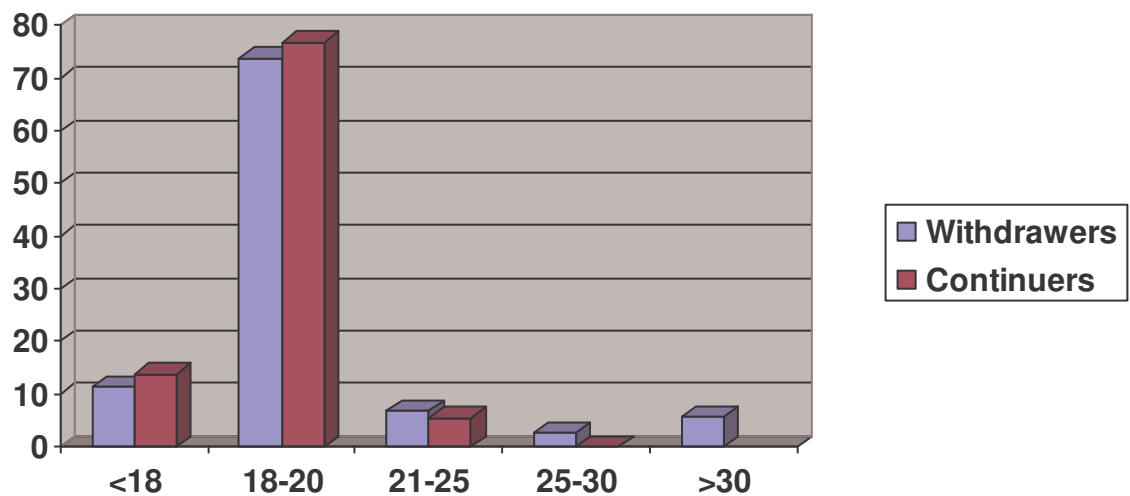
The report finishes with a brief discussion of the findings outlined above and suggests some ways in which The University of Edinburgh might improve retention, especially among those non-traditional students that its wider access policies seeks to draw in who have been shown to be more at risk of

withdrawal than more traditional students. It is suggested that the University of Edinburgh might consider the following:

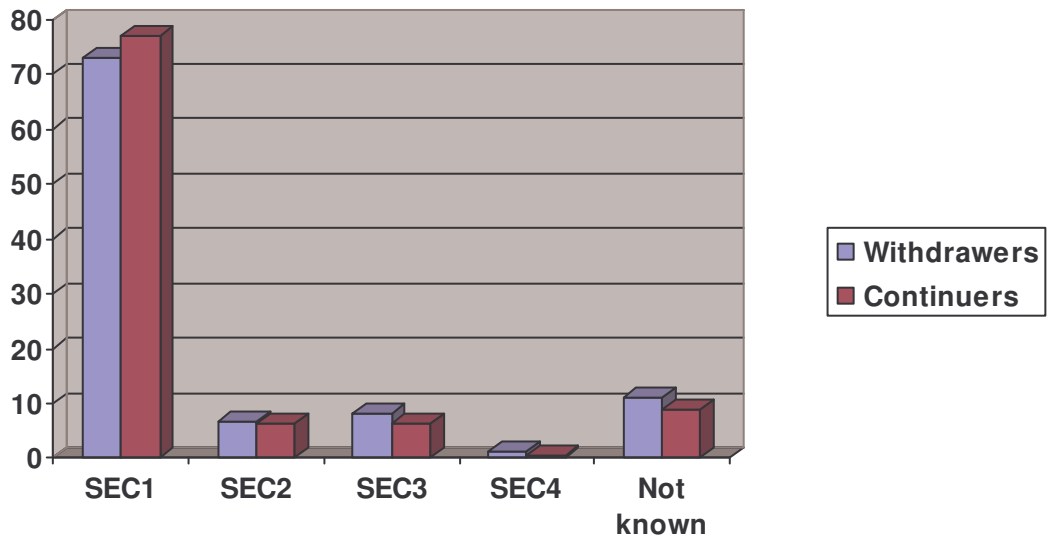
- Improving the information provided to students from pre-entry through to exit
- Ensuring that Directors of Studies are approachable, helpful and knowledgeable
- Developing more interactive teaching methods; increasing staff/student contact
- Improving the match between 1<sup>st</sup> year courses and admissions qualifications
- Helping students to adjust to the demands of degree level study in their first year
- Improving personal support within the context of academic Schools
- Encouraging a better social mix and improving social integration
- Enhancing provision of financial assistance for less well-off students

