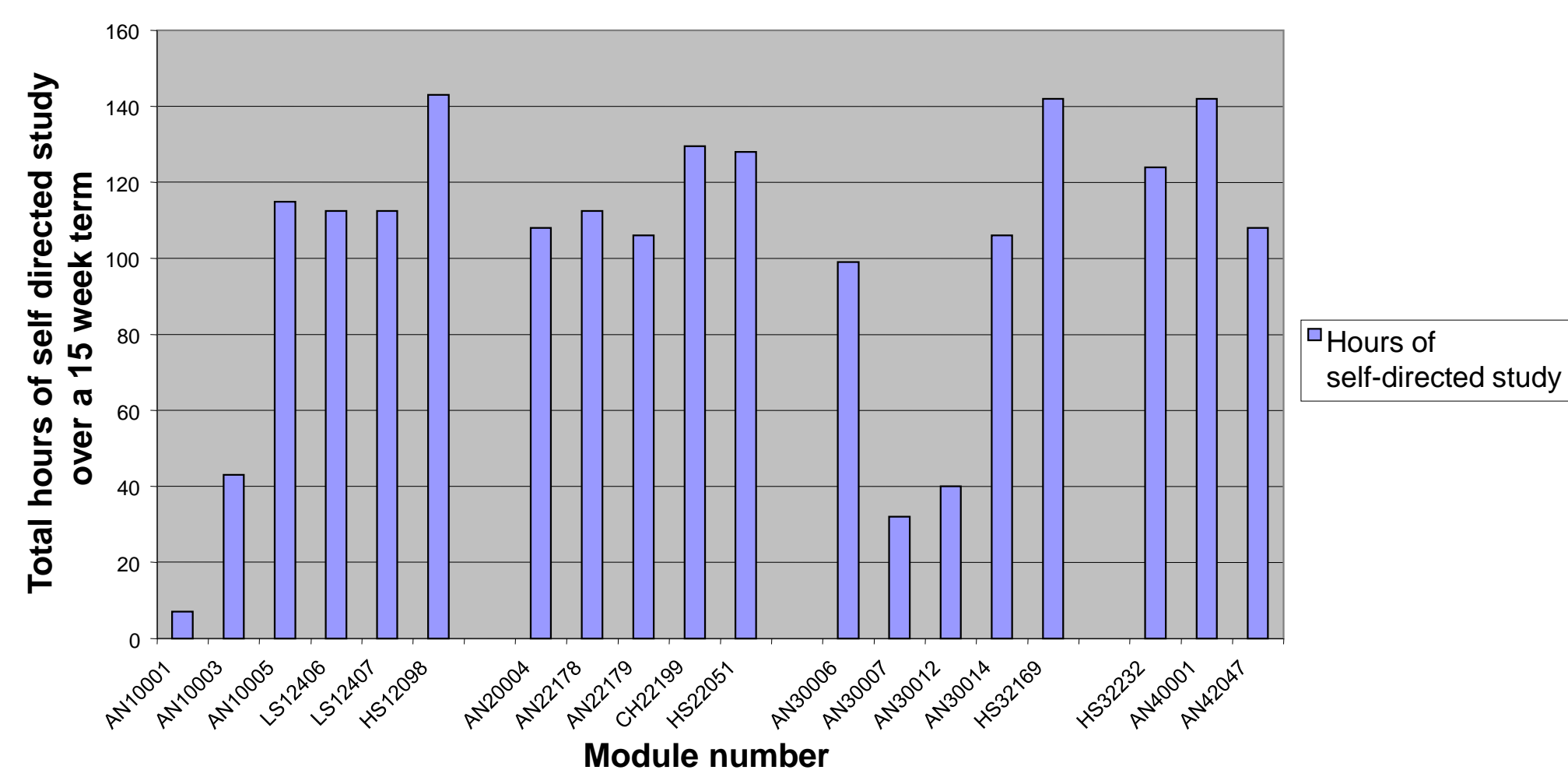


# SELF DIRECTED LEARNING WITHIN THE VETERINARY NURSING DEGREE

## Abstract

One of the main features of higher education is the ability of students to undertake self directed study. However, the level of self directed study and the preparation which students receive prior to embarking on their studies can vary between different educational institutions and programme subjects. A review of self directed study within the veterinary nursing degree programme was carried out using questionnaires, and examination of module handbooks. Results revealed that students were expected to embark on high levels of self directed study from the start of their time at university a factor which may contribute to the number of students who leave university within their first year. Also students did not feel prepared to successfully carry out self directed study. The central role of the lecturer in teaching students how to learn and providing information about self directed learning was apparent.

