



***CES***

**CENTRE *for*  
EDUCATIONAL  
SOCIOLOGY**

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE  
ARTICULATION SUPPORT  
ADVISERS**

**REPORT TO ELRAH**

**May 2011**

***The University of Edinburgh***



# **External Evaluation of the Articulation Support Advisers**

Dr Annie Weir  
Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh

Dr Cathy Howieson  
Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh

May 2011



# Contents

<b>A</b>	<b>SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A1</b>	Introduction	1
<b>A2</b>	Methodology	1
<b>A3</b>	Overview	2
<b>A4</b>	Summary of key findings	3
<b>A5</b>	Recommendations	5
<b>B</b>	<b>INTERVIEWS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN COLLEGE</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>B1</b>	Responses of the Articulation Support Advisers in colleges	7
	B1.1 Establishing Objectives	7
	B1.2 Where the ASA post is located	7
	B1.3 Where ASAs have been most effective	7
	B1.4 Where ASAs have been least effective	8
	B1.5 Are the right measures in place to demonstrate the achievements of the ASA post?	8
	B1.6 The extent to which articulating students have specific needs	8
	B1.7 Articulation Support Advisers (ASAs) contribution to ELRAH Objectives	9
	B1.8 The ASA Network	11
<b>B2</b>	<b>Responses of the College Line Managers</b>	<b>12</b>
	B2.1 How the ASA position has improved articulation information and support for HEIs and articulating students	12
	B2.2 The ASA role	13
	B2.3 Systems and measures are in place to monitor the achievements of the ASAs	13
	B2.4 Location of the ASA position	14
	B2.5 Key Facilitators to the Success of the Position	14
	B2.6 Existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position	15
	B2.7 Issues for Articulating Students	15
	B2.8 Value of the dedicated ASA Post	16
	B2.9 If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?	16
<b>B3</b>	<b>Responses of Key Staff in College (Academic Tutors and Student Support Staff)</b>	<b>18</b>
	B3.1 How the ASA position has improved articulation information and support for HEIs and articulating students	18
	B3.2 The ASA role	18
	B3.3 Location of the ASA position	19
	B3.4 Key facilitators to the success of the position	19
	B3.5 Issues for Articulating Students	19
	B3.6 Value of the Dedicated ASA Post	20
	B3.7 If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?	20
<b>C</b>	<b>HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS)</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>C1</b>	<b>Responses from Articulation Advisors (ASAs)</b>	<b>21</b>
	C1.1 Establishing Objectives	21
	C1.2 Where the ASA post is located	21

C1.3	Where ASAs have been most effective	21
C1.4	Where ASAs have been least effective	21
C1.5	Right Measures in Place to Demonstrate ASA Achievements	21
C1.6	The extent to which articulating students have specific needs	22
C1.7	How the introduction of the Articulation Support Advisers (ASAs) resulted in and/or contributed to ELRAH objectives	22
C1.8	The ASA Network	24
<b>C2</b>	<b>HEI Line Mangers</b>	<b>25</b>
C2.1	How the ASA position has improved articulation information and support for HEIs and articulating students	25
C2.2	The effectiveness of ASA role	25
C2.3	Systems and measures in place to monitor the achievements of the ASAs	26
C2.4	ASA position is located in the right place for it to be most effective	26
C2.5	Key facilitators to the success of the ASA post	26
C2.6	Existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position	27
C2.7	Issues for Articulating Students	27
C2.8	Value of the Dedicated ASA Post	28
C2.9	If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?	28
<b>C3</b>	<b>Responses of Key Staff in HEIs (Academic Tutors and Student Support Staff)</b>	<b>30</b>
C3.1	How the ASA position has improved articulation information and support for articulating students	30
C3.2	ASA position is located in the right place for it to be most effective	30
C3.3	Key facilitators to the success of the ASA post	31
C3.4	Existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position	31
C3.5	Issues for Articulating Students	32
C3.6	Value of the Dedicated ASA Post	33
C3.7	If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?	33
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>ELRAH ARTICULATION SUPPORT ADVISER: EVALUATION OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	<b>ARTICULATION SUPPORT ADVISERS: DISCUSSION GUIDELINES</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>APPENDIX C</b>	<b>LINE MANAGERS: DISCUSSION GUIDELINES</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>APPENDIX D</b>	<b>KEY STAFF: DISCUSSION GUIDELINES</b>	<b>39</b>

