

## Description

This session was a discussion of the factors determining how students choose their HE institution: course content, subject's reputation, social life, standard of teaching. Tony's research also underlined that students often look at the department's research reputation as well as its teaching reputation.

### The rationale for this research was threefold:

1. Given questions of wider participation, emphasis need be on what new entrant historians anticipate the discipline to be;
2. Impact of curriculum 2000: changes in schools provision might have had an impact on expectations of university history;
3. The trend towards vocationalism: would be useful to know what students want from degree level history in terms of skills.

## Findings:

Factors determining how students choose their HE institution: course content, subject's reputation, social life, standard of teaching. Also, and importantly, Tony's research underlined that students often look at the department's research reputation as well as its teaching reputation.

Type of course favoured, as expected, tended to be towards twentieth - century Europe, especially Nazism, Stalinism and military history. Not surprisingly, low number wanting gender histories, methodology courses, heritage studies and economic history courses.

History is seen as being a good subject to develop skills in: written exposition; self - organisation; and intellectual analysis. Seen as poor at providing: public speaking; teamwork; time management; leadership and communication.

## Implications:

First - year course tutors need to be aware that students do not enter history with the skills they might expect. Need for closer attention to the skills side of history, since AS/A2 levels are so content driven. This is important since there are growing cohorts of pre - HE students that are aware that they need to read a degree that scores them points on the CV by being skills - development related. Appears that many expect HE history to be a matter of spoonfeeding; hence, resistance to idea of independent learning at university.

Many pre - HE students unaware of the range of career trajectories history has to offer. In Tony's words, 'it appears that we suffer a major image problem'.