UNIVERSITY of DERBY

Turn up, Tune in or Drop Out?

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Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Majority of lecturers have a scanner to scan I.D cards.
- Data from scanners downloaded into database.
- Lecturers can run reports from this database and inform a central team that they want a student chased.
- Scanning takes place for a variety of interactions: lectures, seminars, tutorials etc.
- Participation Policy

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- We wanted to find out if there is any correlation between attendance and achievement at Derby?
- Can other research findings into attendance monitoring be found in our data?
- Data collection headaches, two different systems.
- Concentrated on first year, on campus undergraduates in 12/13.
- Excluded any students from our dataset who had been in attendance in previous academic year.
- Excluded students who left within academic year, removed data problems.

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Dataset of 2774 students studying 123 undergraduate programmes across four faculties.
- 76% of the cohort were aged 21 or under at enrolment (18 year olds accounted for 40% of cohort)
- Males 48% Females 52%
- 79% classed themselves as White British, White Irish or Other white background.
- 94% were classed as Home students, 4% EU, 2% Overseas, Island or exchange.
- Full Time 96% Part Time 4%

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Calculated average % attendance for all students for their programme based on scanned sessions across the academic year.
- Calculated average % grade for all students across their programme
- Average % attendance for the cohort was?

  66%
- Average grade for cohort was?

  57%

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

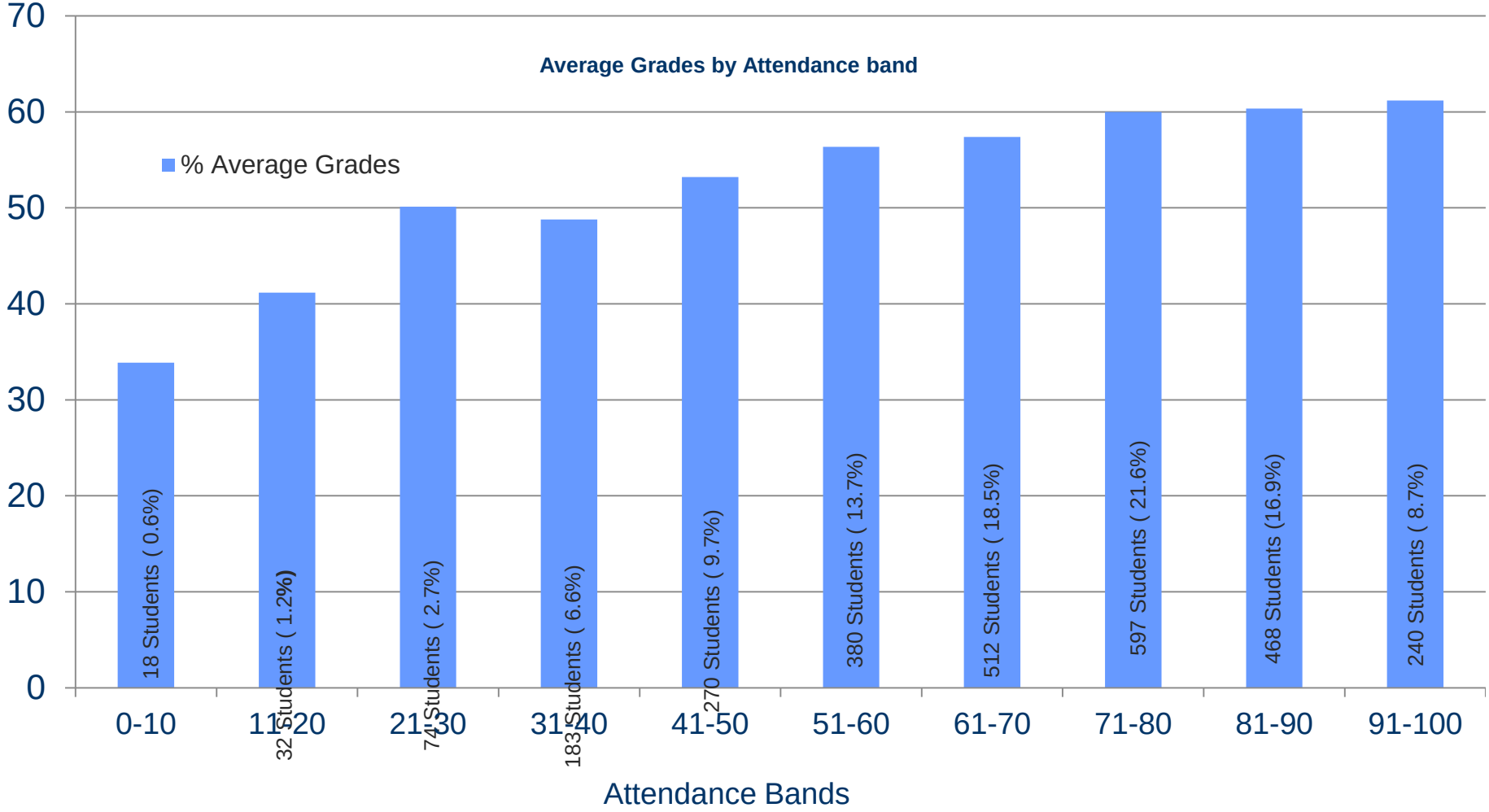
- Lots of research claims to show a link between attendance and achievement, Colby (2004), Cohn and Johnson (2006), Newman-Ford *et al* (2008) all show a link between attending and getting better grades.

