VOLUME TWO

Part Two

Evidence of Research Output and Components of Practice for Project 1 – Faculty Advice Shop

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A critical examination of the effectiveness of faculty-based student learning support

Research Outputs for Project 1 – Faculty Advice Shops

Journal Articles

Tab No	Details	Personal Contribution
1	Fitzgibbon K & Prior D J, (2007) 'Students' early experiences and university interventions – a timeline to aid undergraduate student retention' Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning Vol 8, No 3 pp 17 -27	50%. Joint analysis of issues from student experiences and identification of interventions
2	Fitzgibbon K, Stocking S, Prior J, & Ayre M, (2009) 'Faculty Advice Shop Provision at the University of Glamorgan', International Perspectives on the First-Year Experience in Higher Education, First Year Experience Monograph Series, National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina	40%. Led co-ordination of contributions and produced first draft. Liaised with editor and led revisions.

Conference Papers

Tab No	Details
3	Fitzgibbon K & Prior D J (2003) 'Student Expectations and University Interventions – a timeline to aid undergraduate student retention' LTSN BEST Annual Conference, Brighton UK 2003
4	Fitzgibbon, K, Carter J, (2006) 'Using One-stop Shopping to Aid Student Retention' The 1st European First Year Experience Conference, Teesside
5	Fitzgibbon, K., Stocking, S., Prior, J., & Ayre, (2007) How was it for you? Reflections on the first year of Faculty Advice Shop Provision at the University of Glamorgan. Second European First-Year Experience Conference, Gothenburg University, Sweden
6	Fitzgibbon K (2009) Fit for purpose: an institutional approach to student personal support. 3rd International Personal Tutoring and Academic Advising Conference: Improving student success, Liverpool, UK
7	Fitzgibbon K & Harrett J (2009) Telling Tales: Students' Learning Stories, Challenging Higher Education: knowledge, policy and practice, SRHE Annual Conference 8-10 December, Wales

Invited Seminars

Tab No	Details
8	Fitzgibbon, K (2003) 'Student Advice Shop' *Do I stay or do I go? LTSN BEST Event, Glamorgan* – co-hosted by Fitzgibbon & Prior
9	Fitzgibbon, K, & Prior, J (2003) 'The Academic Perspective' *Joseph Rowntree Foundation Research Jury Day, Glamorgan*
10	Fitzgibbon, K (2004) 'Student Advice Shop' *LTSN BEST Event, University of Ulster*
11	Fitzgibbon, K (2004) 'Grasping the Nettle: interventions to support student retention' Business School, University of Derby
12	Fitzgibbon, K & Prior J (2004) 'Widening Participation & Student Retention at the University of Glamorgan' *Association of Business Schools, London*
13	Fitzgibbon, K (2004) 'Effective Intervention-based Retention Initiatives, *Consortium for Access to Legal Education, Glamorgan*
14	Fitzgibbon, K (2006) 'At Risk Groups: Transferring to Fail?' *Falling Down Ladders and Charming Snakes, Glamorgan*
15	CELT seminar: 'First Year of Faculty Advice Shops Operation' Jan 08

Evaluative Framework for Project 1

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Students' early experiences and University interventions – a timeline to aid undergraduate student retention

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Abstract

The University of Glamorgan has a policy of encouraging widening participation. However, as many universities are realising, widening the entrance gates can sometimes lead to increasing numbers leaving through the exit gates before the completion of their programme.

At the University of Glamorgan, a project established in 2001 is demonstrating how interventionist policies can improve attrition rates. This project involves two of the University's biggest departments and comprises of a series of timed interventions designed to support vulnerable first year students during the first semester of their studies. Students' typical experiences have been highlighted and mapped onto a timeline, along with the sequence of retention and support initiatives introduced at Glamorgan. It is this timeline that will be explored in the paper.

INTRODUCTION

Retention of widening participation students in UK higher education is a current topic of discussion and debate. Whilst much is written about the causes and consequences of non-completion (Tinto 1993, Yorke 1999, Moxley et al 2001, Martinez 2001, Owen 2002) it is more difficult to find reliable and tested practice-based approaches to improving student retention in first year undergraduate studies.

The aim of this paper, using an action research methodology (Cohen et al, 2000), is to focus on two elements of the student lifecycle model, the first term and moving through the course (HEFCE, 2001). The paper explores a timeline of typically acknowledged student experiences in part one, and in part two shows the interventions introduced in two Schools at the University of Glamorgan; an acknowledged provider of opportunities for widening participation in higher education. The paper then concludes with recommendations on the most effective interventions that could be introduced, in order to begin to address the specific retention needs of widening participation students in UK higher education institutions. The paper is aimed at practitioners responsible for introducing good practice in student retention and also those seeking to improve their institutional retention figures.

The retention timeline

	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4
Student Experiences	enrol/queue module/award choices induction programme timetable finance: loans/grant/fees employment home/digs socialisation/integration coping with lifestyle changes finding way around/getting lost	establishing friendships fitting in (or not) dealing with homesickness possible first approach to tutor making decisions about balance time management keeping up with changing info first assessment am I on the right course? am I part of this community?	settling down, establishing routines attendance ongoing (or not) assessment ongoing (or not) learning independently (or not) time management - ongoing ongoing tutor contact feedback on progress assessment feedback	holiday 'return blues' last minute catch up revision and exams exam stress/nerves/panics semester results go or stay advice drift off/no contact taking stock **Revision Exams**
weeks	1　　2　　3	4　　5　　6	7　8　9　10　11　12	13　　14　　15
University Actions	central contact point identify non returners comprehensive induction programme friendly first contact tutors identify late joiners - outside system support late starters at risk 'screening' first register checks first absence follow ups transition workshops	advice & support - ongoing sign-posting support time management - real time! promoting autonomous learning late joiners - special event weekly attendance monitoring ongoing absence follow ups repeaters - progress meetings	non-submission check for assessment 1 study health check progression report from tutor personal tutor meeting feedback on assessment advice for making 'infomed' choices student profiles	revision & exam workshops making sense of results strategies for continuing withdraw/suspend studies/transfer advice

Figure 1

The timeline shown in Figure 1 highlights typical student experiences and University actions and is divided into four zones, covering the first semester of study. However, the timeline is equally applicable to a year long programme of study, if the weeks in each of the zones are adjusted accordingly.

> Zone 1: enrolment, induction and the first two weeks of teaching
>
> Zone 2: late enrolment, late induction and early weeks of teaching
>
> Zone 3: middle to end of teaching period, first/second assessments
>
> Zone 4: final assessment period, revision and examinations or assignments

The timeline was constructed from evidence (gained from approximately 1000 contacts in the form of advice interviews, attendance monitoring discussions, and informal conversations with students) concerning the experiences of first year students studying at the University of Glamorgan (anonymised views are quoted with the students' consent). The paper focuses on events which are related to the university experience, and not supra-institutional factors which may also have an impact, such as domestic upheaval, drug or alcohol abuse, and so on. The typical experiences included in the timeline are acknowledged by those involved in widening participation as being generic to many level one undergraduates. However, the events in each zone are not mutually exclusive, neither do they necessarily begin and end within the weeks indicated as some feelings (for example homesickness) may continue through several, if not all, of the zones shown.

PART ONE – TYPICAL STUDENT EXPERIENCES

	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4
Student Experiences	enrol/queue module/award choices induction programme timetable finance: loans/grant/fees employment home/digs socialisation/integration coping with lifestyle changes finding way around/getting lost	establishing friendships fitting in (or not) dealing with homesickness possible first approach to tutor making decisions about balance time management keeping up with changing info first assessment am I on the right course? am I part of this community?	settling down, establishing routines attendance ongoing (or not) assessment ongoing (or not) learning independently (or not) time management - ongoing ongoing tutor contact feedback on progress assessment feedback	holiday 'return blues' last minute catch up revision and exams exam stress/nerves/panics semester results go or stay advice drift off/no contact taking stock **Revision Exams**
weeks	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	13 14 15

Figure 2

Timeline Zone 1: enrolment, induction and first two weeks of teaching

Evidence suggests that one of the most significant periods of crisis for first year undergraduate students is at the immediate commencement of their studies. A positive experience during this induction phase is key to ensuring continuation on the programme of study for most students (Yorke 1999, Willmot & Lloyd 2002). As Storan (2002) points out when discussing the first term phase of the student lifecycle 'For many students, arriving in higher education can be a lonely and anonymous experience with a strange culture and vocabulary.' There will also be students for whom things go wrong, but whose desire to persist is strong enough to secure their continuation despite the issues they face. Moxley et al (2001:40) reinforce this point:

> Students face different issues and experience them in different ways. These issues and their experience by students have different consequences for educational persistence and retention.

Those who are staying at home during their university studies often experience different problems, as Latham and Green (1997) found 'family expectations can affect the experience of the first year.' Interviews with Glamorgan students led to the following observations:

> "I found it so hard living at home, still looking after my little sister, including being expected to pick her up from school even when that meant missing a lecture. My parents just didn't understand how different I needed to be as a university student compared to when I was doing my A levels."

As well as course and accommodation requirements, many students are actively seeking employment at this point and this can have repercussions for their studies. Recommendation 8 of the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment (2001) states: 'higher education institutions should provide guidance to their students that they should not work in paid employment for more than 12 hours a week during term time.' Many students, unaware and not advised of this guideline, will get the balance wrong between employment hours and study time, sometimes forfeiting lectures in order to work. A study from Edgehill University (2003) makes the following suggestion:

> There is scope for some form of agreement between the HEI and each student about when he or she plans to be at work and how they are going to plan their studies. This might help to avoid missing seminars, and failing to hand in work on time, the first steps to eventual withdrawal.

During these early weeks it is often the smaller things which trigger a crisis, such as getting lost on campus or not making friends quickly. At this time the student population are expecting contact with academic and support staff, and it is clear that however trivial the

question, students need to be able to ask someone who will give them an answer, and not make them feel inadequate for asking.

Final elements of first years' experiences in Zone 1 concern socialisation and integration issues. The ease with which students make the transition into university has a significant impact on their ability to settle to the demands of study. Part of the transition involves the ability to make connections with the institution, something that Williams (1982) cited in Beder (1997) describes as 'institutional belongingness'. Williams developed an institutional belongingness scale which he used to establish the extent to which students 'can be said to feel identified with university as an institution and to have made a comfortable entry to life there.' Beder (1997) voices the thoughts of many when she makes the point that:

> Forming a student identity is closely related to feeling connected to and integrated with the university. However, the proportion of students who manage to attain this sense of identity is likely to fall with an increase in flexible delivery and in the numbers of students who have to spend large amounts of time off campus so as to earn an income, even when studying full-time.

Ozga and Sukhnandan (1998) also make the link between preparedness for university and ability to cope with the realities of the experience suggesting that 'the causes of non-completion are best understood as a complex social process in which the main factors are student preparedness and compatibility of choice.'

Timeline Zone 2: late enrolment, late induction and early weeks of teaching

For the vast majority of students, weeks 4-6 represent a period of calm after the initial hectic activity in the first three weeks. Most students are establishing friendships and beginning to get a better picture of university learning and teaching. For some students however, things do not go as smoothly because they are joining university late; late enrolees, transfers and repeating students may only now be joining their respective courses. This group will not only be experiencing the 'load' from Zone 1, but will be under the additional burden of the issues associated with Zone 2. Those starting late may be doing so for a variety of reasons, but for some, the decision to return as a repeat-year student may have been as a result of a sudden change of mind:

> "I thought repeating the year would just be a waste of time and I didn't want to go backwards. All through the summer I was certain I wouldn't go back - I even got a job. Then come October I just couldn't stop thinking about it. I got in touch with an advisor and came back late."

Some students are struggling with homesickness at this time – the initial euphoria of leaving home and 'going on an adventure' can turn into a depressing cycle of not eating properly, missing classes to stay in warm, safe surroundings and generally turning in on oneself. Thoughts about whether coming to university was the right choice, or whether the course of study is correct are prevalent at this time. Yorke (1999:46) asserts that 'younger students were roughly twice as likely as their older peers to have been influenced in their withdrawal by the wrong choice of the programme and the consequential loss of commitment.' In their study Ozga & Sukhnandan (1998) found that the level of preparation for and choices made about course entry had a direct correlation with persistence and non-completion.

For many students, the early excesses of late nights, dabbling with alcohol and getting by on three or four hours sleep have given way to feeling miserable and tired. It is time to evaluate when to party and when to work, but for some finding this balance is a recurring problem. Then there is a reality check for students, because the first assignments are due:

> "I can remember thinking, wow Uni is the best thing I ever did – partying, meeting loads of new people, coming and going whenever I wanted, sleeping in if I felt like it. Then BOOM! Assignments. Suddenly I didn't know if I was coming or going. Up late reading then partying, then sometimes not bothering to go to bed before a 9am class the next day. It couldn't last…and it didn't! I bummed out in my first assignment 27%. From then on I started to manage myself a lot differently. I got some stick for being a bit of a party-pooper but I still partied at weekends so that soon disappeared."

It is often at this point that students seek some help from a member of staff and the way they are dealt with can have a huge impact on their confidence and self-belief. In the LTSN publication 'Supporting the First Year Experience' Wallace (2003) quotes Noel, Levitz & Saluri (1985):

> To make the first year student connection, institutions must adopt the concept of 'front loading', putting the strongest, most student centred people, programmes and services during the first year.

Students are adept at seeking out those that will help and are available to do so. In their study of the first year experience, Latham & Green (1997) found that students who were unsure whether to approach university staff, often sought help from other sometimes unexpected sources, such as grandparents, family and friends, and even high school tutors.

If institutions get it wrong in this critical period students may make a quick decision and withdraw. As Wallace (2003) found 'it seems that students make up their minds in the first four to six weeks about whether they will stay and 'give it a go', or whether to seek another course or even pursue paid employment.'

Timeline Zone 3 – middle to end of teaching period, first/second assessments

This Zone is the point at which things have usually settled into some kind of pattern; students become more familiar with their award structure, and for the majority the regular cycle of class attendance, private study and working will be the norm. However, not all students develop consistent working cycles and many find the academic transition problematic. Surveys by McInnis & James (1995), Collins & Lim (2002), Richardson (2003) and Lim (2004) all found that the change from school to university presented significant challenges and periods of adjustment for many first year students. Another recurring theme was the 'perceptual gaps of student and staff perspectives of learning and expectations in higher education' (Collins & Lim 2002). As Cook and Leckey (1999) found, students persist with learning habits developed at school, in spite of staff expectations that students will become independent learners. Latham and Green (1997) found a growing disparity between '[staff] expectations of first year students and student performance in areas such as independent learning, research skills, academic reading and writing as well as the use of new technologies.'

Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that these difficulties are confined to students with less traditional qualifications; in Richardson's (2003) study A-level students also admitted to finding the transition to higher education a very challenging experience. The following comments from Glamorgan students typify uncertainty during this time:

> "At school my teachers told me what to do and when to do it. Here, [university] I'm just left to get on with it."

> "In the beginning I thought this is easier than my A' levels, but that was because I didn't really understand what I was supposed to be doing. I mean I went to all my lessons and everything, but other than that I pretty much just hung out with my new friends. It took me a while to catch on to the all the 'extra' time I should be putting in."

For those students still struggling to settle into university life, particularly if this is coupled with low attendance, heavy part-time work commitments or poorly established study habits,

this is the period when they really start to feel the pressure - they are on a downward spiral as they struggle to meet ongoing assessment deadlines. This forces some students into intense bursts of activity, with the likely consequences of rushed and unsatisfactory work, or even plagiarism. For others, no activity takes place, resulting in non-submission of work. A failed assessment is the immediate issue, but left unchecked this behaviour will result in ineffective study patterns and at best surface learning.

While some students will have genuine explanations (such as illness, bereavement, family difficulties, etc) for not submitting work, Collins & Lim (2002) found:

> Quite often, the issue is not that the students are difficult to motivate, or not committed to doing a degree, or just here for a 'laugh', but that students genuinely do not know what to expect or the standards required when they first arrive.

As well as coping with ongoing assessment deadlines, Zone 3 is often the period when students receive feedback from their first assignment. Constructive feedback and reassurance is now crucial. A good grade will clearly encourage and motivate students, but a poor grade or even a lower grade than was expected, can be a blow to a student's confidence. If students are already having doubts about their chosen award or questioning their decision to remain in university – this can be the deciding nail in the coffin. As Gipps (2003) discussed '…provision of feedback to the learner – both motivational (evaluative) and substantive descriptive (not just marks) – is crucially important to support learning.' - a sentiment echoed by the following student:

> "My lecturer keeps telling me that our university studies are a whole new ball-game. He said my essay needs to be a critical appraisal, with evidence and references to back up my argument – OK - but what exactly does this mean?"

Even towards the end of the semester, many students are only just beginning to appreciate that they need to become more autonomous learners and most are still somewhat dependent on their tutors for help and advice. As Cook (2003) advocates, 'While we should all aspire to produce students who think and learn independently, we can no longer assume that they will arrive already able to do so'. As such, ongoing contact between tutors and students is a continuing necessity throughout Zone 3. Tutors continue to have an immense influence over students' self-confidence and self-esteem - things that can make the differences between whether or not a student remains in HE.

Timeline Zone 4 – revision week and examination fortnight

Zone 4 falls immediately after the Christmas break and students return to university with the looming prospect of revision and examinations. During this period students are typically seeking reassurance and guidance on examination protocol and revision and exam techniques, while others will be missing coursework notes or suffering from last minute panic, nerves and exam stress. For those students who have already underperformed this is a make or break point. With the real and imminent prospect of academic failure, these students now have to face up to the consequences.

> "I know I should have prepared better, but the exams seemed ages away and I planned to catch up over the Christmas break. Now I just feel like I'm slipping further and further behind and I'm really frightened I'm going to fail my exams. My parents will go mad!"

While the end of Zone 4 is a period of consolidation and progress for those students who have successfully completed the semester, the natural progression for students who have failed one or more modules should not be taken for granted; as illustrated by one student's feedback after receiving their results transcripts:

> "I've failed some modules, am I allowed to continue? Will I be kicked off the course?"

Students who feel they have underperformed may become disheartened and lose confidence in their abilities and this is a period when they need advice and guidance from their tutors, not only to put results into perspective, but also to ensure that they adopt more successful study strategies for the next semester.

At the end of Zone 4 many students will actively seek contact with tutors after receiving their results but not all will do so; some may silently 'drift-off' and just not return for the second semester of studies. Particularly at risk are those students who have failed a significant number of modules, or who have not successfully integrated into HE, which makes them particularly susceptible to withdrawal. Tutor contact at this point is vital to ensure that students make informed decisions about their future. Even if withdrawal is the final outcome, tutor contact can help to make this a positive process for the student. As Peelo (2002) stated '…failing can be a positive outcome. Sometimes withdrawal, drop-out or failure to complete courses represents successful personal choices rather than failures of the student or the system'.

PART TWO – SUPPORT INTERVENTIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GLAMORGAN

The second part of this article demonstrates how two Schools within the authors' institution have established a series of timed interventions, in an attempt to address the issues identified in part one.

Retention context for University of Glamorgan

Attrition figures for the University of Glamorgan (student population of approximately 21,000) have compared unfavourably with other UK universities. The most recently published Higher Education Statistics Agency figures show Glamorgan with an attrition rate of 19% (HESA, 2005a based on 2003/04 figures) demonstrating that there are clearly retention issues which are specific to the University. Contributory factors to this relatively high attrition rate are:

- 27.6% of students from low participation neighbourhoods, against a benchmark of 18.9% (HESA, 2005b)

- Low educational attainment of catchment area students

- Large proportion of 'first generation' students

- 42.5% of students from socio economic classification classes 4,5,6, and 7, against a bench mark of 36.2% (HESA, 2005b)

Within the University there are varying levels of retention performance and several models of retention currently being undertaken. Some of these are institutional (counting, accounting, etc), but many follow Moxley et al's (2001, 40) student-centred approach '…that retention is primarily for students and not necessarily for the benefit of the institution, although it can create many institutional benefits'. The projects at the heart of this article take the student centred approach and concern two posts which were independently established in September 2001, by the two biggest Schools in the University, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS) and the Business School. Since their introduction, the two posts have made a significant contribution to the retention and progression of students in the Schools and are helping address the retention issues highlighted above. Although operationally different, both roles were specifically created to address retention issues. HaSS created the role of Advice Shop Manager, with the aim of providing a 'one-stop shop' for all student queries. Initially

funded for one year, the Advice Shop project has now been established as a permanent feature of the School. The work involves monitoring retention issues and implementation of appropriate interventions to address them, together with direct contact with all students of the School (approximately 5000). Study skills advice, pastoral care, and academic support are all offered. The role of Student Achievement Co-ordinator in the Business School (held by one of the authors from September 2001 – November 2003) was specifically attached to the BA Business Studies Scheme (BABS), the largest undergraduate programme in the School. The post was seen as a complimentary role to support first year tutors, with a specific remit to look at the retention and performance of students (approximately 190) on Level 1 of the Scheme.

University of Glamorgan interventions

In an attempt to combat some of the potential 'negative' experiences of first semester students, the post holders introduced a series of timed initiatives, as shown in Figure 3.

	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4
University Actions	central contact point identify non returners comprehensive induction programme friendly first contact tutors identify late joiners - outside system support late starters at risk 'screening' first register checks first absence follow ups transition workshops	advice & support - ongoing sign-posting support time management - real time! promoting autonomous learning late joiners - special event weekly attendance monitoring ongoing absence follow ups repeaters - progress meetings	non-submission check for assessment 1 study health check progression report from tutor personal tutor meeting feedback on assessment advice for making 'infomed' choices student profiles	revision & exam workshops making sense of results strategies for continuing withdraw/suspend studies/transfer advice
weeks	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	13 14 15

Figure 3

Some were specific to each zone, such as the 'at risk screening' in Zone 1, where as others such as providing a 'central contact point' continued through to the end of the semester. While the evidence concerning the need for these interventions came directly from the two projects, the interventions themselves were successful because of the team approach taken to reducing attrition in both Schools.

Zone 1: enrolment, induction and first two weeks of teaching

Clearly the students' early encounters with the University and the first weeks of the teaching period are the initial point at which students may be overburdened by anxiety. One of the recurring themes identified by Kerka's (1995) review of adult retention was the crucial

importance of the first few weeks of study. Indeed 55% of the students that withdrew from their programme of study in HaSS in the academic year 2001/2, did so before the end of November. Concurring figures from the BABS Scheme show that 84% of first year withdrawals occurred during the first semester, 47% of which occurred during the first few weeks of teaching.

In an attempt to reduce this flood of early withdrawals and to ease student's transition into the HE environment, HaSS put in place an induction programme which aimed to allow space for socialisation, as well as time to sort out financial issues, accommodation, timetables and so on. The BABS Scheme introduced a comprehensive, week long induction programme for first year students, and in addition to the more usual orientation and introductory events, many activities were interactive and group based. This encouraged students to build early relationships with both staff and their peers, and of particular success was the employment of second year students to assist in enrolment and induction processes.

While the first few weeks are a 'danger zone' for all students, there are further groups who are considered to be at a greater risk of withdrawing: those repeating their stage of study and those who are late enrolling. (For example, only 5 out of the 17 students who enrolled late on the BABS Scheme in 2002/3 successfully completed their first year of study.) To try to combat this, students falling into these categories were identified at enrolment and supported by a member of academic staff who maintained contact until the students settled into their studies - providing additional reassurance, advice and guidance as necessary. In addition, mini-induction events were run for late enrolees and regular progress meetings held with repeating students.

A further intervention taking place at this time was to identify non-returners. Students who should be returning to repeat their stage of study and who then failed to enrol were telephoned, and in the first year this was introduced, twelve of the twenty students contacted by the Advice Shop subsequently resumed their studies. This at risk screening significantly contributed to the overall reduction of early withdrawals in both Schools. For example, the number of early withdrawals in HaSS, was cut from 40 in 2000/01 to 11 in 2001/02.

For all Level 1 students on the BABS Award, and selected Awards within HaSS, paper copies of spreadsheet class registers were produced for tutors, and this attendance monitoring was

invaluable for the early identification of students not attending classes. Any student missing two consecutive sessions, or showing a pattern of non-attendance was followed up by the Advice Shop Manager or the Student Achievement Co-ordinator. This contact was supportive and non-judgmental, in an attempt to identify the reasons for the student's non-attendance. Students were then supported and encouraged to return to their studies, and appropriate liaison between the Advice Shop or Student Achievement Co-ordinator and the tutor facilitated a smooth return to the classroom.

The success of these early semester interventions was also influenced by the approachability of staff - at all levels within the institution. For example, when one rather 'lost' looking student was approached by a member of staff, she promptly burst into tears and said "I want to leave but I can't find the car park." This led to the student being directed to the Advice Shop and with the appropriate guidance she subsequently went on to successfully complete her first year studies. Students who are seeking reassurance or the solution to a query benefit from a central point of contact, which provides an open and welcoming environment, where they will receive impartial help, guidance and advice. Demand for advice and information in these early weeks should not be underestimated. In the HaSS Advice Shop the volume of students calling in for advice during enrolment week represents almost a third of the total School population of approximately 5000.

Other interventions to support orientation included transition workshops. These were a series of weekly timetabled sessions for the BABS students and a short programme titled 'pathway to graduation' for HaSS. Both were designed to help prepare students for HE study, covering issues such as realistic time management and the amount of self study expected of level one students.

Zone 2: late enrolment, late induction and early weeks of teaching

As well as ongoing advice and support, one of the other resource intensive interventions was the continuation of the weekly attendance monitoring system. Although time consuming, this was invaluable for identifying the more 'marginal' students; as poor or sporadic attendance proves to be a consistent and reliable early warning sign of students who were disengaging from their studies. Where absence was quickly identified it was possible to take early remedial action, and for many a gentle reminder was sufficient to encourage students to take a

more mature and balanced approach to their studies. In other cases early identification provided the opportunity to offer students additional guidance and support and to sign-post and mobilise other support agencies within the University, such as the Education Drop-In Centre (study skills) and Student Services (counselling, finance, careers, etc).

For the identified at risk student groups (such as late enrolees, late returners and repeating students) ongoing contact was more rigorously maintained. Late joiners were offered support in developing study action plans; More importantly, efforts were made to ensure students integrated into their groups and felt part of the University and its community. Regular progress meetings were held with repeating students, who were encouraged to develop action plans to address ineffective behaviour or issues that had hindered their performance during the previous year.

During this Zone it became evident that many students were unprepared for the peaks and troughs of university study, and their time management skills were not sufficiently developed to deal with the demands of such a fluid learning environment. Ozga and Sukhnandan (1998) pointed to the mismatch between institutional expectations and student experiences being emphasised by the expansion of higher education. Richardson (2003) identified a link between the relatively low number of contact hours and the student's perception that this was in direct proportion to the amount of effort they were expected to give to their studies in order to be successful. During this period, students were encouraged to seek help with time management planning, and appointments for friends to come in together and go through their work schedules became very popular. By promoting these opportunities, students developed a better appreciation of what it meant to be a more autonomous learner and of the realities and requirements of this in relation to their HE studies.

Zone 3 – middle to end of teaching period, first/second assessments

Ongoing attendance monitoring was one way of identifying students who were missing classes, but an additional mechanism used to pick up students not satisfactorily progressing was to check for non-submissions or failure of the students' first piece of assessment. Students falling into this category were contacted by the Student Achievement Coordinator/Advice Shop Manager and offered additional guidance and support. Some just needed to be reminded of the procedures for seeking deadline extensions because of

mitigating circumstances (such as illness, etc), but for others it was an early lesson learnt – non-submission resulted in a zero grade. The quick identification of students facing difficulties meant that it was still possible to take corrective action. This example demonstrates the proactive nature of these retention interventions, because in the past such students would not have been identified until the end of year Award Boards. In the case of students who had 'drifted off', exit interviews were encouraged to close the loop. If withdrawal was the preferred option, the personal approach assisted them in making informed choices, helping to make this a more positive experience for the student.

A further initiative on the BABS Scheme was to provide each Personal Tutor with an individual student profile of their tutees - detailing module attendance, assessment results and any contact made by the Student Achievement Coordinator. Having some context of the students' first few weeks, enabled Personal Tutors to offer better advice and guidance to students and helped to ensure a more consistent staff approach to student support.

During Zone 3 students started to receive feedback on assignments and this was often the first indicator of their academic progress to date. Tutors on the BABS Scheme were encouraged to refer struggling students to the Student Achievement Coordinator, who used the tutor's progression report to assist students in developing strategies for raising their performance. For some students this involved weekly/regular progress meetings, offering additional study skills or time management support. These weekly progress meetings were also well received by students returning to University after an extended absence. An additional outcome of this support initiative was the number of self-referrals from students who felt they were not performing to their own expected standards. One student with straight As from secondary school was devastated to receive B and C grades and the opportunity for a study health check offered advice for putting results into context.

Zone 4 – revision week and examination fortnight

During this period students were encouraged to attend study skills sessions for revision and exam techniques. Additional revision and exam workshops were specifically arranged for the BABS Scheme and HaSS students were encouraged to book individual or group sessions with the Advice Shop. Although the uptake of these sessions was initially slow, feedback was

positive. Students particularly commented on how being made aware of the protocol for their first university examinations helped to alleviate undue nerves and exam stress.

In Zone 4 there are no scheduled teaching weeks so many tutors were not routinely available – yet this was a time when students were proactively sought, and needed contact with staff. Despite students not having to be on campus, the Student Achievement Coordinator and Advice Shop continued to receive queries and drop-in visits, and these significantly escalated when students received their end of semester results. Many students asked for clarification on the 'progression codes' used by the University, or just generally did not understand what their grades meant. For example, one student received a 'D' grade (border line pass) but thought she had failed; conversely another student was fairly pleased to have received an 'F2', (which was a clear fail) because she thought it was a pass grade.

One initiative adopted for the BABS Scheme was to include a letter with all students' results inviting them to get in touch if they were disappointed or concerned about their performance. Approximately 25% of students made contact and welcomed the opportunity to discuss their results and how they could improve them in the future. A similar initiative with HaSS was the 'What Happens Next Leaflet', written in clear and simple 'student language' which proved very successful in helping students to make sense of their results.

This was a critical time for staff to maintain positive contact with all students, but particularly with those who had underperformed; even more so if they were not eligible to progress to the next level of their Award. While some students identified poor revision and exam technique as a reason for under-performing, a number of students became disheartened and lost confidence in their abilities. Such students needed practical advice and guidance about strategies for continuing; encouraging them to recognise that their first foray into HE was a learning process, and early or poor performance in the first semester did not mean that HE was not right for them. For other students the decision to withdraw, suspend their studies or transfer was the right decision, and the opportunity to talk to the Student Achievement Coordinator/Advice Shop Manager helped to make this a more informed and positive decision.

The period between the end of Zone 4 and the start of the next semester was a significant danger point for students who had encountered difficulties during the first semester. To

encourage students to continue with their studies the Student Achievement Coordinator/Advice Shop Manager initiated contact at the start of the new semester, with the offer of additional guidance and advice.

Implementing interventions with limited resources

The timeline shown in Figure 1 maps the student experiences against the University actions piloted at Glamorgan and the paper has shown there were student and institutional benefits from all the initiatives introduced. However if resources are limited, there are some elements the authors consider to be key considerations within each zone.

At the beginning of the semester, one of the causes of early withdrawal is the gap between learner expectations and reality, so initiatives that are focused on ensuring the preparedness and integration of students into university life are essential. Key elements to reducing attrition in Zone 1 are:

- To have a comprehensive induction, ensuring the staff involved are 'the good guys'.
- To establish a central and accessible query, advice and guidance point, with friendly and approachable staff.
- To identify students in high risk categories (such as late starters or repeaters) and ensure provision of late joiner events.

By mid-semester, time management becomes an issue, with students making decisions about the balance between their academic, part-time work and social life. Students' assessment results and attendance can be key indicators of students potentially at risk of withdrawal or failure. Key elements for reducing attrition in Zones 2 and 3 are:

- To establish warning systems for the early identification of students at risk, with the necessary support measures in place to follow this up.
- These measures include - register checks with weekly follow ups of unexplained absence, progression reports from tutors, intervention after non-submission of first assignment and study health checks for individual students.

In the latter part of the semester, withdrawal was also linked with non-progression, as students either under performed or failed assessments. Poor academic performance was a good

indicator of students struggling with their studies, and also evidence of students' disengagement from their Award. Key elements to reducing attrition in Zone 4 are:

- To actively contact under achieving students and to provide clear and constructive feedback on their assessments and examination results.
- To offer practical guidance and advice for raising performance levels and developing successful strategies for continuing in HE.
- Vigilant monitoring of student attendance at the start of the second semester to identify students who do not return.

CONCLUSIONS

The interventions discussed in this paper may seem simplistic, but they have been proven to be successful in improving student retention regardless of educational background. In the period 2001-2003 the attrition rate on level 1 of the Business Studies Scheme, was reduced from 25% at the start to 12% at the end of the project. In the School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences, the in year attrition rate has been reduced from 6% in 2001 to 2.5%.
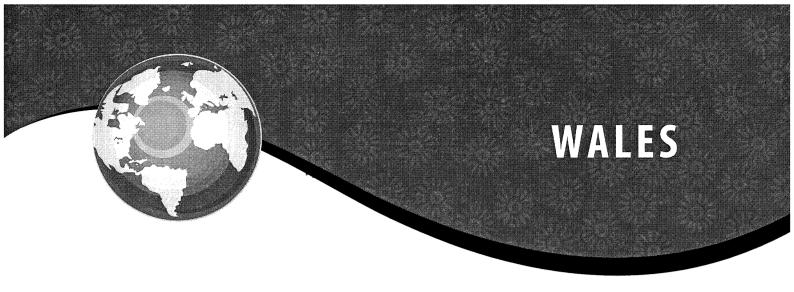
During the interviews conducted for this research, it became apparent that a polarisation exists between the expectations of the students and the institution, with the time taken to assimilate the skills associated with independent learning taking longer than widely recognised. Given the body of literature supporting the needs of widening participation students, the authors feel that whilst this observation is borne out of interviews with Glamorgan students, this gap in student and staff expectations is highly likely to be apparent in many institutions with a cohort representing the widening participation agenda. Staff commitment to retention at every level requires greater understanding of all students' needs, but particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds whose requirements, perceptions and ideas are very different from more traditional cohorts.

As the Government seeks to target widening participation rates, so more and more HEIs will be seeking interventions that will bridge the gap between HE standards and expectations, and students' abilities and expectations. It is hoped that this timeline will contribute to a greater understanding of first year issues and possible institutional responses.

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Faculty Advice Shops

University of Glamorgan

The Institution and Its Students

The University of Glamorgan, located in Pontypridd, Wales, UK, is a publicly controlled higher education institution. The total student population for 2006-2007 was 21,326, of which 86% were undergraduates and 14% postgraduate. Half (51%) were full-time, and 2,463 were international students. The male/female ratio was 49:51. Of the undergraduate population, 23% of full-time, and 54% of part-time students were age 25 or older. The ethnic demographics of the undergraduate population were Black 3%, **Asian** 6% (one third Chinese), White 83%, and other/undisclosed 7%. The percentage of students living in residential halls on campus was 5%.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data show that 29.4% of the University's students are from low-participation neighborhoods, compared with 16.4% for Wales as a whole, and 14% across the UK (HESA, 2007a). HESA defines low-participation neighborhoods in the UK as "areas for which the participation rate is less than two thirds of the UK average rate" (HESA, 2007b). In addition, 41.4% of the University's students are from lower socioeconomic groups, compared with 29.0% for Wales and 29.3% across the UK (HESA, 2007a).

The Initiative

In 2006, the University of Glamorgan set up Faculty Advice Shops across the institution as one of its initiatives to address rising student drop-out rates and provide an interface for student/faculty interaction. Advice Shops are an innovative concept—not only providing frontline advice to students but also actively developing and implementing strategies to improve retention and progression based on the data they collect. Thus, the Advice Shops complement and integrate their roles and services with existing academic and administrative student support in the **faculty**. They

also collaborate institutionally with Student Services and other corporate support departments. The major goals of the Advice Shops responding to student attrition include

◇ Identifying retention issues across the faculty in conjunction with faculty **staff**
◇ Implementing intervention processes to improve student retention within the faculty
◇ Identifying best practices across the University of Glamorgan and other institutions and to share examples where appropriate

This initiative arose from the success of a pilot Advice Shop, which was established in 2001 in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS). The school's senior management identified the need for an Advice Shop in response to two emerging developments: (a) the increasing number of students seeking academic help or advice on withdrawing, suspending, or transferring studies and (b) concern about the retention and progression patterns for first-year students. The role of the Advice Shop was to act as an information, advice, and referral service. The pilot was very successful and led to a lower attrition rate and significant revenue savings. Thus, Advice Shop was made a permanent feature of HASS.

In 2005, the University directorate made the decision to roll out this type of provision across the entire University, which was about to be reorganized into five faculties: (a) Advanced Technology; (b) Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries; (c) Glamorgan Business School; (d) Health, Sport, and Science; and (e) Humanities and Social Sciences (Fitzgibbon & Carter, 2006). Accordingly, in September 2006, Advice Shops were opened in the four remaining faculties, extending the provision to all University of Glamorgan students and focusing on those students from widening-participation backgrounds and low-participation neighborhoods.

Each Advice Shop provides a full-time, drop-in service and appointment system for academic advice and pastoral support. Academic advice includes any aspect of the student's current or proposed course of study, including information and advice on withdrawal, transfer, or suspension of their studies. Pastoral support can include referral to corporate support providers within the University.

The Advice Shops are also actively involved in the identification and implementation of appropriate faculty-based interventions to support student retention. In addition to the common provision described above, a range of individual faculty-specific functions is designed to address retention issues. Examples include

◇ Electronic monitoring of attendance and proactive follow-up with first-year undergraduate students who have low or sporadic patterns of attendance
◇ Administering an undergraduate **summer revision** event for students with referrals in coursework and/or examination **assessments**
◇ Providing cross-faculty liaisons for disability and dyslexia support services
◇ Scheduling progress meetings for students identified as at risk of drop out or poor performance (e.g., late enrollees, repeating students, students failing or not submitting early assessment work)
◇ Becoming involved in the **induction** program for all first-year students and providing a central contact point for students enrolling late

Advice Shops are managed by a member of the **research-active academic staff** and supported by a range of administrative personnel, who participate in a number of faculty and University-wide strategic and operational committees.

Research Design

This study examines the provision of Advice Shops, which is an ongoing University-wide initiative. A multiphased approach has been adopted to identify student retention and achievement issues followed by analysis of the impact of the initiatives undertaken. The study follows an action research methodology (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) and, as a result, is an iterative process that informs and reviews the work. The research questions include

◇ What factors contribute to making students at risk of early withdrawal?
◇ What interventions can be established to counteract these factors?
◇ What evidence is there of use and effectiveness of the interventions?
◇ What evidence is there of the impact on improving student retention?

As such, the research included (a) an examination of student retention rates, existing interventions, and known risk points or triggers; (b) the identification and selection of major interventions; (c) the implementation of identified interventions; and (d) gathering data to test the impact of the interventions.

Secondary research was carried out to address the first research question using findings from the established HASS Advice Shop, historical data from the University, and a literature review. To answer our second and third questions, we collected qualitative and quantitative data from primary sources, which involved (a) the development and implementation of a student record system to collect data on student interviews and contacts, (b) the development and distribution of online questionnaires to assess student satisfaction with Advice Shop provision, and (c) data collected from the attendance monitoring systems.

The final research question was addressed by collating Advice Shop data on student contact and usage and correlating common factors leading to dissatisfaction or early withdrawal from study.

Findings

What factors contribute to making students at risk of early withdrawal?

The retention literature identifies the main reasons for early withdrawal as poor social or academic integration (Beder, 1997; Crosling, Thomas, & Heagney, 2008; Tinto, 1993; Yorke & Longden, 2007), including transition to a higher education culture, lack of preparedness (Collins & Lim, 2002; Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998), poor course choice (Yorke, 1999), financial and personal issues (such as ill health) or other supra-institutional factors (Archer, Hutchings, & Ross, 2003; Christie, Munro, & Fisher, 2004). As Figure 1 shows, many of the categories of withdrawal at Glamorgan matched those from the literature, with the notable exception of financial issues. This disparity is particularly striking given the demographic profile of the University and the number of students with significant commitments to part-time work.

Underlying the categories in Figure 1 were complex factors, which contribute to student withdrawal. These were manifested by low or nonattendance at time-tabled classes, nonsubmission or poor performance of early assessments, and difficulties with time management and the rigors of independent study. Many first-year undergraduate students struggled to adapt to the new learning environment, and this was exacerbated by trying to balance university with family, part-time work, and other commitments. Social integration was further affected by the numbers of commuting students who maintained their previous social circles from home.
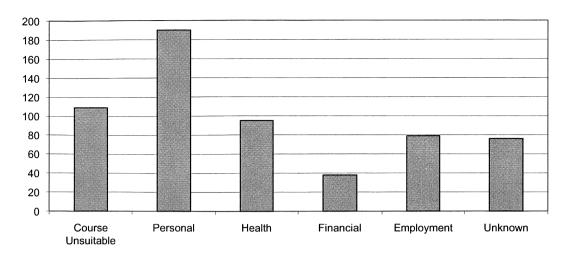
Figure 1. Reasons for in-year withdrawal and suspended studies, 2006-2007.

What interventions can be established to counteract these factors?

In response to the contributory factors identified above, we identified the following interventions, which were subsequently adopted by the Advice Shops:

◇ Providing a central point of contact within each faculty for any student query
◇ **Signposting** to other faculty and institutional support staff and services
◇ Following up with students who were expected to return but failed to re-enroll
◇ Advising students considering change of course of study or institution or early withdrawal
◇ Systematically monitoring attendance of first-year students and offering tutor referral for any other students
◇ Implementing a robust follow-up system for students with low or sporadic attendance patterns
◇ Targeting students with nonsubmission or late submission of assessments
◇ Holding progress meetings to encourage students to adopt successful study strategies
◇ Designing and implementing electronic self-assessment support tools to enable students to identify the extent of their social and academic orientation and integration
◇ Sponsoring events to encourage social integration

What evidence is there of the use and effectiveness of the interventions?

Following the opening of the Faculty Advice Shops, students immediately began to access the drop-in provision. Advice Shops were inundated with queries or requests for information, as well as more complex issues that required students to meet with an advisor. Over the period of October 2006 to June 2007, the volume of student usage from all types of inquiries including visits, e-mails, and telephone calls totalled 13,773. The majority of queries were managed within the Advice Shop, but where necessary, students were referred to the appropriate support staff or

services and subsequently contacted to ensure a network of care. Advice Shop surveys of student opinion show that 69% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided.

Where students failed to enroll when expected or suspended their studies, Advice Shop contact resulted in many of these students successfully returning to their studies. This contact provides help and advice on suitability of course and techniques for successful study. The effectiveness of the intervention was evidenced by the number of students subsequently returning to their studies (approximately 20%) or resuming after a period of suspension (more than 50%). The Advice Shop also supports students considering early withdrawal, suspension of studies, or transfer of course during the academic year. This ensures that students make an informed decision so that their choice is a supported and positive experience.

More than 2,000 first-year students were monitored for attendance, which proved to be one of the most effective methods for the early identification of students at risk of disengaging or poor performance. Students with low attendance were contacted and offered support to encourage them back into the classroom, rather than disciplining them for poor attendance. Of the many hundreds of students contacted, approximately two thirds resumed their studies, with the remaining students either seeking further support to resume or making informed decisions about their studies rather than drifting away. Student feedback on the attendance monitoring interventions was positive, with 81% stating the intervention had improved their attendance rates, and 92% of those who attended an advice interview stated that they found it helpful.

Interventions such as the follow-up of late or nonsubmission of coursework and progress meetings enabled Advice Shops to target support for students with academic issues. The learner support tools allowed students to self-identify their individual need for support. Approximately 1,500 students used these self-assessment tools, which was much greater than anticipated.

Social integration is encouraged by the organization of cultural events, informal get-togethers for specific student cohorts and end-of-term and end-of-year celebrations. Participation in these events is high, and students are very positive about the opportunity to make friends and integrate with their peers and tutors in social settings.

What evidence is there of the impact on improving student retention?

The Advice Shops have established a better understanding of students and the issues they face while studying in higher education. As recommended by the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2008), the University now has reliable information concerning study crisis points, timing, and reasons for withdrawal, including the underlying complexities of the reasons why students leave early.

Early indications are that the Advice Shops are making a contribution to the overall improvement in student retention. Although it is too early to evaluate the extent to which such improvement is directly attributable to these interventions, the evidence shows that the Advice Shops have made a positive contribution to improving the student experience.

Implications and Future Directions

There was immediate acceptance and use of the Advice Shops by students, demonstrating the need for such provision. The intervention also improved our understanding of and ability to profile our students, whether they were persisters or early leavers. We discovered a number of issues that were critical to the success of this initiative. First, a cohesive team of Advice Shop managers is vital for professional support and parity of student provision. Yet, student retention can never be solely

the responsibility of the Advice Shops. It is an issue that must be addressed by the whole institution. To secure institution-wide buy-in, support from senior-level management is crucial. Even with a competent management team and top-level support, time is needed for the Advice Shops to be accepted by faculty staff and to be integrated with existing support provision.

If we were to do anything differently in the future, it would be to manage our own and staff expectations better with regard to realistic and achievable milestones. We would also pay greater attention to the physical location of each Advice Shop in order to maximize accessibility, visibility, and efficiency.

We believe that this initiative can easily be adapted at other institutions but offer the following suggestions for a smooth adoption of the Advice Shop concept. First, educators should put systems in place to provide evidence of institutional issues and use this evidence to identify appropriate interventions. Next, it is important to remember that a micro approach to interventions can be an effective starting point. For example, educators should implement the scheme on a small scale before adopting it across the institution. While we often expect a dramatic transformation of student retention in the short term, it may be more realistic to aim for incremental gains. Finally, the Advice Shop concept should follow a supportive rather than a punitive approach, especially when monitoring student attendance. Supporting poor attenders back into the classroom rather than penalizing them has proved to be a highly successful strategy.

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Student Expectations and University Interventions

– a timeline to aid undergraduate student retention

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Student Expectations and University Interventions

- a timeline to aid undergraduate student retention

Abstract

The University of Glamorgan has a policy of encouraging widening participation. However, as many Universities are realising, widening the entrance gates can sometimes lead to increasing numbers leaving through the exit gates before the completion of their programme. This in turn leads to increasing attrition rates for the university or HEI and a feeling of failure, or low self-esteem on the part of the learner.

At the University of Glamorgan, a pilot project partly funded by HEFCW is demonstrating how interventionist policies can improve attrition rates. This innovative project involves two of the University's biggest departments (the Business School and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences) and comprises of a series of timed interventions designed to support vulnerable first year students, as well as those struggling in the latter stages of their studies. These initiatives have been made possible by the establishment of a number of Retention Advisor posts, whose primary focus has been to support students in their orientation and journey through their Higher Education programme.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the interventions, a timeline was first constructed – detailing weekly issues and interventions over the first semester of a study programme. This highlighted student experiences, mapped against the amount of support offered by various University initiatives.   It is this timeline that will be explored in the conference paper.

One cause of early withdrawal is a gap between learner expectations and reality, and it is recognised that the first few weeks of study are of crucial importance. At the beginning of the semester initiatives focused on ensuring the preparedness and integration of students into University life. For example, in addition to a comprehensive induction programme, measures were taken to contact non-returners and to provide additional support for late enrolees – both groups identified as being 'at risk' of withdrawing before completing their study programme.

By mid-semester, time management became an issue, with students making the decision about the balance between their academic, part-time work and social life. Some students questioned whether they had made the right Award choice, or even whether university in general was the right option for them. Students' performance and attendance became key indicators of students potentially at risk of withdrawal or failure, and early identification was crucial so that additional support and remedial action could be offered. Initiatives included register checks with weekly follow ups of unexplained absence, progression reports from tutors, intervention after non-submission of first assignment and study health checks for individual students.
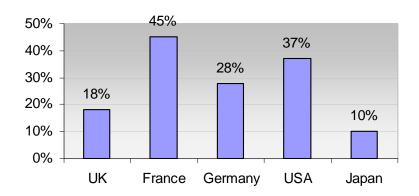
In the latter part of the semester, withdrawal was also linked with non-progression as students either under performed or failed assessments. Poor academic performance brought home to some students the need for a more mature and autonomous approach to their studies, but for others it was evidence of their disengagement from their Award. In addition to the more general measures arising around revision and exam techniques, intervention was needed to ensure that students put results into perspective and developed strategies for raising performance levels and successfully progressing in HE.

The early results taken from the project indicate that the various interventions have made a positive impact on the quest to reduce attrition. The project has now been extended for a further year, and the University is currently exploring ways of replicating this example of innovative practice in other academic Schools. However, the biggest success is evidenced by the students who have gone from despair to becoming achievers; those who have gone from thinking they would drop out, to continuing with good grades; and those who were not planning to come back to University, but have returned and successfully completed their current year of study.

Picture of HE Retention Issues Nationally

In comparison to other countries, higher education (HE) in the UK has a relatively low wastage or non-completion rate at 18%, see Figure 1. However, this is equivalent to £900 million of HE Funding Council Grant; in term of student numbers 260,000 students gained a degree and 47,000 (18%) did not[1] (HESA cited in NATFE, 2000).

Figure 1

The rate of Wastage or non-completion 1997/8
- Based on HEFCE (2000) Performance indicators for HE

While the UK percentage figure has remained fairly constant over the past decade, there has been an increase in student numbers, so in real terms the true cost of non-completion is rising. With the Government pushing for a target of 50% of those aged between 18-30 in HE within the next century, experience from other countries suggests that as access increases non-completion figures will grow[2] (OECD, 2000).

For the University of Glamorgan with its successful widening access policy and the resultant inclusion of greater numbers of non-traditional students, attrition figures have in the past compared unfavourably with other UK universities. Figure 2 shows the national (UK) and Welsh picture of retention and progression as provided by the HEFCE (2002) Performance Indicators for 1999/2000.

Figure 2

HE Performance Indicators for higher education 1999-2000
  - Full time First Degree Entrants (HEFCE, 2002)

	UK	WALES	UNIVERSITY OF GLAMORGAN
Entrants	279,769	16,568	2,505
Continue/Qualify	87.8%	88.5%	82%
UK transfer with other HEIs	2.5%	2.6%	3.1%
Not in HE by following year (attrition)	8%	7.3%	13%

Somewhat of an improvement in the progression, transfer and attrition figures for

Wales, but contrast this with figures published for the University of Glamorgan and the

picture is a little less optimistic.

Picture of Retention Issues for the University of Glamorgan

With an attrition rate of 13%, there are clearly retention issues which are specific to the

University of Glamorgan. Contributory factors to this are:

- widening participation agenda

- low educational attainment of catchment area students

- many undergraduates who are 'first in the family' to enter into HE, so have little

  or no knowledge of the experience and culture of studying in HE.

Within the University itself, there are varying levels of retention performance. Figures

produced to demonstrate broad categories of student withdrawal, suspension of study

and transfers indicate that it is not just individual Schools, but specific Awards within

Schools which have higher than average attrition rates. So what is the University doing to combat this?

There are several models of retention currently being undertaken, some of which are institutional (counting, accounting, etc), but many of which follow Moxley et al's (2001, 40) student-centred approach '…that retention is primarily for students and not necessarily for the benefit of the institution, although it can create many institutional benefits'.

The project at the heart of this article concerns two posts which were independently established by the two biggest Schools in the University, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS) and the Business School. Although operationally different, both roles were specifically created to address retention issues.

HaSS created the role of Advice Shop Manager, with the aim of providing a 'one-stop shop' for all student queries. Initially funded for one year, the Advice Shop project has been extended for a further two years and now includes a research agenda and the appointment of an additional member of staff. The work involves direct contact with all students of the School (approximately 2500), and study skills advice, pastoral care, and academic support are all offered.

The role of Student Achievement Co-ordinator in the Business School was specifically attached to the BA Business Studies Scheme, which had the largest undergraduate

programme in the School. The post was seen as a complimentary role to support first year tutors with a specific remit to look at the retention and performance of students (approximately 190) on Level 1 of the Scheme.

As well as ongoing day to day support, the two post holders also wanted to analyse and begin to understand and respond to, the key danger points which seemed to affect retention rates for either the Scheme or School. Slowly, a timeline of student expectations and corresponding university initiatives or interventions was constructed. From the first draft of the timeline, it became apparent that there was a polarisation between the expectations of the students and the institution. When the students most needed and sought support, the institution was pulling away; not out of negligence, but because it was assumed that at this point in their first year students had assimilated the skills associated with independent learning.

The Timeline

Figure 3

Student Expectations and University Interventions – a timeline to aid retention

The timeline was constructed from the experiences of first year students and for ease of reference is divided into four zones, covering the first semester:

Zone 1: enrolment, induction and the first two weeks of teaching

Zone 2: late enrolment, late induction and early weeks of teaching

Zone 3: middle to end of teaching period, first/second assessments

Zone 4: final assessment period, revision and examinations or assignments

Under each Zone the issues for the student are contrasted with those for the University in order to demonstrate the activities, initiatives and interventions which are now in place, as part of this innovative approach to student retention.

Zone 1: enrolment, induction and first two weeks of teaching

Student Issues

A large number of the students who come to the University of Glamorgan are 'first generation', ie they are the first in their family to experience higher education. They often have little or no idea of what to expect from their HE studies and bring with them stereotypical ideas, such as expecting the academic staff to be capped and gowned at all times. Some will initially feel extremely uncomfortable in the presence of an academic member of staff and find first name terms difficult to engage with. Staff often experience the continuing use of 'Miss' or 'Sir' and one colleague voiced the experiences of many when he said:

> "It's usually in a seminar in about week 5 when someone will tentatively, quietly, say 'Phil' to ask me a question. Then, there's a collective intake of breath waiting for my reaction and when I simply answer the question the class breathes out again! After that most people are happy to use my name."

This gap in learners' expectations can result in early withdrawal, but of course this is not the case for all students. Many are happy and confident about beginning their

journey into higher education, and the combination of those first generation and those who are more realistic in their expectations seems to produce a healthy mix of attitudes amongst most cohorts.

There are common experiences shared by all students in terms of the requirements of enrolment, such as receiving (and trying to understand) the timetable for classes, participating in induction events, receiving a password for the IT systems within the University and having a tour of the Learning Resources Centre. However, some elements are not common to all students; depending on their chosen course of study, some will be making Award and option choices – often over a relatively short period of time. Others will be settling into Halls of Residence accommodation or local privately owned rented housing, bringing with it a whole new gamut of emotions and practical issues:

> "I got by in my first year on coffee, beans on toast and biscuits unless I ate on campus – I just didn't know how to cook anything else and anyway I couldn't afford the food and didn't have the time!"

Those who are staying at home during their University studies often experience equally difficult, though very different problems:

> "My friends spoke of 'your University friends' (who they never met) as if these people were an odd bunch of misfits who wore scarves and smoked dope all day."

> "I found it so hard living at home, still looking after my little sister, including being expected to pick her up from school even when that meant missing a

lecture. My parents just didn't understand how different I needed to be as a university student compared to when I was doing my A levels."

During this time the student population are expecting contact with academic staff as well as support staff. It is clear that however trivial the question, they need to be able to ask someone who will give them an answer, and not make them feel inadequate for asking.

Very tearful student: "I'm never going to fit all these hours in. I'm going to have to leave now because I just can't be here for all that time."

The student had mistakenly thought that all the seminars listed under one subject were compulsory so she'd built up a timetable consisting of over forty contact hours. If the Advice Shop had not been there would she just have left?

Zone 1: enrolment, induction and first two weeks of teaching

University Interventions

Clearly the students' early encounters with the University and the first weeks of the teaching period are the initial point at which students may be overburdened by anxiety. One of the recurring themes identified by Kerka's (1995) review of adult retention was the crucial importance of the first few weeks of study. It is certainly the case that 55% of the students that withdrew from their programme of study in HaSS in the academic year 2001/02, did so before the end of November. Concurring figures from the BABS Scheme show that 84% of first year withdrawals occurred during the first semester, 47% of which occurred during the first few weeks of teaching.

In an attempt to reduce this flood of early withdrawals and to ease student's transition into the HE environment, HaSS put in place an induction programme which aimed to allow space for socialisation as well as time to sort out financial issues, accommodation and so on. Every student was also given an individual timetable with their own seminar/lecture programme set out.

The BABS Scheme introduced a comprehensive, week long induction programme for first year students, and in addition to the more usual orientation and introductory events, many activities were interactive and group based. This encouraged students to build early relationships with both staff and their peers, and of particular success was the employment of second year students to assist in enrolment and induction processes.

While the first few weeks are a 'danger zone' for all students, there are further groups who are considered to be at a greater risk of withdrawing: those repeating their stage of study and those who are late enrolling. (For example, only 4 out of the 10 students who enroled late on the BABS Scheme in 2001/2 successfully completed their first year of study.) To try and combat this, these two groups are now supported by a member of academic staff who maintains contact until the students have settled into their studies - providing additional reassurance, advice and guidance as necessary. In addition, mini-induction events are run for late enrolees and regular progress meetings held with repeating students.

A further intervention taking place at this time is to identify and contact those students who have failed to enrol. Often there are last minute problems and the student chooses to defer their place until the next academic year. Students who should be returning to repeat their stage of study and who then fail to enrol are telephoned to see if there are issues for which they need help or support. The Advice Shop had some early success with this and twelve of the twenty students contacted subsequently resumed their studies. In addition, the number of early withdrawals in HaSS was cut from 40 in 2000/01 to 11 in 2001/02. This dramatic reduction is attributed to the early support interventions and services outlined above.

There are three key elements to reducing attrition during Zone 1.

- Ensure the staff involved in induction and enrolment activities are 'the good guys' of the School.

- Establish a base room, with a student friendly décor (posters, plants, comfy chairs, etc), to create an open and welcoming environment where students will receive help and advice.

- Whatever level of staffing is perceived as needed to deal with questions, queries, form filling, directing and so on should be doubled.

Zone 2: late enrolment, late induction and early weeks of teaching

Student Issues

For the vast majority of students, weeks 4-6 represent a period of calm after the initial hectic activity in the first three weeks. Most students are establishing friendships and

beginning to get a better picture of University teaching. For some students however, things do not go as smoothly, because they will only now be joining the University. Late enrolees, transfers from other HEIs, late returning and late repeating students can all join their respective courses. This group will not only be experiencing the 'load' from Zone 1, but will be under the additional burden of the issues associated with Zone 2.

Students are often struggling with homesickness at this point – the initial euphoria of leaving home and 'going on an adventure' having turned into a depressing cycle of not eating properly, missing classes to stay in warm, safe surroundings and generally turning in on oneself. Other decisions about getting the balance right, and whether coming to University or the chosen Award was the right option, are often being made. The early excesses of late nights, dabbling with alcohol and getting by on three or four hours sleep have given way to feeling miserable and tired. It is time for students to evaluate when to party and when to work, but this realisation for some is a long time coming, and poor time-management for many is a recurring problem.

A further danger at this point is that students are unaware that the hill they are climbing is about to get suddenly steeper – the first assignments are due:

> "I can remember thinking, wow Uni is the best thing I ever did – partying, meeting loads of new people, coming and going whenever I wanted, sleeping in if I felt like it and only ten hours of classes a week instead of 8 hours a day, 5 days a week like College. Then BOOM! Assignments. Suddenly I didn't know if I was coming or going. Burning the candle both ends, up late reading then partying, then sometimes not bothering to go to bed before a 9am class the next day. It couldn't last…and it didn't! I bummed out in my first assignment

27% and thought, get a grip girl. From then on I started to manage myself a lot

differently. I got some stick for being a bit of a party-pooper but I still partied at

weekends so that soon disappeared."

It is often at this point that students seek some help from a member of staff and that

can have a huge impact on their confidence and self-belief. For example, one Advice

Shop query was: "Can you tell me the difference between lectures and seminars?"

After an explanation the student commented:

"Ah. Now I understand. I just thought the tutor didn't like me. I keep asking

questions all the time in the lecture, often asking others sitting around me what

they thought of a particular point I'd raised. The tutor was just ignoring me and

no-one was sitting next to me so I thought I'd better come and see what I'm

doing wrong!"

