

Proposed Student Retention Strategy

The matrix identifies the key dimensions of the University’s Student Retention Strategy, drawing on findings from literature and information gathered from student retention working party meetings and interviews with faculty staff with experience of first year experience activities. It is organised under three themes intended to capture the critical stages / dimensions of a student’s engagement with the University: *Transitions* – focussing on a student’s transition to university and from first to second year; *Academic experience at a programme/course level* – a significant theme given that instructional effectiveness has been found to constitute one of the strongest strategies for improving retention; *Broader university experience* – in acknowledgement that a sense of social connectedness and a sense of belonging on campus (i.e. beyond the classroom) contribute significantly to student persistence. Under each theme are a series of high-level strategies, an impact statement, and roles and responsibilities. In all the areas of focus, particular attention will be paid to providing targeted assistance for Māori and Pacific students. This strategy will be informed where appropriate by learning analytics data (e.g. NCEA cohort data and aggregate data on student success rates and individual performance).

1. Transitions (to university, from year 1 - 2)

Objectives:

- *Students have a clear understanding of what university study entails*
- *Students have well-defined, achievable academic goals and a roadmap for completing their degree*
- *Targeted assistance is provided for Māori and Pacific students, and other equity groups to support progression in their chosen programme of study*

Focal point	Strategies	Impact on student retention (evidence-based)	Mode of delivery	Implementation requirements	Roles & responsibilities (& other project dependencies)
Pre-Entry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have opportunities to prepare themselves for university prior to enrolling in their programmes. Such preparation includes understanding realities of academic life and expectations of university study. 2. All students are made aware of the University’s commitment to a safe, inclusive and equitable environment and the range of support available for them. Such support is likely to be particularly important for Māori and equity group students who are first in their family to attend university. 3. Students’ academic preparation is evaluated and students are directed to Foundation or undergraduate programmes and courses appropriate to their academic goals and level of preparedness. 4. Foundation and alternative pathways are designed to equip students to meet challenges in first year study that have an adverse impact on progression. 5. Students experience personalised and integrated academic advisory services (both digital and face-to-face). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orientation schemes help to integrate students into the academic and social environment of the campus community. They communicate the values of the institution and what is required to be successful. Research indicates that integration contributes significantly to student persistence. ▪ Preparation and pathways are linked to successful retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrated online and face-to-face advisory services 	<p><u>Principle 1:</u> Early knowledge of what is required is important, especially if the University becomes more prescriptive about the programme choices in which UTAS and other students entering via alternative pathways can enrol. This approach will require significant expectation-setting exercises and more work in schools would be essential. The Faculty of Education and Social Work could continue to play a significant role in engaging with principals, clusters of schools and in providing PD for teachers.</p> <p><u>Principle 2:</u> A range of role models and explicit messages about equity and inclusion are important.</p> <p><u>Principle 3:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCEA results are not reliable predictors of student retention and success at the course level. Assessing the level of student preparation upon arrival is desirable for promoting student success but difficult given that students have 2-weeks to withdraw from courses without penalty. - Directing students (e.g. UTAS students) to Foundation programmes to prepare them to succeed at undergraduate level study will require recalibrating the mind-sets and expectations of staff as well as students. <p><u>Principle 4:</u> Requires a review of foundation/alternative pathways and the development of enhanced, targeted options.</p>	<p>Faculty Advice/Outreach systems</p> <p>Faculty of Education and Social work School Partnership Office</p> <p>Equity Office</p> <p>Academic Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Contact Centre - Scholarships Office <p>Campus Life</p> <p>Board of Foundation Studies</p> <p>Student Journey Project</p>

