William College

Student Retention Strategy

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Document Version Control	
Document Title:	Student Retention Strategy
Version:	1.0
Review Body:	Academic Board
Approving Body:	Senior Leadership and Management Team
Document Lead:	Provost
Date of Approval:	June 2026
Date of Last Review:	June 2026
Date Effective from:	July 2026
Date of Next Review:	June 2027

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Purpose 3
3. Scope 3
4. Definitions: 3
5. Responsibilities 3
6. Policy Aims 5
7. Data Action Working Group (DAWG) 5
8. Procedures 5
9. Compliance and Monitoring 7
10. Review and Revision 7
11. Related Policies and Reference Points 7
12. Appendix A: Retention Checklist 8

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1. Introduction

William College recognises that student retention is central to academic success, institutional growth, and the overall student experience. Retaining students through to completion requires a coordinated approach across academic, administrative, and wellbeing teams.

This strategy provides a framework for identifying, supporting, and empowering students to achieve their academic potential and personal goals. It supports the College's mission to deliver accessible, high-quality education and aligns with the expectations of the Office for Students (OfS) regarding student outcomes and progression.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- Establish a consistent, institution-wide approach to improving student retention and progression.
- Establish and embed proactive and preventative support measures across the student lifecycle.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration between academic and support services.
- Identify key data points and performance indicators to evaluate retention efforts.
- Ensure that all students receive equitable opportunities to succeed.

3. Scope

This strategy applies to:

- All students enrolled at William College.
- All staff involved in teaching, student support, and academic administration.
- All College campuses, departments, and support services.

4. Definitions:

Term	Definition
Continuation	Students who continue their studies or one year and 14 days after they enrolled.
Completion	Students finishing their degrees.
At-Risk Student	A student identified as being at risk of withdrawal due to attendance, academic performance, personal issues, or financial circumstances.
Intervention	A targeted measure, action or support designed to address barriers to a student's continued study.
Engagement	Active participation in academic learning, extracurricular activities, and the wider college community.

5. Responsibilities

Department/ Individual	Responsibilities
Admissions Team	• Provide transparent and accurate information about course loads and structure, and assessment. • Assessing, to the best of their ability, students' motivation to study.

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	• Identifying any student who may need support (English language, digital literacy etc.) in the early stages of their studies.
Student Engagement Officers	• Conduct Initial Course Evaluation (ICE) by Week 4 of Term 1 of new students.
Student Support Officers	• Monitor student attendance, participation, and academic progress. • Identify students at risk of non-progression or withdrawal. • Initiate early contact and refer concerns to the Student Success Team. • Maintain accurate records of student meetings and interventions.
Programme Leaders	• Review retention and progression rates within their programmes. • Lead programme-level initiatives to improve engagement and learning quality. • Ensure consistent tutor support and feedback mechanisms are in place. • Report termly to the Academic Dean on progress and trends.
Student Success Team	• Coordinate institutional retention initiatives and manage the Early Intervention Framework. • Deliver academic, personal, and wellbeing support programmes. • Maintain a central log of at-risk students and monitor outcomes. • Collaborate with academic and administrative teams to ensure timely interventions.
Registry Office	• Maintain accurate student enrolment, attendance, and progression data. • Provide retention and withdrawal statistics for institutional review. • Support communication between departments regarding student status.
Wellbeing and Counselling Services	• Provide confidential support to students experiencing mental health, personal, or financial challenges. • Liaise with academic staff to ensure coordinated care and appropriate academic adjustments. • Contribute to developing wellbeing campaigns and awareness workshops.
Senior Leadership and Management Team	• Oversee strategic direction and institutional accountability for retention outcomes. • Allocate resources and approve retention initiatives. • Receive and review quarterly retention reports from the Academic Board.
Provost	• Ensure alignment of retention strategy with academic standards and OfS requirements. • Approve annual retention action plans and review institutional data reports. • Champion a culture of continuous improvement in student success.
Student Representatives	• Provide feedback on student experience, engagement, and barriers to retention. • Participate in focus groups and consultative forums related to retention initiatives.

