



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: ACADEMIC TUTORING IN THE ERA OF CENTRALISED STUDENT PROCESSES

Transition(s) the practice supports: Abertay University has been long associated with widening participation, and for the session 2015-16, 34% of new enrolments were college articulants. This review of academic tutoring recognises the range of entry points and signposts students to the specific support that they may require to enable them to successfully progress in their studies.

Abstract: In an era where efficiency and effectiveness have led to the centralisation of many student support services it is vital that the role of the academic tutor in providing guidance is not lost. Teaching, research, and administration can lead to competing demands on time however, the advice that academic staff provide can be crucial to student success. Higher education is now characterised by a more diverse student body and a sense of 'belonging' has often been cited as key to student retention. Academics can help foster this concept by ensuring that they lend an empathetic ear while signposting students to specialist help, if relevant. This case study outlines from a student and staff perspective the operation of academic tutoring.

Description: Prior to the outset of the 2014-15 academic session, Abertay University instituted a new 'one stop shop' Support Enquiry Zone (SEZ) for students. This facility replaced four discrete School reception areas and students were advised to take all enquiries to SEZ. However, during the first year of operation it became clear that some academic staff were referring students to SEZ for all enquiries but then some students were being 'boomeranged' back to the academic staff because the issue was specifically to do with a module or a programme of study. This resulted in a review of academic tutoring at the outset of the 2015-16 session with staff and student guidance notes being developed outlining expectations and indicating sources of help/support depending on the nature of the query. (Figure 1 outlines a decision-making tree to enable the student to identify the most appropriate point of contact to enable them to resolve their question). The Student Association, academic staff, and support service staff were involved in the development of the guidance notes which were subsequently disseminated by programme leaders to the student body. This information can also be found on the Student Association, Student Services, and Teaching, Learning and Enhancement webpages and will be incorporated into student handbooks in subsequent sessions. New academic staff are made aware of these guidelines as part of their induction. It is as yet too early to evaluate the impact of introducing these guidelines however, it is anticipated that information that makes it easier for students to expediently determine the correct source of help can only be of benefit in enabling the student to make the transition into higher education.

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All examples provided will be posted to the Enhancement Themes website with the intention of including them in the National Transitions map.

ACADEMIC TUTORING IN THE ERA OF CENTRALISED STUDENT PROCESSES – Abertay University

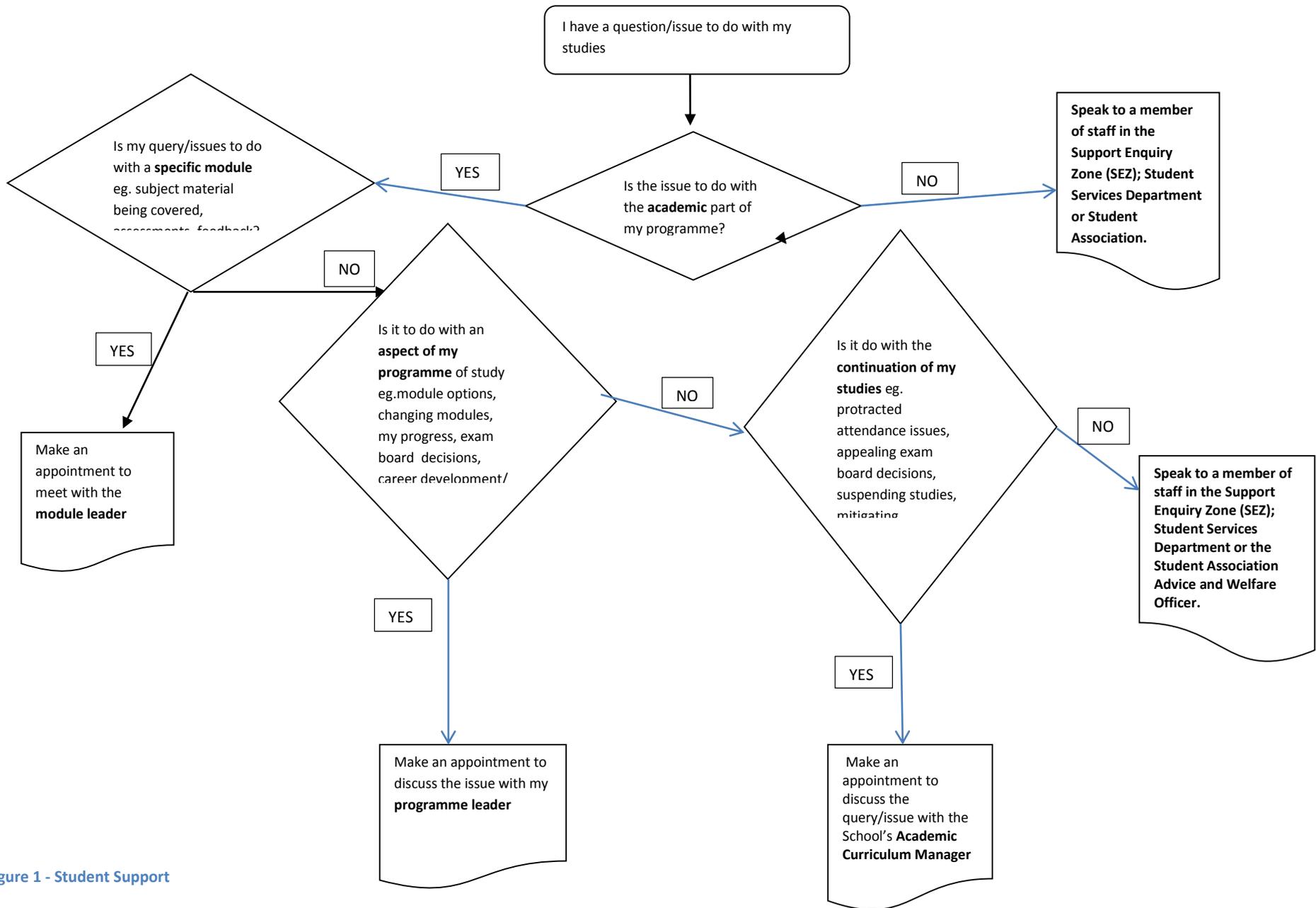


Figure 1 - Student Support