Focal point	Strategies	Impact on student retention (evidence-based)	Mode of delivery	Implementation requirements	Roles & responsibilities (& other project dependencies)
Entry	<p>6. Students and their families are provided with accurate and timely information about subjects and programmes, key milestones and student support services.</p> <p>7. Students are supported to define their academic goals and plan their programme of study (including a contingency option should they not be able to pursue their first choice of programme).</p> <p>8. Students have a clearly defined progression pathway for completing their programme.</p> <p>9. Students are provided with structured programmes aligned with their preparation pathway.</p> <p>10. Students have access to systems of peer mentoring and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who are equipped with knowledge and have the end goal in their sights are less likely to drop out of their programme of study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated online and face-to-face advisory services. 	<p><u>Principle 6:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online and face-to-face advisory services/strategies need to be closely connected. Review of online orientation is planned (to enhance personalisation, interactive functionality and support better (individual) tracking). <p><u>Principle 9 (& 3):</u> A challenge is getting students to take the most appropriate programme option especially if it entails taking an extra 6 months or year to optimise their chances of completing an undergraduate degree. Scholarship and other support (e.g. support for ECE fees) for low SES students in conjunction with interested donors would support a more prescriptive approach.</p> <p><u>Principle 10:</u> The ‘mentoring’ landscape is sometimes confusing to students and not as consistent as it might be. (For example not all schemes referred to as mentoring are, or even claim to be.) An agreed mentoring framework that sets out core expectations and standards for is needed</p>	<p>Academic Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Contact Centre Scholarships Office <p>Faculty Student Centres</p> <p>UG/PG Advisors – disciplinary areas</p> <p>Faculties</p> <p>Student Engagement teams (or equivalent)</p> <p>FYE & Tuakana staff</p> <p>L&LS</p> <p>Student Journey Project</p>
Transition from Y1 – Y2	<p>11. Students have access to appropriate on-going advice and support in the transition to year two.</p> <p>12. Academic expectations of students are set appropriately to support students to advance from first to second year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ‘step-up’ into second year has been identified by Faculties as significant for students with a low GPA. Literature also points to the importance of support structures for students in Semester 1 of year 2, and of setting realistic academic expectations of students to smooth the transition from first to second year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated online and face-to-face advisory services. 	<p><u>Principle 11:</u> The timing of advice is important.</p>	<p>UG Advisors – disciplinary areas</p> <p>Faculties</p> <p>Student Engagement teams (or equivalent)</p> <p>FYE & Tuakana staff</p> <p>L&LS</p>

2. Academic Experience (Programme / Course Level)

Objective:

- Through instructional effectiveness, students evolve into confident learners, fully engaged intellectually and socially in their programmes of study and university life
- The University will utilise learning analytics to enhance its understanding of student achievement and to inform its interventions

Focal point	Strategies	Impact on Student Retention (evidence-based)	Mode of delivery	Implementation requirements	Roles & responsibilities (& other project dependencies)
Curricula	<p>13. Programmes / courses are designed to assist student progression.</p> <p>14. Curricula draw on a range of accessible learning resources.</p>			<p><u>Principles 13-28</u>: Mechanisms to support teaching are important and are being considered by the Teaching Capability working group and Assessment working group – two streams in the wider LT programme of work.</p> <p>An important consideration is whether extra pedagogical support should be provided to staff running courses that have been identified as problematic courses.</p>	<p>University & Faculty governance committees (Education Committee, TLQC, etc)</p> <p>Deans Associate Deans Academic Heads of School Programme Directors Teachers</p> <p>Tuakana / peer support</p> <p>Teaching Capability working group & the Assessment working group – LT Programme</p>
Assessment & Performance	<p>15. Assessment is designed to increase students' confidence as academic learners.</p> <p>16. There is a balance between formative and summative assessment (i.e. assessment for learning vs assessment of learning).</p> <p>17. Criteria for assessments are clearly explained and relevant.</p> <p>18. Timely and quality feedback on assessment is provided to students.</p> <p>19. Assessments are timed appropriately to minimise workload stress and maximise constructive feedback opportunities.</p> <p>20. Early monitoring and intervention support academic progress and link students to appropriate pastoral care and support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The design of assessment plays a major role in scaffolding academic self-confidence in students. Experiencing an early academic success (or avoiding an early failure) can provide students with a powerful incentive for continuation. 		<p>Implementation issues will emerge in 2017 from the Assessment Working Group.</p> <p><u>Principles 18 & 20</u>: A system for recording the academic advice and support provided to students on a wide range of issues (including their choice of majors) would help to ensure that intervention support is not being duplicated inefficiently.</p>	<p>University & Faculty governance committees (Education Committee, TLQC, etc)</p> <p>Deans Associate Deans Academic Heads of School Programme Directors Course Directors Teachers L&LS CLear</p> <p>Assessment working group – LT Programme</p>

