Using Data to Improve Student Retention at The University of Huddersfield

Sarah Broxton

Inspiring tomorrow’s professionals
Overview

About the University of Huddersfield, strategic position;

Why we need the data – drivers for change;

Application overview;

Evaluation and next steps
UoH Institutional Performance

Significant improvements made over last 5 year period:

- 20,500 students
- Improving NSS scores
- Increasing league table positions
- Top 10 Employability
- Times Higher Entrepreneurial University of the Year
- Award winning estate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total full-time first degree entrants</th>
<th>Number who transfer to other UK HEI</th>
<th>Number no longer in HE</th>
<th>Percent no longer in HE (%)</th>
<th>Bench-mark (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>3415</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>3425</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>3705</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>3700</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>4055</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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Drivers for Change

Strategic requirement to improve retention rates;

Strategic requirement to improve institutional effectiveness and efficiency;

Introduction of attendance monitoring and centralised timetable system;

Increased cohort sizes;

Limited access/knowledge by staff about what data is available.
Drivers for Change

Create own systems
- Onerous and bureaucratic
- Duplicates effort, associated version issues
- Increasing risk of error

Wider implications
- Reputational impact
- Financial impact
- Social and ethical impact

“The traditional ladder out of poverty is education. Access to university education is seen as countering social exclusion and poverty” (Quinn et al, 2005, p.1)
Starting Point – Where We Were

Data is retrospective, informative, though limited

Useful to be able to monitor student behaviour while they are still attending

Early intervention
  – Sign post to most appropriate support services
Support Priority Students - Overview

Profile leaver characteristics from previous year:
- Gender
- Age
- Entry Tariff
- Entry Quals
- Entry route
- Home Postcode
- Disability
- Ethnicity

Apply to current first year cohort (2013/14):
- Overlay Attendance Monitoring data

OUTPUT: Report of students more likely to leave:
- Communicated to:
  - Nominated staff within schools:
  - Personal Tutors via Staff Portal / My Students
What Happens Next?

Support Priority Student

Get in touch

If all ok, occasional check in

Academic Issues – ASTs

Other Issues – School or central support services

Occasional check in
Benefits

Provides targeted intelligence on where to focus initial attention

Data available on the desktop to academic staff

Facilitates proactive, early intervention – mitigates ‘crisis point’

Improves communication between schools and services

Increases institutional intelligence on the retention issue
### Evaluation

#### Withdrawal and Suspension Rates Comparing SPS Students to Population (to end Jan)

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<tr>
<th>ACADYEAR</th>
<th>SPS JAN</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Suspended</th>
<th>Withdrawn</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
<th>Num W &amp; Susp</th>
<th>W &amp; Susp as % of Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>13/14</td>
<td>NON_SPS</td>
<td>4011</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>4176</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
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<td>13/14 Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>4100</td>
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<td>4284</td>
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Population: Fulltime, undergraduate, first year home students
The Learning Curve

The technicalities were easy

Changing practices and processes creates the challenge

– Feedback meetings with schools
– Confidence in taking proactive approach
– Privacy and ethical issues
What we did next....

Student Support Steering Group

- Use of Data
- School and Central Student Support
- Internal Communications
What we did next.....

Talked to colleagues;
Lack confidence in contacting SPS students;

Actions:
Increase transparency;
Changed student regs re our use of student data;
Ethical policy in development
Training for colleagues
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A word of caution…….

- Data provided is **INDICATIVE**
- It’s not **PRESCRIPTIVE**
  - Students identified will not necessarily leave
  - Students not identified will also leave

- An SPS student shares characteristics similar to other students who have left in the past;
- Based on evidence from previous years, these students **MORE LIKELY** to leave than students with different profile
- Provides starting point for engagement with students
Contact Details

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