



## **Research into Higher Education Course Choices for Students Studying Level 3 Travel & Tourism Courses in Herefordshire and Worcestershire**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This is a survey of Level 3 students, currently studying Travel and Tourism in Herefordshire and Worcestershire about their intentions for progressing to Higher Education. It is hoped that the research will inform HE and FE provision in the region and help institutions to develop a range of progression opportunities that reflect the needs of the students.

### **SURVEY**

Course leaders at all 5 Further Education colleges running level 3 programmes in Sport in Herefordshire and Worcestershire were asked to survey current students (either first or second year) by electronic and paper based surveys. The survey was informally trialled with course leaders, and then conducted in June 2008. The responses were collated in Survey Monkey. The survey of students was run alongside a survey of FE Lecturers in Travel and Tourism.

### **SAMPLE SIZE**

The survey aimed to make full use of the HWLLN network and thus the survey was sent to all 5 colleges offering Level 3 qualifications in Travel and Tourism and related courses.

### **RESPONSE RATE**

Students: 61 students responded from 3 colleges.

## RESULTS

**Q1 & Q2 were filters to ensure that all respondents were students on Travel and Tourism related courses at colleges in Herefordshire and Worcestershire**

This identified that:

49.2% of respondents were studying A Levels

50.8% were studying a Level 3 Vocational Qualification (BTEC National Diploma)

**Q3. Are you considering progressing to Higher Education? (61 respondents)**

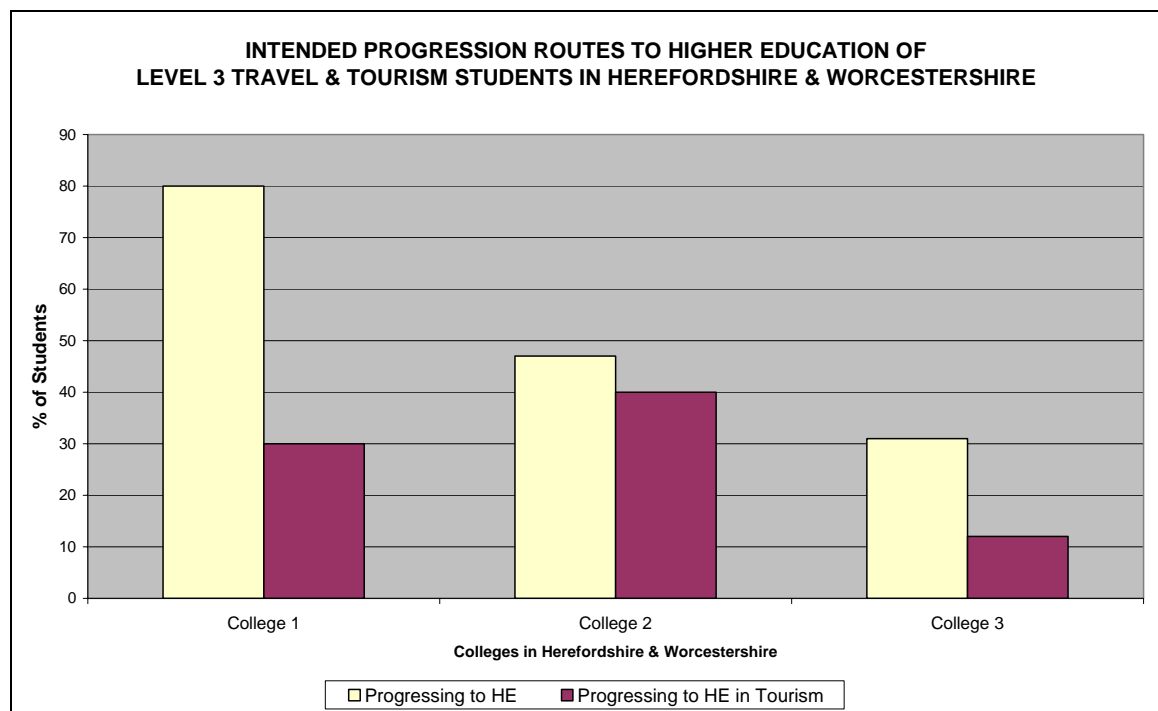
Yes	59.0%
No	41.0%

The responses provide intended general progression rates:

College 1 – providing A Levels	80.0%
College 2 – providing BTEC National Diploma	46.7%
College 3 – providing BTEC National Diploma	31.3%

With intended progression rates in Travel and Tourism is:

College 1 – providing A Levels	30.0%
College 2 – providing BTEC National Diploma	40.0%
College 3 – providing BTEC National Diploma	12.0%



**Q4a. What sort of course are you considering? (36 respondents who answered Yes to Q3)**

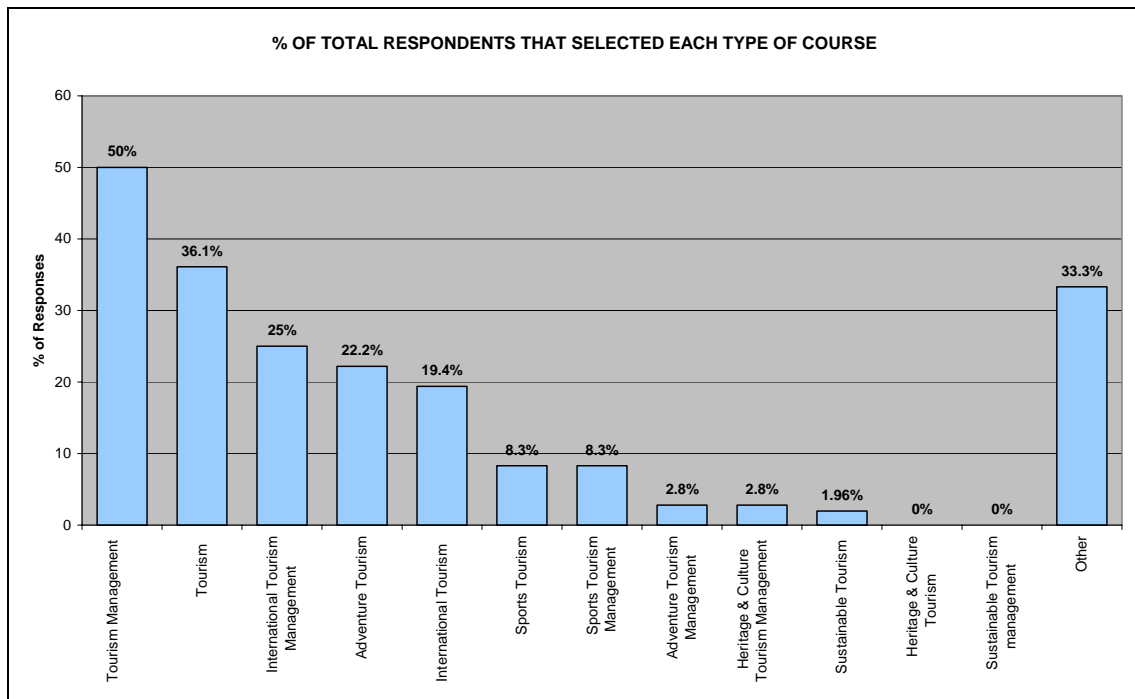
Undergraduate degree	52.8%
Undecided	38.9%
Foundation degree	8.3%

**Q4b. Are you interested in studying ... (36 respondents who answered Yes to Q3)**

Full time	91.7%
Part-time	8.3%

**Q4c. What sort of course are you interested in? (SELECT YOUR TOP 3 OPTIONS)  
(36 respondents who answered Yes to Q3)**

