Retention and Student Success Policy and Framework: Summary and Guidance

(Approved by Academic Board: 8 June 2011)

1. **Scope:** the Retention and Student Success Framework covers all students, home and international, on taught undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, including those at partner colleges and distance learning students.

2. **Governance** of the University Retention and Student Success Framework should be through the University’s Executive and Academic Board, via the ADC sub-committee. ADC will monitor and evaluate retention and student success and review the framework on an annual basis. Faculties will be responsible through their Executive Deans and Heads of Department for setting, implementing and monitoring targets.

3. **Purpose and context:** The University’s Corporate Plan 2008-13 (2008) is designed to deliver a positive student experience. The central theme of the Plan is to ‘Improve the Student Experience’, and one of its objectives is to support and enhance student transition, progression and achievement. In general terms, across the university, retention is not a major issue, with the university meeting its HESA benchmarks. However, the university strives to continuously improve on student retention and the ongoing success of its students.

The ISEG sub group for ‘Retention and student success’ was therefore formed in the summer of 2009 with an objective to formulate and recommend a framework and to make recommendations in order for the university to enhance the retention and success of its students.

4. **Outcomes:** The University is meeting its HESA benchmark requirements and withdrawal rates are falling. However, the university should put into place improved monitoring and evaluation of retention and student achievement, over and above existing QA/ QE practices, particularly for those courses and modules falling short of agreed benchmarks and targets. The key features and guiding principles of the Retention and Student Success Framework are:

- A supportive environment to help students succeed. All academic and professional support staff are responsible for supporting and helping students to achieve their full potential within the university
- Student engagement is a focus of what we are aiming to achieve and central to retaining students; their feedback is a key element of this and informs decisions
• Students should have a sense of belonging, build meaningful relationships pre- and post-entry with their peers, academic and professional support staff
• Students should know what is expected of them e.g. study hours, attendance, taking personal responsibility for attending, engaging and managing their learning
• Retention and student success issues should be regularly reviewed and embedded within university enhancement processes, such as module quality review, and included in Peer Supported Review
• We need to be consistent across the university in utilising data and measures that highlight student success, and data that gives early warning signs of potential student failure, such as identifying those students at risk and acting on modules with persistently poor pass rates
• There should be ongoing evaluation, sharing, dissemination and identification of practices that help to improve student retention and success
• Retention and student success should be incorporated into the course planning process
# The Retention and Student Success Policy and Framework