Zone 2: late enrolment, late induction and early weeks of teaching

University Interventions

Weekly register checks proved invaluable at this point for identifying the more

'marginal' students. Follow up contact was made with any student who had two

consecutive and unexplained absences in a module. The tone of contact was always

supportive and non-judgmental, which helped to uncover the 'real reasons' for non-

attendance.

Poor or sporadic attendance proved to be a consistent and reliable early warning sign of students who were disengaging from their studies and were therefore potentially at risk of drop-out or failure. Where absence was quickly identified it was possible to take early remedial action, and for many a gentle reminder was sufficient to encourage students to take a more mature and balanced approach to their studies.

In other cases early identification provided the opportunity to offer students additional guidance and support and to mobilise other support agencies within the University, such as the Education Drop-In Centre (study skills) and Student Services (counselling, finance, careers, etc). Some students subsequently re-evaluated their position and made the decision to transfer to other Awards, to suspend their studies or even to withdraw. But this in its self was positive if it meant that the student had been supported in making an informed choice that was right at that time for them. Yorke (1999) made the distinction between 'drop-outs' and 'stop-outs' and the latter are more likely to return if they have left with a positive experience of the University.

For the identified at risk student groups (such as late enrolees, late returners and repeating students) ongoing contact was more rigorously maintained. Students who had enroled or returned late were offered support in developing Study Action plans – to help them catch up on any work they had missed. More importantly, efforts were made to ensure students integrated into their groups and felt part of the University and its community. For repeating students regular progress meetings were held; students were encouraged to develop action plans to address ineffective behaviour or issues that had hindered their performance during the previous year.

Key elements to reducing attrition during Zone 2

- Establish early warning systems for identifying students who are potentially at risk and have the necessary support measures in place for supporting these students.

- Encourage positive two-way dialogue between students and staff – build relationships so that students feel valued and supported in their HE journey.

Zone 3 – middle to end of teaching period, first/second assessments

Student Issues

This zone is the point at which things have usually settled into some kind of pattern. Students have become more familiar and established within their Award structure, and for the majority of students the regular cycle of class attendance, private study and working will be the norm. However, not all students will be working consistently, and some will be in the type of study pattern that involves intense bursts of activity, predominantly in response to approaching assessment deadlines.

A significant number of first year students will continue to struggle to find a balance between self-confident strides into their own learning, and seeking tutor feedback before tackling assignments. Whilst they are starting to become autonomous learners, most students are still somewhat dependent upon their tutors for help and advice. For example after carefully reading the tutor's assessment guidelines, one student's query was:

"'My lecturer keeps telling me that HE is a whole new ball-game and I know my work has to be a critical appraisal, with evidence and references to back up my argument – but what exactly does this mean?"

Not only was there an assumption that the students comprehended the shift from a school to a HE essay, but that the students understood the fundamentals of essay writing. With an increasingly diverse and 'non-traditional' cohort, (with for example mature, foreign and Advanced GNVQ or Vocational A' Level entrants) this is just not the case.

It is at this time that those students who have poorly established (or non-existent) study habits, really come under pressure. In addition, many of these students will also have poor attendance records, so have also missed a significant amount of coursework material. They are on a downward spiral as they struggle to meet assessment deadlines, which can result in rushed and unsatisfactory work, or even non-submission. Genuine explanations such as illness, family difficulties, bereavement, relationship problems, etc. are all cited as reasons for students' not submitting work – but often poor time management is the true cause. Once again it seems issues of balance, and levels of autonomous learning have a large part to play in determining who drops out and who continues.

During this period many students will also receive feedback from their first assignment ,and constructive feedback and reassurance is now crucial. A good grade will clearly encourage and motivate students, but a poor grade or even just a lower grade than was expected, can be a blow to students' confidence and levels of motivation. If

students are already having doubts about their chosen Award or are questioning their decision to remain in University – this can be the deciding nail in the coffin.

As such, tutors continue to have an immense influence over students' well-being, self-confidence and self-esteem. They still have the power to influence the choice of whether a student remains in HE or leaves.

Zone 3 – middle to end of teaching period, first/second assessments

University interventions

As the end of teaching for the first semester approaches, many staff assume students have settled into University life and established relatively successful study routines – but this is frequently not the case. Indeed students are still seeking significant levels of contact with their tutors for a whole range of issues and as (NATFHE, 2000, 1) identified '…the quality and nature of academic and pastoral support that students receive are fundamental to student retention.'

In order to monitor progress each student is allocated an Academic Counsellor (BABS) or Progress Tutor (HaSS) for the year. Students are encouraged to seek guidance at anytime, but are invited to a meeting each semester, and this offers another opportunity for more individual dialogue between students and staff.

While some students raise general academic queries, some will still be struggling with transitional problems and grappling with the whole gamut of cultural change that HE can bring. Frequently, it is the pastoral issues, such as family difficulties, part-time employment, illness, etc that impinge upon students' academic performance. What ever the issue raised, one of the major benefits is that early detection offers the opportunity for pre-emptive action. Individual Schools and the University as a whole have a wide range of Student Support Services, and the Academic Counsellor/Progress Tutor is often the link that encourages students to take advantage of them.

In addition to poor attendance, non submission of assignments was further evidence that a student was 'drifting off' or had unofficially withdrawn. These students were contacted and offered additional guidance and support. Some just needed to be reminded of the procedures for seeking deadline extensions (because of illness, etc), but for others it was an early lesson learnt – non-submission resulted in a zero grade. However, for those students still wavering with the Award/University decision, it was a critical time for re-evaluating their position. With early corrective action, it was still possible for some students to retrieve the situation and successfully complete the semester. In the case of students who had unofficially withdrawn, exit interviews were encouraged to ensure that students were aware of the options available and thus could reach a more informed decision.

Nothing replaces good student-staff interaction and positive benefits from even minor interventions such as a follow up telephone call, call have a significant impact upon whether a student stays. As MacDonald et al (1996) highlighted actual reasons for

leaving are rarely single or simple; often a small change can tip the balance between positive and negative factors and result in the decision to leave.

Key elements to reducing attrition in Zone 3

- Ongoing identification of students experiencing difficulties, disengaging or drifting off.

- Ensure students are proactive about accessing pastoral and academic support systems.

Zone 4 – revision week and examination fortnight

Student Issues

This period falls immediately after the Christmas Break, and students return to University with the looming prospect of revision and examinations. This is naturally a low point when all students are somewhat vulnerable, and the highest number of student visits and queries occurred during this time. Many students sought reassurance and guidance on examination protocol, revision and exam techniques, or just a general idea of what to expect. Some were missing coursework notes and others were suffering from last minute panic, nerves and exam stress.

> One mature student commented: "I haven't sat an exam for nearly 20 years. I just don't think I'm going to be able to cope".

For students who had already underperformed (generally because of low attendance and poor study patterns during the semester) this was a make or break point. With the real and imminent prospect of academic failure, these students now had to face up to the consequences - avoidance tactics were no longer a viable option.

> "I know I should have prepared better, but the exams seemed ages away and I planned to catch up over the Christmas break. Now I just feel like I'm slipping further and further behind and I'm really frightened I'm going to fail. My parents will go mad!"

Typically at the end of the semester, withdrawal was linked with non-progression issues because of failed assessments. Although some students identified poor revision and exam technique as a reason for under-performing, a number of students became disheartened and lost confidence in their abilities - making them particularly susceptible to the withdrawal option. For a small minority, poor results cemented the 'go or stay' question. For others it was a wake up call, and some students did go on to revise their laissez faire attitude and successfully pass that level of study.

After the examination period and particularly after the receipt of their results transcripts, many students proactively sought out staff. Examples of queries were:

> 'I haven't done very well. What do I do now, what happens next?"

> "I've failed some modules, am I allowed to continue, will I be kicked off the course?"

> "Does an F grade mean I've failed?"

It is also not unusual to receive telephone calls from students' parents. Some contact the University on the students' behalf (stating the student was too nervous, worried, embarrassed, etc to phone themselves), others want to discuss their son or daughter's progress and an explanation as to why they have failed modules. Both scenarios raise confidentiality issues, making it difficult to offer a response that reassures either the parent or the student. However, the call does alert staff to the situation and the student can be encouraged to talk to come in and talk over the situation in person.

Zone 4 – revision week and examination fortnight

University interventions

In Zone 4 there are no scheduled teaching weeks, so many tutors are not routinely available – yet this is a time when students are proactively seeking and need contact with staff.

One intervention on Level 1 of the BABS Scheme was to compile individual student profiles, which facilitated the identification of students potentially at risk of poor-performance or failure. Where identified, it was possible to take proactive action by targeting theses students and encouraging them to attend weekly progress meetings; issues of concern could then be addressed and joint strategies developed for raising their performance. In the majority of cases it was not the student's academic ability per se that was causing them to under-perform or fail. Some were unmotivated and in HE for the wrong reasons, but many had not made the transition from uncertain learners to students who were fully engaged with the learning process.

During this period students were also encouraged to attend extra study skills sessions. Additional revision/exam workshops were specifically arranged for the BABS Scheme and HaSS students were encouraged to book individual or group sessions with the Advice Shop. Although the take up rate was disappointing, many students did subsequently seek advice after receiving their results, and student participation at such events did improve in the second semester.

However, it was not only failing students that sought advice. BABS Level 1 students were sent a letter with their results inviting them to get in touch if they were disappointed or concerned about their performance. Approximately 25% of students made contact and welcomed the opportunity to discuss both their result and how they could be further improved in the second semester.

This was a critical time for staff to maintain positive contact with all students, but particularly with those who had underperformed; with the subsequent risk of being ineligible to progress to the next level of their Award. Students who performed well were to be commended and encouraged to stretch themselves further, those who performed badly needed practical advice and guidance about 'putting things right'. The latter, in particular needed to be able to put their results into perspective; to recognise that their first foray into HE is a learning process, and early or poor performance in the first semester does not mean that HE isn't right for them, or that they have to withdraw.

Key elements to reducing attrition in Zone 4.

- Contact under achievers and provide clear and constructive feedback on their assessments and examination results. With hindsight some will knuckle down to their second semester studies and successfully retrieve the situation.

- Ensure staff are available to offer practical guidance and advice for raising performance levels developing successful strategies for progressing in HE.

- Vigilant monitoring of student attendance at the start of the second semester, to identify students who do not return.

Conclusions

Student retention is a multifaceted issue so there is no single panacea. However, many of the problems students' experience are easily resolved given the right kind of guidance, intervention and support.

Many of the interventions discussed in this paper may seem simplistic, but they have been proven to be successful in reducing attrition regardless of educational background. It is not enough to publicise the services on offer to support struggling students - universities must find ways of encouraging students to engage with those services. Neither should these guidance, intervention and support services seek to pigeon-hole institutional responsibility for retention, every member of staff has the potential to influence a student's decision to stay or go.

Staff commitment to retention at every level requires greater understanding of all students' needs, but particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds whose requirements, perceptions and ideas are very different from more traditional cohorts. As the Government seeks to target widening participation rates, so more and more

HEIs will be seeking interventions that will bridge the gap between HE standards and expectations, and students' abilities and expectations.

WORDCOUNT 4995

Endnotes

[1] Based on the HESA figures for 1997/8.

[2] Direct comparisons between countries is difficult because it involves comparing figures on different bases, using different definitions of non-completion.

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Using one-stop shopping to aid student retention

Abstract

In September 2001 the School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences commenced a one year pilot project under the banner of the Student Advice Shop. The first year was very successful and led to a reduction in the School attrition rate and a significant revenue saving. The project was extended for a further year, and in 2003 was made a permanent feature of the School. In 2005 the University Directorate decided to roll out this type of provision to the remaining four faculties with the intention of the new Advice Shops becoming operational by September 2006.

The paper will focus on the one-stop shop approach to student retention within a faculty environment, and will detail the services offered, showing how the project has developed and why the University has taken the step of rolling out this support mechanism to aid student retention.

The paper will include indicative data demonstrating the success of the project, and savings over the period, together with views expressed by academic staff and students.

The principle of establishing a 'one stop shop' for student queries and support, has achieved success in several universities, perhaps most notably in the United States of America with examples of provision at the University of South Carolina, Winona State University's Student Answer Centre and the Tomas Rivera Center at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Other universities have also attempted to offer student support at School or Faculty level, and it is this provision at the University of Glamorgan which is the subject of this paper.

The demand for an 'Advice Shop' for the School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences (HLaSS) in 2001 arose from the perception of senior staff within the School that more and more students were seeking help and support from the administrative offices within the School, who were often unsure of advice to give, particularly with regard to issues of well-being, academic advice and so on, and that the retention and progression pattern, particularly for first year students, was becoming a cause for concern. Student support services within the University are well established, but students were finding difficulty accessing the appropriate services for the type of enquiry or issue they were experiencing, often due to lack of awareness of the services available. The senior management within the School decided to establish a Student Advice Shop to act as a information, advice and referral service. The initial idea was to appoint a member of academic staff who would provide a presence throughout the week to advise the students of the School (approx 5000) who had concerns regarding study skills, pastoral care, and academic support. Where necessary, referrals would be made to other University support departments. As far as possible, the service was to be on the basis of casual, drop in queries rather than appointment-based. Moxley et al (2001:54) identify the importance attached to accessibility of such provision. 'Retention…should offer students a set of services and supports that are easily triggered and easily used…..'

There is some evidence emerging in the literature that when students have to make an appointment to discuss an issue it becomes more serious in their eyes, whereas the ability to avail themselves of advice through a casual drop-in facility is less threatening. This is very important in the context of the student body at Glamorgan, many of whom are from a widening participation background and who as Lawrence (2002) suggests 'may consider it to be a sign of weakness, for example, or equate help with 'remedial' intervention or a 'loss of face'.'

Since 2001 the remit of the Advice Shop service has grown to include monitoring retention issues, particularly with regard to identification of students at risk of early withdrawal; designing and implementing appropriate interventions to address these issues; overseeing the School's mitigating circumstances provision; and identifying innovative practice to pre-empt retention issues such as the use of an electronic attendance monitoring and assessment submission system as well as continuing to offer the physical presence for student advice.

The growth in demand for advice has been swift, with the number of student interviews going from 728 in 2001/02, to 3400 in 2004/05. Correspondingly as demand has increased, so the number of students leaving within the academic year has fallen from 6% to 3.3% - an indication that this type of provision is meeting a need which in turn supports continued study. In revenue terms, the reduction in the number of students leaving over the period 2001 – 2004 represents approximately £3.5m in fees and funding saved for the School.

Since 2001, the Advice Shop has established a reputation for giving good, straightforward advice and this has led to an acceptance of the provision by both students and staff. We were recently referred to as the 'glue in the sandwich between staff and students' and this sentiment is echoed in the work of Wallace (2003) in relation to first year student experiences 'The way to increase retention is to work towards policies and practices that have student success and satisfaction as their central theme.' The boundaries of our role are central to the success of the operation from the student perspective. If it becomes necessary to refer a student to another support service within the University we make it very clear why this is necessary. Earwaker (1992) points to the importance of students understanding the need for referral 'Unless the issues have been thoroughly thought out and talked through with the student, then the student may feel that the tutor is walking away from the problem….It helps if the referral is presented in terms of an extra resource being made available…' We are able to offer a continuing advice service to students who have been referred, working alongside the student counsellors for example and giving academic advice concerning extended deadlines, reducing modules and so on whilst the counsellors give confidential support to enable the student to overcome the issues they are facing. In this way, the student is supported by the full range of services within the University rather than being passed back and forth in a somewhat muddled fashion as they try to identify who they should talk to about different issues or concerns they may be facing.

Comments from students who have accessed the Advice Shop have been positive, including one from a student who has a history of mental illness who wrote "Thank

you for treating me like a 'normal' human being with problems, rather than an insane human being like most do".

Sometimes students find it difficult to seek help and support and the value of the Faculty-based Advice Shop has been the connection between staff and students. One mature student summed up the situation when she wrote '....you will never really know hard it was for me to ask for help, or how grateful I am that someone has helped me.....'

Many students who have been contacted in relation to their poor attendance have also expressed thanks and appreciation. Overwhelmingly the comments amount to the same thing – firstly they are amazed that someone noticed they weren't in class (particularly so on the large modules of 200+) and secondly they are impressed and thankful that someone has then followed them up to see if everything is going well. This appreciation is confirmed by Owen (2002) when discussing the personal tutoring expectations of students "Many even instanced examples of being contacted by their personal tutor when they had been absent for long periods or not submitted work. Often they had been hiding away with what they felt were insuperable problems and being called in came as a relief. 'Letters when you don't attend would be a really good idea'."

Staff often make referrals to the Advice Shop if they are concerned about students who have not been attending regularly, or not submitted coursework, or seem to be struggling when in class. These students are contacted and give appropriate advice and support to help them back into successful study. The Advice Shop staff then act as the bridge between the student and tutor to resolve any outstanding issues. Both students and staff are appreciative of this with staff making comments such as 'Thanks for this…. It's a blessing to have you on the case!'

In late 2005, the Directorate of the University began to actively consider the possibility of rolling out the HLaSS Advice Shop model to the other Schools within the University. At this time, Directorate were also establishing a new structure for the University, replacing academic Schools with a reduced number of Faculties. Senior Managers within HLaSS were unanimous in their support for the Advice Shop which had a high profile, not just within the School, but in the University as a whole. The appointment of the Advice Shop Manager was key to the success of the venture, and to its acceptance within the University. This person needed to be accepted and appreciated by academic colleagues. An understanding of academic issues arising from their own experience was essential, together with a passion for retention issues, a healthy realism and nuclear-generated energy. Once the appropriate person was in place, and acting effectively both within and beyond the School, little persuasion of Senior Managers for roll-out was required. The calculation of financial savings validated by Finance did of course help!

The roll-out plan was very much in line with the University Strategic Plan. The dominant planning theme over 2005 - 2010 is focussed on student recruitment and retention and one of the key milestones is improved retention. Particular markers for success, in addition to a numerical improvement in overall drop-out are improvements in drop-out rates for mature and off-campus students. The University-wide roll-out of Advice Shops is a key element of the University Retention Strategy (2004 - 2009)

which seeks to achieve an evidence-based, more holistic, team approach to student support. Although roll-out to other Faculties was inevitable, a period of academic restructuring and the creation of five new Faculties from the original seven did afford a good opportunity for change. The new team of Advice Shop Managers was selected with great care, with, importantly, the advice and input from the existing Manager.

In conclusion, the Glamorgan model of one-stop shopping to aid student retention within Faculty has become established as an essential element in the work towards improving student progression and attainment. The years ahead will undoubtedly hold further challenges as we endeavour to cope with the ever-increasing demand for advice and guidance at the Faculty level.   Further interventions, new staff, new Faculty structures and of course ever-expanding student numbers will all provide challenges. However, based upon the success of the model in practice we are confident that the challenges will be met and overcome, and that the number of students successfully completing their studies, despite overcoming obstacles along the way, will continue to rise.

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How was it for you? Reflections on the first year of Faculty Advice Shop Provision at the University of Glamorgan, Wales.

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Abstract

At the first European First Year Experience conference in 2006, Fitzgibbon and Carter presented the paper *Using one-stop shopping to aid student retention* which outlined the successful pilot of a single Student Advice Shop at the University of Glamorgan, and described the decision-making process which led to the 2006 roll out of this provision to all Faculties. This paper continues the story. As the end of their first year of operation approaches, the Advice Shop Managers offer their reflections on the challenges associated with providing customer driven support within a traditional UK higher education setting.

Keywords: Student support, student experience, student advice shop

Introduction

The principle of a Faculty or Department 'one stop shop' for student queries and support was pioneered in several US universities in the 1990s, notably at the University of South Carolina, Winona State University and the Tomas Rivera Center at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

The University of Glamorgan has a large proportion of students from non-traditional backgrounds. In a new initiative to improve student achievement and retention the School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences opened a Student Advice Shop as a one year pilot project in September 2001. The first year was very successful and led to a reduction in the School attrition rate and a significant revenue saving. The project was extended for a further year, and in 2003 was made a permanent feature of the School. In 2005 the University Directorate decided to roll out this type of provision across the University, which was about to be reorganised into five Faculties. Accordingly, in September 2006 four additional Advice Shops became operational.

This paper will focus on the impact of the expansion of the Advice Shop approach across all Faculties within the University. This will be supported by the evidence of student interaction with the Advice Shops together with staff reflections.

Background

The University of Glamorgan has a total student population of 21,326, of whom 18,222 are studying on campus; the remainder are studying in partner colleges throughout Wales who are licensed to deliver University of Glamorgan courses. Of the total student population, 2,463 are international students. Further analysis of the student profile reveals that 86% are undergraduates and 14% postgraduate. The University is acknowledged as a provider of opportunities for students from low participation neighbourhoods - indeed the most recently published UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) figures for the academic year 2003/04 show that the Glamorgan has 27.6% of students from this group against a benchmark of 18.9% (HESA, 2005).

In August 2006 the University completed the transition from an academic Schools structure to a Faculty structure. This was a period of major change for the University, with several Schools being amalgamated into new Faculty subject areas. It was this restructuring that also provided the opportunity for the University to embed the Advice Shop provision across all the Faculties (Fitzgibbon & Carter 2006). Earwaker (1992:130) makes the point that 'rethinking support provision must mean bringing it into line with the institution's policies and priorities…' and it has certainly been the case that student support is now firmly embedded as part of the institutional policy surrounding the student experience.

Owen (2002) identifies three models of student support: 'curriculum', 'professional' and 'pastoral'. Of these, the University fits most closely within Owen's 'pastoral' model. However, it is suggested that a new model is emerging at Glamorgan with the introduction of Advice Shops, resulting in support networks at Faculty level which also includes personal tutors, Faculty tutors and Scheme or Award leaders. Further support services across the University include the Education Drop-in Centre, Student Services, comprising of Student Counselling and Advisory Services, Student Money Service, Disability and Dyslexia Service, Health Service, International Student Support Unit, Careers Service, Residential Tutors and the Chaplaincy. The Faculty Advice Shops are seen as complementary to this extensive support provision, and are not intended to be a replacement for any element. Part of the remit of the Advice Shop Managers has been to establish comprehensive communication networks between the various support providers both at Faculty and institutional level.

Advice Shops

The Advice Shops complement and to some extent integrate their roles and services with existing student support in the Faculty and work in conjunction with both Faculty academic and administrative staff.

All Advice Shops provide baseline services for students and staff within their Faculty as described below.

Baseline Provision

Each Advice Shop provides a drop-in service, normally Monday to Friday 9am to 4 pm and an appointment system outside these hours where necessary. Advice Shop staff provide academic advice on any aspect of the student's current or proposed course of study, academic offences and appeals and any other academic related issues. Their role in pastoral support with issues that may be affecting students could include referral to the Student Counselling and Advisory Services.

Students can receive information and advice when they wish to suspend studies, withdraw or transfer to other courses including all the possible alternatives. The implications of these changes are discussed during these exit interviews.

If a student encounters problems on their course which affects their performance they can claim for mitigating circumstances in relation to late submission of coursework, non submission of coursework or poor performance. Students are able to seek advice as to whether their application is valid and within the parameters of the mitigating circumstances procedure, as well as the process itself; and help with identifying appropriate sources of independent evidence. This process may lead to further discussion with students and lecturers as appropriate.

In some cases the Advice Shop will refer students to other Faculties and support departments by using its network of contacts across the University, thus giving students access to resources which may offer further support, advice or guidance. Effective communication between Faculty staff, students and other university support departments is therefore essential to ensure that Advice Shops are seen as part of a network of support.

The Advice Shops are actively involved in the identification and implementation of appropriate interventions to support student retention within each of the Faculties. Advice Shop staff are involved in open days and applicant days for prospective students and the induction programme for all first year students. The Advice Shops provide

a central contact point for students enrolling late, by offering additional support to integrate students into their programme of studies.

Faculty Specific Provision
In addition to the base provision there is also a range of faculty specific functions put in place by some of the Advice Shops in conjunction with individual Faculty staff to address retention issues. These include:

- Electronic attendance monitoring and proactive follow up of all level 4 undergraduate students with low or sporadic patterns of tutorial attendance.
- Co-ordinating an undergraduate student mentoring scheme, where second year students offer study skills and general support for integrating into higher education.
- Administering an undergraduate summer revision event, for students with referrals in coursework and/or examination assessments.
- Cross-Faculty liaison for disability and dyslexia provision.
- Scheduled progress meetings for students identified as 'at risk' of drop-our or poor performance, for example late enrolees, repeating students, students failing or not submitting early assessment work, etc.
- Providing an Advice Shop handbook for general information for staff
- Use of an automated system integrating the Mitigating Circumstances decisions with the coursework submission log

Staffing and Infrastructure
Each Advice Shop is managed by a member of academic staff and supported by a range of administrative functions depending on the Faculty preference. The support staff include such roles as student achievement co-ordinator, administrator and attendance co-ordinator. To enable the Advice Shops to function more effectively a student administration database has been developed to ensure accurate record keeping, collection of comparable data and consistent recording across the Advice Shops. All Advice Shop staff have been trained in the use of this system.

The Advice Shop Managers are all members of academic staff and active researchers who meet regularly to plan and identify possible projects, conference papers and journal articles relevant to the role and development of the Advice Shops. They also participate in a number of faculty and university wide strategic and operational committees. One Faculty Advice Shop is piloting a different operational model to include the Faculty registrarial services within the Advice Shop.

Each Advice Shop is located within the Faculty building, although locations range from ground floor highly accessible and visible suite of offices, to top floor difficult to navigate office space. Some locations are temporary and are due to relocate to fit-for-purpose accommodation for the new academic year.

Student Demand
Students immediately began to access the drop-in provision and the Advice Shops were inundated with ad hoc queries during the first month of the new term. Over the period October 2006 to March 2007 the volume of student advice interviews recorded ranged from approximately 600 to 1150 for each Advice Shop and in addition ad-hoc queries ranged from 300-2000 in the same period.

Reflections on the First Year of Operation

The Advice Shops were set up during a time of major reorganisation for the University as at this time the organisational structure changed from Schools to Faculties, causing a great deal of upheaval. Although there was already one Advice Shop in existence the setting up of the other four was influenced by what was in place in each of the Faculties before the Advice Shops were opened in September 2006. This has led to differing structures in each of the Advice Shops. Also the restructuring led to a lack of understanding on the part of some Faculty staff of the Advice Shop role in relation to existing services. It therefore became important that the Advice Shop Managers put in place systems to encourage staff acceptance and engagement.

Reflecting on the challenges associated with the first year of operation the authors have identified positive and negative facets of their role. During this period of change management the focus for the managers has been on building a cohesive and responsive team amongst themselves to enable them to consistently deliver the services to students and faculty outlined above. This has been achieved in a number of ways. On commencement of the posts Advice Shop Managers received training facilitated by the staff counsellor. Then, based on the Advice Shops' functions within the first term it was felt that additional space for group reflection was needed and this

has been provided by the staff counsellor on a monthly basis. However, all the Managers agree that core to the continuing cohesion of the team are the weekly managers' meetings held with agenda and action minutes where all members contribute. These have been very productive leading to the sharing of good practice, maintaining an institutional perspective, the development of new initiatives and the establishment of effective networks through the inclusion of a variety of other support staff throughout the University.

In all Advice Shops the volume of work has been high since opening. It was surprising how quickly students became aware of their Faculty Advice Shop and started to use it (with minimum publicity), even in the cases where the location of the Advice Shop was inconvenient. Although it has been a challenge building the Advice Shop team structures, alongside a climate of high volume of student enquiries, Faculty restructuring, and establishment of new processes and procedures, the rewards in terms of the manifest benefits to the students and University have been high.

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THE 3rd INTERNATIONAL PERSONAL TUTORING
AND ACADEMIC ADVISING CONFERENCE:
Improving Student Success
April 21-22, 2009

Fit for purpose: an institutional approach to student personal support

Karen Fitzgibbon, University of Glamorgan

Context of case study university

Based in the South Wales valleys

Student population

Faculties structure

Large proportion low-participation neighbourhood students

Seeking ways to improve student achievement

Need for review

- Perception of mismatch between regulation and practice
- Internal audit outcomes
- Sense of wanting to bring discrete policies and practices together

Blended model of student support

- Wider than personal tutoring
- Includes:
    - Student Services
    - Faculty Advice Centres
    - National Student Union Officers
- Centralisation v decentralisation
- Continuum of advising

Possible models of personal tutoring

- One size fits all
- Owen's (2002) typology:
  - Curriculum model
  - Pastoral model
  - Professional model

Evolved personal tutoring model

- Agreed minimum expectations for student personal support
- Devolved responsibility for delivery of support to Faculties
- Faculties must provide clear statement of personal support systems in place and how students access systems
- Faculties to reflect on first year of new framework in their annual performance reviews

Future aspirations of the model

- First year of operation coming to an end
- Reflect on staff and student experiences of personal tutoring arrangements
- Where appropriate amend minimum expectations

Thank you

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Outline:

With widening participation many undergraduates are drawn from non-academic backgrounds and university life may be outside their experiences and those of friends and family (Archer, Hutchings and Ross 2003). Student life can be challenging in many respects and affected by previous learning experiences. Support for students may be practical, or pastoral, but listening actively to student learning experiences requires what Maguire (Maguire 1998 18) describes as the 'ongoing consideration of the listener.' In other words, listening and responding appropriately. This active listening may be the role of the peer group or individuals, such as a tutor. Maguire insists that personal storytelling helps others to engage with those experiences and that such an approach places the experiences of the learner at the heart of their personal development. This research has a focus on student learning stories and how these stories lead to understanding, both personal and in the wider community. The use of narrative in research is becoming increasingly popular (White 2004, Elliott 2005) and by analyzing students' learning stories the authors hope to demonstrate the value of narrative in student learning as well as social science research. Sharing learning journeys provides students with many benefits: they are able to relate to each other in more open ways; they develop more confidence in articulating perceived successes and failures; they may help to place experiences into a wider perspective and they provide the tutor with extra knowledge about the needs and expectations of the students in their care. This research evaluated how tutor knowledge and student expectation were enhanced by the sharing of learning stories, something Morris (2009) commented on in a recent editorial about the role of advising in teaching.

Students studying Education were introduced to the idea of telling their stories by the concept of a memory box where articles symbolising experiences were placed in a box. Tutors shared their learning memories with the group, emphasising learning in wider contexts than school or university and quoting a variety of experiences which were 'learning experiences'. This openness was designed to give the students confidence and provide what Garnett (2005 153) described as a 'collaborative exercise' to build positive relationships. Students were then given the opportunity to talk in small groups and share thoughts and ideas before telling their stories to a larger group. Contact for young people these days is often through technology where social networking sites provides a 'changed communication paradigm' (Walsh 2008 102). Giving them the chance to interact and 'recognising that learners are in a social context creating knowledge as part of doing things with others' (Watkins 2003 38) provided them with the opportunity to think more deeply about their learning journeys. They were able to reflect on their experiences and expectations and evaluate these retrospectively.

Following talking and telling, thinking and reflecting, students were asked to record significant events in these learning journeys on a simple grid. They identified an object which they associated with a learning event, such as car keys to signify passing the driving test, and wrote a short description noting whether it was a negative or positive learning experience.

A small number of students from the cohort were then interviewed, using a semi-structured interview schedule. They were questioned about a positive learning experience and a negative one and asked to elaborate and reflect on these experiences. Grainger (2005) deliberates on this dialogic process as a means of cognition and inter-thinking, believing that making connections in this way provides more motivation for learners. A further small number of students were selected and interviewed from those who sought support from the University Advice Centre in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. In literature relating to academic advising, the role of reflection is critical to the creation of developmental advising which encourages students to expand their range of self-reliance skills such that they are able to address and future learning issues for themselves. (Crookston 1972,

Alexitch 2006, Gordon, Habley and Grites 2008). The authors were keen to test whether narrative accounts of learning would facilitate such development.

 As a result of this collaboration and communication with students we were able to perceive many benefits. In large student cohorts there was often anonymity. Friends formed small social groups within the larger group and did not even know the names of those outside their social framework. Communicating learning stories, especially those which represented difficulty or failure, enabled students to see the commonality of learning experiences, both from tutors and fellow students. Listening actively to personal stories provided empathy in the group as many of these stories were bound in emotions. We learnt more about each other as people and so were able to create a more supportive and less anonymous learning environment. Holmes (2005) asserts that it is usually emotional aspects of well-being which can limit attitudes towards learning. We found that enabling students to tell their tales provided an emotional and cognitive experience on which to build future learning and teaching.

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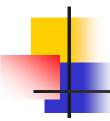
Memory boxes

Comments from the group

- Nan's slippers: 'I was cooking with my Nan and she went to get something from the fridge and I saw her slippers were in there. She was developing Alzheimer's.'

- Speeding fine: 'Being pulled over by the police for speeding and shaking so much I couldn't park the car. Hopefully it'll stop me speeding a bit.'

- A level results: 'I was predicted 3 U grades at A level. It made me want to work harder and prove them all wrong. I ended up having A, C, D and it made me so proud of myself.'

- I'd put a wine glass in as it's the thing that brings me and my friends together....it's some of my happiest memories. It's emotional development as well as language.'

Student Advice Shop

Karen Fitzgibbon

School of Humanities, Law & Social Sciences

Session Agenda

- Background to the Advice Shop initiative
- A three year strategy
- First things first
- Summary of interventions
- Results of the first two years
- What next

Original concept

- Demand
  - Retention concern
  - Progression concern
  - Dispersed service
- Solution
  - a one-stop shop

A three year strategy

- **Short term**
  - gathering statistics
  - increase visibility of pastoral support
  - identify key issues in attrition patterns
  - identify at risk groups for early support

Medium term

- Continue to monitor trends across UK HE
- Make reporting systems more robust
- create systems and strategies for future years
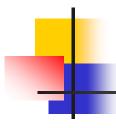- suggest minor amendments to scheme/award structures as appropriate

Longer term

- Improve retention rates
- Share effective model of good practice within UG
- Increase staff awareness of the shared role of supporting students

First things first

- Finding a suitable location
- Getting the service established
- Identifying immediate issues
- Setting up early interventions

Summary of interventions

- Register trials
- Telephoning non-returners
- Study skills & revision sessions
- 'What happens next?' leaflet
- Mitigating circumstances
- Advice Shop & Student Enquiry Centre
- 'Pathway to Graduation'
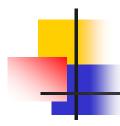- 'Self development: moving forward'

Behind the scenes work

- Plagiarism referrals
- Recording client needs
- Database of withdrawn/suspend/transfer students

Results - evidence of demand

	2001/02	2002/03
Advice Interviews	267	819
Queries	161	800
Mitigating Circumstances advice	300	728
TOTALS	728	2347

Results: increasing retention

- 2000/01   -   6%
- 2001/02   -   5%
- 2002/03   -   3.3%

Results - linking attendance to achievement

- Early indications are showing a connection between attendance and module grade achievement
- 50% attendance   -   fail
- 60%   -   third
- 70%   -   2.2
- 80%   -   2.1
- 90%   -   first
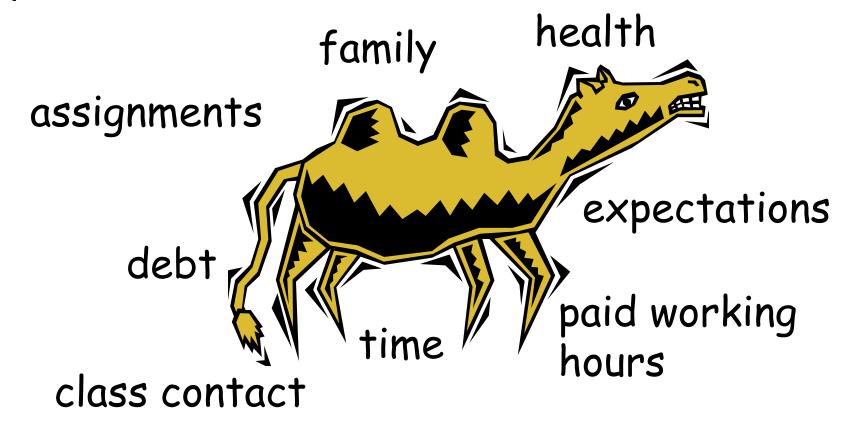
What next?

- Further reductions in attrition
- More targetted support to specific groups
- Expansion of the AS team
- Rethinking University teaching & learning
- Contributing to the development of a University-wide retention policy informed by good practice
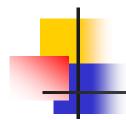
In conclusion ....

- How much do we know about our students?

- What factors influence why they stay/go?

- Is retention the flip side of widening access?

- What has been/can be done to improve attrition rates?

family

health

assignments

expectations

debt

paid working hours

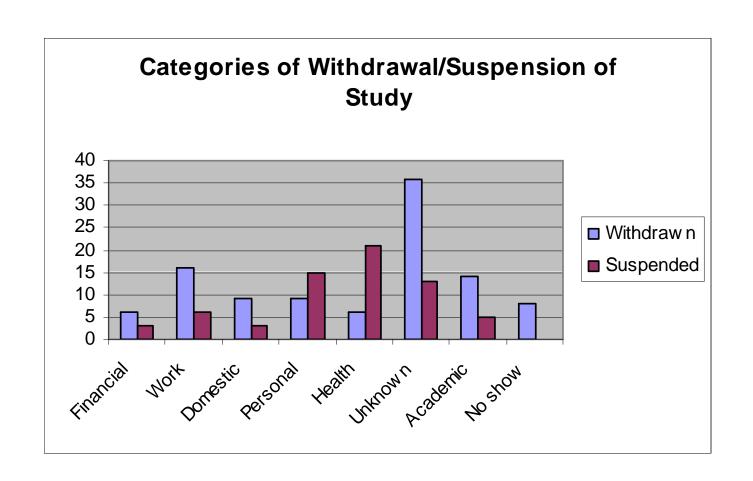time

class contact

Thanks for listening

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The Academic Perspective

Karen Fitzgibbon

Julie Prior

Why do students drop out?

Categories of Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Legend:
- Withdrawn
- Suspended

Categories (x-axis): Financial, Work, Domestic, Personal, Health, Unknown, Academic, No show

y-axis: 0 to 40

When interventions didn't work

Student Experience	Student enrolled	Experiencing domestic difficulties resulting in non-attendance	Mother taken seriously ill. Had to come to live with student. Further absence.	Student decided to withdraw. Reason given could have been Financial, Personal or Employment! Chose to record 'Personal' because care responsibilities were 'the final straw'.
School Intervention		Picked up absence. Contacted student after two consecutive absences.	Picked up again via attendance checks.	Processed withdrawal form. Confirmed in writing that student would be welcome to return in the future.
Outcome/notes		Student confirmed that due to childcare costs she had a part time job. She had now lost the job so could no longer afford the childcare to come to University. Arranged for her to see Student Services. Obtained Hardship Loan	Student confirmed that her elderly mother was now living with her. The student was now the full time carer. Suggested going part time but this was not possible because the fees would be too onerous.	Student was thankful for the interventions, support and advice provided but felt her HE experience was just impossible at that time. She left full of praise for the University. It is hoped she will return in the future.

Impact on this area

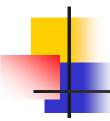- The University of the Valleys
- The impact of positive interventions
- Indication of returning to HE after withdrawal or suspension of study

Student Advice Shop

Karen Fitzgibbon

School of Humanities, Law & Social Sciences

Session Agenda

- Background to the Advice Shop initiative

- A three year strategy

- First things first

- Summary of interventions

- Results of the first two years

- What next

Original concept

- Demand
  - Retention concern
  - Progression concern
  - Dispersed service
- Solution
  - a one-stop shop

A three year strategy

- Short term
  - gathering statistics
  - increase visibility of pastoral support
  - identify key issues in attrition patterns
  - identify at risk groups for early support

Medium term

- Continue to monitor trends across UK HE
- Make reporting systems more robust
- create systems and strategies for future years
- suggest minor amendments to scheme/award structures as appropriate

Longer term

- Improve retention rates
- Share effective model of good practice within UG
- Increase staff awareness of the shared role of supporting students

First things first

- Finding a suitable location
- Getting the service established
- Identifying immediate issues
- Setting up early interventions

Summary of interventions

- Register trials
- Telephoning non-returners
- Study skills & revision sessions
- 'What happens next?' leaflet
- Mitigating circumstances
- Advice Shop & Student Enquiry Centre
- 'Pathway to Graduation'
- 'Self development: moving forward'

Behind the scenes work

- Plagiarism referrals
- Recording client needs
- Database of withdrawn/suspend/transfer students

Results - evidence of demand

	2001/02	2002/03
Advice Interviews	267	819
Queries	161	800
Mitigating Circumstances advice	300	728
TOTALS	728	2347

Results: increasing retention

- 2000/01 - 6%
- 2001/02 - 5%
- 2002/03 - 3.3%

Results - linking attendance to achievement

- Early indications are showing a connection between attendance and module grade achievement
- 50% attendance   -   fail
- 60%   -   third
- 70%   -   2.2
- 80%   -   2.1
- 90%   -   first

What next?

- Further reductions in attrition
- More targetted support to specific groups
- Expansion of the AS team
- Rethinking University teaching & learning
- Contributing to the development of a University-wide retention policy informed by good practice

In conclusion ....

- How much do we know about our students?

- What factors influence why they stay/go?

- Is retention the flip side of widening access?

- What has been/can be done to improve attrition rates?

family

health

assignments

expectations

debt

paid working
hours

time

class contact

Thanks for listening

Karen Fitzgibbon

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Grasping the Nettle: interventions to support student retention

Karen Fitzgibbon

University of Glamorgan

School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences

Performance indicators for HE

Full time First Degree Entrants, 2000-01 (HEFCE, 2003)

	UK	WALES	UNI OF GLAMORGAN
Entrants	281,305	16.733	2,229
Continue/Qualify	88%	89%	84%
UK transfer to other HEIs	3%	3%	3%
Not in HE by following year	9%	9%	**13%**

Contributory factors to attrition at the University of Glamorgan

- Widening participation agenda

- Low educational attainment of catchment area students

- Many graduates who are 'first in the family' to enter HE - so little or no knowledge of the experience and culture of studying in HE

Original Concept

- **Demand**
  - Retention concern
  - Progression concern
  - Dispersed services

- **Solution**
  - A one-stop-shop

First things first

- Finding a suitable location

- Getting the service established

- Identifying immediate issues

- Setting up early interventions

Initiatives trialled

- Register trial
- Telephoning non-returners
- Dedicated notice-board
- Revision/exam technique sessions for friends
- Database of wd/ss/transfers
- Recording of client needs

- Late starter pack
- 'Pathway to Graduation'
- Follow up from results
- Progress files potential
- Plagiarism referrals
- Mitigating circumstances assistance
- 'Self Development, Moving Forward'

Interventions

- Supportive, non-judgmental
- Email, telephone, letter
- Support plans put in place
- Student views
- Indicator of risk
- Time intensive

Impact of monitoring attendance

- Improved attendance
- Reasons for non-attendance
- Targeted support
- Improved retention rates
- Attendance and performance links
- Student engagement
- Staff perceptions?

So is it worth it?

- Positive behaviour change in some students
- Contribution to reduction in attrition rate
- Staff and student interaction with the initiative
- Student 'saves'

Conclusions

- Level of demand

- Targeted initiatives

- Estimated number of saves

- Significant reduction in attrition rate

- Seamless support

Widening participation and student retention at the University of Glamorgan

Karen Fitzgibbon

&

Julie Prior

Contributory factors to attrition at the University of Glamorgan

- Widening participation agenda

- Low educational attainment of catchment area students

- Many graduates who are 'first in the family' to enter HE - so little or no knowledge of the experience and culture of studying in HE

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- **Demand**
  - Retention concern
  - Progression concern
  - Dispersed services

- **Solution**
  - A one-stop-shop

First things first

- Finding a suitable location

- Getting the service established

- Identifying immediate issues

- Setting up early interventions

Summary of interventions

- Telephoning non-returners

- Late starter pack

- Register trials

- Revision week

- 'What happens next' leaflet

Conclusions

- Level of demand

- Targeted initiatives

- Estimated number of saves

- Significant reduction in attrition rate

- Seamless support

Karen Fitzgibbon	Julie Prior
Advice Shop Manager *HLaSS* *kfitzgib@glam.ac.uk*	(Formerly) Student Achievement Coordinator *Business School* *djprior1@glam.ac.uk*

Retention Initiatives	HLASS	Business School - Level 1
Buddy Scheme		✔
Central student advice point	✔	✔
Database of withdrawals, suspended studies and transfers	✔	✔
Extended induction activities		✔
Late starter pack	✔	✔
Mitigating Circumstances	✔	
Pathway to Graduation	✔	
Plagiarism referrals	✔	
Progress meetings		✔
Recording of client needs	✔	✔
Register checks and absence follow ups	Level 1 History, Criminology, LLB	All awards, all modules
Resit-revision event		✔
Results follow-up	✔	✔
Revision and exam technique	✔	✔
Self Development: moving forward	✔	
Telephone non-returners	✔	✔
Sign posting/referrals		

Effective Intervention-based Retention Initiatives

- Session One – 1130 - 1300
  - Overview of the University of Glamorgan
  - Retention Models
  - Strategy for the School of Humanities, Law & Social Sciences Advice Shop
  - Timeline of factors affecting student retention

Effective Intervention-based Retention Initiatives

- Session Two – 1400 – 1530
  - Identifying Interventions
  - Results of those chosen interventions
  - Detailed review of attendance monitoring

Session One

Models, Strategy and Student Expectations

Performance indicators for HE

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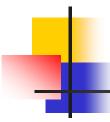
Models of Retention

- **Institutionally based**
- Programme based
- Dedicated function
- 'Add on' responsibility

Original concept

- Demand
  - Retention concern
  - Progression concern
  - Dispersed service
- Solution
  - a one-stop shop

A three year strategy

- Short term
  - gathering statistics
  - increase visibility of pastoral support
  - identify key issues in attrition patterns
  - identify 'at risk' groups for early support

Medium term

- Continue to monitor trends across UK HE
- Make reporting systems more robust
- create systems and strategies for future years
- suggest minor amendments to scheme/award structures as appropriate

Longer term

- Improve retention rates
- Share effective model of good practice within UG
- Increase staff awareness of the shared role of supporting students

Timeline to aid student retention

University Actions			
identify non returners induction programme (good staff) the Big Welcome late enrolees - outside system support late returners repeaters - progress meetings at risk 'screening' first register checks	first tutors = good guys time management - real time! promoting autonomous learning late enrolees - special event late returners - special event late repeaters - special event first absence follow ups	intervention after non-sub ass 1 register checks ongoing study health check progression report from tutor academic counselling first feedback on assessment student profiles	exam information revision & exam workshops award board information advice about putting things right strategies for continuing wd/ss/transfer advice Revision Exams
week 1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	13 14 15
enrol/queue module/award choices timetable induction programme finance issues: loans/grant/fees job home/digs socialisation LRC Password/IT issues finding way around/getting lost	establishing friendships finding way around/getting lost keeping up with changing info dealing with homesickness possible first approach to tutor making decisions about balance time management	assessment ongoing attendance ongoing learning independently (or not) ongoing tutor contact am I on the right course? am I part of this community? issues of my own making feedback on progress	revising time management exam technique what do I tell my .... head in/out of bucket drift off drop out no contact or discussion

Student Expectations

Flags

Uni	WD Transition and integration	WD - Made the right choice?	WD - Disengaging / drifting away	WD - Performance issues
Stud	Expecting contact	Maintaining Contact	Seeking or Wanting Contact	Needing Contact

Zone 1 issues

- preparedness

- integration/isolation

- adaptation to new environment

- understanding HE expectations

Students expecting contact

University Actions			
identify non returners			
induction programme (good staff)			
the Big Welcome			
late enrolees - outside system			
support late returners			
repeaters - progress meetings			
at risk 'screening'			
first register checks			
week	**1**	**2**	**3**
Student Expectations			
enrol/queue			
module/award choices			
timetable			
induction programme			
finance issues: loans/grant/fees			
job			
home/digs			
socialisation			
LRC			
Password/IT issues			
finding way around/getting lost			
Flags Uni	WD Transition and integration		
Stud	Expecting contact		

Examples of student dialogue

- "I got by in my first year on coffee, beans on toast and biscuits unless I ate on campus – I just didn't know how to cook anything else and anyway I couldn't afford the food and didn't have the time!"

- "My friends spoke of 'your University friends' (who they never met) as if these people were an odd bunch of misfits who wore scarves and smoked dope all day."

- "I found it so hard living at home, still looking after my little sister, being expected to pick her up from school even when that meant missing a lecture. My parents just didn't understand how different I needed to be as a university student compared to when I was doing my A levels."

Key elements for reducing attrition in Zone 1

- Ensure the staff involved in induction and enrolment activities are 'the good guys'

- Establish a base room, with a student friendly décor

- Whatever level of staffing is perceived as needed should be doubled

Zone 2 issues

- time-management

- made the right choice
  - award?
  - university as a whole?

Students maintaining contact

University Actions	first tutors = good guys time management - real time! promoting autonomous learning late enrolees - special event late returners - special event late repeaters - special event first absence follow ups
week	4 5 6
Student Expectations	establishing friendships finding way around/getting lost keeping up with changing info dealing with homesickness possible first approach to tutor making decisions about balance time management
Flags Uni	WD - Made the right choice?
Stud	Maintaining Contact

Examples of student dialogue

- "Wow Uni is great - partying, new friends, coming and going whenever I want, sleeping in, only 12 hours of classes. **Then BOOM assignments!**

  Suddenly I didn't know if I was coming or going. Up late reading, then partying, sometimes not going to bed at all. First assignment 27% - from then on I started to manage myself a lot differently."

- "I want to leave. Everything is so different and I can't cope. I miss my family, I'm not enjoying the subjects and my first assignment…well I haven't got a clue where to start".

Key elements for reducing attrition in Zone 2

- Establish early warning systems to identify students 'at risk'
  - ensure necessary support measures in place

- Encourage positive two-way dialogue between students and staff
  - build relationships so students feel valued and supported in their HE journey

Zone 3 issues

- disengaging

- drifting off

- non-submission

- poor attendance

Students seeking contact

University Actions	intervention after non-sub ass 1 register checks ongoing study health check progression report from tutor academic counselling first feedback on assessment student profiles
week	7 8 9 10 11 12
Student Expectations	assessment ongoing attendance ongoing learning independently (or not) ongoing tutor contact am I on the right course? am I part of this community? issues of my own making feedback on progress
Flags Uni	WD - Disengaging / drifting away
Stud	Seeking or Wanting Contact

Examples of student dialogue

- "My lecturer keeps telling me that HE is a whole new ball-game and I know my work has to be a critical appraisal, with evidence and references to back up my argument – but what exactly does this mean?"

- "But I did really well at A level and always received high marks for my essays. I worked really hard on this assignment, I mean I spent weeks on it - so if this isn't good enough I don't know what more to do. I might as well go now."

Key elements for reducing attrition in Zone 3

- Ongoing identification of students experiencing difficulties, disengaging or drifting off

- Ensure students are proactive about accessing pastoral and academic support systems

Zone 4 issues

- drift away

- academic failure

- resits

- failure to progress
versus withdrawal

Students needing contact

	University Actions
	exam information
	revision & exam workshops
	award board information
	advice about putting things right
	strategies for continuing
	wd/ss/transfer advice

		Revision	Exams	
week		**13**	**14**	**15**

	Student Expectations
	revising
	time management
	exam technique
	what do I tell my ….
	head in/out of bucket
	drift off
	drop out
	no contact or discussion

Flags	Uni	WD - Performance issues
	Stud	Needing Contact

Examples of student dialogue

- "I haven't sat an exam for nearly 20 years. I just don't think I'm going to be able to cope."

- "I know I should have prepared better, but the exams seemed ages away and I planned to catch up over the holidays. I feel I'm slipping further and further behind and I'm really frightened I'm going to fail."

- "Does a D grade mean I've failed?"

- "I've failed some modules. Am I allowed to continue - will I be kicked off the course?"

Key elements for reducing attrition in Zone 4

- Contact underachievers - provide clear and constructive feedback on their results

- Ensure staff are available to offer practical guidance and advice on strategies for continuing

- Vigilant monitoring at the start of the new term – who has not returned?

Session One Conclusions

- Multi-faceted issue

- Identifying your institutional/faculty risk areas is paramount – don't be swayed by 'norms'

- Keep the responsibility broad – *everyone* makes a difference

- Engaging students with the service

- Expect the unexpected – both with students and their queries!

Session Two

The Interventions

Direct Interventions trialled 2001-2004

- Central Advice Point
- Late Starter pack
- Mitigating Circumstances advice
- 'Pathway to Graduation'
- Telephone non-returners

- 'Self Development: Moving Forward'
- Attendance monitoring
- Revision/exam technique
- Results follow-up
- 'What Happens Next?' leaflet

Behind the scenes support initiatives

- Database of wd/ss/tr
- Plagiarism Referrals
- Recording client needs
- Mitigating circumstances procedures

- Advice to tutors
- Quality Assurance advice

Monitoring Student Attendance

- Identifying the need
- Data collection method
- Interventions used
- Impact of monitoring attendance
- Is it worth it?

Data collected

Level 1 Students (across 2 semesters)	No of Modules	2001/2
Business	10	200
History	9	130

Level 1 Students (across 6 year long modules)	2002/3	2003/4
Business	190	180
History	40	40
Criminology	350	350
Accounting & Finance	---	60
Leisure, Sport & Tourism	---	31
Law	---	180
HND Business Management	---	75

2003/4

Approx 1,000 students across 38 modules

Data collection methods

2001/2 & 2002/3

Manual system – class registers

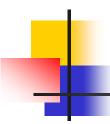- Time consuming
- Time delay
- Incomplete data

2003/4

Electronic swipe cards piloted

Student Information System

- Teething problems

Poor attendance a consistent and reliable early indicator of students at risk

Interventions

- Supportive, non-judgmental

- Email, telephone, letter

- Support plans put in place

- Student views

- Indicator of risk

- Time intensive

Impact of monitoring attendance

- Improved attendance

- Reasons for non-attendance

- Targeted support

- Improved retention rates

- Attendance and performance links

- Student and staff perceptions

Is it worth it?

- Positive behaviour change in some students
- Contribution to reduction in attrition rate
- Staff and student interaction with the initiative

Session Two conclusions

- Interventions aren't necessarily complex but are time consuming
- Student 'saves'
- Opportunity to really make a difference
- 'Service standards' coming into HE

At risk groups: Transferring to fail?

Karen Fitzgibbon

School of Humanities, Law & Social Sciences

Session agenda

- What are at risk groups?
- Why focus on transfer students?
- Transfer protocol within HLaSS
- Pass rates for transferring students in 04/05
- Where do we go from here

What are at risk groups?

- Groups of students who are at greater risk of withdrawal or drop out than other students
- Poor attenders
- Late enrollees
- Struggling students
- Those who chose the wrong course
- Mature learners*

Why focus on transfer students

- Wrong choice of course is commonly cited as one of the major issues influencing early withdrawal
- Anecdotal evidence from previous years suggests these students may be *exchanging heat sources* rather than facing up to bigger issues
- Huge market of transfer students for HLaSS means these students represent a large part of the client base in the Advice Shop at the beginning of each academic year

Sample distribution

- Only tracked those who TO/To/TI/Ti as opposed to any who transferred internally within HLaSS

- 74 students from a possible 90 were tracked

- The gender split was 58% female, 42% male

- All levels of student from Foundation to Post-graduate were included

Why do so many students transfer?

- Choose the wrong course
- Make strategic choices
- Pressured into choices
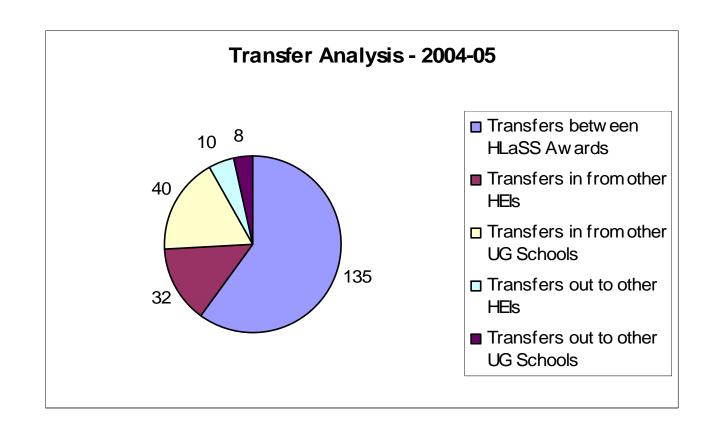- Unaware of the possible routes

Transfer protocol within HLaSS

- All the students had advice interviews to ensure they were making informed decisions about course transfer

- Most of the students in the sample had two advice interviews together with a follow-up phone call

- All were seen by their new Award Tutor prior to transfer

- Many were referred to the Careers Centre for further advice before making their final decision.

- Many of those transferring into the School would have been involved in attendance monitoring trials
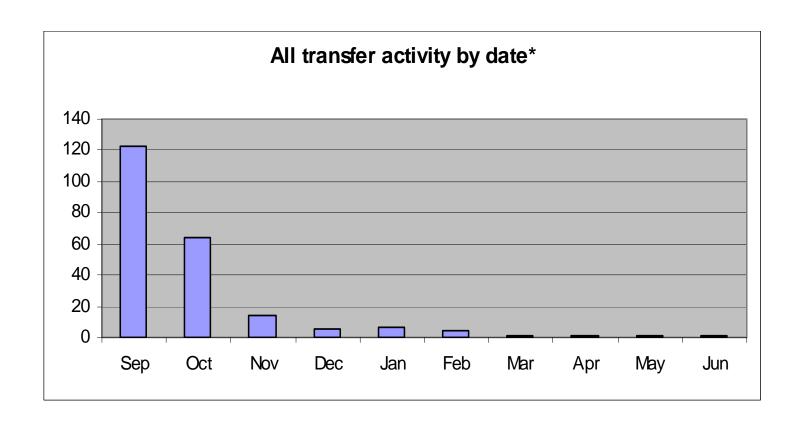
Total transfers in HLaSS for 2004/05

Transfer Analysis - 2004-05

Legend:
- Transfers between HLaSS Awards
- Transfers in from other HEIs
- Transfers in from other UG Schools
- Transfers out to other HEIs
- Transfers out to other UG Schools

Values shown: 10, 8, 40, 135, 32

When transfers take place
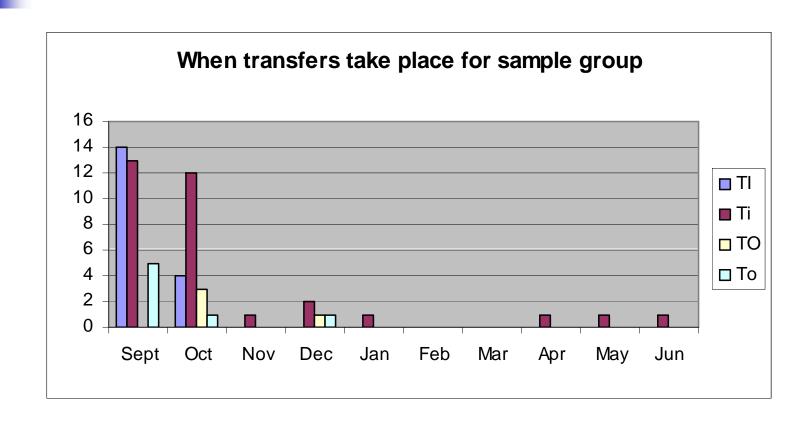
All transfer activity by date*

Transfer by date of sample group

When transfers take place for sample group

Transfers by level of study

Transfer activity by level of study

Legend:
- Transfers between HLaSS Awards
- Transfers in from other UG Schools/HEIs
- Transfers out to other UG Schools/HEIs

Categories: Level 0, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, PG
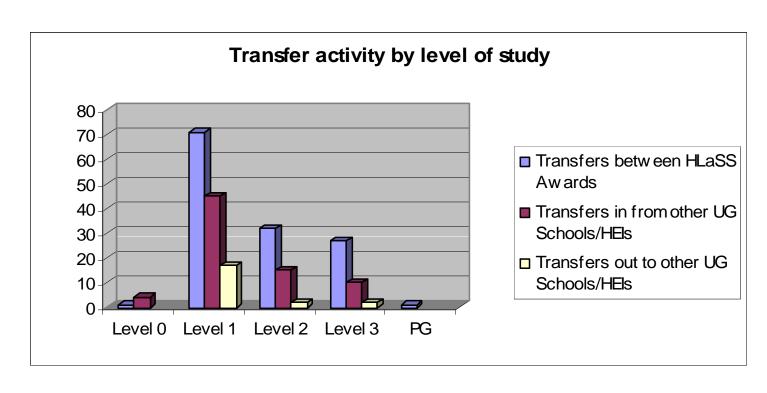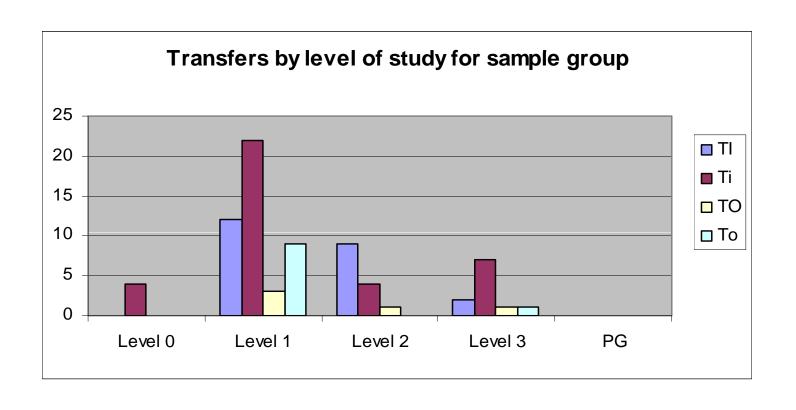
Transfers by level of sample group

Transfers by level of study for sample group

Pass rates/attrition for transfer students 04/05

- Pass rates:
  - Overall pass rate of 58% for transfer students
  - TI 52%
  - Ti 67%
  - To 40%
  - Female 58%
  - Male 45%

- Withdrawn/Suspend study students:
  - TI 5:23
  - Ti 3:36
  - To – 1:10
  - TO – unknown
  - Female 12%
  - Male 10%

Where do we go from here

- Explore the data further:
  - Why do HLaSS have so many transfers?
  - Is flexibility a positive or negative factor?
  - Does the week of transfer affect outcome?
- Identify issues in other Faculties with new Advice Shop Managers
- New tracking system for support departments/Advice Shops may help
- Listen to the views of students who have been successful and learn from them

Any Questions?

