

The influence of route of entry on academic achievements and attrition in a Pre-Registration Midwifery education programme.



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Background

- Strategies to improve recruitment and retention of undergraduate midwifery students is crucial to address the current midwifery shortage (RCM, 2017)
- Admissions tutors recruiting to midwifery programmes are required to ensure both wider and higher recruitment rates while also keeping up academic standards.
- Widening access to include non-traditional qualifications has been criticised for having a negative impact on the retention of students in other healthcare disciplines (Kevern et al 1999, Brimble, 2015). It is not known if midwifery is impacted in the same way.

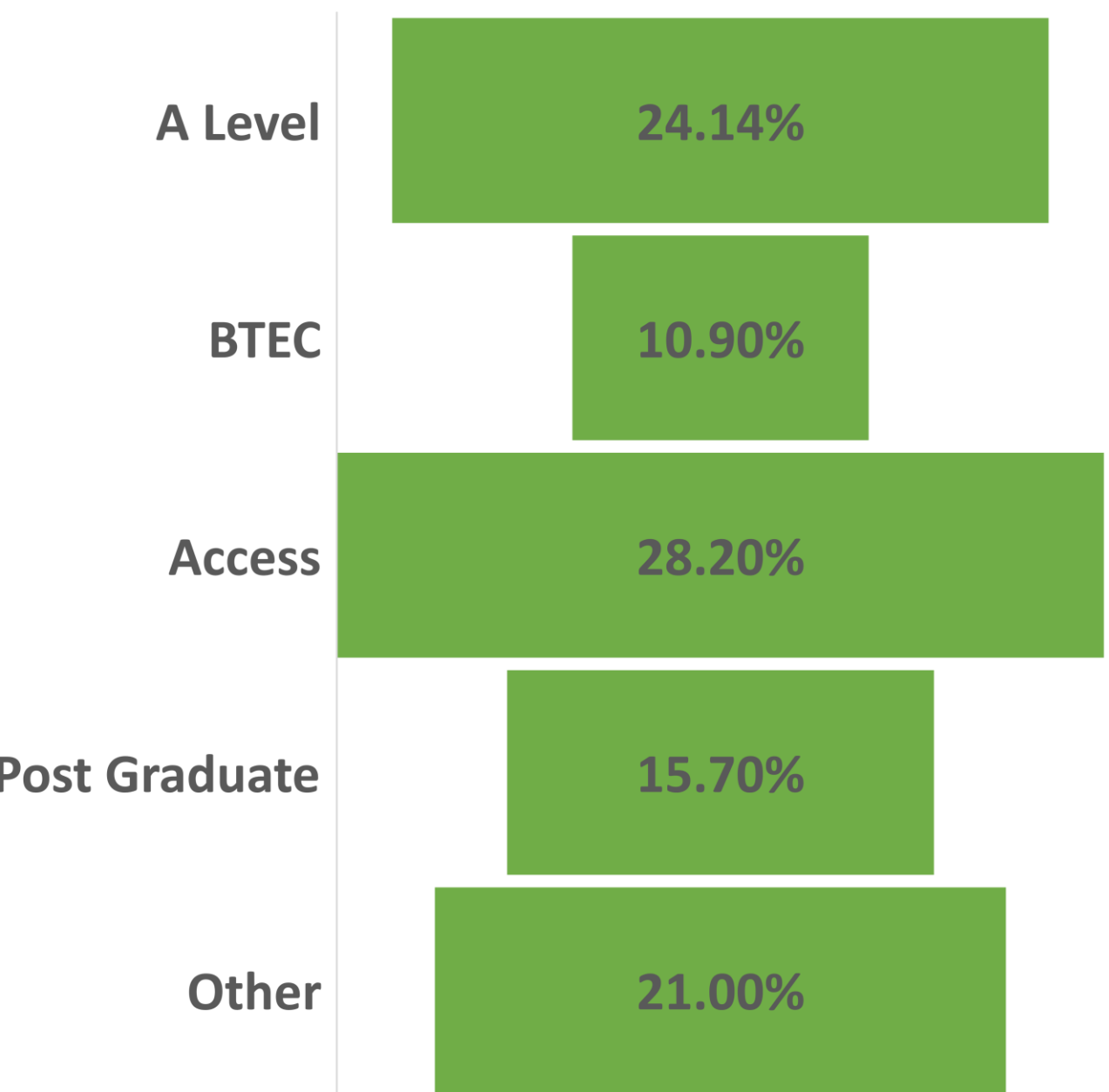


Fig 1: Percentages by entry Routes

Research question

To what extent does route of entry affect academic performance in a Pre-Registration Midwifery programme?

Aims

- To identify if there is a relationship between entry route to midwifery education and academic achievement.
- To explore if entry route predicts course completion rates.