- Some researchers however are unconvinced about the power of attendance.

  "Students who are more interested in the material, or more skilled academically, or more focused on academics are almost certain to attend class more often than students who are less interested, less skilled or less focused. If this is the case, then the results….to some extent reflect a general impact of motivation on performance rather than a true effect of attendance" (Romer,1993)

  "The variety of studies, study settings and student profiles in the literature examined suggests no definitive consensus or indeed evidence to support the assertion that a mandatory attendance policy will result in higher academic achievement for students." (Leufer and Cleary-Holdforth, 2010)

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?



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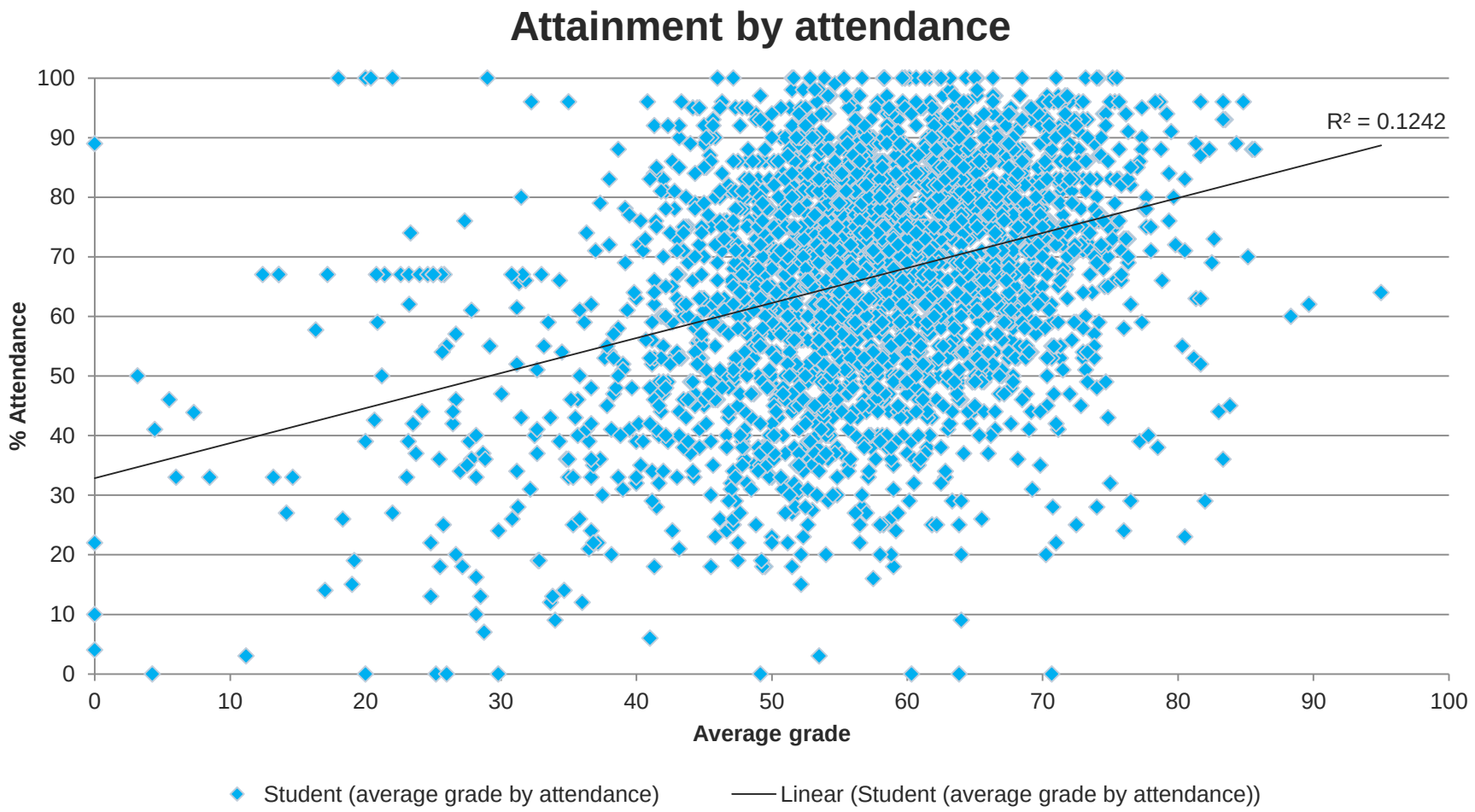
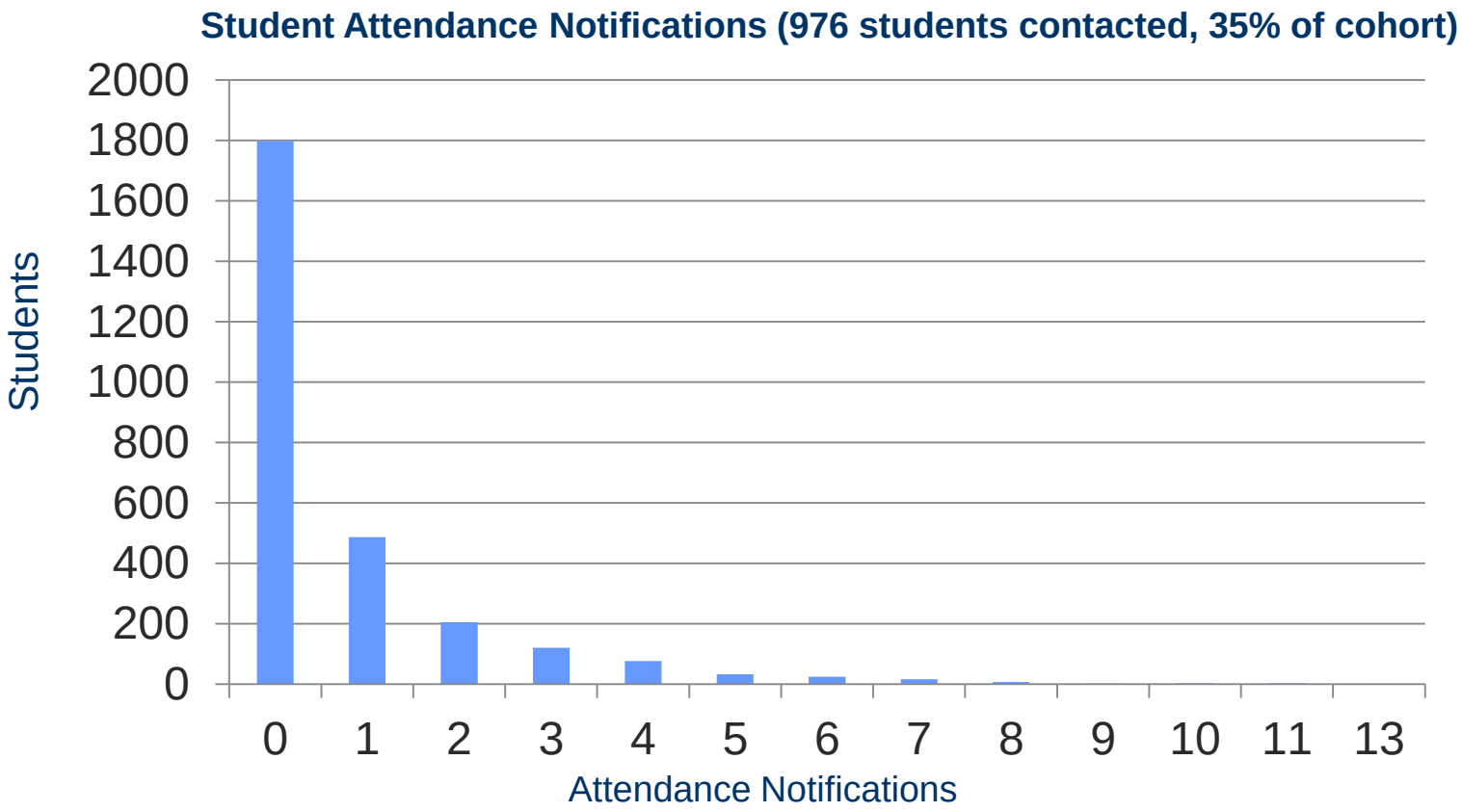


Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Students at Derby can be notified about their attendance.
- 65% of students in this study received no notifications about their attendance
- The students that received no notifications had an average attendance of 72%
- 50% of the students who received an attendance notification received only one notification.

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?



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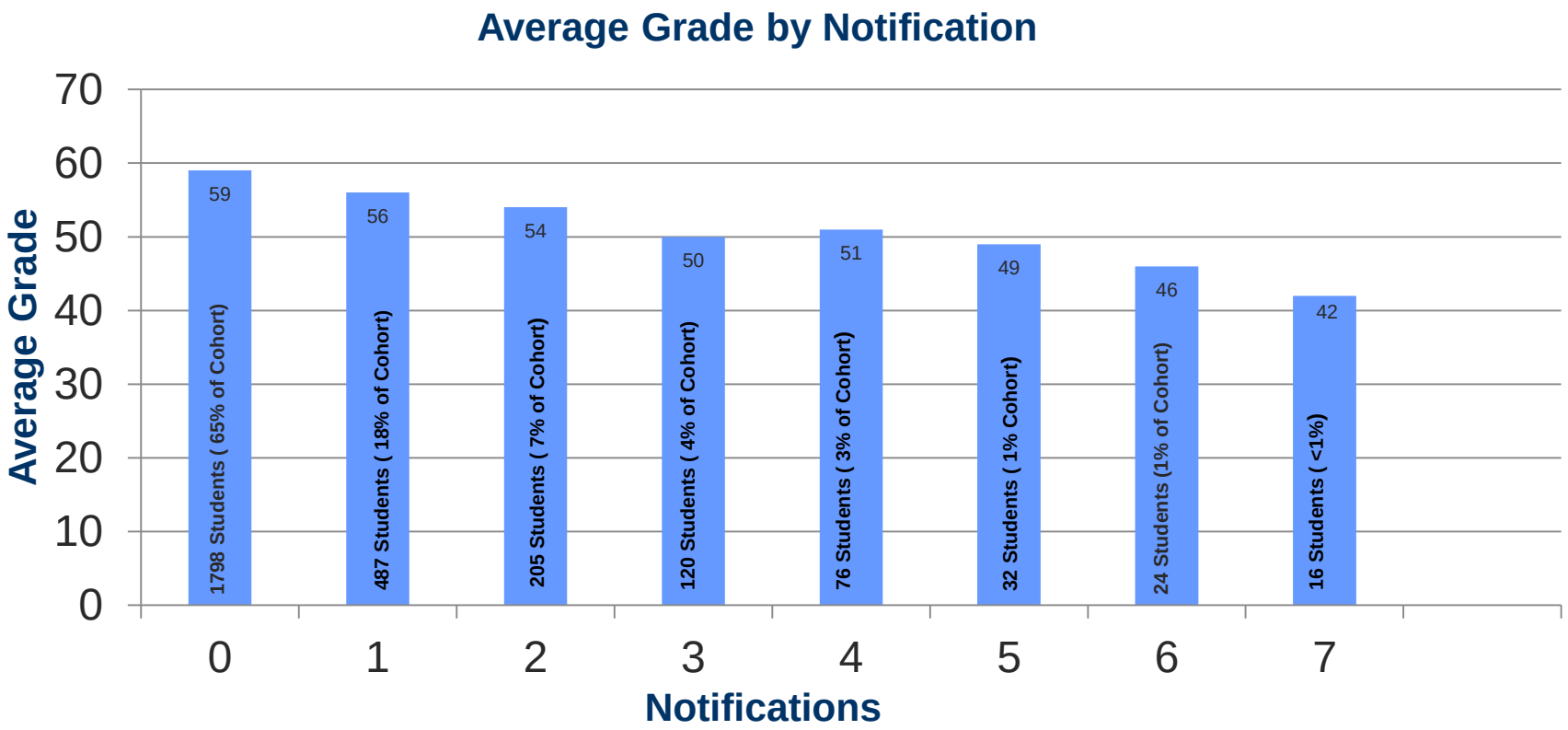


