



# **back on course**

The University of Manchester  
Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Sarah McKernan and Katie Weeds

# Facts and figures (2006/7)

Non-continuation following year of entry

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How many (in numbers)?	28,785
Lowest % for UK university?	1%

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How many (in numbers)?	28,785
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Highest % for UK university?	



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% 'young' students?	

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% 'young' students?	7.4%
% 'mature' students?	

# Facts and figures (2006/7)

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Highest % for UK university?	20%
% 'young' students?	7.4%
% 'mature' students?	14.8%

# What does **back on course** do?

- Aims to increase number of students who complete higher education studies by offering information, advice and guidance (IAG) on opportunities available
  - Identify further actions that could improve retention
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# Background

The background features a stylized figure composed of overlapping circles and curved lines in light green and light blue. The figure appears to be a person with arms and legs, rendered in a minimalist, abstract style. The circles are semi-transparent, allowing the colors to blend where they overlap.

- 45,000 UK students leave full-time HE early
  - National Audit Office report 'Staying the course: The retention of students in higher education' (July 2007) emphasised the importance of student retention for the economy, HEIs and individual students
  - HEFCE-funded project, collaborative approach to support students' return to higher education
  - Individual retention strategies not affected
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# Who is involved?



- HEFCE – provide funding
  - HEI partners – initially in NW
  - UCAS – introduce project and evaluate
  - OU – overall co-ordination and delivering information, advice and guidance (IAG) service
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# What does this mean for students?



- Encourage (re)consideration of options
  - Signpost to sources of advice/support
  - Information on support at different HEIs
  - Impartial advice on options
  - Advocate if necessary
  - Support them to take responsibility for process
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# How do we work?



- Based at The Open University's North West regional office
  - Support staff and experienced Advisers, used to working with HE students
  - Telephone and email contact
  - Website
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# back on course pilot



- North West pilot
    - until July 2010
    - nearly 2000 student referrals made
    - all NW HEI agreed to support in some way
  - roll-out from July 2010 to July 2012 if HEFCE agrees
  - develop model for sustainability beyond July 2012
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# What would we like from you?

- Information about who to contact for returning students considering application:
    - Admissions
    - Student support
    - Careers
    - Financial support
    - Academic skills
    - Disability
  - To be aware of **back on course** when supporting existing students
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# What have we learned?



- mixed awareness of financial options
- didn't talk to anyone
- no careers advice
- appreciate opportunity to discuss and reflect

# Contact **back on course**

The background features two stylized human figures. The figure on the left is green, and the figure on the right is blue. They are composed of simple circles for heads and curved lines for bodies, suggesting movement or interaction.

[contact@backoncourse.ac.uk](mailto:contact@backoncourse.ac.uk)

[www.backoncourse.ac.uk](http://www.backoncourse.ac.uk)

0161 902 9823

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# Further information

The background features two stylized human figures. The figure on the left is light green, and the figure on the right is light blue. Both figures have a circular head and a curved, open-bottom body, suggesting a sense of movement or connection.

Please contact Sarah McKernan

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