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1. Extended induction and orientation for first years (Level 3 and Level 4), including academic skills development.  
2. Transition induction from level to level, including placement and final destinations.  
3. Attendance monitoring, with follow-up, of first year students during first semester.  
Recommended:  
• Extended induction for PG taught students  
• Pre-entry decision making information for course choice.  
• Careful recruitment to ensure student retention and success.  
• Socialisation at course level.  
• Peer mentoring |
| b) Student skills and knowledge development | Lack of study skills and ability to find information to build knowledge contribute to lack of engagement in their course. | Core requirement:  
4. Early diagnostics during induction to identify students at risk.  
Recommended:  
• Individual student support through use of peer mentoring.  
• Moving from centralised to discipline led skills development and support, in a relevant context, through effective staff development.  
• Early student engagement in active learning, e.g. through group work projects. |
| c) Academic experience                  | Inadequate learning and teaching practices, lack of early formative assessment and feedback, poor curriculum content and its organisation, not meeting diverse student needs. Lack of course identity. | Core requirement:  
5. Early assessment and feedback by week 6, of first semester, in all first year UG and PG courses.  
6. Use of in-module retrieval in all first year modules (L3 and L4).  
7. This Framework should be incorporated into course planning and validation, for improved course design. (To be embedded through AQF proposals)  
Recommended:  
• Inclusive LTA practices.  
• Revision support classes for summer referrals.  
• Active learning, e.g. EBL  
• Peer tutoring. |
| d) Social experience                    | Lack of formal and informal social activities lead to a lack of belonging and early withdrawal. Lack of course identity. | Recommended:  
• Peer networks and social activities e.g. within the Students Union.  
• Use of social spaces, both physical and virtual via technology.  
• Peer mentoring/tutoring. |
| e) Professional services provision      | Lack of use of central and local support services, such as study skills, finance, disability, careers services. | Recommended:  
• Guidance on support services within extended induction.  
• Staff development support |
| Monitoring and evaluation | Lack of use of data in a meaningful way, such as diagnostics, monitoring, tracking, and student performance. | Core requirement:  
8. Common set of institutional data to underpin the framework.  
9. KPIs to be clearly articulated and monitored at university and local levels, and faculty action plans produced.  
10. Feeds into University Business Planning processes/ Portfolio Review.  
Recommended:  
• Effective engagement in the use of data through existing quality enhancement processes such as module and course review and Peer Supported Review. NSS, SHSES.  
• Each faculty should have a forum for the discussion and implementation of retention and progression interventions that meets on a regular basis, and reports to the university forum. (Many faculties already have such a forum, for example through Student Experience Groups.) |
| Sharing and dissemination of effective practice | Lack of sharing of good practice that has been evaluated and proven to work. | Recommended:  
• The University should have a Retention and Progression for Student Success Forum for monitoring, analysing, evaluating and the sharing of effective retention & success interventions. This will produce an annual report to ADC that will include retention and progression data and analysis, that will lead to an annual university Action Plan.  
• Central resources should be developed by the LTI/ SLS in the form of a website for the dissemination and sharing of effective practice for enhanced retention and student success. |
Improving the Student Experience Group– ‘Retention and Student Success’: Further Information

Retention and Student Success Framework

1.0 Scope: the Retention and Student Success Framework covers all students, home and international, on taught undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, including those at partner colleges and distance learning students.

2.0 Governance of the University Retention and Student Success Framework should be through the University’s Executive and Academic Board, via the ADC sub-committee. ADC will monitor and evaluate retention and student success and review the framework on an annual basis. Faculties will be responsible through their Executive Deans and Heads of Department for setting, implementing and monitoring targets.

3.0 Purpose, context and definitions:
The university’s Corporate Plan 2008-13 (2008) is designed to deliver a positive student experience. The central theme of the Plan is to ‘Improve the Student Experience’, and one of its objectives is to support and enhance student transition, progression and achievement. In general terms, across the university, retention is not a major issue, with the university meeting its HESA benchmarks. However, the university strives to continuously improve on student retention and the ongoing success of its students. The ISEG sub group for ‘Retention and student success’ was therefore formed in the summer of 2009 with an objective to formulate and recommend a framework and to make recommendations in order for the university to enhance the retention and success of its students. The constitution of the group is shown in Appendix 1.

Retention – the proportion of students who remain registered/ enrolled and are progressing to their next level of study. Students who re-register for modules and continue but do not progress to the next level are also deemed to be retained. Students who withdraw from their studies, or fail to progress and subsequently do not re-enrol are not retained.

Non-completions- students that do not complete a module in their year of study on their course. To receive funding from HEFCE the student must either undergo the final assessment task on the module or have passed the module, even without undertaking the final assessment task.

Withdrawals- students who have left their programme of study and are not registered/ enrolled, some of which will be temporary.

4.0 Retention Data:
Centrally, data is available through the university’s Cognos database. The group initially reviewed the university/ faculty retention and completion data to see where there were any issues. Table 1 below shows that we have a withdrawal rate around 9%.
Table 1 - Withdrawal rates for SHU (includes postgraduate and undergraduate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Total students</th>
<th>Withdrawn all year</th>
<th>% Withdrawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>32868</td>
<td>3012</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>37387</td>
<td>3192</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>34552</td>
<td>3401</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>32586</td>
<td>2953</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>30953</td>
<td>2945</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 below illustrates Sheffield Hallam’s good performance against the HESA benchmark since 2003-4 to 2007-08 (the most recent data available). The student retention strategy developed should commit the university to performing at or above the HESA retention benchmark for full time first degree students.

