

International Programme in Addiction Studies (IPAS): an overview of the first three years of implementation.

Anna Williams, Kim Wolff, Femke Buisman-Pijlman, Mary Loos, Kyle Dyer, Elizabeth Eustis-Turf, Charles O'Keeffe, John Strang, J. Randy Koch, Robert Ali, Robert Balster, Rod Irvine.

Introduction

The International Programme in Addiction Studies (IPAS) was launched in 2008 with the aim of contributing to the international training of professionals in the Addictions field by increasing access to a state-of-the-art advanced educational experience to students from more remote parts of the world.

The programme is a collaborative effort involving three universities (University of Adelaide, Virginia Commonwealth University and King's College London) and delivers the IPAS Master of Science in Addiction Studies. Upon completion of the degree, students receive a diploma conferred by all three partner universities.

Method

An overview of the programme's development and delivery in the last three years is presented. Data has been drawn from the programme records and students' feedback. Three areas are covered:

1. Curriculum and Delivery
2. The IPAS Students
3. Programme Evaluation (based on 22 responses from 2010/2011)

Programme Overview

1. Curriculum and Delivery

Host University:

University of Adelaide: 2008-2011
VCU: 2011 to present

Mode of delivery:

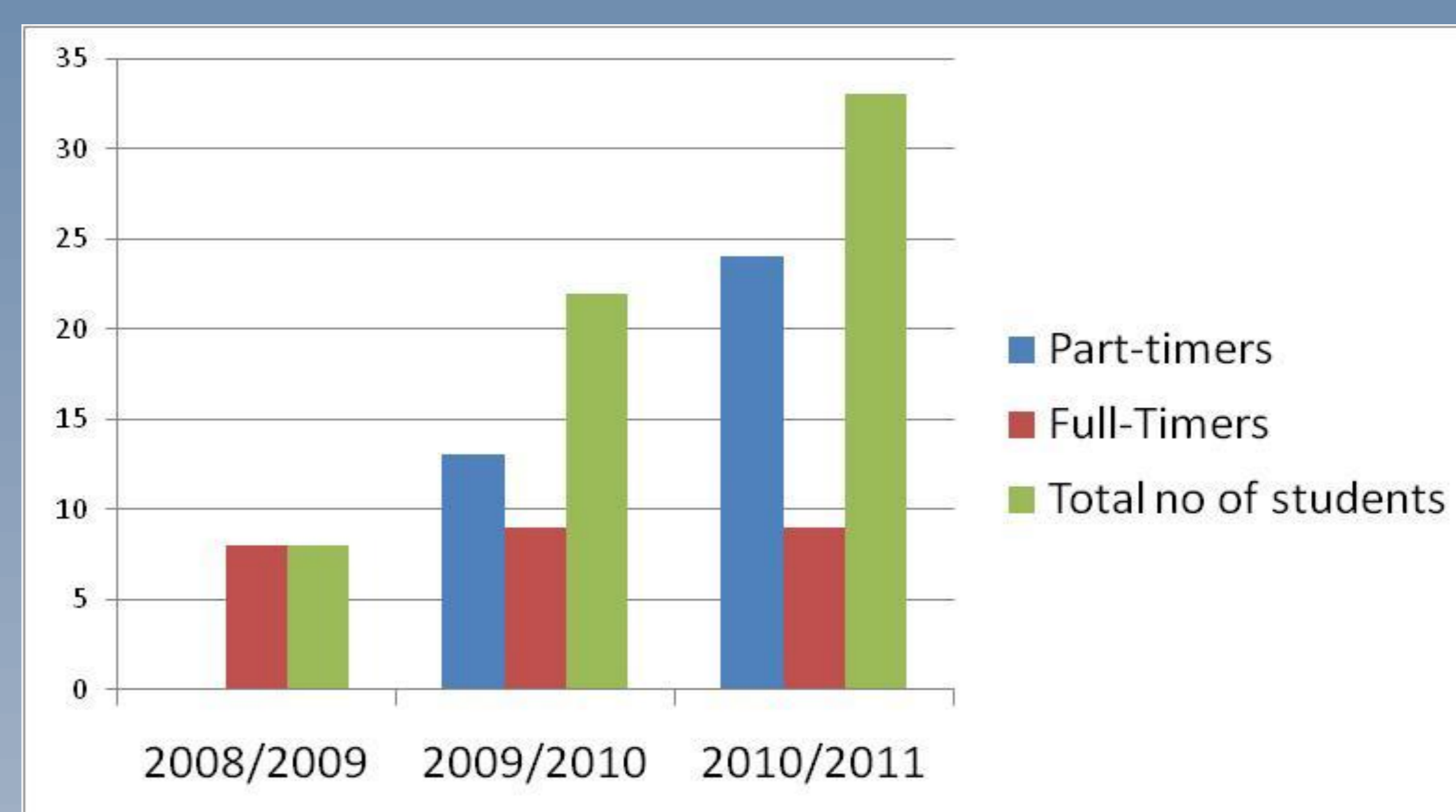
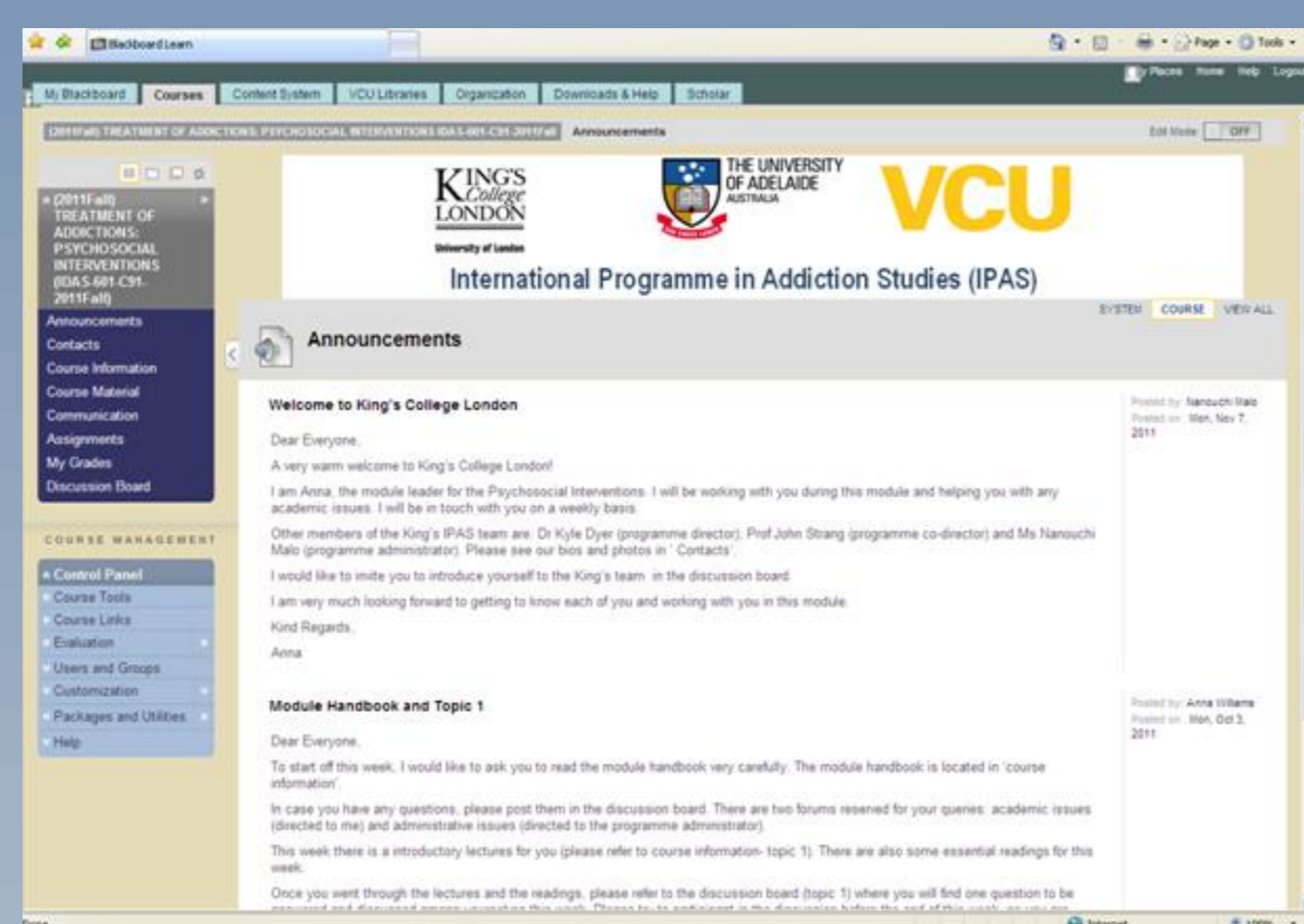
36 credits delivered online through an interactive web-interface: Blackboard

Options:

- Full-time (12-month)
- Part-time (24-month)

Scholarship funds:

Reckitt-Benckiser Pharmaceuticals



The year is divided into four 11-week terms. Part-time students take one course per term as opposed to two courses for full-time students. Lectures are offered by leading authorities in each of these subject areas:

Term 1: August to October

Addiction Policy
Biological Bases of Addiction

Term 2: November to February

Treatment of Addiction: Psychosocial Interventions
Research Methodology in Addictions

