

## **BRAG: enhancing student retention and attainment through the BRAG monitoring procedure**

### **Summary**

BRAG provides a student centred tracking and action planning tool to focus cross-college attention on supporting student success. Rates of attendance and progress of all learners are monitored using a colour coded heat map for each class group. This is coordinated by the Student Records Team, maintained by the class Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) and involves whole team discussion during team meetings. This approach includes performance data from the previous three years allowing comparison of performance, encouraging team ownership and enabling simple monitoring of learner progress and attainment. A summary of BRAG data for all courses is also considered by the Curriculum and Business Planning Group of Heads of Service to review whole college impacts or actions.

Each learner is assessed against attendance and progress on a weekly basis using Green (no issues), Amber (may give cause for concern), Red (at risk of withdrawal or lack of success), Blue (all input has failed and learner has been withdrawn). This provides the PAT with a quick reference tool to support their guidance activity for a group or on an individual basis, enabling early intervention where a learner is identified as being at risk of withdrawal or lack of attainment. Attainment is also updated following Progression Board outputs.

Since the introduction of this BRAG monitoring, student early retention and student success has improved. Teaching staff find this procedure to be supportive and helpful, whilst the Student Services Team uses the BRAG process to help target learners who may require support in their learning. College managers use the process to monitor programme progress and to target resources as appropriate to support learning.

The monitoring tool is being further refined to enable PATs to filter out information specific to an individual learner, such as PLSP or Care leaver, to be used as a visual tool during guidance discussions with the learner.

### **Background**

A key challenge is ensuring that timely interventions are made that will support the student while they are studying at the College allowing them to have every opportunity to achieve their qualification to which they were enrolled. This involves teams (academic and support) from various cross college areas working together seamlessly to ensure these timely interventions are effective.

BRAG was initially introduced in AY 2011-12 and has been further developed to incorporate a 'BRAG monitoring spreadsheet' providing PATs, and other key people/teams information about student attendance and their performance. The spreadsheet also provides an early live generation of predictive course PIs in comparison to previous years (3 year trend).

The process is supported by the use of an online attendance system (CELCAT), where PATs are able to monitor student attendance. PATs can then use this

information to contact students to offer help and support, they may also request the assistance of Student Services. All actions are recorded.

Student Services staff in the Guidance and Counselling team also have access to the BRAG spreadsheets to proactively identify potential impacts and interventions.

### **Demonstrable/evidenced impact on learners, staff and/or other stakeholders**

Students are supported in an effective manner and with a consistent approach ensuring that the interventions are timely and appropriate. Using the BRAG Attendance and Performance Monitoring Procedure ensures that students that need additional help and support are identified quickly and support is provided to ensure that they are able to be successful on their chosen course. The system continues to evolve; it is currently most effective in non-networked programmes although all teams use it.

The BRAG Attendance and Performance Monitoring Procedure supports staff to perform their roles. Using the BRAG Checklist, Lecturers and PATs have a consistent and clearly defined procedure to follow with an identified, specific timeline and text messages/letters with agreed content to send. The communication links between staff/Teams and roles/responsibilities are defined.

Results from the Annual Student Survey 2014-15 indicated that 90% of students were satisfied with their experience whilst studying at college, additionally:

98% saying that their lecturers know their subjects well;

97% saying that staff treated them with respect;

98% saying that they are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning;

95% saying that lecturers are constantly encouraging me to do my best

### **Support for current government or national agenda, or the priorities of external partners**

This activity supports the Scottish Government Strategic Objective 'Smarter' and the National Outcome 'Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens'. The procedure also supports the Opportunities for All initiative.

### **Future development of the activity**

Now that the activity has been embedded in the role of the PATs, the system has been enhanced this academic year to include part-time as well as an early indication of KPIs and how the college is performing overall.

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