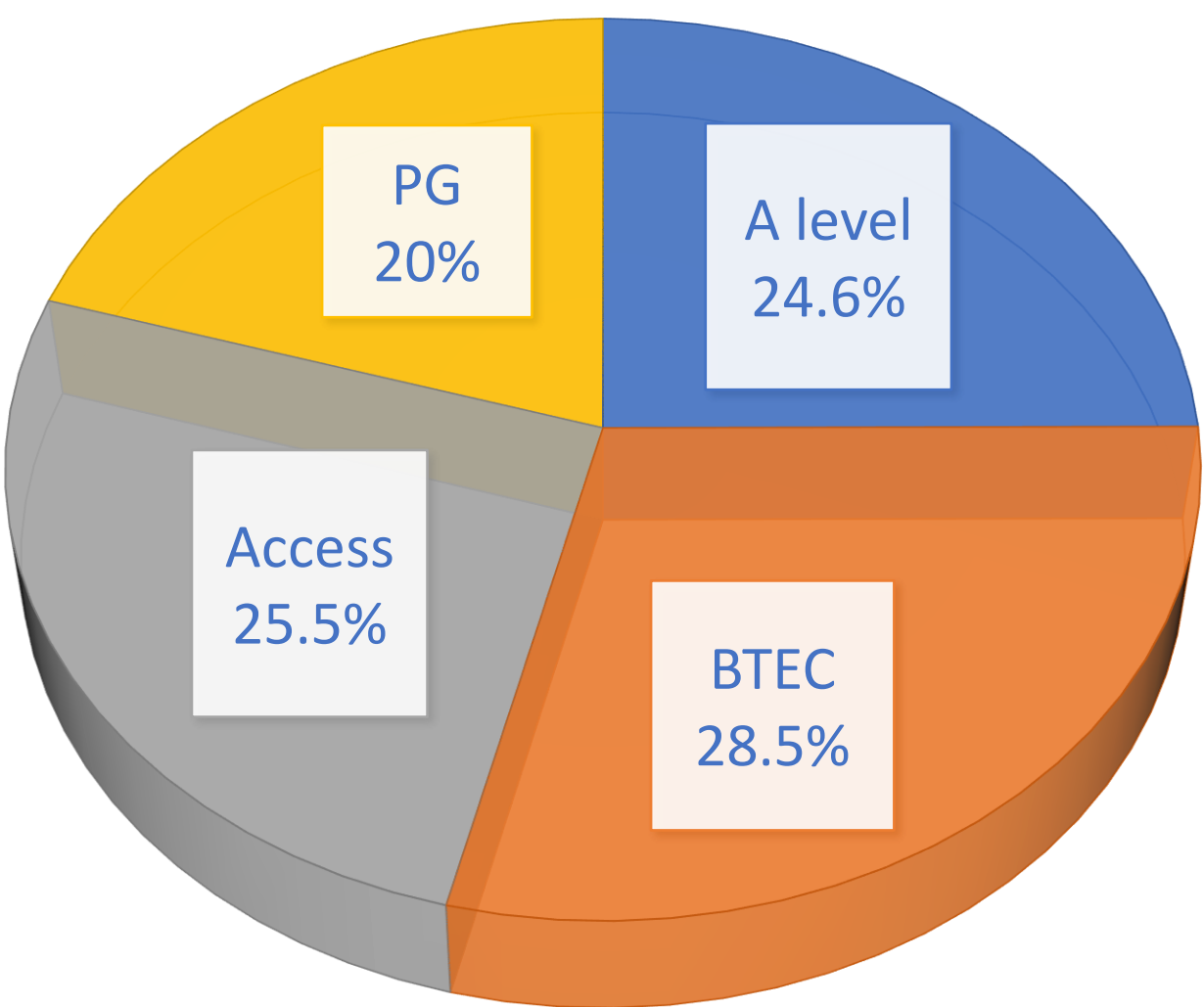


Fig.2 : Attrition rates categorized by entry route.

Method

- Retrospective observation cohort study as part of a wider doctoral thesis, on factors that influence success in a pre-registration midwifery programme.
- Data from university admission and student record systems between September 2014 and September 2018 in a UK University.
- Variables collected : Route of entry (A Level, BTEC, Access Course, Post Graduate and Other). Degree attained and numbers leaving the course prior to completion.
- Outcome Measure : (i) numbers achieving 1st class, 2:1 and above (ii) Numbers leaving the course