Term 3: February to May

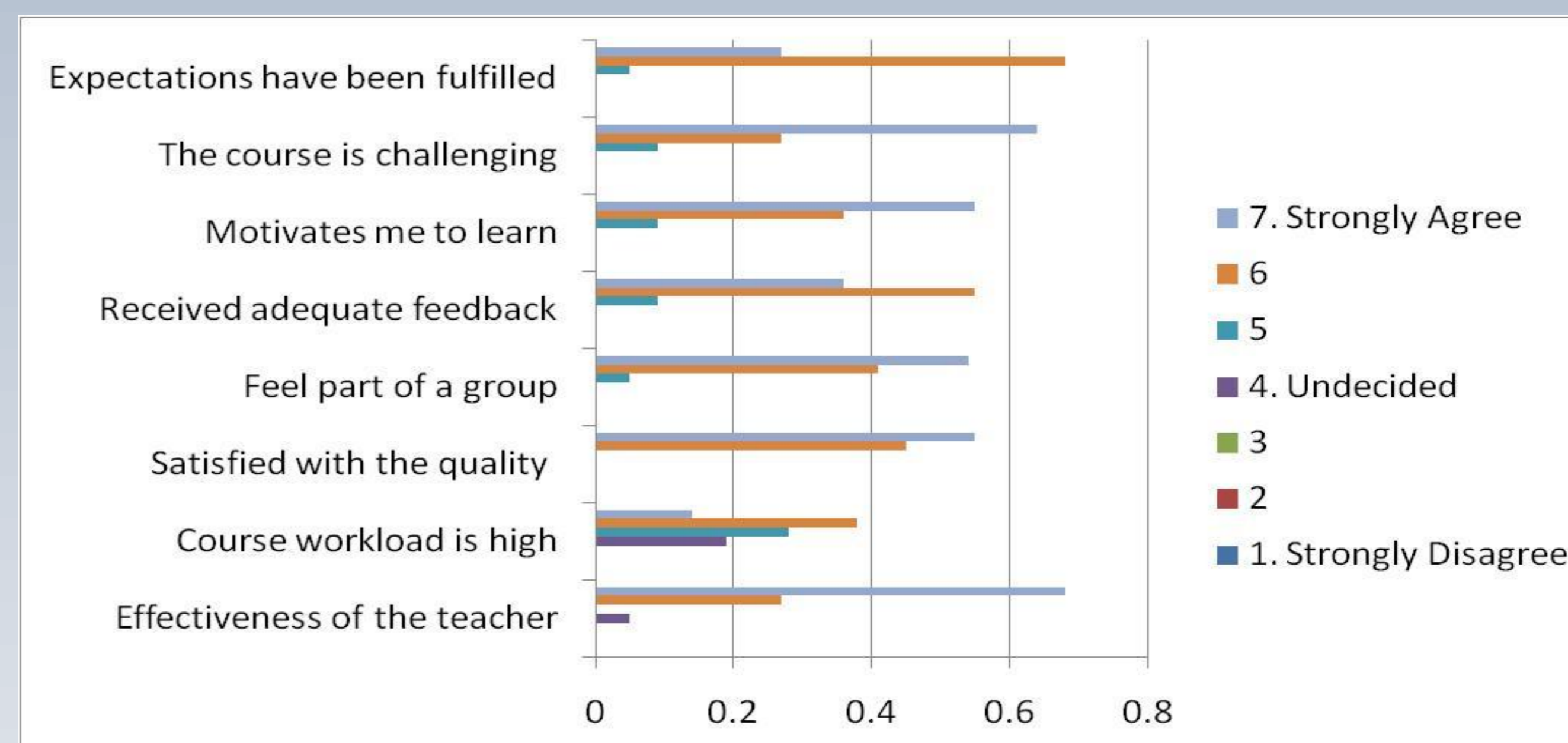
Public Health Issues and Approaches to Addiction
Treatment of Addiction: Pharmacotherapies

Term 4: May to August

Treatment of Addiction: Critical Issues
Research Project in Addictions

3. Programme Evaluation

Students' feedback highlighted the high quality of the course but also noted the unexpectedly high student workload.



4. Conclusion

This special international collaboration has offered students an exceptional chance to receive high quality training by distance education and combining the expertise of the three universities has resulted in a strong programme.

Challenges identified: improving distant student-tutor interaction and combining the three universities' rules/regulations.

Future developments: increasing student numbers and geographical coverage, the continued update of its curriculum and use of Technology Enhanced Learning resources.

2. The IPAS Students

The programme has attracted students with diverse professional and cultural backgrounds. Student numbers have grown steadily and most students are based in the US and Australia (with a significant proportion from Asia, Africa and Europe).

Students' professional background:

- Pharmacy
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Social work
- Government planning
- Research
- Military service
- Advocacy
- Counselling

Regions of origin- 16 countries in total:

- North America
- South America
- Europe
- The Middle East
- Africa
- Asia
- Australia

Contact

More information on:

<http://www.vcu.edu/idas/IPAS.html>

Presenter's email :

anna.v.williams@kcl.ac.uk