Table 2 - Non-continuation – total entrants (full time first degree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year (entry)</th>
<th>2003/04</th>
<th>2004/05</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2006/07</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHU Non-continuation (%)</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HESA benchmark rate (%)</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.0 Module Pass Rates

In general terms across the university there has been a slight decline in first time module pass rates over the last 3 years, with some exceptions. (The overall averages are ~85% pass first time, ~90% final pass rate). The business school for example has seen an improvement in first time pass rates at levels 4 and 5 over the last 3 years. Level 3 (Foundation level, preparatory year) has consistently seen poor first time pass rates across the university. There is some work that needs to be done here to ensure better pass rate performances across the university at all levels, but particularly levels 3 and 4. A key issue for subject groups and course teams to address are modules with persistently poor first time pass rates. Annual course and module review, peer supported review and appraisal discussions should be utilised to deal with these module issues.

6.0 Background research on retention and student success

In the HE sector within the UK there is a growing body of evidence relating to retention and student success in higher education, with numerous events for

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1 The HESA Performance Indicator data is based on the tracking of students from the year they enter an institution to the following year. The HESA PI non-continuation rate therefore refers to the percentage of students who were studying at SHU on December 1st of an academic year, but by December 1st the following academic year they could not be traced as being ‘active’ within the HE sector i.e. actively studying. Thus, students who transfer to other institutions are defined as still being active in HE and are therefore, not counted as non-continuation. For each academic year of ‘entry’ above, the tracking takes place the following year. For further details of the HESA definition/interpretation of non-continuation please see: [http://www.hesa.ac.uk/pi/0405/continuation.htm](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/pi/0405/continuation.htm)
sharing effective practice. One programme in particular is the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Higher Education Funding Council for England Retention Grants Programme, co-ordinated by the Higher Education Academy and Action on Access (2010). Under this programme there are seven projects which are already generating insightful evidence on how retention and student success can be improved. From this work the HEA are in the process of developing a framework for institutions to use when developing their own institutional policies. Figure 1 below outlines the essential conditions that need to be considered in improving institutional retention and student success.

Figure 1 - Essential Conditions to Improve Institutional Student Retention and Success (http://www.actiononaccess.org/index.php?p=11_3_1)

In addition there is a wealth of research that has been undertaken internationally on this topic, particularly in the US, (Tinto,1993, 2003) and there exist from this work conceptual models on student persistence, retention and engagement.

Research on student withdrawals shows that there is no single reason why students leave. The picture is complex and there will always be those students that leave for factors beyond the university’s control.

To summarise the research undertaken by Yorke (1999), Yorke and Longden (2008), and the National Audit Office (NAO, 2007) and House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2008), the main reasons that students withdraw are:

- Inadequate preparation for Higher Education
• Poor institutional and course match
• Not coping with academic demand/ making poor progress/ lack of engagement
• Poor social integration with their peers and academic/ support staff
• Financial issues and personal circumstances

The factors that enhance student retention and success are:

• The provision of adequate pre-entry information and preparation
• Relevant courses
• Induction and transition support
• Active learning and inclusive teaching and learning strategies
• Formative assessment
• Personal tutoring and study support
• Social engagement
• Student support, both centrally available and integrated within the curriculum
• Effective collection and use of retention & achievement data, and monitoring

Jones (2008) in his review of widening participation, student retention and success, shows that the research suggests the following policy recommendations for institutions:

• Build institutional commitment to student retention, through an institutional strategy and actions which are understood and implemented by all staff
• Ensure students have access and make use of pre-entry information, advice and guidance to inform their choice of course, subject and institution
• Use pre-entry programmes to help prepare students for the transition to higher education learning
• Assist students in developing a sense of belonging through induction, student- centred learning and social integration
• Improve students’ academic experience through induction, active learning and teaching strategies, formative assessment, relevant courses and flexible learning
• Collect and use data at the institutional, faculty, course and student levels; and undertake research with students who leave early
• Support students through integrated skills development, proactive personal tutoring, easy to access student services
• Evaluate and share good practice within the institution and beyond.

