Student Attitudes, Expectations and Behaviour in a New Funding Regime

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The Survey

March 2013
17 Universities
3461

15 Universities
13 English
2534/1937

March 2014
18 Universities
2576

2 Scottish
Who was surveyed?

- Core Economics Modules in Year 1 and 2
- At least 50% of degree is Economics
- Repeated cross-section will create some dependence
The Survey Questions

• Expectations?: class contact; assessment; access to staff; IT; workload; quality of teaching; feedback; support; skills.
• Behaviour: independent work time; paid work; attendance; submission of work
• Market / admissions: reputation; unistats; course structure; employability; city.
• All Likert scale 1-5.
• Some administrative data for comparison
## Quasi Difference in Difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohort 2013</th>
<th>Cohort 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Treated</strong></td>
<td>First Years (High)</td>
<td>First Years (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treated</strong></td>
<td>Second Years (Low)</td>
<td>Second Years (High)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dependency*

• Same students may have answered in 2013 and 2014. No individual data to model this.
• Check for this using clustering within universities
• And also bootstrapping errors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12 Universities Used in main analysis</th>
<th>COHORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YEAR</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST YEAR</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND YEAR</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic Comparison of UCAS 1st and 2nd Year Economics Students and Survey Respondents

UCAS Gender distribution:
- Male: 31.37%
- Female: 68.63%

UCAS Age distribution:
- 21 and under: 95.72%
- 22 to 25: 2.73%
- Over 26: 1.55%
- Over 30: 0.01%

UCAS Domicile:
- UK: 69.44%
- EU (non UK): 22.58%
- Other international: 7.997%

Gender distribution:
- Male: 41.79%
- Female: 58.21%

Age distribution:
- 21 and under: 87.27%
- 22 to 25: 11.25%

Permanent Place of Residence:
- England/NI: 54.81%
- Scotland: 25.43%
- Wales: 7.813%
- EU (non UK): 7.104%
- Other: 10.63%
Specification

• We use:

\[ y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 C + \beta_2 T + \beta_3 CT + \text{other covariates} \]

\( C \) \textit{Cohort}

\( T \) \textit{Treatment group}

\textit{Other covariates are gender, unigroup}

\textit{Unigroup is Russell, Post92, Pre92, Other}
Regressions

• Likert responses collapsed into binary variables and use:
  • Logit, probit and LPM
  • With and without clustering within universities
  • Boostrapping errors

• Results are robust to different specifications
• We report the logit results with clustering
• Results sometimes sensitive to the “collapsing”
Students’ Work
Paid Work

(Coding 1)

• Coded “0-5 hours” against “6 and above”. Students paying higher fees work less.

• Probability of working >6 hours for low fees = 0.18. Value falls by 0.056 for high fees – around a third.
Paid Work

(Coding 2)

• Coded “0 hours” against “>0”. Students paying higher fees work less.
• Probability of working >6 hours for low fees = 0.26. Value falls by 0.0556 for high fees – around a fifth.
Adjusted Predictions of Treatcohort with 95% CIs
Paid Work

First Year Students

Second Year Students

Paid Work
Independent Study

• Coded as “<10” and “>10” hours.
• Prob for low fees: .56. Increases by .07 (around an eighth).
Independent Study

First Year Students

Second Year Students
Figure 15: Total workload hours by discipline

Source: HEPI/HEA 2014
The Course
Class contact time?

Class Contact

2013

2014
Quantity of IT and E-learning

• Coded as “More/Sig more” and “Matches or less” than expectations.
• Prob for low fees: .39. Falls by .15 (almost a half).
IT and E-Learning

First Years

Second Years

2013

2014
Quality of Feedback

First Years

Second Years
Group Work

• Formative group work: High fees students more likely to say that there was more than expected (from around 7% of students to around 12%).
Market Variables
Location of the University

First Year Students

Second Year Students
Reputation of the University

• Important for non-Russell Group.
• Prob of saying “SA” increases by .17 from 0.24 to 0.41.
• Importance increasing over time (independently of high fees)
Other “market” variables

• Content is important (but becomes insignificant with clustering)

• Employability – no high fees effect but its importance increases over time (prob of SA increases over 2013-4 by 0.04 from 2013 [0.6] to 2014 [0.64])

• Induction: high fees students are less likely to have found this valuable or very valuable.

• No effect of skills variables: Problemsolving, Essays, Writing, Presentation, Application
Russell Group Only

• Reduction in satisfaction with lecturer contact (12/345) – (fall in prob 0.1 to 0.06)
• Evidence of increased dissatisfaction due to feedback quality (123/45) (.11 to 0.06)
• Support: high fee payers less likely to be satisfied (.25 to .15)
• More exams than expected (prob 0.1 to 0.14 with high fees)
• More essays/assignments than expected (prob 0.04 to 0.1 with high fees)
Summary

• Student responses are not markedly different across most questions
• Evidence of a more discerning/critical “consumer” in some areas
• Evidence of more competition (location, reputation)
• More independent work and less paid work
• Little evidence of concern with skills in the course
• Feedback is an increasingly important area of concern
• RG: over-assessment; student support.