Karen Fitzgibbon

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Reflections on the first year of Faculty Advice Shop provision (2006-7)
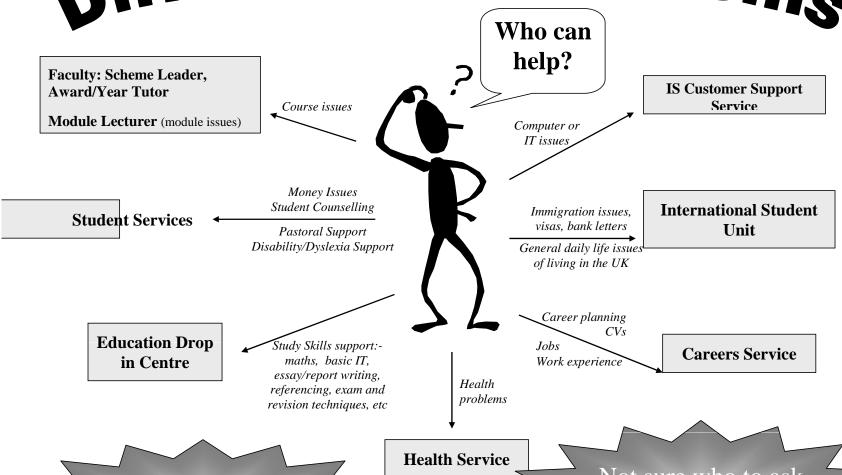
Mary Ayre - HeSaS

Leann Davies – CCI

Karen Fitzgibbon - HaSS

Julie Prior - GBS

Sue Stocking - AT

Whilst you are eating...

- What do you think the Faculty Advice Shops do?

- What do you think we *should* do?

Difficulties...Problems

Who can help?

Faculty: Scheme Leader, Award/Year Tutor

Module Lecturer (module issues)

Course issues

IS Customer Support Service

Computer or IT issues

Money Issues
Student Counselling

Student Services

Pastoral Support
Disability/Dyslexia Support

Immigration issues, visas, bank letters

International Student Unit

General daily life issues of living in the UK

Career planning
CVs

Education Drop in Centre

Study Skills support:- maths, basic IT, essay/report writing, referencing, exam and revision techniques, etc

Jobs
Work experience

Careers Service

Health problems

Health Service

If you need it
ASK FOR HELP!

Not sure who to ask
Call into your
Faculty Advice Shop

Example of a Faculty web - AT

Year/Personal Tutors (Computing courses only)
Receive absence reports. Make specific contact during early weeks and towards end of term

Pastoral Tutors
Pastoral care
Mitigating Circs
General Advice
2 available for 1 hour each lunchtime

Advice Shop
Advice, support, & link with relevant support facilities. Study skills leaflets Mitigating Circumstances advice. Attendance monitoring and follow up.

Student Support System

Student Admin Office
Student records, general queries
Change of address

Module Leaders/ Module Staff
Module specific concerns, assignment issues

Scheme/Award Leaders
Academic issues
Option choices
Problems not resolved by Year Tutor (Computing), advice concerning appeals/complaints

Advice Shop structures

AT	Advice Shop Manager, 2 Student Achievement Coordinators, 1 Administrator
CCI	Advice Shop Manager, Assistant Advice Shop Manager, 2 Administrators
GBS	Advice Shop Manager, 2 Student Achievement Coordinators, 1 Administrative Assistant
HaSS	Advice Shop Manager, 1 Student Achievement Coordinator, 1 Student Attendance Coordinator, 1 Mitigating Circumstances Administrator
HeSAS	**TF**: Advice Shop Manager, 0.6 Admin Assistant **GT**: Student Support Advisor

Baseline provision – aims

- Set up and run the Faculty Advice Shop (FAS)

- Promote the FAS and its activities

- Provide support for students within the Faculty

- Identify retention issues across awards/ modules

- Identify 'at risk' students/points in the academic year

- Develop intervention processes

Baseline provision:
Student facing functions

Drop-in service/appointment system to provide:

- Academic advice

- Pastoral care

- Suspend studies/ withdrawals/ transfers advice

- Mitigating circumstances advice

- Referral to other faculties and support departments

Baseline provision:
Faculty facing functions

- Establishing appropriate Mitigating Circumstances process

- Involvement in open days, induction, etc

- Maintaining a record of student visits

- Designing and implementing intervention processes

- Communicating between Faculty staff, students and other University support departments

- Use data captured to produce a research programme for Advice Shop Managers

Faculty variations and innovations to baseline

- FAS Student Administration System
- Attendance monitoring
- Follow up non-submission of assessment
- Development of Early Days & Study Health Check
- Students Supporting Students (PASS & PAL)
- Summer Revision Sessions
- Disability and Dyslexia – Faculty liaison/ administrative support

Facts and figures

- Student contacts

- Reason for contact

- Timing of attrition

- Reasons for leaving

Number of student contacts

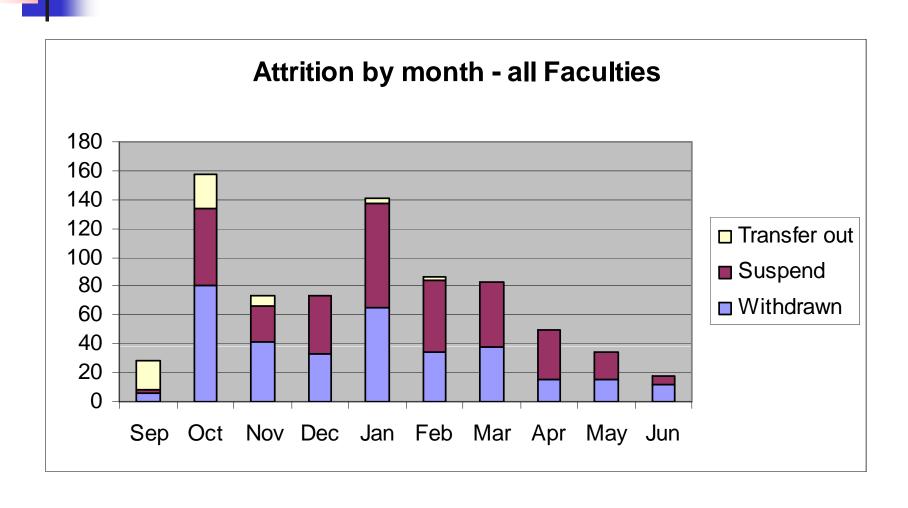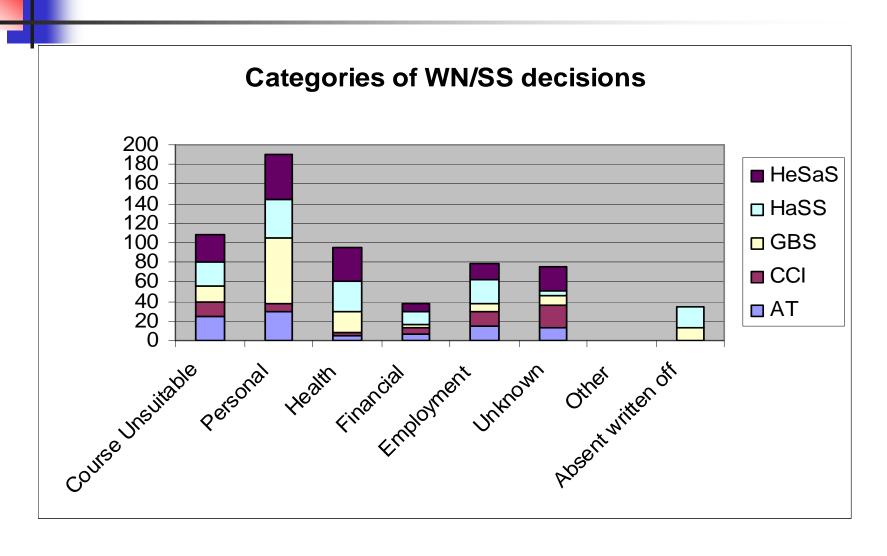|	
AT	4000
CCI	1000
GBS	3328
HaSS	3200
HeSaS	2245
Total	**13,773**

Reasons for contacts

- Attendance follow-ups

- Change of status

- Academic concerns/queries

- Administrative

- Lecturer referral, Personal

- Exit interview, Mits, Progress

- Complaints, Finance

Timing of attrition

Attrition by month - all Faculties

Reasons for attrition

Categories of WN/SS decisions

Legend:
- HeSaS
- HaSS
- GBS
- CCI
- AT

Categories (x-axis): Course Unsuitable, Personal, Health, Financial, Employment, Unknown, Other, Absent written off

Student feedback

- Glamlife Survey
- Internal Student Survey

Staff were very willing and helpful

They sorted out my problem straightaway and were helpful

One of the best services provided for students

Problem dealt with in a quick and friendly way

Contribution to institutional procedures

- Follow-ups of pre-registered students

- Amended procedure for processing withdrawal/suspension of study or transfer

- Changes to withdrawal/suspension forms

Operationalisation of the Faculty Advice Shop provision

- Advice Shop Managers' meetings

- Advice Shop team meetings

- Professional Support in Practice

- Advice Shop staff training

- Committee membership

Examples of current research projects

- Computing students expectations of HE (Sue Stocking, AT).

- Collaboration with an Australian university researching into inclusivity in the engineering disciplines and related sciences (Mary Ayre, HeSaS)

- Investigation into the link between first year student attendance and module results (Karen Fitzgibbon, HaSS)

- Investigation of pre-entry predictors of undergraduate business students' proclivity to successfully complete their degree (Julie Prior, GBS).

- Improving technology interfaces between student record systems to create reliable picture of student engagement (Leann Davies, CCI)

Reflections

- Challenges
- Bridge between academic/non-academic staff
- Understanding students and their experience (including reliable data)
- Academic enquiry

Contributions to academic debate

- ASMs are active members of teaching and research communities in their Faculties

- Initiate pedagogically sound interventions

- Use data collected to inform critical enquiry into student retention

- Disseminate UoG findings at conferences and in publications

Conclusion

- Students view the FAS as a valuable resource

- Staff involvement is growing with increasing tutor referrals and networks becoming established

- Strong synergies are emerging between student administration and FAS, and provision is shaping toward Faculty Advice Centres

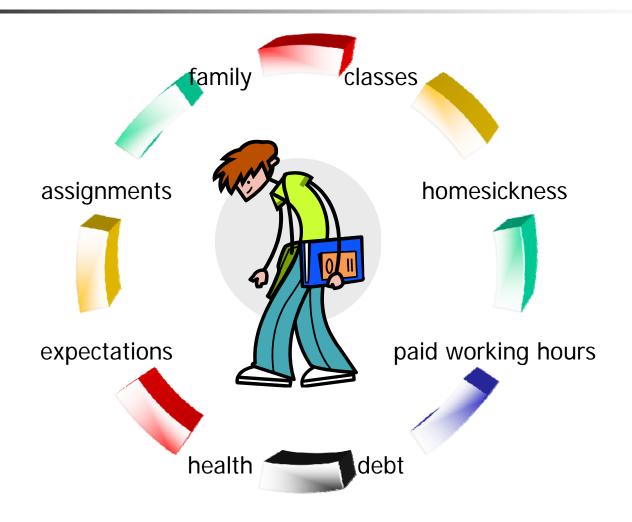- But....the University still faces a challenge with student retention

Faculty Advice Shops can (and do)

- Respond to student needs both pro and reactively

- Contribute to the reduction of student withdrawal by ensuring timely advice at the point of need/identified risk moments

- Help inform the debate about university student experience and shape strategy and policy
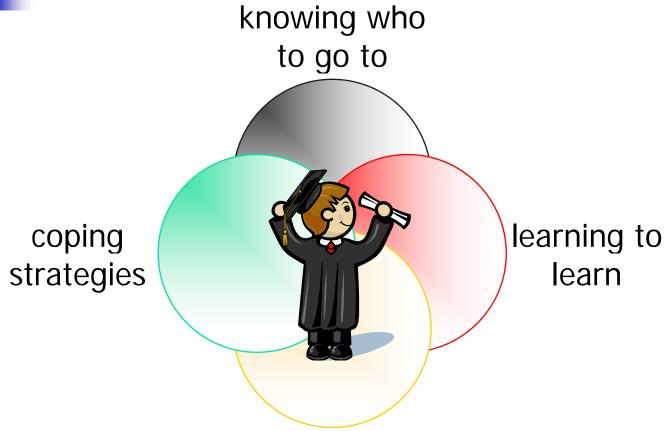
Student pressures – before

Questions

AT	Sue Stocking
CCI	Leann Davies
GBS	Julie Prior
HaSS	Karen Fitzgibbon
HeSaS	Mary Ayre

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Progression and Retention in the Undergraduate Awards

Academic Year 2000 – 2001

Karen M Fitzgibbon
Advice Shop Manager

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Progression and Retention in the Undergraduate Awards

The **HASS Advice Shop** has been operational since September 2001. During that time, several trials have been established to seek to improve retention rates within the School. It is, however, sometimes difficult to obtain an accurate picture of the School's key issues with regard to retention. This report attempts to give Award Tutors, Scheme Leaders and the Senior Management Team of the School a clear analysis of the current retention issues by Award, together with an analysis of the barriers to progression which some students experience.

Two reports have recently been published within the University that are applicable to this analysis. They are: **Student Services Student Retention Report** and the **University of Glamorgan Student Satisfaction Survey**. Each report identifies a number of general issues with regard to retention and student satisfaction however, some issues are specific to HASS and are summarised below.

Student Services Student Retention Report

Retention figures by Academic Subject Category show HASS as having an attrition rate of 10%. This includes all withdrawals, suspended study and non-completing students across the range of courses. It is worth noting that this figure was put forward in the HEFCW returns from Student Information Services, whereas a later report by SIS shows the HASS attrition rate as 6%.

The SSSR report goes on to summarise a number of key 'interventions' which are now in place to try and prevent the present UG attrition rate from rising further. These include the establishment of a one-stop student finance centre (now open in C Block) and increases in the hardship fund and number of scholarships. It is to be hoped that a number of HASS students are able to benefit from these initiatives, certainly the Advice Shop is directing a number of clients towards the Student Finance Centre.

University of Glamorgan Student Satisfaction Survey

Although necessarily generalist in its remit, some analysis is made of student satisfaction by Department/School. HASS receives many Aa, Bb, and Cc category awards for satisfaction in most of the key areas identified, with one D given for the amount of work placement opportunities available within the Awards, and one D for the number of computers available within the School. In the majority of cases, HASS students seem to be highly satisfied with the course organisation, learning and teaching and university environment.

Financial considerations are also surveyed but these are not analysed by school and we are unable to draw any conclusions from them for HASS students in particular. However, it is interesting to note that 32% of the sample indicate that their financial situation has a 'bad impact' on their academic work as this contrasts markedly with the number of students who cite financial problems as their reason for withdrawing as seen in the figures overleaf.

Karen M Fitzgibbon   1
Advice Shop Manager

HASS Analysis

It follows that if our students are for the most part overwhelmingly satisfied with their experience in HASS, our attrition rate is possibly due to other factors not considered in the Student Satisfaction Survey. Our official figures (produced by SIS) for the 2000/01 cohort across the whole range of programmes offered by the School are as follows:

2268 enrolled
73 withdrawn
54 suspended study
6% attrition rate

The attrition figure is then broken down into a number of reasons for withdrawal as shown below. However, the reasons given by students for withdrawing or suspending their studies do not always reflect an accurate reason for withdrawal. For example, students sometimes prefer to say they have financial problems rather than admit that they feel out of their depth intellectually. For this reason, the following figures should be treated with some caution. However, they do give a picture of the key reasons why some students withdraw. The number of 'unknown' responses is currently being investigated to ascertain if we can identify a sharper picture of the reasons HASS students withdraw or suspend their studies.

Reasons for withdrawal or suspension of study for HASS

Reason Given	Financial	Unknown	Unsuitable	Absent	Personal	Employment
Number	1	56	2	1	12	1
%	0.7	44	1.6	0.7	9.4	0.7

Contrast this with the total picture for the University:

Reason Given	Financial	Unknown	Unsuitable	Absent	Personal	Employment
Number	24	702	37	22	190	31
%	2	59	3.1	1.9	16	2.6

The global figures for student attrition in HASS are helpful as a point of comparison with other Schools and Departments and to allow HASS to develop a picture of the overall reasons for withdrawal or suspension of study. However, for individual Award Tutors, the figures represent little more than a comfort blanket. Award Tutors want to have a more detailed picture of attrition for their particular award. They want to be able to identify key periods during the academic year when students on their award are more likely to withdraw, they also want an accurate picture of the modules which routinely prevent students progressing. In the following sections I have attempted to bring together key data for students by award, including total number registered by level, total withdrawn, total suspending study. I have also identified those modules that represent the most common stumbling blocks to progression in order that we can identify potential crisis points for students and advise/support them accordingly. The quantitative data is then discussed and suggestions offered in terms of future

strategies that may be employed to help overcome the problems, together with suggested interventions which the Advice Shop can lead or support.

Awards

Foundation Certificate Humanities

Attrition rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% of cohort wd\ss
Level 1 - 37	1	0	3

Non-progression figures 2000/01

Module name	Module Code	Number failing	Expressed as a %
European Computer Driving Licence	IS008	19	51
Foundation Quantitative Methods	MP008	15	40
Into the Future/Communities Career Planning	PE002	17	46
Learning Strategies	PE101	14	38
Psychology	PS002	12	32
Sociology	SO001	14	38

The number of students failing the core modules is unusually high. It is pleasing to note that the majority of modules taken inside the School have significantly lower non-progression rates, with the exception of Psychology and Sociology as detailed above.

It is suggested that the School SMT consider the possibility of teaching the Foundation Students totally within HASS rather than leaving them outside the School for half of their curriculum time when they have affiliated themselves to our School by choice of Award.

Single Honours Awards

BA Animation

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% of cohort wd\ss
Level 1 – 22	0	0	
Level 2	0	0	
Level 3	2	0	

No commonly failed modules

The withdrawal/suspending study rates are excellent on this Award. Tutors may have suggestions for rolling out their techniques/practices to other Awards in order that we are able to share best practice amongst the undergraduate programme.

BA Art Practice

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% of cohort wd\ss
Level 1 – 18	3	2	28
Level 2 – 16	0	0	
Level 3 – 19	0	0	

Non-progression figures

Module Name	Module Code	Number failing	Expressed as %
Intro to Materials & Processes	AP101	3	16
Intro to Art History	AH104	3	16
Art of the Renaissance 1400 – 1600	AH103	3	16
Art Practice: Painting Special Relationships	AP102	4	22
Life Drawing	AP110	4	22
Intro to Drawing Systems	AP111	3	16

The seemingly high percentage non-progression rates are worthy of comment. The same student names appeared in all the failed modules, indicating that these students struggled with the whole diet of the course. It is important though to consider such issues as whether the students were counselled about their choice of award, whether they were continually absent and whether this was monitored and if so whether the students were advised about the correlation between low attendance patterns and low achievement. It seems to be the case from the successful strategies so far implemented by the Advice Shop project that 'absent' students welcome this kind of support, and see it as a crucial part of successfully completing their studies.

BA Criminal Justice

A small cohort at levels 1 & 2, and 16 students going out at level 3. No significant non-progression issues.

<u>BSc Criminology</u>

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% of cohort wd/ss
Level 1 – 45	3	1	7
Level 2 – 29	0	1	3
Level 3 - 19	0	0	

Non-Progression 2000/01

Module Name	Module Code	Number Failing	Expressed as %
Social Interaction & Control	CR103	8	17
Styles of Research & Criminology	CR104	15	33
Quantitative Research Methods in Criminology	CR107	20	44
Crime & the Criminal	CR112	11	24
The Development of Criminological Thought	CR101	12	26
Introduction to Psychology	PS101	9	20
Social & Developmental Psychology	PS126	12	26

The non-progression figures are high for all the first year modules of the Award. It is to be expected that some students will find their first year of study challenging, but it is unusual to find such high numbers of non-progressing students. Possible suggestions include piloting a 'buddy' scheme whereby first year students are buddied by a second/third year student for the first semester. There could be other issues linked particularly to this scheme, for instance a high rate of non-attendance, in which case we could extend the Registers Trial successfully carried out with History year one students. Lastly, it is definitely worth putting a focus group together from year one students to ascertain student opinion. I am more than happy to facilitate such a group.

Karen M Fitzgibbon
Advice Shop Manager

BA English Studies

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% cohort wd\ss
Level 1 – 34	2	0	6
Level 2 – 22	0	0	
Level 3 – 26	0	0	

Non-Progression 2000/01

Module Name	Module Code	Number failing	Expressed as %
Text & Context	LI135	5	15
Text & Context 2	LI145	6	18
Fictionalising the Valleys	LI151	4	12

These three modules represent the major stumbling blocks for Level 1 BA English Studies students. The same issues arise here as for BA Art Practice, with a number of students failing all of the modules identified.

BA History

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% cohort wd\ss
Level 1 – 15	2	0	13
Level 2 – 19	0	0	0
Level 3 – 15	1	0	7

BA History has relatively small numbers across all levels and as such we would expect to see lower attrition. As with some of the other Awards with low attrition rates, it would be interesting to compare the student experience with a focus group. Tutors will also be asked to share aspects of good practice.

Non-progression 2000/01

The cohort numbers are small, and therefore modules with as few as two students failing give a percentage failure rate of 13%. It is considered meaningless however to rely on such small numbers, and we see again the pattern of continuing failure by a small number of students. However, the issues identified with regard to counselling, advice, and guidance of failing students on BA Art Practice are also pertinent here. Analysis of the register trial impact on progression will also be useful.

BA Humanities

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% cohort wd\ss
Level 1 – 65	2	1	8
Level 2 – 66	1	0	2
Level 3 – 52	0	0	0

Non-Progression 2000/01

Module Name	Module Code	Number failing	Expressed as %
Crime & the Criminal	CR112	5	8
Starting to Write	CW101	7	11
Writing Poetry	CW102	5	8
Writing Short Stories	CS103	5	8
Introduction to Psychology	PS101	6	9
Development of Criminological Thought	CR101	5	8
Drugs, Abuse, Policy & Control	CR220	4	6
Experimental Design & Statistics	PS230	9	14

The comparisons between those students on BA Humanities, and those on BSc Criminology in terms of failure rate of criminology modules are interesting. There is a higher pass rate amongst general Humanities students taking these modules, than in the Criminology cohort.

BA Media Practice

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% cohort wd\ss
Level 1 – 34	5	1	15
Level 2 – 31	0	0	
Level 3 - 15	0	0	

Non-Progression

There are no significant failure rates for modules in level 1 of the BA Media Practice Award. However, there is one Level 2 module with a failure rate of 13% (Documentary Photography MD2F5) which is worthy of some further investigation and comment by the Award Tutor/team.

BSc Psychology

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% cohort wd/ss
Level 1 – 64	6	0	9
Level 2 – 57	2	0	4
Level 3 - 54	0	0	

Non-Progression

One module has a failure rate of 9% (PS1D1) Research and Methodological Issues in Psychology. All other modules on the Award have low failure rates in the region of 4 – 5%.

BSc Social Sciences

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% cohort wd/ss
Level 1 – 10	1	0	10
Level 2 – 4	1	0	25
Level 3 – 21	0	0	0

Non-Progression

No modules had significant failure rates. This is a fully modular Award and the low failure rates could reflect the amount of counselling students receive prior to making their option choices. The Award Tutor is encouraged to share practices with other undergraduate Award Tutors.

BSc Sociology

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% cohort wd\ss
Level 1 – 16	1	1	6
Level 2 – 11	0	0	9
Level 3 – 15	0	0	0

Non-Progression

Module Name	Module Code	Number failing	Expressed as %
Styles of Research And Criminology	CR104	5	31%
Quantitative Research Methods in Criminology	CR107	4	25%
Social Theory	SO201	3	27%

Relatively few modules appear to have high failure rates once students have successfully completed level one. BSc Sociology has a level 2 module with a high failure rate given the low cohort numbers.

BA Theatre and Media Drama

Attrition Rate 2000/01

Student Numbers by Level	Withdrawn	Suspending Study	% cohort wd\ss
Level 1 – 57	2	2	7
Level 2 – 36	0	0	0
Level 3 - 25	0	0	0

Non-Progression 2000/01

Module Name	Module Code	Number failing	Expressed as %
Cultural & Critical Studies	MS129	4	7
Intro to Cinema	TD103	5	9
Text Studies: Realism & Naturalism	TD110	5	9
Text Studies: Expressionism & Epic	TD217	4	11
Popular Theatre	TD201	4	11
Cultural Policy	MS222	5	14

Non-Progression

The second year modules identified have a higher rate of non-progression than the first year modules for this Award. This is an unusual pattern with undergraduate study (where commonly failed modules tend to appear at year one of the typical cohort profile) and merits further investigation.

Major/Minor and Joint Awards

The only major/minor/joint awards that I have analysed, are those with a cohort size of more than 10. Smaller numbers render analysis meaningless.

BA Communication Studies

No significant attrition/suspending study rates, and no commonly failed modules.   Total cohort size for 2000/01: Level 1 (18), Level 2 (32), Level 3 (49)

BA English Studies and Media Studies

No significant attrition/suspending study rates, and no commonly failed modules.   Total cohort size for 2000/01: Level 1 (9), Level 2 (3), Level 3 (10)

BA Theatre & Media Drama with English Studies

One student withdrew from level 1 (10% attrition rate) one student suspending study at level 2 (14% suspending study) no commonly failed modules.   Total cohort size for 2000/01: Level 1 (10), Level 2 (7), Level 3 (6)

BA Theatre & Media Drama with Media Studies

No significant attrition/suspending study rates with only one student withdrawing (level 2), and no commonly failed modules.   Total cohort size for 2000/01: Level 1 (17), Level 2 (14), Level 3 (7).

BSC Psychology with Criminology

No significant attrition/suspending study rates, (one withdrawal at level 1 representing 3% of the cohort) and no commonly failed modules.   Total cohort size for 2000/01: Level 1 (36), Level 2 (29), Level 3 (27).

Timing of Withdrawal

The remaining part of the picture of the School's attrition rates is when the withdrawal peaks occur. It is possible that each of the Awards have specific critical periods when the number of students seeking to withdraw or suspend their studies increases. At the moment our records are only able to provide the most basic of data, and the dates given should be treated with caution as they may reflect the date the form was completed, not the date of actual withdrawal. This may explain why some of our students were withdrawn in June (outside the University cut off for withdrawal, which is 31 May). It is possible that these students actually withdrew or suspended their studies earlier in the academic year, and that therefore skews our data. Of course it is also possible that the student **was** permitted to withdraw in June. If this is the case then this may further skew our true attrition rates as those students should not be recorded as withdrawn, but as s students exiting with a lower award such as a Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education or fail repeat/fail discontinue students.

From the preliminary analysis so far undertaken, our peak withdrawal times are those shared throughout the University, being mid November and January. However, the number of students withdrawing in June is not mirrored in other Schools and warrants further investigation.

Summary of Action Points

It is hoped that the following action points can be drawn from this analysis and used to shape future strategy for improving the School rates of retention and student progression. I would be happy to be involved in any of the further discussions and investigations as appropriate.

General

Colleagues to share best practice across Awards with regard to counselling students in the choice of award, monitoring absence, and advising about transfer, suspending study or withdrawal. Karen Fitzgibbon to further investigate June withdrawals.

Foundation Certificate in Humanities

Investigate possibility of teaching Foundation Certificate students within the School for all modules as opposed to the Humanities modules only.

BA Animation

Tutors to roll out examples of good practice to other Award Tutors and colleagues in the School.

BSc Criminology

Investigate further reasons for high failure rate of first year students to include possible pilot of buddy system and possible register trial for first year students. Consider a focus group with first year students to identify reasons for high failure rate.

BA English Studies

Discuss counselling of failing students where a number of modules are failed. Possible attendance issues arising from these common failures.

BA History

Discuss the counselling of students who appear to be failing the complete module diet.

BA Humanities

Discuss the number of students failing the second year modules and further investigate the number of students who successfully complete the Criminology modules to compare their experience with students on the Criminology Award. This may be achieved through a focus group.

BA Media Practice

Fairly high attrition rate, which warrants further investigation to identify common factors of withdrawal. Discuss identified module with high non-progression rate.

Karen M Fitzgibbon   19
Advice Shop Manager

BSc Psychology

Award tutor to share good practice with colleagues to try to identify reasons for high progression rates. Attrition rate is above the School average and warrants further investigation to identify common factors for withdrawal/suspension of study.

BSc Social Sciences

The attrition rates appear alarming on the second year of this Award, but it is worth noting the small cohort size. Award tutor is encouraged to discuss counselling processes with other colleagues given the high progression rate across this fully modular scheme.

BSc Sociology

Fairly low attrition rate for first year students rising in the second year of the course which is unusual in attrition patterns. The three modules with high non-progression rates merit further investigation to ascertain reasons for failure and to make adjustments to the Award where necessary for 2002.

BA Theatre & Media Drama

Discussion concerning the non-progression statistics associated with the level two modules needs to take place as these present an unusual pattern of failure rates.

Major/Minor & Joint Awards

The attrition rates for each of the major/minor and joint awards (with cohorts of more than ten students) appear to be fine and none of the major/minors have significant failure rates on modules.

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Advice Shop Operation 2001/2002

Karen M Fitzgibbon   September 2002
Advice Shop Manager

Introduction

At the commencement of the Advice Shop project in September 2001, the initial aims were to establish a presence as quickly as possible and to begin research into major retention issues for the School. A number of early initiatives were successfully undertaken which are outlined later in this evaluation of the first year of operation and it is felt that these have lead to an increase in the number of students using the Advice Shop provision.

In November 2001 the first report into retention issues was published for Senior Management Team, Scheme Leaders, Award Tutors and School Tutors and this has resulted in a number of initiatives being developed which it is hoped will lead to a further reduction in the attrition rate for the School.
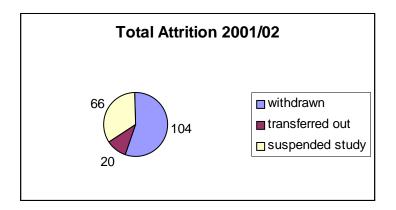
This report represents a review of the first year of the Advice Shop operation and contains the following sections:

- Analysis of comparative data from 2000/1 and 2001/2
- Key attrition analysis
- Analysis of students using the Advice Shop
- Review of strategic aims of the Advice Shop
- Précis of initiatives/interventions undertaken and a review of effectiveness
- Proposed new initiatives for the next academic session 2002/03
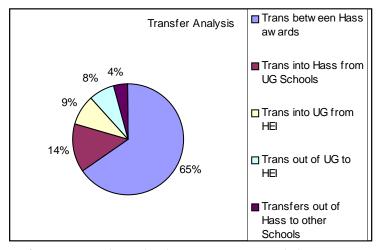
Analysis of 2001/02 Attrition Figures

The figure for students leaving Hass during 2001/02 is 190. However, 10 students have resumed after a period of suspended study, and 39 students have transferred into Hass from other UG Schools or from other HEI's, giving a total attrition figure of 141. Expressed as a percentage of the total Hass student population this represents an attrition rate of 5%, a 1% reduction over the period 2000/01.

For the purposes of attrition analysis, the following graphs present a picture of the attrition activity of the total number of students (190) who left Hass during the period under review.

The attrition figures above take account of students transferring out of Hass but the amount of internal transfer activity is worthy of further attention. Although not resulting in students leaving, the high transfer rate is having an impact on student performance and will possibly, in the longer term, raise the School attrition rate. In the period under review there were a total of 170 transfers. Further analysis reveals the pattern illustrated in the pie chart below.
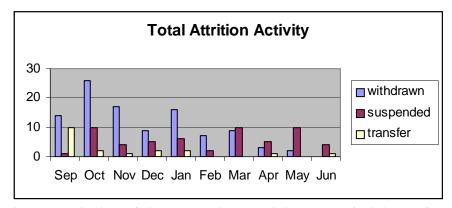
Each student transferring into the School or between Awards has been tracked to provide us with data of the success rate of these students. Pass rates have been calculated as follows:

Internal transfers between courses within Hass – 111 students, 55% pass rate
Transfers into Hass from other UG Schools, 24 students, 45% pass rate
Transfers into UG from other HEIs, 15 students, 60% pass rate

We expected a fairly high proportion of transfer activity between Awards, but the analysis of pass rates seems to indicate that students are not always making informed decisions about their transfer. It is impossible of course to know how those students would have performed if they had not transferred, or even whether they would have stayed in University, so caution is needed here.   The Advice Shop has recently acted in a number of cases to agree conditions of acceptance on students transferring between Awards in order to try and improve internal pass rates.
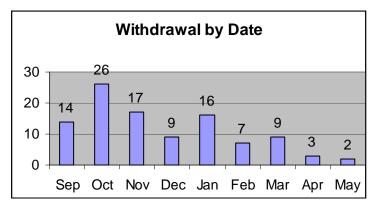
When attrition takes place

The University analysis of attrition has long indicated two danger periods when our attrition rate is high. These are given as November and February. However, if the total attrition activity is analysed by date, it reveals a different pattern as can be seen below.
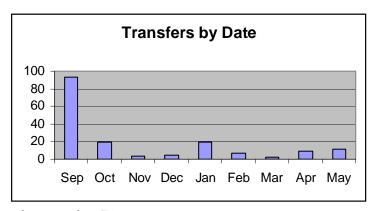
Total Attrition Activity

Further analysis reveals that of the 104 students withdrawing, 53% did so before 31 November 2001. This indicates the importance of our 'front-loading' of information, support, help and guidance.

In order to facilitate a greater understanding of the pattern of attrition, each of the categories has been displayed separately in the following graphs.
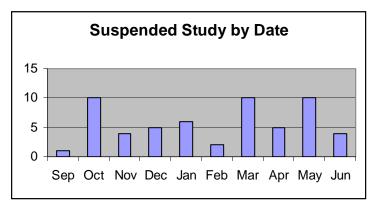
Withdrawal by Date

Total withdrawal for the period = 104

Transfers by Date

Total transfers for the period = 170
This graph includes **all** transfers between Hass Awards as well as those students transferring into and out of UG.

Suspended Study by Date
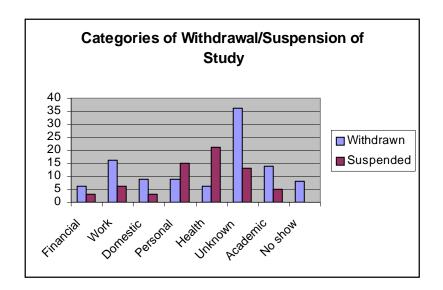
Total suspended study for the period = 66

In summary:

- 53% of students withdrawing from Hass courses did so before 30 November 2001
- The number of students transferring internally is uncommonly high and initial analysis reveals a lower than average pass rate amongst students who transfer between Awards.
- The pass rate for students transferring into Hass from other UG schools is only 45%, again lower than average.

Reasons Given for Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Students withdraw for many reasons, indeed we know that for many students the picture of issues behind the final reason is extremely complex. To illustrate this, consider the following example.
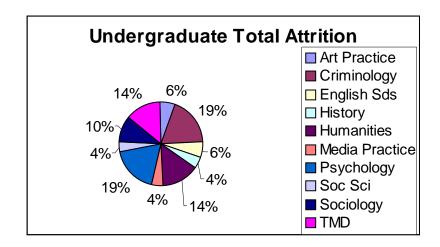
Student A had been experiencing domestic difficulties juggling her childcare whilst studying. She was under financial pressure due to the cost of the childcare she needed, and she then lost her part time job and was unable to afford the childcare. At the same time, her elderly mother became seriously ill and was unable to look after herself, so the student became her mother's full time carer. She could have ticked Financial, Personal or Employment as the reason for leaving, but she chose to record Personal, as it was the full time care of her mother that was the 'final straw'.
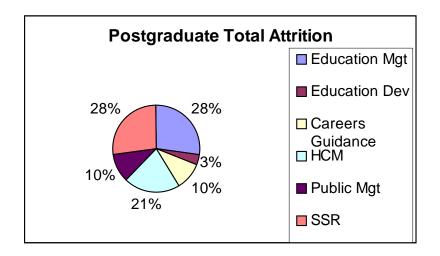
Bearing this example in mind, the following analysis of students' reasons for withdrawing or suspending their study should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the major categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'.

Categories of Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Pattern of Attrition by Award

The breakdown of student attrition by Award is shown below for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Withdrawal and Suspending Study students have been added together to give a total attrition figure for each Award and these figures are then represented pictorially to show the spread of attrition across the undergraduate scheme.

Undergraduate Total Attrition

Legend:
- Art Practice
- Criminology
- English Sds
- History
- Humanities
- Media Practice
- Psychology
- Soc Sci
- Sociology
- TMD

Values: 6%, 19%, 6%, 4%, 14%, 4%, 19%, 4%, 10%, 14%

Postgraduate Total Attrition

Legend:
- Education Mgt
- Education Dev
- Careers Guidance
- HCM
- Public Mgt
- SSR

Values: 28%, 28%, 3%, 10%, 21%, 10%

Further analysis of the Awards is given over the next few pages, together with comparative data taken from the attrition analysis of the academic year 2000/01.

Analysis of Comparative Data between 2000/01 and 2001/02

The tables below present the attrition picture for each of the undergraduate and postgraduate Awards within the School. Attrition rates for the previous academic year (2000/01) are provided for comparison.   The percentages are calculated using the total attrition figure for each Award and the total Award cohort figures. The percentages are not therefore comparable with the figures shown on the previous page concerning spread of attrition by Award.

Undergraduate Awards

BA Art Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	35	1	1	2	6	28
Level 2	14	1		1	0.25	0
Level 3	16					
Totals	**65**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4.6%**	**9%**

BSc Criminology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	42	3	2	5	12	7
Level 2	29	1	1	2	7	3
Level 3	28		2	2	7	0
Totals	**99**	**4**	**5**	**9**	**9%**	**5%**

BA English Studies

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	36	2	1	3	8	6
Level 2	29					
Level 3	22					
Totals	**87**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**3%**	**2%**

BA History

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	27	1		1	4	13
Level 2	17		1	1	6	0
Level 3	20					
Totals	**64**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**3%**	**6%**

BA Humanities

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	66	1	2	3	4	8

		Withdrawn	Suspended			
Level 2	52	1	2	3	6	2
Level 3	41		1	1	2	0
Totals	**159**	**2**	**5**	**7**	**4%**	**2%**

BA Media Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	48	2		2	4	15
Level 2	27					
Level 3	34					
Totals	**109**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**2%**	**7%**

BSc Psychology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	60		3	3	5	9
Level 2	55	2	1	3	5	4
Level 3	50	1	2	3	6	0
Totals	**165**	**3**	**6**	**9**	**5%**	**4%**

BSc Social Sciences

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	20	1	1	2	10	10
Level 2	5				0	25
Level 3	13					
Totals	**38**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**5%**	**6%**

BSc Sociology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	20	2		2	10	6
Level 2	16		1	1	6	9
Level 3	8	1	1	2	25	0
Totals	**44**	**3**	**2**	**5**	**11%**	**5%**

BA Theatre and Media Drama

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	55	6		6	11	7
Level 2	52	1		1	2	0
Level 3	32					
Totals	**139**	**7**	**0**	**7**	**5%**	**3%**

Major/Minor and Joint Awards

Those Awards with significant student attrition are analysed. The remaining major/minor or joint Awards are not shown due to the small cohort numbers.

BA Communication Studies

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	2	1		1	50	0
Level 2	21	2		2	9	0
Level 3	26					
Totals	**49**	**3**		**3**	**6%**	

BA Psychology with Criminology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	18		2	2	11	3
Level 2	29	1		1	3	0
Level 3	27		2	2	7	0
Totals	**74**	**1**	**4**	**5**	**7%**	**3%**

Other Awards

Diploma in Intensive Welsh

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	25	4	4	8	32	
Level 2	25	12	3	15	60	
Totals	**50**	**16**	**7**	**23**	**46%**	**unavailable**

Foundation Studies

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	74	7	1	8	11	3

Franchise Partner Colleges

Franchise operations have also been monitored during the period under review, with three courses showing higher than average attrition rates.

BA Humanities Bridgend

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	13	2		2	15	
Level 2	13	1		1	8	
Totals	**26**	**3**		**3**	**12%**	**unavailable**

HND Community Theatre Bridgend

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	11	4		4	36	unavailable
Level 2						

Cert HE Humanities and Social Sciences Ebbw Vale

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1	17	10		10	59	unavailable

Postgraduate Awards

Postgraduate Awards with significant cohort numbers or attrition rates are shown below.

MA Education Management

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1 (Cert)	10	1	1	2	20	
Level 2 (Dip)	15					
Level 3 (Diss)	15		6	6	40	
Totals	**40**	**1**	**7**	**8**	**20%**	**unavailable**

MA Education Development

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1 (Cert)	45	1		1	2	
Level 2 (Dip)	1					
Level 3 (Diss)						
Totals	**46**	**1**		**1**	**4%**	**unavailable**

MSc Careers Guidance (full time one year programme)

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1 (Cert)	26	2	1	3	11	
Level 2 (Dip)						
Level 3 (Diss)						
Totals		**2**	**1**	**3**	**11%**	**unavailable**

MSc Health Care Management

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1 (Cert)	14	1	3	4	14	
Level 2 (Dip)	9					
Level 3 (Diss)	23		2	2	9	
Totals	**46**	**1**	**5**	**6**	**13%**	**unavailable**

MSc Public Management

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1 (Cert)	3	2		2	66	
Level 2 (Dip)	2					
Level 3 (Diss)	3		1	1	33	
Totals	**8**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**37%**	**unavailable**

MSc Social Science Research

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2001 % of cohort	2000 % of cohort for comparison
Level 1 (Cert)	26	3	4	7	27	29
Level 2 (Dip)	19		1	1	5	12
Level 3 (Diss)						
Totals	**45**	**3**	**5**	**8**	**17%**	**41%**

In summary:

- Of the 23 Awards shown above, nine show an increase in attrition over 2000/01
- Five show a decrease in attrition in comparison to 2000/01
- Nine Awards have no available data for comparison due either to no records being kept, or (in most cases) due to the transfer of Awards from the Business School.
- Higher than average attrition is recorded for the following Awards:
    - ❑ BSc Criminology (9%)
    - ❑ BSc Sociology (11%)
    - ❑ Diploma in Intensive Welsh (46%)
    - ❑ Foundation Studies (11%)
    - ❑ BA Humanities (Bridgend) (12%)
    - ❑ HND Community Theatre (Bridgend) (36%)
    - ❑ Cert HE Humanities (Ebbw Vale) (59%)
    - ❑ MA Education Management (20%)
    - ❑ MSc Health Care Management (13%)
    - ❑ MSc Public Management (37%)
    - ❑ MSc Social Science Research (17%)

Further analysis will be undertaken of the Awards with higher than average attrition to isolate issues which the Advice Shop and Course Team can act upon in order to try and reduce these figures.

Analysis of Clients Using the Advice Shop
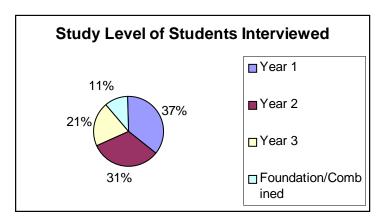
Approximately 500 students have visited the Advice Shop in the period under review. Students requiring answers to brief questions or enquiries such as staff telephone numbers, room numbers, term dates, change of address details and so on have not been formally recorded. However, we have recorded every student who has required advice via interview, using client record sheets. A copy of the record sheet is then placed on the student's personal file. A total of 89 students have required interviews with either Karen Fitzgibbon or Carol Sanders. It should be noted that this figure does not represent the total number of interviews carried out however, as students often return on three or four separate occasions for further advice interviews. Several students were on a weekly visiting schedule to check progress and these were seen during each teaching week. A reasonable estimation of the total number of interviews carried out is to allow 3 interviews per student – giving a total of 267 interviews. In addition, approximately 300 students have called for advice concerning mitigating circumstances claims.

In summary:

Advice interviews (allowing 3 per student)	267
Non-interview advice enquiries	161
Mitigating circumstances enquiries	300
Total number of interviews/enquiries	**728**

Telephone and email contact is also regularly undertaken – approximately 25 telephone calls and 30 emails per day are received and dealt with.

Further analysis of those students interviewed reveals the following breakdown of their level of study.

Study Level of Students Interviewed

The demand for advice interviews has been surprisingly constant, with predictable peaks around exam time in both semesters. The number of casual callers has also been constant, and has continued throughout the summer period in terms of telephone contact. Callers for mitigating circumstances have mainly been around the exam period, with a small but consistent demand at other times.

Hass Advice Shop
Costs –v- Benefits

Costs:

Post funding – 1 grade 4, 1 PL
Initiatives - books for student reps £63.08
Accommodation – not separated from main School costs
Telephone – £180

Benefits for the School:

Each student prevented from withdrawing saves the School £3.5k per annum in funding terms. The figures below also give projected savings in terms of students with subsequent years of study remaining at the point of successful retention.

Conservative estimates of the number of students prevented from withdrawing through Advice Shop interventions are as follows:

First year students : 20 = £70k this year, £210k ongoing
Second year students: 15 = £52.5k this year, £105k ongoing
Third year students: 6 = 21K

Fees saved for the School this academic year: £128.5k
Fees saved for ongoing years of study: £315k
Total fees saved from first year of Advice Shop operation: £443.5k

Additionally, our reputation as a School which cares for and supports our students should not be underestimated in terms of added value, particularly in the light of much of our market being from the immediate locality.

Benefits for the student:
Confidence increases, personal satisfaction, life skills enhanced

For the University:
Improved performance against benchmarks
Rise in performance indicators
Reputation in the community enhanced as a caring HEI

Review of the Strategic Aims of the Advice Shop Project

The strategy for the Advice Shop Project has been regularly reviewed during the first year of operation. All of the short-term aims have been met, and a number of the medium-term goals are some way towards completion. One of the long-term aims was stated as 'Transfer knowledge across UG using the HASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice'. It is satisfying to note that this has already happened, with a number of academic schools now recruiting retention advisors to offer just the kind of service we are providing. These posts will become effective from September.

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
✓ Gather statistics from recent cohorts to identify particular cohort issues	Continue to monitor trends in UG and other institutions	✓ Use Advice Shop project as a method of improving current HASS non-completion rates
✓ Increase visibility of the pastoral support provided within the School and secondly, within the University	Continue to monitor and forecast UG statistics against HEFCW performance indicators	✓ Transfer knowledge across UG using the HASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice
✓ Identify key support initiatives in University support departments and raise student awareness of these services	✓ Make student reporting of reason for non-completion (W/D, defer, transfer etc) more robust.	Demonstrate added value to the next QAA inspection concerning the HASS model of pastoral/academic care and support
✓ Identify number of deferring/transferring students and draw out key issues	Set up a system of follow-up interviews with non-completing students.	Promote a staff development cycle which prevents tension between elements of UG mission statement and to foster an environment where 'student friendliness' does not fall to a few
✓ Identify national trends in retention – including non-completion numbers together with retention strategies being adopted by other institutions	Measure the impact of the 2002 'Big Bang' on retention issues	
✓ Identify number of students who return after deferral	✓ Work with other UG Schools and CELL to increase the possibility of 'in-house' transfers between Schools	
✓ Identify key non-completion indicators in scheme, award or mode of study	Investigate possibility of reporting resuming students to identify HASS as a School with good follow up mechanisms for deferred students	
✓ Draw up research agenda from proposed activities	✓ Create systems and strategies for HASS Advice Shop which will remain effective after secondment ends.	
✓ Identify student expectations during induction programmes taking appropriate action where necessary to alleviate early course/study concerns	Secure publication of articles from Advice Shop project	
✓ Review admissions policies in line with key research concerning non-completion	✓ Make suggestions for minor amendments where necessary to ease problem areas of the curriculum identified in short term project findings	
✓ Identify key risk groups of learners for early stage support	Make improvements in key areas to correct the current non-completion rates	

Review of Initiatives and Interventions Introduced in 2001/02

Student Interventions

The following interventions have all been established in the academic period under review and are direct interventions between the Advice Shop and Hass students.

Register trial

Introduced with History Award level one students. Registers were produced which all tutors completed at every contact session. Registers were then passed to the Advice Shop for monitoring. The Advice Shop followed up each student who missed two consecutive sessions. Telephone calls were made initially, with an offer of interview made to the student. All the students contacted resumed their attendance and a small proportion of students accepted the opportunity to come in and discuss their attendance pattern. A variety of issues were raised and dealt with, in one case the student was referred to the Student Finance Centre and successfully secured hardship funding.

An unforeseen outcome of the register trial was the amount of student feedback received. Students were able to point out issues of concern that they wouldn't have raised with the lecturers. This information was fed back to the Field Leader and the teaching pattern has now been modified to take student comment into account. Overall, it was felt by both the Field and the Advice Shop that the outcome of the History trial was extremely successful and it will continue for the next academic session.

Telephoning non-returners

A sample of students who had been expected to return either after a suspension of their studies, or as progressing students, who had not enrolled during enrolment week were telephoned. This resulted in approximately 20 students returning to the University who had been undecided before being contacted by the Advice Shop. Telephone calls will be made again at a similar time after 2002/03 enrolment.

Dedicated notice-board

The Advice Shop notice-board is located immediately outside A26 and is regularly changed to reflect the issues deemed current for students. For example, during enrolment the displayed notices include information about the LRC, Student Services, the Advice Shop, Student Finance Centre and so on. During the period around first assessments one-to-one or group assignment sessions are advertised as well as time management guidance. At exam time, revision sessions are offered, and details of exam/revision technique sheets are given.

Revision/exam technique sessions for friends

Rather than expecting students to come in alone, we offered the opportunity to 'bring your friends' to assessment/revision technique sessions. Although the take-up for this has been slow we will continue to offer the service.

Reflecting on Exam Technique

An invitation was extended to students who had completed exams in semester A to undertake a reflective exercise in order to build on the strengths of their techniques and to rectify any weaknesses in preparation for their semester B exams. Tutors were invited to email the Advice Shop with their general observations from marked papers and these were communicated (where relevant) to students. The take-up for this initiative was disappointing. The changes to the structure of the academic year will affect this initiative, as there will no longer be two exam periods per year. However, it is felt that such self-development is an important element of student progression and as such this initiative will continue to be offered.

Follow up from results

Due to the importance of clearing up resits, all students who had resit exams or coursework were telephoned by the Admin staff to ensure that they were aware of the importance of submitting coursework and/or attending exams. This initiative was undertaken as a result of the number of students who had been unsure of how to proceed or whether to return which became apparent from the exercise to encourage non-returners detailed above.

Plagiarism referrals

A number of plagiarism cases have been referred to the Advice Shop by the Chair of the plagiarism panel and these students have been followed up with a letter inviting them to call into the Advice Shop for some assistance with referencing their work. A number of students have accepted this offer and have substantially improved their subsequent performance in coursework.

Recording of client needs

Keeping a record of each student requiring an advice interview has offered us the opportunity to track common issues and also to raise queries which may benefit other students. An example of this is shown below:

A student came into the Advice Shop for advice about withdrawing. At her interview the student she stated that she held her tutor in high esteem and had long been an admirer of his work. The difficulty this caused was with the (appropriate) criticism he offered of her work, which she found very difficult to cope with. KF spoke to the tutor concerned and suggested that he used part of a tutorial talking about the impact of literary criticism he had received and how he dealt with it. This was deemed to be a great success and not only did the student continue, she passed with a higher than expected grade.

Although only a single example, this proves the value of tracking and sharing student queries rather than dealing with them in isolation.

Once each student had been advised and felt that the matter was closed, the Advice Shop maintained contact by ringing the student after a few weeks, or in some cases,

ringing again at the same point of the second semester when this was appropriate. For example we interviewed one student who had found it very difficult managing her time around the semester A assessment period, so we contacted her just prior to that point in semester B and she came in for some further reassurance. Following students up in this way made effective use of our services, ensuring that the students who needed help could be sure of receiving an appropriate level of support.

Mitigating circumstances assistance

In January the Advice Shop was asked to provide the clerical support to the Mitigating Circumstances Committee within the School and Carol Sanders has successfully undertaken the admin role associated with this Committee in addition to her Advice Shop role. The Advice Shop is now able to provide students with Mitigating Circumstances forms as well as give advice on the completion of the form and necessary evidence in support of a claim. The Advice Shop Manager has been designated as a School Tutor and regularly advises students concerning their mitigating circumstances claims.

It is felt that the additional service to students of collecting their mitigating circumstances forms, as well as speaking to a School Tutor, or to the Panel administrator, provides a further link in the chain of student support being offered by the Advice Shop.

Database of wd/ss/transfers

A crucial part of the role of the Advice Shop Manager has been the dissemination of the data held on withdrawing, suspending and transferring students. A database has been maintained during the academic year under review and this has allowed us to analyse patterns of withdrawal, suspension and transfer in more detail than was previously possible. This analysis has lead to a number of further interventions, and has also confirmed the peak withdrawal times for the School, allowing the Advice Shop to offer intervention and support activities to Award Tutors and Scheme Leaders.

Sharing Good Practice

With any new initiative the sharing of good practice is vital and the Advice Shop is represented at the Retention Advisors Working Group which meets regularly to discuss retention issues. Other members include Student Services, Business School, School of Electronics, Law School and School of Care Sciences. The group has now established a Retention Library - to be located in Student Services - which members of the group can access and provide items for. Additionally the group has now subscribed to the Journal of Student Retention, an international journal dealing with recruitment and retention issues in higher education.

Contact with other University Departments

A number of contacts have been built up between the Advice Shop and other University support services, including Student Services, Student Finance Centre and the Education Drop-In Centres on main campus and at Glyntaff. These contacts mean that we can

make appointments on behalf of students who need other services and this system of smooth referral is exactly what we envisaged for providing a seamless support service to Hass students. Additionally, each of the University support departments knows about the Advice Shop and will refer students to us if they are from Hass.

In a further joint initiative, details of student debtors are sent to the Advice Shop from the University Finance Department. The Advice Shop has been able to clear up a number of student exclusion queries in this way. We have also been able to ensure that a Hass student receiving advice or help from the Advice Shop does not receive a letter warning of sanctions from a different department at the same time - as has happened in the past.

Delivery of workshop

Julie Prior and Karen Fitzgibbon delivered a successful 2-hour presentation as part of the Teaching and Learning Office series of lunchtime seminars. The focus of the presentation was the differing approaches to retention between the two Schools represented (Hass and the Business School). A number of colleagues subsequently sought advice from Julie and Karen concerning student retention initiatives in their own Schools and we have provided examples of our work to a number of colleagues throughout the University.

The success of the presentation has resulted in a paper being produced for the University of Glamorgan Occasional Paper Series and it is hoped that this will be published in December 2002.

Conference attendance

KF attended the international AUA Student Recruitment and Retention Conference in February 2002. The lead presenter, Jim Black from University of North Carolina at Greensboro was very keen to hear about the Advice Shop initiative and a number of contacts were made with overseas Universities who have successfully introduced the notion of one-stop-shopping as an aid to recruitment and retention.

Proposed Initiatives for the New Academic Year 2002/03

The success of the Advice Shop has been evident in a number of ways, and all of our initiatives from 2001/02 will be continuing. However, there are several new pilot interventions that we will be offering in the new academic year and these are outlined below:

Extension of Register Trial

The trial of registers with History students proved very successful and two other Awards to be included in the trial for the new academic year, these are English and Criminology.

Contacting Non-Returners

In preparation for the new academic year 2002/03 the Advice Shop has contacted all students who, at the time of suspending their studies, indicated a September 2002 return date. 55 of the 66 who suspended indicated September 2002 as their return date. The students will receive a letter inviting them to return, giving them details of enrolment dates/times and offering them an appointment to discuss their return or to continue their suspension. Advice will also be offered about transferring awards if this is appropriate.

Students failing to enrol at the appropriate time will also be contacted in the light of the success of this approach last year.

Intervention on Non-Submission of Coursework

Teaching staff will be invited to refer students to the Advice Shop who fail to submit coursework when expected. This is to be limited to either one Award, or a small number of modules. The Advice Shop will then contact the student to offer guidance and advice as necessary. It is felt that this intervention will be a further pilot of the need for a 'guiding hand' throughout first year studies and may prevent students becoming so far behind with their studies they are unable to catch up and feel that they should withdraw or repeat the year.

'Pathway to Graduation' Programme

This new initiative will involve a small number of students (possibly from the Psychology Award) following a programme of supported activities during their first year (full details of the proposal can be found at the end of this report). The students will meet regularly with Advice Shop staff and undertake and record their activities, gradually establishing the basis of a Progress File.

The programme will be voluntary but it is hoped it will prove effective in encouraging students to develop into autonomous learners as they progress through their first year.

Analysis undertaken for this evaluation has revealed some issues concerning the number of internal transfers taking place within the School. A new leaflet will be prepared for use by students wishing to transfer between Awards. The transfer procedure will involve the Advice Shop, academic staff (as appropriate) and possibly an interview with the University Careers Service to ensure students are making informed decisions about Award choices. As has been previously mentioned, the Advice Shop will, in conjunction with Award Tutors, continue to recommend conditions which students transferring will be required to agree to. It is felt that these combined initiatives will add more rigour to the transfer system and may contribute to an improvement in the pass rate of students undertaking such transfers.

Pathway to Graduation'

This is an initiative aimed at first year students to encourage their orientation and preparedness for higher education study. Many of the students who withdraw from HaSS do so because they cannot cope with the experience of being independent learners and it is hoped that this programme will go some way towards making the transition from dependent to independent a smoother process.

What's involved?

The pathway will involve students in the following:

- Completion of a set of diagnostic tests to assess current study skills level
- A range of study skills advice/guidance materials/(optional) workshops
- Familiarity with the Education Drop-In Centre
- On going contact with the Advice Shop through a series of planned appointments
- Regular skill-building activities throughout the first year
- An introduction to the techniques associated with reflective learning

The students will have the option of whether to take part in the pathway project, and at the end of their course will receive certification of completion together with an opportunity to extend the pathway through their remaining years of study (resulting in a Progress File).

Other links will be:

- Formalise contact with progress tutor
- Familiarise students with Advice shop

What's in it for the School?

- Provide a Hass pilot for progress files at little extra resource for the school giving us a chance to test their uses – particularly across a broad spectrum of curriculum areas
- Aid the School's goal of reducing attrition
- Active/interventionist approach to supporting first year undergrads which will be comparable for performance indicator purposes – ie entry points/exit value

How will the programme be delivered?