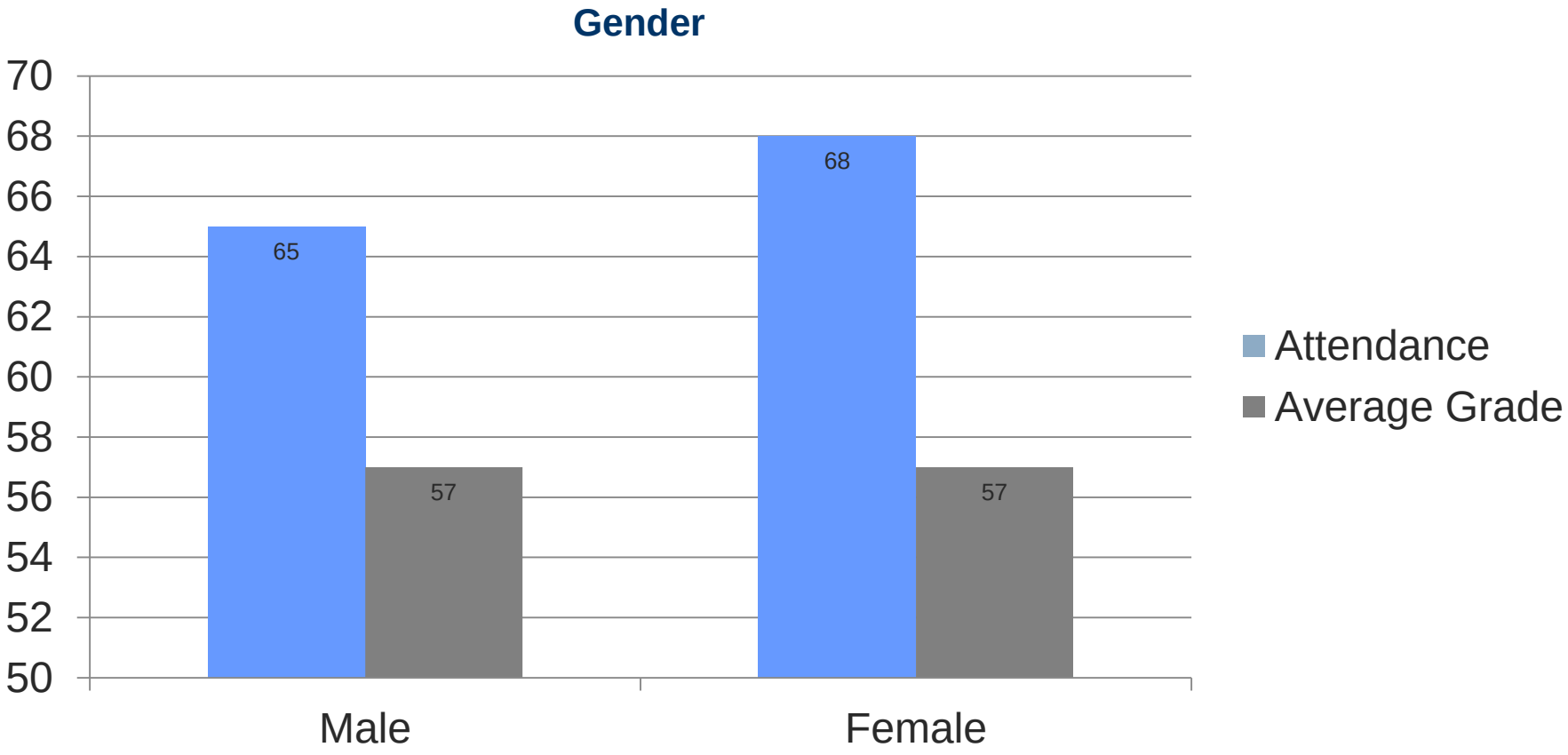
Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Study looking at gender differences in undergraduate attendance rates in 2006 found difference in attendance rates between females and males

- (Woodfield, Ruth, Donna Jessop, and Lesley McMillan. "Gender differences in undergraduate attendance rates." *Studies in Higher Education* 31.1 (2006): 1-22.)