## Charts and Tables

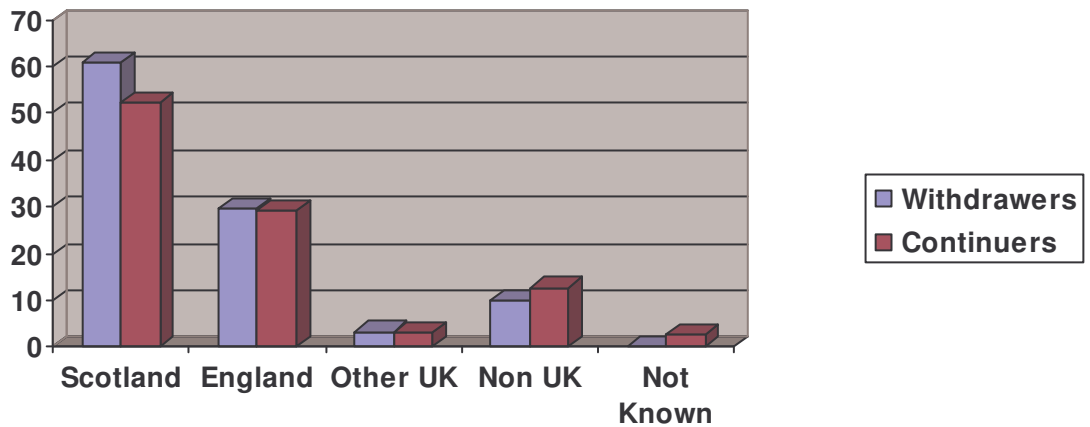
**Chart 1, Q:** “What age were you when you started at The University of Edinburgh?”



**Chart 2:** *Socio-Economic Classification*



**Chart 3:** Country of residence before coming to The University of Edinburgh

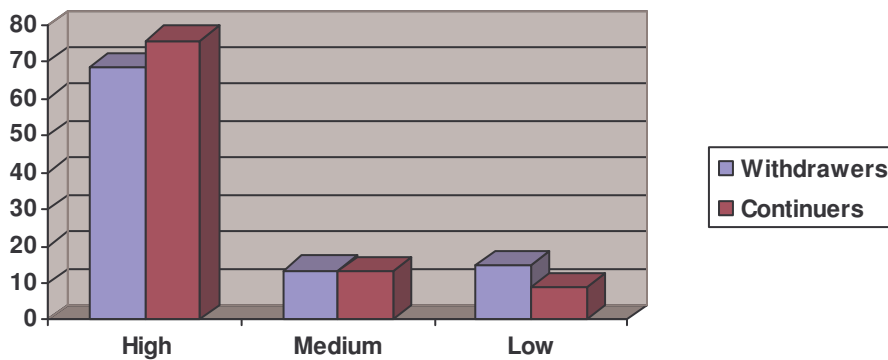


**Table 1, Q:** “What type of qualification did you take to gain entry to The University of Edinburgh?”

Qualification	Withdrawers	Continuers
Highers/Advanced Highers	48.2	49.1
A-Levels/AVCE	36.3	40.5

HNC/HND	3.5	1.3
BTEC/GNVQ/GSVQ	1.1	0
Access Course	4.2	3.4
Other	8.6	9.5

**Chart 4:** *Withdrawal by grades in Higher and A-Level qualifications*



**Table 2, Q:** *“What kind of educational institution were you attending when you got these qualifications?”*

Educational Institution at which qualifications attained	Withdrawers	Continuers
Comprehensive school	46.8	49.3
Grant maintained school	2.0	2.3
Independent school	22.2	30.2
College of Further Education	7.0	2.5
Sixth Form College	6.3	3.1
Higher Education Institution	5.5	5.4
Other	8.1	4.4

**Table 3, Q:** *“Which, if any, is the highest educational qualification of your main male and female carers (e.g. your father, stepfather.....mother/stepmother)?*

Highest	Withdrawers'	Continuers'	Withdrawers'	Continuers'
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Qualification	Male Carer	Male Carer	Female Carer	Female Carer
Degree	39.6	50.7	35.2	41.4
Diploma	5.2	8.6	10.7	13.2
Highers/A Levels	8.5	7.8	8.2	12.1
O Grades/O Levels/GCSEs	13.8	13.9	22.2	21.0
Other	7.8	7.1	3.4	2.7
None	8.3	5.2	7.8	3.9
Don't know	13.0	6.0	10.7	5.0

