

Title: Supporting student journeys: evaluating routes to success

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Identify some of the key factors influencing the student learning journey
- Evaluate the success of transition and retention initiatives to support the student journey at Kent
- Assess the barriers and challenges that affect student engagement with support

Session Outline

With the expansion of HE in the 21st century, the factors that determine student learning success have become more diverse and increasingly, support for students has had to become more bespoke and personalised to ensure that all students can engage effectively with their studies and gain control over their learning experience (Knox and Wyper, 2008). Seminal studies in the US (reviewed in Tinto 2006) and UK (Yorke and Longden (2004, 2008) about student transition and retention have identified that academic and social integration are key factors to promote student engagement, satisfaction and success. Many institutional initiatives¹ have been developed to support student transition and the learning journey, but in different ways to suit local needs (Cook and Rushton, 2009).

Since the Student Learning Advisory Service was established at Kent (1993), the range and demand for services that support transition and retention have grown to include:

- Joint delivery of study skills sessions with Schools to support student transition and progression (Advantage Initiative)
- Mentoring and student support (Academic Peer Mentoring)
- New variants of our VALUE retention programme to support non-traditional higher education entrants (VALUE MaP) and Stage 2/3 transition (VALUEPlus)

In this session, we will consider how we evaluate the impact and success of these activities, to develop a roadmap of support services for all students that identifies

¹ eg STAR (Student Transition & Retention – led by Ulster), LeedsforLife, Transition @ UCL, Flying Start (Liverpool Hope University), Student Transition Framework (Strathclyde), Supporting Transition (Durham)

key stages in the student journey and signposts them to more personalised support along the way.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

1. Introduction – 15 minutes
2. Discussion groups – 20 minutes (table discussions) to address the following:
 - a. *Travellers* – In what ways, do you adapt student support to accommodate the specific needs of students?
 - b. *Routes* – Based on your own experience and evaluations, how has student support developed over the past 5 years?
 - c. *Roadblocks* – What barriers to providing, or engaging students with, student support have you encountered?
3. Feedback & conclusions – 10 minutes

References

Cook A and Rushton BS (2009) How to recruit and retain higher education students; a handbook of good practice (Routledge)

Knox H and Wyper J (2008) – Personalisation of the First Year

<http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/firstyear/Personalisation%20-%20Final.pdf>

Tinto V (2006) Research and practice of student retention: What next? Journal of College Student Retention: Research Theory and Practice 8, 1-19

Yorke M and Longden B (2004) Retention and student success in higher education. Open University Press

Yorke M and Longden B (2008) The first year experience of higher education in the UK– HEA report

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/research/surveys/FYE/FYEFinalReport.pdf>