Enhancing Student Support (ESS)  
Project Update

Central Management Group

The Project Sponsor, Assistant Principal Professor Ian Pirie, presented a paper to Central Management Group (CMG), at the meeting held on Tuesday 20 January 2015, outlining the key recommendations for refinements to be made to the Personal Tutor (PT) system in response to the evaluation of phase one of the project for ‘on-campus’ undergraduate students. CMG approved the main recommendations and agreed the following:

**Local Autonomy**
The PT system will retain the current diversity of approach in selecting and assigning PTs.

**Reward & Recognition**
The diversity of the PT system will be supported by effective induction, line-management and incentivising through appraisal and review. To facilitate this data on effectiveness of the system at School and individual PT level will be gathered.

**Scheduled Meetings**
Schools will continue to formally schedule meetings between PTs and Tutees but these meetings will become more flexible in regard to the numbers and mix of individual and/or small group meetings related to the year of study and local pedagogic approaches. A cascading model will be adopted with the numbers of School scheduled meetings changing to 4, 3, 1, 1 across UG Years 1 to 4 (and 5 where required). This change will particularly address the desire of first year students to have an extra scheduled meeting during the first semester (to develop a greater rapport with their PT during this vital settling in period) while also allowing for less formally contact in the latter years of study. However, students are to be actively encouraged and routinely expected to schedule meetings with their personal tutors as required.

In the light of these CMG decisions, the Project Sponsor and Director of Human Resources met with Union representatives to discuss the implications for academic staff reward & recognition and support.

Student Enhancement Programme Board

The Student Enhancement Programme Board (SEPB), at the meeting held on Wednesday 25 February 2015, considered the decisions of CMG and agreed the following:

**Governance & Quality Assurance**
The Student Support Implementation Group (SSIG) will cease operating when the ESS project formally ends in July 2015. SEPB will continue to have strategic oversight of the PT system, and the ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of the PT system will become part of the annual Quality Assurance (QA) process. This will be achieved in such a way that ensures the University’s commitment to a quality student experience across the PT system, as enshrined in School Personal Tutoring Statements, while minimising any additional administrative layers to School and College processes. To this end it is proposed, subject to approval, that Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) establish a sub-group with responsibility for QA oversight of the PT system during the transition from the conclusion of the ESS
project to full mainstreaming within School QA processes. The sub-group will have responsibility for oversight of all School Personal Tutoring Statements and will be expected to meet twice annually to review and report.

**Key Performance Indicators**
A set of University-wide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), based on student satisfaction with their PT, will be developed to assist with the reward and recognition process for individual academic staff and to facilitate the annual QA review of the PT system as a whole. If a School's overall KPIs drop below 80% this will trigger further investigation by the aforementioned QAC sub-group. The Project Sponsor will oversee the development of a survey methodology for gathering data on student satisfaction with individual PTs, with a view to gathering this data from 2015-16.

**Student Support Implementation Group**
At the meeting held on Wednesday 4 March 2015, SSIG discussed the direction set by CMG and SEPB and identified the following key QA elements which it will address, in collaboration with QAC, during the lead-up to the formal ending of the ESS project in July 2015:

**Senior Tutor Role**
The Senior Tutor (ST) is one of key relationships between the ESS project team and each School (the other being the College Dean of Students). The role of ST has been essential during the implementation of the PT system by helping to ensure that the new system is working effectively in each school. The ST supports PTs in their particular School but has no formal line management role (as the line management of each staff member with a PT role is at the discretion of the School). SSIG will update the project Roles and Responsibilities document to ensure the role of ST is afforded appropriate prominence in School organisational structures and QA processes.

**School Personal Tutoring Statement**
Every School has a Personal Tutoring Statement that explains how the PT system will operate, the purpose and timing of individual and group meetings, and key contacts in the School (i.e. the Student Support Team). The School Personal Tutoring Statement template is designed to ensure a minimum University-wide standard while also allowing local flexibility for School based information to be included. SSIG will oversee the updating of the template in line with the new cascading model.

**Online Record**
Schools will be encouraged to maintain an online record of PT/Tutee meetings and ensure that this is accessible to each student. Schools will also be encouraged to develop the use of the online system proactively with an expectation that students contribute directly to their personal ‘in-year’ record through recording their reflections and intended actions in response to feedback.

SSIG will also conduct a PGT student survey in June 2015 (the final element in the project implementation evaluation process), review the provision of resources and information in support of the PT system, and consider the future of the Senior Tutor Network and Student Support Team Network. SSIG will produce a final evaluative report for dissemination to Colleges and Schools on completion of the ESS project.

ESS Project Team
March 2015