Focal point	Strategies	Impact on Student Retention (evidence-based)	Mode of delivery	Implementation requirements	Roles & responsibilities (& other project dependencies)
Pedagogical Style/ Classroom Environment	21. Students have opportunities to learn from one another and expand their academic networks. 22. Students have opportunities for social learning including in in large class environments. 23. Teaching and learning simulates real world activities where possible. 24. Inclusive teaching practices including assessment are applied. 25. Enquiry-based learning is used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a strong relationship between student learning and increased persistence. Instructional effectiveness constitutes one of the strongest strategies for improving retention. ▪ Students in highly structured academic courses are less likely to drop out, especially when small cohorts facilitate the development of strong interpersonal rapport between staff and students. 		<p><u>Principles 13-28</u>: Mechanisms to support teaching are important and are being considered by the Teaching Capability working group – a stream in the wider LT programme of work.</p> <p><u>Principle 22</u>: Social learning in large classes can be simulated using technology tools.</p>	Teachers Service units responsible for building teacher capabilities – CLear, CReATE, etc Academic units (Teaching Capability Working Group – LT Programme)
Graduate Profile	26. Programmes and courses are framed in relation to the University Graduate Profile and students are fully aware of the attributes developed within the curricula and their on-going benefits in relation to future career and study options. 27. Experiential learning is embedded where possible within the curriculum. 28. Cultural and social competence is cultivated within the curriculum to support an inclusive learning environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students who are aware of the relevance and utility of the capabilities they are developing throughout their degrees are more likely to persist in their programme. Students are more likely to persist if they can see the relevance of their programmes in relation to their future careers, study options and community-based post-study aspirations. 			Graduate Profile Implementation 2017

3. Broader University Experience (On-going)

Objectives:

- *Students have broad opportunities outside of their programmes to develop themselves personally, professionally and academically*
- *Students experience a safe, inclusive and equitable learning environment*

Focal point	Strategies	Impact on student retention (evidence-based)	Mode of delivery	Implementation requirements	Roles & responsibilities (& other project dependencies)
Support	<p>29. Services are provided to enhance students' academic and cultural capabilities and skills.</p> <p>30. Services are provided to enhance students' personal capabilities and support their health, safety and wellbeing.</p> <p>31. Student support services and staff are strongly student-centred and appropriate for diverse cohorts.</p> <p>32. Services are provided to remove or mitigate personal barriers to success which can include personal health and wellbeing, accommodation, financial, health, transport and other logistical challenges.</p> <p>33. The University actively encourages students to engage with support services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supplemental instruction (provided through Libraries and Learning Services) has proven to be a highly successful intervention strategy, ensuring that students have support in mastering critical academic skills and course concepts. ▪ Students who actively engage with the available support services and resources are more likely to persist with their studies. 	On-line and face-to-face	<p>Planned enhancements to student services delivery model (SSDM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring consistency of service standards as well as clear processes for handover within and between faculties and service divisions. This is to avoid double-handling, confusing and/or conflicting advice to students, general confusion over roles and responsibilities. - Identifying cohorts of students with particular needs, e.g., students enrolled in foundation programmes, in order to target student support services in a more tailored way and to monitor effectiveness. 	<p>Campus Life</p> <p>AUSA</p> <p>L&LS</p> <p>Academic Faculties</p> <p>Student Engagement Managers & FYE staff</p> <p>Equity Office - Student Disability Services, Māori and Pacific Advisors</p> <p>Tuākana</p> <p>Class teachers</p>
Inclusive activities	<p>34. There are activities that accommodate a diversity of student cohorts, and help to establish confident cohort identities and inclusion.</p> <p>35. There is engagement with the wider community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special programmes and efforts that address students' diverse needs and contributions help to reduce feelings of isolation and to integrate students in the academic community, helping to ensure student success and retention. 			<p>Campus Life</p> <p>Academic Faculties</p> <p>Equity Office</p> <p>L&LS</p>
Identity development opportunities	<p>36. There are leadership activities to develop personal and individual capability in students.</p> <p>37. Students develop their professional and student identity from interaction with experienced practitioners.</p> <p>38. Students develop their identity as part of a cohort with whom they share understandings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant and meaningful participation in extracurricular activities contributes to student success and retention. Campus clubs, organizations, intramurals, campus events and traditions all play a role in engaging the student and providing intentional connection opportunities. 			<p>Academic Faculties – schemes</p> <p>Campus Life</p> <p>Equity Office - Tuākana</p>

