

Moving Forward: enhancing progression through partnership

Institution-wide Project coordinated by the Caledonian Academy

This project will address a key strategic issue identified by the Senior Executive. Its outcomes will be:

- Improved progression rates
- Enhanced student experience in terms of transition to GCU
- Greater support for staff in developing and implementing strategies to address issues associated with transition and progression.

This will be achieved through a coordinated institutional strategy for transition and progression and evidence-based practice which will centre on partnership working between the Caledonian Academy, the Schools, Learner Support, CRL and the Student Association.

Project Aims and introduction

The development of a GCU Transition and Progression Framework will support the implementation of a coordinated institutional strategy to support the transition of all GCU students to first year, as well as direct HN entrants into later programme levels, and progression within the subsequent stages of their programmes. The purpose of the Framework is to improve progression rates within GCU. The Framework will be integrated within the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) in terms of both its pedagogical and quality enhancement focus. The framework will be developed and implemented in partnership with the Schools, Learner Support, CRL and the Student Association.

The development of the GCU Transition and Progression Framework is an integral part of the GCU's Action Plan GCU in terms of the use of the WARP funding to improve progression rates. It is not a separate or discrete element of the plan, it will provide the framework within which all the activities and strategies within the action plan will operate, at School and central level.

The development of the Framework will include the identification and analysis of the causes, as well as the patterns, of poor progression and retention. These will vary across Schools and across programmes and will be influenced by issues associated with diversity in terms of learner profile and mode of delivery. One size will not fit all – the framework will contain a set of overarching principles and a range of strategies which will enable Schools to select the most appropriate approaches to tackle the particular issues which have been identified at School and programme level. The Framework will provide both the infrastructure and the support for staff in developing these strategies. The Framework will also recognise and be responsive to the fact that student needs and the student experience, are constantly evolving. The evaluation of the impact of these strategies in terms of more effective transition support and improved progression will be incorporated within the Framework.

The Framework will be used to guide Schools in developing action plans to support transition and progression, based on evidence gathered at School level, which will be incorporated into the LTAS section of the School Plan.

The Caledonian Academy will support Schools in a coordinated scholarship approach in terms of the gathering and analysis of the evidence concerning the causes of poor progression, the identification of action and the evaluation of the impact of that action. Development work and scholarly activity carried out within Schools to support transition and progression will be linked to the Academy Fellowship scheme.

Project Objectives

- I. The improvement of progression and retention rates across the Schools through the development of a GCU Transition and Progression Framework. This will support Schools in the development and evaluation of approaches to address the issues of transition and progression within their programmes
- II. The identification and analysis of the causes of poor progression within programmes across the university
- III. The development of School Action Plans for Transition and Progression to support the more effective transition of students into first year and improve progression rates within programmes
- IV. The establishment of mechanisms to evaluate the impact of strategies in terms of enhanced student engagement and improved progression

Approach

The university –wide framework approach as the key mechanism for developing a coordinated, institutional strategy reflects good practice within the HE sector both nationally (Strathclyde University 2006, UHIMI: Campbell,2006) as well as internationally (Harvey, Drew and Smith,2006 Krause, 2003, QAA,2005, 2007). Objectives will be achieved through partnership between the Caledonian Academy the Schools, Learner support, CRL and the Student’s Association. A project team will be appointed to work with Schools to identify issues, evaluate current approaches and develop new strategies. The CA project team will work directly with the Heads of Learning, Teaching and Quality and the new Academic Development Tutors . A strategic, evidence-based approach will be taken to addressing the issue of retention and progression within GCU.

The project will be undertaken in three phases:

Phase 1: identification of issues associated with transition and causes of poor progression at School and programme level and development and approval of GCU Transition and Progression Framework through:

- an **evaluation of the student experience** in terms of transition and progression to identify the causes of lack of engagement and poor progression within the first year. This will be undertaken through student-focussed extended journey mapping undertaken by Kevin Gavaghan, Consultant.
- **Consultative process with key stakeholders** across the university: Senior Management; teaching and support staff in the Schools ; Learner Support staff; library and IT staff; Student Association and CRL. This consultative process will also include a **review of existing academic structures** including programme management and the nature and shape of the first year.

- addressing the issues which have been identified by the **Progression, Retention and Completion Group** and the aspects of the student experience which are identified in the National Student Survey as areas for improvement
- consideration of data from **GCU's Student Evaluation Project (SEP)** and **FE/HE project** to support this process
- consideration of outcomes of the **Quality Enhancement Themes** Responding to Student Needs and the First Year Experience, particularly the practice-focussed project on Transition.
- Integrating the development of the Framework within the **revised LTAS**

The Framework

The Framework will comprise of;

1. Key principles underpinning effective support for transition and progression
2. Strategies to address transition and progression support mapped to particular problems/issues
3. Case studies which contextualize these strategies

The Framework will be accessible to staff as an on-line central resource via the Caledonian Academy. The Framework will provide a focal point for reflection, discussion, sharing of good practice and evaluation of action. The resource will therefore grow as School Action plans are developed, implemented and evaluated.

Phase 2: supporting the implementation of the Framework and the development of School Action Plans for Transition and Progression including mechanisms for evaluation, monitoring and review

The implementation of the Framework and the development of School Action Plans for Transition and Progression will be undertaken at School level.

The development of School Action Plans will be led by the Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality and coordinated by the School Academic Development Tutors with support of the CA project team. The CA will facilitate the development of a network of Academic Development Tutors to enable cross-school collaboration in development; reflection and evaluation. Where common issues are identified, Schools may collaborate in terms of sharing resources to develop solutions.

