

# Empowering students through a school-based, embedded approach to learning development support

Deborah O'Neill, Dr Jane McKay, Dr Stephanie McKendry, Dr Lina Petrakieva  
 Learning Development Centre, School of Health and Life Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University  
 Deborah.Oneill@gcu.ac.uk

## Glasgow Caledonian University

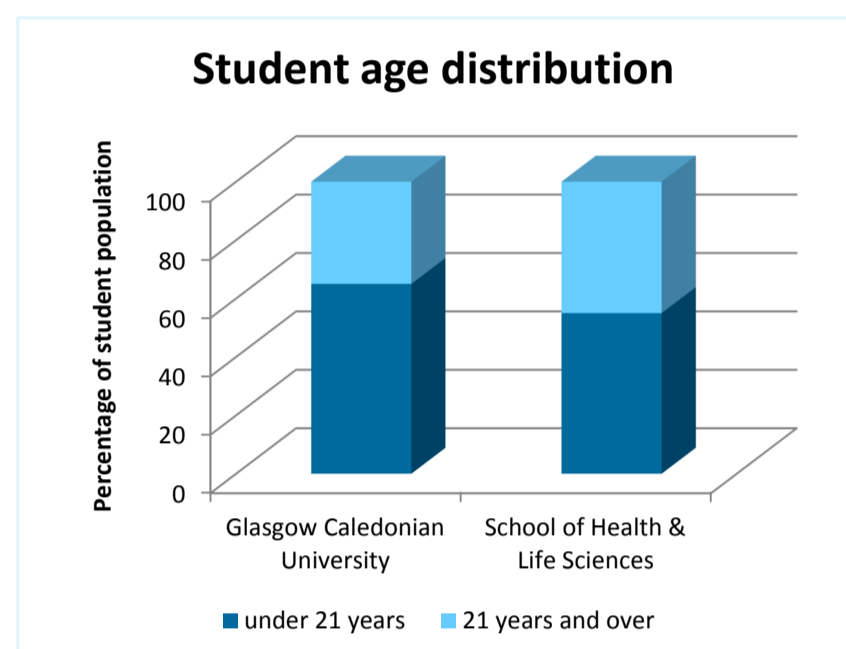
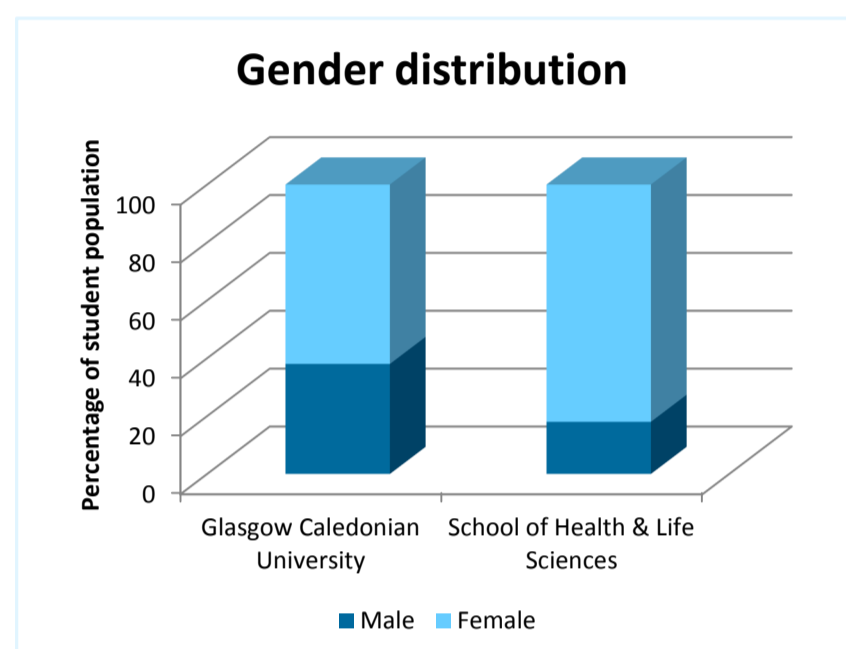
- Formed in 1993 with merger of Glasgow Polytechnic and Queen's College, Glasgow.
- 5th largest in Scotland in terms of student recruitment.
- Student population of over 17,000
- 3 Academic Schools