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6. Policy Aims

The Student Retention Strategy is underpinned by four key strategic aims:

1. Early Identification and Intervention

- Identification of at-risk students at application stage based on pre-defined set of risk factors.
- Use of predictive indicators (e.g., missed classes, failed assessments) to flag at-risk students early on.
- Implementation of systematic attendance and engagement tracking via the designated VLE and attendance registers.
- Prompt escalation of concerns to the Student Success Team by academic staff.

2. Holistic Student Support

- Integration of academic writing, English language workshops, and foundation support programmes for transition years.
- Enhancement of access to counselling, disability support, and financial advice.

3. Academic Excellence and Belonging

- Promote inclusive and engaging teaching methods that support diverse learning needs, as articulated in the *Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy*.
- Use of extracurricular activities and peer engagement opportunities to foster and embed a sense of belonging.

4. Data-Driven Decision Making

- Ensuring the correct collection, analysis, and reporting of student retention, progression, and completion data at the relevant level and granularity.
- Implementing information from data reports to inform intervention methods and practices
- Reporting findings and outcomes to the Academic Board and use insights to inform strategic planning.

7. Data Action Working Group (DAWG)

The College has established a Data Action Working Group to oversee the procedures outlined in this document. The Data Action Working Group (DAWG) reports to the Senior Leadership and Management Team (SLMT) on a regular basis. The group comprises:

- Data Insights and Statutory Returns Officer
- Student Experience Managers
- Academic Manager
- Registry, Data and Compliance Manager
- Student Success Team
- Provost

8. Procedures

The table below identifies different retention/intervention actions that can be taken at different stages of the academic year. Responsible parties should complete the checklist in the Appendix to evidence action completion.

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When considering de-registration and withdrawal the *Actions Related to De-Registration, Early Withdrawal and Withdrawal* should be followed.

Stage/Time	Actions
Admissions	• Check info being giving to applicants accurately represents course delivery especially regarding the demands of the course (assessments). • Check that info agents are giving to applicants accurately represents course delivery. • Record support needs of students and refer to Student Services. • Share 'weak writing' admission scripts with English Language Support Tutor. • Provide training in 'interview skills' for all staff conducting admissions interviews. • Monitor agents against continuation rates of the students they send, and report this to SLMT.
Induction and Wks 1 & 2	• Chase students re registration with partner unis. • IT to be available at induction and to visit classes to diagnose any IT issues.
Wk 1 onwards	• Student Hub to be open during student break times. IT to also be available in Hub.
By end Wk 2	• Attendance and Intervention Office to report to SLMT members on number of students that are going to be de-registered for engagement.
Week 4	• Conduct ICE by end of Week 4 of Term 1.
Weeks 1-4	• Student Services class visits to all new students to outline Wellbeing, Support, Success, and Language help that is available.
Week before 1st Assess.	• Introduce Submission Checklist.
Week 6	• Data Insights & Statutory Returns Officer to report to Student Services Manager on number of students still unregistered. Report to include number of times each unregistered student has been reminded by partner university.
Ongoing	• Engagement Policy used to monitor ongoing engagement. • SLMT to be notified through regular reports of any students that are nearing point of recommended withdrawal/weekly. • Fitness to Study Policy to be invoked in all possible cases before withdrawal.
Per Term	• Develop formative assessment maps for all courses and share with Student Support so they can intervene in a timely manner.
Assessment Timings	• Academic Manager to share assessment maps with Student Services so proactive interventions can be mapped out.
Week 10	• Student Services Teams to visit classes to check students are all set for final assessments. Menti or Kahoot questions to encourage responses. • Student Success Team to offer review of draft work.
Pass requirements	• Assessment Officer to compile a simple table showing pass requirements for each course and what options students have re retakes.
On release of grades	• Lecturers to give (recorded) lecture for all students who have failed. Lecture should highlight the key common areas of weakness that resulted in failure. • Student Success Team to offer resit support.