**Table 4:** *University attendance of siblings*

	Withdrawers	Continuers
All went to, go to or plan to go to university	62.6	76.8
Some went to, go to or plan to go to university	17.9	12.4
None went to, go to or plan to go to university	18.7	10.5

**Table 5, Q:** *“How many of your friends went to, go to or plan to go to university?”*

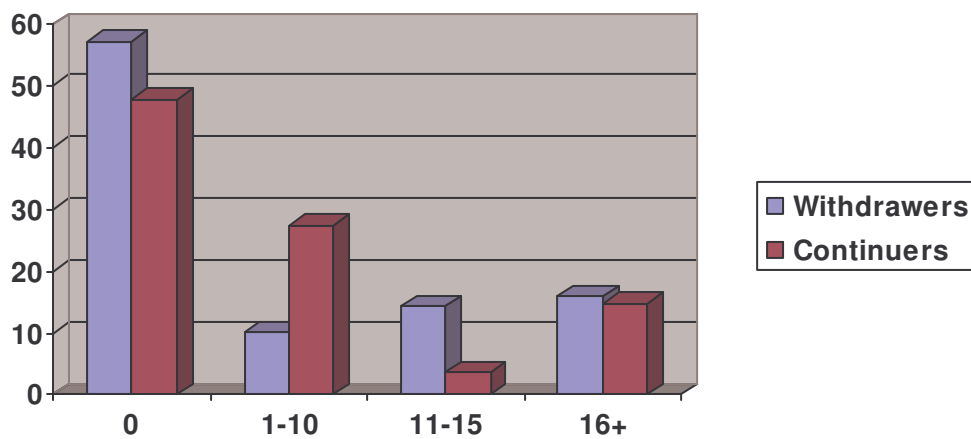
	Withdrawers	Continuers
Most	76.8	77.9
Quite a few	15.1	19.3
Not many	4.6	2.1

None	2.3	0.4
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**Table 6, Q:** “How did you support yourself while you were at Edinburgh University?”

	Withdrawers	Continuers
Student Loan	72.6	65.1
Parents/Family	70.4	74.1
Paid Work	43.1	50.3
Bank Overdraft	38.0	36.9
Bursary	14.5	10.2
Grant	9.8	7.0
Other	8.1	13.8

**Chart 5:** Hours of paid employment per week during term time



**Table 7, Q: “Why did you decide to go to university?”**

	Withdrawers	Continuers
To gain qualifications	78.4	85.9
Something I've always wanted to do	46.1	54.6
Didn't want to go out to work yet	14.5	24.1
Couldn't find a job	0.7	0.6
Interest in the subject	63.2	69.0
Family expected it	38.4	44.4
To get a good job	57.1	74.1
For my personal development	60.1	61.8
For the social life	33.0	45.5
Other	5.4	6.6
Don't know	3.7	1.0

**Table 8, Q: “Why did you choose Edinburgh University rather than another university?”**

	Withdrawers	Continuers
To do a particular course	37.8	37.5
Recommended by family/friends	23.1	32.6
Recommended by Careers Adviser	10.0	10.7
Convenient to home	23.1	21.6

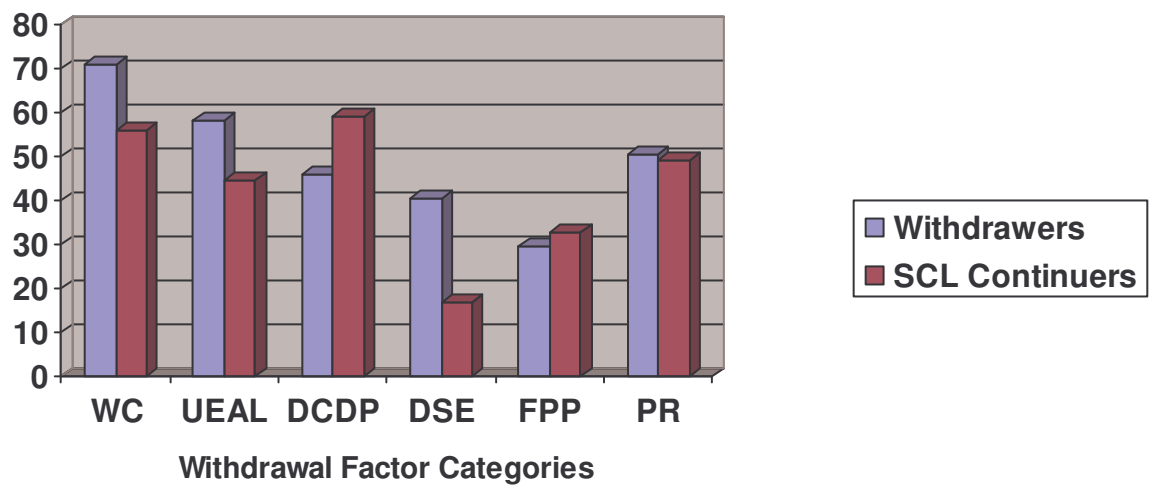
Wanted to live in Edinburgh	54.6	57.7
Thought an EU degree was a quality degree	60.4	63.9
Impressed by prospectus	10.8	13.5
Impressed by Open Day	13.1	16.9
Impressed by staff	5.7	9.2
Reputation of University	59.6	74.5
Reputation of the Dept	19.5	35.0
Friends were going	7.3	5.4
Other	5.4	8.2
Don't know	2.6	0.7

