

RETENTION POLICY

The College aspires to enable every learner 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 national averages and to see a continuous improvement in retention rates for all levels and cohorts of learners.

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 learner'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:

- 1 The work of 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. Learners found not to be settled on their course should be referred, as soon as possible, to the Advice and Guidance team for support and information on alternative provision.
- 2 The work of Learning Support – providing a spread of additional support, either 1:1, in small groups or within the class.
- 3 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 learner's successful experience from day one.
- 4 Listening to the learner voice to ensure that learners 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. Faculty Directors and Managers should have regular contact with learners via student forum and visits to groups.
- 5 Identification of learners who may be 'at risk' of dropping out, so that appropriate support can be provided and close monitoring can take place.
- 6 Provision of assessment plans to avoid the 'bunching' of major pieces of work and obviate crisis points. Reference should be made to the Assessment Policy.
- 7 Attendance monitoring – poor attendance is an early indicator of the likelihood of poor retention. Reference should be made to the Punctuality and Attendance Policy.
- 8 Learner mentoring – support small groups of learners to maximise their chances of successfully completing their course.
- 9 Peer mentoring – 'study buddies', eg HE learners PAL programme - mentoring Level 3, Year 2 mentoring Year 1 etc.
- 10 Level 1 Motivation Days – designed to provide enjoyable and aspirational experiences and to raise learner self-esteem and retention.
- 11 Internal progression interview days and application process.
- 12 Breakfast and Homework Clubs

- 13 Research to inform future strategies – eg focus groups of representative learners of under-achieving groups; comparative retention achievement by gender; additional measures required to support looked-after children.
- 14 Enhanced social activities for EU, ESOL and International learners to aid integration and break down barriers.
- 15 A rewards system for good attendance and successful course completion, celebration of success throughout the year.
- 16 The work of Student Services and Student Union in providing 'On the Edge' sports and social activities – seen as a major influence in learner enjoyment of College life, having a positive effect on retention.

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Designation: Teaching and Learning Group

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This policy is to be reviewed by the Teaching & Learning Group by November 2011.