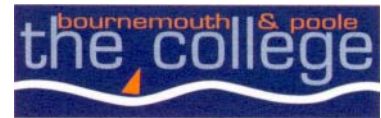


POLICY STATEMENT



RETENTION POLICY

The College aspires to enable every student who enrolls to complete and achieve on a course appropriate to their stage of development. It is The College's aim to meet or exceed benchmarks and to see a continuous improvement in retention rates for all levels and cohorts of students.

It is The College's policy to put in place, via the Teaching & Learning Group, a variety of strategies, practices and procedures all aimed at reducing drop-out throughout the student's journey through College, and to monitor and review their effectiveness on an ongoing basis. These strategies, practices and procedures are described in The College's Retention Strategy, and currently include:

- The work of Student Services – providing a range of student support, including the Advice and Guidance team. Research shows that selection and placement on the right course, and providing a comprehensive induction process are important keys to high retention.
- The work of Learning Support – providing a spread of additional support, either 1:1 or in small groups.
- The investment of generous resources into tutorial provision, placing tutoring at the heart of the learning process – effective tutoring is seen as central to the student's successful experience from day one.
- Listening to the student voice to ensure that students feel valued and involved in College life – teaching teams are encouraged to learn from SPOC reports which can highlight problems in course structure or support systems.
- Identification of students who may be 'at risk' of dropping out, so that appropriate support can be provided.
- Provision of assessment plans to avoid the 'bunching' of major pieces of work and obviate crisis points.
- Attendance monitoring – poor attendance is an early indicator of the likelihood of poor retention.
- Student mentoring – senior managers support small groups of students to maximise their chances of successfully completing their course.
- Peer mentoring – 'study buddies', eg HE students mentoring Level 3, Year 2 mentoring Year 1 etc.
- Level 1 Motivation Days – designed to provide enjoyable and aspirational experiences and to raise student self-esteem and retention – to be extended to Level 2 students.
- Internal progression interview days and application process.
- Research to inform future strategies – eg focus groups of representative students of under-achieving groups; comparative retention achievement by gender; additional measures required to support looked-after children.
- Enhanced social activities for EU, ESOL and International students to aid integration and break down barriers.
- A rewards system for good attendance and successful course completion.

- ECM/Enrichment activities – seen as a major influence in student enjoyment of College life, having a positive effect on retention.

Signed:

Date: November 2006

Designation: Chair of Academic Board

Policy Reference / Version number: SC18/V1

This policy is to be reviewed by the Teaching & Learning Group and the Academic Board by October 2008.