**Table 9, Q:** *“Did you have any of the following contacts with Edinburgh University before you started?”*

Type of Contact with the University	Withdrawers	Continuers
Talked to EU staff at a Careers or HE Convention	10.0	11.3
Attended an Open Day at EU	49.3	58.2
Visited the Department	37.0	43.0
Talked to EU students	29.1	36.5
Contact with an Admissions Office	25.0	22.0

Contact with the Schools and Colleges Liaison Office	7.8	5.3
Contact with the Student Association	1.8	2.1
Other Contact	8.1	5.5
None	17.4	???

**Chart 6:** Reasons for withdrawal or for considering withdrawal



**WC** = Wrong choice; **UEAL** = Unsatisfactory experience of academic life; **DCDP** = Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme; **DSE** = Dissatisfaction with the social environment; **FPP** = Financial and practical problems; **PR** = Personal reasons

**Table 10:** Unsatisfactory Experience Relating to Wrong Choice (WC)

Withdrawal Factor	Withdrawers	SCL Continuers
Course(s) not what I expected	47.2	29.1
My commitment to the course was low	34.2	34.1
I needed a break from education	16.4	24.2
Course wasn't relevant to my career	13.7	5.6
I found a more suitable course	25.6	2.4

elsewhere		
Wanted to take up full-time employment	8.7	6.8
TOTAL	71.0	56.1

**Table 11:** *Unsatisfactory experience of academic life*

Withdrawal Factor	Withdrawers	SCL
		Continuers
Didn't like the way the course was organised	36.5	28.3
The teaching did not suit me	20.7	21.1
Inadequate academic support at EU	18.4	25.1
Inadequate personal support at EU	17.6	17.6
The timetabling did not suit me	11.1	3.2
I didn't feel I was getting value for money	6.4	10.8
I had problems using computing facilities	4.3	1.2
I had problems using the library facilities	5.7	2.0
TOTAL	58.2	44.7

**Table 12:** *Approachability and helpfulness of academic staff*

Respondents **agreeing** with each statement

	Withdrawers	SCL Continuers	All Continuers
Most of my lecturers were approachable	58.8%	71.8%	77.5%
Most of my tutors were approachable	70.8%	84.5%	89.9%
My Director of Studies was helpful	68.1%	76.8%	74.6%

**Table 13:** *Talking to staff about problems*

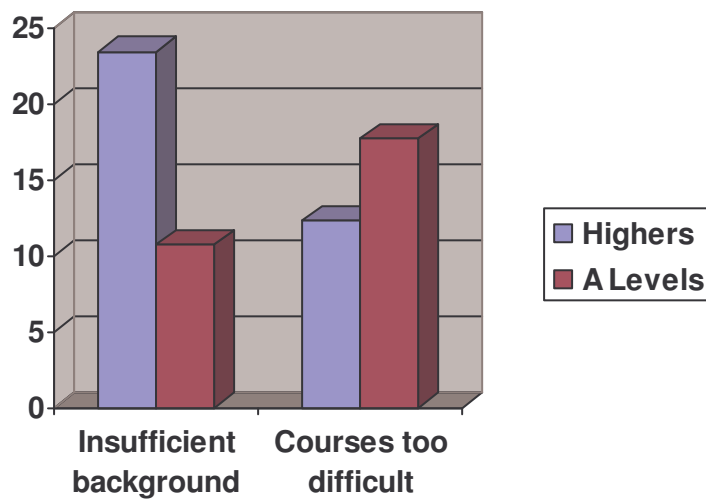
Respondents **agreeing** with each statement

