Case Study

Project summary

Student-Staff Partnership with the School of Modern Languages to re-design support for academic transition for new first year undergraduates.

Background and rationale

The School is reviewing how it supports first year undergraduate students in making the transition to Higher Education study. In order to help this review re-design process, the School and Student Learning Development are working with students to examine current support mechanisms and how these might be improved on and developed.

Current stage of the project and planned next steps

The project is in its initial stages at present. Preliminary meetings with course representatives from the School have highlighted a number of priorities for development and improvement, including:

- addressing the needs of students studying for joint degrees, in particular getting to grips with different writing conventions, including different referencing systems;
- ensuring that support activities and resources are pitched at an appropriate level and seek to take account of existing levels of knowledge and awareness;
- ensuring much closer integration between support activities and the mainstream curriculum;
- focussing attention on understanding and making sense of the expectations of higher education study, in particular writing at degree level;
- using examples (e.g. essays and other genres of academic writing) as the basis for discussions around writing development;
- considering inclusion of more formative writing tasks in the first year in order to provide concrete experiences for students to reflect on and learn from.

The next stage of the project will be to discuss the practical implications of these ideas and to consult more widely with current students.