## Student demographics

### (full time, undergraduate population 2010/2011)

- 62% female (82% within School of Health & Life Sciences)
- 35% 21 or over (45% within School of Health & Life Sciences)
- 37% live in areas classified in bottom two quintiles of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)



Devolved support	
Pros	Cons
<b>Holistic</b> Staff have awareness of the wider context of the programme and student population	<b>Potential silo behaviour</b> Difficult to see the bigger picture; missing opportunities for collaboration
<b>Linked to curriculum</b> Targeted, timely support tailored to specific assessment practices	<b>Any others?</b>
<b>Subject-specific</b> Examples, language, skills aligned to discipline and profession (e.g. evidence based practice for healthcare students)	
<b>Longitudinal</b> Embedding within programmes allows year-on-year continuous development and contact	
<b>Collaborative</b> Closer links with staff and greater potential for staff engagement	
<b>Inclusive</b> Normalises learning development as part of the curriculum and promotes learning to learn with HE	
<b>Cross-specialism</b> Staff with different roles can learn from each other and collaborate in project work and research	

Central support	
Pros	Cons
<b>Cross-pollination of ideas</b> Broader perspective allows for dissemination of good practice	<b>Too generic</b> Difficult to see if a particular good practice is applicable to a specific programme
<b>Graduate attributes enhancement</b> Potential to develop transferable skills outside the curriculum	<b>Opt-in</b> Challenge to engage staff and students with activities that are not immediately relevant to studies
<b>Anonymity / Distance from Academic staff</b> Can encourage engagement	<b>Reactive</b> Limited opportunities to develop staff and service
<b>Better use of resources</b> Can potentially support wider body of students when staffing levels low	<b>Remedial</b> Service can be viewed as remedial and stigmatising by both staff and students
<b>Any others?</b>	<b>Lack of integration</b> Difficulty maintaining coordination with academic schools/departments
	<b>Any others?</b>

It is entirely possible for central provision to be embedded, enhancement-based, tailored and longitudinal. Equally, devolved models can be remedial, reactive and generic.

But, we believe the opportunity to nurture the advantages of embedding and avoid the drawbacks of 'bolt-on' are greatest with a School-based approach.