Materials will be available via Blackboard and hard copy
Students will be invited to participate – tutors can also nominate at any time, thereby using the pathway as a positive intervention for 'key risk' students.

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Advice Shop Operation 2002/2003

Karen M Fitzgibbon   September 2003
Advice Shop Manager

Introduction

This report presents a summary of the initiatives, interventions and support services offered by the Advice Shop in its second year of operation.   The retention figures are also updated and offer the opportunity to view three years of data collection concerning retention performance by School and Award.
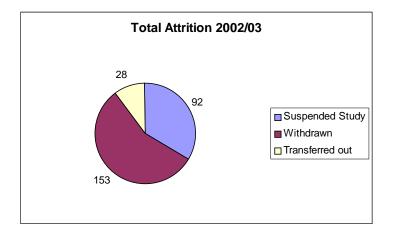
The report contains the following sections:

- Analysis of comparative data from 2000/1, 2001/2 and 2002/03
- Key attrition analysis
- Analysis of students using the Advice Shop
- Review of strategic aims of the Advice Shop
- Précis of initiatives/interventions undertaken and a review of effectiveness
- Proposed new initiatives for the next academic session 2003/04
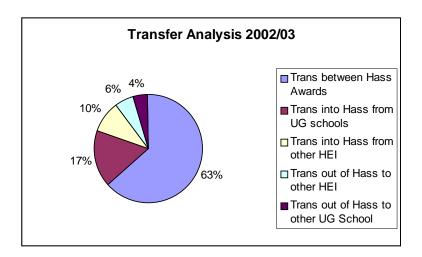
Analysis of 2002/03 Attrition Figures

The figure for students leaving Hass during 2002/03 is 273. However, 21 students have resumed after a period of suspended study, and 73 students have transferred into Hass from other UG Schools (47) or from other HEI's (26), giving a total attrition figure of 179. Expressed as a percentage of the total Hass student population this represents an **attrition rate of 3.3%**, a 1.7% reduction over the period 2001/02.
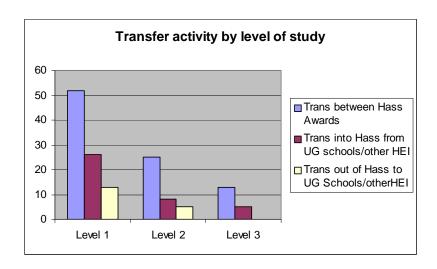
For the purposes of attrition analysis, the following graphs present a picture of the attrition activity of the total number of students (273) who left Hass during the period under review.

Total Attrition 2002/03

28

92

153

- Suspended Study
- Withdrawn
- Transferred out

The attrition figures above take account of students transferring out of Hass but the amount of internal transfer activity is worthy of further attention. In the period under review there were a total of 273 transfers, compared to 170 transfers in the period 2001/02. Further analysis reveals the pattern illustrated in the pie chart below.

Transfer Analysis 2002/03

6% 4%

10%

17%

63%

- Trans between Hass Awards
- Trans into Hass from UG schools
- Trans into Hass from other HEI
- Trans out of Hass to other HEI
- Trans out of Hass to other UG School

The picture of transfer activity by level is shown below:

Transfer activity by level of study

When attrition takes place

The University analysis of attrition has long indicated two danger periods when our attrition rate is high. These are given as November and February. However, if the total attrition activity is analysed by date, it reveals a different pattern as can be seen below.

Total Attrition Activity
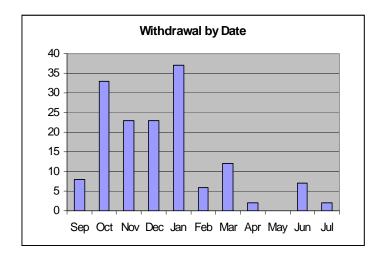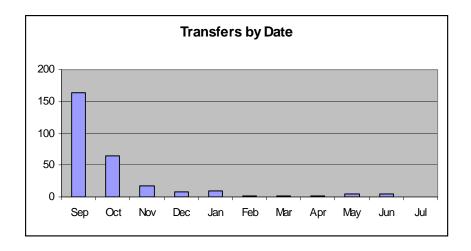
Further analysis reveals that of the 153 students withdrawing, 56% did so before the end of the first term. This indicates the importance of our 'front-loading' of information, support, help and guidance. Significantly, a further 24% of the total withdrawals took place in January. However, the overall pattern of withdrawal has not changed significantly with the abolition of the semester system. The Hass pattern is still indicating that if we can support students through their first term and their initial return after the Christmas vacation, they are likely to complete their first year of study.

In order to facilitate a greater understanding of the pattern of attrition, each of the categories has been displayed separately in the following graphs.

Withdrawal by Date
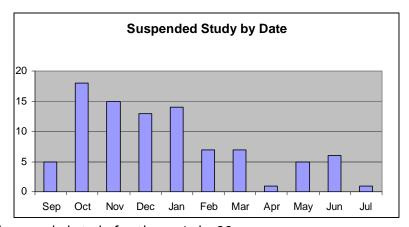
Total withdrawal for the period = 153

Transfers by Date

Total transfers for the period = 278
This graph includes **all** transfers between Hass Awards as well as those students transferring into and out of UG.

Suspended Study by Date

Total suspended study for the period = 92

In summary:
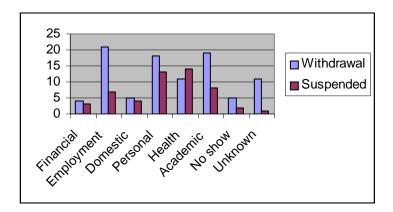
- We have reduced the School's attrition rate from 5% last year, to 3.3% this year. This represents almost a halving of the original Hass attrition figure before the Advice Shop was established.
- 80% of students withdrawing from Hass courses did so before 31 January 2002
- The number of students transferring internally is higher than in the previous academic year.

Reasons Given for Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Students withdraw for many reasons, indeed we know that for many students the picture of issues behind the final reason is extremely complex. To illustrate this, consider the following example.
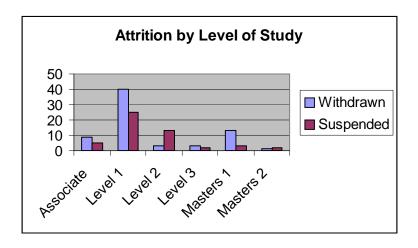
> Student A called into the Advice Shop after receiving news that her son had been diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition. As a result of this, she had been under great stress and had subsequently had to reduce her part time working hours. This meant she could no longer afford to attend University and was having to withdraw from the course. She could have ticked her reasons for withdrawal as: Financial, Personal or Health.

Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'.
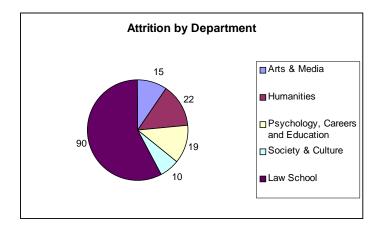
It is clear that the three leading categories of withdrawal for HaSS students are employment, personal and academic reasons. However, each of the categories includes many related issues. For example, withdrawal for employment reasons has included, 'secured full time employment', 'need to keep full time employment and can't balance everything', 'pressure from employer to work certain hours which clash with timetable' and so on.

Pattern of Attrition by Level of Study

Attrition by Level of Study

The above graph illustrates where attrition takes place during the stages of study, and it is clear that level one students remain our target group for further reductions in attrition activity.

As the new structure came into effect on 1 August 2003, I have calculated the attrition by Departments for information. The spread is as follows:

Attrition by Department

Further analysis of the Awards is given over the next few pages, together with comparative data taken from the attrition analysis of the two previous academic years.

Analysis of Comparative Data from 2000/01 to 2002/03

The tables below present the attrition picture for each of the undergraduate and postgraduate single Honours Awards within the School. Attrition rates for the previous academic years 2000/01 and 2001/02 are provided for comparison.

Undergraduate Awards

BA Art Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	27	5	1	6	22	6	28
Level 2	28					0.25	0
Level 3	13		1	1	8		
Totals	**68**	**5**	**2**	**7**	**10%**	**4.6%**	**9%**

BSc Criminology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	69	1	7	8	12	12	7
Level 2	38		1	1	3	7	3
Level 3	29					7	0
Totals	**136**	**1**	**8**	**9**	**7%**	**9%**	**5%**

BA Drama (Theatre and Media)

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 % (TMD)	2000/01 % (TMD)
Level 1	82	4			5	11	7
Level 2	42					2	0
Level 3	49						
Totals	**173**	**4**		**4**	**2%**	**5%**	**3%**

BA English Studies

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	35		1	1	3	8	6
Level 2	31						
Level 3	31						
Totals	**97**		**1**	**1**	**1%**	**3%**	**2%**

BA History

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	29	1		1	3	4	13
Level 2	21		2	2	10	6	0
Level 3	17						
Totals	**67**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4%**	**3%**	**6%**

BA Humanities

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	61	1	2	3	5	4	8
Level 2	44		2	2	4	6	2
Level 3	40					2	0
Totals	**145**	**1**	**4**	**5**	**3%**	**4%**	**2%**

BA Media Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	54	2		2	4	4	15
Level 2	44	1		1	2		
Level 3	32		1	1	3		
Totals	**130**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**3%**	**2%**	**7%**

BSc Psychology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	67	3	2	5	7	5	9
Level 2	47	1	1	2	4	5	4
Level 3	56					6	0
Totals	**170**	**4**	**3**	**7**	**4%**	**5%**	**4%**

BSc Social Sciences

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	11					10	10
Level 2	5					0	25
Level 3	8						
Totals	**24**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0%**	**5%**	**6%**

BSc Sociology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	22	1		1	4	10	6
Level 2	21					6	9
Level 3	18					25	0
Totals	**61**	**1**		**1**	**2%**	**11%**	**5%**

Other Awards

Diploma in Intensive Welsh

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	23	6		6	26	32	
Level 2	14	4		4	29	60	
Totals	**37**	**10**		**10**	**27%**	**46%**	**Unavailable**

Franchise Partner Colleges

Franchise operations have also been monitored during the period under review, with two courses showing higher than average attrition rates.

BA Humanities Bridgend

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	11	3		3	27	15	
Level 2	13	2		2	15	8	
Totals	**24**	**5**		**5**	**21%**	**12%**	**Unavailable**

Cert HE Humanities and Social Sciences Ebbw Vale

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	13	3			**23%**	**59%**	Unavailable

Postgraduate Awards

Postgraduate Awards with significant attrition rates are shown below.

MSc Education Management

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1 (Cert)	0					20	
Level 2 (Dip)	8	2		2	25		
Level 3 (Diss)	16	3		3	19	40	
Totals	**24**			**5**	**21%**	**20%**	**unavailable**

MA Education Development

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1 (Cert)	23	7		7	30	2	
Level 2 (Dip)	7						
Level 3 (Diss)							
Totals	**30**	**7**		**7**	**23%**	**4%**	**unavailable**

In summary:

- Of the 15 Awards shown above, nine show a decrease in attrition over 2001/02
- Six show an increase in attrition in comparison to 2001/02
- Higher than average attrition is recorded for the following Awards:

  - BA Art Practice (10%)
  - Diploma in Intensive Welsh (27%)
  - BA Humanities (Bridgend) (21%)
  - Cert HE Humanities (Ebbw Vale) (23%)
  - MSc Education Management (21%)
  - MA Education Development (23%)

  Further analysis will be undertaken of the Awards with higher than average attrition to isolate issues which the Advice Shop and Course Team can act upon in order to try and reduce these figures.

- Several Awards featured with high attrition rates last year are now showing much reduced attrition. These are:

  - BSc Criminology (from 9% last year to 7% this year)
  - BSc Sociology (from 11% last year to 2% this year)
  - BSc Social Sciences (from 5% last year to 0% this year)

- The spread of attrition activity over level one is therefore more even than last year with few single awards showing higher than average attrition rates. We can now focus on an overall reduction across the undergraduate awards rather than targeting interventions at specific undergraduate awards. However, key interventions such as attendance monitoring on specific awards will continue in the light of their success.

Analysis of Clients Using the Advice Shop

Approximately 2300 students have visited the Advice Shop in the period under review compared with just over 500 students in our first year of operation.

Students requiring answers to brief questions or enquiries such as staff telephone numbers, room numbers, term dates, change of address details and so on have not been formally recorded. However, we have recorded every student who has required advice via interview, using client record sheets. A total of 95 students have required interviews with either Karen Fitzgibbon or Carol Sanders. It should be noted that this figure does not represent the total number of interviews carried out however, as students often return on three or four separate occasions for further advice interviews. Several students were on a weekly visiting schedule to check progress and these were seen during each teaching week. A reasonable estimation of the total number of interviews carried out is to allow 3 interviews per student – giving a total of 285 interviews.

Students wishing to change their status of study by withdrawing, transferring or suspending their study have resulted in a further 534 interviews. In addition, 728 students have called for advice concerning mitigating circumstances claims.
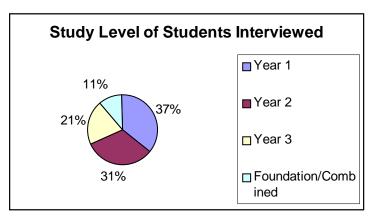
Telephone and email contact is also regularly sought – approximately 25 telephone calls and 10 emails per day are received and dealt with.

Finally, we monitored the attendance of approximately 600 students per week resulting in letters and telephone calls to approximately 30 students a week for each teaching week. The figures below do not include the register monitoring statistics.

In summary:

Advice interviews (allowing 3 per student)	285
Interviews about change of status	534
Mitigating circumstances enquiries	728
Ad hoc queries	800
Total number of physical interviews/enquiries	**2347**

Further analysis of those students interviewed reveals the following breakdown of their level of study.

Study Level of Students Interviewed

The demand for advice interviews has been surprisingly constant, with predictable peaks around exam time in both semesters. The number of casual callers has also been constant, and has continued throughout the summer period in terms of telephone contact. Callers for mitigating circumstances have mainly been around the exam period, with a small but consistent demand at other times.

Hass Advice Shop
Costs –v- Benefits

Costs:

Post funding – 1 grade 4, 1 PL
Initiatives - books for student reps £135
Accommodation – not separated from main School costs
Telephone – £165

Benefits for the School:

Each student prevented from withdrawing through intervention saves the School £3.5k per annum in funding terms. The figures below also give projected savings in terms of students with subsequent years of study remaining at the point of successful retention.

Conservative estimates of the number of students prevented from withdrawing through Advice Shop interventions are as follows:

> First year students : 40 = £140k this year, £420k ongoing
> Second year students: 17 = £59.5k this year, £119k ongoing
> Third year students: 12 = 42K
>
> Fees saved for the School this academic year: £241.5k
> Fees saved for ongoing years of study: £539k
> Total fees saved from second year of Advice Shop operation: £780.5k

These figures should be treated with caution but represent a fair reflection of the monetary value of positive retention interventions such as the Advice Shop operation.

Our reputation as a School which cares for and supports our students should not be underestimated in terms of added value, particularly in the light of much of our market being from the immediate locality.

Benefits for the student:
Confidence increases, personal satisfaction, life skills enhanced

For the University:
Improved performance against benchmarks
Rise in performance indicators
Reputation in the community enhanced as a caring HEI

Review of the Strategic Aims of the Advice Shop Project

The strategy for the Advice Shop Project has been regularly reviewed during the first and second years of operation. All of the short-term aims have been met, and a number of the medium-term goals are some way towards completion. One of the long-term aims was stated as 'Transfer knowledge across UG using the HASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice'. Other schools have now appointed retention advisors, but at present only the Business School and HaSS have dedicated full time posts.

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
✓ Gather statistics from recent cohorts to identify particular cohort issues	✓ Continue to monitor trends in UG and other institutions	✓ Use Advice Shop project as a method of improving current HASS non-completion rates
✓ Increase visibility of the pastoral support provided within the School and secondly, within the University	✓ Continue to monitor and forecast UG statistics against HEFCW performance indicators	✓ Transfer knowledge across UG using the HASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice
✓ Identify key support initiatives in University support departments and raise student awareness of these services	✓ Make student reporting of reason for non-completion (W/D, defer, transfer etc) more robust.	Demonstrate added value to the next QAA inspection concerning the HASS model of pastoral/academic care and support
✓ Identify number of deferring/transferring students and draw out key issues	Set up a system of follow-up interviews with non-completing students. **Ongoing**	✓ Promote a staff development cycle which prevents tension between elements of UG mission statement and to foster an environment where 'student friendliness' does not fall to a few
✓ Identify national trends in retention – including non-completion numbers together with retention strategies being adopted by other institutions	Measure the impact of the 2002 'Big Bang' on retention issues. **Ongoing**	
✓ Identify number of students who return after deferral	✓ Work with other UG Schools and CELL to increase the possibility of 'in-house' transfers between Schools	
✓ Identify key non-completion indicators in scheme, award or mode of study	Investigate possibility of reporting resuming students to identify HASS as a School with good follow up mechanisms for deferred students	
✓ Draw up research agenda from proposed activities	✓ Create systems and strategies for HASS Advice Shop which will remain effective after secondment ends.	
✓ Identify student expectations during induction programmes taking appropriate action where necessary to alleviate early course/study concerns	Secure publication of articles from Advice Shop project. **Ongoing**	
✓ Review admissions policies in line with key research concerning non-completion	✓ Make suggestions for minor amendments where necessary to ease problem areas of the curriculum identified in short term project findings	
✓ Identify key risk groups of learners for early stage support	✓ Make improvements in key areas to correct the current non-completion rates	

Review of Initiatives and Interventions Introduced in 2001/02

Student Interventions

The following interventions have all been established in the academic period under review and are direct interventions between the Advice Shop and Hass students.

Register trial

Introduced with History Award level one students last year, this year the trial was extended to include the Criminology and Criminal Justice Award. Registers were produced which all tutors completed at every contact session. Registers were then passed to the Advice Shop for monitoring. The Advice Shop followed up each student who missed two consecutive sessions. Telephone calls were made initially, with an offer of interview made to the student. A variety of issues were raised and dealt with including some students who needed referral to other University support departments.

In June 2003 Karen Fitzgibbon delivered a staff seminar concerning attendance and student performance based on the data gathered from the two register trials. It was felt by the Fields, Award Tutors and Advice Shop that the outcome of the History and Criminology trials were extremely successful and they will continue for the next academic session. In addition, LLB first year student attendance will be monitored.

Telephoning non-returners

A sample of students who had been expected to return either after a suspension of their studies, or as progressing students, who had not enrolled during enrolment week were telephoned. This resulted in approximately 12 students returning to the University who had been undecided before being contacted by the Advice Shop. Telephone calls will be made again at a similar time after 2003/04 enrolment.

Dedicated notice-board

The Advice Shop notice-board is regularly changed to reflect the issues deemed current for students. For example, during enrolment the displayed notices include information about the LRC, Student Services, the Advice Shop, Student Finance Centre and so on. During the period around first assessments one-to-one or group assignment sessions are advertised as well as time management guidance. At exam time, revision sessions are offered, and details of exam/revision technique sheets are given.

Revision/exam technique sessions for friends

Rather than expecting students to come in alone, we offered the opportunity to 'bring your friends' to assessment/revision technique sessions. Although the take-up for this has been slow we will continue to offer the service.

Follow up from results

Due to the importance of clearing up resits, all students who had resit exams or coursework were telephoned by the Admin staff to ensure that they were aware of the importance of submitting coursework and/or attending exams. This initiative was undertaken as a result of the number of students who had been unsure of how to proceed or whether to return which became apparent from the exercise to encourage non-returners detailed above.

'What Happens Next?' leaflet

This initiative arose from joint discussions at the Retention Advisors Working Group. The leaflet was produced to explain in clear terms what students needed to do if they did not have straight-forward results. 500 leaflets were printed and sent out to every student with resits or repeat year results in June. The leaflet dramatically reduced the volume of telephone calls to the Student Office and Student Enquiry Centre and those students who did telephone agreed that the leaflet gave them the information but that they 'wanted to talk to someone'. The reduction in telephone calls meant that those students got through to a member of staff who could advise them, resulting in a better service for our students.

Plagiarism referrals

A number of plagiarism cases have been referred to the Advice Shop by the Chair of the plagiarism panel and these students have been followed up with a letter inviting them to call into the Advice Shop for some assistance with referencing their work. A number of students have accepted this offer and have substantially improved their subsequent performance in coursework.

Recording of client needs

Keeping a record of each student requiring an advice interview has offered us the opportunity to track common issues and also to raise queries which may benefit other students with their Award tutor, or module tutor.

Once each student had been advised and felt that the matter was closed, the Advice Shop maintained contact by ringing the student after a few weeks. Following students up in this way made effective use of our services, ensuring that the students who needed help could be sure of receiving an appropriate level of support.

Mitigating circumstances

The clerical support to the Mitigating Circumstances Committee within the School and maintenance of the mitigating circumstances database is undertaken by Carol Sanders in addition to her Advice Shop role. The Advice Shop is now able to provide students with Mitigating Circumstances forms as well as give advice on the completion of the form and necessary evidence in support of a claim. The Advice Shop Manager has been designated as a School Tutor and regularly advises students concerning their mitigating circumstances claims.

It is felt that the additional service to students of collecting their mitigating circumstances forms, as well as speaking to a School Tutor, or to the Panel administrator, provides a further link in the chain of student support being offered by the Advice Shop. This may account in part for the rise in the number of Mitigating Circumstances claims this year.

Advice Shop & Student Enquiry Centre

With the move of the majority of Humanities staff to Forest Hall in February 2003, the Advice Shop secured new accommodation on the ground floor of Forest Hall, designated as the Advice Shop and Student Enquiry Centre. This has meant that students can now hand in their coursework and get advice at the same time, in one place. Several visitors from other Universities have been impressed with this facility, and we are sure that the new accommodation has further improved the level of service we are able to provide.

Database of wd/ss/transfers

A crucial part of the role of the Advice Shop Manager has been the dissemination of the data held on withdrawing, suspending and transferring students. A database has been maintained during the academic year under review and this has allowed us to analyse patterns of withdrawal, suspension and transfer in more detail than was previously possible. This analysis has lead to a number of further interventions, and has also confirmed the peak withdrawal times for the School, allowing the Advice Shop to offer intervention and support activities to Award Tutors and Scheme Leaders.

Sharing Good Practice

With any new initiative the sharing of good practice is vital and the Advice Shop is represented at the Retention Advisors Working Group which meets regularly to discuss retention issues. Other members include Student Services, Business School, School of Electronics, Law School and School of Care Sciences.

Karen Fitzgibbon and Julie Prior delivered a conference paper to the Business and Management (BEST) LTSN in March 2003 and this has resulted in a BEST LTSN retention symposium to be held at Glamorgan in November 2003.

Contact with other University Departments

A number of contacts have been built up between the Advice Shop and other University support services, including Student Services, Student Finance Centre and the Education Drop-In Centres on main campus and at Glyntaff. These contacts mean that we can make appointments on behalf of students who need other services and this system of smooth referral is exactly what we envisaged for providing a seamless support service to Hass students. Additionally, each of the University support departments knows about the Advice Shop and will refer students to us if they are from Hass.

In a further joint initiative, details of student debtors are sent to the Advice Shop from the University Finance Department. The Advice Shop has been able to clear up a number of student exclusion queries in this way. We have also been able to ensure that

a Hass student receiving advice or help from the Advice Shop does not receive a letter warning of sanctions from a different department at the same time - as has happened in the past.

Senior School Tutor

The Advice Shop Manager has now taken on the role of Senior School Tutor and co-ordinates the School Tutor timetable. Discussions with School Tutors have resulted in some tutors becoming more focussed on particular groups of students, for example, Combined Studies, mature students and so on.

Pathway to Graduation

This short programme designed to orientate new students to the experience of higher education was launched with Criminology and Psychology students. It proved to be very successful with 22 taking part in the programme. Of those who completed the programme 14 passed the year 1 suspended their studies, 5 have carried modules into their second year and 1 student is repeating the year.

The Pathway to Graduation programme was considered a success by both Award tutors and will be offered again this year.

Proposed Initiatives for the Academic Year 2003/04

The success of the Advice Shop has been evident in a number of ways, and all of our initiatives from 2002/03 will be continuing. However, there are several new pilot interventions that we will be offering in the new academic year and these are outlined below:

Contacting Non-Returners

In preparation for the new academic year 2003/04 the Advice Shop has contacted all students who, at the time of suspending their studies, indicated a September 2003 return date. The students will receive a letter inviting them to return, giving them details of enrolment dates/times and offering them an appointment to discuss their return or to continue their suspension. Advice will also be offered about transferring awards if this is appropriate.

Students failing to enrol at the appropriate time will also be contacted in the light of the success of this approach last year.

Intervention on Non-Submission of Coursework

Teaching staff will be invited to refer students to the Advice Shop who fail to submit coursework when expected. This is to be limited to either one Award, or a small number of modules. The Advice Shop will then contact the student to offer guidance and advice as necessary. It is felt that this intervention will be a further pilot of the need for a 'guiding hand' throughout first year studies and may prevent students becoming so far behind with their studies they are unable to catch up and feel that they should withdraw or repeat the year.

'Pathway to Graduation' Programme

This initiative will involve a small number of first year students from the Psychology and Criminology Awards following a programme of supported activities designed to support their orientation into University. Art Practice students will also be invited to participate in the initiative in an attempt to reduce the attrition rate of this particular Award. The students will meet regularly with Advice Shop staff and undertake and record their activities, gradually establishing the basis of a Progress File.

Student Services and Hass joint initiative

Student Services are to launch an initiative to support students who have struggled through their first year and into their second year. The course will help them identify their behaviour patterns which have been successful and remedy those which have held them back. The course is only being offered to HaSS students for its trial and we are hopeful that this initiative help to improve pass rates and reduce the number of resits at the end of the second year.

Internal Transfer Between Awards

Analysis undertaken for this evaluation has revealed some issues concerning the number of internal transfers taking place within the School. A new leaflet will be prepared for use by students wishing to transfer between Awards. The transfer procedure will involve the Advice Shop, academic staff (as appropriate) and possibly an interview with the University Careers Service to ensure students are making informed decisions about Award choices. As has been previously mentioned, the Advice Shop will, in conjunction with Award Tutors, continue to recommend conditions which students transferring will be required to agree to. It is felt that these combined initiatives will add more rigour to the transfer system and may contribute to an improvement in the pass rate of students undertaking such transfers.

Notes for Mitigating Circumstances claims

To support students with their Mitigating Circumstances applications we will be producing some notes for completion of the claim form. It is hoped that this will alleviate the number of spurious or poorly evidenced claims which are dealt with every year.

In addition to the above initiatives, the Advice Shop will work closely with the Law School to try implement specific, targeted interventions to reduce the Law School attrition rates.

School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences

Advice Shop Operation 2003/2004

Karen M Fitzgibbon   February 2005
Advice Shop Manager

Introduction

This report presents a summary of the initiatives, interventions and support services offered by the Advice Shop in its third year of operation.   The retention figures are also updated and offer the opportunity to view four years of data collection concerning retention performance by Award. Attrition information is also provided under the Departmental structure.

The report contains the following sections:

- Analysis of comparative data from 2000/1, 2001/2, 2002/03 and 2003/04
- Key attrition analysis
- Analysis of students using the Advice Shop
- Review of strategic aims of the Advice Shop
- Précis of initiatives/interventions undertaken and a review of effectiveness
- Proposed new initiatives for the next academic session 2004/05
- Challenges ahead
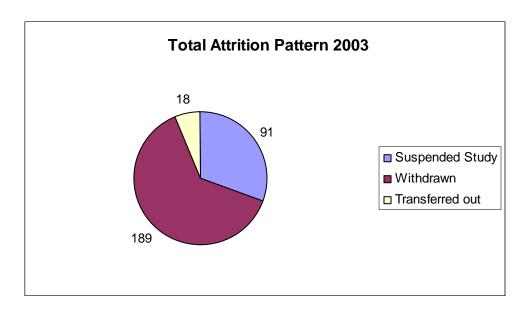
Analysis of 2003/04 Attrition Figures

The figure for students leaving HLaSS during 2003/04 is 298. However, 5 students have resumed after an extended period of suspended study, 40 have resumed after one year of suspended study and 75 students have transferred into HLaSS from other UG Schools (42) or from other HEI's (33), giving a total attrition figure of 178. Expressed as a percentage of the total HLaSS student population this represents an **attrition rate of 2.5%**.
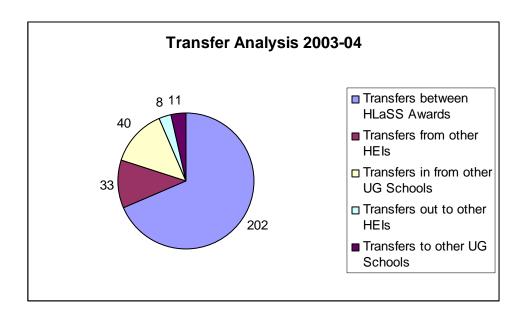
The reduction in the attrition rate over the period of existence of the Advice Shop is as follows:

Attrition rate on establishment of Advice Shop	6%
Attrition rate at end of first year (2001/02)	5%
Attrition rate at end of second year (2002/03)	3.3%
Attrition rate at end of third year (2003/04)	2.5%
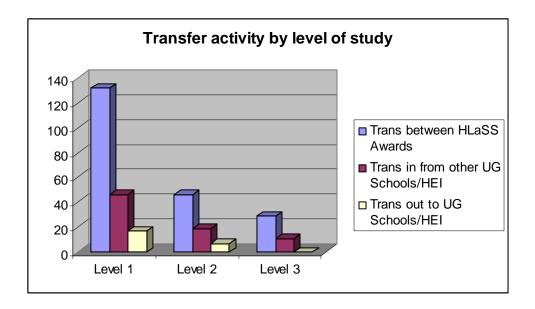
For the purposes of attrition analysis, the following graphs present a picture of the attrition activity of the total number of students (298) who left HLaSS during the period under review.

Total Attrition Pattern 2003

The attrition figures above take account of students transferring out of HLaSS either to other UG Schools or other HEIs. However the amount of internal transfer activity is worthy of further attention. In the period under review there were a total of 294 transfers, compared to 273 in the period 2002/03 and 170 transfers in the period 2001/02 . Further analysis reveals the pattern illustrated in the pie chart below. The rise in transfers between Awards is partly attributable to students who would previously have withdrawn being offered alternative study opportunities. However the amount of transfer activity at level 1 remains high and is worthy of further investigation to discover the causes. Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that a number of students are getting entry to the School and then transferring to their first choice Award.
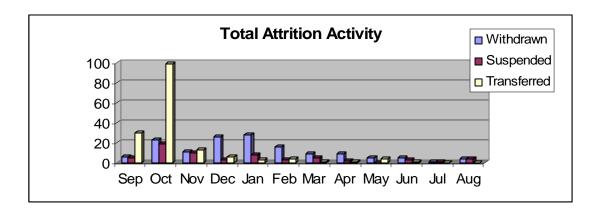
Transfer Analysis 2003-04
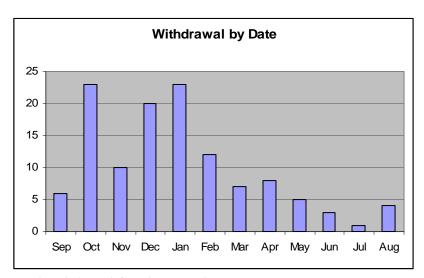
Legend:
- Transfers between HLaSS Awards
- Transfers from other HEIs
- Transfers in from other UG Schools
- Transfers out to other HEIs
- Transfers to other UG Schools

Values: 8, 11, 40, 33, 202

The picture of transfer activity by level is shown below:

Transfer activity by level of study

Legend:
- Trans between HLaSS Awards
- Trans in from other UG Schools/HEI
- Trans out to UG Schools/HEI

Categories: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3

When attrition takes place

The University analysis of attrition has long indicated two danger periods when our attrition rate is high. These are given as November and February. However, if the total attrition activity is analysed by date, it reveals a different pattern as can be seen below.

Total Attrition Activity

Further analysis reveals that of the 189 students withdrawing, 47% did so before the end of the first term. This indicates the importance of our 'front-loading' of information, support, help and guidance. Significantly, a further 16% of the total withdrawals took place in January. The HLaSS pattern continues to indicate that if we can support students through their first term and their initial return after the Christmas vacation, they are likely to complete their first year of study.

In order to facilitate a greater understanding of the pattern of attrition, each of the categories has been displayed separately in the following graphs.

Withdrawal by Date

Total withdrawal for the period = 189

Transfers by Date.

This graph includes **all** transfers between HLaSS Awards as well as those students transferring into and out of UG.

Suspended Study by Date

Total suspended study for the period = 91

In summary:
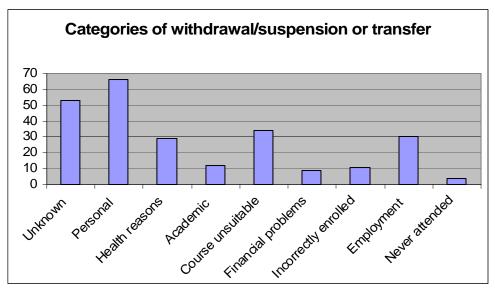
- We have reduced the School's attrition rate from 3.3% last year, to 2.5% this year. This represents a significant lowering of the original HLaSS attrition figure before the Advice Shop was established.
- 63% of students withdrawing from HLaSS courses did so before 31 January 2004
- The number of students transferring internally is higher than in the previous academic year.

Reasons Given for Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Students withdraw for many reasons, indeed we know that for many students the picture of issues behind the final reason is extremely complex. To illustrate this, consider the following example.

Student A called into the Advice Shop after receiving some lower than expected grades in the first set of assessments in her final year. She felt that her performance was not going to improve and that there was little point continuing. She was under pressure from her family to take up an offer of employment because of her extreme debt caused partly by withdrawal of funding from her LEA. Despite our advice and offer of support, she chose to withdraw. She could have ticked her reasons for withdrawal as: Financial, Personal, Academic or Employment

Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'.

Categories of withdrawal/suspension or transfer

It is clear that the three leading categories of withdrawal for HLaSS students are employment, personal and academic reasons. However, each of the categories includes many related issues. For example, withdrawal for employment reasons has included, 'secured full time employment', 'need to keep full time employment and can't balance everything', 'pressure from employer to work certain hours which clash with timetable' and so on.

Pattern of Attrition by Level of Study

Attrition by Level of Study

The above graph illustrates where attrition takes place during the stages of study, and it is clear that level one students remain our target group for further reductions in attrition activity.

Attrition by Department is shown below for information.

Departmental Attrition

Further analysis of the Awards is given over the next few pages, together with comparative data taken from the attrition analysis of the three previous academic years.

Analysis of Comparative Data from 2000/01 to 2003/04

The tables below present the attrition picture for the main undergraduate single Honours Awards within the School. Attrition rates for the previous academic years 2000/01, 01/02 and 02/03 are provided for comparison.   The data for student numbers in 03/04 has been drawn from QP and Discoverer, whereas the withdrawn/suspended data is drawn from Advice Shop records. The withdrawal rate includes any transfers out of the School from the Award in question.

Undergraduate Awards

BA Art Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	35	3	1	4	11	22	6	28
Level 2	25	2	1	3	12		0.25	0
Level 3	24					8		
Totals	**84**	**5**	**2**	**7**	**8%**	**10%**	**4.6%**	**9%**

BA Drama (Theatre and Media)

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 % (TMD)	2000/01 % (TMD)
Level 1	50	6	4	10	20	5	11	7
Level 2	62						2	0
Level 3	2							
Totals	**114**	**6**	**4**	**10**	**9%**	**2%**	**5%**	**3%**

BA English Studies

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	30	3	3	6	20	3	8	6
Level 2	41	2	2	4	10			
Level 3	29		1	1	3			
Totals	**100**	**5**	**6**	**11**	**11%**	**1%**	**3%**	**2%**

BA History

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	41	5	1	6	15	3	4	13
Level 2	33		1	1	3	10	6	0
Level 3	19	1		1	5			
Totals	**93**	**6**	**2**	**8**	**9%**	**4%**	**3%**	**6%**

BA Humanities

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	25	3	3	6	24	5	4	8
Level 2	36		3	3	8	4	6	2
Level 3	26		2	2	8		2	0
Totals	**87**	**3**	**8**	**11**	**13%**	**3%**	**4%**	**2%**

BA Media Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	63	2		2	3	4	4	15
Level 2	55	1		1	2	2		
Level 3	72					3		
Totals	**190**	**3**		**3**	**1.5%**	**3%**	**2%**	**7%**

BSc Criminology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	90	9	3	12	13	12	12	7
Level 2	46	1	1	2	4	3	7	3
Level 3	37						7	0
Totals	**173**	**10**	**4**	**14**	**8%**	**7%**	**9%**	**5%**

BSc Psychology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	77	8	1	9	11	7	5	9
Level 2	54	1	1	2	4	4	5	4
Level 3	43	2	3	5	12		6	0
Totals	**174**	**11**	**5**	**16**	**9%**	**4%**	**5%**	**4%**

BSc Social Sciences

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	24	3	3	6	25		10	10
Level 2	20						0	25
Level 3	6							
Totals	**50**	**3**	**3**	**6**	**12%**	**0%**	**5%**	**6%**

BSc Sociology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	2003/04 %	2002/03 %	2001/02 %	2000/01 %
Level 1	22	2		2	9	4	10	6
Level 2	21						6	9
Level 3	18	1		1	5.5		25	0
Totals	**61**	**3**		**3**	**5%**	**2%**	**11%**	**5%**

Analysis of Clients Using the Advice Shop

Approximately 3100 student visits have been made to the Advice Shop in the period under review compared with just over 500 student visits in our first year of operation.

Students requiring answers to brief questions or enquiries such as staff telephone numbers, room numbers, term dates, change of address details and so on have not been formally recorded, but an estimate of numbers of ad hoc queries is included below. However, we have recorded every student who has required advice via interview, using client record sheets. A total of 82 students have required interviews with either Karen Fitzgibbon or Carol Sanders. It should be noted that this figure does not represent the total number of interviews carried out however, as students often return on three or four separate occasions for further advice interviews. Several students were on a weekly visiting schedule to check progress and these were seen during each teaching week. A reasonable estimation of the total number of interviews carried out is to allow 3 interviews per student – giving a total of 246 interviews.

Students wishing to change their status of study by withdrawing, transferring or suspending their study have resulted in a further 1064 interviews. In addition, 537 students have called for advice concerning mitigating circumstances claims.
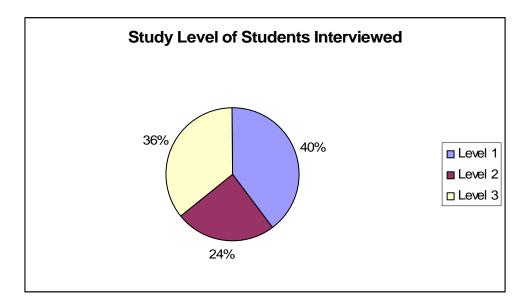
Telephone and email contact is also regularly sought – approximately 25 telephone calls and 10 emails per day are received and dealt with.

Finally, we monitored the attendance of approximately 1000 students per week resulting in letters and telephone calls to approximately 30 students a week for each teaching week. The figures below do not include the register monitoring statistics.

In summary:

Advice interviews (allowing 3 per student)	246
Interviews about change of status	1064
Mitigating circumstances enquiries	537
Ad hoc queries	1250
Total number of physical interviews/enquiries	**3097**

Further analysis of those students interviewed reveals the following breakdown of their level of study.

Study Level of Students Interviewed

36%

40%

24%

Level 1
Level 2
Level 3

The demand for advice interviews has been surprisingly constant, with predictable peaks around exam time.   The number of level three interviewees is not particularly surprising given the often complex nature of their advice requirements. The number of casual callers has also been constant and these are predominantly level one students. The demand for advice has continued throughout the summer period in terms of telephone contact. Requests for mitigating circumstances have remained fairly constant during the year, but there have been some noticeable peaks at common assessment times, for example, at the end of term.

HLaSS Advice Shop
Costs –v- Benefits

Costs:

Post funding – 1 grade 4, 1 PL
Initiatives - books for student reps £184.11
Accommodation – not separated from main School costs
Telephone – £180

Benefits for the School:

Each student prevented from withdrawing through intervention saves the School £3.5k per annum in funding terms. The figures below also give projected savings in terms of students with subsequent years of study remaining at the point of successful retention.

Conservative estimates of the number of students prevented from withdrawing through Advice Shop interventions are as follows:

> First year students : 65 = £227.5k this year, £682.5k ongoing
> Second year students: 23 = £80.5k this year, £161k ongoing
> Third year students: 15 = 52.5K
>
> Fees saved for the School this academic year: £360.5k
> Fees saved for ongoing years of study: £843.5k

These figures should be treated with caution but represent a fair reflection of the monetary value of positive retention interventions such as the Advice Shop operation.

Our reputation as a School which cares for and supports our students should not be underestimated in terms of added value, particularly in the light of much of our market being from the immediate locality.

Benefits for the student:
Confidence increases, personal satisfaction, life skills enhanced

For the University:
Improved performance against benchmarks
Rise in performance indicators
Reputation in the community enhanced as a caring HEI

It is possible to calculate the ongoing fees saved during the three years of Advice Shop operation by comparing current attrition levels with those at the commencement of the project. If the School attrition rate had remained at 6% during the last three years, the revenue lost to the School would have amounted to 5,839,750 whereas the actual revenue lost to the School through the reduction of the attrition rate over the last three years is 3,041,500 - a saving of 2,798,250, but still a significant loss to the School.

Review of the Strategic Aims of the Advice Shop Project

The strategy for the Advice Shop Project has been regularly reviewed during the last three years of operation. All of the short-term aims have been met, together with the majority of the medium-term goals. One of the long-term aims was stated as 'Transfer knowledge across UG using the HLASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice'. Other schools have now appointed retention advisors, but at present only the Business School and HLaSS have dedicated full time posts.

During the year 2003/04 several other UK HEIs have approached us for advice about retention issues. Glamorgan is gaining a reputation for its work on student retention and several good contacts have been made.

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
✓ Gather statistics from recent cohorts to identify particular cohort issues	✓ Continue to monitor trends in UG and other institutions	✓ Use Advice Shop project as a method of improving current HLASS non-completion rates
✓ Increase visibility of the pastoral support provided within the School and secondly, within the University	✓ Continue to monitor and forecast UG statistics against HEFCW performance indicators	✓ Transfer knowledge across UG using the HLASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice
✓ Identify key support initiatives in University support departments and raise student awareness of these services	✓ Make student reporting of reason for non-completion (W/D, defer, transfer etc) more robust.	Demonstrate added value to the next QAA inspection concerning the HLASS model of pastoral/academic care and support
✓ Identify number of deferring/transferring students and draw out key issues	Set up a system of follow-up interviews with non-completing students. **Ongoing**	✓ Promote a staff development cycle which prevents tension between elements of UG mission statement and to foster an environment where 'student friendliness' does not fall to a few
✓ Identify national trends in retention – including non-completion numbers together with retention strategies being adopted by other institutions	✓ Measure the impact of the 2002 'Big Bang' on retention issues.	
✓ Identify number of students who return after deferral	✓ Work with other UG Schools and CELL to increase the possibility of 'in-house' transfers between Schools	
✓ Identify key non-completion indicators in scheme, award or mode of study	✓ Investigate possibility of reporting resuming students to identify HLASS as a School with good follow up mechanisms for deferred students	
✓ Draw up research agenda from proposed activities	✓ Create systems and strategies for HLASS Advice Shop which will remain effective after secondment ends.	
✓ Identify student expectations during induction programmes taking appropriate action where necessary to alleviate early course/study concerns	Secure publication of articles from Advice Shop project. **Ongoing**	
✓ Review admissions policies in line with key research concerning non-completion	✓ Make suggestions for minor amendments where necessary to ease problem areas of the curriculum identified in short term project findings	
✓ Identify key risk groups of learners for early stage support	✓ Make improvements in key areas to correct the current non-completion rates	

Review of Initiatives and Interventions

Student Interventions

The following interventions have all been established in the academic period under review and are direct interventions between the Advice Shop and HLaSS students.

Register trial

An intervention which has been running with BA History level one students since 2001/02, and with BSc Criminology and Criminal Justice level one students was extended during 2003/04 to include LLB level one students. Registers were produced which all tutors completed at every contact session. Registers were then passed to the Advice Shop for monitoring, or to a member of the Admin team in Glyntaff in the case of Law students. The Advice Shop followed up each student who missed two consecutive sessions. Telephone calls were made initially, with an offer of interview made to the student. A variety of issues were raised and dealt with including some students who needed referral to other University support departments.

Tutors from a number of Awards have sought help in chasing up non-attenders and a series of ad hoc follow ups have been made for Drama, English and History at levels one, two and three.

The register intervention continues to be amongst our most efficient and effective methods of ensuring that silence is as much a trigger for support as an overt request for help. As well as generating information concerning attendance, a number of other offshoots come from learning more about the student population in HLaSS and these in turn will be fed into the forthcoming Quinquennial Review.

Telephoning non-returners

A sample of students who had been expected to return either after a suspension of their studies, or as progressing students, who had not enrolled during enrolment week were telephoned. This resulted in approximately 12 students returning to the University who had been undecided before being contacted by the Advice Shop. Telephone calls will be made again at a similar time after 2004/05 enrolment.

Contacting 'Suspended Study' students

The Advice Shop contacted all students who, at the time of suspending their studies, indicated a September 2004 return date. The students received a letter inviting them to return, giving them details of enrolment dates/times and offering them an appointment to discuss their return or to continue their suspension. This resulted in exactly half of the students returning from their suspended study (32 out of 64) a very high continuation rate for this particular group of students.

Dedicated notice-board

The Advice Shop notice-board is regularly changed to reflect the issues deemed current for students. For example, during enrolment the displayed notices include information about the LRC, Student Services, the Advice Shop, Student Finance Centre and so on. During the period around first assessments one-to-one or group assignment sessions are advertised as well as time management guidance. At exam time, revision sessions are offered, and details of exam/revision technique sheets are given.

Revision/exam technique sessions for friends

Rather than expecting students to come in alone, we offered the opportunity to 'bring your friends' to assessment/revision technique sessions. Although the take-up for this has been slow we will continue to offer the service.

'What Happens Next?' leaflet

This initiative arose from joint discussions at the Retention Advisors Working Group in 2002/03. The leaflet was produced to explain in clear terms what students needed to do if they did not have straight-forward results. Leaflets were printed and sent out to every student with resits or repeat year results in June. The leaflet dramatically reduced the volume of telephone calls to the Student Offices and Student Enquiry Centre and those students who did telephone agreed that the leaflet gave them the information but that they 'wanted to talk to someone'. The reduction in telephone calls meant that those students got through to a member of staff who could advise them, resulting in a better service for our students.

'What Happens Now?' leaflet

Designed during 2003/04, again in conjunction with the Retention Advisors Working Group, this leaflet is sent to all repeat year students. It details exactly what they will need to do, and gives academic as well as financial advice and guidance.

Plagiarism referrals

A number of plagiarism cases have been referred to the Advice Shop by the Chair of the plagiarism panel and these students have been followed up with a letter inviting them to call into the Advice Shop for some assistance with referencing their work. A number of students have accepted this offer and have substantially improved their subsequent performance in coursework.

Recording of client needs

Keeping a record of each student requiring an advice interview has offered us the opportunity to track common issues and also to raise queries which may benefit other students with their Award tutor, or module tutor.

Once each student had been advised and felt that the matter was closed, the Advice Shop maintained contact by ringing the student after a few weeks. Following students up in this way made effective use of our services, ensuring that the students who needed help could be sure of receiving an appropriate level of support.

Mitigating circumstances

The clerical support to the Mitigating Circumstances Committee within the School and maintenance of the mitigating circumstances database is undertaken by Carol Sanders in addition to her Advice Shop role. The Advice Shop is now able to provide students with Mitigating Circumstances forms as well as give advice on the completion of the form and necessary evidence in support of a claim.

It is felt that the additional service to students of collecting their mitigating circumstances forms, as well as speaking to a School Tutor, or to the Panel administrator, provides a further link in the chain of student support being offered by the Advice Shop.

Database of wd/ss/transfers

A crucial part of the role of the Advice Shop Manager has been the dissemination of the data held on withdrawing, suspending and transferring students. A database has been maintained during the academic year under review and this has allowed us to analyse patterns of withdrawal, suspension and transfer in more detail than was previously possible. This analysis has lead to a number of further interventions, and has also confirmed the peak withdrawal times for the School, allowing the Advice Shop to offer intervention and support activities to Award Tutors and Scheme Leaders.

Sharing Good Practice

The sharing of good practice concerning retention initiatives is vital and the Advice Shop is represented at the Retention Advisors Working Group which meets regularly to discuss retention issues. Other members include Student Services, Business School, School of Electronics, Law School and School of Care Sciences.

Contact with other University Departments

A number of contacts have been built up between the Advice Shop and other University support services, including Student Services, Student Finance Centre and the Education Drop-In Centres on main campus and at Glyntaff. These contacts mean that we can make appointments on behalf of students who need other services and this system of smooth referral is exactly what we envisaged for providing a seamless support service to HLaSS students. Additionally, each of the University support departments knows about the Advice Shop and will refer students to us if they are from HLaSS.

In a further joint initiative, details of student debtors are sent to the Advice Shop from the University Finance Department. The Advice Shop has been able to clear up a number of student exclusion queries in this way. We have also been able to ensure that a HLaSS student receiving advice or help from the Advice Shop does not receive a letter warning of sanctions from a different department at the same time - as has happened in the past.

Senior School Tutor

The Advice Shop Manager has now taken on the role of Senior School Tutor and co-ordinates the School Tutor timetable. Discussions with School Tutors have resulted in some tutors becoming more focussed on particular groups of students, for example, Combined Studies, mature students and so on.

'Self Development: Moving Forward' joint initiative between HLaSS and Student Services

This initiative was designed to support students who struggled through their first year and into their second year. The course aims to help them identify their successful behaviour patterns and remedy those which have held them back. The course was offered to all HLaSS second year students who had resits or repeat modules at the June Award Boards. Ten students took part and completed the six sessions and all rated the course highly.

A small grant from the Learning & Teaching Office has been awarded to run the initiative again during 2004/05.

Proposed Initiatives for the Academic Year 2004/05

The success of the Advice Shop has been evident in a number of ways, and all of our initiatives from 2003/04 will be continuing. However, there are several new pilot interventions that we will be offering in the new academic year and these are outlined below:

Intervention on Non-Submission of Coursework

Teaching staff will be invited to refer students to the Advice Shop who fail to submit coursework when expected. This is to be limited to either one Award, or a small number of modules. The Advice Shop will then contact the student to offer guidance and advice as necessary. It is felt that this intervention will be a further pilot of the need for a 'guiding hand' throughout first year studies and may prevent students becoming so far behind with their studies they are unable to catch up and feel that they should withdraw or repeat the year.

'Pathway to Graduation' Programme

This initiative will involve a small number of first year students from the Psychology and Criminology Awards following a programme of supported activities designed to support their orientation into University. Art Practice students will also be invited to participate in the initiative in an attempt to reduce the attrition rate of this particular Award. The students will meet regularly with Advice Shop staff and undertake and record their activities, gradually establishing the basis of a Progress File.

Internal Transfer Between Awards

Analysis undertaken for this evaluation has revealed some issues concerning the number of internal transfers taking place within the School. A new leaflet will be prepared for use by students wishing to transfer between Awards. The transfer procedure will involve the Advice Shop, academic staff (as appropriate) and possibly an interview with the University Careers Service to ensure students are making informed decisions about Award choices. As has been previously mentioned, the Advice Shop will, in conjunction with Award Tutors, continue to recommend conditions which students transferring will be required to agree to. It is felt that these combined initiatives will add more rigour to the transfer system and may contribute to an improvement in the pass rate of students undertaking such transfers.

Additional staff

The appointment of a .5 post at Glyntaff will increase the service offered to Law Students. Targetted interventions including attendance monitoring will be taking effect in 2004/05.

Updated strategy

During the next academic year we will be reviewing the strategy for the Advice Shop to take account of the School Plan, Teaching & Learning Strategy and the University Retention Strategy.

School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences

Advice Shop Operation 2004/2005

Karen Fitzgibbon   November 2005
Advice Shop Manager

Introduction

This report presents a summary of the initiatives, interventions and support services offered by the Advice Shop in 2004/05 together with four years of retention data gathered over the period of the Advice Shop initiative.

The report contains the following sections:

- Analysis of comparative data from 2000/1, 2001/2, 2002/03 and 2003/04
- Key attrition analysis
- Analysis of students using the Advice Shop
- Review of strategic aims of the Advice Shop
- Précis of initiatives/interventions undertaken and a review of effectiveness
- Proposed new initiatives for the next academic session 2005/06

Analysis of 2004/05 Attrition Figures
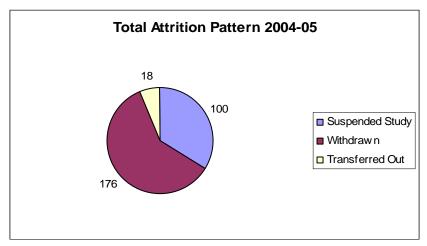
The figure for students leaving HLaSS during 2004/05 is 294. However, 33 students have resumed after one year of suspended study and 72 students have transferred into HLaSS either from other UG Schools (40) or from other HEI's (32), giving a total attrition figure of 189. Expressed as a percentage of the total HLaSS student population this represents an **attrition rate of 3.3%**, a 0.8% rise on last year's figure.

This is the first time that a rise in the School attrition rate has been reported since the Advice Shop initiative began and is worthy of further explanation. It is to be expected that some natural variation will exist between cohorts, however, a large increase in attrition occurred in the Law School. A contributory factor to this increase may have been the acute administrative staff shortage in the Law School, which impacted significantly on the responsibilities of the .5 Advice Shop post there. This, coupled with concerns about the entry level of the 04/05 LLB cohort may go some way to explaining the rise. It is disappointing, however small the increase to our overall School figures, to see a rise in attrition and it is hoped that with the successful recruitment and retention of administrative staff, the Law School attrition rate will begin to fall once more.

The changes in the attrition rate over the period of existence of the Advice Shop are as follows:
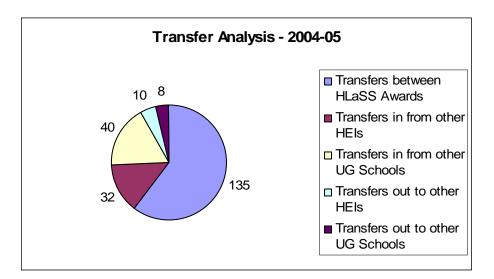
Academic Year	HLaSS Attrition rate
2000/01 – before Advice Shop commenced	6%
2001/02	5%
2002/03	3.3%
2003/04	2.5%
2004/05	3.3%

For the purposes of attrition analysis, the following graphs present a picture of the attrition activity of the total number of students (293) who left HLaSS during the 04/05 academic year.
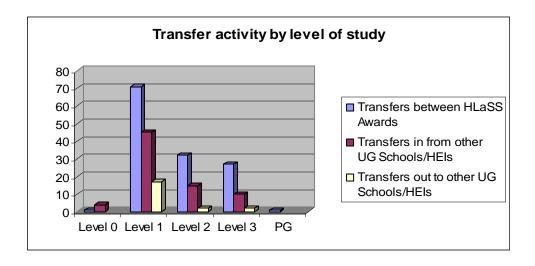
Total Attrition Pattern 2004-05

The attrition figures above take account of students transferring out of HLaSS either to other UG Schools or other HEIs. However, the amount of transfer activity between Awards within HLaSS is worthy of further attention. In the period under review there were a total of 225 transfers, compared to 294 in 2003/04, 273 in the period 2002/03 and 170 transfers in the period 2001/02.

Further analysis reveals the pattern illustrated in the pie chart below. The number of transfers between Awards is partly attributable to students being offered alternative study opportunities who may previously have withdrawn, a successful intervention which has helped reduce the School attrition rate. A small number of students are required to transfer after enrolment due to their 'course instance' not being available at enrolment. Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that a further group of students in the transfer category are gaining entry to an Award and then transferring to their first choice Award which they were previously unable to join due to entry requirements. Other students in the transfer group include those who were unaware of major/minor or joint options before enrolling. Whilst the majority of transfer students are largely catered for within the HLaSS suite of Awards, one of the significant categories of student withdrawal is given as 'course unsuitable'. It is therefore considered important that the Advice Shop project team and the Scheme and Award tutors work together to identify ways of reducing this particular group of at risk students.
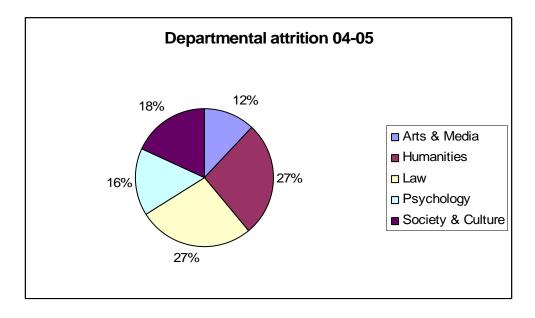
The picture of transfer activity by level is shown below and reinforces the large number of students who are transferring after entry to the School in their first year of study.

Transfer activity by level of study
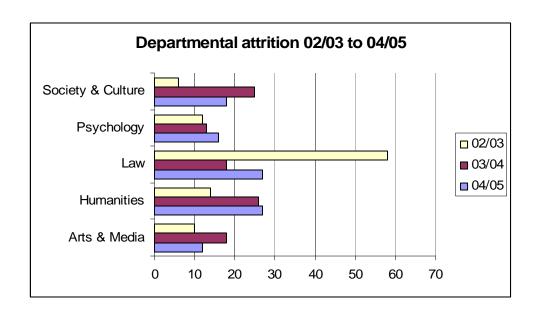
It is interesting to note from tracking transfer students that those who transfer into HLaSS from other Schools within the University, have a better pass and progression rate (67% passed the year of study in which they transferred) than those who transfer from HLaSS into other Schools within the University (40% passed the year of study in which they transferred).

Attrition by Department and Award

Departmental attrition is show below.   The figures indicate the proportion of withdrawn, suspended study or transferred students from each Department.

Departmental attrition 04-05

For the three years in which the Departments have been established, the picture of attrition is as follows:

Departmental attrition 02/03 to 04/05

Society & Culture
Psychology
Law
Humanities
Arts & Media

Legend: 02/03, 03/04, 04/05

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Analysis of Comparative Data from 2000/01 to 2004/05

The tables below present the attrition picture for the main undergraduate single Honours Awards within the School. The attrition pattern for these Awards demonstrates the variability of attrition over the four years of Advice Shop operation. Whilst overall we continue to make advances in reducing School attrition, it is clear that cohort variations and other extrinsic factors can also impact upon retention.