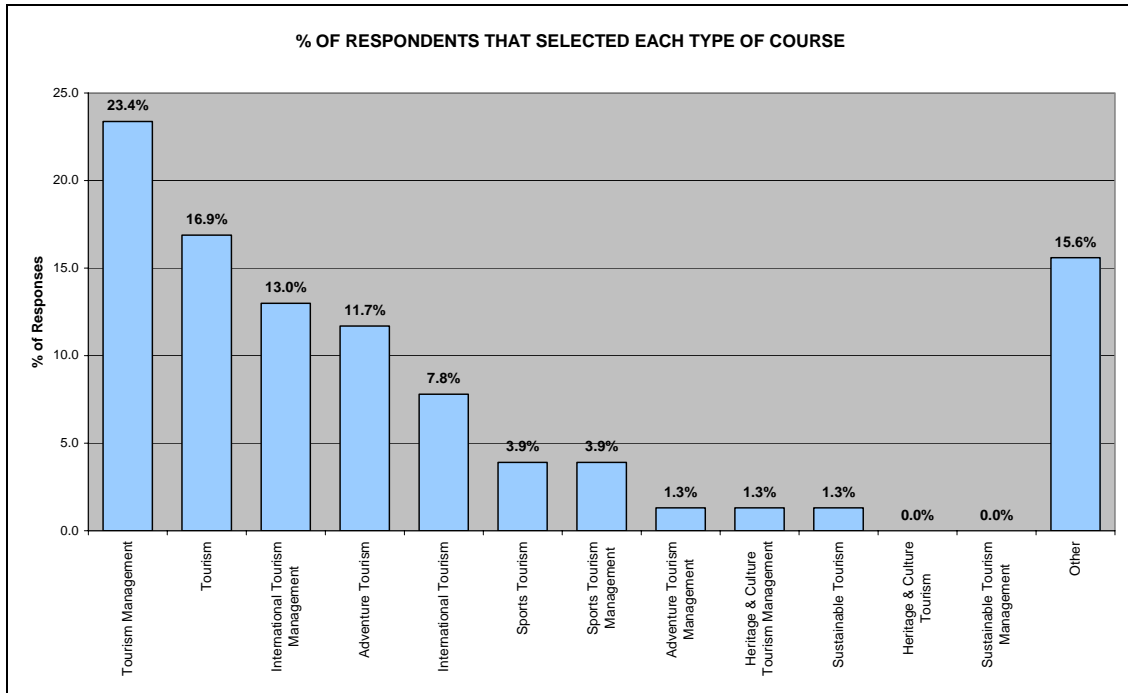
Percentages show the proportion of respondents who indicated a preference for each course:



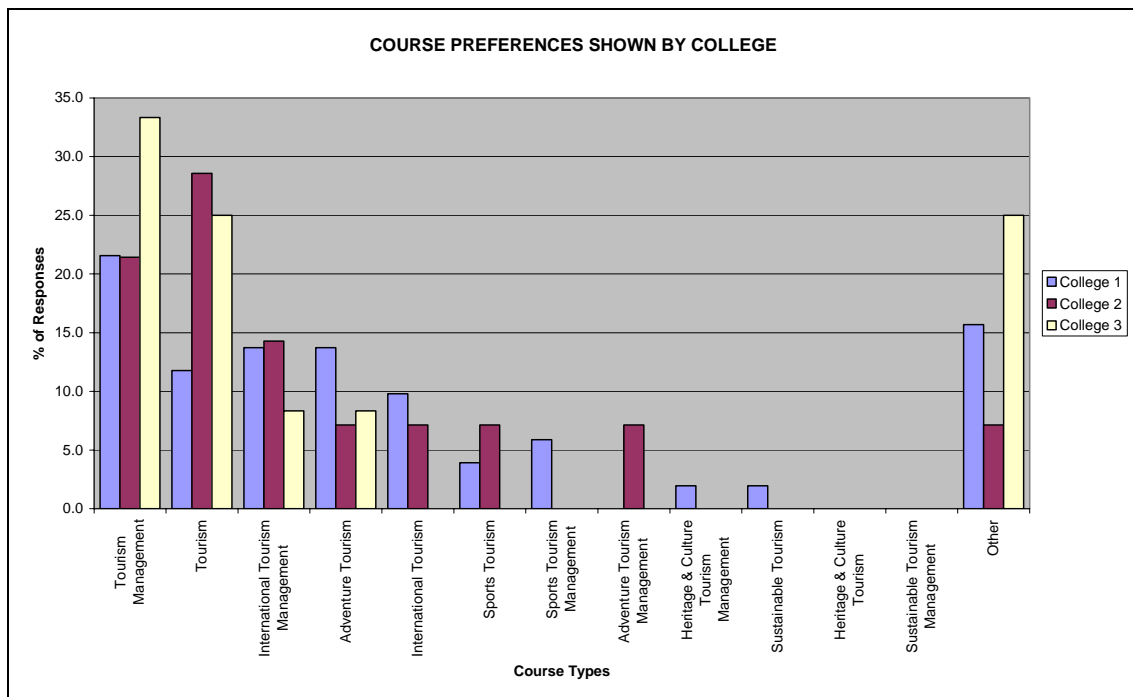
The courses in the 'Other' category included:

- Aviation management
- Business
- Psychology
- Marketing
- Business / law
- Business / accounts
- Primary teaching
- Events management \* 2
- Not Sure \* 3

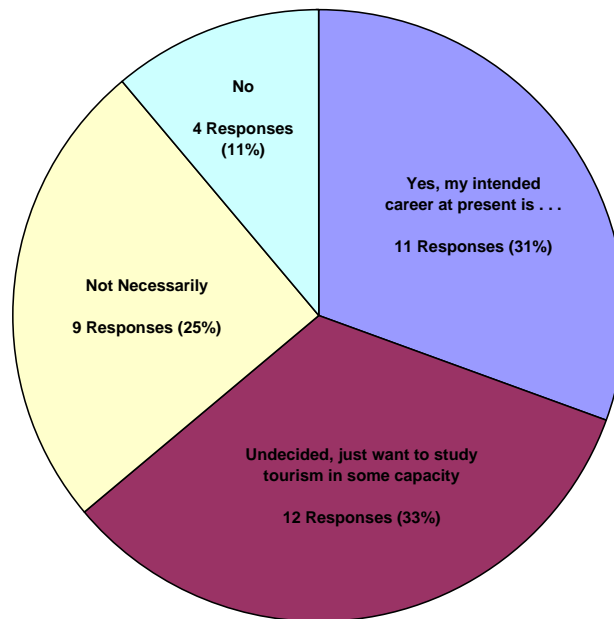
As respondents selected multiple options a clearer picture is provided by considering the percentage of responses for each course.



In order to identify differences in the distribution of choices between the three participating colleges the responses for each course are also shown as percentages of the responses from each college. This shows marked differences in preferences between the three institutions: with College #3 (providing BTEC National Diploma) showing strong interest in a few courses, whilst College #1 (providing A and AS levels) showing a broader spread of interest.



**Q4d. Is it your intention that your choice of career will lead to a career in Travel & Tourism or a Tourism related industry? (36 respondents who answered Yes to Q3)**

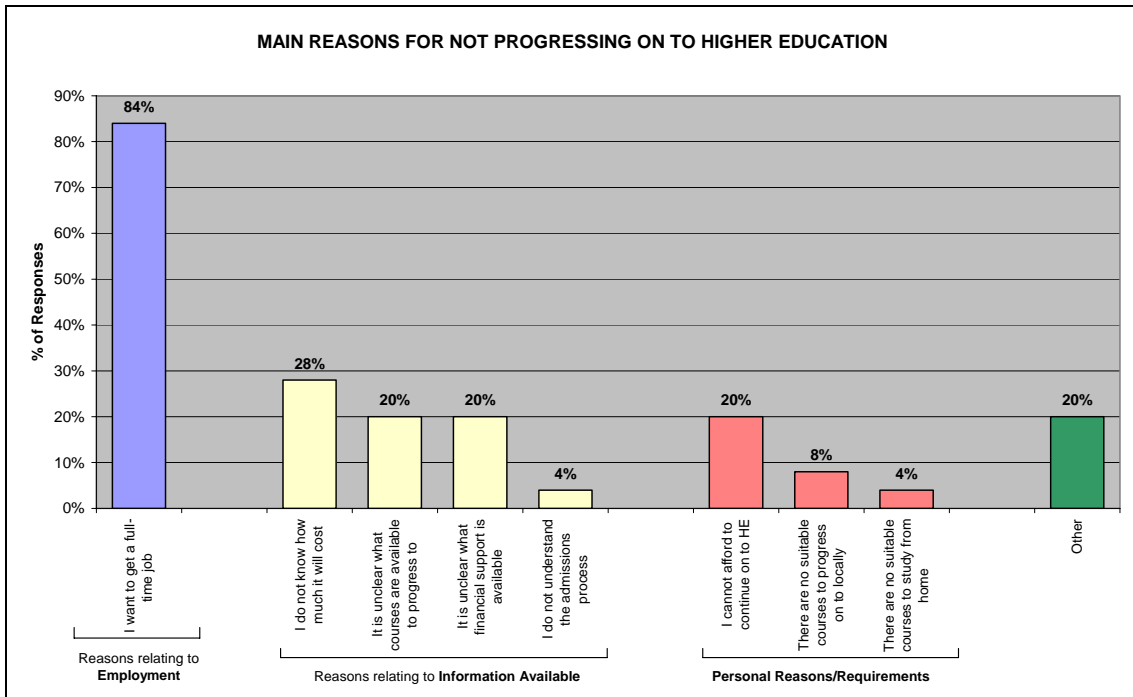


Those students that said 'Yes' provided information regarding their intended career at present, which included:

- Cabin Crew (x2)
- Air Steward
- In Aviation
- Air Traffic Control Officer
- Events Coordinator
- Events Management
- Hotel Manager/Events
- No answer (x3)

**Q5. What are your reasons for not progressing on to HE? (Select as many boxes as apply) (25 respondents who answered No to Q3)**

Percentages show the proportion of respondents who indicated a preference:



The reasons given in the 'Other' category include:

- University does not appeal to me
- Joining army as a pilot
- I do not know which course I wish to take
- I don't want to because I would rather do something and learn at the same time and University doesn't appeal to me.
- No reason given

## ANALYSIS

The survey was conducted in June 2008 when most second year students had already made their progression choices. Thus most of the respondents were first year students, considering their choices for 2009. All students were studying level 3 programmes at Colleges in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Overall the responses reveal a moderate degree of intention to proceed to Higher Education, with 59% planning to continue their studies at HE level. Of these students the great majority were looking for full-time studies, with a clear preference for BSc / BA courses, and there was little interest in Foundation degrees. These preferences were evenly reflected across all three of the institutions that contributed to the research. However there was a wide variation in intended progression rates between institutions, with very high levels (80%) for the institution providing A' level / AS qualifications, although a large proportion of these were intending to study subjects other than travel and tourism. There were lower progression rates at the colleges with vocational qualifications (46%, 31%) although a higher proportion of those who did intend to continue into HE wished to do so within the same subject area.

Although most of the respondents who intended to progress to HE were hoping to study full-time, it is noticeable that a significant number of the respondents who did not anticipate progressing to HE cited reasons that related to the costs and loss of potential income from studying full-time. This could suggest that students may be unaware of part-time / work-based options or of the availability of financial support for Higher Education.

As anticipated, respondents selected a wide variety of courses. However several key features can be identified:

First, *Tourism Management* and *Tourism* were the 2 most popular choices with half of all respondents selecting *Tourism Management*. These choices suggests that many students are seeking a generalist degree in the area, or are currently unsure of the areas that they might wish to specialise in. This also reflects students career intentions with a large proportion (33%) keen to work in the sector but undecided about career intentions.

Second, overall *Tourism*, *International Tourism* and *Adventure Tourism* were the three most popular areas of study, whilst *Heritage and Culture Tourism* and *Sustainable Tourism* were least popular. Possibly this reflects the teaching of travel and tourism, with sustainability units commonly being taught in the second year.

Third, the inclusion of the term 'management' in the course title appeared to increase the appeal of *Tourism* and *International Tourism* courses. However it should be noted that the majority of students who selected *Tourism* also selected *Tourism Management*, whilst a small number of respondents selected titles that mostly or all included the term 'management'. Thus it seems likely that students are primarily motivated by the subject area, whilst a smaller group are looking for vocationally relevant management courses, and are less concerned about the subject area.

Fourth, 33.3% of respondents indicated areas of study outside of the list of potential course titles. The responses provide some evidence for a demand for degree level qualifications in events management. They also indicate a strong correlation between A' level *Tourism* and general Business courses (16.7% of A / AS students who intended to progress to HE listed business, marketing or business law).

The research identifies that the major reason for not progressing into HE was the desire to enter employment. Given the vocational nature of travel and tourism it is likely that

proportion of the students leaving would find employment within the travel industry, and that they might return to HE later in their careers. However this would require further research to establish.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research identifies the level of intention to progress to HE amongst students studying L3 qualification in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, it also identifies student course choice preferences, and reasons for not progressing to HE. Whilst the research was conducted with first year students it reflects differences between institutions and between qualifications.

It is hoped that the research will inform HE and FE provision in the region and help institutions to develop a range of progression opportunities that better reflect the needs of the students.