

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. This report is intended for a wide audience that falls into two broad categories: operational and strategic.
 2. Operational would include people who have contact with students, such as:
 - staff in both FE and HE who deal with potential and actual top-up* students, including:
 - lecturers
 - tutors
 - studies advisers
 - year tutors
 - programme leaders/course directors
 - support staff
 - library and computing staff
 - careers staff.
 3. Strategic are those involved in policy setting and implementation within an institution, such as:
 - those concerned with quality assurance within an institution
 - staff dealing with issues of student retention
 - those taking forward the widening participation agenda
 - those involved in collaborative partnerships between institutions
 4. The report might also be of interest to others involved in educational projects as an example of the workings of such a project:
 - project managers, consultants and others on similar types of projects
 - not least, all those who have contributed to the SPAT project.
- *See 10 below for definition
5. The document outlines the approach taken by the SPAT (Student Transfer and Progression) project. Chapter 2 sets the context of the project and outlines its aims and objectives. In chapter 3, the project methodology and reasons for the approach are outlined. There is also a short section on project management and evaluation. Chapter 4 reports the research findings and how they led to the selection of relevant topics for the SPAT materials. This chapter also includes a literature review setting the SPAT work in the wider context of other research and policy initiatives. Chapters 5 and 6 outline the development of the materials, with examples of the different types, and describe the evaluation process used to develop and refine them. Chapters 7 and 8 outline the different partnerships that were entered into, the working with our dissemination partners and the ways in which SPAT materials were customised. Chapter 9 shows

examples of these customised materials.

6. Chapter 10 has other examples of good practice in progression and transfer collected during the project. Chapter 11 is a detailed look at the running of partnerships between FECs (Further and Higher Education Colleges) and HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) for the purpose of enhancing the progression of students. Chapter 12 reports briefly on the National Conference on Progression and Transfer. Chapter 13 summarises the SPAT findings and lays out some good practice guidelines. Chapter 14 relates to the continuation strategy and the arrangements for the long-term survival of the SPAT materials. References, contact names and addresses and the names of all those who kindly gave interviews to the project team are at the end of the document. Copies of the SPAT materials are also included there (Appendix 6.1).
7. The SPAT project is a FDTL 3 (Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning) project, undertaken by the University of Plymouth, Faculty of Land, Food and Leisure, and the University of Ulster, School of Biological and Environmental Sciences.
8. Also included in the bid were partner colleges, Duchy College, Cornwall and Greenmount College, Northern Ireland.
9. The Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) is resourced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) (Northern Ireland). The fund was established to support projects aimed at stimulating developments in teaching and learning in higher education and to encourage the dissemination of good teaching and learning practice. Projects may therefore tackle issues both within higher education provision in Further Education Colleges and Higher Education Institutions. For more information about FDTL, please refer to the NCT website at www.ncteam.ac.uk.
10. The primary aim of the SPAT project was to promote effective student progression between HE levels, and transfer across institutional boundaries. The specific target group was students progressing from HND into the second or third year of an honours degree programme (sometimes called top-up or direct entry students) although the materials

developed have a wider applicability than that narrow focus (see chapters 2 and 6).

11. The project built on good practice in the approach to top-up students identified by TQA at the University of Plymouth, Faculty of Land, Food and Leisure. This was developed for use by a new University of Ulster, School of Biological and Environmental Sciences, and by other dissemination partners identified both in the bid and in the early stages of the work.