## **A SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A1 Introduction**

A1.1 The Articulation Support Advisers Network was set up by ELRAH following a commissioned report on Student Engagement and Transition Support (Dundas 2009). This identified a need for an adviser team which would work regionally to provide a co-ordination role for ELRAH partners and to enhance existing practice and initiate new activity within and across partner institutions. The Network was launched in October 2009 with a dedicated Articulation Support Advisor in each of the ELRAH partner colleges and in its most active HEIs (Edinburgh Napier University, Queen Margaret University and Heriot Watt University).

A1.2 During their first academic year Articulation Support Advisors (ASAs) focused their work on identifying and enhancing existing support arrangements and highlighting and filling gaps in the support available to articulating students. Their current activities focus on embedding a more comprehensive and coherent set of support services for students, evaluating the student experience and promoting collaborative working. Work has begun on the longer term objective of providing a package of support which will make a measurable impact on levels of student articulation, retention and achievement.

A1.3 During their first academic year Articulation Support Advisors (ASAs) focused their work on identifying and enhancing existing support arrangements and highlighting and filling gaps in the support available to articulating students. Their current activities focus on embedding a more comprehensive and coherent set of support services for students, evaluating the student experience and promoting collaborative working. Work has begun on the longer term objective of providing a package of support which will make a measurable impact on levels of student articulation, retention and achievement.

A1.4 The evaluation aims to provide an independent assessment of the impact that the Articulation Support Advisers have had so far on enhancing levels of information, guidance and support available to students articulating to degree study with advanced standing from colleges, bearing in mind that the objectives for the Adviser Network are intended to be achieved over a period of time. The evaluation focuses on the additional value that the ASAs have brought in view of the fact that the college and university partners already had some articulation agreements and information and activities in place to support college students to progress from HNC/D study to degree programmes before ELRAH was established. The evaluation therefore focused on the additional contribution made by the ASAs to existing provision and their contribution to new developments. The evaluation looked at progress towards achieving the 18 objectives set by ELRAH for the Network (these are detailed in appendix A).

### **A2 Methodology**

A2.1 The evaluation involved a review of current documentation held by ELRAH on their own self reviews against the ELRAH objectives and interviews with key stakeholders. The interview schedules are in Appendix B–D.

- A2.2 The documentation reviewed included:
- ASA Remit;
  - ASA Objectives and Impact Reports;
  - Self-evaluations from ASAs;
  - National Integrated Datasets for 2008-9 and 2009-10.
- A2.3 Interviews were held with staff in all the ELRAH College Partners - Borders, Carnegie, Edinburgh's Telford, Forth Valley, Jewel and Esk, Oatridge, Stevenson, and West Lothian - with the exception of Adam Smith College, where there was no adviser in place at the time, and with staff in the three most active HEI partners: Edinburgh Napier University, Queen Margaret University and Heriot Watt University
- A2.4 Altogether, 45 members of staff were consulted as part of the evaluation. A total of 37 interviews were undertaken:
- seven with Articulation Support Advisers;
  - nine with the Line Managers/Supervisors of the ASAs;
  - 21 with the Key Staff that ASAs engage with in the partner institutions including Academic Tutors and Student Support Staff.
- A2.5 In addition to the interviews, another eight members of staff gave responses by email and these have been incorporated into the interview data.

### A3 Overview

- A3.1 The evaluation concluded that the ASA Network has increased and enhanced the levels of information, advice and support to students and staff in a number of ways: The development and provision of tailored information and support; the strengthening of links across the partner institutions; the further development of articulation agreements and their co-ordination and management; increasing awareness of, and sustaining a focus on, articulation in institutions; and contributing to greater consistency in the extent and quality of information and support across the partner institutions.
- A3.2 The creation of a Network of advisers, meeting as a team and operating on a regional basis as well as within their individual institutions has been fundamental to the success of the ASA project.
- A3.3 While it is possible to identify numerous examples of 'added value' by the ASA Network, it is much more difficult to demonstrate its impact in terms of such outcomes as an increase in the number of HNC/D students progressing to degree study, improvements in their retention and achievement. There is an inherent difficulty in proving a causal relationship between the activities of the ASA Network and such outcomes; moreover the timescale is such that these sorts of impacts are not likely to be currently evident. The ELRAH core team and ASA Network have been giving greater priority to activity reporting, student evaluations of activities and the monitoring of activities against the Networks' objectives but a major barrier to, at the least, the tracking and recording of the outcomes of articulating students is the lack of data and the difficulty in easily identifying articulating students in the UCAS system and in some HEIs recording systems. This issue is considered in detail in