# Learning Development Centre

LDC Director



Admin

ICT Skills Tutor

Academic Development Tutors



- First point of student contact
- Booking
- Tracking
- Evaluating



- ICT Skills Learning and Teaching
- Website and VLE



- English for Academic Purposes



- Nursing
- Midwifery



- Psychology
- Vision Sciences



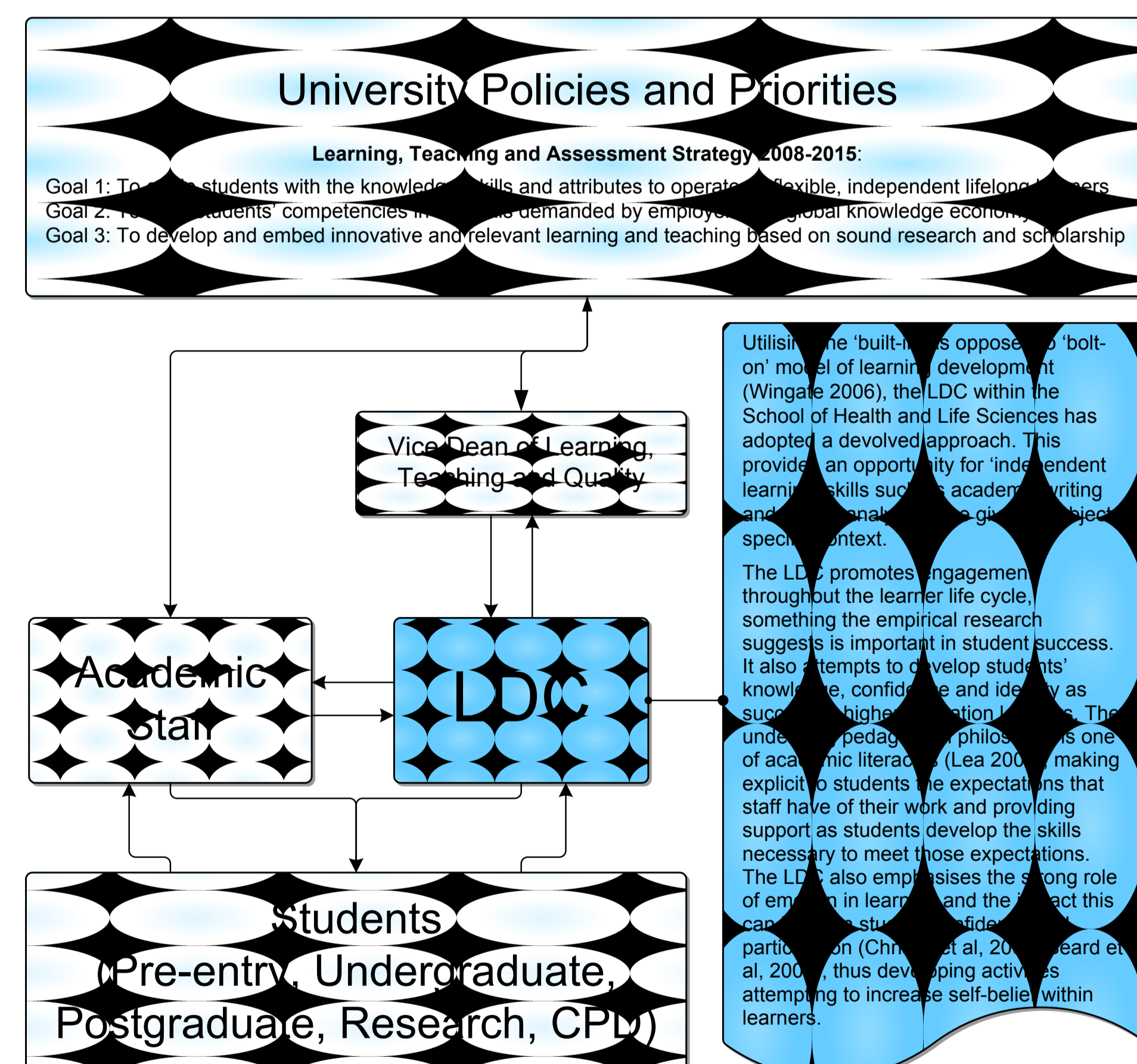
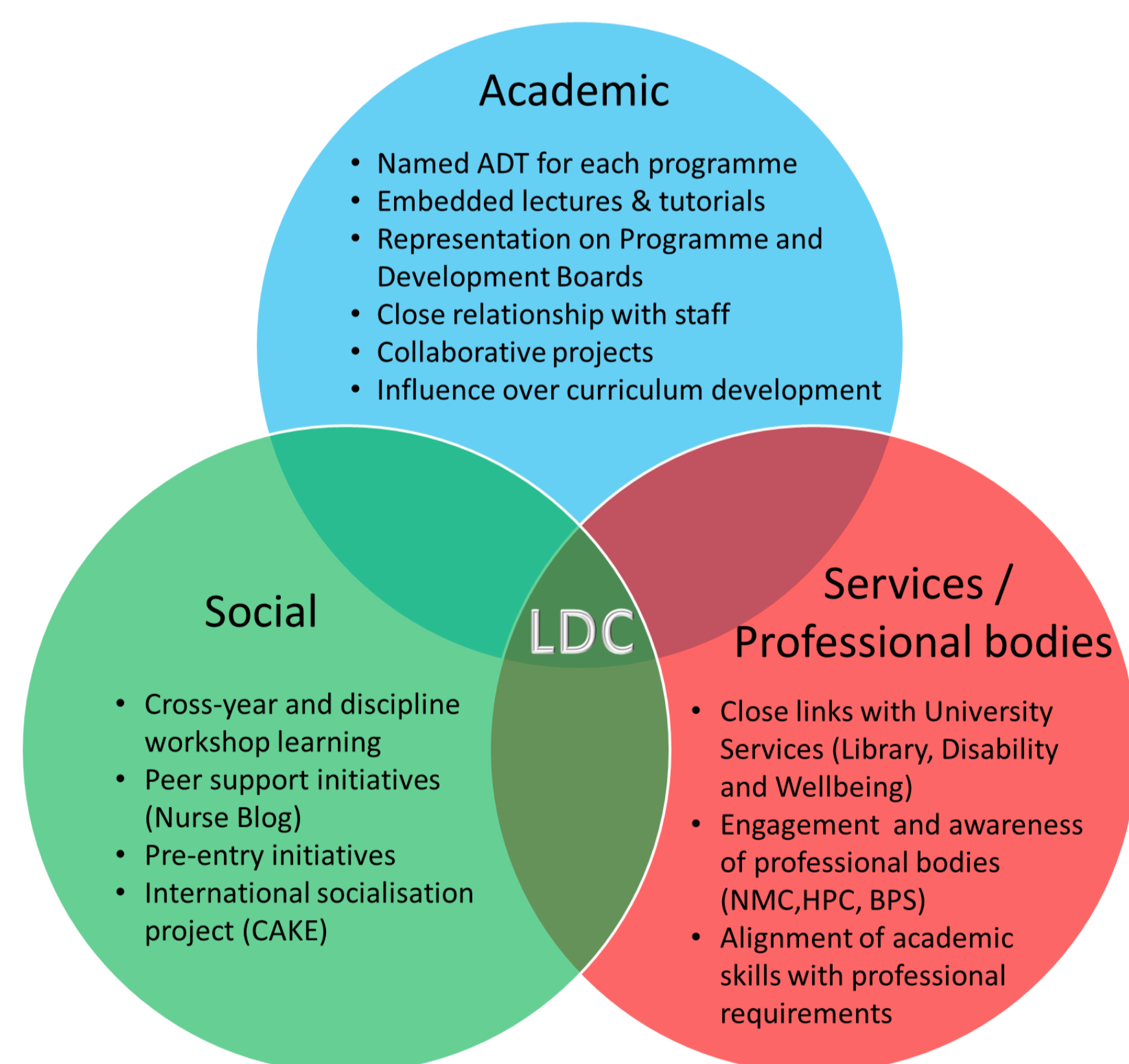
- Psychology
- Biological Sciences