University Student Retention Strategy: Implementation Planning

The following outlines the immediate, high-level steps that would need to be taken to implement the proposed University Student Retention Policy and Strategy.

Proposed Strategy	Implementation steps	Indicative Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Transitions (Pre-entry)</p> <p><i>Students' academic preparation is evaluated and students are directed to Foundation or undergraduate programmes and courses appropriate to their academic goals and level of preparedness.(3)</i></p>	<p><u>Revision of University Targeted Admission Scheme (UTAS) Policy</u></p> <p>The retention strategy proposes that more students be directed to foundation programmes if they have not attained a sufficient level of academic preparedness for undergraduate level study on entry to the University. This is likely to include the majority of students admitted via the University Targeted Admission Scheme entering undergraduate degrees under the guaranteed entry score. As a key retention measure, it would be desirable to establish UTAS as a direct pathway into Foundation rather than undergraduate study, to ensure that these students are equipped to succeed.</p> <p>This would require proposing an amendment to the UTAS policy via Equity Committee, Education Committee, Senate and Council. A paper presenting a strong argument for the change would need to be developed in consultation with the Equity Committee and other relevant parties. Such a paper would provide data demonstrating that students (predominantly Māori and Pacific) admitted under this scheme have significantly lower pass rates and degree completion times compared to their peers in the wider cohort.</p>	<p>Policy changes approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EC: June 2018 - Senate/Council: Jul/Aug 2018 <p>Schools notified: Sept 2018</p> <p>Implementation: 2020</p>	<p>DVC (Academic)/ PVC(Equity)</p> <p>Equity Committee</p>
<p>Transitions (Pre-entry)</p> <p><i>Foundation and alternative pathways are designed to equip students to meet challenges in first year study that have an adverse impact on progression.(4)</i></p>	<p><u>Review & Development of Foundation Programmes (TFC/CTAP)</u></p> <p>The retention strategy places renewed emphasis on ensuring that existing Foundation programmes are fit for purpose. The proposed policy mandates that these programmes be demonstrably aligned with the curriculum and identified retention issues in undergraduate programmes. This would require a review of existing foundation programmes and the development of enhanced, targeted options in consultation with the Board of Foundation Studies. Some issues for review and analysis are outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UniBound (Certificate in Academic Preparation): Pass rate data of Unibound students in degree level courses indicates that this Certificate is not functioning as effectively as it should. There is a concern that the duration of the programme is too condensed (students enrol in degree level courses in their first semester) and that the full-year Tertiary Foundation Certificate and Certificate in Health Sciences provide a more effective model. - Tertiary Foundation Certificate (TFC): The focus of the TFC is on preparing students for undergraduate programmes in Sciences and Arts. There is potential in expanding the TFC to include specialised Engineering and Commerce pathways utilising existing courses of the Certificate in Academic Preparation and incorporating some of its components (pastoral care for example) and study skills modules. 	<p>Foundation programme changes approved by CUAP 2018 (Round 2) for first offering in 2019.</p>	<p>DVC (Academic)</p> <p>Board of Foundation Studies</p>
<p>Transitions (Pre-entry/Entry)</p> <p><i>Students have opportunities to prepare themselves for university prior to enrolling in their programmes. Such preparation includes understanding realities of academic life and expectations of university study.(1)</i></p>	<p><u>Review & Update of University Orientation</u></p> <p>Campus Life intends to undertake a significant revision and update of the content of orientation and also to revisit opportunities for personalisation, interactive functionality and better (individual) tracking. These features were removed from scope during the development of online orientation. There is an opportunity to develop orientation (both on-site and on-line versions) in a way that makes it useful for prospective, not just enrolled, students to undertake and that could lead to better awareness of academic pathways prior to enrolment</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Campus Life L&LS Equity Faculties International Office</p>