There is a lot of excellent practice being undertaken at Sheffield Hallam, both centrally and within faculties. A recent output from this group reviewed the retention practices across the university, and these are detailed in Appendix 2, and summarised below:
a) Common recognition/ review of retention issues:

- In general the faculties use quality procedures and review retention on an annual basis through the AQR process. Where there is an external requirement for attendance and student engagement, additional retention interventions and monitoring takes place.
- Attendance monitoring is generally undertaken at level 4 but it appears patchy in its implementation and consequent successful follow up with students.
- Retention discussions have risen up the agenda of faculty management groups.
- There is a need for accurate data on retention that is easily accessible by staff involved in monitoring student achievement and progression.

b) Common retention problems/ issues

- Level 4 retention and achievement
- Distance learning students
- Prep year (level 3) pass rates
- Withdrawals due to poor course matching
- Student personal/ financial issues leading to withdrawal
- Numerical modules - leading to high referral rates e.g. Maths, programming, statistics (in Research Methods), financial accounting modules.
- Placements can lead to withdrawal due to poor match of student with career choice
- Lack of course identity
- Lack of academic support for summer referrals

c) Common Interventions

- Extended induction
- Mentoring/ peer assisted learning
- Attendance monitoring
- Increased study skills support
- Revised assessment strategies – improved formative assessment and feedback, in-module retrieval
- Use of personal academic tutors
- Development of a course identity/ community
- Improved marketing/ open day briefing more explicit on course content and design
- Raised UCAS points
- Texting to students
- Numerical skills support
7.0 The Retention and Student Success Framework

Governance and annual review of the framework will be through the University’s Executive and Academic Board, via ADC, as well as through Faculty Annual Planning and Departmental AQR processes. The framework is to help enhance student retention and success, and includes the top line SHU key performance indicators: module completion and module pass rates, progression rates, withdrawal rates.

7.1 The following are the guiding principles for the Retention and Student Success framework:

- A supportive environment to help students succeed. All academic and professional support staff are responsible for supporting and helping students to achieve their full potential within the university
- Student engagement is a focus of what we are aiming to achieve and central to retaining students; their feedback is a key element of this and informs decisions
- Students should have a sense of belonging, build meaningful relationships pre- and post-entry with their peers, academic and professional support staff
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4. Early diagnostics during induction to identify students at risk.

**Recommended:**
- Individual student support through use of peer mentoring.
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### c) Academic experience

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**Recommended:**
- Peer networks and social activities e.g. within the Students Union.
- Use of social spaces, both physical and virtual via technology.
- Peer mentoring/ tutoring.

### e) Professional services provision

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**Recommended:**
- Guidance on support services within extended induction.
- Staff development support through SLS staff working with faculty staff to embed student support/ study skills within programmes of study.
- Individual student support e.g. through peer mentoring, or other individualised personal support processes.

**Note:** Students Union already provide support through their Advice Centre.

### f) Monitoring and evaluation

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**Core requirement:**
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8.0 References
Last accessed 18th April 2010.

Corporate Plan 2008-2013, Sheffield Hallam University (2008),

House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2008), 'Staying the course: the retention of students on higher education courses - tenth report of session 2007-08',


National Audit Office (2007), 'Staying the course: the retention of students in higher education',

Appendix 1 – ISEG Sub-Group on Retention and Student Success membership

Graham Button, PVC Dean ACES (Chair from July 2009 to September 2009)
Clive Macdonald, Director of SLS (Chair from October 2009 to June 2010)
Mike Bramhall, ACES (Project Manager)
Sue Forder, ACES
Malcolm Todd, D&S
Amanda Foster, SBS
Helen Best, HWB
Helen Kay, LTI
Cal Weatherald, SLS
Gail Stephens, Chief Executive, Students Union
Dani Beckett, President, Students Union
Appendix 2 – Review of Retention practices across the university

2.1 How do you recognise when/where there is a retention problem? When do you do this? e.g. weekly, monthly, annually?

From a quality perspective this would be looked at annually as part of the annual AQR process and the Award Assessment Boards (Quality). All faculties have the opportunity to look at the retention figures 3 times per year, after the February and June SABs and then after the September resit boards. This results in AQR action plans that are monitored across the year.

