**Top Tips for Managing Student Expectations**

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In an increasingly competitive HE sector, coupled with the increase in fee's there is a greater need to manage, support and engage with your students to ensure that their overall experience and expectations are met and then exceeded. Here we explore some of the ways you can understand, implement and manage those expectations:

**Pre Enrolment, Outlining your Promises from the Start**

At the pre-enrolment phase it is crucial that initial information, advice and guidance are tailored to your students. With the right tools your student will be able to make those important life-changing choices. Using **Customer Charters** gives you the opportunity to set out the service your students can expect. The promises you make will show all those involved in the decision making process (be it the student or their parents) that you care about their needs, which in turn builds confidence and trust. Put these Charters in welcome packs, online, on your Facebook pages, discuss them in forums but make sure it is visible and make sure you deliver on those promises.

**Build a sense of Belonging and Familiarity through your Communications**

Advice, guidance and support build’s trust and enables you to manage your student’s expectations but communication is the key. From the initial decision making process right through to induction, student learning and graduation, your on-going communication will build a community of mutual respect. Use social media forums to keep students engaged, makes sure your open days get across your student experience promises, use mentoring schemes for new students and promote your Student Union as a place of fun, support and security. Making a commitment to creating a safe and secure environment to help fulfil students full potential will nurture the right environment and, undoubtedly, your students learning will be a success.

**Excellent Staff Experience means Excellent Student Experience**

If you recognise the need for a cultural change then you are headed in the right direction. Staff that have the right motivation, training and tools to create the right internal experience will mean that the same student experience will be reflected. Everyone should be expected to create an environment where lifelong learning is worthwhile. Put some time and effort into working with your team to understand what the cultural needs of your department or university are and what the needs of your students are, this way you will be able to set out, manage and meet expectations, knowing they are consistently embedded. Set out and promote your teaching approaches, your facilities, the maximum amount of time a student should expect to be taught and the average weekly workload. Making a promise about the service a student should expect to receive and the supported learning a student will receive from staff will create mutual success.

**Consider Life after Uni**

Meeting student expectations shouldn’t stop at the end of university life. Understanding the needs of your graduate is just as important as understanding the needs at pre-enrolment. Building partnerships with employers, communities and local authorities is a great way to demonstrate to your students that they will be nurtured to achieve lifelong success. In a recession it is even more important that universities and their students have a good reputation amongst employers, so make sure that you build working partnerships with employers and your students. Work with them to understand what their expectations are when they leave university and follow up to ensure that they are supported to achieve their goals.

For more information on how the Customer First Standard can support your customer service needs call a dedicated Relationship Manager on 0845 226 0719 or email **enquiries@customerfirst.org** quoting the ref “Student Experience”

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