Undergraduate Awards

BA Art Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	31	2	1	3	10	11	22	6	28
Level 2	36					12		0.25	0
Level 3	40		1	1	2.5		8		
Totals	**107**	**2**	**2**	**4**	**4%**	**8%**	**10%**	**4.6%**	**9%**

BA Drama (Theatre and Media)

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	68	4	2	6	9	20	5	11	7
Level 2	48							2	0
Level 3	121		1	1	1				
Totals	**237**	**4**	**3**	**7**	**3%**	**9%**	**2%**	**5%**	**3%**

BA English Studies

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	25	4	1	5	20	20	3	8	6
Level 2	30					10			
Level 3	62	1	2	3	5	3			
Totals	**117**	**5**	**3**	**8**	**7%**	**11%**	**1%**	**3%**	**2%**

BA History

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	38	3	4	7	18	15	3	4	13
Level 2	44		1	1	2	3	10	6	0
Level 3	60		1	1	2	5			
Totals	**142**	**3**	**6**	**10**	**7%**	**9%**	**4%**	**3%**	**6%**

BA Humanities

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	89	1		1	1	24	5	4	8
Level 2	32	1		1	3	8	4	6	2
Level 3	58	1	1	2	3	8		2	0
Totals	**179**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**2%**	**13%**	**3%**	**4%**	**2%**

BA Media Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	20	2		2	10	3	4	4	15
Level 2	56					2	2		
Level 3	95	2		2	2	3			
Totals	**171**	**4**		**4**	**2%**	**1.5%**	**3%**	**2%**	**7%**

BSc Criminology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	73	8	4	12	16	13	12	12	7
Level 2	63	1	3	4	6	4	3	7	3
Level 3	88		1	1	1			7	0
Totals	**224**	**9**	**8**	**17**	**8%**	**8%**	**7%**	**9%**	**5%**

BSc Psychology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	65	2	4	6	9	11	7	5	9
Level 2	63	1	5	6	10	4	4	5	4
Level 3	96					12		6	0
Totals	**224**	**3**	**9**	**12**	**5%**	**9%**	**4%**	**5%**	**4%**

BSc Social Sciences
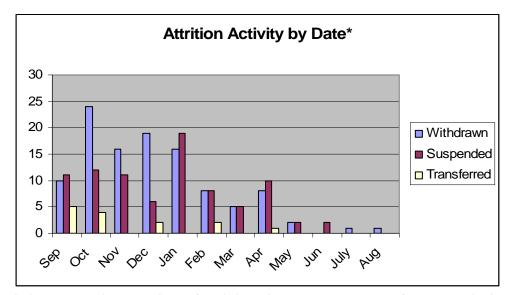
Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	21	1		1	5	25		10	10
Level 2	20							0	25
Level 3	42		1	1	2				
Totals	**83**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**2%**	**12%**	**0%**	**5%**	**6%**

BSc Sociology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	29	5	1	6	21	9	4	10	6
Level 2	25							6	9
Level 3	41		1	1	2	5.5		25	0
Totals	**95**	**5**	**2**	**7**	**7%**	**5%**	**2%**	**11%**	**5%**

When attrition takes place
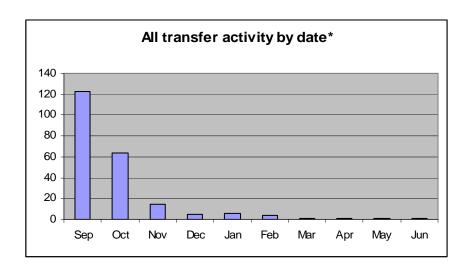
The University analysis of attrition has often indicated two danger periods when our institutional attrition rate is high these being after the Christmas vacation and during the exam period in May. However, if the total HLaSS attrition activity is analysed by date, it reveals a different pattern as can be seen below.

Attrition Activity by Date*
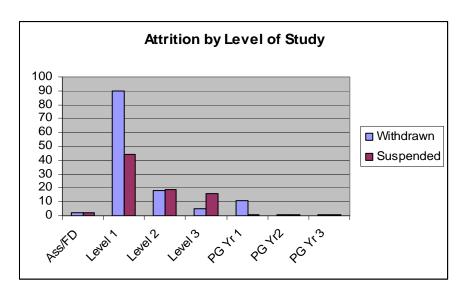
* excludes Law students as date of withdrawal, suspension or transfer not available

Further analysis reveals that of the 210 students withdrawing, suspending or transferring out of the School or University, for whom we have a firm date, 120 (57%) did so before the end of the first term. This indicates the importance of our 'front-loading' of information, support, help and guidance. Significantly, a further 16% of the total withdrawals took place in January. The HLaSS pattern continues to indicate that if we can support students through their first term and their initial return after the Christmas vacation, they are likely to complete their first year of study.

The amount of transfer activity, which includes internal transfers between HLaSS awards, and transfers into and out of HLaSS from other UG Schools or other HEIs still represents a high volume of activity for the Advice Shop. The graph below illustrates the amount of transfer activity by date but excludes Law students where firm dates of transfer were not available.

All transfer activity by date*

Pattern of Attrition by Level of Study

Attrition by Level of Study

The above graph illustrates where attrition takes place during the stages of study, and it is clear that level one students remain our target group for further reductions in attrition activity.

In summary:
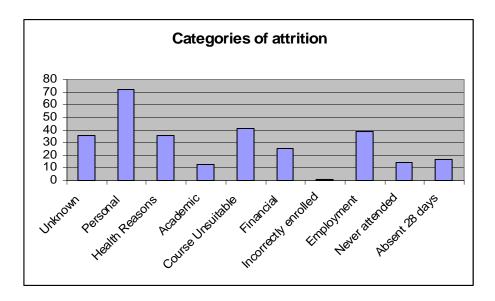
- The attrition rate has increased this year for the first time since the Advice Shop operation began.
- Our primary target continues to be level 1 students in the first term of study.
- The withdrawal group citing 'course unsuitable' requires further investigation to identify possible interventions.

Reasons Given for Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Students withdraw for many reasons; indeed we know that for many students the picture of issues behind the final reason is extremely complex. To illustrate this, consider the following example.

Student A called into the Advice Shop after receiving some lower than expected grades in the first set of assessments in her final year. She felt that her performance was not going to improve and that there was little point continuing. She was under pressure from her family to take up an offer of employment because of her extreme debt caused partly by withdrawal of funding from her LEA. Despite our advice and offer of support, she chose to withdraw. She could have ticked her reasons for withdrawal as: Financial, Personal, Academic or Employment

Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'.

It is clear that the three leading categories of withdrawal for HLaSS students are employment, personal and course unsuitability. However, each of the categories includes many related issues. For example, withdrawal for employment reasons includes, 'secured full time employment', 'need to keep full time employment and can't balance everything', 'pressure from employer to work certain hours which clash with timetable' and so on.

The following table illustrates the categories of attrition over the four years of the Advice Shop project, again reinforcing the major categories for HLaSS as personal, course unsuitable and employment. The rise in the number of 'unknown' data in 03/04 is due to the reasons for internal transfers not being adequately recorded - this has now been corrected.

Categories of attrition 01/02 to 04/05

Over the period some of the categories used by the University have changed (Domestic used to be a category, but this is now included in Personal), and we have also recognised two categories in HLaSS as being significant - incorrect enrolments and absent for 28 days. Incorrect enrolments were mainly recorded during the first year of Quercus Plus when several students were required to transfer after enrolment because their course instance was unavailable at enrolment. In most cases this meant a simple transfer between HLaSS awards, however there were a few cases where a student was incorrectly enrolled as a HLaSS student and their subsequent transfer took them out of HLaSS, thereby adding to our School attrition rate. 'Absent 28 days' refers to those students who were withdrawn by their Award/Scheme Leader because of continued absence despite attempts to contact them and encourage them back to the course. The majority of these are from the Law School.

Analysis of Clients Using the Advice Shop

Approximately 3400 student visits have been made to the Advice Shop in 04/05, demonstrating a consistent rise in demand over the period of the project as shown below.

Client demand 01/02 - 04/05

Students requiring answers to brief questions or enquiries such as staff telephone numbers, room numbers, term dates, change of address details and so on have not been formally recorded, but an estimate of numbers of ad hoc queries is included. Every student who has required advice via interview has been recorded using client information sheets. A total of 96 students have required interviews with either Karen Fitzgibbon or Carol Sanders during 04/05. It should be noted that this figure does not represent the total number of interviews carried out however, as students often return on three or four separate occasions for further advice interviews. Several students were on a weekly visiting schedule to check progress and these were seen during each teaching week. A reasonable estimation of the total number of interviews carried out is to allow 3 interviews per student – giving a total of 288 interviews.

Students wishing to change their status of study by withdrawing, transferring or suspending their study have resulted in a further 888 interviews. In addition, approximately 600 students have taken advice about submitting mitigating circumstances claims, resulting in 576 claims being made.
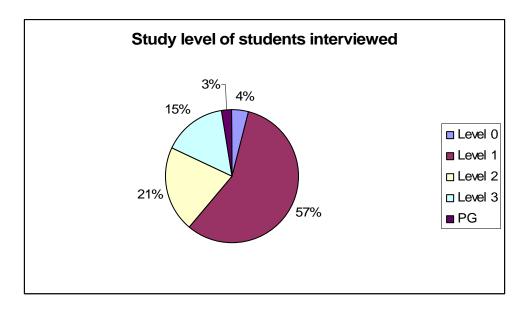
Telephone and email contact is also regularly sought – approximately 25 telephone calls and 10 emails per day are received and dealt with and these are not accounted in the figures given below.

Finally, we monitored the attendance of approximately 1000 students per week resulting in letters and telephone calls to approximately 30 students a week for each teaching week. The figures below do not include the register monitoring statistics.

Total demand:

Advice interviews (allowing 3 per student)	288
Interviews about change of status	888
Mitigating circumstances enquiries	600
Ad hoc queries	1600
Total number of physical interviews/enquiries	**3376**

Further analysis of those students interviewed reveals the following breakdown of their level of study.

Study level of students interviewed

3%
4%
15%
21%
57%

Level 0
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
PG

The demand for advice interviews has been surprisingly constant, with predictable peaks around exam time. The number of level three interviewees is not particularly surprising given the often complex nature of their advice requirements. The number of casual callers has also been constant and these are predominantly level one students. The demand for advice has continued throughout the summer period in terms of telephone contact. Requests for mitigating circumstances have remained fairly constant during the year, but there have been some noticeable peaks at common assessment times, for example, at the end of term.

HLaSS Advice Shop
Costs –v- Benefits

Costs:

Post funding – 1 grade 4, 1 PL
Initiatives - books for student reps £170.61
Accommodation – not separated from main School costs
Telephone – £200

Benefits for the School:

Each student prevented from withdrawing through intervention saves the School £3876[1] per annum in fees and funding. The figures below also give projected savings in terms of students with subsequent years of study remaining at the point of successful retention. Conservative estimates of the number of students prevented from withdrawing through Advice Shop interventions are as follows:

> First year students : 72 = £279,072 this year, £558,144 subsequent years of study
> Second year students: 31 = £120,156 this year, £120,156 subsequent year of study
> Third year students: 11 = 42,636
>
> Fees saved for the School this academic year: £441,864
> Fees saved for ongoing years of study: £678,300

These figures should be treated with caution but represent a fair reflection of the monetary value of positive retention interventions such as the Advice Shop operation. Our reputation as a School which cares for and supports our students should not be underestimated in terms of added value, particularly in the light of much of our market being from the immediate locality.

Benefits for the student:
Confidence increases, personal satisfaction, life skills enhanced

For the University:
Improved performance against benchmarks, rise in performance indicators, and reputation in the community enhanced as a caring HEI

It is possible to calculate the ongoing funding & fees saved during the four years of Advice Shop operation by comparing current attrition levels with those at the commencement of the project. If the School attrition rate had remained at 6% during the last four years, and assuming that half of those lost would be first year students, the revenue lost to the School would have amounted to £7,390,150 over the period whereas the actual revenue lost to the School through the reduction of the attrition rate over the last four years is £3,894,220 - a 'saving' of £3,495,930.

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[1] Figure calculated by averaging the funding/fees across the 3 ASCs for Humanities, Social Sciences and Art and Design

Review of the Strategic Aims of the Advice Shop Project

The strategy for the Advice Shop Project has been regularly reviewed during the last four years of operation. All of the short-term aims have been met, together with the majority of the medium-term goals. One of the long-term aims was stated as 'Transfer knowledge across UG using the HLASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice'. It is therefore very pleasing to see that each of the new Faculties will be establishing Advice Shops over the next academic year.

The strategy will be the focus of further development work over the next term and will be updated to reflect the changing nature of the University as we move to a Faculty structure and introduce a new fee charging regime.

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
✓ Gather statistics from recent cohorts to identify particular cohort issues	✓ Continue to monitor trends in UG and other institutions	✓ Use Advice Shop project as a method of improving current HLASS non-completion rates
✓ Increase visibility of the pastoral support provided within the School and secondly, within the University	✓ Continue to monitor and forecast UG statistics against HEFCW performance indicators	✓ Transfer knowledge across UG using the HLASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice
✓ Identify key support initiatives in University support departments and raise student awareness of these services	✓ Make student reporting of reason for non-completion (W/D, defer, transfer etc) more robust.	Demonstrate added value to the next QAA inspection concerning the HLASS model of pastoral/academic care and support
✓ Identify number of deferring/transferring students and draw out key issues	Set up a system of follow-up interviews with non-completing students. **Ongoing**	✓ Promote a staff development cycle which prevents tension between elements of UG mission statement and to foster an environment where 'student friendliness' does not fall to a few
✓ Identify national trends in retention – including non-completion numbers together with retention strategies being adopted by other institutions	✓ Measure the impact of the 2002 'Big Bang' on retention issues.	
✓ Identify number of students who return after deferral	✓ Work with other UG Schools and CELL to increase the possibility of 'in-house' transfers between Schools	
✓ Identify key non-completion indicators in scheme, award or mode of study	✓ Investigate possibility of reporting resuming students to identify HLASS as a School with good follow up mechanisms for deferred students	
✓ Draw up research agenda from proposed activities	✓ Create systems and strategies for HLASS Advice Shop which will remain effective after secondment ends.	
✓ Identify student expectations during induction programmes taking appropriate action where necessary to alleviate early course/study concerns	Secure publication of articles from Advice Shop project. **Ongoing**	
✓ Review admissions policies in line with key research concerning non-completion	✓ Make suggestions for minor amendments where necessary to ease problem areas of the curriculum identified in short term project findings	
✓ Identify key risk groups of learners for early stage support	✓ Make improvements in key areas to correct the current non-completion rates	

Review of Initiatives and Interventions

Student Interventions

The following interventions have all been established in the academic period under review and are direct interventions between the Advice Shop and HLaSS students.

Register trial

An intervention which has been running with BA History level one students since 2001/02, and with BSc Criminology and Criminal Justice level one students was extended during 2003/04 to include LLB level one students. Registers were produced which all tutors completed at every contact session. Registers were then passed to the Advice Shop for monitoring, or to a member of the Admin team in Glyntaff in the case of Law students. The Advice Shop followed up each student who missed two consecutive sessions. Telephone calls were made initially, with an offer of interview made to the student. A variety of issues were raised and dealt with including some students who needed referral to other University support departments.

Tutors from a number of Awards have sought help in chasing up non-attenders and a series of ad hoc follow ups have been made for Drama, English and History at levels one, two and three.

The register intervention continues to be amongst our most efficient and effective methods of ensuring that silence is as much a trigger for support as an overt request for help. As well as generating information concerning attendance, a number of other offshoots come from learning more about the student population in HLaSS and these in turn will be fed into the forthcoming Quinquennial Review.

During 2004/05 we submitted a bid for Learning and Teaching Office money to conduct a small trial of an electronic attendance monitoring system using a level one Psychology module. Whilst the bid was successful, it also attracted attention from Directorate and we were asked to upscale trial to include approximately 800 first year students. Work on the project commenced and it is hoped that in 2005/06 the School will have the opportunity to successfully pilot the equipment. Evaluation of the project may ultimately lead the University towards monitoring all first year students on campus.

Telephoning non-returners

A sample of students who had been expected to return either after a suspension of their studies, or as progressing students, who had not enrolled during enrolment week were telephoned. This resulted in 11 students returning to the University who had been undecided before being contacted by the Advice Shop. Telephone calls will be made again at a similar time after 2005/06 enrolment.

Contacting 'Suspended Study' students

The Advice Shop contacted all students who, at the time of suspending their studies, indicated a September 2005 return date. The students received a letter inviting them to return, giving them details of enrolment dates/times and offering them an appointment to discuss their return or to continue their suspension. This resulted in exactly half of the students returning from their suspended study (31 out of 62 on campus suspended study students) a very high continuation rate for this particular group of students.

Dedicated notice-board

The Advice Shop notice-board is regularly changed to reflect the issues deemed current for students. For example, during enrolment the displayed notices include information about the LRC, Student Services, the Advice Shop, Student Finance Centre and so on. During the period around first assessments one-to-one or group assignment sessions are advertised as well as time management guidance. At exam time, revision sessions are offered, and details of exam/revision technique sheets are given.

Revision/exam technique sessions for friends

Rather than expecting students to come in alone, we offered the opportunity to 'bring your friends' to assessment/revision technique sessions. Although the take-up for this has been slow we will continue to offer the service.

'What Happens Next?' leaflet

This initiative arose from joint discussions at the Retention Advisors Working Group in 2002/03. The leaflet was produced to explain in clear terms what students needed to do if they did not have straight-forward results. Leaflets were printed and sent out to every student with resits or repeat year results in June. The leaflet dramatically reduced the volume of telephone calls to the Student Offices and Student Enquiry Centre and those students who did telephone agreed that the leaflet gave them the information but that they 'wanted to talk to someone'. The reduction in telephone calls meant that those students got through to a member of staff who could advise them, resulting in a better service for our students.

'What Happens Now?' leaflet

Designed during 2003/04, again in conjunction with the Retention Advisors Working Group, this leaflet is sent to all repeat year students. It details exactly what they will need to do, and gives academic as well as financial advice and guidance.

Letter from Careers Service

In addition to the above leaflets, the Advice Shop asked the Careers Service to send out a letter explaining their services to students who had been fail

discontinued at either the June or September Award Boards. It was felt that such contact from the Careers advisors was appropriate for these students. It is hoped that figures concerning take up of the service will be available in the future.

Plagiarism referrals

A number of plagiarism cases have been referred to the Advice Shop by the Chair of the plagiarism panel and these students have been followed up with a letter inviting them to call into the Advice Shop for some assistance with referencing their work. A number of students have accepted this offer and have subsequently improved their performance in coursework.

Recording of client needs

Keeping a record of each student requiring an advice interview has offered us the opportunity to track common issues and also to raise queries which may benefit other students with their Award tutor, or module tutor.

Once each student had been advised and felt that the matter was closed, the Advice Shop maintained contact by ringing the student after a few weeks. Following students up in this way made effective use of our services, ensuring that the students who needed help could be sure of receiving an appropriate level of support.

Mitigating circumstances

The clerical support to the Mitigating Circumstances Committee within the School and maintenance of the mitigating circumstances database is undertaken by Carol Sanders in addition to her Advice Shop role. The Advice Shop is now able to provide students with Mitigating Circumstances forms as well as give advice on the completion of the form and necessary evidence in support of a claim.

It is felt that the additional service to students of collecting their mitigating circumstances forms, as well as speaking to a School Tutor, or to the Panel administrator, provides a further link in the chain of student support being offered by the Advice Shop.

Database of wd/ss/transfers

A crucial part of the role of the Advice Shop Manager has been the dissemination of the data held on withdrawing, suspending and transferring students. A database has been maintained during the academic year under review and this has allowed us to analyse patterns of withdrawal, suspension and transfer in more detail than was previously possible. This analysis has lead to a number of further interventions, and has also

confirmed the peak withdrawal times for the School, allowing the Advice Shop to offer intervention and support activities to Award Tutors and Scheme Leaders.

Sharing Good Practice

The sharing of good practice concerning retention initiatives is vital and the Advice Shop is represented at the Retention Advisors Working Group which meets regularly to discuss retention issues. Other members include Student Services, Business School, School of Electronics, Law School and School of Care Sciences.

Contact with other University Departments

A number of contacts have been built up between the Advice Shop and other University support services, including Student Services, Student Finance Centre and the Education Drop-In Centres on main campus and at Glyntaff. These contacts mean that we can make appointments on behalf of students who need other services and this system of smooth referral is exactly what we envisaged for providing a seamless support service to HLaSS students. Additionally, each of the University support departments knows about the Advice Shop and will refer students to us if they are from HLaSS.

In a further joint initiative, details of student debtors are sent to the Advice Shop from the University Finance Department. The Advice Shop has been able to clear up a number of student exclusion queries in this way. We have also been able to ensure that a HLaSS student receiving advice or help from the Advice Shop does not receive a letter warning of sanctions from a different department at the same time - as has happened in the past.

Senior School Tutor

The Advice Shop Manager has now taken on the role of Senior School Tutor and co-ordinates the School Tutor timetable. Discussions with School Tutors have resulted in some tutors becoming more focussed on particular groups of students, for example, Combined Studies, mature students and so on.

Additional staff

The appointment of a .5 post at Glyntaff increased the service offered to Law Students. Targeted interventions including attendance monitoring were operated as well as a holistic approach to mitigating circumstances.

In addition, Directorate funded a further post for the Advice Shop to support our work on attendance monitoring. The post holder will be part of the team working on the electronic attendance monitoring project.

Proposed Initiatives for the Academic Year 2005/06

The success of the Advice Shop has been evident in a number of ways, and all of our initiatives from 2004/05 will be continuing. However, there are several new interventions that we will be offering in the new academic year and these are outlined below:

'Self Development: Moving Forward' joint initiative between HLaSS and Student Services

This initiative was designed to support students who struggled through their first year and into their second year. The course aims to help them identify their successful behaviour patterns and remedy those which have held them back. The course ran successfully in 2003/04 however, staff illness meant that Student Services were unable to support it in 2004/05. However, it will now run again in 2005/06 with a new member of staff from Student Services leading the sessions.

Student Support Tracking

A successful bid to LTO from CeLL will result in the Advice Shop being part of a unique tracking project in 2005/06. Several of the support services including the various departments within Student Services, Education Drop in Centre, and the Advice Shop will maintain a student tracking system that will effectively monitor referrals. In the past, although the Advice Shop has sent clients to Student Services for financial advice we have not been able to identify whether the student actually went in all cases. Tracking the support offered to students will provide us with the opportunity to see who is using the services and how effective our referral system is.

Electronic attendance

This large project will involve all the Advice Shop staff in a significant trial of the electronic monitoring of attendance. The project will run for the academic year and will involve five awards - Psychology, Sociology, Criminology, History and English Literature. Four awards will use the electronic equipment, and one award (Sociology) will use the paper based registers trialled by the Advice Shop over the past four years. Student and staff feedback will be gathered as part of the project evaluation.

Parent to parent

Money from the Learning and Teaching Office will enable us to trial a project involving parents of successful students being in touch with parents of new students.

FINAL

School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences

Advice Shop Operation 2005/2006

Karen Fitzgibbon   October 2006
Advice Shop Manager

Introduction

This report presents a summary of the initiatives, interventions and support services offered by the Advice Shop in 2005/06 together with five years of retention data gathered over the period of the Advice Shop initiative. This is the last report for the School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences as the next academic year sees the arrival of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The report contains the following sections:

- Analysis of comparative data from 2000/1, 2001/2, 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2005/06
- Key attrition analysis
- Analysis of students using the Advice Shop
- Review of strategic aims of the Advice Shop
- Précis of initiatives/interventions undertaken and a review of effectiveness
- Proposed new initiatives for the next academic session 2006/07
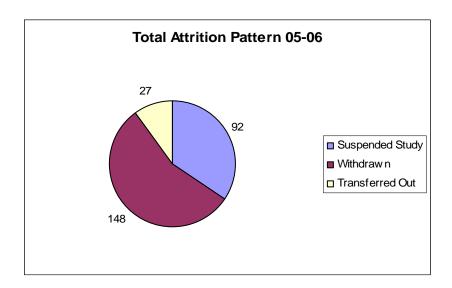
Analysis of 2005/06 Attrition Figures

The figure for students leaving HLaSS during 2005/06 is 267. However, 34 students have resumed after one year of suspended study and 44 students have transferred into HLaSS either from other UG Schools (23) or from other HEI's (21), giving a total attrition figure of 189. Expressed as a percentage of the total HLaSS student population this represents an in year **attrition rate of 3.6%**.

The changes in the attrition rate over the period of existence of the Advice Shop are as follows:

Academic Year	HLaSS Attrition rate
2000/01 – before Advice Shop commenced	6%
2001/02	5%
2002/03	3.3%
2003/04	2.5%
2004/05	3.3%
2005/06	3.6%
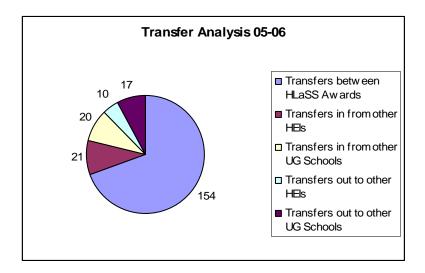
For the purposes of attrition analysis, the following graphs present a picture of the attrition activity of the total number of students (267) who left HLaSS during the 05/06 academic year.
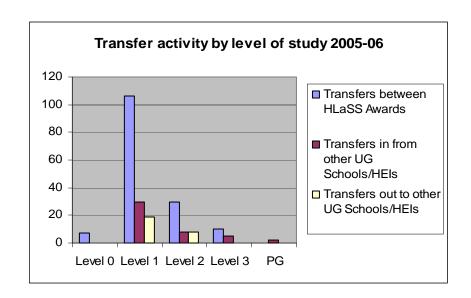
Total Attrition Pattern 05-06

The attrition figures above take account of students transferring out of HLaSS either to other UG Schools or other HEIs. However, the amount of transfer activity between Awards within HLaSS is worthy of further attention. In the period under review there were a total of 222 transfers, compared to 225 in 2004/05, 294 in 2003/04, 273 in the period 2002/03 and 170 transfers in the period 2001/02.

Further analysis reveals the pattern illustrated in the pie chart below. The number of transfers between Awards is partly attributable to students who may previously have withdrawn being offered alternative study opportunities, a successful intervention which has helped reduce

the School attrition rate.   A small number of students are required to transfer after enrolment due to their 'course instance' not being available at enrolment.   Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that a further group of students in the transfer category are gaining entry to an Award and then transferring to their first choice Award which they were previously unable to join due to entry requirements. Other students in the transfer group include those who were unaware of major/minor or joint options before enrolling. Whilst the majority of transfer students are largely catered for within the HLaSS suite of Awards, one of the significant categories of student withdrawal is given as 'course unsuitable'. It is therefore considered important that the Advice Shop project team and the Scheme and Award tutors work together to identify ways of reducing this particular issue.

Transfer Analysis 05-06

- Transfers between HLaSS Awards
- Transfers in from other HEIs
- Transfers in from other UG Schools
- Transfers out to other HEIs
- Transfers out to other UG Schools

Values shown: 17, 10, 20, 21, 154

The picture of transfer activity by level is shown below and reinforces the large number of students who are transferring after entry to the School in their first year of study.

Transfer activity by level of study 2005-06

- Transfers between HLaSS Awards
- Transfers in from other UG Schools/HEIs
- Transfers out to other UG Schools/HEIs

Levels: Level 0, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, PG

It is interesting to note from tracking transfer students that those who transfer into HLaSS from other Schools within the University, have a better pass and progression rate (67% passed the year of study in which they transferred) than those who transfer from HLaSS into other Schools within the University (40% passed the year of study in which they transferred). Figures are for students transferring in the academic year 04/05.

Attrition by Department and Award

Departmental attrition is show below.   The figures indicate the proportion of withdrawn, suspended study or transferred students from each Department, and those transferring into the Departments from other UG Schools or other HEIs, but do not include the movements of students transferring between awards within the School.

Departmental attrition pattern including those transferring into the Departments

22% 24%

20%

10% 24%

- Arts & Media
- Humanites
- Law
- Psychology & Ed
- Society & Culture

For the four years in which the Departments have been established, the picture of attrition is as follows:

Departmental attrition 02/03 - 05/06

Analysis of Comparative Data from 2000/01 to 2005/06

The tables below present the attrition picture for the main undergraduate single honours awards within the School. The attrition pattern for these awards demonstrates the variability of attrition over the five years of Advice Shop operation. Whilst overall we continue to make advances in reducing School attrition, it is clear that cohort variations and other extrinsic factors can also impact upon retention.

Undergraduate Awards

BA Art Practice

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	29	4	3	7	24	10	11	22	6	28
Level 2	24	0	1	1	4		12		0.25	0
Level 3	31	0	0	0	0	2.5		8		
Totals	**84**	**4**	**4**	**8**	10%	**4%**	**8%**	**10%**	**4.60%**	**9%**

BA Drama (Theatre and Media)

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	61	2	1	3	5	9	20	5	11	7
Level 2	51	1	2	3	6				2	0
Level 3	39				0	1				
Totals	**151**	**3**	**3**	**6**	4%	**3%**	**9%**	**2%**	**5%**	**3%**

BA English Studies

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	26	3	2	5	19	20	20	3	8	6
Level 2	28		1	1	4		10			
Level 3	23		2	2	9	5	3			
Totals	**77**	**3**	**5**	**8**	10%	**7%**	**11%**	**1%**	**3%**	**2%**

BA History

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	32	8		8	25	18	15	3	4	13
Level 2	44		2	2	5	2	3	10	6	0
Level 3	42	2	1	3	7	2	5			
Totals	**118**	**10**	**3**	**13**	11%	**7%**	**9%**	**4%**	**3%**	**6%**

BA Humanities

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	18	1		1	6	1	24	5	4	8
Level 2	14	1		1	7	3	8	4	6	2
Level 3	20				0	3	8		2	0
Totals	**52**	**2**		**2**	4%	**2%**	**13%**	**3%**	**4%**	**2%**

BSc Criminology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	61	12	2	14	23	16	13	12	12	7
Level 2	57	1	1	2	4	6	4	3	7	3
Level 3	56		2	2	4	1			7	0
Totals	**174**	**13**	**5**	**18**	10%	**8%**	**8%**	**7%**	**9%**	**5%**

BSc Psychology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	97	5	8	13	13	9	11	7	5	9
Level 2	63	2	4	6	10	10	4	4	5	4
Level 3	60		1	1	2		12		6	0
Totals	**220**	**7**	**13**	**20**	9%	**5%**	**9%**	**4%**	**5%**	**4%**

BSc Social Sciences
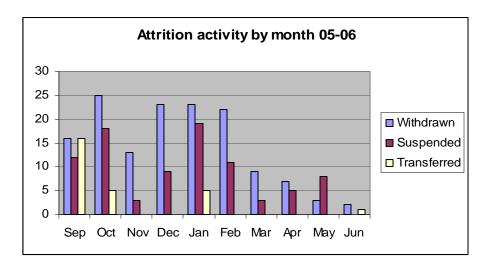
Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	14	2	1	3	21	5	25		10	10
Level 2	15		1	1	7				0	25
Level 3	14		1	1	7	2				
Totals	**43**	**2**	**3**	**5**	12%	**2%**	**12%**	**0%**	**5%**	**6%**

BSc Sociology

Student Numbers		Withdrawn	Suspended	Total Attrition	05/06 %	04/05 %	03/04 %	02/03 %	01/02 %	00/01 %
Level 1	19	2		2	11	21	9	4	10	6
Level 2	26				0					6	9
Level 3	23				0	2	5.5		25	0
Totals	**68**	**2**		**2**	3%	**7%**	**5%**	**2%**	**11%**	**5%**

When attrition takes place

The University analysis of attrition has often indicated two critical periods when our institutional attrition rate is high these being after the Christmas vacation and during the exam period in May. However, if the total HLaSS attrition activity is analysed by date, it reveals a different pattern as can be seen below.
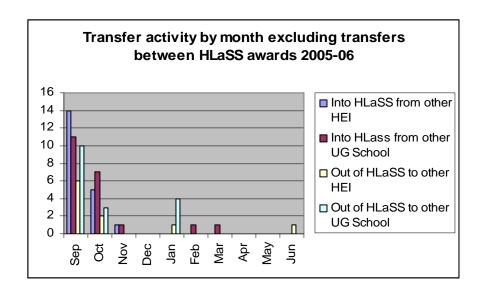
Further analysis reveals that of the 267 students withdrawing, suspending or transferring out of the School or University, 140 (52%) did so before the end of the first term. This indicates the importance of our 'front-loading' of information, support, help and guidance. Significantly, almost 18% of the total withdrawals took place in January. The HLaSS pattern continues to indicate that if we can support students through their first term and their initial return after the Christmas vacation, the majority are likely to complete their first year of study. However, the spike for withdrawal in February goes against all other years of withdrawal data and is worthy of further comment. Six of the 22 students withdrawing in February were withdrawn as a result of the attendance monitoring project. These students had been absent for a long period of time and despite many attempts to contact them had clearly dropped out of their studies. If these six students are removed from the February figures, the pattern becomes very similar to our usual trend.
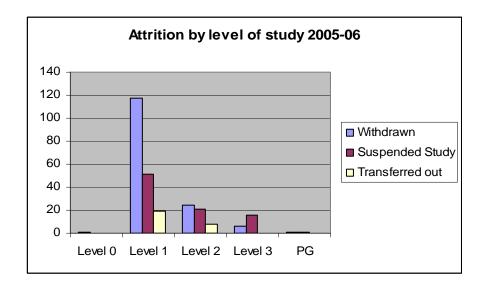
The amount of transfer activity, which includes internal transfers between HLaSS awards, and transfers into and out of HLaSS from other UG Schools or other HEIs, still represents a high volume of activity for the Advice Shop. The graph below illustrates the amount of transfer activity by date.

All transfer activity by month 2005-06
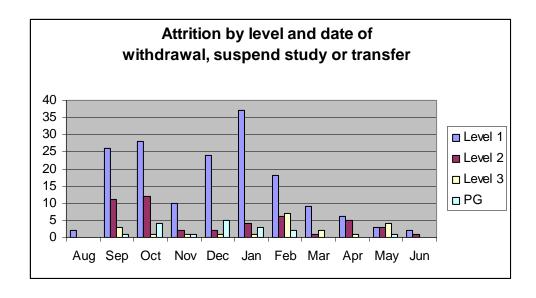
The high volume of transfers between HLaSS awards masks the pattern of transfers into and out of the School from other UG Schools or other HEIs. For interest, the figure below shows these movements.

Transfer activity by month excluding transfers between HLaSS awards 2005-06

Pattern of Attrition by Level of Study

Attrition by level of study 2005-06

The above graph illustrates where attrition takes place during the stages of study, and it is clear that level one students remain our target group for further reductions in attrition activity.

Attrition by level and date of withdrawal, suspend study or transfer

Reasons Given for Withdrawal/Suspension of Study
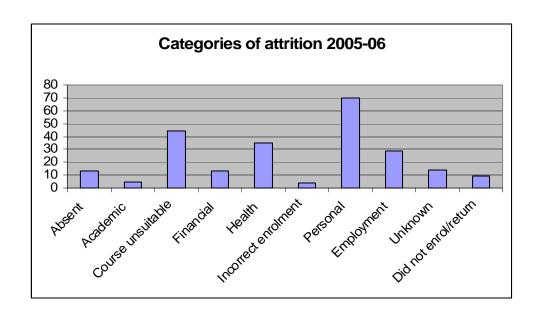
Students withdraw for many reasons; indeed we know that for many students the picture of issues behind the final reason is extremely complex. To illustrate this, consider the following example.

> Student A telephoned the Advice Shop to discuss problems with her attendance. She is a mature student with a young daughter who has chronic health problems. Her daughter's health had been carefully managed and was considered to be under control to the extent that the student would, for the first time, be able to realise her dream of attending university. However, within three weeks of the start of term, her daughter's health rapidly and unexpectedly deteriorated, requiring urgent surgery. The student was hoping to continue with her studies in the meantime, but wanted to explain the reason for her absence. She anticipated being able to return to the University within four weeks. Subsequently to that her daughter's care needs changed in a way that had not been foreseen. This had a financial impact on the family and the student was unable to return to her studies. Taken separately, none of these events would have caused her to suspend her studies, but the accumulation of issues put her under too much pressure and resulted in her suspending study for this academic year. We are hopeful that she will return in 06/07.
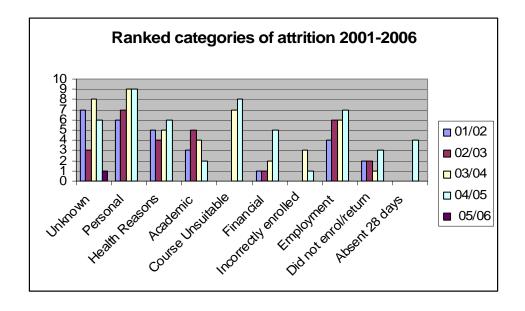
Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'. An indication of the need for caution with regard to these categories is given below:

> Student B called into the Advice Shop saying she wished to transfer her award of study but remain within HLaSS. Her reason for choosing to transfer was because she felt the new award would better suit her ambitions for career choice.   In this very straight-forward example, the student could have ticked course unsuitable (because in her eyes the current award was unsuitable for her purposes) academic (because part of her thinking was based on her academic preference), employment (because she had taken advice from the Careers Centre and two prospective employers and was aiming to meet their needs) or personal (because ultimately it was a personal decision). As the University works towards improving information about attrition, it is clear that those responsible for recording categories of withdrawal must use reliable data collection methods as it would be easy to make data collection errors which result in unreliable analysis.

Categories of attrition 2005-06

It is clear that the three leading categories of withdrawal for HLaSS students are employment, personal and course unsuitability. However, each of the categories includes many related issues. For example, withdrawal for employment reasons includes, 'secured full time employment', 'need to keep full time employment and can't balance everything', 'pressure from employer to work certain hours which clash with timetable' and so on.

The following table illustrates the categories of attrition over the five years of the Advice Shop project, again reinforcing the major categories for HLaSS as personal, course unsuitable and employment. The rise in the number of 'unknown' data in 03/04 is due to the reason for internal transfers not being adequately recorded - this has now been corrected.

Ranked categories of attrition 2001-2006

Over the period some of the categories used by the University have changed (Domestic used to be a category, but this is now included in Personal), and we have also recognised two categories in HLaSS as being significant - incorrect enrolments and absent for 28 days. Incorrect enrolments were mainly recorded during the first year of Quercus Plus when several students were required to transfer after enrolment because their course instance was unavailable at

enrolment. In most cases this meant a simple transfer between HLaSS awards, however there were a few cases where a student was incorrectly enrolled as a HLaSS student and their subsequent transfer took them out of HLaSS, thereby adding to our School attrition rate. 'Absent 28 days' refers to those students who were withdrawn by their Award/Scheme Leader because of continued absence despite attempts to contact them and encourage them back to the course.

Analysis of Clients Using the Advice Shop

Approximately 3800 student visits have been made to the Advice Shop in 05/06, demonstrating a consistent rise in demand over the five year period as shown below.

Client demand 01/02 - 05/06

Students requiring answers to brief questions or enquiries such as staff telephone numbers, room numbers, term dates, change of address details and so on have not been formally recorded, but an estimate of numbers of ad hoc queries is included. Every student who has required advice via interview has been recorded using client information sheets. A total of 175 students have required advice interviews with either Karen Fitzgibbon or Carol Sanders during 05/06. It should be noted that this figure does not represent the total number of interviews carried out however, as students often return on three or four separate occasions for further advice interviews. Several students were on a weekly visiting schedule to check progress and these were seen during each teaching week. A reasonable estimation of the total number of interviews carried out is to allow 3 interviews per student – giving a total of 525 interviews.

Students wishing to change their status of study by withdrawing, transferring or suspending their study have resulted in a further 536 interviews. In addition, approximately 900 students have taken advice about submitting mitigating circumstances claims, resulting in 872 claims being made.

Telephone and email contact is also regularly sought – approximately 25 telephone calls and 10 emails per day are received and dealt with and these are not accounted in the figures given below.

Finally, we monitored the attendance of approximately 1000 students per week resulting in letters and telephone calls to approximately 30 students a week for each teaching week. The figures below do not include the register monitoring statistics, nor the resultant interviews about progress with Karen Fitzgibbon.

Total demand:

Advice interviews (allowing 3 per student)	525
Interviews about change of status	536
Mitigating circumstances enquiries	900
Ad hoc queries	1800
Total number of physical interviews/enquiries	**3761**

The demand for advice interviews has been fairly constant, with predictable peaks around exam time. The number of casual callers has also been constant and these are predominantly level one students. The demand for advice has continued throughout the summer period in terms of telephone contact. Requests for mitigating circumstances have remained fairly constant during the year. There has been a significant increase (51%) on the number of claims made last year (576 claims in 04/05 compared to 872 claims in 05/06) as the Advice Shop is now responsible for administering all mitigating circumstances claims for the School, whereas in previous years Law School administrative staff completed the process for Law students.

HLaSS Advice Shop
Costs –v- Benefits

Costs:

Post funding – 1 grade 4, 1 PL
Initiatives - books for student reps £90
Accommodation – not separated from main School costs
Telephone – approx £250

Benefits for the School:

Each student prevented from withdrawing through intervention saves the School £3876[1] per annum in fees and funding. The figures below also give projected savings in terms of students with subsequent years of study remaining at the point of successful retention.
Conservative estimates of the number of students prevented from withdrawing through Advice Shop interventions are as follows:

> First year students: 82 = £317,832 fees saved this year, £635, 664 for subsequent years of study
> Second year students: 36 = £139,536 this year, £139,536 for subsequent year of study
> Third year students: 14 = £54,264
>
> Fees saved for the School this academic year: £511,632
> Fees saved for ongoing years of study: £775,200

These figures should be treated with caution but represent a fair reflection of the monetary value of positive retention interventions such as the Advice Shop operation.
Our reputation as a School which cares for and supports our students should not be underestimated in terms of added value, particularly in the light of much of our market being from the immediate locality. The benefits to individual students who turn their situation around include increased confidence, personal satisfaction and enhanced life skills.

It is possible to calculate the ongoing funding & fees saved during the five years of Advice Shop operation by comparing current attrition levels with those at the commencement of the project. If the School attrition rate had remained at 6% during the last five years, and assuming that half of those lost would be first year students, the revenue lost to the School would have amounted to £8,901,790 over the period whereas the revenue lost to the School through the reduction of the attrition rate over the last five years and repeating the approximate split of half those lost being first years is £4,808,956. This approximation allows us to calculate the revenue savings by reducing the in year attrition rate over the period of the Advice Shop operation – the amount saved is £4,092,834.

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[1] Figure calculated by averaging the funding/fees across the 3 ASCs for Humanities, Social Sciences and Art and Design

Review of the Strategic Aims of the Advice Shop Project

The strategy for the Advice Shop Project has been regularly reviewed during the last five years of operation. All the short-term aims have been met, together with the majority of the medium-term goals. One of the long-term aims was stated as 'Transfer knowledge across UG using the HLASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice'. It is therefore very pleasing to see that each of the new Faculties will be establishing Advice Shops over the next academic year.

The strategy will be the focus of further development work over the next term and will be updated to reflect the changing nature of the University as we move to a Faculty structure and introduce a new fee charging regime.

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
✓ Gather statistics from recent cohorts to identify particular cohort issues	✓ Continue to monitor trends in UG and other institutions	✓ Use Advice Shop project as a method of improving current HLASS non-completion rates
✓ Increase visibility of the pastoral support provided within the School and secondly, within the University	✓ Continue to monitor and forecast UG statistics against HEFCW performance indicators	✓ Transfer knowledge across UG using the HLASS Advice Shop as a model of best practice
✓ Identify key support initiatives in University support departments and raise student awareness of these services	✓ Make student reporting of reason for non-completion (W/D, defer, transfer etc) more robust.	Demonstrate added value to the next QAA inspection concerning the HLASS model of pastoral/academic care and support
✓ Identify number of deferring/transferring students and draw out key issues	Set up a system of follow-up interviews with non-completing students. **Ongoing**	✓ Promote a staff development cycle which prevents tension between elements of UG mission statement and to foster an environment where 'student friendliness' does not fall to a few
✓ Identify national trends in retention – including non-completion numbers together with retention strategies being adopted by other institutions	✓ Measure the impact of the 2002 'Big Bang' on retention issues.	
✓ Identify number of students who return after deferral	✓ Work with other UG Schools and CELL to increase the possibility of 'in-house' transfers between Schools	
✓ Identify key non-completion indicators in scheme, award or mode of study	✓ Investigate possibility of reporting resuming students to identify HLASS as a School with good follow up mechanisms for deferred students	
✓ Draw up research agenda from proposed activities	✓ Create systems and strategies for HLASS Advice Shop which will remain effective after secondment ends.	
✓ Identify student expectations during induction programmes taking appropriate action where necessary to alleviate early course/study concerns	Secure publication of articles from Advice Shop project. **Ongoing**	
✓ Review admissions policies in line with key research concerning non-completion	✓ Make suggestions for minor amendments where necessary to ease problem areas of the curriculum identified in short term project findings	
✓ Identify key risk groups of learners for early stage support	✓ Make improvements in key areas to correct the current non-completion rates	

Review of Initiatives and Interventions

Student Interventions

The following interventions have all been established in the academic period under review and are direct interventions between the Advice Shop and HLaSS students.

Electronic attendance monitoring project

The project to electronically monitor student attendance using *Uni-Nanny* technology was extremely successful. Three reports were produced during the year, an implementation review, a mid-project report and a final report. In summary, the students were very positive about the project, staff involvement was successful and the overall costs of the project were offset by the number of first year students who continued their studies with support rather than withdrawing.

Telephoning non-returners

A sample of students who had been expected to return either after a suspension of their studies, or as progressing students, who had not enrolled during enrolment week were telephoned. This resulted in 12 students returning to the University who had been undecided before being contacted by the Advice Shop. Telephone calls will be made again at a similar time after 2006/07 enrolment.

Contacting 'Suspended Study' students

The Advice Shop contacted all students who, at the time of suspending their studies, indicated a September 2005 return date. The students received a letter inviting them to return, giving them details of enrolment dates/times and offering them an appointment to discuss their return or to continue their suspension. This resulted in 34 of the students returning from their suspended study, a good continuation rate for this particular group of students.

Revision/exam technique sessions for friends

Rather than expecting students to come in alone, we offered the opportunity to 'bring your friends' to assessment/revision technique sessions. Although the take-up for this has been slow we will continue to offer the service.

'What happens next?' and 'What happens now?' leaflets

This initiative arose from joint discussions at the Retention Advisors Working Group in 2002/03. The leaflet was produced to explain in clear terms what students needed to do if they did not have straight-forward results. Leaflets were printed and sent out to every student with resits ('what happens next') or repeat year ('what happens now') with their results letters in July. The leaflets dramatically reduced the volume of telephone calls to the Student Offices and Student Enquiry Centre and those students who did telephone agreed that the leaflet gave them the information but that they 'wanted to

talk to someone'. The reduction in telephone calls meant that those students got through to a member of staff who could advise them, resulting in a better service for our students.

Letter from Careers Service

In addition to the above leaflets, the Advice Shop asked the Careers Service to send out a letter explaining their services to students who had been fail discontinued at either the June or September Award Boards. It was felt that such contact from the Careers advisors was appropriate for these students. It is hoped that figures concerning take up of the service will be available in the future.

Plagiarism referrals

A number of plagiarism cases have been referred to the Advice Shop by the Chair of the plagiarism panel and these students have been followed up with a letter inviting them to call into the Advice Shop for some assistance with referencing their work. A number of students have accepted this offer and have subsequently improved their performance in coursework.

Recording of client needs

Keeping a record of each student requiring an advice interview has offered us the opportunity to track common issues and also to raise queries which may benefit other students with their Award tutor, or module tutor.

Once each student had been advised and felt that the matter was closed, the Advice Shop maintained contact by ringing the student after a few weeks. Following students up in this way made effective use of our services, ensuring that the students who needed help could be sure of receiving an appropriate level of support.

Mitigating circumstances

The clerical support to the Mitigating Circumstances Committee within the School and maintenance of the mitigating circumstances database is undertaken by Carol Sanders in addition to her Advice Shop role. The Advice Shop is now able to provide students with Mitigating Circumstances forms as well as give advice on the completion of the form and necessary evidence in support of a claim.

The rise in claims, together with responsibility for administering all the Law School claims in addition to HaSS claims has seen a huge rise in the administrative load connected with this process.

'Self Development: Moving Forward' joint initiative between HLaSS and Student Services. This initiative was designed to support students who struggled through their first year and into their second year. The course aims to help them identify their successful behaviour patterns and remedy those which have held them back. The course was delivered again in 05/06, albeit with limited take-up. Unfortunately Student

Services have decided not to offer the course in future due to staffing constraints, but it is hoped that at a future point we will be able to offer similar personal development opportunities to our students.

Parent to parent

Money from the Learning and Teaching Office enabled us to produce a leaflet designed to introduce university life and experiences to parents of new students. Comments from parents of successful students were gathered at the graduation ceremonies in July 05. The leaflet was then prepared and printed over the summer and given to new students at induction. They were then able to choose whether to pass the leaflet on! We had a few phone calls from parents saying what a help the leaflet had been and how reassured they were by the tone and obvious support that would be available to their son/daughter. We will be running the leaflet once again in the September 06 induction.

Data concerning wd/ss/transfers

A crucial part of the role of the Advice Shop Manager has been the dissemination of the data held on withdrawing, suspending and transferring students. A spreadsheet has been maintained during the academic year under review and this has allowed us to analyse patterns of withdrawal, suspension and transfer in more detail than was previously possible. This analysis has lead to a number of further interventions, and has also confirmed the peak withdrawal times for the School, allowing the Advice Shop to offer intervention and support activities to Award Tutors and Scheme Leaders.

Sharing Good Practice

The sharing of good practice concerning retention initiatives is vital and the Advice Shop is represented at the Student Experience and Retention Group, a cross-University committee who meet termly to discuss retention issues.

Contact with other University Departments

A number of contacts have been built up between the Advice Shop and other University support services, including Student Services, Student Finance Centre and the Education Drop-In Centres on main campus and at Glyntaff. These contacts mean that we can make appointments on behalf of students who need other services and this system of smooth referral is exactly what we envisaged for providing a seamless support service to HLaSS students. Additionally, each of the University support departments knows about the Advice Shop and will refer students to us if they are from HLaSS.

In a further joint initiative, details of student debtors are sent to the Advice Shop from the University Finance Department. The Advice Shop has been able to clear up a number of student exclusion queries in this way. We have also been able to ensure that a HLaSS student receiving advice or help from the Advice Shop does not receive a letter warning of sanctions from a different department at the same time - as has happened in the past.

Senior Faculty Tutor

The Advice Shop Manager fulfils the role of Senior Faculty Tutor and co-ordinates the Faculty Tutor timetable. Discussions with Faculty Tutors have resulted in some tutors becoming more focussed on particular groups of students, for example, Combined Studies, mature students and so on.

Proposed Initiatives for the Academic Year 2006/07

The success of the Advice Shop has been evident in a number of ways, and all of our initiatives from 2005/06 will be continuing.

Electronic Attendance Monitoring

We have been able to secure funding to continue with the electronic attendance monitoring system in 06/07 and will hopefully be able to extend the monitoring to include Law School first year students on selected modules.

Faculty Advice Shops

From September 06 there will be Advice Shops in each of the five Faculties. The decision was taken by Directorate in November 04 to roll out the HLaSS Advice Shop model to the new Faculties. Karen Fitzgibbon is working with the new Advice Shop Managers to establish the new services and to ensure that there is a baseline provision which is replicated across all the Advice Shops on campus.

Client Record Database

We have been fortunate in securing funding to pay for the development of a database to be shared by all the new Advice Shops. The main purpose of this is to ensure that we all collect the same data and maintain control over the analysis of the data. This will allow us to make meaningful and reliable comparisons between Faculties concerning patterns and trends in student support and attrition and will help take the University debate about retention further forward.

Final

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Advice Shop Operation 2006/2007

Karen Fitzgibbon   September 2007
Advice Shop Manager

Executive Summary

This report presents a summary of student withdrawal, suspension of study and transfer in 2006/07, together with the initiatives, interventions and support services offered by the HaSS Advice Shop.

In the period under review:

- 4486 students were enrolled in the Faculty
- 206 students withdrew, suspended study or transferred out of the Faculty
-
- The in-year attrition rate was 3.7%
- The percentage of attrition by Department was:
  o Humanities & Languages 35%
  o Law 20%
  o Psychology, Education & Careers 25%
  o Social Sciences 20%
- Level 3 (new CQFW) students were more likely to withdraw than any other year
- The peak months for withdrawal were October and January
- The most common categories of withdrawal were personal, health and employment
- There have been several new initiatives including:
  o the successful roll out of the HaSS model of student support to all Faculties
  o a University-wide method of data-collection for all Advice Shops
  o Online advice and support through Glamlife
- Planning for new initiatives for 2007-08 includes:
  o Parent to Parent online information
  o Two learner support tools utilising QuestionMark Perception
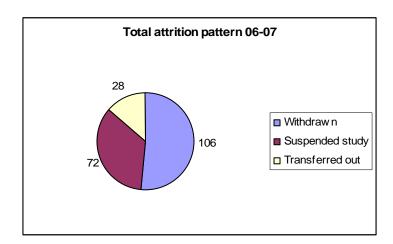
Analysis of 2006/07 Attrition Figures

The figure for students leaving HaSS during 2006/07 is 206. However, 13 students have resumed after one year of suspended study and 29 students have transferred into the Faculty either from other UG faculties (17) or from other HEI's (12), representing a gain of 42 students, and giving a net total attrition figure of 164. Expressed as a percentage of the total faculty student population of 4486[1] this represents an in year **attrition rate of 3.6%**.

The changes in the attrition rate over the period of existence of the Advice Shop are as follows:

Academic Year	HaSS Attrition rate
2000/01 – before Advice Shop commenced	6%
2001/02	5%
2002/03	3.3%
2003/04	2.5%
2004/05	3.3%
2005/06	3.6%
2006/07	3.6%

For the purposes of attrition analysis, the following graphs present a picture of the attrition activity of the total number of students (206) who left HaSS during the 06/07 academic year.

Total attrition pattern 06-07

- Withdrawn
- Suspended study
- Transferred out

The attrition figures above take account of students transferring out of HaSS either to other UG Faculties or other HEIs. In the period under review there were a total of 135 transfers between HaSS awards, a marked reduction compared to the trend in earlier years as shown below:

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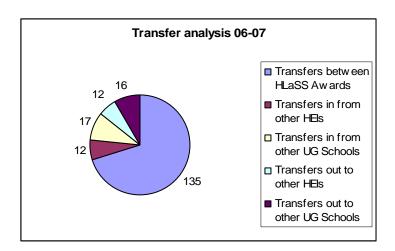
[1] Taken from Discoverer Report TP83

Year	Number of transfers
2005/06	222
2004/05	225
2003/04	294
2002/03	273
2001/02	170
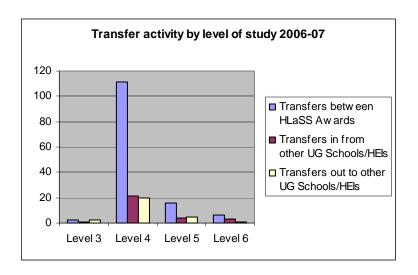
The reduction in transfers between awards is partly attributable to some awards moving to CCI, and partly to a considerable decline in the once common practice of students gaining entry to an Award and then transferring to their first choice Award (which they were previously unable to join due to entry requirements).

The number of transfers between Awards is partly attributable to students who may previously have withdrawn being offered alternative study opportunities, a successful intervention which has helped reduce the Faculty attrition rate. A small number of students are required to transfer after enrolment due to their 'course instance' not being available at enrolment. Other students in the transfer group include those who were unaware of major/minor or joint options before enrolling.

The most significant category of reasons given for student transfer is 'course unsuitable'. It is therefore considered important that the Advice Shop team and the Head of Learning and Teaching (Undergraduate) and Award tutors work together to identify ways of reducing this particular issue.

Transfer analysis 06-07

- Transfers between HLaSS Awards
- Transfers in from other HEIs
- Transfers in from other UG Schools
- Transfers out to other HEIs
- Transfers out to other UG Schools
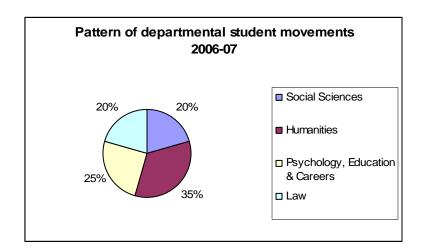
The picture of transfer activity by level is shown below and reinforces the large number of students who are transferring after entry to the Faculty during their first year of study.
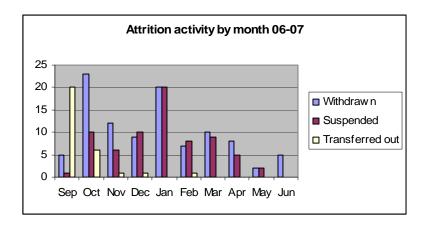
Transfer activity by level of study 2006-07

Legend:
- Transfers between HLaSS Awards
- Transfers in from other UG Schools/HEIs
- Transfers out to other UG Schools/HEIs

Categories: Level 3, Level 4, Level 5, Level 6

Student Movement by Department

Student movement by Department is shown below.   The figures indicate the proportion of withdrawn, suspended study or transferred students from each Department, and those transferring into the Departments from other UG Faculties or other HEIs, but do not include the movements of students transferring between awards within the Faculty.

Pattern of departmental student movements 2006-07

20%, 20%, 25%, 35%

Legend:
- Social Sciences
- Humanities
- Psychology, Education & Careers
- Law

When attrition takes place

Attrition activity by month 06-07

Analysis of student withdrawal/suspension or transfer out of the Faculty or University reveals that of the 206 students withdrawing, suspending or transferring out of the Faculty or University, 91 (44%) did so before the end of the first term. This indicates the importance of our 'front-loading' of information, support, help and guidance. Significantly, 19% of the total withdrawals took place in January. The HaSS pattern continues to indicate that if we can support students through their first term and their initial return after the Christmas vacation, the majority are likely to complete their first year of study.

The amount of transfer activity, which includes internal transfers between HaSS awards, and transfers into and out of HaSS from other UG Faculties or other HEIs, still represents a high volume of activity and is illustrated below.

All transfer activity by month

Pattern of Attrition by Level of Study

The above graph illustrates where attrition takes place during the stages of study, and it is clear that level one students remain our target group for further reductions in attrition activity.

Reasons Given for Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Students withdraw for many reasons; indeed we know that for many students the picture of issues behind the final reason is extremely complex. To illustrate this, consider the following case.

Student A telephoned the Advice Shop to discuss problems with her attendance. She is a mature student with a young daughter who has chronic health problems. Her daughter's health had been carefully managed and was considered to be under control to the extent that the student would, for the first time, be able to realise her dream of attending university. However, within three weeks of the start of term, her daughter's health rapidly and unexpectedly deteriorated, requiring urgent surgery. The student was hoping to continue with her studies in the meantime, but wanted to explain the reason for her absence. She anticipated being able to return to the University within four weeks. Subsequently to that her daughter's care needs changed in a way that had not been foreseen. This had a financial impact on the family and the student was unable to return to her studies. Taken separately, none of these events would have caused her to suspend her studies, but the accumulation of issues put her under too much pressure and resulted in her suspending study for this academic year.

Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'. An indication of the need for caution with regard to these categories is illustrated by the following case:

Student B called into the Advice Shop saying she wished to transfer her award of study but remain within HaSS. Her reason for choosing to transfer was because she felt the new award would better suit her ambitions for career choice. In this very straight-forward example, the student could have ticked course unsuitable (because in her eyes the current award was unsuitable for her purposes) academic (because part of her thinking was based on her academic preference), employment (because she had taken advice from the Careers Centre and two prospective employers and was aiming to meet their needs) or personal (because ultimately it was a personal decision). As the University works towards improving information about attrition, it is clear that those responsible for recording categories of withdrawal must use reliable data collection methods as it would be easy to make data collection errors which result in unreliable analysis.

Categories of attrition 2006-07

It is clear that the four leading categories of withdrawal or suspension for HaSS students are employment, personal, health and course unsuitability. However, each of the categories

includes many related issues. For example, withdrawal for employment reasons includes, 'secured full time employment', 'need to keep full time employment and can't balance everything', 'pressure from employer to work certain hours which clash with timetable' and so on.

Analysis of Clients Using the Advice Shop

Approximately 3200 student visits have been made to the Advice Shop in 06/07, demonstrating a consistent rise in demand over the five year period as shown below.

Analysis of client demand 2001/2 - 2006/07

Students requiring answers to brief questions or enquiries such as staff telephone numbers, room numbers, term dates, change of address details and so on have not been formally recorded, but an estimate of numbers of ad hoc queries is included. Every student who has required advice via interview has been recorded using client information sheets. A total of 106 students have required advice interviews with either Karen Fitzgibbon or Carol Sanders during 06/07. It should be noted that this figure does not represent the total number of interviews carried out however, as students often return on three or four separate occasions for further advice interviews. Several students were on a weekly visiting schedule to check progress and these were seen during each teaching week. A reasonable estimation of the total number of interviews carried out is to allow 3 interviews per student – giving a total of 318 interviews.

Students wishing to change their status of study by withdrawing, transferring or suspending their study have resulted in a further 383 interviews. In addition, approximately 700 students have taken advice about submitting mitigating circumstances claims, resulting in 677 claims being made.

Telephone and email contact is also regularly sought – approximately 25 telephone calls and 10 emails per day are received and dealt with and these are not accounted in the figures given below.