In SBS new Student Support Officers roles were created in 07/08 for each programme area with a remit to monitor level 4 attendances, and identify students at risk through monitoring contact with them and the level leaders.

In HWB every department/subject/professional area gets a monthly report on the faculty Retention SharePoint site for them to check. Courses with more than 10% attrition are highlighted. The Retention Monitoring Group, which used to meet 4 times per year, has now been subsumed into the faculty Student Experience Group (SEG), which meets monthly. Heads of department attend and report on highlighted areas. Exit interviews of withdrawing students are now being held. Information from these will be brought to the SEG. By bringing the academics and administrators together to discuss the issues then both qualitative information from the academic tutors and quantitative information from the administrators can be combined to see the extent of any problems/issues.

HWB send a monthly retention report to their course commissioners, i.e. the Strategic Health Authority (SHA), which uses different data compared to HEFCE, where students transferring in/out are logged for the SHA report. The SHA give a 2% bonus if attrition is kept to less than 13% for students from start to finishing their course. HWB are outside this figure in most areas.

In ACES the Retention Group, chaired by the HoLTA has also been subsumed within the faculty Student Experience Group. Retention is now an agenda item at these meetings. Retention, progression data and first time pass rates are analysed 3 times per year as per quality procedures, with final statistics reviewed at the Quality Award Assessment Boards. A Supported Change Programme of staff meetings is held during October to discuss the retention and pass rate issues and support staff in developing their AQR action plans. First year module attendance (and some second year modules) is monitored by the Portfolio Managers, followed up by SMS texts, or emails, then meetings with students who are poor attenders.

Some courses in D&S have appointed first year tutors who audit registers across all modules after the first few weeks of the academic year and chase up any non-attenders or irregular attenders. Subsequent to this (i.e. after the first semester of the academic year) attendance checks are systematically made twice a year (following assessment points and Exam Board). However, individual patterns of non-attendance are usually picked up by module tutors/personal tutors and dealt with as they arise during the year. On small cohorts staff are quickly aware when there is a problem with student attendance. As they have an 80% attendance requirement (on some courses?) it is important to pick it up promptly with the student. In Education, attendance is monitored across all courses (by register) and students who miss two consecutive sessions are contacted automatically. In some courses there is no systematic monitoring. Architecture has a high failure/withdrawal rate. Nationally, drop out and fail rates in all schools of architecture are very high compared to other courses, though the RIBA (professional body) do not make an issue of it, perhaps given how universal it is.

2.2 Where are the retention problems in your faculty/department/subject group? How are they identified?
In ACES, the modules with consistently poor first time pass rates are identified through analysis of the data. Those modules with greater than 15 students that have less than an 80% first time pass rate over 2 to 3 years are highlighted for priority action as part of the AQR process. Problems are consistently in numerical modules, database modules, computer programming. Courses in Design & Media have a high withdrawal rate, typically around 20% at level 4, well above the national average, which is 5-10% typical. Problems of withdrawal with DL courses and foundation level (3) prep years having high failure rates. Foundation degree top up courses have high failure rates. First time pass rates have been falling slightly in ACES over the last 3 years. Some level 4 modules get below 80% pass rates after referral in mechanical engineering.

In D&S the weakest retention is at Level 4. In D&S the Faculty AQR identified problems in respect of taught postgraduate and part-time. Progression through the PG stages- distance learning students do not always progress to MSc level; they sometimes finish at PG cert of PG Dip level. This isn’t always a problem as such (for the student).