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Stage/Time	Actions
	• Resit face to face and online workshops. • Engagement Tracker updated with assessment results and students requiring interventions identified.
Post release of Sem.1 grades	• Student Support to deliver 'Understanding Your Feedback' sessions to all groups.
Post exam board	• All students who have retake opportunities contacted and advised re additional funding options. • Identify opportunities to promote re-enrolment and continued engagement.

9. Compliance and Monitoring

- Retention data will be reviewed termly by the Academic Board.
- Success indicators include:
    - Continuation rates above benchmark.
    - Completion rates above benchmark
    - Reduction in early withdrawal percentages.
    - Positive student satisfaction scores related to support and belonging.
- Student Retention Strategy Checklist to be a standing item on SLMT.

10. Review and Revision

- This strategy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by regulatory changes or institutional developments.
- Feedback from staff, students, and the Academic Board will inform revisions of the strategy.

11. Related Policies and Reference Points

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

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12. Appendix A: Retention Checklist

Time	Action	Owner	Check
Prior to start of the course	• Check info being giving to applicants accurately represents course delivery especially regarding the demands of the course (assessments). • Check that info agents are giving to applicants accurately represents course delivery. • Record support needs of students and refer to Student Services. • Share 'weak writing' admission scripts with English Language Support Tutor. • Provide training in 'interview skills' for all staff conducting admissions interviews. • Monitor agents' conversion rates, and report to SLMT.	Admissions	
Induction and Wks 1 & 2	Chase students re registration with partner unis.	Student Support	
Induction and Wks 1 & 2	IT to be available at induction and to visit classes to diagnose any IT issues.	IT Coordinator	
Wk 1 onwards	Student Hub to be open during student break times. IT to also be available in Hub.	Student Support	
By end of wk 2	Attendance and Intervention Office to report to SLMT members on number of students that are going to be de-registered for engagement.	Attendance Team	
By end of wk 4	Conduct Initial Course Evaluation Questionnaire.	Academic Manager	
Wks 1-4	Student Services visit classes to outline Wellbeing, Support, Success, and English Language support that is available.	Student Services	
Wk before 1st assess.	Introduce Submission Checklist.	Student Success	
Wk 6	Data Insights & Statutory Returns Officer to report to Student Services Manager on number of students still unregistered. Report to include number of times each unregistered student has been reminded by partner university.	Data Insights & Statutory Returns Officer	
Wk 10	Student Services Teams to visit classes to check students are all set for final assessments. (Menti or Kahoot questions to encourage responses). Student Success Team to offer review of draft work.	Student Services and Success	
Before Release of Grades	Assessment Officer to compile a simple table showing pass requirements for each course and what options students have re retakes.	Assessment Officer	
Release of Grades	Lecturers to give (recorded) lecture for all students who have failed. Lecture should highlight the key common areas of weakness that resulted in failure.	Lecturers	

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Release of Grades	Student Success Team to offer resit support.	Student Success	
Release of Grades	Engagement Tracker updated with assessment results and students requiring interventions identified.	Assessment Team	
Termly	• Develop formative assessment maps for all courses and share with Student Support so they can intervene in a timely manner. • Academic Manager to share assessment maps with Student Services so proactive interventions can be mapped out.	Academic Manager	
Post Grades Release	Student Support to deliver 'Understanding Your Feedback' sessions to all groups.	Student Support	
Post Exam	All students with retake opportunities contacted and advised re additional funding options.	Student Support	
Post Exam	Consider incentives to ensure that students who have passed the year continue at William College	SLMT	
Ongoing	• Engagement Policy used to monitor ongoing engagement. • SLMT to be notified through regular reports of any students that are nearing point of recommended withdrawal/weekly. • Fitness to Study Policy to be invoked in all possible cases before withdrawal.	Student Support	

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