Proposed Strategy	Implementation steps	Indicative Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Transitions (Entry)</p> <p><i>Students are provided with structured programmes aligned with their preparation pathway.(9)</i></p>	<p><u>Enhancement of Student Academic Advisory Function</u></p> <p>The proposed retention strategy places renewed emphasis on guided pathway mapping that captures students' preparation and aspirations. Implementing this approach will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modelling pathways through programmes aligned to the needs of students entering from foundation programmes. - Ensuring that online and face-to-face advisory services/strategies across the university (faculties and centrally) are closely integrated and properly resourced in the new Service Delivery Model. 	TBC	DVC (Operations) & Registrar / Academic Services
<p>Transitions (Entry)</p> <p><i>Students have access to systems of peer mentoring and support.(10)</i></p>	<p><u>Development of a Student Mentoring Framework</u></p> <p>The student retention strategy establishes robust systems of peer mentoring as an important source of advice and support for students. The 'mentoring' landscape is sometimes confusing to students and not as consistent as it might be. (For example not all schemes referred to as mentoring are, or even claim to be.) An agreed mentoring framework that sets out core expectations and standards for is needed.</p>	TBC	Campus Life Academic Services Equity Office
<p>Academic Experience (Curricula / Assessment)</p> <p><i>Programmes and assessment are designed to increase students' confidence as academic learners and performance.(13/14)</i></p>	<p><u>Identification of Teachers' Professional Development & Support Needs</u></p> <p>The strategy recognizes instructional effectiveness as a critical to student retention. Appropriate professional development and support are needed for teachers to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective course design - A balance is maintained between formative & summative assessment - Criteria for assessment are clearly explained and relevant - Assessments are timed appropriately to minimise workload stress for students - Inclusive teaching practices are applied to assessment <p>An important consideration is whether extra pedagogical support should be provided to staff running courses that have been identified as problematic courses.</p>	Mechanisms to support teaching are being considered by the Teaching Capability and Assessment working groups in 2017. These will have implications for the Teaching and Learning Service Delivery Model that will be reviewed and in place by the end of 2018.	DVC(Academic) / DVC(Operations) & Registrar
<p>Broader University Experience (Support)</p> <p><i>Services are provided to enhance students' academic and cultural capabilities and skills.(29)</i></p> <p><i>Services are provided to enhance students' personal capabilities and support their health, safety and wellbeing.(30)</i></p> <p><i>Student support services and staff are strongly student-centred and appropriate for diverse cohorts.(31)</i></p>	<p><u>Review & Enhancement of Student Support SDM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring consistency of service standards as well as clear processes for handover within and between faculties and service divisions. This is to avoid double-handling, confusing and/or conflicting advice to students, general confusion over roles and responsibilities. - Identifying cohorts of students with particular needs, e.g., students enrolled in foundation programmes, in order to target student support services in a more tailored way and to monitor effectiveness. 	TBC	DVC(Operations) & Registrar Director Campus Life, Director Academic Services and Director LLS Equity Office