- Females attended more than males (4%) and their degree percentage was also higher (3%)

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?



Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Lots of research investigating the attainment gap between white and ethnic minority students.
- At Derby we are running a project taking a post-racial view, moving from cultural to contextual sensitivity, and are trialling a range of interventions to improve performance and retention.
- Early indications are encouraging and we have seen an uplift of performance of ‘good honours’ in all our students but especially in our BME cohorts.
- Could find little research about attendance by Ethnicity.

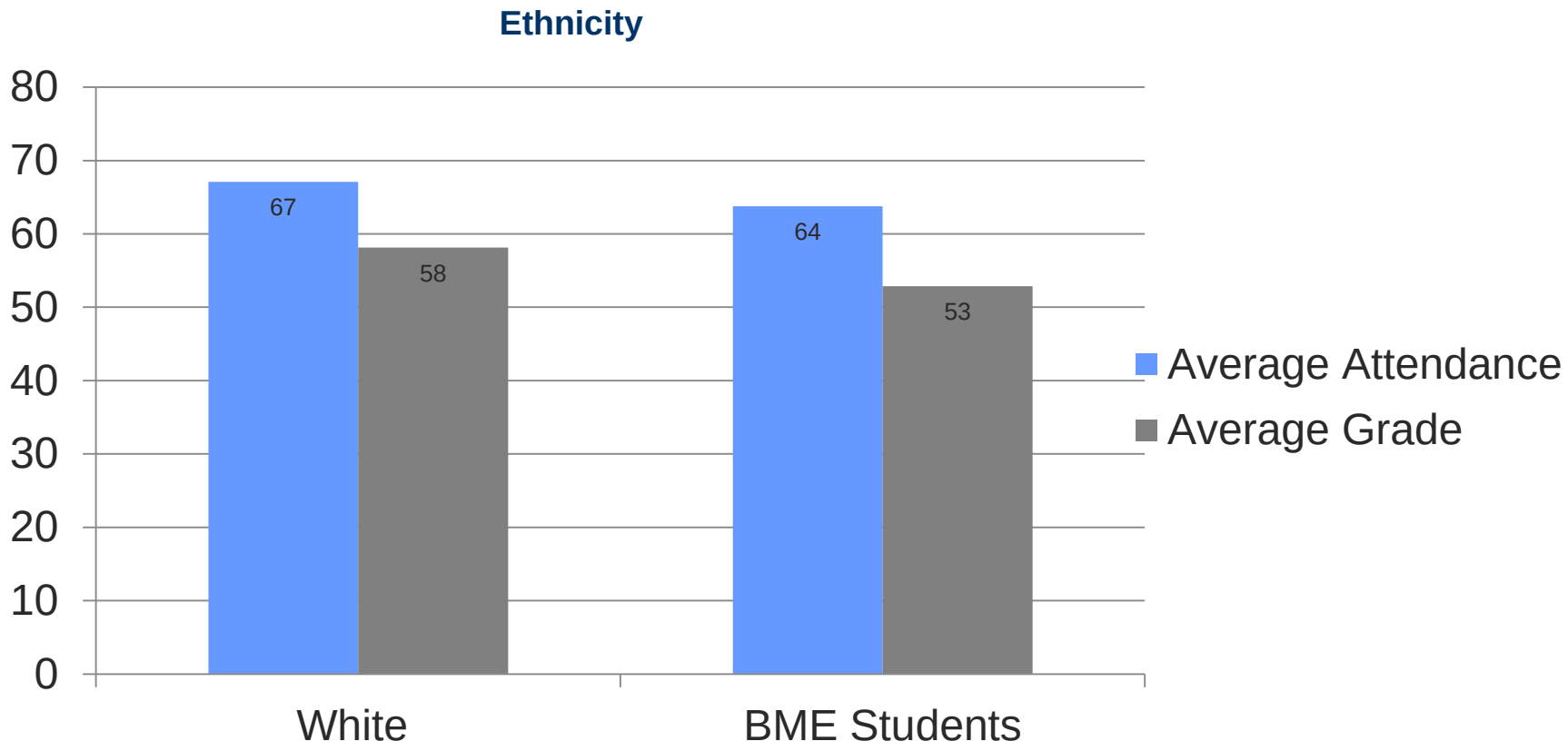
Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Study by Gatherer and Manning (1998) investigated a possible correlation between lecture attendance and examination performance.

- Correlation was found and was particularly strong for “non Anglophone and UK ethnic minority students”

> “We conclude that ethnic minority students are more likely to benefit from lecture attendance than their non-ethnic minority colleagues, and that ethnic minority students should therefore be encouraged to attend lectures, since they are more likely to suffer individual deterioration in examination performance from failure to attend”

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?



