

Title: **Supporting student transitions through student peer mentoring: Policy and Practice**

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Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Appreciate the value and the challenges of creating a new Student Peer Mentoring policy
- Explore how the implementation of any policy must positively relate to context/disciplines/subject areas to be a credible and relevant endeavour
- Review various operationalisations of a policy at various times and in various contexts in the student journey to ensure effective transitions
- Appreciate the value to both students and staff of engaging with a student peer mentoring policy

Session Outline

The session will predominantly cover the following:

Discussion and exploration including the positives and the challenges of how a Student Peer Mentoring Policy can:

- Inspire a sense of community and belonging
- Support new and existing students, in terms of student experience and employability
- Afford appropriate peer support to new students in their transition and induction into university
- Positively enhance the student experience
- Actively support a university retention strategy.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- Introduction to Student Peer Mentoring policy creation including challenges (5-8 minutes) (see Scott G. (2003))
- How the policy's implementation becomes an established support system for student engagement and retention (5-8 minutes) (EHU Strategic Plan 2013-2020)
- Discussion on how the policy encourages friendship and peer support and has become a valuable approach in aiding student transition, benefitting both mentees and mentors (15 minutes) including how:
 1. It enables individuals to address a wide range of enquiries, which assist the process of social and academic adjustmentand
 2. How it offers an approach whereby students help students discover the new world of university life through the formation of safe and supportive peer relationships. (see Andrews et al (2012))
- With reference to various contexts including Education, Nursing and Media Programmes discuss how the policy is not just reflective of the support given to new students in the first few days and weeks of university but rather how it is indicative of the longer-term reciprocal relationships made between peers and mentors as change agents. (12-15 minutes)

The main indicative questions throughout will be:

- How does the Student Peer Mentoring Policy support the implementation of opportunities for transferable skills, widening participation, and lifelong learning?
- How does it advocate best practice as recognised in the wider HE community?
- How does it ensure students have opportunities to participate in a Student Peer Mentoring Scheme?

References

Andrews Jane, Clark Robin, Thomas Liz (Eds) (March 2012) *What Works: Compendium of Effective Practice in Higher Education, Retention and Success*, Published Aston University, Birmingham & HEA, York. (pp.5-74)

EHU, Strategic Plan 2013 – 2020, <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/strategic-plan-2013-2020.pdf>, accessed 29.11.16.

Scott Geoff (2003) *Effective Change Management in Higher Education*, Educause.