Finally, we monitored the attendance of approximately 1000 students per week resulting in letters and telephone calls to approximately 30 students a week for each teaching week. The figures below do not include the register monitoring statistics, nor the resultant interviews about progress.

Total demand:

Advice interviews (allowing 3 per student)	318
Interviews about change of status	383
Mitigating circumstances enquiries	700
Ad hoc queries	1800
Total number of physical interviews/enquiries	**3201**

The demand for advice interviews has been fairly constant, with predictable peaks around exam time. The number of casual callers has also been constant and these are predominantly level four students. The demand for advice has continued throughout the summer period in terms of telephone contact. Requests for mitigating circumstances have remained fairly constant during the year.

Estimation of financial savings for Faculty:

Each student prevented from withdrawing through intervention saves the Faculty £4,449.60[2] per annum in fees and funding.

It is possible to calculate the ongoing funding & fees saved during the six years of Advice Shop operation by comparing current attrition levels with those at the commencement of the project. If the Faculty attrition rate had remained at 6% during the last six years, and assuming that half of those lost would be first year students, the revenue lost to the Faculty would have amounted to £10,392,406 over the period whereas the revenue lost to the Faculty through the reduction of the attrition rate over the last six years and repeating the approximate split of half those lost being first years is £5,721,124. This approximation allows us to calculate the revenue savings by reducing the in year attrition rate over the period of the Advice Shop operation – the amount saved is £4,671,282.

Our reputation as a Faculty which cares for and supports our students should not be underestimated in terms of added value, particularly in the light of much of our market being from the immediate locality. The benefits to individual students who turn their situation around include increased confidence, personal satisfaction and enhanced life skills.

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[2] Figure calculated by averaging the funding/fees across the 2 ASCs for Humanities and Social Sciences

Karen Fitzgibbon
September 2007

Faculty Advice Shop Baseline Provision

In 2005-06 the Hass Advice Shop Manager was asked to co-ordinate of the roll out of Faculty Advice Shops (FAS) based on the HaSS model. In preparation for opening to students in September 2006 it was necessary to establish a baseline provision which all the FAS managers would be responsible for delivering. Additional interventions or initiatives to supplement this baseline provision would then be established at a local (faculty) level by each manager as appropriate. The baseline provision is as follows:

Aims:

To identify retention issues across the Faculty in conjunction with Faculty staff.
To put in place intervention processes to improve retention within the Faculty.
To identify best practice across this and other institutions and share examples where appropriate.

Objectives
- To set up and run the Faculty Advice Shop (FAS);
- To promote the FAS and its activities, providing information on student support;
- To provide support for students within the Faculty;
- Identify retention issues across awards/modules;
- Identify 'at risk' students;
- To develop intervention processes;
- Develop and inform research programmes for FAS staff;
- Develop IT systems to support all FAS activities.

Indicative Activities Roles and Services in addition to existing student support in the Faculty.

Student Facing Functions
- Drop-in service (Mon to Friday 9 – 4)/Appointment system to provide:
- FAS awareness
- Academic advice
- Pastoral care
- Suspend studies/ withdrawals/ transfers advice
- Involvement in open days, applicant day and induction
- Mitigating circumstances advice
- Signposting to other schools and support departments

Operational Functions
- FAS awareness to Faculty staff
- Mitigating Circumstances procedure
- Preparation for open days, induction etc.
- Record keeping
- Intervention processes
- Attendance at relevant meetings
- Communication between Faculty staff, students and other university support departments.
- Research – to use data captured to produce a research programme for Advice shop staff.

Review of Initiatives and Interventions

Student Interventions

The following interventions have all been established in the academic period under review and are direct interventions between the Advice Shop and HaSS students.

Electronic attendance monitoring project

The successful pilot project in 2005/06 established the need for supportive student attendance monitoring and its role in encouraging students back into the classroom after absence. In 2006/07 the students being monitored increased to include first year LLB students and although the logistics associated with managing the collection of data between two sites was challenging, staff and students were positive about its use.

Telephoning non-returners

The process of telephoning students who were listed as pre-registered after enrolment has been embedded in University protocol in conjunction with Student Registry, Student Admin Managers and Faculty Advice Shop Managers. Students gave a variety of reasons for choosing not to continue with their studies, and many who were uncertain about whether to continue were offered appropriate guidance. This process helped to quickly correct a number of student records in each Faculty, resulting in more accurate class lists and ultimately Field and Award Board information.

Contacting 'Suspended Study' students

The Advice Shop contacted all students who, at the time of suspending their studies, indicated a September 2006 return date. The students received a letter inviting them to return, giving them details of enrolment dates/times and offering them an appointment to discuss their return or to continue their suspension. This resulted in 13 students returning to HaSS and a further 12 former Hass students returning to the new CCI after a period of suspended study.

Post-Award Board information

The two leaflets produced to guide students in their understanding of their results ('What Happens Now' and 'What Happens Next') were incorporated into the 'Study' pages on Glamlife in June 2006. it was felt that rather than mass-producing paper versions, students would find an electronic version simple and straightforward. 'What Happens After Resits' will also be appearing on Glamlife when resit results are posted to help students understand the implications of repeat year status. Students were also able to access a link to the Glamlife pages from Blackboard.

The availability of clear information on Glamlife reduces the volume of telephone calls to the Student Offices, Student Enquiry Centre and Advice Shop in the same way that the paper leaflets had done in previous years. The reduction in telephone calls meant that those students got through to a member of staff who could advise them, resulting in a better service for our students.

Plagiarism referrals

Students whose poor practice had led to allegations of plagiarism have been referred to the Advice Shop by academic staff. The Advice Shop has been able to provide guidance concerning the process of investigation, as well as follow-up contact concerning good referencing technique and onward referral to the Education Drop-in Centres.

Recording of client needs

Keeping a record of each student requiring an advice interview has offered us the opportunity to track common issues and also to raise queries which may benefit other students with their Award tutor, or module tutor. The new FAS managers were funded to develop a way of recording all client information and subsequently established a database which all FAS staff use. This ensures that the information captured is consistent across the FAS network.

Sharing Good Practice

The sharing of good practice concerning retention initiatives is vital and the Advice Shop is represented at the Student Achievement Group, a cross-University committee who meet termly to discuss retention issues. In addition, the FAS Managers meet weekly to discuss a range of issues and good practice to ensure parity of FAS provision across the University.

Referral to other services

Contact with other University support departments including Student Services, Student Finance Centre and the Education Drop-In Centres is also maintained. These contacts mean that we can make appointments on behalf of students who need other services and this system of smooth referral is exactly what we envisaged for providing a seamless support service to HaSS students. Usage figures provided by Student Services demonstrate that 20% of all client visits were from Hass students. Reciprocal referral also takes place as appropriate.

Proposed Initiatives for the Academic Year 2007/08

The success of the Advice Shop has been evident in a number of ways, and all the initiatives from 2006/07 will be continuing. In addition, new initiatives will be offered as follows:

'Parent to Parent' Online Information

In 2005/06 the Parent to Parent leaflet was produced drawing upon reflections of parents of successful students' and offering information and advice about university life and experiences to parents of new students. In 2007/08 this information will be available online, further supplementing the wide variety of information and advice available electronically.

QuestionMark Perception Project

Two learner support tools developed as a result of successful Learning Development Grants will be launched in 2007/08. Both tools ('Early Days' and 'Study Health Check') use QuestionMark Perception to deliver a self-assessment tool to enable students to identify whether their study patterns and behaviours are leading them towards successful completion

or to a summer spent completing resit exams and coursework. 'Early Days' provides orientation advice and guidance and is for all new students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It will be launched in the third week of the new term. Study Health Check is for all students, whatever level, and will provide advice and guidance concerning successful study and how to access information to overcome difficulties. It will be launched at the end of January 2008.

Final

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Advice Shop Operation 2007/2008

Karen Fitzgibbon   October 2008
Advice Shop Manager

Executive Summary

This report presents a summary of student withdrawal, suspension of study and transfer in 2007/08, together with the initiatives, interventions and support services offered by the HaSS Advice Shop.

In the period under review:

- 5262 students were enrolled in the Faculty
- 278 students withdrew, suspended study or transferred out of the Faculty
- The in-year attrition rate was 3.9%
- The percentage of in-year attrition by Department was:
    - Humanities & Languages 15%
    - Law 42%
    - Psychology, Education & Careers 38%
    - Social Sciences 6%
- Level 4 students were more likely to withdraw than any other year
- The peak months for withdrawal were October and January
- The most common categories of withdrawal were course unsuitable and personal
- There have been several new initiatives including:
    - Timing of telephone follow-up of repeat year students
    - Launch of two learner support tools using QuestionMark Perception
    - Development and distribution of student experience questionnaire
- Planning for new initiatives for 2008-09 includes:
    - Questionnaire for student experiences of those that withdrew early from their studies
    - Evaluation programme
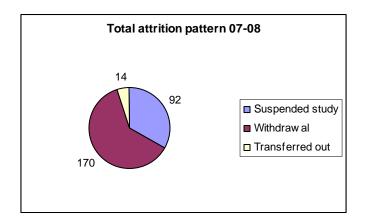
Analysis of 2007/08 Attrition Figures

The figure for students leaving HaSS during 2007/08 is 278. However, 70 students have transferred into the Faculty either from other UG faculties (53) or from other HEI's (17), giving a net total attrition figure of 208. Expressed as a percentage of the total Faculty student population of 5262[1] this represents an in year attrition rate of 3.9%. The increase over previous years is attributable largely to management statistics from the Planning and Reporting Unit which have proved more accurate than the MIS TP83 report used in previous years.

The changes in the attrition rate over the period of existence of the Advice Shop are as follows:

Academic Year	HaSS Attrition rate
2000/01 – before Advice Shop commenced	6%
2001/02	5%
2002/03	3.3%
2003/04	2.5%
2004/05	3.3%
2005/06	3.6%
2006/07	3.7%

For the purposes of attrition analysis, the following graphs present a picture of the attrition activity of the total number of students (278) who left HaSS during the 07/08 academic year.
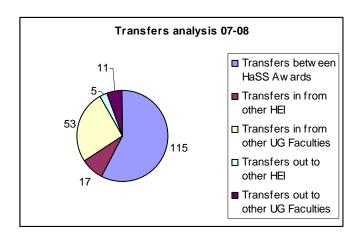
Total attrition pattern 07-08

The attrition figures above take account of students transferring out of HaSS either to other UG Faculties or other HEIs. In the period under review there were a total of 115 transfers between HaSS awards, continuing the reduction in this type of activity as shown below:

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[1] Taken from Annual Monitoring Report 2007-08

Year	Number of transfers
2006/07	135
2005/06	222
2004/05	225
2003/04	294
2002/03	273
2001/02	170
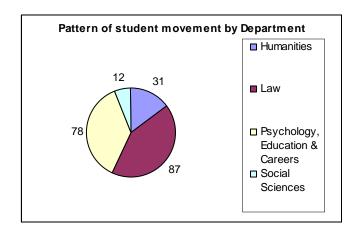
The most significant category of reasons given for student transfer in 94% of cases continues to be 'course unsuitable'. It is therefore considered important that the Advice Shop team and the Head of Learning and Teaching (Undergraduate) and Award tutors continue to work together to identify ways of reducing this particular issue.

The number of transfers between Awards is partly attributable to students who may previously have withdrawn being offered alternative study opportunities, a successful intervention which has helped reduce the Faculty attrition rate. A small number of students are required to transfer after enrolment due to their 'course instance' not being available at enrolment.

Transfers analysis 07-08

- Transfers between HaSS Awards
- Transfers in from other HEI
- Transfers in from other UG Faculties
- Transfers out to other HEI
- Transfers out to other UG Faculties

Student Movement by Department

Student movement by Department is shown below. The figures indicate the proportion of withdrawn, suspended study or transferred students from each Department, and those transferring into the Departments from other UG Faculties or other HEIs, but do not include the movements of students transferring between awards within the Faculty.

Pattern of student movement by Department

- Humanities: 31
- Law: 87
- Psychology, Education & Careers: 78
- Social Sciences: 12

The pattern of transfers between Departments within the Faculty is as follows:
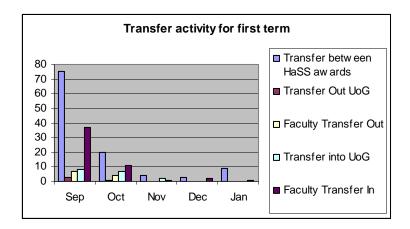
Department	Transferred out	Transferred in	Balance
Humanities	38	29	-9
Law	23	19	-4
Psyc, Ed & Careers	30	33	3
Social Sciences	24	34	10

When attrition takes place
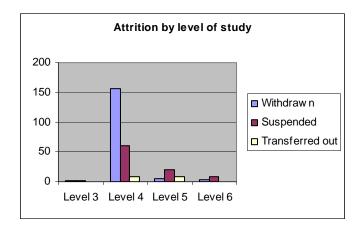
Attrition activity by month

Analysis of student withdrawal/suspension or transfer out of the Faculty or University reveals that of the 278 students withdrawing, suspending or transferring out of the Faculty or University, 155 (56%) did so by the end of the first term, a slight reduction compared to previous years. Despite the small reduction, this figure continues to indicate the importance of our 'front-loading' of information, support, help and guidance. Significantly, a further 20% of the total withdrawals took place in January, a slight rise compared to previous years. The HaSS pattern continues to indicate that if we can support students through their first term and their initial return after the Christmas vacation, the majority are likely to complete their first year of study.

The amount of transfer activity, which includes internal transfers between HaSS awards, and transfers into and out of HaSS from other UG Faculties or other HEIs, still represents a high volume of activity and is illustrated below.

Transfer activity for first term

Pattern of Attrition by Level of Study

Attrition by level of study

The above graph illustrates where attrition takes place during the stages of study, and it is clear that level one students remain our target group for further reductions in attrition activity.

Attrition by level and date

Reasons Given for Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Students withdraw for many reasons; indeed we know that for many students the picture of issues behind the final reason is extremely complex. To illustrate this, consider the following case.

Student A telephoned the Advice Shop to discuss problems with her attendance. She is a mature student with a young daughter who has chronic health problems. Her daughter's health had been carefully managed and was considered to be under control to the extent that the student would, for the first time, be able to realise her dream of attending university. However, within three weeks of the start of term, her daughter's health rapidly and unexpectedly deteriorated, requiring urgent surgery. The student was hoping to continue with her studies in the meantime, but wanted to explain the reason for her absence. She anticipated being able to return to the University within four weeks. Subsequently to that her daughter's care needs changed in a way that had not been foreseen. This had a financial impact on the family and the student was unable to return to her studies. Taken separately, none of these events would have caused her to suspend her studies, but the accumulation of issues put her under too much pressure and resulted in her suspending study for this academic year.

Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'. An indication of the need for caution with regard to these categories is illustrated by the following case:

Student B called into the Advice Shop saying she wished to transfer her award of study but remain within HaSS. Her reason for choosing to transfer was because she felt the new award would better suit her ambitions for career choice. In this very straight-forward example, the student could have ticked course unsuitable (because in her eyes the current award was unsuitable for her purposes) academic (because part of her thinking was based on her academic preference), employment (because she had taken advice from the Careers Centre and two prospective employers and was aiming to meet their needs) or personal (because ultimately it was a personal decision). As the University works towards improving information about attrition, it is clear that those responsible for recording categories of withdrawal must use reliable data collection methods as it would be easy to make data collection errors which result in unreliable analysis.

Categories of reason for leaving

It is clear that the leading category of withdrawal or suspension for HaSS students in 2007/08 was course unsuitability, followed by 'personal' a continuing trend when compared to data from previous years.

When the categories for leaving are separated by type of decision, i.e whether to withdraw, suspend or transfer, the results are as follows:
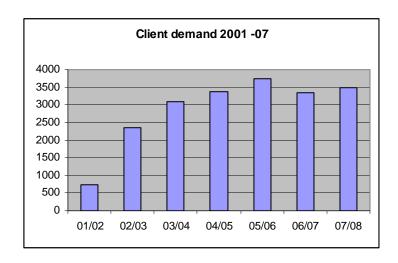
The categories of **withdrawal** by Department are shown below. It is apparent that Law and Psychology, Education & Careers students are proportionally more like to withdraw due to a mismatch between their expectations of the course and their experience.

The categories of **suspended study** by Department are as follows:

Karen Fitzgibbon
October 2008

Analysis of Clients Using the Advice Shop
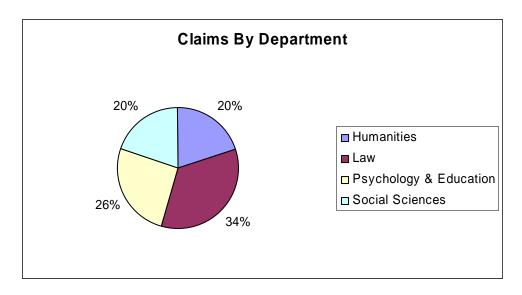
In 2007/08 there were 3497 student visits to the Advice Shop, a slight rise on the figure for 06-07. Usage over time is shown below.

Students requiring answers to brief questions or enquiries such as staff telephone numbers, room numbers, term dates, change of address details and so on have not been formally recorded, but an estimate of numbers of ad hoc queries is included. Every student who has required advice via interview has been recorded using client information sheets and entered into the Advice Shop database. A total of 163 students have required advice interviews with either Karen Fitzgibbon or Carol Sanders during 07/08. It should be noted that this figure

does not represent the total number of interviews carried out however, as students often return on three or four separate occasions for further advice interviews. Several students were on a weekly visiting schedule to check progress and these were seen during each teaching week. A reasonable estimation of the total number of interviews carried out is to allow 3 interviews per student – giving a total of 480 interviews.

Students wishing to change their status of study by withdrawing, transferring or suspending their study have resulted in a further 417 interviews. In addition, approximately 800 students have taken advice about submitting mitigating circumstances claims, resulting in 786 claims being made. The distribution of claims by department is shown below:

Claims By Department

Telephone and email contact is also regularly made – approximately 25 telephone calls and 10 emails per day are received and dealt with and these are not counted in the figures given below.

Finally, we monitored the attendance of approximately 1000 students per week resulting in letters and telephone calls to approximately 30 students a week for each teaching week. The figures below do not include the register monitoring statistics, nor the resultant interviews about progress.

Total demand:

Advice interviews (allowing 3 per student)	480
Interviews about change of status	417
Mitigating circumstances enquiries	800
Ad hoc queries	1800
Total number of physical interviews/enquiries	**3497**

The demand for advice interviews has been fairly constant, with predictable peaks around exam time. The number of casual callers has also been constant and these are predominantly level four students. The demand for advice has continued throughout the summer period in terms of telephone contact. Requests for mitigating circumstances have remained fairly constant during the year.

Estimation of financial savings for Faculty:

Each student prevented from withdrawing through intervention saves the Faculty £4,449.60[2] per annum in fees and funding.

It is possible to calculate the ongoing funding & fees saved during the seven years of Advice Shop operation by comparing current attrition levels with those at the commencement of the project. If the Faculty attrition rate had remained at 6% during the last six years, and assuming that half of those lost would be first year students, the revenue lost to the Faculty would have amounted to £12,149,996 over the period whereas the revenue lost to the Faculty through the reduction of the attrition rate over the last six years and repeating the approximate split of half those lost being first years is £6,866,894. This approximation allows us to calculate the revenue savings by reducing the in year attrition rate over the period of the Advice Shop operation – the amount saved is £5,283,102.

Our reputation as a Faculty which cares for and supports our students should not be underestimated in terms of added value, particularly in the light of much of our market being from the immediate locality. The benefits to individual students who turn their situation around include increased confidence, personal satisfaction and enhanced life skills.

Review of Initiatives and Interventions

Student Interventions

The following interventions have all been established in the academic period under review and are direct interventions between the Advice Shop and HaSS students.

Electronic attendance monitoring project

The successful pilot project in 2005/06 established the need for supportive student attendance monitoring and its role in encouraging students back into the classroom after absence. The ongoing success of this initiative has encouraged the software developers to review their product in conjunction with Advice Shop staff throughout the University. The new version of the software will be ready for use at the start of 2008-09.

Student feedback on the system in use is consistently positive with 80% saying that the system is making a positive difference in their attendance patterns.

Telephoning non-returners

The process of telephoning students who were listed as pre-registered after enrolment has been embedded in University protocol in conjunction with Student Registry, Student Admin Managers and Faculty Advice Shop Managers. Students gave a variety of reasons for choosing not to continue with their studies, and many who were uncertain about whether to continue were offered appropriate guidance. This process helped to quickly correct a number of student records in each Faculty, resulting in more accurate class lists and ultimately Field and Award Board information.

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[2] Figure calculated by averaging the funding/fees across the 2 ASCs for Humanities and Social Sciences

In 2007-08 students with incomplete progression or those required to repeat their current year of study were contacted immediately after results were released in a joint initiative between the Faculty Administration and Advice Shop teams. The Student Admin Manager noted a rise in the number of resit coursework submissions, whilst the Advice Shop team were able to gain a clearer picture of whether students offered a repeat year would actually be returning. This in turn has provided greater clarity for student number planning.

Contacting 'Suspended Study' students

The Advice Shop contacted all students who, at the time of suspending their studies, indicated a September 2007 return date. The students received a letter inviting them to return, giving them details of enrolment dates/times and offering them an appointment to discuss their return or to continue their suspension. This resulted in 31 students returning after a period of suspended study.

Plagiarism referrals

Students whose poor practice had led to allegations of plagiarism have been referred to the Advice Shop by academic staff. The Advice Shop has been able to provide guidance concerning the process of investigation, as well as follow-up contact concerning good referencing technique and onward referral to the Education Drop-in Centres.

'Parent to Parent'

The information contained in the 'Parent to Parent' leaflet for HaSS students has been incorporated into one of the Marketing publications aimed at parents, thus ensuring the continuation of this intervention which has proved popular with parents in the past.

QuestionMark Perception Project

Two learner support tools developed as a result of successful Learning Development Grants were launched in 2007/08. Both tools ('Early Days' and 'Study Health Check') use QuestionMark Perception to deliver a self-assessment tool to enable students to identify whether their study patterns and behaviours are leading them towards successful completion or to a summer spent completing resit exams and coursework. 'Early Days' provides orientation advice and guidance and is for all new students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and is available just after enrolment. Study Health Check is for all students, whatever level, and provides advice and guidance concerning successful study and how to access information to overcome difficulties. Both proved popular with students with approximately 1200 accessing them over the year.

Student Experience Questionnaire

In order to support information gained about students' academic experiences through the use of module evaluations, a student experience questionnaire was developed by the Advice Shop Managers in conjunction with the Heads of Learning and Teaching. It was developed using QuestionMark Perception and distributed to students in May 2008. Analysis is underway and will be provided to HoLTs and Learning, Teaching

and Student Experience Committees in due course. Results will also be part of a discussion event at a CELT seminar in November 2008.

Faculty Advice Shops Review

A review of the FAS provision throughout the University has been underway and is due to report shortly. One expected recommendation from the Steering Group is a change of name from 'Faculty Advice Shop' to 'Faculty Advice Centre'.

Referral to other services

Contact with other University support departments including Student Services, Student Finance Centre and the Education Drop-In Centres is also maintained. These contacts mean that we can make appointments on behalf of students who need other services and this system of smooth referral is exactly what we envisaged for providing a seamless support service to HaSS students. Usage figures provided by Student Services demonstrate that 20% of all client visits were from Hass students. Reciprocal referral also takes place as appropriate.

Proposed Initiatives for the Academic Year 2008-09

The success of the Advice Shop has been evident in a number of ways, and all the initiatives from 2008/09 will be continuing. In addition, new initiatives will be offered as follows:

Evaluation programme

A new evaluation programme to capture student and staff feedback is planned. Client evaluation sheets have been designed and we are currently investigating the possibility of using QuestionMark Perception to seek staff views of the FAS provision.

Student Experiences of withdrawn students

In order to provide comparable data the student experience questionnaire referred to above will be amended and sent to all withdrawn students. In this way it is hoped that we will identify possible differences between the social and academic integration of students who continue and those who leave their studies early.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Advice Shop Operation 2008/2009

Karen Fitzgibbon   August 2009

Executive Summary

This report presents a summary of student withdrawal, suspension of study and transfer in 2008/09, together with the initiatives, interventions and support services offered by the HaSS Advice Shop.

In the period under review:
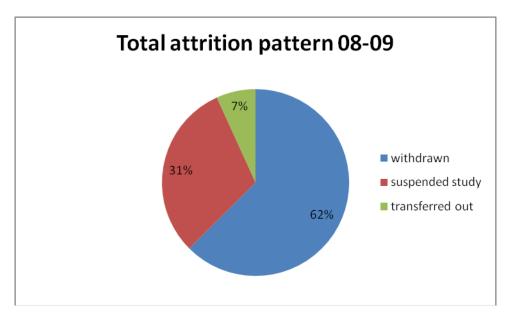
- 4014 students were enrolled in the Faculty
- 235 students withdrew, suspended study or transferred out of the Faculty
- 71 students transferred into the Faculty from other Faculties or HEI
- The in-year attrition rate was 4%
- The percentage of in-year attrition by Department was:
  - Humanities & Languages 27%
  - Law 37%
  - Psychology, Education & Careers 30%
  - Social Sciences 7%
- Level 4 students were more likely to withdraw than any other year
- The peak months for withdrawal were October and December
- The most common categories of withdrawal were 'course unsuitable' and 'personal'
- There have been several new initiatives including:
  - Questionnaire for student experiences of those that withdrew early from their studies
  - Evaluation programme for staff and students
- The Advice Shop staffing level has been reduced

Analysis of 2008/09 Attrition Figures

The figure for students leaving HaSS during 2007/08 is 235 (147 withdrawals, 72 suspended studies and 16 transferred out of the Faculty). However, 71 students have transferred into the Faculty either from other UG faculties (64) or from other HEI's (7), giving a net total attrition figure of 164. Expressed as a percentage of the total Faculty student population of 4014[1] this represents an in year attrition rate of 4%. The changes in the attrition rate over the period of existence of the Advice Shop are as follows:

Academic Year	HaSS Attrition rate
2000/01 – before Advice Shop commenced	6%
2001/02	5%
2002/03	3.3%
2003/04	2.5%
2004/05	3.3%
2005/06	3.6%
2006/07	3.7%
2007/08	3.9%

For the purposes of attrition analysis, the following graphs present a picture of the attrition activity of the total number of students (235) who left HaSS during the 08/09 academic year.

Total attrition pattern 08-09

- withdrawn — 62%
- suspended study — 31%
- transferred out — 7%

The attrition figures above take account of students transferring out of HaSS either to other UG Faculties or other HEIs. In addition, during the period under review there were a total of 61 transfers between HaSS awards, continuing the reduction in this type of activity as shown below:

Year	Number of transfers
2007/08	115
2006/07	135

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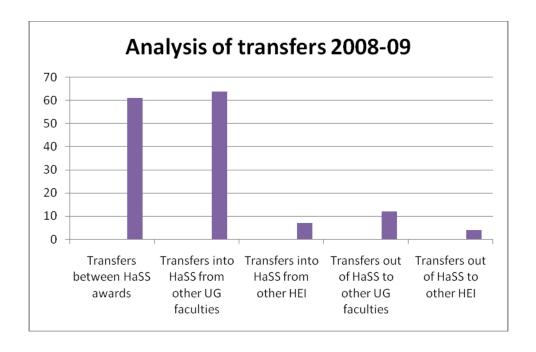
[1] Taken from SID July 09

2005/06	222
2004/05	225
2003/04	294
2002/03	273
2001/02	170

The most significant category of reasons given for student transfer in 84% of cases continues to be 'course unsuitable'. It is therefore considered important that the Advice Shop team and the Head of Learning and Teaching and Award tutors continue to work together to identify ways of reducing this particular issue.
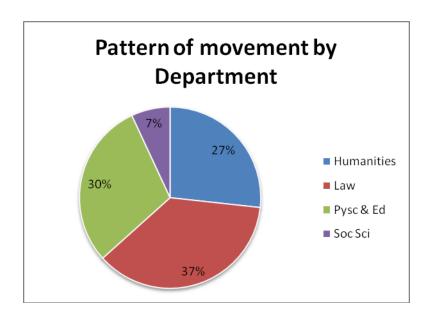
The number of transfers between Awards is partly attributable to students who may previously have withdrawn being offered alternative study opportunities, a successful intervention which has helped reduce the Faculty attrition rate. A small number of students are required to transfer after enrolment due to their 'course instance' not being available at enrolment.

Other transfer movements including those transferring into and out of the Faculty are shown below:

Student Movement by Department
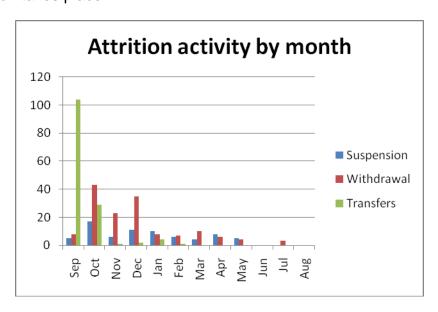
Student movement by Department is shown below. The figures indicate the proportion of withdrawn, suspended study or transferred students from each Department, and those transferring into the Departments from other UG Faculties or other HEIs, but do not include the movements of students transferring between awards within the Faculty.

The pattern of transfers between Awards within Faculty Departments is shown below and demonstrates that movements between Departments were much reduced this year.

Department	Transferred out	Transferred in	Balance
Humanities	16	16	0
Law	7	4	-3
Psyc, Ed & Careers	19	22	3
Social Sciences	19	19	0
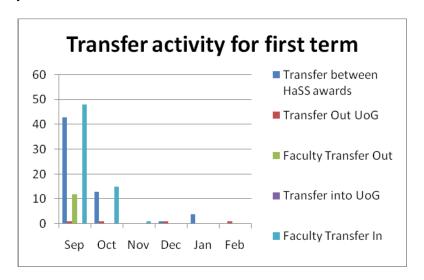
When attrition takes place
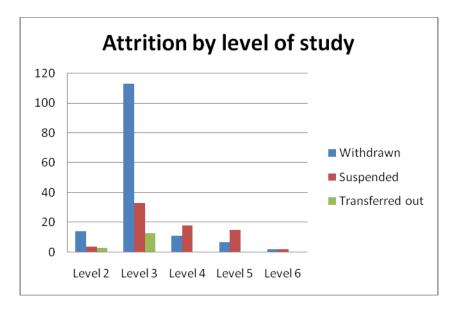
Analysis of student withdrawal/suspension or transfer out of the Faculty or University reveals that of the 235 students withdrawing, suspending or transferring out of the Faculty or University, 69% did so by the end of the first term, an increase compared to previous years. This continues to indicate the importance of our 'front-loading' of information, support, help and guidance. Significantly, a further 9% of the total withdrawals took place in January, a

marked fall compared to 20% of withdrawal at this time in 2007-08. The HaSS pattern continues to indicate that if we can support students through their first term and their initial return after the Christmas vacation, the majority are likely to complete their first year of study – a nationally recognised trait of student behaviour. This is often attributed to greater institutional involvement and a sense of belonging from level 5 and 6 students, compared with a far more transient sense of community amongst first years. The Advice Shop Manager is analysing the results of the student experience questionnaire to identify the extent of institutional belonging in our first year students and it is hoped that such work will continue to inform the University's approach to student retention.

The amount of transfer activity, which includes internal transfers between HaSS awards, and transfers into and out of HaSS from other UG Faculties or other HEIs, still represents a high volume of activity and is illustrated below.

Pattern of Attrition by Level of Study

The above graph illustrates where attrition takes place during the stages of study, and it is clear that level one students remain our target group for further reductions in attrition activity.

Reasons Given for Withdrawal/Suspension of Study

Students withdraw for many reasons; indeed we know that for many students the picture of issues behind the final reason is extremely complex. To illustrate this, consider the following case.

Student A telephoned the Advice Shop to discuss problems with her attendance. She is a mature student with a young daughter who has chronic health problems. Her daughter's health had been carefully managed and was considered to be under control to the extent that the student would, for the first time, be able to realise her dream of attending university. However, within three weeks of the start of term, her daughter's health rapidly and unexpectedly deteriorated, requiring urgent surgery. The student was hoping to continue with her studies in the meantime, but wanted to explain the reason for her absence. She anticipated being able to return to the University within four weeks. Subsequently to that her daughter's care needs changed in a way that had not been foreseen. This had a financial impact on the family and the student was unable to return to her studies. Taken separately, none of these events would have caused her to suspend her studies, but the accumulation of issues put her under too much pressure and resulted in her suspending study for this academic year.

Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'. An indication of the need for caution with regard to these categories is illustrated by the following case:

Student B called into the Advice Shop saying she wished to transfer her award of study but remain within HaSS. Her reason for choosing to transfer was because she felt the new award would better suit her ambitions for career choice. In this very straight-forward example, the student could have ticked course unsuitable (because in her eyes the current award was unsuitable for her purposes) academic (because part of her thinking was based on her academic preference), employment (because she had taken advice from the Careers Centre and two prospective employers and was aiming to meet their needs) or personal (because ultimately it was a personal decision). As the University works towards improving information about attrition, it is clear that those responsible for recording categories of withdrawal must use reliable data collection methods as it would be easy to make data collection errors which result in unreliable analysis.

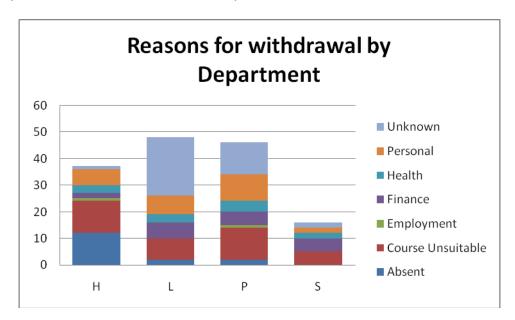**Categories of reason for leaving**

It is clear that the leading category of withdrawal or suspension for HaSS students in 2008/09 was course unsuitability, followed by 'personal' a continuing trend when compared to data from previous years.
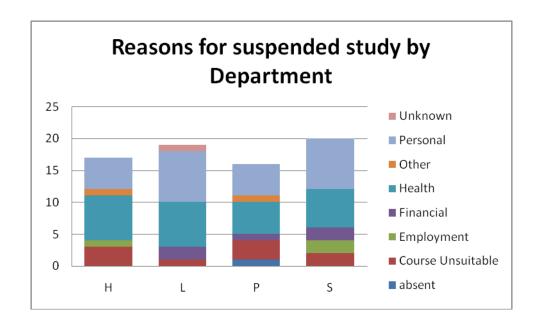
When the categories for leaving are separated by type of decision, i.e whether to withdraw, suspend or transfer, the results are as follows:

Reason for leaving by decision type

The categories of **withdrawal** by Department are shown below. It is apparent that Humanities and Psychology, Education & Careers students are proportionally more like to withdraw due to a mismatch between their expectations of the course and their experience than those in other Departments.
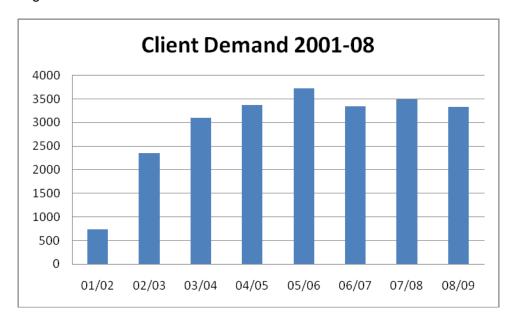
The categories of **suspended study** by Department are as follows:
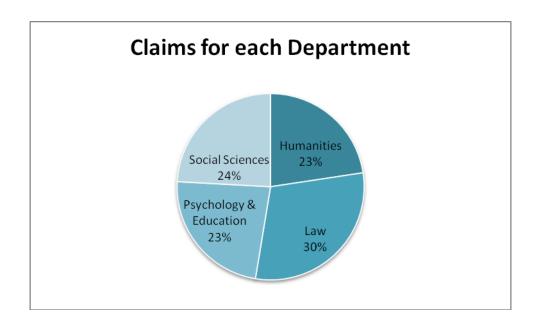
Analysis of Clients Using the Advice Shop

In 2008/09 there were 3327 student visits to the Advice Shop, a slight rise on the figure for 07/08. Usage over time is shown below.

Client Demand 2001-08

Students requiring answers to brief questions or enquiries such as staff telephone numbers, room numbers, term dates, change of address details and so on have not been formally recorded, but an estimate of numbers of ad hoc queries is included. Every student who has required advice via interview has been recorded using client information sheets and entered into the Advice Shop database. During 08/09 125 students have required advice interviews with either Karen Fitzgibbon or Carol Sanders for personal and academic issues affecting their ability to study. It should be noted that this figure does not represent the total number of interviews carried out however, as students often return on three or four separate occasions for further advice interviews. Several students were on a weekly visiting schedule to check progress and these were seen during each teaching week.   A reasonable estimation of the number of interviews carried out is to allow 3 interviews per student – giving a total of 375 interviews.

Students wishing to change their status of study by withdrawing, transferring or suspending their study have resulted in a further 352 interviews. In addition, approximately 800 students have taken advice about submitting mitigating circumstances claims, resulting in 724 claims being made. The distribution of claims by department is shown below:

Claims for each Department

Telephone and email contact is also regularly made – approximately 25 telephone calls and 15 emails per day are received and dealt with and these are not counted in the figures given below.

Finally, we monitored the attendance of 575 students per week resulting in letters and telephone calls during each teaching week. A total of 282 attendance letters were sent, and these resulted in further advice interviews which are not shown in the figures below. In addition, there were many tutor referrals for modules which were not routinely monitored, requesting that we follow up students with poor or sporadic attendance.

Total demand:

Advice interviews (allowing 3 per student)	375
Interviews about change of status	352
Mitigating circumstances enquiries	800
Ad hoc queries	1800
Total number of physical interviews/enquiries	**3327**

The demand for advice interviews has been fairly constant, with predictable peaks around exam time. The number of casual callers has also been constant and these are predominantly level four students. The demand for advice has continued throughout the summer period in terms of telephone contact. Requests for mitigating circumstances have remained fairly constant during the year.

Estimation of financial savings for Faculty:

Each student prevented from withdrawing through intervention saves the Faculty £4,830.60[2] per annum in fees and funding.

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[2] Figure calculated by Business Manager and averaging fee and funding income of ASC Humanities and Social Sciences

It is possible to calculate the ongoing funding & fees saved during the eight years of Advice Shop operation by comparing current attrition levels with those at the commencement of the service. If the Faculty attrition rate had remained at 6% during the last six years, and assuming that half of those lost would be first year students, the revenue lost to the Faculty would have amounted to £13,599,176 over the period whereas the revenue lost to the Faculty through the reduction of the attrition rate over the last six years and repeating the approximate split of half those lost being first years is £7,833,016. This approximation allows us to calculate the revenue savings by reducing the in year attrition rate over the period of the Advice Shop operation – the amount saved is £5,766,160.

Our reputation as a Faculty which cares for and supports our students should not be underestimated in terms of added value, particularly in the light of much of our market being from the immediate locality. The benefits to individual students who turn their situation around include increased confidence, personal satisfaction and enhanced life skills.

Review of Initiatives and Interventions

Student Interventions

The following interventions have all been established in the academic period under review and are direct interventions between the Advice Shop and HaSS students.

Electronic attendance monitoring project

The successful pilot project in 2005/06 established the need for supportive student attendance monitoring and its role in encouraging students back into the classroom after absence. The importance of the work in monitoring student attendance continues to offer the most effective way of reaching students who are struggling but not proactively seeking advice and support. The software developers launched the new version of their product in September 08. Attendance monitoring staff in the Advice Shop underwent further training and successfully operated the new system throughout 08-09.

Student feedback on the system in use is consistently positive with 82% of those responding to a short survey saying that the system is making a positive difference in their attendance patterns. Staff have also continued to support the value of the system and the improvement in student attitudes to attendance has been reported by some.

Telephoning non-returners

The process of telephoning students who were listed as pre-registered after enrolment has been embedded in University protocol in conjunction with Student Registry, Student Admin Managers and Faculty Advice Shop Managers. Students gave a variety of reasons for choosing not to continue with their studies, and many who were uncertain about whether to continue were offered appropriate guidance. This process helped to quickly correct a number of student records in each Faculty, resulting in more accurate class lists and ultimately Field and Award Board information.

In 2008-09 students with incomplete progression or those required to repeat their current year of study were contacted immediately after results were released in a

joint initiative between the Faculty Administration and Advice Shop teams. The Student Admin Manager noted a rise in the number of resit coursework submissions, whilst the Advice Shop team were able to gain a clearer picture of whether students offered a repeat year would actually be returning. This in turn has provided greater clarity for student number planning.

Contacting 'Suspended Study' students

The Advice Shop contacted all students who, at the time of suspending their studies, indicated a September 2008 return date. The students received a letter inviting them to return, giving them details of enrolment dates/times and offering them an appointment to discuss their return or to continue their suspension. This resulted in 33 students returning after a period of suspended study. HaSS continues to be very successful amongst the Faculties for re-engaging suspended students with their studies and influencing their progression and the students are particularly appreciative of the ongoing contact the Advice Shop makes with them during their suspension of study. The Advice Shop Manager is working with Dr Jane Prince to explore whether any pattern exists between the type of reason causing the suspension of study and the likelihood of return to study. It is hoped that such information is useful in the future to positively advise students who are considering suspension.

Plagiarism referrals

Students whose poor practice had led to allegations of plagiarism have been referred to the Advice Shop by academic staff. The Advice Shop has been able to provide guidance concerning the process of investigation, as well as follow-up contact concerning good referencing technique and onward referral to the Education Drop-in Centres.

'Parent to Parent'

The information contained in the 'Parent to Parent' leaflet for HaSS students has been incorporated into one of the Marketing publications aimed at parents, thus ensuring the continuation of this intervention which has proved popular with parents in the past.

QuestionMark Perception Project

The success of the two learner support tools developed in 2007/08 has continued. Both tools ('Early Days' and 'Study Health Check') use QuestionMark Perception to deliver a self-assessment tool to enable students to identify whether their study patterns and behaviours are leading them towards successful completion or to a summer spent completing resit exams and coursework. 'Early Days' was designed by the Advice Shop Managers from all the Faculties and provides orientation advice and guidance for all new students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and is available just after enrolment. Study Health Check is for all students, whatever level, and provides advice and guidance concerning successful study and how to access information to overcome difficulties. Both proved popular with students with approximately 1200 accessing them over the year. External interest in the tools has been wide and several successful conference presentations have resulted in future collaborative work currently being planned with colleagues from other UK universities.

Student Experience Questionnaire

In order to support information gained about students' academic experiences through the use of module evaluations, a student experience questionnaire was developed by the Advice Shop Managers in conjunction with the Heads of Learning and Teaching. It was developed using QuestionMark Perception and distributed to students in May 2008. The data provided by the survey, and subsequent analysis, provided information about the wider student experiences including social integration, study habits and the extent of involvement with the university. The survey was considered to be of immense value to the Student Lifecycle work being led by Professor Clive Mulholland and was repeated in May 2009.

Faculty Advice Shops Review

The Advice Shop Review report contained 15 recommendations. The main report confirmed the value of the Advice Shops to the University and recommended that the function be permanently integrated into each Faculty with continuing academic leadership. Copies of the review report are available if colleagues would like to read the report in full.

Referral to other services

The need for ongoing referral is quite small compared with the overall advisory service provided by the Advice Shop as approximately 85% of students are satisfied that their issues have been dealt with by their Faculty advisor and do not need onward referral. However, contact with other University support departments including the centres comprising Student Services, and the Education Drop-In Centres is maintained. These contacts mean that we can make appointments on behalf of students who need other services and this system of smooth referral is exactly what we envisaged for providing a seamless support service to HaSS students. Usage figures provided by Student Services demonstrate that 20% of all client visits were from Hass students. Reciprocal referral also takes place as appropriate.

Evaluation programme

A new evaluation programme to capture student and staff feedback has been underway this year. Clients have been encouraged to complete a brief evaluation of their visit. A limited number have been received and the comments have been very positive.

In addition to the student comments, staff throughout the University were invited to give their views about the Advice Shop provision across the institution. The number of academic staff who refer students to the Advice Shop was 90%, with 71% viewing the Advice Shop as a useful resource. When asked if they felt the Advice Shop had an impact on the student experience, 65% felt they made a positive impact(27% expressed no opinion), and 63% felt that they made a positive impact on academic staffs' role. There were many comments received, the vast majority of which were positive and we anticipate repeating this evaluation in the future.

Study experiences of withdrawn students

In order to provide comparable data the student experience questionnaire (referred to above) was amended and sent to all withdrawn students. Results of the analysis currently underway may help us to identify possible differences between the social and academic integration of students who continue and those who leave their studies early. In turn, this will

provide the Faculty with firm information on which to introduce planned initiatives to further reduce the attrition rate. This work is informed by the Yorke and Longden study and Professor Bernard Longden has expressed an interest in following up on the results of this work.

Provision for 2009-10

Unfortunately the staffing level within the Advice Shop has been reduced and the current level of provision is unlikely to continue. Two fixed term posts have not been renewed – the student attendance co-ordinator and the mitigating circumstances administrator. It is doubtful therefore that large scale attendance monitoring will continue in 2009-10. The most likely impact of this will be reflected in the in-year attrition rate as this critical intervention is the most effective way we have of reaching those students who are slipping away from their studies and not seeking direct support during the year. The future of the remaining initiatives which have proved successful in addressing retention for the Faculty is uncertain at this time.

Faculty Advice Shops - Review of First Year of Operation 2006-07

Executive Summary

Having established the success of faculty-based student support with the HaSS Advice Shop model, the four new Faculty Advice Shops (FAS) had opened to students by September 2006. The information contained in this report is taken from the evaluation reports of the FAS provision in 2006-07 produced by each Advice Shop Manager[1] for dissemination within their faculty, and as such presents a composite view of the FAS rather than an expanded narrative.

The report contains the following sections:

1. Details of baseline FAS service provision
2. Number of students visiting FAS
3. Timing of attrition across all Faculties
4. Categories of withdrawal/suspension reasons across all Faculties
5. Initiatives introduced in addition to baseline service provision
6. Feedback from students
7. Contribution to institutional procedures
8. Action plans for 07/08
9. Reflections on the first year of operation

In summary:

- Over 13,000 student visits
- University on campus key withdrawal points are October and January
- Major category of attrition for on campus students is 'personal reasons'
- Baseline provision successfully established to ensure parity of student experience of FAS
- Six additional faculty-specific major interventions established

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[1] Sue Stocking (AT) Leann Davies (Assistant ASM CCI), Julie Prior (GBS), Karen Fitzgibbon (HaSS) Mary Ayre (HeSaS)

Context

In September 2001 a pilot project known as the Student Advice Shop was launched in the (then) School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The pilot was established to respond to a rise in the number of students withdrawing early from their studies, and staff opinion that students were frequently confused by the availability of disparate support services and unsure which service they should access depending on the nature of their query.

Although the School had a fully functioning School Office, staffed by well-trained and responsive administrative teams, the School Senior Management Team felt there was a need for a co-ordinated approach to providing student advice and providing a signposting service to direct students (and staff) to appropriate support departments or services depending on the nature of their query. A further role of the Advice Shop Manager was to investigate the patterns of student withdrawal, implement pedagogically sound interventions designed to address critical points of risk through collaboration with academic staff and work with administrative staff to amend administrative processes and thereby facilitate an improved student experience.

The pilot project lasted until 2003 when the Advice Shop was embedded as a permanent feature of the School. This successful approach to School-based student support continued to make a contribution to reducing in-year student withdrawal, and resulted in increased usage of University support services and departments as well as a number of innovative interventions designed to address key risk moments in the student learning experience.

In 2005 Directorate made the decision to restructure the University into Faculties and with this restructuring, to employ the HaSS model of School-based student support by establishing Student Advice Shops in each of the new Faculties.

By September 2006 the new Faculty Advice Shops (FAS) were open to students. Each FAS would offer a consistent level of service, but the model and structure of each FAS was Faculty determined. The following narrative provides a review of that first year experience.

1.0   Baseline Provision

To ensure parity of student experience of faculty advice services, the collection of comparable data, and a common approach to the use of such data, the Advice Shop Managers (ASM) agreed a minimum level of provision to be established during 2006-07, the objectives of which were as follows:

- Set up and run the Faculty Advice Shop (FAS);
- Promote the FAS and its activities
- Provide support for students within the Faculty;
- Identify retention issues across awards/ modules;
- Identify 'at risk' students/points in the academic year;
- Develop intervention processes;

- Develop and inform research programmes for FAS managers;
- Develop IT systems to support all FAS activities.

The services provided are in addition to existing student support in the faculties and work in conjunction with both academic and administrative staff in two main areas, student-facing and operational functions as detailed below:

(a)   Student Facing Functions:

Drop-in service (Mon to Friday 9 – 4)/Appointment system to provide:

FAS awareness
Academic advice
Pastoral care
Suspend studies/ withdrawals/ transfers advice
Mitigating circumstances advice
Referral to other faculties and support departments

(b)   Operational Functions

Raising FAS awareness with Faculty staff
Establishing appropriate Mitigating Circumstances process
Preparation for and involvement in open days, induction etc.
Maintaining a record of student visits
Designing and implementing intervention processes
Attendance at relevant meetings
Communicating between faculty staff, students and other university support departments.
Use data captured to produce a research programme for ASMs.

How the baseline provision has been achieved in operational terms

(a) Advice Shop Managers Meetings

The achievement of a common approach to student support within the faculties has been realised in the main by the use of an inclusive weekly meeting between the ASMs. Action minutes were used as the vehicle for ensuring a consistent approach to a range of tasks. A shared vision and common desire to ensure the FAS made a difference to the support of students characterised the working culture of the group. A range of colleagues from support departments willingly participated in the meetings in guest spots and provided information about their departmental functions which in turn fed into the procedures for referring students, informing staff of useful services and generally improving understanding of the myriad of support functions within the University.

(b) Faculty Advice Shop Team Meetings

To ensure that the FAS teams were updated with such information, regular team meetings were established where the ASM would cascade information as appropriate. Teams were encouraged to establish contact with their counterparts in other FAS and have gradually grown their own successful network.

(c) Professional Support in Practice

The ASMs meet as a group with the University Staff Counsellor who facilitates a monthly Professional Support in Practice meeting, following the model of supervision used by professional counsellors. This provides much-needed space to share concerns about difficult issues raised by clients of the FAS services, and practice in general.

(d) Research meetings

The ASMs meet every six weeks to discuss the range of research projects they are involved in and to engage in the preparation of articles and conference papers. This has resulted in several projects examples of which include:

- the continuation of the HEA funded work concerning Computing students expectations of HE (Sue Stocking, AT). Outcome: two conference papers
- the ongoing collaboration with an Australian university researching into inclusivity in the engineering disciplines and related sciences (Mary Ayre, HeSaS) Outcome: joint authored book contract agreed
- the investigation of the link between first year student attendance and module results (Karen Fitzgibbon, HaSS) Outcome: journal article publication pending
- pre-entry predictors of undergraduate business students' proclivity to successfully complete their degree (Julie Prior, GBS). Outcome: research instrument being designed using QuestionMark Perception software
- improving technology interfaces between student record systems to create reliable picture of student engagement (Leann Davies, CCI). Outcome: conference paper abstract in preparation

In addition, the ASMs collectively presented a paper at an international conference and submitted a chapter for inclusion in the European First Year Experience monograph.

(e) Training

Student Services have provided intensive training sessions for ASMs and FAS teams including listening and helping skills, and awareness of the centres comprising Student Services.

(f) Committee membership

Sharing of information, practice and engagement comes from the range of committees at which the ASMs are represented. These include: Fees and Scholarships, First Experience, Student Achievement Group, Heads of Learning and Teaching, a number of FQACs, several Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committees, Mitigating Circumstances, Faculty Boards and Faculty Executive.

2.0   Number of students visiting FAS

The number of student visits to the FAS has been encouraging; particularly the early take up of opportunities for advice in the four new FAS.

Figures representing the total number of student visits are shown below and include ad hoc enquiries, advice interviews, change of status interviews (for withdrawal, suspension of study or transfer) and attendance follow-up interviews. The figures do not include the number of students being tracked weekly for attendance (approximately 800 in HaSS, 500 in AT and 300 in GBS).
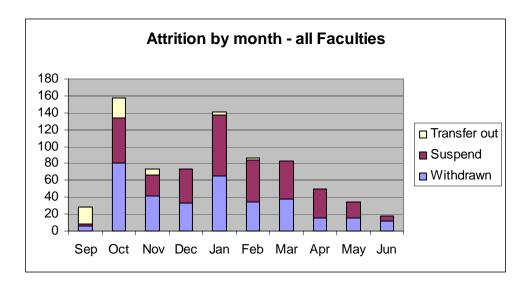
AT	4000
CCI	1000
GBS	3328
HaSS	3200
HeSaS[2]	2245
Total	13773

3.0   Timing of attrition across all Faculties

As a result of the data gathered by the FAS teams, it is possible for the first time to compare the picture of when withdrawal, suspension or transfer activity takes place during the academic year across all Faculties. The graph below provides clear evidence of two main points of student attrition. For withdrawal the peak is clearly October followed by January, whilst the main period for suspension of study is January. The majority of students transferring out of their Faculty, or out of the University do so in September or October.

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[2] includes Faculty Advice Shop plus Student Support Advisor

Attrition by month - all Faculties

Seeing the complete picture of in-year non-completion allows us to identify where future developments need to take place. FAS teams will continue to work in collaboration with academic and administrative colleagues to establish appropriate initiatives or interventions designed to support students at key risk points. This comparative picture will also assist us in monitoring the effectiveness of such interventions over time. Graphs demonstrating Faculty-specific attrition activity are included in the Appendix.

4.0   Categories of withdrawal/suspension reasons across all Faculties

Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'. An indication of the need for caution with regard to these categories is illustrated by the following case:

Student B called into the HaSS Advice Shop saying she wished to transfer her award of study but remain within HaSS. Her reason for choosing to transfer was because she felt the new award would better suit her ambitions for career choice.   In this very straight-forward example, the student could have ticked course unsuitable (because in her eyes the current award was unsuitable for her purposes), employment (because she had taken advice from the Careers Centre and two prospective employers and was aiming to meet their needs) or personal (because ultimately it was a personal decision).

From the illustration above, it is clear that those responsible for recording categories of withdrawal must use reliable data collection methods as it would be easy to make data collection errors which result in unreliable analysis. The FAS have developed systems to ensure that data capture is as robust as possible. Changes to the withdrawal/suspend study and transfer forms which will be introduced in 2007/08 also make a stronger connection between the narrative on the form and the required HESA code.

Students presenting to their FAS about withdrawing, suspending or transferring are provided with advice about possible options in a one to one interview. If ultimately the student decides to withdraw, then the information gathered in the interview is used to identify the appropriate category on the withdrawal form. All FAS teams work to ensure that they are recording an accurate record of the narrative reasons students provide, together with reliable decision-making about which category of withdrawal the student will be counted under. As can be seen from Figure 2, the dominant overall category is *Personal*, followed by *Course Unsuitable* and *Health*.

5.0   Initiatives introduced in 2006-07 in addition to the baseline provision

(a)   Faculty Advice Shop Student Admin System

With an objective of ensuring collection of consistent, reliable and comparable data, the ASMs were allocated a small resource to develop a database and reporting tool to record client information in a secure and confidential environment. The system was developed under the direction of Sue Stocking in AT and has been used in each of the Faculties with the FAS teams receiving training and support. During the academic year further updates to the system have been identified and these are detailed in the action plans in section 8 of the report. **Outcome:** consistent and reliable data gathered

(b)   Attendance monitoring

All the FAS are engaged in attendance monitoring with level 4 (year 1) students. HeSaS[3] and CCI have used a system based on selective module monitoring together with academic staff alerting the FAS to student absence. FAS staff then follow those students up to encourage them back into the classroom. Attendance monitoring in AT, GBS and HaSS is facilitated through an electronic system, with routine follow up of students missing two consecutive taught sessions. Both anecdotal and statistical evidence points to the success of such schemes, with students and staff both appreciative of the interventions used to encourage students to resume study. **Outcomes:** students and academic staff positive about electronic monitoring system; improved response rate targeting students at risk of early withdrawal.

(c)   Following up on non-submission of assessment

Both CCI and GBS routinely follow-up students who have not submitted coursework, advising them about possible mitigating circumstances claims, and generally discussing their progress. Some students contacted in this way then receive regular follow-up calls to check progress and provide support as necessary. Students are referred to their course leader/award tutor for further advice as appropriate. **Outcome:** improved tracking and support of students; cleaner Field/Award board data.

(d)   'Early Days' self diagnostic exercise

This innovative model of learning and support information for students has been developed using QuestionMark Perception in co-operation with the LCSS e-Support Team. Over the summer the ASMs built a database of questions and feedback designed to provide information and resources for (primarily) level 4 (year one) students. Students will be able to access the exercise online through GlamLife or BlackBoard. It takes approximately 10 minutes to complete and provides immediate feedback pointing students towards appropriate sources of information/support. Early Days will be launched in October 2007. **Outcome:** successful launch through GlamLife and BlackBoard.

(e)   'Study Health Check'

The partner to 'Early Days', the Study Health Check uses a similar format and is again developed using QuestionMark Perception software in collaboration with the LCSS e-Support Team. Designed to be used by all students, with a planned launch in January 2008, Study Health Check provides students with an opportunity to reflect on their progress to date. Using questions which provide immediate feedback, students are directed to resources including information and support designed to enhance their achievement opportunities. **Outcome:** final version in preparation ready for January 2008 launch.

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[3] Department of Sport and Science

(f)   GlamStart

Two of the ASMs were members of the GlamStart project team - a simulation of ten days in the life of a first year student. Other project team members included representatives from the LRC, Student Union, GlamLife, Student Services, and the e-Support and Blended Learning teams. GlamStart has had a successful launch with approximately 300 students having completed a game. Students using the FAS have been encouraged to participate and the evaluation of the simulation will include student feedback collected through the FAS. **Outcome:** successful launch in first week of teaching. ASMs to be involved in evaluation.

Existing Faculty initiatives which the FAS have contributed to:

(a)   PaSS/PaL

GBS and HaSS continue to successfully operate learning support schemes where students in level 5 (year 2) mentor those in level 4 (year 1). As a result of an agreement at the Student Achievement Group, 'students supporting students' is to be rolled out to all Faculties under the guidance of CeLL in the academic year 2008-09. **Outcome:** initiative to be rolled out to all Faculties in 2008 (CeLL to lead).

(b)   Summer revision programme

AT and GBS held summer revision sessions over a week long period prior to the resit examinations. **Outcome:** Results from AT indicate that 90% of the students attending the revision session passed their resit exams; GBS reported of the 28 students attending, 27 progressed into their second year of study.

6.0   Student feedback on FAS provision

(a)   Glamlife AS surveys

In May 2007 we ran a quick poll on GlamLife to get some student feedback about the FAS across campus. The poll was live for one week. We had 67 responses, 55 of whom were aware of the FAS and 40 of whom had used an Advice Shop. The most popular way of contacting a FAS was to drop in (as opposed to pre-arranged appointment, phone call or email). Of the 29 respondents that expressed an opinion 20 were either very satisfied or satisfied with the service provided, and 7 were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Students were asked to make a comment in free text about their experience and the following are a random sample of those received:

- The advice shop is somewhere for the students to go when they need to find out information when their lecturers don't know.

- The staff were very willing and helpful.

- They answered all my questions and were very fast doing it. They also replied to email and calls within a reasonable time.

- Well, they sorted out my problem straightaway and were quiet [sic] helpful

- The service has been satisfying because the advice shop gave me the information I wanted. It is good to have it at student's disposal.

- One of the best services provided for students

- They are very helpful but the office is very small – when people are handing in coursework it can get very crowded.

- problem dealt with in a quick way, very helpful, friendly

(b)   Internal Student Survey (ISS) results

Question 8 of the ISS asked students to comment whether they have 'called into your Faculty's Advice Shop to get help with any issue to do with your studies. Taking the 310 respondents, CELT[4] reported the Faculty breakdown as follows:

Faculty	Often	Sometimes	Infrequently	Total
AT	10%	17%	12%	39%
CCI	5%	5%	34%	44%
GBS	5%	15%	19%	39%
HaSS	8%	14%	31%	53%
HeSaS	6%	10%	24%	40%

(c)   Student stories

There are many stories behind the students that use the FAS service. Presented here are the anonymised stories of three of those students and the part their FAS played in supporting them through this academic year.

