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VICE CHANCELLORS GROUP

24th July 2011

STAR-Trak Operationalisation Proposal

REPORT SUMMARY

Summary

This report summarises how STAR-Trak can support achievement of our strategic objectives and proposes a means of trialling the application and associated ways of working over the coming academic year

Recommendation

VCG is asked to approve the creation of an implementation group to manage a structured one-year pilot of STAR-Trak.

Appendices

none

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APPROVAL OF REPORT	
<i>Approved by</i>	
<i>Approval date</i>	
<i>VC's Group date</i>	



STAR-TRAK IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL

This report summarises how STAR-Trak can support achievement of our strategic objectives and proposes a means of trialling the application and associated ways of working.

STAR-Trak Overview

STAR-Trak is an application designed to support our objectives around student tracking and retention. It is being developed under two JISC-funded projects, and builds on work undertaken at other Universities including Bedfordshire, Manchester and Thames Valley. The application software is due for final delivery in July 2011. In addition to a web-based user interface the solution includes a means of uploading attendance data into CMIS and a data warehouse for activity data.

The application has an underpinning hypothesis that retention rates and student satisfaction can be improved by facilitating a more informed dialogue between students and staff, based on a rich joined-up picture of a student's academic and extra-curricular engagement with the University. This rich picture will be developed by harvesting user data in applications that support learning and teaching activities, combining it with demographic information and presenting it in a single application that is accessible by the student and the "virtual support team" of academic and pastoral staff.

STAR-Trak has had input from academic and support staff working in Faculties, RSO, Student Services and the Personal Tutor network, as well as the Students Union. It is particularly worth noting that STAR-Trak can support our requirements in respect of international students and the UK Border Agency, our University attendance policy, and Recommendation 1 of the recent student experience audit undertaken by Deloitte.

Proposal

To provide confidence to senior management that STAR-Trak can deliver the anticipated benefits, the following actions are required:

- **Trial the application:** this will demonstrate that STAR-Trak can be successfully embedded into our student-facing services, systems and organisational culture. To achieve this, the creation of a trial project, to run over a full academic year, is recommended. We already have staff who wish to take part in the trial and believe that the investment in effort will be more than paid back in work efficiencies and results.
- **Profile modelling:** the development of different profiles (combinations of activity, course and demographic data) will help us understand the extent to which we can predict students as being at risk of dropping out. This activity should run alongside the trial so that the hypothesis can benefit from real-world testing.

Conclusions and recommendations

VCG is asked to approve the creation of an implementation group to manage a structured one-year pilot of STAR-Trak.

References and further information

Further information can be found at <http://leedsmetstartrak.wordpress.com>