	Withdrawers	SCL Continuers	All Continuers
Most teaching staff seemed too busy to have time for me	24.3%	29.1%	18.3%
There was no member of staff I felt I could talk to about problems with the course	24.9%	17.6%	8.9%
There was no member of staff I felt I could talk to about other problems that affected my studies	37%	39.4%	22.9%

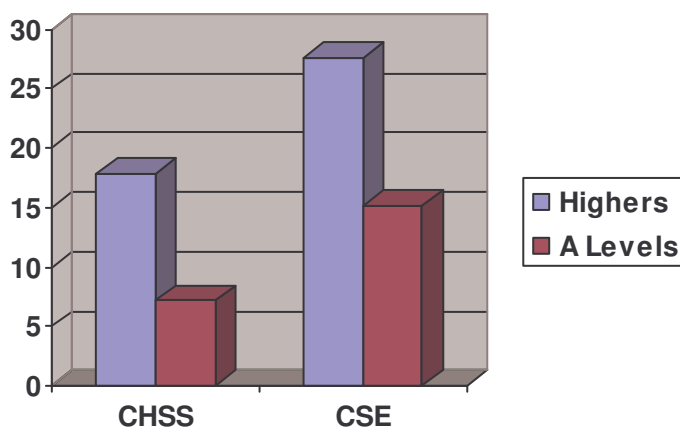
**Table 14:** *Difficulties in coping with the demands of the programme*

Withdrawal Factor	Withdrawers	SCL Continuers
I didn't really feel confident	38.2	40.3
I lacked the necessary study skills	8.0	25.5
Too much course work to get through	12.2	19.5
Courses were too difficult	12.1	11.7
Insufficient background in some subjects	17.0	20.0
I wasn't doing very well academically	17.9	22.3
I had difficulties with the English language	0.7	0
TOTAL	45.8	58.9

**Chart 7: Academic preparedness by type of entrance qualification**



**Chart 8: Academic preparedness by type of entrance qualification, by College**



**Table 15, Q: "How well prepared do you think you were in terms of study skills such as essay writing and note-taking when you started at The University of Edinburgh?"**

	Withdrawers	Continuers
Very well prepared	23.9	17.1
Quite well prepared	51.6	53.1
Not very well prepared	18.1	26.5

Not at all well prepared	5.0	3.3
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**Table 16, Q:** *“Was the course work required of you at the level that you expected?”*

	Withdrawers	Continuers
About what I expected	56.3	62.8
More demanding than I expected	25.0	24.6
Less demanding than I expected	16.6	12.7

**Table 17:** *Dissatisfaction with the social environment*

Withdrawal Factor	Withdrawers	SCL Continuers
I didn't feel that I fitted in at EU	32.5	11.2
I felt that EU staff discriminated against me	2.3	1.2
I didn't really like the other students	17.9	3.6
I found it hard to make friends	17	11.2
DSE TOTAL	40.6	16.8

**Table 18:** *Financial and practical problems*

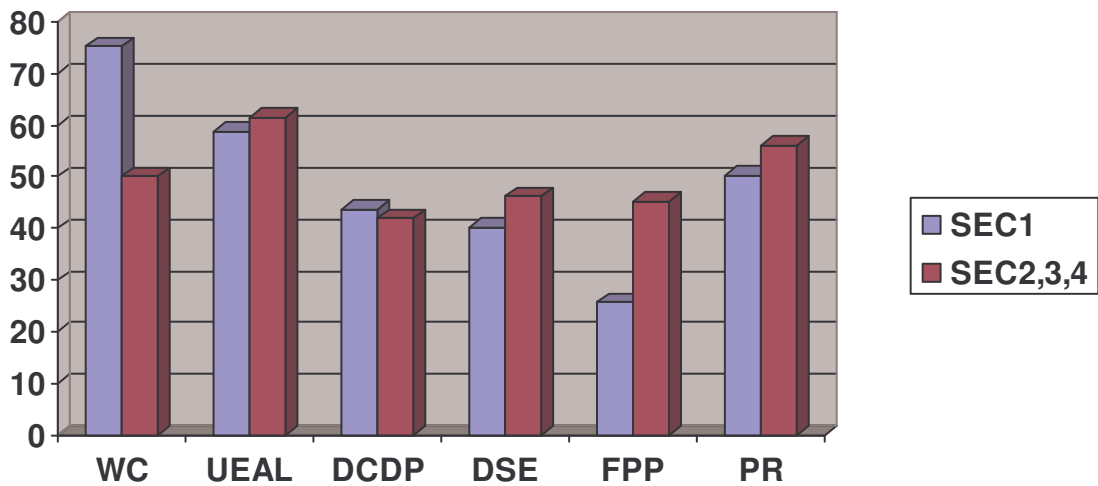
Withdrawal Factor	Withdrawers	SCL Continuers
Financial difficulties	21.0	29.1
Problems with childcare	2.7	1.2
Travel difficulties	3.3	2.0
Accommodation problems	12.4	7.6

