Enhancing Student Support (ESS)
Senior Tutor Network (STN)

Meeting held on Monday 17 June 2013
in Room 3.10/3.11, Dugald Stewart Building

Notes

1. Notes of the last meeting

The notes were approved.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.


It was noted that the statements were currently undergoing peer review before submission to the next SSIG meeting in July.

4. English Language Support at the English Language Teaching Centre

Professor Tony Lynch (Professor of Student Learning, English for Academic Purposes) updated the Network on English language support for international students at the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC).

The Test of English at Matriculation (TEAM) run nine ELTT courses from October to May for Undergraduates, Postgraduates, and ODL Masters students. All courses are free and can be accessed via two routes: by English test score or via referral from School.

Personal Tutors can refer UGs or PGs to ELTC at any time by emailing a brief summary of the student’s difficulties. The student may then be interviewed at ELTC and offered either ELTT tuition or independent study materials and advice.

ELTT courses 2013-14:

- Semester 1: Listening; Speaking; Undergraduate Writing (UG); Essential Grammar; Writing Postgraduate Assignments (PGT).

- Semester 2: Undergraduate Writing (cont’d); Presentation Skills; Writing Postgraduate Assignments (PGT); Essential Grammar; Writing a First-Year Report (PGR).

5. The Use of IT Tools for Student Support

Helen Hamer (Teaching & Graduate School Manager, School of Physics & Astronomy) updated the Network on the use of IT Tools for Student Support in the School of Physics & Astronomy.

The Student Support Team (SST) fully utilise the Personal Tutor notes field in EUCLID to benefit the following processes: Special Circumstances; Examinations – no shows; Progression Interviews in Freshers Week.
For example, for Special Circumstances (SC) the student is prompted by three e-mails from SST (before, during and at end of exam diet) including the following information: the College’s “Common sense guide”; the need to contact PT and to obtain evidence; the date of SC Committee and a warning about late submissions. All SC applications are collected by the SST and then checked for supporting evidence, PT chased up and other Schools contacted if necessary. They are then acknowledged by confidential note in EUCLID (no details).

The benefits of using the PT IT Tools are that it provides a quick and professional service to both students and staff; ensures efficient communication process across Personal Tutors and Tutees; consistent handing of information across all year groups; PT Notes field can be used very effectively to maintain confidentiality; ensures students and Personal Tutors are informed quickly.

6. **IAD Quick Consultation**

Chris Doye (Head of Study Development at the Institute for Academic Development) updated the Network on IAD’s Quick Consultations - 30 min pre-booked individual consultations with a Study Development Advisor for all taught students. These sessions are aimed at supporting students in enhancing their approach to their learning and their academic tasks. Students can book by emailing iad.study@ed.ac.uk subject: Quick Consultation.

The Pilot will run for autumn 2013 - Week 1, Wed 18th Sept 1.30pm – 5.30pm (returning undergraduates only) and Weeks 2, 3, 4, (Weds 25.09; 02.10; 09.10) for all taught students (with possible continuation if there is demand).

7. **Adaptable Materials for Personal Tutors**

Chris Doye also updated the Network on IAD’s adaptable materials for Personal Tutors - a selection of information sheets, worksheets/task sheets, PowerPoint slides, and activities that can be used for individual or group tutorial meetings. Topics include: Before you arrive; Meeting your PT; Lectures /note making; Feedback; Time management; Reflection; Exams / revision. The materials can be adapted to local needs and are available from: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/academic-pastoral/support/resources/adaptable or go to the IAD home page and Search “adaptable resources”.

8. **Employability**

Shelagh Green (Director of Careers Service) reported that the Careers Service and Employability Consultancy developed resources to support PTs in time for the launch in autumn 2012. These can be found from the Careers Service section for staff: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/careers/staff alongside additional resources aimed at staff generally. They are also linked from the IAD website: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/academic-pastoral/support/resources. Similar resources are currently being developed to support the roll out to PGT students. Website traffic suggests these resources are not being heavily used therefore Senior Tutor feedback is requested: is it a lack of awareness? Are the resources not addressing something of relevance? Would a different medium or format be more appropriate?

It was pointed out that there is significant misinformation about the graduate labour market and also that preparation for the transition from university to work and/or study needs to commence early in students’ university life. While the PT can provide support and encouragement there are specialists resources which tutors and tutees can upon, e.g. a link careers adviser is available for each School. Your views on how we can work in partnership
to support students and tutors would be welcome. Please contact Shelagh: Shelagh.Green@ed.ac.uk.

9. **Student Experience Project: Understanding, Developing & Enriching the student experience – Abby Shovlin, Academic Induction Planner**

Abby Shovlin (Academic Induction Planner) updated the Network on developments in the Student Experience Project (SEP).

Jenni Murray & Kristin Hunger are the new Induction Coordinators. The main objective is to co-ordinate and enhance pre-arrival and induction support, enabling our diverse student population to successfully transition to university life and study. Senior Tutors were invited to contact either Jenni or Kristin regarding the following:

- Academic Fair-do we prepare UGs enough in advance to make informed course choices?
- Could we do more to offer more effective outside course information?
- Are the PTs aware of the enhancements to this year’s AF? (taster sessions, more rooms in Appleton Tower, redesign of AF flyer that goes to all new UG students).

Please contact Jenni.Murray@ed.ac.uk or Kristin.Hunger@ed.ac.uk for more information.

Abby is the Academic Induction Coordinator. The main objective is to capitalise on pre-arrival and stage/subject specific inductions as a golden opportunity to both deliver an outstanding student experience and to activate dispositions to understand for oneself from acceptance of offer to graduation.

Senior Tutors were invited to contact Abby regarding the following: raise awareness of aims of SEP; pass on any issues that students have with academic transitions both into first year and beyond; inform SEP of current best practice in academic inductions so that this can be written up in toolkit.

Sep aims to work with PTs and Lecturers to produce academic induction activities tailored to courses that will help students transition successfully during their first year and maximize their full potential. Areas that schools have expressed interest in: Student generated induction activities (with interactive voting software); Shared commitments sessions; Personal Epistemologies as a way to promote critical thinking and better performance in assignments; Subject specific induction tasks; Student management of university email; Participating in longitudinal research into student’s academic journey. Please contact abby.shovlin@ed.ac.uk for more details on current best practice and how it can be implemented in your courses.

10. **AOB**

There was no other competent business.

11. **Date of next meeting:** TBC