Examination of self directed study requirements in theory modules



## Results

62 questionnaires (a response rate of 95.4%) were returned comprising:

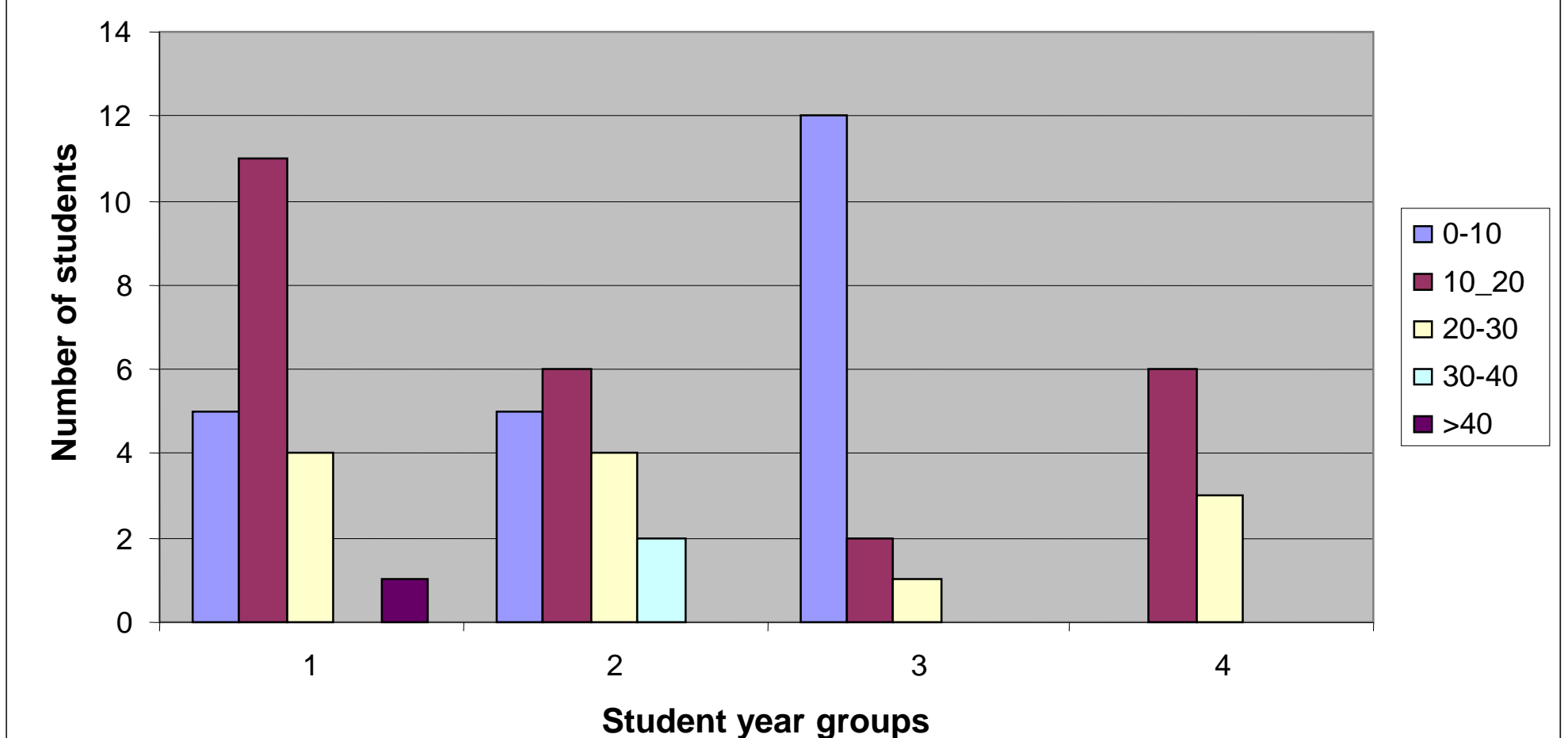
21 first year students

17 second year student

15 third year students

9 final year students

Average number of hours spent on self directed study each week



## TREND 1:

**In order to carry out self directed study successfully self discipline and motivation was required.**

- 'You need much more self discipline and motivation to make the most of it.'
- 'Have to be strong willed to ensure you keep on top of all the work there is to do.'
- 'I have to force myself to study the weakest/least favourite subjects.'
- 'The motivation for self directed study in subjects that are least enjoyable is hard. Very little is taught about time management.'

## TREND 2:

**Students felt that they were not given any directions in how to carry out self directed study or in how to plan their study time:**

- 'Difficult to carry out when not given any directions on how to do it.'
- 'It would be helpful to have information on time planning to help with this at university. As well as this, some feedback from lecturers.'
- 'Some lecturers need to give more direction – it's all very well saying study this for next week but which aspects?'

**CONCLUSIONS** First year students can find the transition from didactic to self directed learning difficult. They need to be aware of self directed study before being asked to undertake this. The role of the lecturer is central in supporting students and motivating them to want to learn and find out information for themselves.