



Student Retention Strategy

OVERVIEW

1. NCH's mission is to be: 'A world-class university-level college in the heart of London. New College of the Humanities combines a unique liberal arts curriculum with one-on-one teaching in an international community to ensure that every student prepared to work will achieve their full potential and leave fully equipped to face the challenges of our increasingly complex world.'
2. Student retention is a College priority, not only because of the College's regulatory obligations, but also its commitment to engage its students in higher education; and because withdrawals have a negative impact on the College, in terms of the effects on both the student experience, reputation and finances.
3. This Student Retention Strategy (SRS) supports the vision and mission of the College, by clearly defining objectives that will improve the experience of the students and subsequently improve retention.
4. The UK Quality Code, Chapter B4, expects higher education providers to have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.
5. The UK Quality Code, Chapter B5, expects higher education providers to take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

OVERARCHING APPROACH

6. The College defines a withdrawn student as a student who starts, but fails to complete and graduate from any programme. Withdrawn students do not include students who are on a break in studies or those who transfer from one programme to another.
7. The College's analysis of historical data identified that the majority of withdrawals have taken place in year 1 during the summer vacation, as students do not return for their second year. The number of withdrawals during that period has decreased over the last three years, but still remains significant. Reasons given by the students for withdrawing from a programme vary from year to year, with health and personal reasons being cited mostly over the last three years.

8. The data illustrates that there is no significant difference between the number of male and female withdrawals, each peaking in different years, but overall, averaging at only marginally more male students withdrawing than females. Nor is there any difference in the number of withdrawals between UK and EU students.

OBJECTIVES

9. To have a coordinated and systematic approach pre-enrolment that ensures that students are enrolled onto the most appropriate programme for their aspirations.
10. To provide a learning environment that is welcoming and ensures a smooth transition from one stage of study to another.
11. To have appropriate monitoring, support, and intervention mechanisms so that students' attendance, progress and achievement are promoted.
12. To reduce the withdrawal rate in Year 1 by two percentage points in comparison to the current percentage withdrawal rate as averaged over the previous three years.

PRE-ENROLMENT

13. The College is committed to admitting students of the highest calibre, with the merit and potential to thrive in our demanding academic environment (AQA Chapter 8: Student Recruitment & Admissions). It also recognises the importance of recruiting the right applicant to the right programme.
14. The College will:
 - 14.1. Assist potential students in selecting their programme by providing accurate and accessible information.
 - 14.2. Invite applicants to open days, taster days and a personal interview to provide information, advice and guidance to applicants.
 - 14.3. Provide a 'Next Steps' guide and a comprehensive reading list for each offer holder in preparation for enrolment.
 - 14.4. Provide an organised and informative offer to study and matriculation to support students during the transition from one stage of study to another.
 - 14.5. Provide an opportunity for applicants to attend a confidential meeting with our Student Wellbeing Coordinator (SWC), to disclose any information prior to enrolment. Further opportunities for disclosure are available at or after enrolment. All students who make a disclosure meet with the SWC regardless of when they submit their paperwork, to discuss it further and if necessary, create a support plan.

INDUCTION

15. The College recognises the importance of students feeling that they belong to their programme, and is therefore committed to providing students with a learning environment where every student feels welcome and valued. The College will prepare students for the academic environment and expectations by providing pre-orientation week events to familiarise them with the College environment, surrounding area and services available; and six weeks of Freshers' Events. These events include local area tours led by the Student Union and College Ambassadors, in depth inductions to staff and roles within the Central Office and

inductions at Senate House Library. Post Freshers' Week, students' will have the opportunity to attend 'FOCUS On' sessions covering topics such as Time Management, Budgeting, Essay Writing and Assessments.

16. The College will:
 - 16.1. Strengthen and broaden its buddy system for all new students to support them.
 - 16.2. Provide students with accurate programme information in a timely manner and an environment which enables students to fully engage in College life.
 - 16.3. Provide programme induction meetings with academics at the start of each programme.
17. The Student Union, being independent, should be encouraged to provide a variety of activities during Freshers' Week to aid transition to student life.

DURING STUDIES

18. The College will:
 - 18.1. Recognise that some students may wish to change their study programme, and will provide appropriate support and advice to facilitate any changes.
 - 18.2. Engage students in their studies by providing an excellent teaching and learning environment; well-planned assessments; timely feedback; a variety of summative methods and teaching practices; a unique liberal arts diploma; subject socials; an active student voice; supportive and approachable staff; and an open, ethical and transparent culture.
 - 18.3. Engage students in their College life through effective communication surveys, prize giving, projects, and a variety of social events organised in collaboration with the Student Union.
 - 18.4. Regularly monitor students' engagement through Academic Board, TESL Board, and Faculty meetings; 1:1 tutorials; personal tutoring; Collections and Annual Monitoring.
 - 18.5. Strengthen its 'Welcome back' Re-Freshers' Sessions.
 - 18.6. Continue to follow up student absences.
 - 18.7. Strengthen its 'FOCUS On exam' preparation sessions to ensure students are effectively prepared for end-of-year examinations.
 - 18.8. Maintain its Careers guidance, so that students understand how their current studies can connect up with post-graduation plans.
 - 18.9. Share best practice among faculties to ensure that a high quality student experience is built across the College.

MONITORING

19. The Student Retention Strategy will be monitored by the Executive Committee (ExCo) and Academic Board at the first meeting of the new academic year. ExCo and Academic Board will review the strategy and its impact on student retention of the previous academic years.

STUDENT RETENTION STRATEGY

Title	Student Retention Strategy	Author	Michele Longhurst
Location	Where is the document stored?	Approved by	Academic Board
Version	1.0	Last updated	
Publication date	October 2018	Review date	June 2021
Related policies			
External Reference Point	UK Quality Code Chapter B2; Chapter B4; Chapter B5		