In HWB, Bioscience/Sports courses have better retention. Radiotherapy/Radiography struggle to maintain their student numbers, which is also a national problem, with approximately 50% attrition, mainly due to students being unhappy with their career choice. However, enrolment has increased from 10 a year to around 70 intake this year. Issues are identified through academic staff having a personal approach. Course leaders have been re-introduced to raise the profile of courses and for better student recognition that they are on a course, rather than a series of modules. For attendance monitoring the faculty has a traffic light system in place, led by student support officers. A swipe card system was introduced for first year students. Exit interviews are held, although these have limited value and need both student support staff and academics to share information on withdrawing students. Non-completion level ~ 11%.

SBS reviewed and revalidated their HND programme in line with student ability and poor student engagement in the past, following higher levels of student failure on these HND routes. The outcome has been the removal of lectures, more tutor contact, revised learning, teaching and assessment strategies to differentiate between ability and learning styles. Finance/accounting modules to non-accountants have had high referral rates.

SBS have reviewed data on SI, and HESA returns of students enrolled, to determine base line student retention data. SBS wish to be more consistent with exit interviews and ensure that relevant information is collected; subsequent analysis of withdrawal data and revising the data collected on the form. Attendance monitoring at level 4 and following up non-attendees for reasons, so that support can be given; review of failing modules; review student surveys; AQRs each year.

2.3 What do you consider to be the main causes of these retention problems?

In SBS, retention issues have been analysed in the past and in 2008/9 it was suggested that the key reasons at undergraduate are:

- Course not suitable - largest category
- Personal reasons - including financial, health etc
- Unknown
- Transfer to other courses
- Staff withdrew students off the system (due to non-attendance/ non-engagement)

Post graduate reasons are more related to failure to proceed, financial and personal reasons but do not reflect the UG reason of course not suitable

D&S First Time Pass rates: sometimes down to the design of some modules. Statistics is a problem topic within the Research Methods module with Social Science
at level 4. This module has a high failure rate. There are issues here about ‘levelness’ of modules with the same tariff, the need to put more resources into some modules, and curriculum design. Some courses have high failure rates due to the mix of modules within the course. Course leaders and module leaders get together to identify retention issues, review the retention statistics and group issues together. Retention is better where students feel there is a ‘course identity’. Other issues are with the timetables, where students can be displaced across the timetable with large gaps between timetabled slots. On undergraduate education courses, the placement experience is sometimes the point at which students leave, having realised that the education workforce is not for them.

In ACES it is believed that there are differing expectations from both staff and students. Staff have sometimes higher expectations of students’ previous educational experience, with a lack of understanding of what is taught in schools/colleges. Problems with course matching, marketing/open day info needing to be more accurate and explicit. Some staff issues e.g. new staff in a subject group may have higher expectations of students than is reality. Experienced staff not wishing to change their LTA practices.

With DL in D&S the students come up to their 3/6 year maximum duration and so are withdrawn at whatever level they have achieved..... DL students can moderate the pace of study to a degree, so that it suits their circumstances, and this pace can slow down as they progress through their careers/increasing pressures of work/have a family etc.

In D&S the economic downturn has affected students on part-time pg courses. Work for the employer has been prioritised over study. Students have withdrawn or failed as a consequence. The dropout rate in first year is thought to be down to poor understanding in some instances of what the curriculum involves, poor or no career advice in terms of skills, work rate, deadlines, time management, and commitment to a long term career path, and accepting low achievers at Clearing to make targets.

In HWB many are financial. In some cases it is course match. Marketing materials/open days need to be more explicit in information given to potential students. Timetabling issues are a continual problem. This has been overcome to some extent by having timetables for students with no tutor names initially linked to sessions, so that the TT is produced and then populated with appropriate staff later. Placement can be a turning point for many students. Who they are placed with can significantly affect their experience. Some students realise that the chosen career is not for them. There needs to be some joint responsibility for improving retention between the placement provider and SHU.

2.4 What interventions have you used? Have they been successful?

SBS: The revalidation activities of 05/06 enabled SBS to review student management roles and activities and student experiences to develop a Student Support Framework for the School’s undergraduate programmes.

