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Profiling of Academically Successful and Unsuccessful Students on Music Technology and Production Degree Courses

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Introduction
Academics often have a ‘gut feeling’ about which categories of students are successful or unsuccessful on their courses. Sometimes this is based on ad hoc anecdotal evidence, e.g. citing examples of a few strong or weak students, or sometimes based on back of the envelope analyses. It is not unusual to hear staff hypothesise that mature students do better/worse than 18 year olds or National Diploma entry students do better or worse than “A”-level entry students. However, staff experiences with subgroups of students can be misleading and not representative of the true picture of the student cohort as a whole.

This project adopted a systematic approach to identify the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful types of students on a suite of Music Technology and Production degrees graduating between 2001 and 2008.

Analysis by Course
Department of Engineering and Technology at University of Huddersfield offers following 4 courses:
- BSc (Hons) Music Technology and Audio Systems (MTAS)
- BSc (Hons) Music Technology Software Development (MTSD)
- BSc (Hons) Popular Music Production (BSc PMP)
- BA (Hons) Popular Music Production (BA PMP)

The first two courses can be considered “technical” although they are broad and cover music production and computer composition in addition to software electronics, DSP, and audio theory. The later two are broad and music production industry focussed with the BA including an element of performance.

Background
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Definitions
- A successful student is defined as a student that achieves a 1st or 2(i)
- An unsuccessful student is defined as a student that fails, withdraws, transfers or suspends and does not return. They do not reach final year and have not been awarded an interim award.

Methodology
- Extract data from University’s Applicant and Student Information System
- Fill in any missing data either from system or old paper records
- Condition data e.g. UCAS points system changed during time period so old UCAS points needed converting to new UCAS points
- Compare groups of student’s entry profiles with the outcome of their studies.

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