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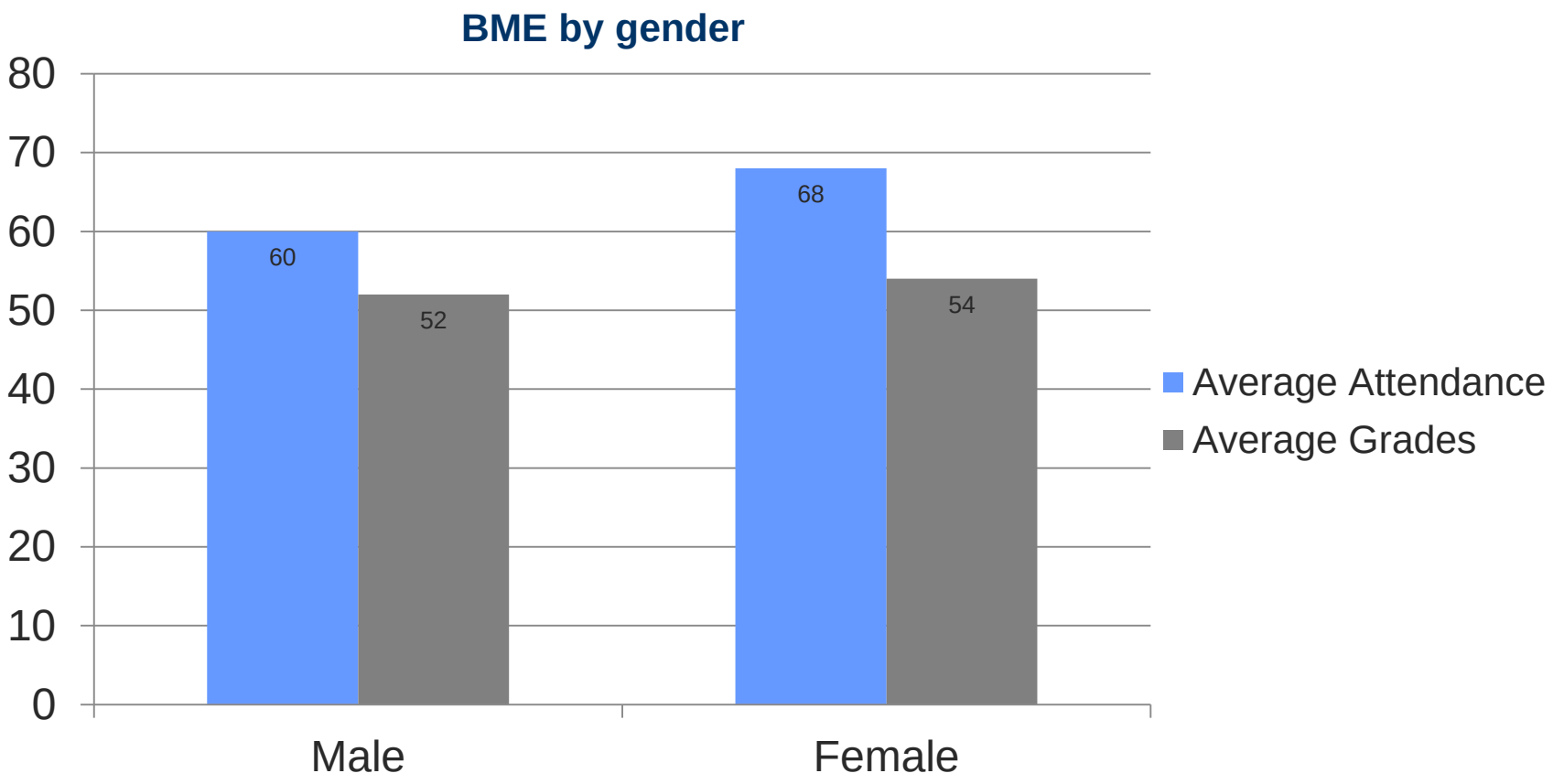

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Some research suggests that attendance tails off over time. Burd, E., and B. Hodgson. (2006) and Colby (2004)
- Do students attend more in first semester than second semester ?
- Majority of Derby modules are either Autumn OR Spring semester modules.
- Extracted over 12000 attendance results for this cohort split by Autumn/Spring semester.