Student A called into the Advice Shop for help with her timetable. She felt completely overwhelmed and was thinking that if she couldn't understand the timetable how on earth she would cope with studying a degree. She had been lost on campus twice, and was panicking at the thought of finding her classes in the first week of teaching. She could not understand that the block names did not match the room letters inside and felt she must be in the wrong place. The advisor she met with explained the timetable, the nature of lectures and seminars, and

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[4] Paper tabled at HoLT Meeting 7 June 2007

the layout of the campus. The advisor also recommended that the student look at the map layout and general information on GlamStart. The student was encouraged to return to the FAS if she had any difficulties navigating her way around. The student was very reassured by the welcoming approach she had received and the nature of the advice provided. She returned once during the following week due to a timetable change, and has since settled well into her studies.

Student B had been contacted as a result of attendance monitoring. A year one student, he had been struggling with his studies due to drug-related issues. He had been through a rehabilitation programme prior to commencing his studies but felt that the pressure of work was threatening his ability to stay clean. After his advice interview he was put in touch with Student Services Mental Health Advisor and received regular support from both his FAS and the MHA during the academic year. He successfully completed the year.

Student C had been diagnosed with depression and had attempted suicide. Her mum contacted the FAS to ask about mitigating circumstances. The student then came into the FAS for further support and was regularly monitored during the year at coursework submission points and throughout the academic year. She also worked with a member of the Counselling and Advisory Service. She successfully passed all her assessments and progressed cleanly to the next year of study.

There are many more student stories, some far less typical than these, and each have been helped, supported and advised by the support services in the University working in collaborative partnership. It is often the case that students will be receiving advice from Student Services, the Education Drop-in Centre as well as their academic tutors and FAS. Through the strong collaborative partnerships which have evolved the student passes through this support provision in an often seamless way. Each of the services contributing to that experience is gratefully acknowledged and the sharing of good practice continues to benefit of all students within the University.

7.0   Contribution to institutional procedures

Whilst the majority of the interventions are designed to support the learning experience of students through the application of good pedagogical practice, it is also the case that the FAS teams have collaborated with Student Admin Managers and Academic Registry to strengthen institutional procedures which contribute to improving student retention or to the data captured about student movement. Examples are:

(a)   Follow-ups of pre-registered students

Students who were expected to return to their studies who had not enrolled by week 3 of the term were all contacted by their FAS. This in turn led to a new

policy developed in conjunction with the ASMs and led by Denise Williams to ensure that a consistent approach was taken. Non-returning students are contacted and encouraged to return to their studies. Clear guidance and advice is provided where students are eligible for a lower award, or where suspension of study, or withdrawal is appropriate. The new procedure also contributed to improvements in student data, particularly concerning the reasons why students were not returning to study.

(b)   Amended procedure for processing withdrawal/suspension of study/transfer

During the academic year, and in consultation with Student Registry and Student Administration Managers, the ASMs led the amendment of the University procedure for withdrawal/suspension and transfer of students. The new procedure streamlines the process and provides clarity to students and staff and has proved effective in practice.

(c)   Changes to withdrawal/suspension of study forms

In order to improve data collection from withdrawal forms, and ensure consistent reporting under HESA codes of withdrawal/suspension, the ASMs have, in consultation with Student Registry, made amendments to the University withdrawal/suspend study forms. The new forms will be available from October 2007.

8.0   Action plans for 07/08

In addition to maintaining the baseline provision throughout the University and continuing with the initiatives outlined in section 5 above, there are some further planned developments to take effect in the new academic year as follows:

(a)   Additional Faculty-specific interventions

- AT will interview all repeat year students at the commencement of their repeat year of study to help this particularly high risk group identify study approaches which improve achievement.

- CCI will continue to explore system integration between procedures such as assessment submission, mitigating circumstances applications and attendance monitoring. It is hoped that after a pilot phase, the methods for integrating such systems will be rolled out to the other FAS. Creating better data about the student journey will enhance opportunities for further targeted interventions where they are most needed, and will greatly assist the FAS in directing resources in the most effective ways.

- GBS will be helping to pilot GlamChat in collaboration with the LCSS e-Support Team. Modelled on popular chatroom applications, it is anticipated that providing social space for online interaction amongst

discrete groups of students will improve their sense of institutional belonging, a prominent factor in successful student retention research.

- HaSS will follow up the successful 'Parent to Parent' leaflet with the provision of online information for parents of first year students. Parents of successful students were asked at graduation to provide information or tips that they would have appreciated as parents of new students. The resulting comments were built into a leaflet distributed to new students at enrolment (they chose whether to give the leaflet to their parents!). The leaflet was very well received, with a number of parents ringing to say how much they welcomed the information provided. Teesside University have adopted the Glamorgan approach and are also gathering parental thoughts for inclusion in induction information.

(b)   Special Projects for 2007-08

- Pathway to Graduation is an existing orientation programme developed in HaSS. During 07-08 the programme will be reviewed by the ASMs and considered for online development on BlackBoard.

- The ASMs are working jointly to develop an online questionnaire for all first year students to improve our knowledge of the make-up of our undergraduate population. Julie Prior (GBS ASM) is leading the development and it is hoped that the information gathered will, for the first time, ensure the University is able to fully understand the attitudes and aspirations of our undergraduate population.

9.0   Reflections on the first year of operation

Reflecting on the year the ASMs are all agreed that the challenge of providing a consistent level of student support has been a demanding one, with hundreds of enquiries being dealt with on a weekly basis by the FAS teams. Whilst many students make more than one visit to their FAS, the primary goal of 'support with purpose' is maintained at all times, and no students have developed a dependency on the provision. All FAS teams provide advice, help and support in such as way as to encourage students to develop and improve their coping and independence skills rather than creating support dependency.

Having a blend of academic and administrative roles in the FAS has undoubtedly contributed to the success of the provision. All the ASMs hold academic contracts and are active members of the teaching and research communities within their Faculties. As such they are well-placed to engage in critical enquiry and academic debate with colleagues who in turn respond positively to ideas and suggestions for FAS interventions or initiatives. This professional relationship has also meant that student enquiries can be quickly directed to the appropriate colleagues, thus facilitating improved communication and action. As has been demonstrated in this report, the
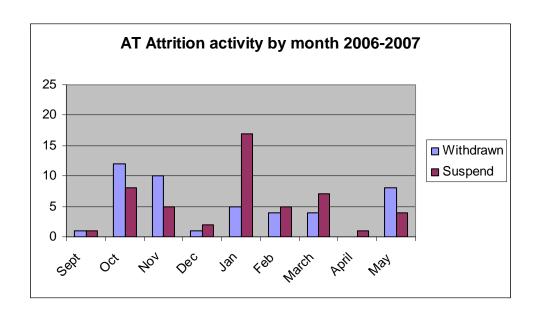
nature of the academic role in terms of critical enquiry, pedagogical research and appropriate intervention has also contributed to the success of the FAS provision.
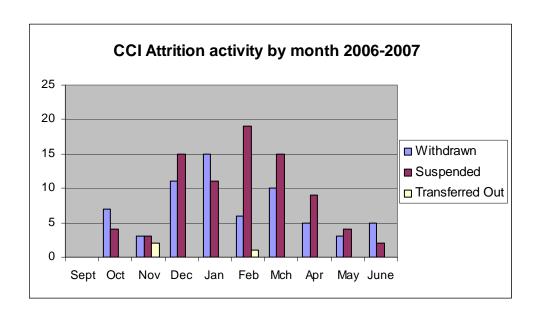
It is clear that the ability to provide reliable data concerning student retention is of paramount importance to the institution and now that appropriate methods have been established, the additional data gathered will help inform critical enquiry into student retention. This in turn will lead to pedagogically sound interventions which will support improvements in student achievement. The ASMs recognise the value in working in collaboration with Faculty staff - both academic and administrative – as well as those in Corporate Support Departments and the successful approach developed to collaborative task management will continue. One comment from a senior management colleague has been to describe the ASMs as the academic interface of the Faculty, able to work collaboratively with students, administrative and academic staff to contribute to the improvement of student achievement.

Over the year it has become clear that students view the services provided by their FAS as a valuable resource and this in turn has led to the realisation that rather than a Faculty Advice Shop, these services are becoming Faculty Advice Centres with clear synergies developing in some Faculties between student administration and the FAS.   Faculties will continue to develop specific models of student support at the point of need and such innovation and development is welcomed.
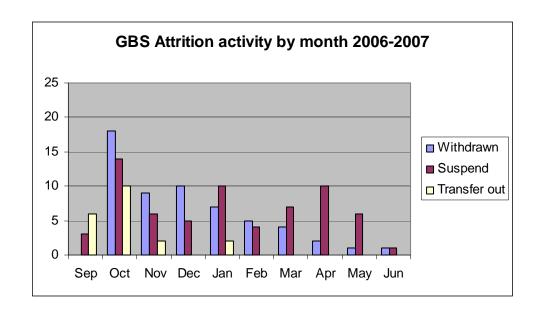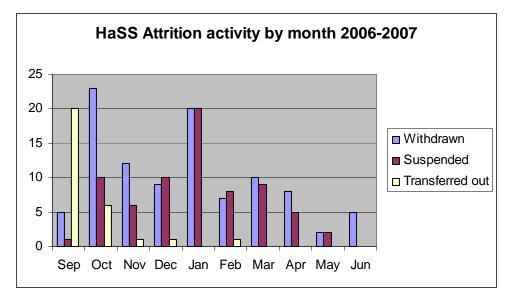
Appendix

Student Attrition[5] Activity by Month and Faculty

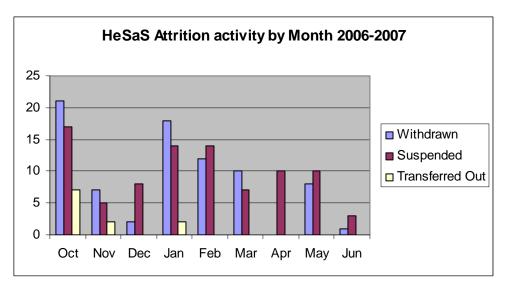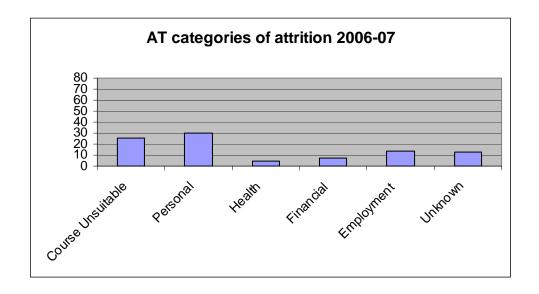**AT Attrition activity by month 2006-2007**

CCI Attrition activity by month 2006-2007

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[5] Recognised collective term for withdrawn or suspended students or those transferring out of the Faculty/Institution

GBS Attrition activity by month 2006-2007
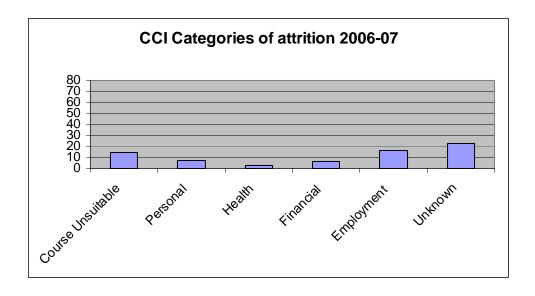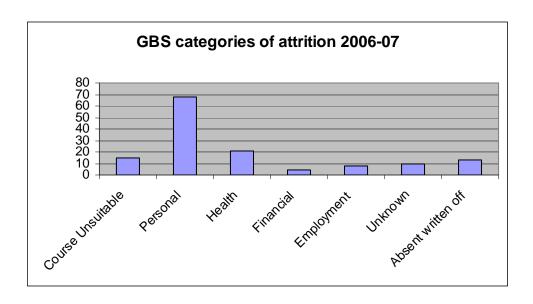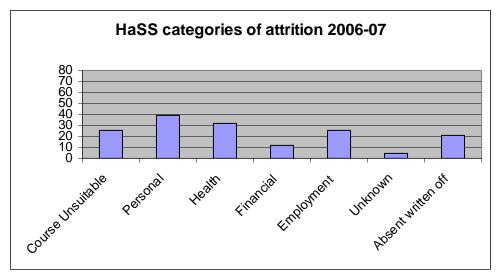

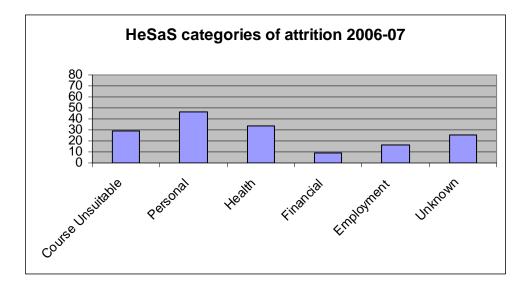HaSS Attrition activity by month 2006-2007

HeSaS Attrition activity by Month 2006-2007

Categories[6] of Student Attrition by Faculty

AT categories of attrition 2006-07

CCI Categories of attrition 2006-07

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[6] Please note caution on data as detailed in Section 4.0

GBS categories of attrition 2006-07

HaSS categories of attrition 2006-07

HeSaS categories of attrition 2006-07

Faculty Advice Shops - Review of Operation 2007-08

Executive Summary

The information contained in this report is taken from the evaluation reports of the Faculty Advice Shop (FAS) provision in 2007-08 produced by each Advice Shop Manager[1] for dissemination within their faculty, and as such presents a composite view of the FAS rather than an expanded narrative.

The report contains the following sections:

1. Details of baseline FAS service provision
2. Number of students visiting FAS
3. Timing of attrition across all Faculties
4. Categories of withdrawal/suspension reasons across all Faculties
5. Initiatives introduced in addition to baseline service provision
6. Feedback from students
7. Contribution to institutional procedures
8. Action plans for 08/09
9. Reflections on the second year of operation

In summary:

- Over 19,500 student visits
- University on campus key withdrawal points are October and January
- Major category of attrition for on campus students is 'personal reasons'
- Baseline provision successfully established to ensure parity of student experience of FAS
- Additional faculty-specific major interventions established

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[1] Sue Stocking (AT) Leann Davies (Deputy Registrar CCI), Julie Prior (GBS), Karen Fitzgibbon (HaSS) Mary Ayre (HeSaS)

1.0   Baseline provision

To ensure parity of student experience of faculty advice services, the collection of comparable data, and a common approach to the use of such data, the Advice Shop Managers (ASM) agreed a minimum level of provision to be established during 2006-07, the objectives of which have been reviewed in 2007-08 and are as follows:

- To maintain the Faculty Advice Shop (FAS) service;
- To promote the FAS and its activities, providing information on student support;
- To provide support for students within the Faculty;
- Identify retention issues across awards/ modules;
- Identify 'at risk' students and times during the academic year;
- To develop intervention processes;
- Develop and inform research programmes for FAS Managers;
- Develop and maintain collaborative processes and IT systems to support all FAS activities;
- Provide CPD for FAS teams.

The services provided are in addition to existing student support in the faculties and work in conjunction with both academic and administrative staff in two main areas, student-facing and operational functions as detailed below:

 Student-facing Functions

Provide a central contact point for student enquiries by offering a drop-in service (Mon to Friday 9 – 4)/appointment system to provide:
- FAS awareness
- Academic advice
- Pastoral care
- Suspend studies/ withdrawals/ transfers advice
- Regulatory advice
- Mitigating circumstances advice
- Signposting to other staff, faculties and support departments

Operational Functions
- FAS awareness to Faculty staff
- Mitigating Circumstances procedure
- Involvement in open days, applicant days, induction etc.
- Record keeping
- Intervention processes
- Attendance at relevant meetings
- Communication between Faculty staff, students and other university support departments.
- Research – to use data captured to produce a research programme for Advice Shop staff.

1.1 How the baseline provision has been achieved in operational terms

1.1.1 *Advice Shop Managers Meetings*

The achievement of a common approach to student support within the faculties has been realised in the main by the use of an inclusive weekly meeting between the ASMs. Action minutes were used as the vehicle for ensuring a consistent approach to a range of tasks. A shared vision and common desire to ensure the FAS made a difference to the support of students characterised the working culture of the group. A range of colleagues from support departments willingly participated in the meetings in guest spots and provided information about their departmental functions which in turn fed into the procedures for referring students, informing staff of useful services and generally improving understanding of the myriad of support functions within the University.

1.1.2 *Faculty Advice Shop Team Meetings*

To ensure that the FAS teams were updated with such information, regular team meetings were established where the ASM would cascade information as appropriate. Teams were encouraged to establish contact with their counterparts in other FAS and have gradually grown their own successful network. In the summer of 2007 functional teams held their own good practice meeting to share practice across the five FAS.

1.1.3 *Professional Support in Practice*

The ASMs meet as a group with the University Staff Counsellor who facilitates a monthly Professional Support in Practice meeting, following the model of supervision used by professional counsellors. This provides much-needed space to share concerns about difficult issues raised by clients of the FAS services, and practice in general.

1.1.4 *Research meetings*

The ASMs meet every six weeks to discuss the range of research projects they are involved in and to engage in the preparation of articles and conference papers. This has resulted in several projects examples of which include:

- the continuation of the HEA funded work concerning Computing students expectations of HE (Sue Stocking, AT). Outcome: two conference papers

- the ongoing collaboration with an Australian university researching into gender inclusivity in engineering disciplines and related sciences (Mary Ayre, HeSaS) Outcome: Contract signed with Routledge, two conference papers

- investigation of extent of student social experience at Glamorgan and relationship with social integration literature (Karen Fitzgibbon HaSS). Outcome: one conference paper presented, journal article in preparation.

- pre-entry predictors of undergraduate business students' proclivity to successfully complete their degree (Julie Prior, GBS). Outcome: online QMP questionnaire completed. Undergraduate version used with all GBS first year students. Piloted on MSc Management programme, available for use across the University. Outcome: one conference paper and invited to participate in collaborative bid to HEFCE with University of Huddersfield.

- measuring effectiveness of skills development (Leann Davies, CCI) by comparing experience and achievement of two groups of students in a longitudinal study. Outcome: conference paper abstract in preparation.

- successful joint authoring of chapter for First Year Experience monograph. Outcome: accepted for publication in '*International Perspectives on the First-Year Experience in Higher Education*'

1.1.5 *Training*

Student Services have provided intensive training sessions for ASMs and FAS teams including listening and helping skills, and awareness of the centres comprising Student Services. In 2007-08 they have provided refresher training for the teams to maintain up to date knowledge and connection with good practice.

1.1.6 *Committee membership*

Sharing of information, practice and engagement comes from the range of committees at which the ASMs are represented. These include: Fees and Scholarships, First Experience, Heads of Learning and Teaching, a number of FQACs, several Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committees, Mitigating Circumstances panels, Faculty Boards and Faculty Executive.

2.0   Number of students visiting FAS

The number of student visits to the FAS has been encouraging; particularly the early take up of opportunities for advice in the four newer FAS.

Figures representing the total number of student visits are shown below and include ad hoc enquiries, advice interviews, change of status interviews (for withdrawal, suspension of study or transfer) and attendance follow-up interviews.

AT	5,000
CCI	2,447[2]
GBS	6,026
HaSS	3,497
HeSaS[3]	2,627
Total	19,597

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[2] Does not include ad hoc queries due to the combined nature of provision in CCI
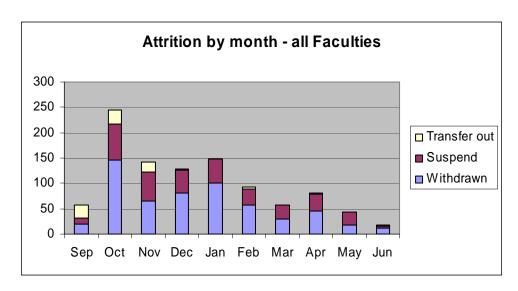[3] includes Faculty Advice Shop plus Student Support Advisor

The figures above do not include the number of students being tracked weekly for attendance – these are as follows:

AT	500 students across 59 modules
CCI	300 students across 8 modules
GBS	320 students across 23 modules
HaSS	720 students across 13 modules
HeSaS	220 students across 25 modules

3.0   Timing of attrition across all Faculties

As a result of the data gathered by the FAS teams, it is possible to compare the picture of when withdrawal, suspension or transfer activity takes place during the academic year across all faculties. The graph below provides clear evidence of two main points of student attrition. For withdrawal the peak is clearly October followed by January, whilst the period for suspension appears to be more fluid. The majority of students transferring out of their Faculty, or out of the University do so in September or October.

Seeing the complete picture of in-year non-completion allows us to identify where future developments need to take place. FAS teams will continue to work in collaboration with academic and administrative colleagues to establish appropriate initiatives or interventions designed to support students at key risk points. This comparative picture will also assist us in monitoring the effectiveness of such interventions over time. Graphs demonstrating Faculty-specific attrition activity are included in the Appendix.

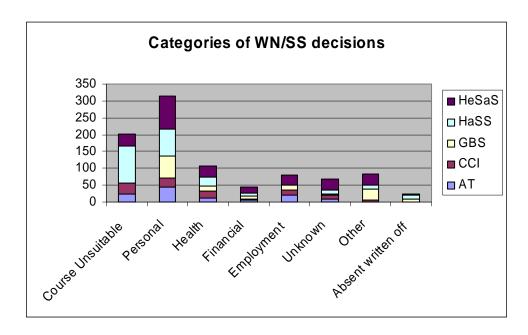## 4.0   Categories of withdrawal/suspension reasons across all Faculties

Students are requested to tick a category for withdrawal on the University withdrawal form. Analysis of these broad categories is given below but this should be treated with some caution and only used as an indicator of the

categories under which students make the decision to leave higher education, rather than as a 'reason for leaving'. An indication of the need for caution with regard to these categories is illustrated by the following case:

> Student B called into the HaSS Advice Shop saying she wished to transfer her award of study but remain within HaSS. Her reason for choosing to transfer was because she felt the new award would better suit her ambitions for career choice. In this very straight-forward example, the student could have ticked course unsuitable (because in her eyes the current award was unsuitable for her purposes), employment (because she had taken advice from the Careers Centre and two prospective employers and was aiming to meet their needs) or personal (because ultimately it was a personal decision).

From the illustration above, it is clear that those responsible for recording categories of withdrawal must use reliable data collection methods as it would be easy to make data collection errors which result in unreliable analysis. The FAS have developed systems to ensure that data capture is as robust as possible. Changes to the withdrawal/suspend study and transfer forms introduced in 2007/08 also make a stronger connection between the narrative on the form and the required HESA code.

Students presenting to their FAS about withdrawing, suspending or transferring are provided with advice about possible options in a one to one interview. If ultimately the student decides to withdraw, then the information gathered in the interview is used to identify the appropriate category on the withdrawal form. All FAS teams work to ensure that they are recording an accurate record of the narrative reasons students provide, together with reliable decision-making about which category of withdrawal the student will be counted under.

Categories of WN/SS decisions

5.0 Initiatives introduced in 2006-07 in addition to the baseline provision

5.1 *Attendance monitoring*

All the FAS are engaged in attendance monitoring with level 4 (year 1) students. HeSaS[4] and CCI have used a system based on selective module monitoring together with academic staff alerting the FAS to student absence. FAS staff then follow those students up to encourage them back into the classroom. Attendance monitoring in AT, GBS and HaSS is facilitated through an electronic system, with routine follow up of students missing two consecutive taught sessions. Both anecdotal and statistical evidence points to the success of such schemes, with students and staff both appreciative of the interventions used to encourage students to resume study. **Outcomes:** students and academic staff positive about electronic monitoring system; improved response rate targeting students at risk of early withdrawal.

5.2 *Following up on non-submission of assessment*

CCI, GBS and HaSS routinely follow-up students who have not submitted coursework, advising them about possible mitigating circumstances claims, and generally discussing their progress. Some students contacted in this way then receive regular follow-up contact to check progress and provide support as necessary. Students are referred to their course leader/award tutor for further advice as appropriate. **Outcome:** improved tracking and support of students; cleaner Field/Award Board data.

5.3 *'Early Days' self diagnostic exercise*

This innovative model of learning and support information for students was developed in 2006-07 using QuestionMark Perception. It was successfully launched to students in October 2007 and analysis of the initial completions has allowed us to identify key aspects of the student experience. **Outcome:** successful launch through GlamLife and BlackBoard. Analysis of student experience is helping to inform the next stage of Student Expectations project.

5.4 *'Study Health Check'*

The partner to 'Early Days', the Study Health Check uses a similar format and is again developed using QuestionMark Perception software in collaboration with the LCSS e-Support Team. Study Health Check was launched in January 2008. It was designed to be used by all students and provided an opportunity for them to reflect on their progress to date. Using questions which provide immediate feedback, students are directed to resources, information and support designed to enhance their achievement opportunities. **Outcome:** successful launch and use by over 600 students.

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[4] Department of Sport and Science

5.5   *GlamStart*

Two of the ASMs were members of the GlamStart project team - a simulation of ten days in the life of a first year student. Other project team members included representatives from the LRC, Student Union, GlamLife, Student Services, and the e-Support and Blended Learning teams. **Outcome:** ASMs involved in evaluation and recommended developments for 2008-09.

5.6   *CCI automated mitigating circumstances forms*

CCI have developed an integrated database that generates individually tailored mitigating circumstances forms, which has a dual benefit of reducing the time taken to match applications to the assessments when marks are being processed. The was created on the basis that it was not just required as a method for recording data, but one from which statistical data would need to be generated on a monthly/annual basis. Therefore the database was built around reporting requirements, which in essence are supported via three Q+ Discoverer reports. **Outcome:** Forms successfully generated. System provides additional data cleansing check on module set up on Q+ as the base data is generated with the support of two discoverer reports.

5.7.0   Existing Faculty initiatives which the FAS have contributed to:

5.7.1 *PaSS/PaL*

In preparation for the planned roll-out by CeLL under the name 'Students Supporting Students' proposed by the Student Achievement Group in 2006-07, GBS and HaSS will continue to operate learning support schemes where students in level 5 (year 2) mentor those in level 4 (year 1). **Outcome:** Effectiveness of the schemes will be monitored in 2008-09 prior to a final decision about roll-out.

5.7.2 *Summer revision programme*

AT and GBS held summer revision sessions over a week long period prior to the resit examinations. **Outcome:** Results from AT indicate that 90% of the students attending the revision session passed their resit exams; of the 28 students attending, 27 progressed into their second year of study. GBS reported that 17 of the 18 attendees re-enrolled (improving the full year attrition rate), with 15 of these students progressing into their second year of study.

6.0   Student feedback on FAS provision

6.1   *Polls on Glamlife*

Two polls (in November 07 and February 08) were conducted on GlamLife seeking student views on the FAS provision. Of the students completing the surveys, the majority (86% in November and 89% in February) were aware of their FAS. Of those that had used the service the most popular method of access was to drop in without an appointment (81% November and 76% February). Satisfaction with the service was high, with 77% in November, and 70% in February being either very satisfied or satisfied with the service received.

6.2   *Student stories*

There are many stories behind the students that use the FAS service. Presented here are the anonymised stories of two of those students and the part their FAS played in supporting them through their studies in 2007-08.

Student A called into the Advice Shop to discuss being bullied by other students and particular members of teaching staff. She was an overseas, mature student on a postgraduate course. The student was coping with her studies but felt that the bullying would soon start to impact on her results. After a number of interviews with the student and staff we realised that this was not a case of bullying but a symptom of a serious mental health issue. Working together with members of academic staff, student services and the on-campus nurse the student was finally admitted to hospital and given the appropriate medication to control her condition. With academic support she went on to successfully complete her studies and return home.

As part of the attendance monitoring process, a first year UG student was invited for an interview with the Advice Shop because of his sporadic attendance. The student was living in halls and (without parental input) was finding it difficult to get up in the mornings. He'd fallen into the habit of missing certain classes and subsequently had fallen behind with his studies. The student was keen to get back on track, but unsure how to achieve this. The Advice Shop supported the student in developing a study action plan and followed this up with some short-term weekly progress meetings. The Advice Shop also contacted Module staff to facilitate the students return to the classroom. The student re-engaged with his studies and subsequently successfully progressed to the second year.

There are many more student stories, some far less typical than these, and each have been helped, supported and advised by the support services in the University working in collaborative partnership. It is often the case that students will be receiving advice from Student Services, the Education

Drop-in Centre as well as their academic tutors and FAS. Through the strong collaborative partnerships which have evolved the student passes through this support provision in an often seamless way. Each of the services contributing to that experience is gratefully acknowledged and the sharing of good practice continues to benefit of all students within the University.

7.0 Contribution to institutional procedures in 2007-08

Whilst the majority of the interventions are designed to support the learning experience of students through the application of good pedagogical practice, it is also the case that the FAS teams have collaborated with Student Admin Managers, Academic Registry and Student Services to strengthen institutional procedures which contribute to improving student retention or to the data captured about student movement. Examples are:

7.1 *Changes to withdrawal/suspension of study forms*

In order to improve the information exchange between Academic Registry and the Student Loans Company, the ASMs worked in partnership with Academic Registry and the Student Admin Managers to develop electronic exchange of change of circumstances forms. The ASMs have also produced a shortened version of the University withdrawal/suspend/transfer forms to capture information not required by the SLC, but needed for institutional analysis of retention/attrition issues. The new process will take effect from October 2008.

7.2 *Fitness to Study Policy*

Working with Student Services, the ASMs have contributed to the production of a policy to support students who have difficulty continuing with their studies and are required to produce medical confirmation of their fitness to resume study. The policy will be debated at Academic Board but it is hoped that it will become effective from December 2008.

7.3 *Student Experience Questionnaire*

Following the success of the two learner support tools, Early Days, and Study Health Check, the ASMs were requested by the Heads of Learning & Teaching (HoLTs) to produce a questionnaire which captured the totality of the student experience outside of the classroom. The questionnaire was developed in time for distribution in May 2008. Analysis was provided to the HoLTs and will also inform the next phase of the Student Expectations Project.

7.4 *Student Personal Support*

In response to the audit of personal tutoring arrangements for students, the ASMs produced a paper for QEC which provided a framework for regulating personal support arrangements in the faculties. QEC accepted the framework

after consultation. Appropriate amendments were made to the Academic Handbook to ensure that the regulations reflected practice in the faculties.

7.5 *Contribution to Institutional Review*

The ASMs were involved in drafting two sections of the Self Evaluation Document (Personal Support, and Academic Guidance). Two ASMs met with the IR team during their visit. The outcome of the review included acknowledgement of good practice in the area of student support and the FAS are pleased to be able to contribute to this key area of recognition.

8.0 Review of action plans for 2007/08

In addition to maintaining the baseline provision throughout the University and continuing with the initiatives outlined in section 5 above, there were some further planned developments to take effect in 2007-08 and progress against targets is shown below:

8.1 *Additional Faculty-specific interventions*

- AT will interview all repeat year students at the commencement of their repeat year of study to help this particularly high risk group identify study approaches which improve achievement. **Outcome**: 153 students were contacted, 70 responded and 50 have returned to their studies.

- CCI will continue to explore system integration between procedures such as assessment submission, mitigating circumstances applications and attendance monitoring. It is hoped that after a pilot phase, the methods for integrating such systems will be rolled out to the other FAS. Creating better data about the student journey will enhance opportunities for further targeted interventions where they are most needed, and will greatly assist the FAS in directing resources in the most effective ways. **Outcome**: the system is now operational in CCI after some further amendments to include withdrawn/suspended students. It will be piloted further in 2008-09 before roll out.

- GBS will be helping to pilot GlamChat in collaboration with the LCSS e-Support Team. Modelled on popular chatroom applications, it is anticipated that providing social space for online interaction amongst discrete groups of students will improve their sense of institutional belonging, a prominent factor in successful student retention research. **Outcome**: students were reluctant to engage with the application. Feedback showed that they were regularly using existing social networking sites (such as Facebook, MySpace, MSN etc) and didn't wish to add another one. The GBS AS will not be continuing with the application.

- HaSS will follow up the successful 'Parent to Parent' leaflet with the provision of online information for parents of first year students. Parents of successful students were asked at graduation to provide information or tips that they would have appreciated as parents of new students. The resulting comments were built into a leaflet distributed to new students at enrolment (they chose whether to give the leaflet to their parents!). The leaflet was very well received, with a number of parents ringing to say how much they welcomed the information provided. Teesside University have adopted the Glamorgan approach and are also gathering parental thoughts for inclusion in induction information. **Outcome**: the content of the leaflet has been adopted by Marketing and published as part of the ParentSpace initiative.

8.2 *Update on Special Projects for 2007-08*

- Pathway to Graduation is an existing orientation programme developed in HaSS. During 07-08 the programme will be reviewed by the ASMs and considered for online development on BlackBoard**. Outcome**: work on the Student Experience Questionnaire meant that this project had to be postponed.

- Julie Prior (GBS ASM) has developed an online questionnaire for all first year students, to improve our knowledge of the make-up of our undergraduate population. It is hoped that the information gathered will, for the first time, ensure the University has a more holistic understanding of the profile of our undergraduate population. **Outcome**: the questionnaire has been piloted and is ready for use across the University.

9.0 Action Plans for 2008-09

In addition to maintaining the baseline provision throughout the University and continuing with the initiatives outlined in section 5 above as appropriate, there are some further planned developments to take effect in the next academic year as follows:

9.1 *University-wide initiatives*

- The staff in the Faculty Advice Shops are to be offered the opportunity for facilitated support in meetings run by Kerry Barnes, a Senior Counsellor within Student Services. The meetings will take place twice a term and will provide FAS staff with the opportunity to reflect on difficult cases, approaches and issues as part of their role. These meetings will not include the FAS Managers as it is considered important to provide a space which encourages honest reflection. This follows the success of the Professional Support in Practice meetings for the ASMs described earlier in this report.

- The ASMs will be delivering staff development for colleagues in partner and accredited colleges about the implementation of University

regulations concerning mitigating circumstances. There will be two phases to the training. Firstly, colleagues acting as Panel members and Chairs in accredited colleges will be invited to a training session in the University. Secondly, the ASMs will visit the partner colleges to conduct some training and advice sessions about the procedures and regulations appropriate to partner college students.

- The results from the Early Days and Study Health Check exercises will be used by the Student Lifecycle and Dimensions project groups.

9.2 *Examples of Faculty-specific interventions in addition to baseline provision*

- AT will run information events for staff concerning mitigating circumstances.
- CCI will be contributing to the faculty Study Skills Project in conjunction with the Head of Learning & Teaching. Seminars on each award will be delivered which will include information about plagiarism, careers, mitigation and use of the LRC.
- GBS will run BlackBoard induction sessions, to improve the support given to late enrolees. Study skills workshops are also being incorporated into PASS for first year students during term 1.
- HaSS and GBS will send an amended version of the student experience questionnaire referred to above to all withdrawn students. In this way it is hoped that we will identify possible differences between the social and academic integration of students who continue and those who leave their studies early.
- HeSaS - The Head of Quality and the Advice Shop Manager will continue to work together and with other colleagues with an interest, to standardise the mitigation procedures across the Faculty.

10.0   Reflections on the second year of operation

This year has been marked by the increase in student and staff visits and interaction with the FAS provision – a jump of over 5000 visits on the first year of operation. Such an increase reinforces the extent to which the FAS have become embedded in the faculties. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the expectations of students and staff for the type and speed of service they receive.

The new evaluation plan for seeking feedback on the level of satisfaction with the service is an example of good practice in advice services, and will provide us with key data on which to continually review and revise our provision.

The FAS teams are have become well-established over the second year of operation, and have benefitted from the opportunity to share practice in their functional group meetings as well as other organised staff development activities, such as a presentation concerning financial implications of
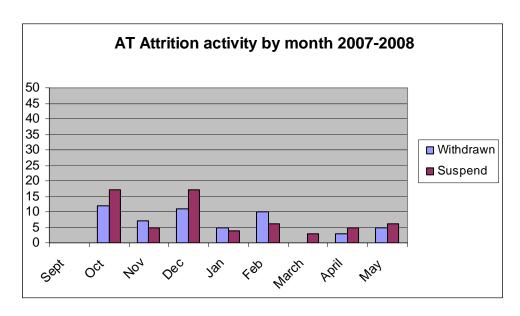
withdrawal delivered by Lesley Hughes, and a presentation and discussion concerning the mediation service by Jenny Andrews
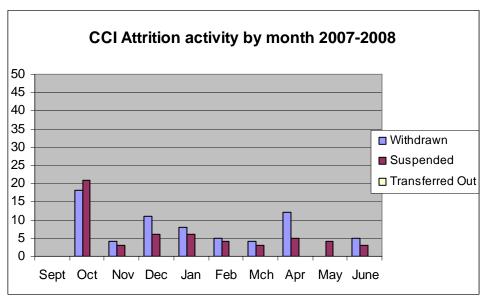
The amount of external interest on the Glamorgan model of student advice provision has also increased, with colleagues from several universities arranging visits including Winchester, Napier, Solent, UWCN, UWIC and Oxford Brookes.

The Faculty Advice Shop Review had an impact on the teams and the Managers in particular, as the Review Steering Group requested two papers as part of their investigation – one concerning the future provision of the FAS, and one concerning the division between academic and administrative input to the current service. The teams await with interest the outcome of the Review.
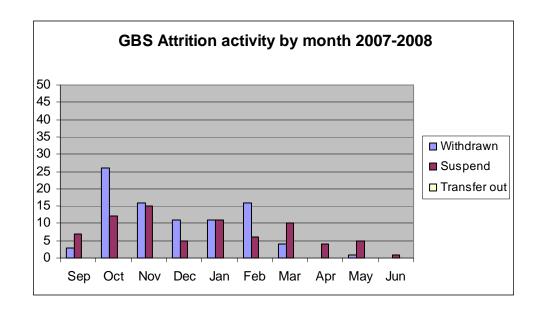
Appendix

Student Attrition[5] Activity by Month and Faculty

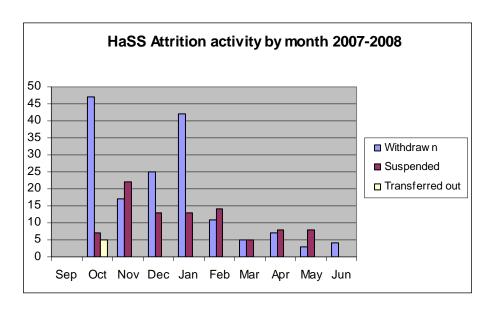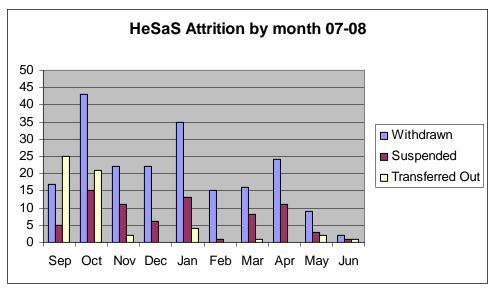---

[5] Recognised collective term for withdrawn or suspended students or those transferring out of the Faculty/Institution

GBS Attrition activity by month 2007-2008

HaSS Attrition activity by month 2007-2008

HeSaS Attrition by month 07-08

Categories[6] of Student Attrition by Faculty

AT categories of attrition 2007-08

Categories: Course Unsuitable, Personal, Health, Financial, Employment, Unknown

CCI Categories of attrition 2007-08

Categories: Course Unsuitable, Personal, Health, Financial, Employment, Unknown, other

GBS categories of attrition 2007-08

Categories: Course Unsuitable, Personal, Health, Financial, Employment, Unknown, Absent written off

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[6] Please note caution on data as detailed in Section 4.0

HaSS categories of attrition 2007-08

HeSaS categories of attrition 2007-08
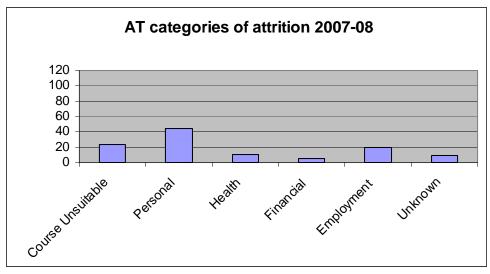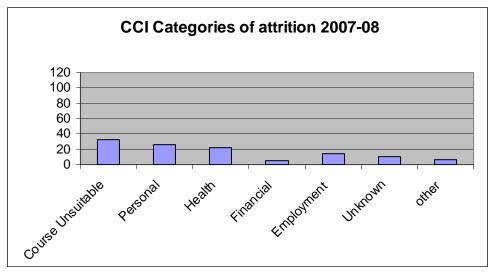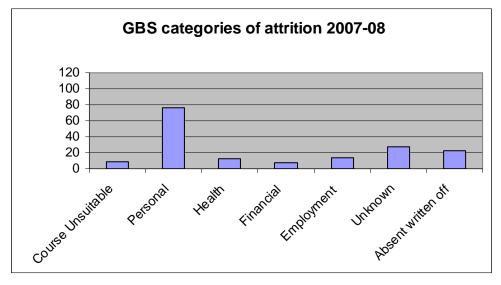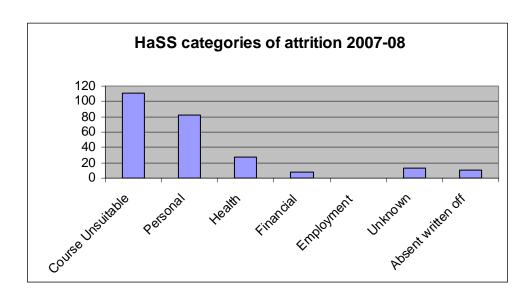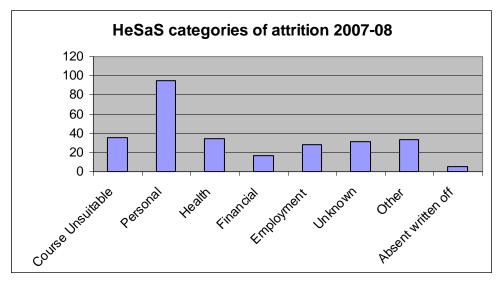
Provision of Student Personal Support within Faculties at the University of Glamorgan

This paper provides a position statement concerning the minimum requirements of student personal support at Faculty level within the University. In so doing, it recognises the variety of role nomenclature currently used to describe such support across the University. The relationship between Faculty staff (including Faculty Advice Centres), Student Services, and the Students' Union Sabbatical Officers is acknowledged but is outside of the scope of this paper.

1.0   Principles of Provision

There is a range of provision for personal support and guidance located on the University campuses, in partner colleges and at RWCMD. Whilst the model may vary, the level of personal guidance and support is consistent with the standards of the minimum expectations.

The principles are:

1.2   Personal support and guidance is available to all students.

1.3   Faculties are required to implement a personal guidance system best suited to the interests of their students and which meet the minimum requirements (Section 4).

1.4   Deans of Faculty should be satisfied that staff offering personal student support are sufficiently accessible and suitably qualified and/or experienced.

1.5   Details of the personal guidance system being operated within a Faculty/Scheme will be monitored by FQAC through Annual Monitoring procedures.

2.0   Definition

The term student personal support is used in this paper to define the provision of advice, guidance and support to students on personal matters impacting their studies that are within the experience and expertise of Faculties.

3.0   Personal Support at Glamorgan

The provision of Faculty-based personal support at Glamorgan is complemented by a comprehensive structure for student advice, welfare, counselling and other sources of student support provided by Student Services, Faculty Advice Centres and the Students' Union.

3.1   Faculties are free to implement systems of personal support best suited to the needs and interests of their students, but must ensure that their arrangements meet the minimum expectations. Terms used to describe existing provision of student personal support varies by Faculty, and is often encompassed within the following roles:
   a. Personal Tutors
   a. Pastoral (Mitigating Circumstances) Tutors
   b. Department Tutors
   c. Award Leaders
   d. Programme/Scheme Leaders
   e. Year Tutors

3.2   The University recognizes that student problems are often complex and that academic and personal issues may be intertwined with one frequently impacting on the other. Consequently, the provision of personal guidance and support for academic guidance may be combined.

4.0   Minimum Expectations

To ensure a consistent standard of practice across the University, and to guarantee a minimum entitlement for students, the following requirements have been established:

4.1   Each Faculty will provide students with a clear statement of personal support systems in place and how they access those support systems.

4.2   Individuals responsible for providing personal support to students are expected to provide such support as they feel able, within the boundaries of such a role.

4.3   These individuals should understand and interface with the referral mechanisms to access other support services, or seek guidance from their Faculty Advice Centre. Appropriate and timely referral decisions should be made jointly with the student concerned wherever possible.

4.4   Members of staff providing personal support should keep matters discussed confidential unless the student has authorised disclosure of such information, or where exceptional circumstances necessitate the breaking of confidentiality, such as if the student is in danger of harming themselves or others. Individuals are encouraged to discuss confidentiality issues with their Faculty Advice Centre or Student Services staff as appropriate.

4.5   In accordance with the University's Welsh Language Scheme (para 4.6) in those departments and fields with Welsh speaking members of staff, arrangements will be made for Welsh speaking students who wish it, to have access to a Welsh-speaking pastoral tutor wherever possible.

5.0   Responsibilities of Students

Students should:

5.1   Inform their nominated personal support provider (as described in their Faculty statement of provision) or their Faculty Advice Centre of any special circumstances which may affect their studies

5.2   Be responsible for acting on the advice provided.

6.0   Responsibilities of Faculties

The Dean or nominee should ensure:

6.1   Arrangements for the provision of student personal support are clearly outlined and displayed as appropriate.

6.2   The appropriate availability of staff involved in the provision is assured and clearly set out in the Faculty statement of provision.

6.3   Staff involved in the provision of personal support to students receive appropriate training to ensure safe and effective practice. Training should include that made available via the Staff Development Programme such as listening and helping skills, making appropriate referrals, and awareness-raising seminars concerning physical and mental impairment.

6.4   Student personal support systems are evaluated through Annual Monitoring.

7.0   Support for Faculties

7.1 The University's Student Services Handbook is available on Inform as a source of further information.

7.2 Further advice on the disclosure of information, and the Data Protection Act is available from LCSS. Further guidance on confidentiality is available from Faculty Advice Centres or Student Services.

Suggestions for Faculty Advice Shop Provision after 2008/09

In the first period of consistent Faculty Advice Shop provision (2006-07), it quickly became apparent that both staff and students welcomed this innovative approach to faculty based student support, an indicator of which was the number of student visits in the first year of full operation, a staggering 13,773[1]. Since the first year we have often been asked 'where did students go before?' perhaps demonstrating that academic and administrative staff are as aware as FAS staff that we have raised student expectations about the way in which student information and support is provided at Glamorgan.

This paper offers some thoughts on the following:

- How we see UoG support developing in the next three years
- Review of the established baseline provision
- Research plans
- Models of Advice Shop Manager role

1.0   HOW WE SEE UOG SUPPORT DEVELOPING IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS

The new model of UoG's student support which has emerged since the introduction of the FAS is already contributing to a reduction in in-year attrition, and the improvement of progression between years. To maintain this impetus, the University's support system must anticipate and respond to both external and internal impacts on the nature of our student intake.

Looking externally, we need to take account of changes in the higher education sector including government policy, the decreasing number of 18 year olds in the medium term and the impact of changes to the fee structure. Internally, in addition to maintaining its work in widening participation, the University is seeking to attract more students through first choice application and reduce reliance on clearing.

Work is currently underway in the FAS to establish a clearer profile of our students and their support needs. The need for student support, particularly in the first year, is well documented in the literature (Tinto 1987, Yorke 1999, Moxley et al. 2001, Crosling et al. 2008), as well as provision that acknowledges the particular needs of students from a widening participation background (Archer, Hutchings et al. 2003). The literature is less conclusive however, about whether students with higher entry points require less support, or how their support needs differ from the groups that have been more thoroughly researched, and this issue will therefore need investigation.

Provision of student support at Glamorgan has emerged over the last two years as being split between academic staff, corporate Student Support Departments (such as Student Services, Education Drop-in Centres) and Faculty Advice Shops. This may change over time as the Glamorgan Academic concept becomes established, and more and more personal learning support is provided by the corporate support and FAS provision, freeing academic staff to concentrate on the provision of high quality learning, teaching and research as well as continuing to work in collaboration with the FAS over matters concerning academic advice in all its forms.

The recently published House of Commons Report (2008) made the following observation:

> 'both academic and pastoral support are important to the higher education experience…Personal contact with the tutor is highly valued by students…The introduction of variable fees may have increased students' expectations of what

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[1] Faculty Advice Shops - Review of First Year of Operation 2006-07, Karen Fitzgibbon, November 2007

Karen Fitzgibbon
April 2008

higher education should provide, especially in terms of contact between students and tutors.' p12 (21).

We have long maintained that the FAS provision cannot work if it is seen as a silo, 'the place where all retention problems are solved.' It can only work in collaboration with the many contributors to improving the student experience. The FAS is however strongly placed to evaluate the impact of University processes and procedures and their effect on the student. From this position, FAS can inform, enhance, shape and share good practice, by improving understanding of the student experience within and across Faculties, and the impact of the multi-various processes and procedures in use within the University.

Faculty Advice 'Centres' or 'Shops'?

A number of Advice Shop stakeholders have suggested that the FAS have evolved over the period into Faculty Advice Centres, rather than 'Shops', and this change of name is now proposed. This suggestion has been fuelled partly by the ever-increasing demands on the service, and partly from some concern that the use of the term 'shop' is misleading and overly consumerised. Changing the name to Faculty Advice Centre also reinforces the two-way focus of communication that it is widely acknowledged the FAS provide: being both student and staff facing, and uniquely placed to see the impact of actions on all groups within the University. It is also clear that many staff engage with the FAS for professional advice in dealing with student concerns or issues, or in understanding the interface between University process and student experience. Perhaps the final reason for a change of name is to reinforce the close relationship with the other support services in the University. A strong network of support functions has emerged over the period of the FAS provision; indeed the ATRiuM model has demonstrated the value of multi-function teams working very closely together to provide support.

2.0 REVIEW OF ESTABLISHED BASELINE PROVISION

During 2008/09 the baseline provision will be reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose and relevant to institutional goals for student progression and achievement. Outcomes of the first two years of FAS operation will ensure that review of the baseline is conducted using an evidence based approach. In this way, we are continuing to adopt a strategy which is seen as positive by the recent House of Commons Select Committee Report (2008)

> 'Universities that are improving retention tend to collate and use management information on withdrawal rates, producing regular reports for decision makers and tracking the performance of students to highlight those that may need more support.' p11 point 17

3.0 RESEARCH PLANS

Over the first two years of the FAS service, each of the Advice Shop Managers has continued to contribute to research into the student experience. Articles in refereed journals have been secured, or are in press, together with a joint authored book and a book chapter, conference papers and presentations. For the next period of the FAS provision, we plan to continue with this research and are currently planning the next series of projects, some of which are longitudinal studies.

4.0 MODELS OF ASM ROLE

Role function

- shared vision
- shared responsibility for implementation and maintenance of baseline provision
  - o parity of support provision across all Faculties

- institutional learning coming from awareness of how University processes and procedures impact the student experience
- bridge between all groups/functions and total student experience
- contribute to work that evaluates, informs and enhances the student experience
- sharing and shaping of good practice
- quality assurance of common processes such as mitigating circumstances
- research to underpin and inform all of the above
- understanding the student profile across the University and the specific issues relating to each Faculty

Model proposed:

There has been some discussion as to whether the role of the Advice Shop Manager should be reviewed as we move into a more established phase of the FAC. We firmly believe that the role should continue, albeit with two proposed changes. One of these is to acknowledge formally the possibility, even desirability, of some flexibility at Faculty level in ASM duties, and the other is a change in nomenclature.

The common job description should remain, ensuring consistency across the University FAC, in particular the requirement for formally combining the role of leading the FAC with a teaching, scholarship and research role. The balance of these duties would be negotiated by local agreement at Faculty level, subject to agreement between the post holder and their line manager, with input from the Senior ASM. The split between FAC duties, teaching and research could be flexible over time, since there may be periods when more time needs to be spent in the FAC role: for a new postholder for example, or at a time of major Faculty reorganisation. Subsequent changes to the agreed proportions would require three-way agreement as above.

It is important to state that this proposal is not advocating a 'tag on' approach to a 'normal' academic role. In Glamorgan's recent history (circa 2002-3) several approaches to the introduction of Faculty-based student support were trialled[2], the majority of which included some aspect of 'student retention' being tagged onto an existing full time role. It was clear that in comparison to the model in the School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences at that time (Advice Shop Manager) such an approach brought little success either in terms of contributing to a reduction in student attrition, or for the individuals concerned, who found themselves overwhelmed by a complex task with little time or support to give effect to ideas and strategies. It is therefore essential that the post-holder remains primarily an ASM, whose teaching and research enhance this role rather than the other way around and who continues to be part of a strong network of providers to ensure consistency in the level of service and enquiry.

The second change concerns nomenclature. It is proposed that the existing title of ASM is changed to Head of Faculty Advice Centre. This title reflects the use of the term 'Head' across the university in connection with other senior academic functions such as Head of Learning and Teaching, Head of Research and so on.

It is felt that these proposals secure the continuation of academic input into the Faculty Advice Centres as well as strengthening the relationship between the current ASM role and the Glamorgan Academic profile. The proposal that the position of Head of FAC be held by an academic member of staff is key to the continuation of the successful model of the FAC at Glamorgan. The reasons for continuing to require an academic input to the FAC provision are as follows:

All current ASMs:
- are members of their academic community
- have a background in, and an understanding of, the pedagogic nature of pro-active student support

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[2] See Retention Advisors Working Group minutes - Chaired by Dave Smith in Student Services

- are engaged in critical reflection
- feed into committees and regulations to shape the student experience (examples Fees and Scholarships, Student Expectations, FQACs LTSEs, First Experience, Faculty Executive and Faculty Boards)
- have worked to secure the trust of academic colleagues and administrative colleagues (in faculties and corporate support departments) in dealing with sensitive issues
- are informed by and contribute to current research in the provision of suitable advice environments

This has meant that all aspects of the student experience are considered from a pedagogic standpoint. A number of the interventions that have been successfully established during the period of FAS provision to date have demonstrated that it is the blend of academic and administrative colleagues working together both within the Faculties and across the University that has been key to the contribution that the FAS has made to reducing in-year attrition.

Examples of the academic enquiry behind some of the interventions:

Problem	Cause	Action	Outcome
Need for greater understanding of student reasons for withdrawal or suspension of study	lack of reliable consistent and comparable data	development of database for collection of client information	2006/07 Faculty Advice Shop report provided details of reliable, comparable data of reasons for withdrawal, and timing of key decisions. Individual Faculty reports prepared by ASMs provided in depth profiling for Faculty staff.
Proactively support students disengaging from study	Identifying ways of using silence as a trigger for support	implementation of attendance monitoring procedures	good results in contacting students at risk of non-progression/early withdrawal. Students and staff very positive about intervention.
		following up students who failed to submit coursework	opportunity to make arrangements to assist students in continuing or providing advice about positive withdrawal or suspension.
Assisting with orientation and early establishment of positive study patterns	many students during early weeks of term unprepared for nature of study at higher level	development of 'Early Days' learner support tool using QMP	over 700 students have accessed this innovative method of support. Evaluative comments received point to support for this type of interactive method of information giving.
Students needing help to identify poor study patterns	peak in withdrawal rate after Christmas often attributed to poor approach to study by students themselves.	development of 'Study Health Check' learner support tool using QMP	over 300 users to date. Evaluation underway as tool currently still available.

ASMs have also fed back into their academic communities via research output. A number of universities have sent representatives to visit the FAS and to take away thoughts on approach, good practice and the 'culture of advice' at Glamorgan.

If the model proposed is accepted, it will be necessary to ensure that full time, day to day operational management is fulfilled by an administrative colleague. It is felt that this role could be staffed within most of the existing structures in the FAC, albeit with some job description revisions. It is proposed that this role is given the title of Advice Shop Co-ordinator.

5.0   RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Change name from Faculty Advice Shops to Faculty Advice Centres (FAC)

2. Amend job title of existing Advice Shop Managers to Head of Faculty Advice Centre (HFAC).

3. Embed HFAC role within full time academic role incorporating teaching and research

4. Review job descriptions of administrative colleagues within FAC to provide opportunity to become Faculty Advice Centre Co-ordinator.

5. Seek approval for embedding long term continuation of FAC rather than securing two or three year approval. Establishing long term continuation will avoid the negative impact of shorter term project reviews which:

    - distract from key role and purpose
    - prevent long term shaping and development of initiatives which may involve short term risk

    and instead:

    - provides freedom (within boundaries) to experiment with variety of approaches and evaluate them appropriately, over an extended period.
    - offers a secure environment within which to test further methods of integration

References

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Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving Early, Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition'. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Yorke, M. (1999). Leaving Early, Undergradate Non-completion in Higher Education. London, Falmer Press

Faculty Advice Shop Indicative Activities

This table is presented in response to the request from Prof Danny Saunders (Chair, FAS Review Steering Group). In common with many student support services with a role requiring reactive responses to students or staff on a demand basis, there is no 'typical' week. However, each FAS also operates planned events and proactive interventions that are implemented on a timeline as determined through research published by Fitzgibbon & Prior (2006). It should be noted that each FAS implements the baseline services and then supplements these with interventions, policies and practices which are determined to meet individual Faculty issues relating to student achievement and retention. Functions under 'administrative input' will vary for those FAS with Senior Officer staff amongst the FAS team. The table offers an indicative list of the different functions and it is not exhaustive.