Phase 3: development of strategies at School level and evaluation of impact. The implementation of the School Action Plans will be undertaken through development of the strategies identified by the School and an evaluation of impact to date in terms of improved progression rates:

- Academy Fellows within the Schools will undertake the development work and scholarly activities arising from School Action Plans, with support of CA team and Academic Development Tutors and the Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality
- Academic Development Tutors will support the implementation and evaluation strategy contained in School Action Plan, through quantitative and qualitative analysis, with support of CA team and Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality and Academy Fellows.

Two **university-wide transition and progression events** will be held to ensure widespread awareness and engagement with the development in Phases 1 and 3.

Indicators of success will be jointly agreed by the Caledonian Academy, the PVC L&T and the Schools. These will include:

- Targets for increased progression rates within Schools
- Qualitative measures of the student experience through student feedback processes

Project Staffing

Caledonian Academy Project team: A Project Manager and Administrative Assistant will be appointed to work with the Project Director (CA Senior Lecturer) to coordinate and undertake this activity. Strategic support will be provided by members of the Caledonian Academy core team. The CA project team will also work collaboratively with the Quality Office; Learner Support staff, CROLL staff, academic administration; IT and library staff and the Student's Association.

School-based team: The CA project team will work collaboratively with the Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality and the School-based Academic Development Tutors and Academy Fellows.

Project Timescale

Phase 1: 1 October 2007 to 31 May 2008

Phase 2: 1 June 2008 to 30 September 2008

Phase 3: 1 October 2008 to 31 December 2009

Project Work plan

Aim	Activity	Responsibility	Timescale	Deliverable
Project Management	Plan, set up and manage the project; develop systems for monitoring progress and maintaining communication with partners in central services and schools	Lead: Project Manager working with: Project Director Admin Assistant; CA Communities Research Fellow; Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality; School Academic Development Tutors; Learner support, CRLL and Student Association	1.10.07-1.12.07	Appointment of Project Manager, setting up of project steering group, setting up of Community of Practice
Phase1.1 : To identify issues associated with transition and causes of poor progression and strategies to address these	Evaluation of student experience on School basis through student-focussed extended journey mapping	Lead: Project Manager working with: Kevin Gavaghan Consultant ,Project Director Admin Assistant working with Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality; School Academic Development Tutors CRLL, Learner Support and Student Association	1.10.07 - 28.2.08 Meeting with KG to discuss and agree process 20.11.07 Student focus group 4.2.08 2 day event May2008	Report of analysis of causes of poor engagement and progression and evaluation of transition strategies from student perspective, blueprint for development of framework /redesign of services/approaches
Phase 1.2 : To identify key principles of effective transition and progression support and mapping of strategies to particular issues/problems. This is likely to include 'quick fix' solutions to	Consultation with key stakeholders across university: informed by outcomes of GCU research and development in this area as well as national development	Lead: Project Manager working with Project Director Admin Assistant Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality and School Academic Development Tutors	1.10.07 – 31.5.07	Report of key issues associated with transition and progression at GCU; evaluation of current strategies; review of existing policies (e.g. Admission) and existing structures (e.g. programme management) and curriculum design; and recommendations

particular problems and longer term strategies for others.	work.			for development of new and revised strategies. Key principles and mapping exercise to be discussed at Cross-university Transition and Progression event -outcomes to contribute to production of Framework
Phase 1.3 To develop GCU Transition and progression Framework	Produce Framework document based on outcomes of Phase 1.1 and 1.2	Lead: Project Manager working with Project Director Admin Assistant liaising with School Academic Development Tutors ; Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality; Learner Support ; Students Association	1.4.08-31.5.08	GCU Transition and Progression Framework – for approval by Senate and integrated within LTAS
Phase 2.1 To develop framework as central on-line resource	Produce on-line resource	Lead: Project Manager working with Project Director, CA Communities Research Fellow, Admin Assistant liaising with School Academic Development Tutors ; Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality; Learner Support ; Students Association	1.6.08 -30.9.08	On-line Transition and progression framework staff resource
Phase 2.2 To develop School Action Plans using Framework	Liaise with Schools to support development of School Action Plans and evaluation	Lead: Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality and Project Manager working with School Academic	1.6.08 -30 9. 08	School Action Plans – to be incorporated into LTAS section of School Plan

	mechanisms	Development Tutors, Project Director Admin Assistant		
Phase 3.1 : To implement School Action Plans	Development work to develop strategies at School level. Development and support of network of Academic Development Tutors	Lead: Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality and Project Manager working with School Academic Development Tutors ; Project Director Admin Assistant	1.10.08 - 30.6.09	Progress report on strategies developed in Schools
Phase 3.2 To evaluate impact of strategies at School level on improved progression rates	Evaluate strategies at School level through quantitative and qualitative analysis (student and staff evaluation): student experience and progression and completion rates	Lead: Project Manager working with in partnership with School Academic Development Tutors and Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality Project Director Project Manager Admin Assistant	1.7.09 - 30.11.09	Cross-university Transition and Progression event- as part of evaluation process and to support cross-fertilisation Report evaluating impact of action and strategies to date and recommendations regarding further development.
Phase 3.3 To further develop on-line resource based on evaluation	To include contextualised strategies and outcomes of evaluation on central on-line resource	Lead: Project Manager working with in partnership with CA Communities Research Fellow ,School Academic Development Tutors and Heads of Learning, Teaching & Quality, Project Director Admin Assistant	1.9.09- 31.12.09	Expanded on-line transition and progression staff resource