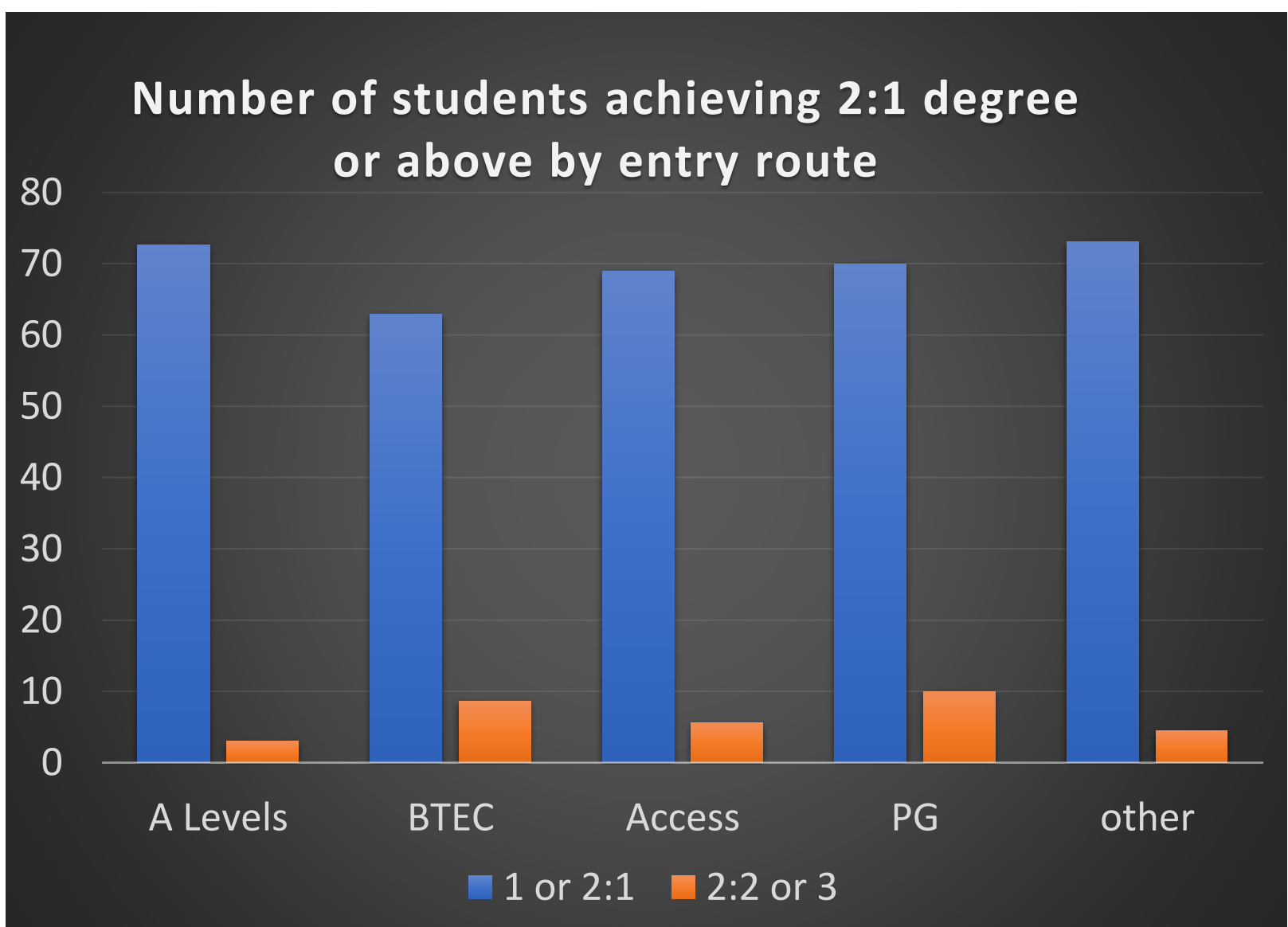


Fig 3 : Achievement by entry route.

Summary of Key Findings

- The total cohort included 335 students of which 16 have not yet completed. Therefore this study focused on 319 students who had either completed or left the programme.
- 24.1% (77) of the cohort entered via the A Level route, 10.9% (35) BTEC, 28.2% (90) Access course, 15.7% (50) with a Post Graduate degree and 21% (67) with other qualifications (Fig.1).
- Of the 319 students 24.1% (77) withdrew from the programme. Attrition rates were very similar amongst A Level, BTEC and Access students (24.6%, 28.5% and 25.5% respectively). However only 20% of postgraduate students left the course without completing (Fig.2).
- 242/319 students completed the degree. There was no significant difference in students attaining 2:1 and above regardless of entry route ($p=0.11$) - A level students (97%) and other entry routes (88-94%) (Fig.3).
- Comparing across non - A level entry routes there was no difference in proportions attaining either a 2:1 and above ($p=0.89$) or a first class degree ($p=0.96$) between BTEC, Post Graduate, Access and Other.
- There was however proportionally more A Level students attaining first class degrees (76%) versus other entry routes (61%) and **this was statistically significant** ($p=0.04$).

Conclusion and Future Directions

Non-traditional routes of entry to midwifery education do not have a material impact on course completion and do not predict higher attrition rates.

Further research is needed to explore the relationship between academic achievement and prediction of course completion by exploring other variables such as ethnicity, age and social deprivation index.

References

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