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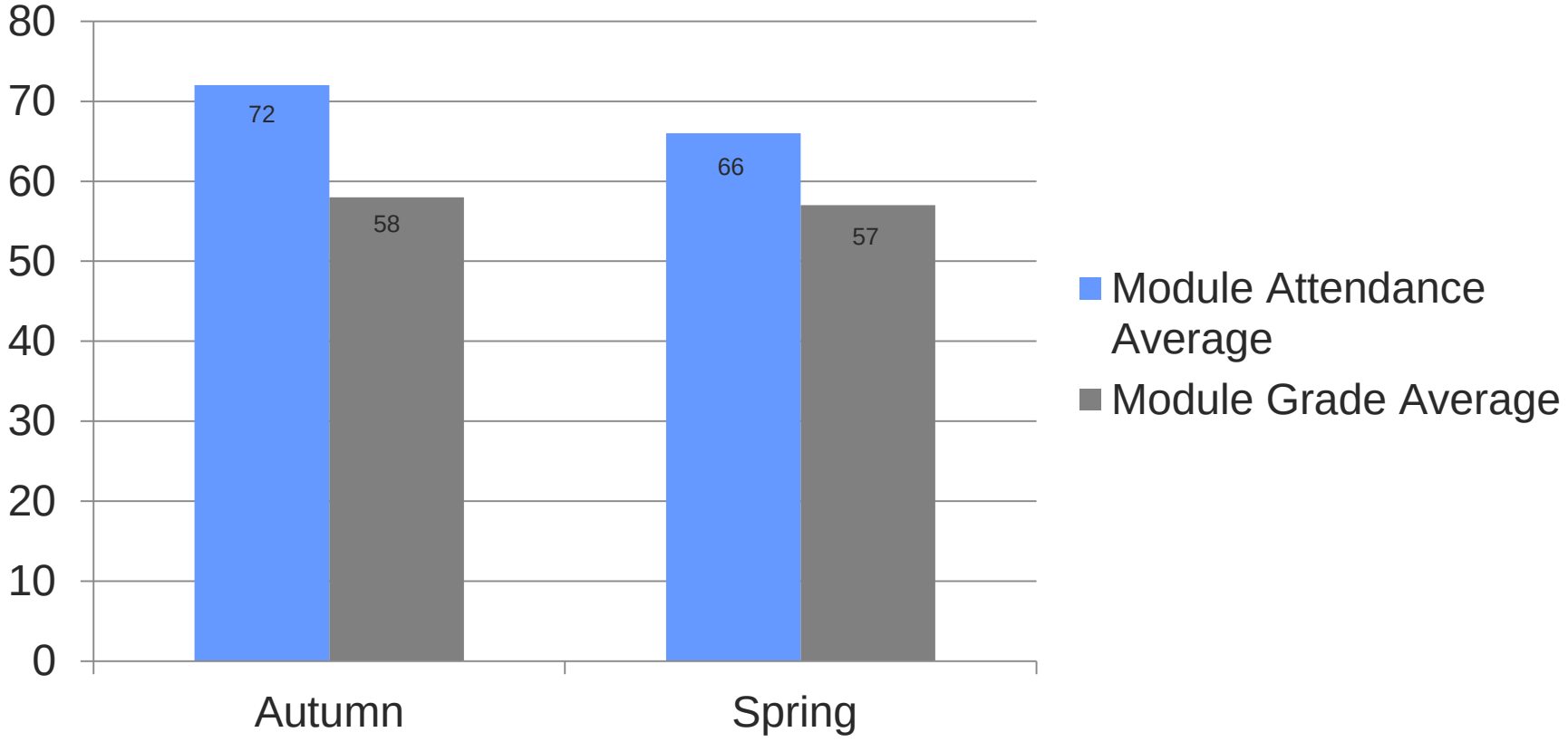

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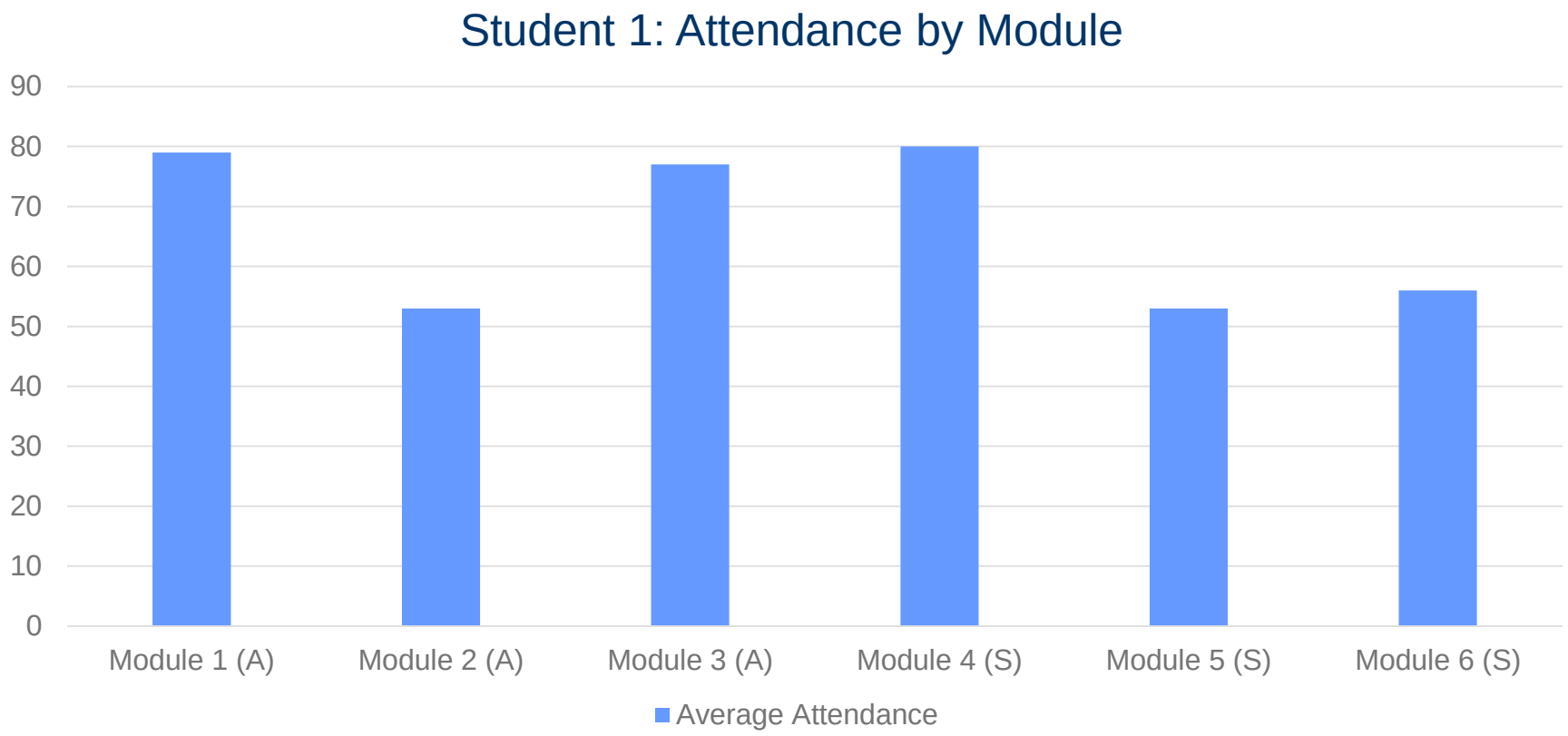

