A Working Strategy for Improving International Students Pass Rates

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Abstract

This report reviews performance of International students enrolled in the GradDipIT, specifically changes to credit recognition for introductory modules. We found that making our introductory modules compulsory for all, regardless of previous qualifications, improved pass rates, as it eases students into New Zealand environments and students help each other.

Keywords: Computing education, International students, Pass Rates

1 Introduction

There are about 20 students in each of the two intakes per annum, many already holding IT degrees from India. The GradDipIT is a 120-credit qualification, split into 7 x 15-credit modules and 3 x 5-credit modules at level 6, ie. introductory modules designed to get newly-enrolled students "up to speed" with IT (since entry is open to anyone with any approved degree). This is done before the other modules. Our proposition was that more International students will pass if all do the introductory modules to settle into the new learning environment.

2 Overall pass rates

Pass rates were generally good (see Figure 1) but we were concerned about negative student experience. The change to compulsory was implemented from the Nov 2008 intake. The first semester shows an increase in pass rates.
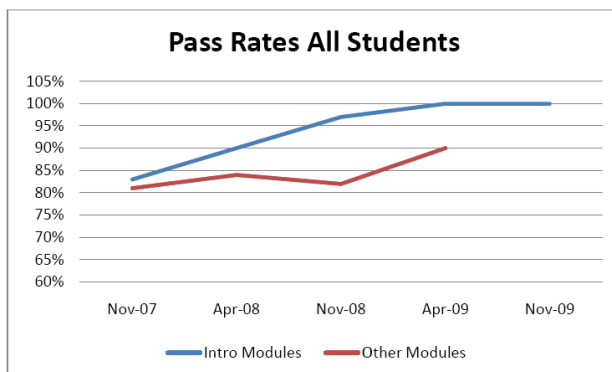

Figure 1: Paper process.

3 IT degree holding pass rates

Several of the struggling students actually already held an overseas IT degree, form India! Figure 2 shows that outcomes for that student cohort improved considerably. It was also noticed that outcomes for students without IT degrees improved, most likely because these students benefit from their peers with IT degrees.
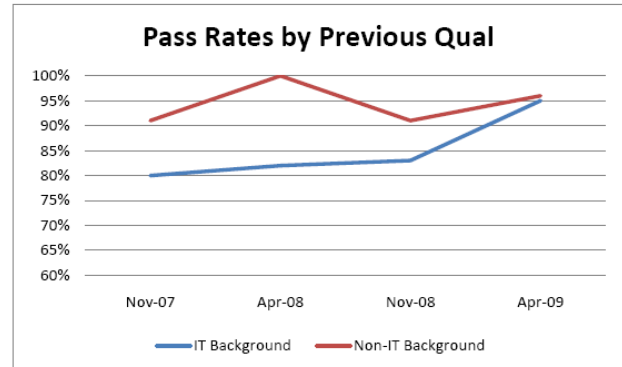

Figure 2: Paper process.

4 Conclusion

Figure 3 shows that pass rates across all modules improved as credit recognition declined.
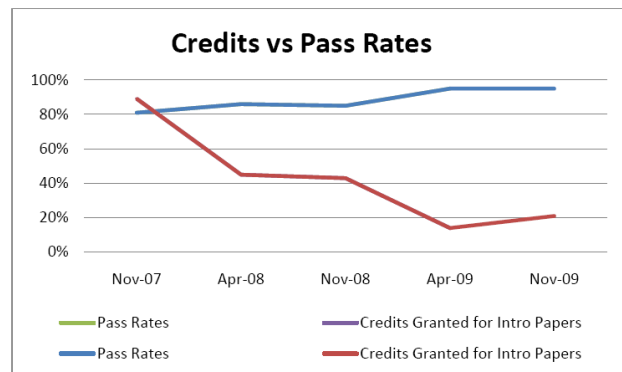

Figure 3: Paper process.

It seems the introductory modules serves as good mechanism to help students settle into New Zealand learning environment.

5 References

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