Key outputs from this process and later developments are:

- Overall student support framework
- Academic coaches for level 4 students
- Student Support and programme support officers with key roles in supporting students and identifying students at risk or not engaging
- Extended induction and enhanced activities related to LTA and expectations etc
- Peer mentoring for Level 4 students on an opt in basis
- Revised assessment strategies particularly at level 4 but rolling out to level 5 & 6 - taking into account the prior learning experiences of students
- Flying start activities
- aim to reduce group work at level 6
• Reviewed and revalidated HND programme in line with student ability and engagement in past. No lectures, more tutor contact, revised LTA and assessment strategies to differentiate between ability and learning styles following higher levels of student failure on the HND routes
• Some in module retrieval available
• Enhance student course identify and engagement through development of relationship with course cluster leaders, belonging to academic community theme - to counter the issue of not relating to the course etc.
• Initiation of a 3 year project 09/10 to improve student engagement and employability within the faculty - just commencing
• Adoptions of a single mark assessment package

D&S: Introduced smaller groups at L4, with a 40-credit module that students take over the year, with the same group and the same tutor over a full academic session, so that they feel they get to know one another and that a tutor gets to know them. This pastoral responsibility then continues into L5. The retention rate at L4 has improved by about 2% since the introduction of this new module and support system (but since it has coincided with the enhanced student support pilot and the change in assessment regulations, it is hard to know where the most impact has been made). Interventions from the Learning hub and Learning centre have been successful.

Further initiatives:
• Learning Hubs for study skills support. Tutorial support. Students are advised to use student support services, such as counselling or study support, and also to reduce pressure of work by submitting ECs for assignments. This is successful in supporting students to continue probably around 50% of the time. Occasionally students are counselled to discontinue or transfer to a less emotionally demanding course.
• Students have been provided with clear formative feedback. This has been effective in some, but not all, borderline cases.
• Students have been provided academic support on referral assignments. This has generally been effective.
• More focussed and detailed information on the website for applicants
• More detailed briefing at Open Days including exhibition of student work
• Interview and advise all unsure/borderline candidates
• Raised the UCAS points for some courses.
• Asked for samples of graphic work for borderline cases in Architecture
• Agreed to insist on electronic portfolio applications for all applicants from next year for Architecture course. This will add a huge amount of time to vetting applicants but is the most reliable indicator of aptitude.
• In-module retrieval.
• Tutorial groups/personal tutee system on the geography awards that is being replicated on the environmental awards.
• Enhanced Student Support: Presentations on regulations (ECs/EERs etc.)
• Following up non-attendance from records of attendance supplied by staff.
• Following up non-submissions where possible.
• Extended induction to be the minimum, with Learning Hub managers responsible for organising. Central support services utilised when needed.
• Enhance student support project: Administrators talk to students, similar to portfolio managers in ACES. Do register checks, such that if a student misses more than 2 sessions they are contacted by an administrator. Data is being collected on why students aren't attending, and they are doing an evaluation on this.
• Academic tutorial systems - e.g. in psychology, humanities, with academics seeing students; need more systems for academic support
• Peer assisted learning (PAL) scheme pilots in place, where students are being paid to help tutor students.
• Part time students - all PT students on all courses are now brought in on the same evening, with learning support and administrative staff available to give support/ guidance every week. Café is open 6pm to 9pm.

HWB:
• Buddying and mentoring systems are being used in some areas.
• Personal tutors for groups have been introduced.
• Improved induction e.g. Occupational Therapy courses.
• SHA now allow re-registration on courses.

ACES:
• Extended induction
• SMS texting to students
• Feedback campaign
• Mentoring
• Peer assisted learning
• Attendance monitoring
• In-module retrieval
• Programming help through PAL scheme
• CETL projects on using final year mentors with first years with database and maths modules. Maths diagnostics/ extra maths tutorials.
• Writing skills support/ dedicated Bb site as a resource.
• Peer Supported Review workshops within subject groups.
• Short courses for referred students