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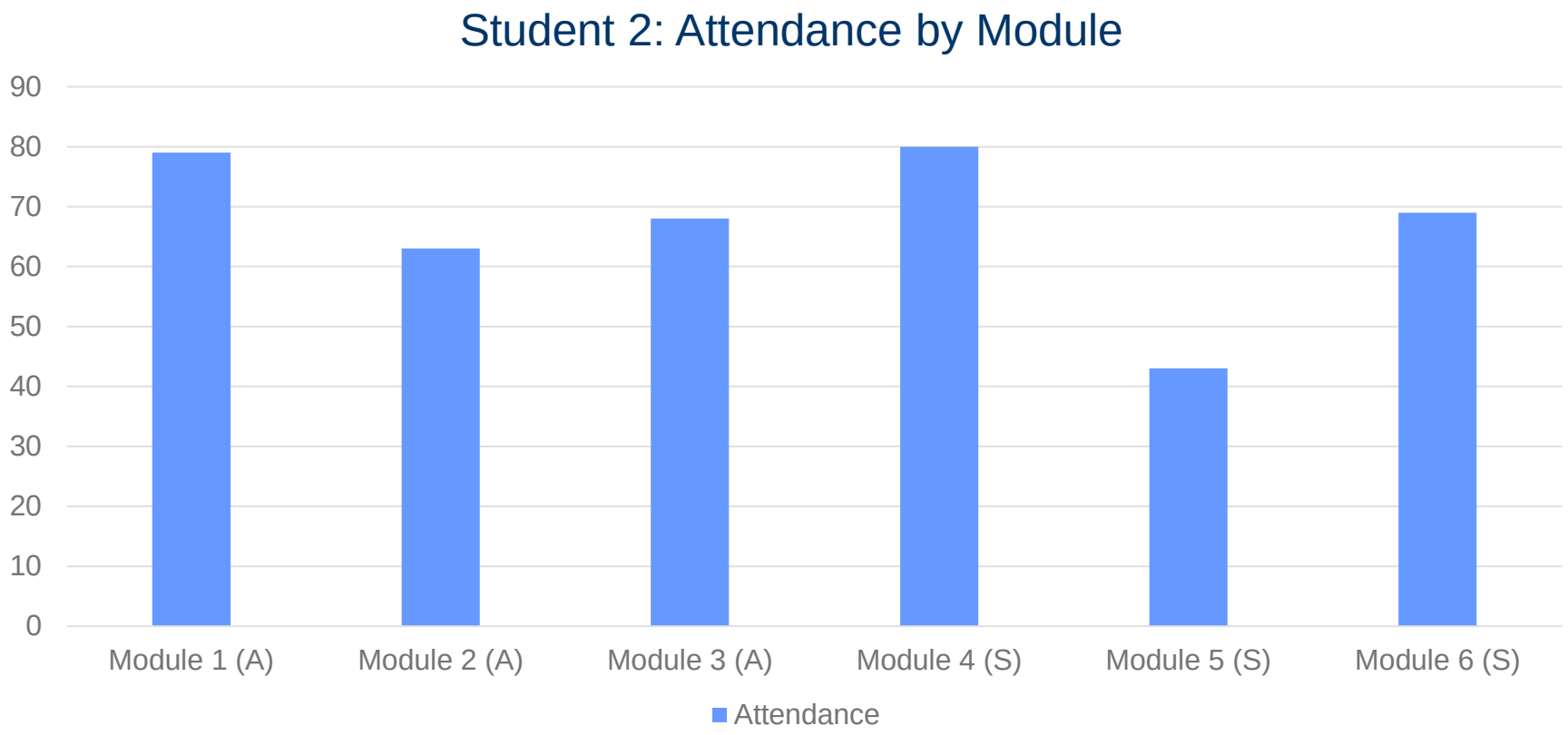

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- What happened to the cohort?
- 2774 students finished the year
- 95% of this cohort returned in the following year (2641)
- Average attendance in A/Y 12/13 of returners 67%
- Average attendance in 12/13 of non returners 53%

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Conclusions

- Correlation between grades and attendance at Derby
- Attendance rate differences by Gender and Ethnicity.
- Attendance rates of BME students should be considered as a factor when looking at the attainment gap.
- On average attendance rates on Autumn semester modules were higher than spring semester modules.
- Non returners had lower attendance rates on average.

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Further Work

- Follow up on the returners to see their progress this academic year and into their final year.
- What do varying module attendances on the same programme or subject area tell us?
- Work with Derby University project on the attainment gap of BME students.

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

- Questions

Turn up, Tune in or Drop out?

References

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