Activity/Service	Advisory role	Academic function	Administrative input
		Determine model of advice: (developmental, prescriptive or intrusive) for each element. Informed by existing practice and literature. FAS use a blend of the three approaches determined by nature of query/issue. Plan and organise resources accordingly.	
1. *One-to-one student advice on:*			
Change of status: withdrawing, suspending or transferring studies	Guidance on options and academic implications. Identification of common issues, timings, establish 'real reasons' for change. Exit interviews, exit questionnaires, etc.	Analysis of trends in data, advising principle academic providers e.g. Programme/Award leaders of possible interventions to address retention issues. Inform on pedagogy, learning, teaching and assessment practices impacting on student retention across the Faculty. Where appropriate advise programme team on resolution of problems affecting the delivery of courses and other issues affecting student achievement. Dissemination of analysis in academic community through publications/conference papers/invited seminar appearances/visits etc	Administer forms. Record data and update QuercusPlus and FAS client database. Send letters of confirming change to students. Letter follow ups to students due to resume studies. Providing base data
Academic matters	Award structure, requirements for progression, options if issues identified as impacting on studies, progress meetings, advising on successful strategies for study, etc.	Tracking of client issues and appropriate collaboration with Programme/Award/Module leaders, Heads of Learning and Teaching, etc.	
Attendance	Interviews, with advice on	Analysis of trends in attendance patterns, working	Set up and maintenance of systems

monitoring	progress, re-engagement with studies, etc - drawing on academic knowledge of Faculty structure and processes. May also result in advice about mitigating circumstances.	with Programme/Award leaders to address poor attendance and suggest possible strategies to increase attendance/engagement. Dissemination of analysis in academic community through publications/conference papers/invited seminar appearances/visits etc	to collect attendance data. Identification of students needing contact and doing follow ups - sending letters/SMS/email, or scheduling interviews. Ongoing monitoring of students identified with attendance issues.
Pastoral care	Consider effects of students' situation, impact on studies. Action referrals from Faculty staff and referrals on to wider support services.	High level of liaison between all contributors to student support across the University and wider Glamorgan Group. Contribute to shaping of policy and practice with regard to student support at University level.	Arrangement of meetings with students, tracking of outcomes.
Mitigating Circumstances	Guidance to students on possible academic options and implications of outcomes. Advice on process and appropriate evidence.	Member of Mit Circs Panels. Analysis of trends in applications in terms of common factors, recurring themes. Work with appropriate academic colleagues to counter-balance recurrent themes which are related to programmes. Contribute to Faculty process/policy/practice to ensure mit circs support student achievement rather than seen as individual or one-off issues.	Administer forms, associated record keeping and advising students on their submissions.
2. Develop resources to improve learning, retention, and the student experience			
Interventions	Work with academic and administrative staff as well as student support departments to advise on retention issues.	Identify appropriate strategies to address retention issues identified. Take lead on planning, set up and implementation of intervention initiatives. Ongoing co-ordination of activities.	Implement process and carry out day to day operation of initiatives.
Difficult to reach groups		Use of appropriate model of advising to provide support for hard to reach groups. Has resulted in developing online self- assessment tools for students reluctant to interact with one to one advisors – Early Days and Study Health Check. Analysis and dissemination of information/issues as appropriate throughout the institution contributes to greater understanding of student experience.	Use of messenger services (Glamchat) for online Advice Shop support.
Summer Revision Week	Liaising with EDiC for study skills and HoD for module	Writing Faculty report, measuring effectiveness of intervention by tracking participating students'	Timetabling sessions, rota for staff, publicity, letters to students,

	staff resourcing.	achievement in resit exams/courseworks.	recording attendance, etc.
Follow up of non-returners (pre-reg students)	Reporting to Faculty on findings. Identifying if students eligible for intermediate awards, or need WN or SS action and appropriate advice.	Reporting to Faculty on findings. Identifying if students eligible for intermediate awards, or need WN or SS action and appropriate advice.	Sending of letters, following contact. Completion and actioning of any WN or SS forms, overseeing change of grade (where appropriate) and conferment of intermediate awards in conjunction with Award leaders.
3. *Networking and publicity*			
UoG and Faculty Groups	Raising awareness of student experience on retention practices. Contributing to quality assurance mechanisms, shaping policy and contributing to institutional strategy as appropriate.	Member of Faculty Committees (Teaching & Learning, Mitigating Circumstances FQAC, etc) and attendance at Department/Divisional/Scheme Meetings. Contribute to Faculty strategic planning process. Membership of UoG committees and working groups (Fees & Scholarships; First Experience; Disability and Dyslexia; Student Experience; Make IT Personal, etc)	Facilitating network between FAS administrative teams, sharing of good practice across and between Faculties, membership of relevant Faculty and University Committees relating to the student experience
Raising student and staff awareness of Faculty Advice Shops	Open day presentations (students and parents). Involvement in induction activities for students.	CELT seminar workshops to disseminate Advice Shop info/share good practice	Arrange publicity for presentations and take part in presentations as and where appropriate
Networking with other UoG support services	Establishing and building links for ease of student referral from faculties. Collaborative working to promote consistent cross faculty support.	Using appropriate knowledge to ensure FAS team leadership is effective, and adopting appropriate skills/strategies to give effect to building strong collaborative relationships across University. Ensuring emotional well-being of FAS teams by facilitating staff training in conjunction with Staff Counsellor. Assisting FAS staff in achieving understanding of balance and boundaries of role.	Maintaining good links with student support departments as appropriate.
4. *Research and Reports*			
Research and dissemination of good practice	Informing University and wider academic community, sharing good practice, learning from others.	Preparing and delivering conference papers, journal and book chapter publications. Developing links/research with colleagues in other HEI. Encourage collaborative activity with other support services within University. Applying for research funding bids as appropriate.	Contribute to information gathering (senior FAS administrative staff only)
Regular reports to Faculty, and other units when requested		Identifying relevant data sources, organising data gathering, writing the reports. Taking role of principal investigator.	Data search and collation. Preparation of Excel charts and graphs etc

5. *Teaching*			
Teaching		Design, develop and deliver range of modules as appropriate, make use of appropriate methods including blended learning.	
Module management		Ensure course design and delivery meet quality standards and regulations of the University. Where appropriate co-ordinate module team. Review materials and update as required and in accordance with good practice.	

Reference

Fitzgibbon K & Prior D J, (2007) 'Students' early experiences and university interventions – a timeline to aid undergraduate student retention' *Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning Vol 8, No 3 pp 17 -27*

Faculty Advice Shops - Notes about maintaining the Confidentiality Code

Respecting the student's right to confidentiality means not revealing any personal information concerning him/her which has been disclosed within a helping context without his/her permission. This includes not divulging any information being sought by parents or friends of the student.

What are the limits of confidentiality?

Generally the limit of confidentiality is reached when:

  a. Those seeking help are in some way a threat to themselves or others
  b. Those seeking help are in physical danger
  c. Those seeking help are seriously ill and need medical help
  d. Disclosure is required by law.

These limits are to ensure that the University is able to discharge its responsibilities with regard to reasonable care and concern for the student.

What should I do if I do have to breach confidentiality?

Wherever possible the student should be told prior to disclosure why when and to whom disclosure will occur. Ideally the student's consent will be gained, however if this is not the case the student should be told why disclosure was made.

Making an informed decision about maintaining confidentiality

Prior to breaching confidentiality, the following questions may be helpful in determining whether it is necessary to do so:

  1. What are my **motives** for wishing to reveal the information? *For example,* to calm down an angry parent, to impress a colleague, to work through the best way to deal with a situation, to protect a student, to deal with your own anxiety.

  2. If I decide to break confidentiality what is the **relevant** information that I should reveal? Can the student's identity be protected in this situation by discussing the situation without naming the student and without allowing the other person to guess who it is?

  3. How might my relationship with my colleagues be affected if I do, or do not, breach confidentiality? *For example* a colleague refers a student to the Faculty Advice Shop because they are concerned about the student's progress. The student reveals some personal difficulties to you during your advice interview. Later, your colleague asks you what the problem was and you have to explain that this is confidential. Some colleagues may take offence that you have seemingly prioritized the student over their 'right to know'. However it is also fair to say that most colleagues will accept the student's right to confidentiality and once reassured that the student will be able to access appropriate support they will be content.

4. Are you fearful of **making a mistake** about whether to maintain confidentiality or not? Being worried about whether to breach confidence can often make you indecisive and perhaps affect your judgement. In such situations it is important to share your concerns with either your line manager within the Faculty Advice Shop, or with another Advice Shop Manager. In doing this without naming the student, you will obtain some objectivity about whether a breach of confidence is appropriate and in time your confidence in your own judgement will increase. It is also worth remembering that staff in the Student Services Counselling Centre will also assist in making this kind of decision.

And finally……parents

We have many cases of parents ringing who are concerned, angry or upset about their son/daughter. Typical situations include:

- They haven't heard from their son/daughter for a while and are concerned about them
- Their son/daughter is ill and they have missed a piece of coursework and the parent would like to know about mitigating circumstances
- They want to find out how their son/daughter is progressing because they are sure something is not right and they may have failed some element of the course
- Their son/daughter has been declined mitigating circumstances and they wish to discuss the claim with you
- They know that their son/daughter has failed because the student has told them, but they want to know what the options are and their son/daughter is not telling them.

In certain extreme situations, students have been at risk of physical danger from their parents once they have confirmation that their son or daughter is at the University and it therefore important to recognize that no matter how worried or upset the parent is the right of the student to their confidentiality remains. We would be breaching that if we disclosed any information about grades, progress, attendance and so on that is specific to an individual student.

However, many parents are reassured if you explain *in general terms and not disclosing information that only affects their son/daughter* how the support system in your Faculty operates, how the University regulations operate in terms of failure, resit, repeat, mitigating circumstances and so on. If you are in any doubt, do not disclose the information, but discuss it first with another member of Advice Shop staff or with Student Services. If you are discussing generic support you do not need to speak to the individual student first. However, any disclosure specific to the student should be discussed with the student prior to discussion with parents.
The best advice is to get the parents to encourage their son/daughter to make contact with either their Faculty AS or Student Services for themselves. They can bring parents with them if they wish to their FAS interview, although not to Student Services.

Faculty Advice Shop

Confidentiality Code

The *Faculty Advice Shop* may wish to keep a client record to ensure that you can be given appropriate assistance. All personal details will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988. Client records are held securely within the Faculty Advice Shop.

In order to assist in resolving your query, this information may be shared with colleagues within the University. These may include: relevant staff in your Faculty, Student Services Centres, and other Advice Shop staff.

There are very specific occasions when this confidentiality code would be extended beyond the list of those colleagues already identified. The circumstances when confidentiality would be extended are:

1. when you are at risk of serious harm
2. when your behaviour is affected adversely the legal rights of other people
3. when your advisor is placed in a position which compromises his/her professional integrity
4. when disclosure is required by law.

Your advisor will aim to discuss the situation with you before breaching confidence. If this is not possible you will be told what information has been disclosed.

In the spirit of learning more about the needs of our students, and with the ongoing aim of improving the support offered, we may refer to your record for research purposes. Any data provided for research will be anonymised in order to protect your identity.

Signature _____ Date _____

Full Name (please print) _____

University of Glamorgan
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

<div style="border:1px solid black">Pathway to Graduation</div>

Welcome to this short programme designed to help you make a smooth transition into higher education.

The activities you will be involved with are designed to encourage you to:

- Find out how **you** learn by completing a straight-forward task
- Establish where the **challenges** of your course of study might lie in relation to your learning style
- Understand how you can build on your current **strengths** in terms of study skills
- Familiarise yourself with the various **support services** available in the University
- Meet your **Progress Tutor**
- Meet regularly with the **Advice Shop** staff

Karen Fitzgibbon – Advice Shop Manager

HaSS Advice Shop

You'll have already met the Advice Shop Manager, Karen Fitzgibbon (a member of academic staff) and you've probably also met another of the Advice Shop team, Carol Sanders. You'll also be aware that you can ask us almost anything (within reason!) and we'll either be able to give you the answer there and then or we'll find out for you.

Did you also know you can get all kinds of study skills advice/help from us too?

Did you know we can arrange meetings for you with other University support departments such as Student Finance Centre, Student Services and the Education Drop-In Centre?

Part of the 'Pathway to Graduation' programme is designed to familiarise you with the support network available, but the main part of the programme is about you and your readiness for Higher Education. Your regular appointments with Karen Fitzgibbon will mean you get that support at the time you most need it – right at the start of your study year – and then as you get more settled the appointment times are further apart. The appointments will be made at times to suit you, your study timetable and other commitments. The whole programme will only add a minimal amount of time to your schedule and can be completed within the first two weeks of starting at Uni.

Make a note of your appointment times here:

Date	Time	Activity

Activity 1: Why you need to know where the challenges lie

This first activity requires you to draw up a chart of the modules you will be studying and to consider where you see your strengths and weaknesses in those study areas.

To use the chart:

1. List the modules from the student handbook for your level and choice of award – if you don't know them all, list as many as you can.
2. Review the seven Common Skills shown below and mark against each module whether they will be a strength or weakness in that curriculum area by deleting the s or w.
3. Now list what will prevent you from studying as well as you'd like to in each subject.
4. Finally, put down the positive resources you that are available which will support your learning in each subject.

Module Name	Transferable Skill	Issues for you	Resources that help
	1sw 2sw 3sw 4sw 5sw 6sw 7sw		
	1sw 2sw 3sw 4sw 5sw 6sw 7sw		
	1sw 2sw 3sw 4sw 5sw 6sw 7sw		
	1sw 2sw 3sw 4sw 5sw 6sw 7sw		
	1sw 2sw 3sw 4sw 5sw 6sw 7sw		
	1sw 2sw 3sw 4sw 5sw 6sw 7sw		

Transferable Skills:

1   Managing and Developing Self
2   Working with and Relating to Others
3   Managing Tasks and Solving Problems
4   Communicating
5   Applying Numeracy
6   Applying Technology
7   Applying Design and Creativity

By carrying out this type of activity you will be engaging with your chosen course of study in a much more positive way than when you just think about it, or talk about it with your friends. You will also start to build a picture of your likely success points, and possible areas of concern. Although it may seem very early in the course, you should do something about your concerns as soon as possible. For example, if one of your weaknesses is working with others, make sure you broaden your scope of friends rather than getting too close too soon to one or two fellow students, or if you have listed IT as a weakness find out about getting some extra tuition right now to help you over the hurdles you see ahead.

So what are Transferable Skills?

Students often ask 'What are transferable skills?' and it is important that you understand the answer to this question. Firstly, transferable skills – also called personal skills, key skills and common skills – are competences that every graduate needs in order to succeed in their chosen career. You may have seen adverts which call for applicants to be 'highly literate and numerate' or 'be able to work as part of a team', or 'able to work to tight deadlines'. These elements are often referred to by employers and reflect the importance they put on your ability to interact with other people, handle pressure, set your own priorities for deadlines and so on. In other words, employers are looking for more than a set of modular results, they are looking at you as a well-rounded individual.

In order to demonstrate your transferable skill ability to prospective employers you need to be able to address your own development in these areas. For example, where are your weaknesses, what are your strengths, are you repeating behaviour patterns which reinforce mistakes, or are you able to address possible problem areas and then do something about them?

The final point (for now!) is that you need to be aware of your current level of skill across a range of modules.   To demonstrate why this is important look at the following example.

> You list time management as a strength in your skills profile because you are feel you are able to manage your time effectively, plan for deadlines, remain focused on a task and so on. That may well be true in subjects that you enjoy. However, is your time management as good for subjects you find particularly challenging, or for those you find less challenging?

Testing your skills across a range of modules is what makes them TRANSFERABLE.   This is why you will be utilising the skills you develop throughout the period of your study across all your modules, at every level of your course.

Activity 2: Self-Evaluation

This activity has been prepared to encourage you to focus on the current level of your common skills competence. Take approximately 20 minutes to work through the chart. Be honest with yourself – false ratings at this point will hold you back – not move you forward.

Skill Area	Estimate of current level of skill 1 (high) 4 (low)				Give an example of why you have rated your skill as you have	How do you intend to improve in this area?
	1	2	3	4		
Planning your time						
Organising yourself						
Preparing for classes						
Reading						
Notetaking						
Gathering information						
Analysing information						
Report/Essay writing						
Giving a presentation						
Listening to others						
Working with others						
Using IT						
Handling numbers						
Solving problems						
Coping with stress						
Assertiveness						
Revision technique						
Exam technique						

Activity 3: Meeting your Progress Tutor

You'll have heard us mention the term 'progress tutor' at the induction sessions but what exactly is a progress tutor?

Well, your progress tutor is a contact you have who is a member of academic staff in your subject area (although you may not actually be taught by him/her).

You are encouraged to meet with your progress tutor in the early weeks of your course, then again just before the Christmas vacation and again later in the year. At the meetings you'll have the chance to review how things are going and talk about your successes as well as anything that might be worrying you.

We often find that students who don't make those meetings don't get the most out of the support networks in the University, don't settle in so well and don't get the grades they hoped for in their first year of studies – so don't be one of them!

Record your meetings with your Progress Tutors in the space below. You might find it useful to write down what you'd like to talk about and any questions you've got before you go in.

First meeting: (induction period) ………………………………………………………….

Second meeting: (pre-Christmas vac) ………………………………………………….

Third meeting: (results) ……………………………………………………

Karen Fitzgibbon, Advice Shop Manager

Activity 4: Analysis of learning style

For this activity you'll need to use the questionnaire, plotting graph and analysis sheet provided with your Pathway to Graduation materials.

Work through the questionnaire – it'll take you around 15 minutes but it'll be worth it!

Then complete the scoring sheet by circling the numbers of the questions you ticked and totalling up each number of circles in each column.

Finally, put your total scores in each of the four categories on the chart and you'll see your preferred learning style.

If you then turn over the sheet, you'll see a picture of the characteristics of your preferred learning style. See how accurate you think it is and then review the other close scores to pick out your less prominent learning characteristics.

You will now be able to identify where your current learning strengths are; maybe you are a strong Activist, or perhaps you are fairly equal across two or more categories.

Activity 5: Developing your learning style

In order to complete this activity, you need to work through the exercise attached taken from 'The Business Student's Handbook' by Sheila Cameron.   (Don't worry that you're not a Business student, the text book is a general guide to developing skills.)

This exercise will help you improve your usage of learning characteristics from the learning styles that you recorded lower scores in when you completed the questionnaire used in Activity 4.

Remember, the purpose of the exercise on learning styles is not to categorise you – it is there to help you understand why you currently learn in the way that you do, and to open up new approaches to learning which may have previously been unknown to you.

Exercise – Developing your Learning Style
Taken from: The Business Student's Handbook, Sheila Cameron

Decide which [learning] styles you need to develop. Choose at least six of the following activities and practise them.

To develop activism
1. Do something completely out of character at least once a week (examples; talk to strangers, wear something outrageous, go to a new place)
2. Force yourself to fragment your day, switching deliberately from one activity to another.
3. Force yourself to take a more porminent role in discussions. Determine to say something in the first ten minutes. Volunteer to take the chair or make the next presentation.
4. Practise thinking aloud. Next time you are thinking about a problem, bounce ideas off a friend, trying to get into the habit of speaking without thinking first.

To develop reflection
1. In discussions, practise observing what other people are saying and doing and thinking about why.
2. Spend some time each evening reflecting on what you have done during the day and what you have learned from it.
3. Aim to submit a perfect essay/assignment next time. Do several drafts, trying to get appearance and spelling, as well as content, as good as you possibly can.
4. Select a topic you have covered in your course that really interests you and try to fine out as much as possible about it and write a short paper summarising this.
5. Before taking any decision, force yourself to draw up as wide as possible a list of pros and cons.

To become more of a theorist
1. Spend at least 30 minutes a day reading something really difficult about one of your subjects, trying to analyse and evaluate the arguments involved.
2. If something goes wrong (eg a problem with a module, flatmates, or even a friend has a problem and seeks your help) try to work out exactly what were the causal factors involved, how they were related and what might have averted the problem.

3. Before taking any action, ensure that you are absolutely clear about what you ar trying to achive. Having clarified your objectives, see what you can do to increase your chances of success.
4. Listen to what people are saying in discussions, trying to identify any dubious assumpions or faulty links in their arguments.
5. Practise asking a series of probing questions, persisiting until you get any answer that is clear and logical.

To become more of a pragmatist
1. When you discuss a problem, make sure that before stopping you have agreed what needs to be done, and who will do it, in order to make things better.
2. Ensure you get feedback on the skills you are practising in these exercises.
3. Tackle some practical problem (examples: mending clothes or appliances, choosing and booking a holiday, cooking a meal for friends).

Activity 6: Where are you now?

All the activities you have undertaken so far have been diagnostic tests of your current level of skill ability. This final activity in the diagnostic set introduces you to the concept of reflection.   This simply means revisiting past learning experiences and thinking about what you would choose to repeat, and what you would choose to change. For example, if you are a 'last minute merchant' who stays up until 3am on the morning of your deadline which means you then miss the next day's classes, would you choose to repeat that way of managing your time for the next assignment, or change the way you handle deadlines?

To help you frame some thoughts about the forthcoming academic year of study, answer these questions:

Question 1: Where am I now?
Question 2: Where am I going?
Question 3: How will I get there?

A possible answer to question 1 may be 'starting a new course at University'
A possible answer to question 2 may be 'I am hoping to achieve the qualification with the highest possible grades'
A possible answer to question 3 may be 'by attending all classes, working on preparing for tutorials and by improving my time management for studying so I do not miss any deadlines.'

These are only suggestions to guide you along. Think about your own objectives, why did you come to University? What do you consider are your key targets whilst studying? And so on. Once you've written your answers bring them along to your next appointment.

Activity 7: Using the LRC

Visit the LRC and locate the resources you will be accessing. Use the following as a check-list of tasks:

Activity	✓ Done
Do a search on OPAC on one of the terminals in the LRC and either search for a particular text to locate it on the shelves, or do a subject search to find all the resources available for that particular subject.	
Find the Journals section and locate the latest edition of a journal from one of your module reading lists. Once you have done that, look for the back issues of the same journal.	
Locate the main subject catalogue for your core area of study. Select a text (or two!) from the reading lists of one or more modules. Remember you have a limit of 10 books from the main catalogue, plus two from Short Loans out on loan at any one time so choose carefully. Once you've selected the texts you want, take them out on loan at the Issue desk.	
There is a self-service area next to the main Issue Desk where you can record your loans and returns – familiarise yourself with that too so you know what to do when you're in a hurry.	

Notes:

Record here any difficulties you had here and ask a member of LRC staff or call back to the Advice Shop in A26 and we'll try to sort the problem out for you.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Karen Fitzgibbon, Advice Shop Manager

Pathway to Graduation Completion Record

Activity	Comments	Date Completed	Signed (student)	Signed (AS)
Where the challenges lie				
Self Evaluation				
Meet your Progress Tutor				
Analysis of learning style				
Developing your learning style				
Where are you now?				
Using the LRC				

Keeping it all going!

So what now? Well, the good news is you've just improved your chances of successfully completing your current level of study – but – you need to maintain the good practice you've built up over the last few weeks. Here are some tips on how to do that:

- Record your grades on each assignment in a table/chart
- Write a short (say one paragraph) account of your approach to the assessment and what you would do differently if you had to repeat that task
- Call into the Advice Shop to let us know how things are going – don't wait for a problem to crop up.
- Attend your classes! We know that the correlation between non-attendance and failure is too high to be a coincidence!

Remember that there are lots of University support services to help if or when things don't go quite as smoothly as you would like:

Student Finance Centre – money worries? Make an appointment direct or come through the Advice Shop

Student Services – need some counselling, a shoulder to cry on? Make an appointment direct or come through the Advice Shop

Education Drop-in Centre – some aspect of your studies worrying you? Come in to the Advice Shop with your query first and if we can't help we'll make an appointment for you with the EDC.

And finally … remember there are several members of staff who are here to help:

Your Scheme Leader: …………………………………………………………………….

Your Award Tutor: …………………………………………………………………..

Your Progress Tutor: …………………………………………………………………..

Your Advice Shop team: Karen Fitzgibbon & Carol Sanders

Useful Resources:

The following texts have been 'tried and tested' with other students and have proved to be useful guides to studying. Some are more 'user friendly' with charts and diagrams, others are more descriptive so choose to suit your style.

If you wish to have a look at any of the texts, you're welcome to browse through them at your next appointment with Karen Fitzgibbon.

Cameron S (1999) *The Business Student's Handbook*, Pitman Publishing, London

Cottrell S (1999) *The Study Skills Handbook,* Macmillan Press, London

Northedge A, (   ) *The Arts Good Study Guide,* O U Press, Milton Keynes

Redman P (2001) *Good Essay Writing A Social Sciences Guide,* Sage Publications

Turner J (2002) *How to Study, A Short Introduction,* Sage Publications

Mitigating Circumstances

Procedural Review

In order to make the Mitigating Circumstances system within Hass as efficient as possible we propose to make the following changes to the current procedures:

- Students wlll normally be offered extensions until the end of the term in which the claim is made, although other dates may also be offered. Only in exceptional cases will the student be offered an end of year submission date.
- Where possible, the Panel will give deadlines that aid the early completion of work depending on the nature of the claim.
- Students will be encouraged to put their own preferred date of submission down at the time of applying for mitigating circumstances. Advice will be given about avoiding 'bunching' of later work with deferred pieces of coursework.
- Students who submit claims with appropriate medical evidence will be 'signed off' by one Panel member and the Committee Secretary and will not be delayed until the next Panel meeting. Audit trails of these claims will be maintained in all cases. The aim is to give speedy decisions to students who are seeking a one week extension because of short term difficulties such as minor illness etc.
- The Panel will meet every month in order to ensure that decisions are conveyed to students as quickly as possible.

Realities of Studying for a Degree

Time & Task Management

Class contact hours

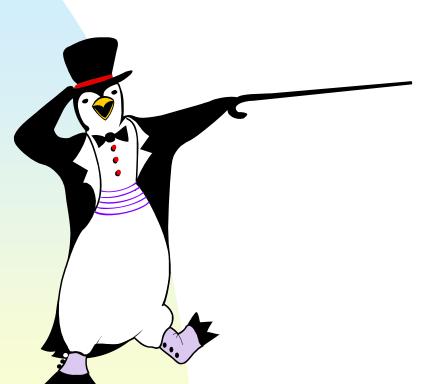- 12 hours per week in class

- 'no problem, **I** can work, rest and play'

What does that mean in real terms?

- Tip of the iceberg!
- Additional 4 hours of independent study for each module per week
- Preparation for classes
- Assessment work

The effective time manager

- Everything organised
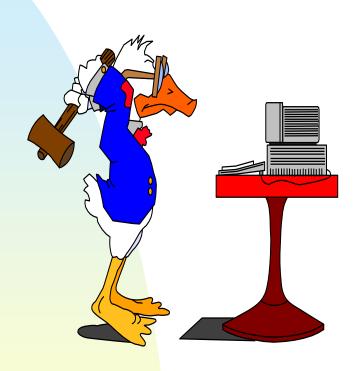
- misses no deadlines

- minimises stress

The less-effective time manager

- note the fact it's something else's fault that the deadline has been missed
- Many unpleasant surprises - 'it's due when??!'

Do something about it

- Take half an hour to put together a realistic schedule.

Include:
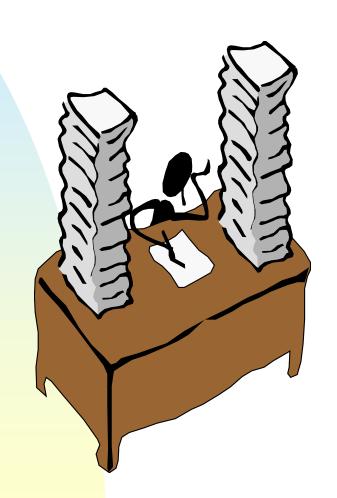
- Research time
  - (identifying the problem & what resources you need to tackle it)

- Thinking time
  - what is your tutor expecting of you?
  - solutions
  - ideas
  - a different approach?

- Writing time
  - ◆ drafts
  - ◆ final copy
  - ◆ referencing
  - ◆ word-processing

- Reading time
  - journals
  - books
  - e-journals
  - e-books
  - internet articles

- **Party time**

Paid employment hours

- avoid doing more than 12 hours a week in your first year

What does that add up to?

- Be realistic, don't kid yourself about your weekly schedule

- Get the balance right

- Start right this year and the habits you learn will set you up for successful university experience all round.
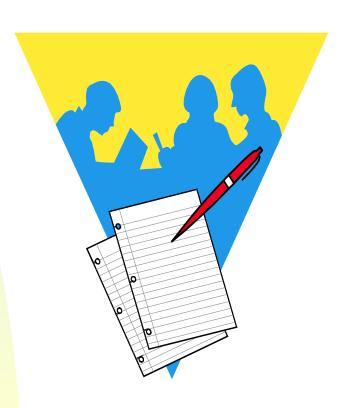
So that you end up with
......

- a degree that reflects your hard work

A good job with opportunities

- And a satisfying career destination

Questions, queries, need help?

Karen Fitzgibbon

Advice Shop

Ground Floor

Forest Hall

01443 483323

hassadviceshop@glam.ac.uk

- Monday – Friday
- Call in 9am – 4pm
- Appointments by arrangement

Parent to Parent – Information for parents of new students

Your son or daughter has secured a place at the University of Glamorgan to study in the School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences. We wish them well as they embark on a challenging study programme.

This brochure aims to help you understand the typical student experience – the highs and lows of studying in higher education. Keep this leaflet to hand during your son or daughter's time at the University, so you're able to access information and advice at any time.

In preparing this brochure, we sought the views of parents whose sons and daughters have just graduated, and asked the parents what tips they would offer to parents of new students. We also asked them what information they would have found useful, and this brochure includes the comments we received.

So what is the 'typical' student experience?

Your son or daughter will normally be studying 120 academic credits in each year of their studies.* These credits are divided up into modules (subjects) and will either be optional modules or compulsory modules which must be successfully completed for their chosen Award (degree).

Your son or daughter will receive details of the modules they are studying, together with information about their timetable for the first week of term, known as 'enrolment week'. In this week, there are lots of things to do and organise ranging from enrolment, Student Union membership, library tours, meeting fellow students on the same course (known as a cohort), opportunities to join clubs and societies and social events. It is also worth checking out the freshers' website at: www.glam.ac.uk/freshers (freshers is the term used for new students).

Parent's comments:

"Make sure they have chosen the correct course to enable them to enjoy the three years in front of them."

"Encourage their[your] offspring[child] to join clubs/societies. e.g. sports/Christian union/theatre etc."

"Make sure they[you] encourage their[your] children because the first few months can be difficult."

"Obtain full information about courses and living accommodation."

*This is the usual number of credits taken in one year, but there are exceptions to this limit.

The academic year is split into three terms – Autumn, Spring, and Summer. To find out when the terms, and holidays, start and finish check the website at: www.glam.ac.uk/students. Some modules will last for the full academic year (three terms) whilst others are of a shorter duration. The length of module being studied will be explained when the timetable is issued.

A brief overview of the academic structure of each term

Autumn term – from enrolment week until the Christmas vacation:

Immediately after enrolment week, the teaching timetable commences. During this term, teaching begins and your son or daughter will get used to finding their way about the campus, will make friends and generally settle in. It is likely that during this term they will be required to complete coursework for each of their modules, and they will receive full details of the assessment requirements from their subject tutors.

Parent's comment:
"The lecturers are not only professional but encourage and support students throughout the programme."

Attendance at **all** classes is a vital component of successful degree study. Research conducted within the School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences has demonstrated a definite link at all levels between the percentage of attendance achieved and the overall pass rate obtained. Some students fall into a pattern of not attending when they don't understand a subject and clearly this is only going to lead to more problems – although very often students don't realise this. Please encourage your son or daughter to see the importance of attending their classes throughout their three years of university study.

If they're struggling, please advise them to speak to the module tutor. Alternatively students can attend the **Education Drop-in Centre** at the **Learning Resources Centre** (library) which is dedicated to providing extra study support and individual tuition on basic maths and statistics, making presentations, taking exams, writing essays, reports and dissertations and much, much more.

In addition to lectures and tutorials, each student is expected to undertake independent study each week in order to keep up with their reading, research and writing. They should not be in a position where they are missing classes to work on coursework – this is a part of their learning experience and tests their ability to manage their time effectively.

Parent's comment:
"Encourage and help them as much as possible. Have patience."

Spring term – from the Christmas vacation until Easter vacation:

During this term, your son or daughter may receive the results of their coursework from the previous term. Some students will have the opportunity to take new

modules because they will have finished them at Christmas, others will be continuing with the same modules right through the academic year.

More coursework may be issued during this term and you may notice a change in your son or daughter's attitude to University. Most start to realise the commitment required in order to be successful in their studies. Some students struggle to manage their time effectively, skipping lectures to work on coursework that they should be completing in their own time. Sometimes several pieces of coursework are due on the same day and this tests the ability to juggle the demands of independent studying, attendance at classes and any employment responsibilities. They can get help in planning their deadlines from the **Advice Shop** or from the **Education Drop-in Centre**, but they need to make an appointment in advance, so they have time to spread the workload rather than leaving it all to the last minute.

Parent's comment:
"Offer support in whatever form. Glamorgan is a great university, the students develop an all-round education, social skills and, they're equipped to enter the "big wide world" with a good degree and plenty of friends."

Summer term – from Easter vacation until end of exam period:

There tend to be less teaching sessions during this term (depending on when Easter falls). However, most students will have more coursework and many will be required to sit exams. During this period you can help by keeping them calm and focused, and by pointing them in the direction of revision and exam technique advice.

What is a 'Reading Week' and when are they?

Reading weeks are exactly that – an opportunity for students to take stock of their subject knowledge and catch up with their reading, sorting of lecture notes, and coursework preparation. Some tutors will give set reading or other academic activities. The lectures and tutorials that fall within a reading week will be cancelled, however some courses adopt a more flexible approach and tutors will advise students of reading week arrangements accordingly. You can help your son or daughter get the most out of reading weeks by encouraging them to use the time wisely by catching up on missed reading etc. You might also want to discourage them from thinking this is like 'half term', or in other words a week off, which it most definitely is not! The School of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences has a designated reading week during the Autumn and Spring terms and details of these dates are usually contained in your son or daughter's Student Handbook.

Parent's comment: Work hard, play hard but keep the correct perspectives

Study skills help

If your son or daughter would like study skills advice there are several sources of information and support available. There are plenty of information leaflets available from the Education Drop-in Centres, which are located in the Learning Resources Centre on the Treforest campus and in the Law School on the Glyntaff campus. Additionally, students can make an appointment in either of the Education Drop-in Centres for help with essay writing, revision planning and exam techniques.

Alternatively, students can make a study skills appointment in the Advice Shop in Forest Hall.

How involved should parents be?

This is a question many parents ask. Once your son or daughter has signed up with the University, they are treated as adults and the University's contract of engagement is primarily with them. However, we would recommend that you show an interest in their studies and encourage them when things get tough as this will give them the inspiration and motivation to carry on and succeed.

Parent's comments:

"Don't worry too much; let them find their own way. Glamorgan is very supportive."
"Make sure they can cook a simple meal and use a washing machine."
"Always support your child, being there is more important than the financial side."
"Get involved, you will find it very interesting and informative."

If you are worried about your son or daughter, you can of course contact the University yourself. However, you should be aware that we cannot discuss any aspect of their studies, progress or results with you unless we have their permission at that time. We will try to give you general information regarding your query, and where appropriate, recommend a course of action for your child to consider.

Submitting coursework and missing a coursework deadline

Your son or daughter will be submitting coursework on a regular basis throughout the period of their studies. It's extremely important that students submit their coursework on time and so they must be organised by keeping a record of all the various deadlines . It's also important for them to be familiar with the mechanism for handing in work and this will be explained to them by their tutors.

If your son or daughter misses a deadline because of illness, then they should enquire about applying for Mitigating Circumstances, which is the University process for obtaining permission to have more time to submit their work – also known as an 'extension'. Information about Mitigating Circumstances is available from the Advice Shop in Forest Hall or the Student Office in the Law School.

Being employed part-time whilst studying

We recognise the financial burden many students suffer whilst undertaking their studies. However, UK Government guidelines (based on research into reasons why students withdraw early from University) recommend that first year students should not undertake more than 16 hours a week in paid employment during term time.

We would support this recommendation, but also encourage students to settle into the demands of their full-time education before seeking employment.
A pattern often repeated by new students is to receive their timetable in the first week of teaching and think that their contact hours represent their total hours at

University. This misconception leads to them taking on far more paid employment than is recommended.

As the demands of the course increase each week, students find they cannot complete all their university work yet they still keep up their employment. Students become used to the extra money, so they start missing classes and not reading as much as they should. This can lead to a downward spiral, with students not achieving the degree they are capable of, or even result in a situation that causes them to withdraw before the completion of their studies.

Of course, this is all a question of balance, but our advice is to settle in first, and then make a decision about part-time employment, but don't do more than 16 hours a week in the first year.

Parent's comments:
"Don't worry, they will grow up and mature and the cost is worth it.
Keep your pockets deep & arms short!"
"Be prepared for a lot of stress and try and take it in your stride. It passes."

Revision techniques for examinations

Students often seek reassurance about exam revision techniques and there are several sources of information to help them plan a sensible but effective revision timetable. Copies of these leaflets are available from the Advice Shop or the Education Drop in Centre. Additionally, your son or daughter is welcome to make an appointment to discuss their revision concerns in either of the above locations.

Exams

Most people understand the requirements of an academic examination – sitting silently in a hall with fellow students whilst independently answering an exam paper. However, students in Higher Education will often come across a range of exam styles and terms such as 'open book' or 'seen case study'. Their tutors will help them understand what approach they should take in such exams, but if they have any queries, they can call into the Advice Shop or Education Drop-in Centre.

Parent's comment: "Encourage them to study well and do their very best."

Results of the first year of study

Results are posted to students' home addresses usually in the first two weeks of July. We cannot give out results over the telephone and we cannot discuss your son or daughter's results with you unless we have their express permission to do so.

Final note

On a final note, we hope you find the information contained in this leaflet useful and we hope your son or daughter succeeds by reaching their full potential. There are support services in place to help them should they need it, but they need to ask for

help or let us know that they are struggling so we can give them the advice they need.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge with grateful thanks the contributions made by parents of our graduates, to whom we leave the last word:

Contact details:

Advice Shops:
- Forest Hall,
  Treforest campus
  Tel: 01443 483323 or 01443 483499 or 01443 482050

- Law School,
  Glyntaff campus
  Tel: 01443 483005

Education Drop-in Centres:
- Learning Resources Centre,
  Treforest campus

- Law School,
  Glyntaff campus

www.glam.ac.uk

www.glam.ac.uk/students

www.glam.ac.uk/freshers

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT…?
Information about your results, resits and resubmissions

If you are reading this leaflet you have received your results letter and probably haven't done as well as you expected.

DON'T PANIC - very often it is not quite as bad as it seems, although it may not feel like it at first. You **can** still turn things around – so read on:

1. Check your results - do you understand them?
   - Check out the section - *'What does it all mean?'*

2. Identify which elements of the module(s) you need to resit – is it coursework, exam or both?
   - Check the module result status in *'What does it all mean?'*

3. Look over the resit work - do you understand what you need to do?
   - Check out *'Resit course work and information'*

4. Don't leave things to the last minute, the resits will be here sooner than you think!
   - Check out *'Getting help and support'*

5. Put the resit coursework submission date and the exam resit week in your diary. For details on the submission process
   - Check out *'What happens in the resit process'*

6. Confused…concerned…worried…any questions? Get in touch!
   - Check out – *'Useful contacts'*

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Your results will be shown on two documents: there is a letter explaining your overall grade, and then a transcript of your module results.

Results letter:

Your results letter contains your overall grade for the year. This is shown in bold after the statement '*The recent Examination Board confirmed your outcome as: […]* Immediately below the result you will find a brief explanation of what this means.

Transcript of module results:

The transcript will show a grade for each module and also a grade for each assessment. Just follow the information below to help you understand the grades you've received and what is required of you.

Each of the modules you have taken are listed. Look at the top line of each module result and you will see the module title and code (eg. EL1S01) followed by the overall mark achieved and the module outcome from this list:

Pass	your marks are between 40 and 100
Narrow Fail	Your marks are between 30 and 39.99
Fail	Your marks are between zero and 29.99
Compensated	The module has been compensated which means that the module will not appear on your degree certificate.

Important Note: If your module mark is above 40 and your module grade is shown as Narrow Fail or Fail, it is because you have not passed all of the compulsory assessments for the module and are not able to pass it until all the assessments have been completed. The information below contains more information.

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Check your results for each of the assessments in the module.

You will see the assessment element, or a description such as 'examination', followed by the mark you were given for that piece of work, and a result status. ***Please note that if no result status is shown, this means you have passed the module.***

Further on result status is given below:

Academic Offence	An academic offence was committed, eg plagiarism or cheating in the examination. You will have been informed about this separately.
Completed – awaiting result	The assessment is set/marked by an external institution. The University will receive the result but it has not yet been supplied.
Completed externally	The assessment is set/marked by an external institution. The University will not receive notification of the result. You should contact the external organisation for your result.
Continuing	There is no result for this module yet as you are continuing on the module and are not yet due to have completed all the assessments/taken the examination(s).
Deferred	You have been asked to take a decision as to whether to resit, etc.
Exempt	You are exempt from taking this module.
First Attempt	You have been granted mitigating circumstances and are permitted to resit the assessment as if for the first time. The full range of marks is available to you.
Mixed	You have to resit some assessments which will be capped at 40 marks. You also have others which you can take as if for the first time, usually because mitigating circumstances have been granted.
Repeat	You are required to repeat the module or you may be able to substitute it with another module. You will be given advice about this at enrolment time.
Repeat (A)	You did not submit an element of assessment but are eligible to repeat the module
Resit	An individual assessment/examination or all the pieces of assessment have to be taken again. These will be capped at a maximum of 40 marks.
Resit (A)	You did not submit the coursework and/or take the examination. Mitigating circumstances have not been granted if applied for, but you are eligible to resit.
Student suspended	You have suspended your studies and have not completed sufficient assessment to be given a result
Student withdrawn	You have withdrawn from your course and have not completed sufficient assessment to be given a result.

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The difference between a Resit and a Repeat

A resit means that you have failed all or part of a module. You are required to undertake a second attempt in the failed element, usually in the summer resit period, which will be assessed by the Resit Board. You will not be able to attain a grade higher than Pass or 40% in any re-assessed element of the module. In the event of another fail, you will normally be required to repeat or substitute the whole module depending on Scheme/Award regulations.

A repeat means that you will be required to take all elements of the module in the following academic year. For repeat modules, you will be able to achieve full marks.

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RESIT COURSEWORK INFORMATION

How will you receive your coursework?

Advanced Technology

All coursework will be available on Blackboard on the 2nd July.

Glamorgan Business School

If you are required to re-take coursework, assessment material should be included with your results letter. If the assessment material is not included please look on Blackboard or contact your module leader as soon as possible. Alternatively please contact the Business School Administration Office.

Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries

Re-sit assessments will be posted first class week commencing 9th July. If you have not received your re-sit assessment by 16th July please contact the Faculty Advice Shop on 01443 654067/654462 without delay.

Health, Sport and Science

Department of Sport and Science: you will receive your resit coursework with your results letter. If the coursework is not included please contact the Department of Science and Sport Administration Office as soon as possible.

Department of Care Sciences and Department of Professional Education: if you do not receive your coursework please contact the Departmental offices as soon as possible.

Humanities and Social Sciences

All resit coursework for Humanities and Social Sciences students will be available on Glamlife

Academic queries

If you have an academic query, contact your module tutor. Don't leave this until the last minute; tutors may not be available during the whole of the summer break.

Need access to specialist equipment?

Central computer labs are open throughout the summer, usually between 9am to 5pm. Further details on opening times and the support available can be found on the University Web Site (www.glam.ac.uk) and by contacting the PC support team.

June 2007

The LRC (main campus and Glyntaff) are open though out the summer between 9am and 7pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 5pm on Fridays. Details of Self Service hours can be found on the University website www.glam.ac.uk
*Photography dark room – **if you require the use of a darkroom contact the Students' Office to ask advice. The LRC also has a darkroom, but you will need to ring and confirm that your tutor has forwarded permission for you to have access.***

Scientific Labs for practical work - you will not be able to use a Lab without being supervised so contact your Award Leader as soon as possible to make access arrangements. If your Award Leader is not available, contact the Student Office for advice.

Sound/video recording/editing facilities are available throughout the summer. Ring Media Services at the LRC and ask their advice; you may need to contact your tutor for written authorisation and it may take a little time to organise these facilities.

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GETTING HELP AND SUPPORT

Module specific advice

Your resit coursework materials should clearly explain what you need to do. If, however, you have module specific queries, you will need to contact the module tutor. Do this as soon as possible because tutors may not be available during the summer period. If you can't get hold of the tutor, contact your Student Office or your Faculty Advice Shop.

General support

The Education Drop-in Centre is open (reduced hours) during the summer vacation and will be able to offer lots of practical advice. You can book a one to one English or maths study session, and get advice and support on topics such as essay planning, revision and exam technique for resits.

General study skills support

The Education Drop-in Centre is open throughout the summer vacation and will be able to offer lots of practical advice. They provide guidance materials and one-to-one support on a wide range of study matters such as essay writing, maths and statistics, and revision and exam technique.

The Centre can post you study skills materials, give advice over the telephone or arrange an appointment with one of the study skills tutors. Summer opening times and contact details are given below:

Location	Opening Times		Telephone No	Email
Main Campus Treforest	Wednesday	9.30 – 4.30	(01443) 482990	dropin@glam.ac.uk
Glyntaff Campus	Monday – Friday	9.30 – 4.30	(01443) 483836	

Past exam papers

The LRC have a resource bank of past examination papers. These are for reference only, but you can make copies.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE RESIT PROCESS?

If you have a query regarding the grades awarded, or decide to appeal against a decision, in the first instance talk to the appropriate Departmental staff or your Faculty Advice Shop. Further information on Academic Appeals can also be found on the University web site. You might also like to talk to a member of the Students Union or a student counsellor in Student Services.

Deadline dates for resit coursework

The deadline for the receipt of coursework (excluding Postgraduate dissertations) is **15th August 2007**. For students required to retake a Postgraduate dissertation, you must check your resubmission deadline with your award leader.

The usual submission procedures also apply to resit coursework, and you may submit work earlier than the deadline date if you wish. If you are posting coursework it is advisable to use Recorded Delivery so that you can be assured your work has been received by the University. You must keep your posting/delivery receipt as this is your proof of submission.

Faculty specific arrangements for submission of coursework

Advanced Technology

All coursework must be submitted via Blackboard unless otherwise agreed with your module tutor.

Glamorgan Business School
Please submit your coursework in the normal way to the Business School Reception; or you may send it Recorded Delivery to the address below. Please note that work sent by email will not be accepted, unless this is the normal procedure used during the term.

> Business School Reception
> University of Glamorgan
> Treforest
> Pontypridd
> CF37 1DL
> UK

Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries

All coursework to be submitted directly to the Faculty Advice Shop, Ty Crawshay, room A122. If you send via the post it must be by recorded delivery directly to the Faculty Advice Shop and arrive with us by the deadline date. Please retain your receipt from the Post Office as proof of sending. Assessments received after the deadline date will be awarded a mark of zero.

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Please ensure you complete the coursework coversheet and submit together with your assignment. Coversheets can be collected from A122 or downloaded from http://glamlife.glam.ac.uk/study/796

You must not send work directly to your tutor.

We will not accept assessments submitted by email

Health, Sport and Science

<mark>The instructions you receive with your coursework will tell you where to post your work to.</mark>

Humanities and Social Sciences

Please submit your coursework in the normal way through the Student Enquiry Centre on the ground floor of Forest Hall, or send it Recorded Delivery to:

Faculty of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences,
Forest Hall
University of Glamorgan
Llantwit Road
Treforest
CF37 1DL

Work sent by email will not be accepted.

Examination dates

The examination re-sit period for all referred exams is Monday 20th – Wednesday 29th August 2007 (excluding the Bank Holiday on the 27th). In July Student Registry will send the examination timetable (with dates, times and rooms) to the address registered with the University as your home address; the exam timetable will also be published on Glamlife.
Please note that if you have any specific provisions (such as disability or dyslexia support), you must contact the DDS Unit in Student Services to discuss any requirements for the resit examinations.

Resit results

Resit exam and coursework results are considered at the re-sit Award Examination Boards held in September. Shortly after this, you will receive your results letter.

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USEFUL CONTACTS

To direct dial the appropriate Faculty, please use the numbers below.

Advanced Technology
Administration Office	01443 482957
AT Advice Shop	01443 482540

Glamorgan Business School:

Administration Office *(contact via Main Reception)*	01443 482343
GBS Advice Shop	01443 654261 / 654176 / 482995
	busadviceshop@glam.ac.uk
Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries	01443 654067 01443 654462
Combined and Foundation Studies	<mark>01443 482252</mark>

Faculty of Humanities & Social
Sciences:

Dept of Humanities	01443482662/3655
Law School	01443 483006/3005
Dept of Psychology, Careers & Education	01443482566/4254
Dept of Social Sciences	01443 482688/2552
	01443 48:
HaSS Advice Shop	3223/3499/2050

Health Sport and Science
Treforest	01443 483645
Dept of Science and Sport	01443 483129
HeSAS Advice Shop	
Glyntaff	01443 483058
Depts of Care Sciences and Professional Education	01443 483021
Student Support Adviser	

Learning Resource Centre:
Main Campus	01443 482625
Glyntaff Campus	01443 483117
Audio/Visual Services	01443 482610

The Education Drop-in Centre:
Main Campus	01443 482990

Glyntaff Campus   01443 483836

PC Labs:
Main Campus   01443 482430/2423
Glyntaff Campus   01443 483190
ISS Helpdesk   isshelpdesk@glam.ac.uk
Student Services:
Main Reception for Careers   01443 482080
Guidance, Student Counselling
and the Disability & Dyslexia
Unit.
Finance   01443 482898
Health Centre   01443 482081

Remember, if you didn't manage to get the grades you were hoping for, it's not the end of the world.   Failing an exam or piece of coursework doesn't make you a failure in life!

So once you have had a chance to take it all in, make an appointment to speak to your progress tutor, academic advisor, tutor or a student counsellor or pop into your Faculty Advice Shop.

Together we can discuss the best way forward and work on a strategy that helps you successfully progress to the next level of your studies.

Remember, if you plan your resit work now you'll still have some time left to relax and enjoy the holiday so don't put it off, get it out of the way now!

Good luck with your studies!

June 2007

WHAT HAPPENS NOW…?
Information for students repeating a year of study

If you are reading this leaflet you have received your results letter and probably haven't done as well as you had hoped.

DON'T PANIC - very often things are not quite as bad as they seem, even if they feel that way at first. You are being given the opportunity for a fresh start and a second chance to fulfil your academic potential and, difficult as this may appear, it is best to try and look at the situation with this positive attitude in mind.

Rest assured you are not the only person to be in this position and it will not affect your future results at the University.

What you need to do next?

Practicalities

- You need to keep your Faculty Office informed of your intentions.
- Contact your Local Education Authority to notify them of your repeat student status. See http://glamlife.glam.ac.uk/supportandwelfare/844/repeating-part-of-your-course.
- You should discuss funding/financial implications with the University Student Money Service.

It is important that you now take the time to assess where you are now and how you feel about your studies. *Remember, you are being given the perfect opportunity to review the past and plan for the future.*

You may find it useful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Did you find the course work more challenging than you anticipated?
- Did you find it difficult to balance University with your other commitments?
- In all honesty, could you have put more effort into your work and attended more regularly?[1]
- Did the course fail to meet your expectations and did you lose interest?

If you've answered yes to any of the above questions, we recommend that you have a chat with somebody in your Faculty Advice Shop. They will be able to give you some advice and support on how to turn things around, as it is important to try and identify why things have gone wrong before you attempt to move forward.

Making the time to talk to someone, whether on the phone or face to face, could help ensure that you are making informed decisions and really make a difference in helping you towards the right choices.

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[1] Please also note that when repeating modules, you will be required to repeat with attendance at all classes.

Remember, if you didn't manage to get the grades you were hoping for, it's not the end of the world. Not successfully progressing to the next level of your course doesn't make you a failure in life!

So once you have had a chance to take it all in, make an appointment with your Faculty Advice Shop. Together we can discuss the best way forward and work on a strategy that helps you successfully complete your repeat year.

Contact Details:

To direct dial the appropriate Faculty, please use the numbers below.

Advanced Technology
    Administration Office   01443 482957
    AT Advice Shop   01443 482540

Glamorgan Business School:

    Administration Office
    (contact via Main   01443 482343
    Reception)

        01443 654261 / 654176
    GBS Advice Shop   / 482995
        busadviceshop@glam.ac.uk

Cardiff School of Creative and   01443 654067 or
Cultural Industries   01443 654462

Combined Studies   01443 482252
Health Sport and Science
Treforest
Dept of Science and Sport   01443 483645
HeSAS Advice Shop   01443 483129

Glyntaff
Depts of Care Sciences and   01443 483058
Professional Education
Student Support Adviser   01443 483021

Faculty of Humanities &
Social Sciences:
    Dept of Humanities   01443482662/3655
    Law School   01443 483006/3005
    Dept of Psychology,   01443482566/4254
    Careers & Education
    Dept of Social Sciences   01443 482688/2552

        01443 48:
    HaSS Advice Shop   3223/3499/2050

Student Services:

    Main Reception for   01443 482080

Careers, Student
Counselling and
Specific Needs Support
Student Money Service: 01443 482898
Email   stufin@glam.ac.uk

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RESITS?
Information for students with failed modules after resits including 'repeat year' students

If you are reading this leaflet you have received your results letter and probably haven't done as well as you had hoped.

DON'T PANIC - very often things are not quite as bad as they seem, even if they feel that way at first. You are being given the opportunity for a fresh start and, difficult as this may appear, it is best to try and look at the situation with this positive attitude in mind. It is worth remembering too that ***you will not be required to retake any modules that you have passed***, so discuss the implications of this with your Scheme Leader, Award Tutor or Advice Shop team.

What should you do next?

- Contact your Scheme Leader or Award Tutor or Advice Shop to discuss what your results mean for your progress
- Keep your Faculty Office informed of your intentions.
- Discuss funding/financial implications with the University Student Money Service
- Contact your Local Education Authority about funding

How can you prepare for the new academic year and the challenges facing you?

It is important that you take the time to assess where you are now and how you feel about your studies. *Remember, you are being given the opportunity to review the past and plan for the future.* You may find it useful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Did you find the course work more challenging than you anticipated?
- Did you find it difficult to balance University with your other commitments?
- In all honesty, could you have put more effort into your work and attended more regularly?
- Did the course fail to meet your expectations and did you lose interest?

If you've answered yes to any of the above questions, we recommend that you have a chat with somebody in your Faculty Advice Shop. They will be able to give you some advice and support on how to turn things around, as it is important to try and identify why things have gone wrong before you attempt to move forward. Making the time to talk to someone, whether on the phone or face to face, could help ensure that you are making informed decisions and really make a difference in helping you towards the right choices.

Remember, if you didn't manage to get the grades you were hoping for, it's not the end of the world. Not successfully progressing to the next level of your course doesn't make you a failure in life! So once you have had a chance to take it all in, make an appointment with your Faculty Advice Shop. Together we can discuss the best way forward and work on a strategy that helps you successfully complete your repeat year.

Contact Details:

Student Offices:

Faculty of Health & Sports Science
(HeSaS)

Department of Science and Sport	01443 483645
Care Science and Chiropractic students	01443 483068

Glamorgan Business School	01443 48
Faculty of Advanced Technology (AT)	01443 48
Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI)	Email: advice@atrium.glam.ac.uk

**Faculty of Humanities and Social
Sciences (HaSS)**

HaSS Advice Shop	01443 483323
Department of Humanities	01443 482688
Law School	01443 483007
Department of Psychology and Education	01443 482566
Department of Social Sciences	01443 482584
Combined Studies	01443 482252
Student Services:	01443 482080
Student Money Service: Email	01443 482898 stufin@glam.ac.uk

Dear

As you reflect on last year do you identify with any of the following statements:

- ✓ Every assignment deadline seemed to provoke a crisis for me
- ✓ I wish I could have been more organised
- ✓ I would have achieved more if I felt less stressed
- ✓ I wish I had asked for help earlier, But How?
- ✓ Life got in the way

If you answered yes to any of the above you may be interested in a short non-assessed course we are offering **'Self-Development, Moving Forward'**. There are 6 one-hour sessions covering: -

- ♦ A Holistic approach to studying effectively
- ♦ Identifying personal learning strengths and areas of challenge
- ♦ Know yourself (time & self management)
- ♦ Enhancing coping skills (stress and why we need it!)
- ♦ Assertion (effective communication)
- ♦ Who, When & How to ask for help

You will receive a Certificate of completion which will be valuable to future employers, demonstrating your commitment to your studies and self-management.

The course will start in the week commencing 2 February. There are three times for you to choose from. The time of your class will remain the same for the six sessions.

<div align="center">Thursday 12 – 1, Thursday 1 – 2, Thursday 5 - 6</div>

If you are interested in this opportunity to reflect on last year and plan for achievement this year, cut off and return the form at the end of this letter. This is the second time we have run the course and the feedback from students who were lucky enough to get places last time was extremely positive. We are expecting demand to be high so places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Karen Fitzgibbon
Karen M Fitzgibbon
Advice Shop Manager/Principal Lecturer
………………………………………………………. ……………….cut off and return ……………………………………………………………….
Yes! I would like to reserve a place on the **Self-Development, Moving Forward** course. My preferred time of attendance is:

Thursday 12 – 1   Thursday 1 – 2   Thursday 5 - 6   (**please circle your choice**)

Name: Enrolment Number:
Contact Number:

Unique Opportunity

Dear Student,

Welcome back to year two. As you reflect on year one do you identify with any of the following statements: -

- ✓ Every assignment deadline seemed to provoke a crisis for me
- ✓ I wish I could have been more organised
- ✓ I would have achieved more if I felt less stressed
- ✓ I wish I had asked for help earlier, But How?
- ✓ Life got in the way

If you answered yes to any of the above you may be interested in a short non assessed course we are offering

 There are 6 one-hour sessions covering: -

- ♦ A Holistic approach to studying effectively
- ♦ Identifying personal learning strengths and areas of challenge
- ♦ Know yourself (time & self management)
- ♦ Enhancing coping skills (stress and why we need it!)
- ♦ Assertion (effective communication)
- ♦ Who, When & How to ask for help
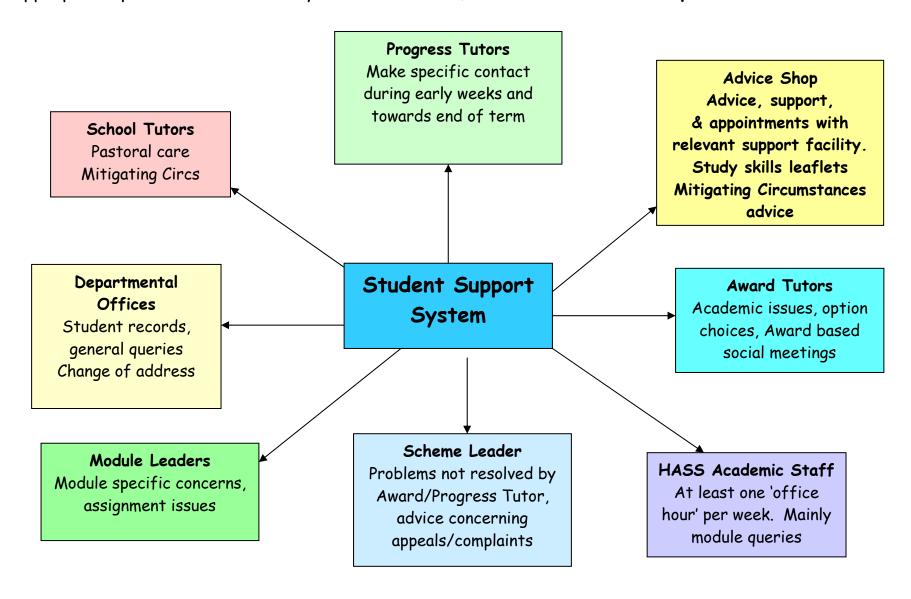
[Certificate of attendance provided]

If you are interested in this opportunity to reflect on last year and plan for achievement this year

Contact Karen Fitzgibbon in the HLaSS Advice Shop, Ground Floor, Forest Hall

Difficulties...Problems

Who can help?

Faculty: Scheme Leader, Award/Year Tutor

Module Lecturer (module issues)

Course issues

Computer or IT issues

IS Customer Support Service

Money Issues
Student Counselling

Student Services

Pastoral Support
Disability/Dyslexia Support

Immigration issues, visas, bank letters

International Student Unit

General daily life issues of living in the UK

Education Drop in Centre

Study Skills support:- maths, basic IT, essay/report writing, referencing, exam and revision techniques, etc

Career planning CVs

Jobs Work experience

Careers Service

Health problems

Health Service

If you need it
ASK FOR HELP!

Not sure who to ask
Call into your
Faculty Advice Shop

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Got a query? Not sure who to go to? This diagram should give you a better understanding of the most appropriate person to talk to – if you're still unsure, come to the **Advice Shop** – it's what we're here for

Student Support System

Progress Tutors
Make specific contact during early weeks and towards end of term

School Tutors
Pastoral care
Mitigating Circs

Advice Shop
Advice, support, & appointments with relevant support facility. Study skills leaflets
Mitigating Circumstances advice

Departmental Offices
Student records, general queries
Change of address

Award Tutors
Academic issues, option choices, Award based social meetings

Module Leaders
Module specific concerns, assignment issues

Scheme Leader
Problems not resolved by Award/Progress Tutor, advice concerning appeals/complaints

HASS Academic Staff
At least one 'office hour' per week. Mainly module queries

University of Glamorgan

Advice Shop Framework - 2006

Aims

To identify retention issues across the Faculty in conjunction with Faculty staff.
To put in place intervention processes to improve retention within the Faculty.
To identify best practice across this and other institutions and share examples where appropriate.

Objectives

- To set up and run the Faculty Advice Shop (FAS);
- To promote the FAS and its activities, providing information on student support;
- To provide support for students within the Faculty;
- Identify retention issues across awards/ modules;
- Identify 'at risk' students;
- To develop intervention processes;
- Develop and inform research programmes for FAS staff;
- Develop IT systems to support all FAS activities.

Indicative Activities

Roles and Services

These are provided in addition to existing student support in the Faculty and work in conjunction with both Faculty academic and administrative staff.
These roles/services can be sub-divided into two main areas:

Student Facing Functions

Drop-in service (Mon to Friday 9 – 4)/Appointment system to provide:
- FAS awareness
- Academic advice
- Pastoral care
- Suspend studies/ withdrawals/ transfers advice
- Involvement in open days, applicant day and induction
- Mitigating circumstances advice
- Signposting to other schools and support departments

Operational Functions
- FAS awareness to Faculty staff
- Mitigating Circumstances procedure
- Preparation for open days, induction etc.
- Record keeping
- Intervention processes
- Attendance at relevant meetings

- Communication between Faculty staff, students and other university support departments.
- Research – to use data captured to produce a research programme for Advice shop staff.