Difficulties of juggling paid work and study time	10.5	15.6
Difficulties of juggling family time and study	6.3	2.4
TOTAL	29.4	32.7

**Table 19:** *Personal reasons*

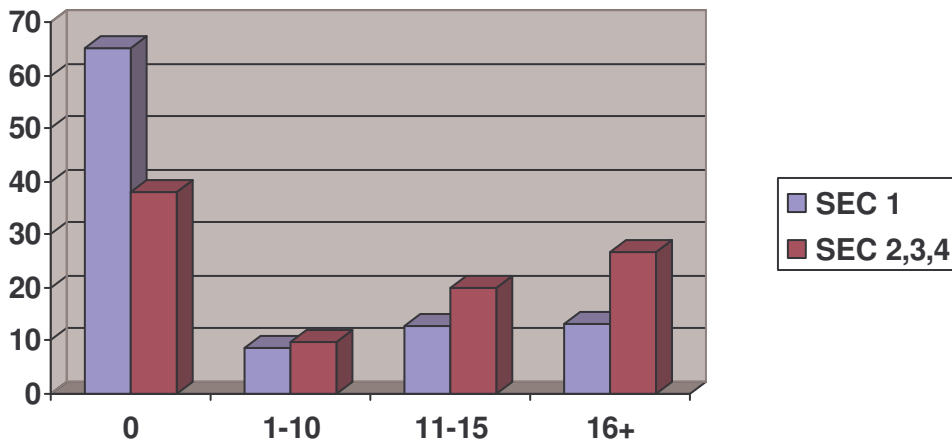
Withdrawal Factor	Withdrawers	SCL Continuers
My social life got in the way of studying	14.2	13.0
I was homesick	12.0	8.0
I didn't like living in Edinburgh	10.0	5.6
Lack of support from my family	4.8	2.0
Emotional difficulties	32.4	35.1
Health problems	17.6	16.0
Pregnancy (self or partner)	0	0
Bereavement	2.9	8.8
TOTAL	50.6	49.1

**Chart 9:** *Reasons for withdrawal by SEC background*

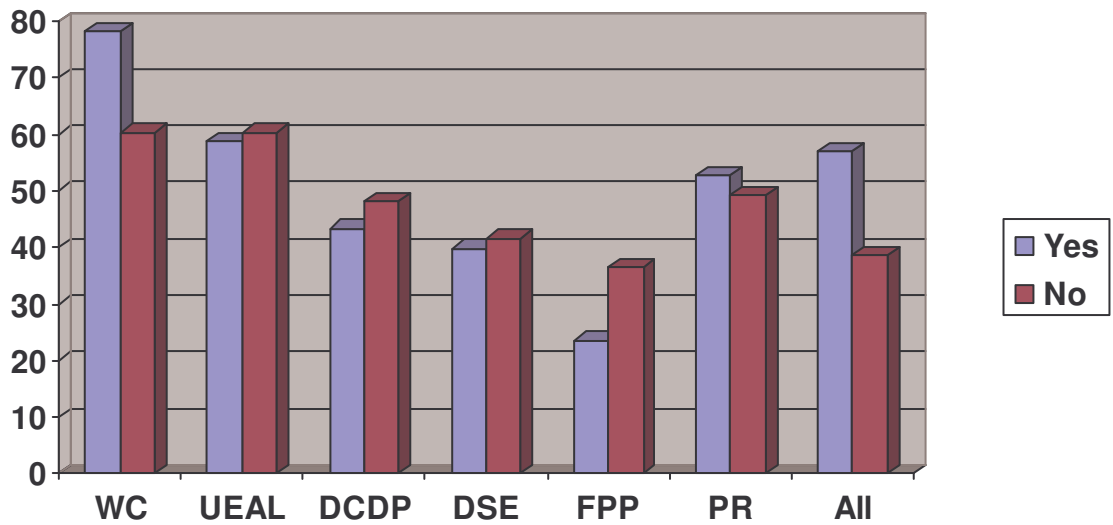


**WC** = Wrong choice; **UEAL** = Unsatisfactory experience of academic life;  
**DCDP** = Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme; **DSE** =  
Dissatisfaction with the social environment; **FPP** = Financial and practical  
problems; **PR** = Personal reasons