- Allied Health Professions
- Social Work

ADT lead in each of the following: International students, Articulating students, Students with Disability, Pre-entry and transition support, Research and scholarly activities

## What Works? Conceptual Model of Student Engagement



- Note taking in lectures and active participation in classes
- Becoming an independent learner
- Conventions of academic writing
- Written assessments
- Exam skills
- Reflective writing
- Critical appraisal
- Literature reviews
- Research writing and structuring dissertation

Pre-entry

Following restructuring at a modern university, learning support has been embedded within Learning Development Centres (LDCs) in each School. LDCs are staffed by Academic Development Tutors (ADTs) and ICT Skills Tutors and are designed to provide tailored, enhancement-led support to learners throughout the student life cycle, from initial transitions and learning to learn in HE skills through to graduate attributes and postgraduate research and writing skills.

Beyond HE

- IT Induction—logging on, email, accessing VLE
- Information Searching
- Word Processing
- Professional requirements and systems - Cleanliness Champions, ICT Baseline
- Web 2.0 tools for Blended Learning
- Presentations
- Analysing Data—Excel, SPSS
- Poster preparation and presentation
- Word Processing for Dissertations
- E-Portfolios

## References

- Beard, C., Clegg, S. & Smith, K. (2007) 'Acknowledging the affective in higher education', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 235-252. Christie, H., Tett, L. Cree, V., Hounsell, J. & McCune, V. (2008) 'A real rollercoaster of confidence and emotions': learning to be a university student', *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 33, no. 5, pp. 567-581. Lea, M. (2004) 'Academic literacies: a pedagogy for course design', *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 739-756. Wingate, U. (2006) 'Doing away with 'study skills'', *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol.11, no. 4, pp. 457- 469