**Chart 10:** *Number of hours worked by SEC background*

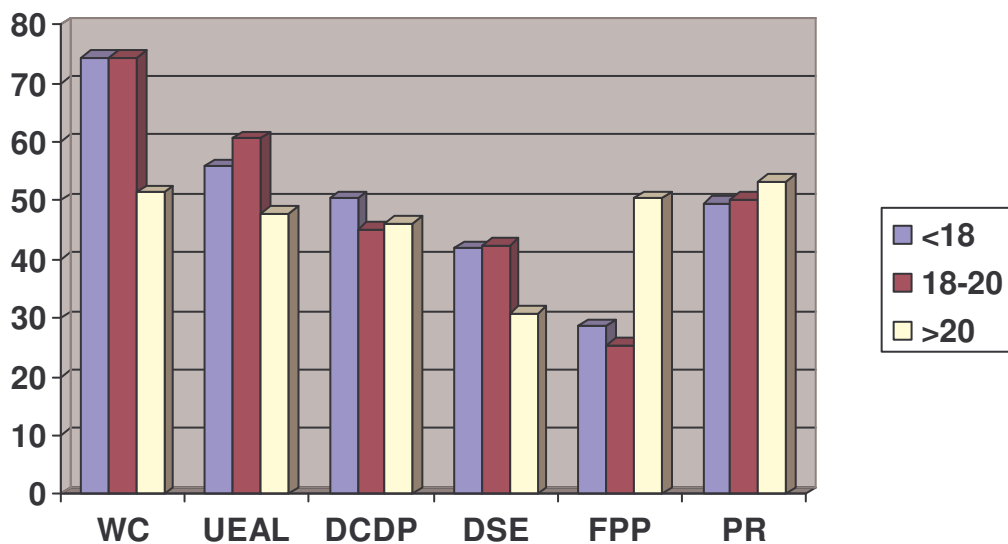


**Chart 11, Q:** *“Did either of your main carers ever go to university?”*

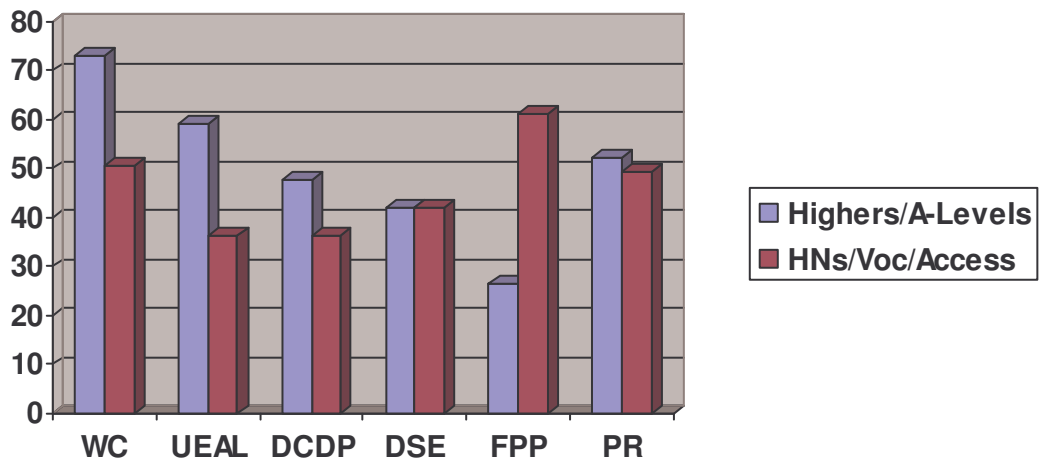


**WC** = Wrong choice; **UEAL** = Unsatisfactory experience of academic life; **DCDP** = Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme; **DSE** = Dissatisfaction with the social environment; **FPP** = Financial and practical problems; **PR** = Personal reasons

**Chart 12:** *Reasons for withdrawal by age of student*

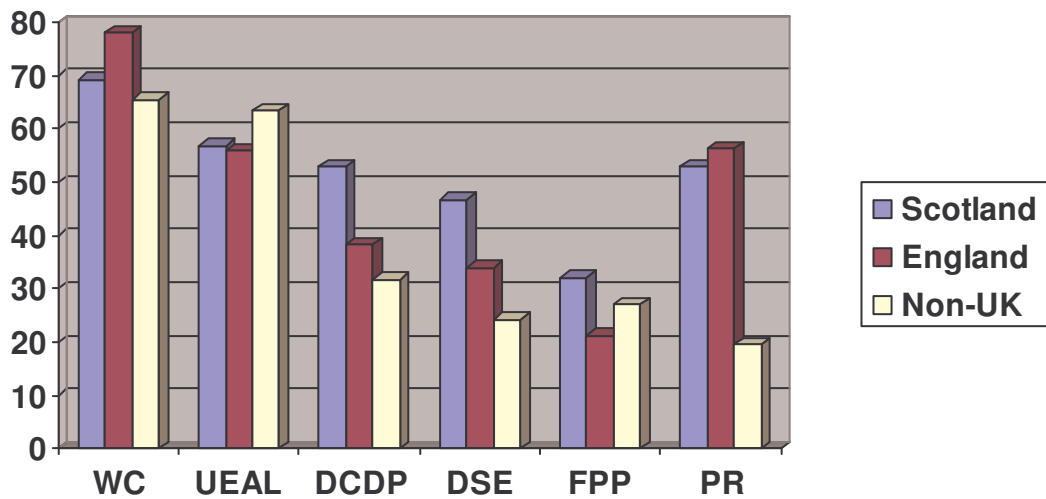


**Chart 13:** *Reasons for withdrawal by entrance qualification*

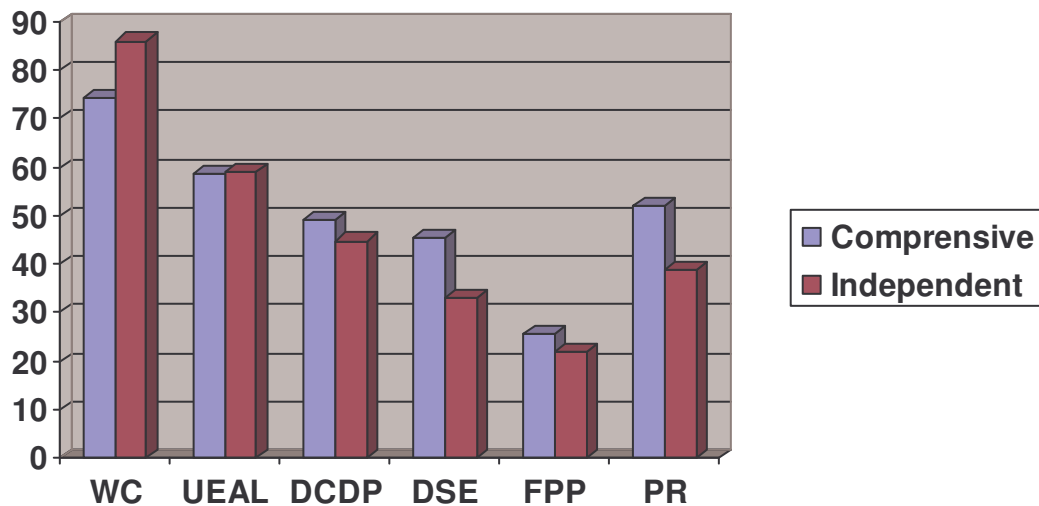


**WC** = Wrong choice; **UEAL** = Unsatisfactory experience of academic life; **DCDP** = Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme; **DSE** = Dissatisfaction with the social environment; **FPP** = Financial and practical problems; **PR** = Personal reasons

**Chart 14:** *Reasons for withdrawal by country of residence*



**Chart 15:** *Reasons for withdrawal by type of educational institution*



**WC** = Wrong choice; **UEAL** = Unsatisfactory experience of academic life; **DCDP** = Difficulties coping with the demands of the programme; **DSE** = Dissatisfaction with the social environment; **FPP** = Financial and practical problems; **PR** = Personal reasons

**Table 20, Q:** “What do you think the University could do to help people stay on course?” (Please tick all that apply)

	% Withdrawers
Provide more (or better) information on what the courses involve	50.7
Give early feedback on students’ progress	41.2
Improve the support given by Directors of Studies	37.9
Demand a certain level of attendance and follow up on non-attendance	35.6
Provide more help with study skills	29.4
Provide more opportunities to meet other students	28.9
Provide more information on the relevance of my course to future careers	25.5
Be clearer about how much work students need to put in to a course	24.3
Provide more financial aid	22.7
Provide more information about funding and financial matters	17.1

Improve the standard of teaching	16.6
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**Table 21, Q:** *“If you are not in full-time education do you hope to return to it?”*

	% Withdrawers not in education
Yes, within a year	17.1
Yes, within the next two years	18.2
Yes, within the next five years	8.0
Yes, but not for many years	4.5
No, but hope to return part-time	9.1
No	9.7
Don't know	21.2