another ELRAH commissioned study which has made recommendations for change to central and institutional processes in respect of the recoding of data<sup>1</sup>.

A3.4 As ELRAH moves into the latter stage of its existence, a key issue is what the focus of the ASA Network should be in its remaining two years. To date the ASAs have concentrated on developing and delivering a comprehensive set of support services for students and promoting collaborative working. If the investment in the ASA Network is to be capitalised on in the future, then there now needs to be some change in their activity towards a focus on succession planning in each partner institution. We suggest that the future objectives for the ASA Network should be set in relation to their contribution to a 'succession' strategy to embed activities and processes in institutions that support and enhance articulation. Ideally this should be done as part of a formal agreement with the partner institution on how they will use the ASA post in the context of their institutional policy and/or strategy on articulation.

A3.5 As ELRAH moves into the latter stage of its existence, a key issue is what the focus of the ASA Network should be in its remaining two years. To date the ASAs have concentrated on developing and delivering a comprehensive set of support services for students and promoting collaborative working. If the investment in the ASA Network is to be capitalised on in the future, then there now needs to be some change in their activity towards a focus on succession planning in each partner institution. We suggest that the future objectives for the ASA Network should be set in relation to their contribution to a 'succession' strategy to embed activities and processes in institutions that support and enhance articulation. Ideally this should be done as part of a formal agreement with the partner institution on how they will use the ASA post in the context of their institutional policy and/or strategy on articulation.

## A4 Summary of key findings

### A4.1 *Conditions for success of the ASA Network*

- It is crucial to the success of the project to have both ELRAH objectives and institutional objectives for the Articulation Support Adviser (ASA) post. This means that initiatives within the project are able to be targeted to the needs of the institution.
- Joint 'buy in' from the senior management of the colleges and universities is essential to enable the ASAs to effectively carry out their roles, duties and responsibilities and agreed priorities.
- The ASA role needs to have a high profile across the institution and for staff and students to understand how the ASA role works and how it can help them. How well the ASA is profiled within the institution is important and impacts significantly on their ability to successfully to implement initiatives.
- It is essential for the ASA to be effective to have unhindered access to tutors, lecturers and to students, in particular be able to deliver support that is embedded into students' programmes.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Recording and reporting student articulation from Scottish colleges to Scottish HEIs through UCAS: research report and specification of change requirement' Croxford L, Howieson C and Steele D. ELRAH, January 2011. <http://www.elrah.ac.uk/Documents.aspx?itemID=bc5bdc4e-9933-41e4-ab7f-745f88c0f247>

- Willingness of the institution and staff to take up potential enhancements to current practice impacts on the success or otherwise of interventions by ASAs.
- The ELRAH Network is ‘the glue’ and a key to the success of the project. The Network has helped ASAs to gain confidence and inspiration in their role and to enable them to share good practice which has in turn had an impact on the quality and extent of articulation activities and support of students and staff. ASAs through the Network have been able to contribute significantly to achieving greater consistency in the information, guidance and support available to articulating students.

#### A4.2 ***Contribution of ASAs***

- The ASAs have used a range of mechanisms to raise awareness of the importance of articulation agreements and to meet staff and students’ needs by supporting the articulation process. Activities include workshops, drop in sessions, attendance at HE fairs, 1:1 sessions with students and work with tutors and lecturers to embed bespoke activities into programmes.
- It has been challenging for the ASAs to locate articulation agreements and establish if they are up-to-date and being utilised; to centralise articulation agreements where appropriate or record centrally where they are held by Schools; and to facilitate new ones as this was not always recognised by institutions as a role of the ASA. Where they have managed to gather data on articulation agreements this has been uploaded the ELRAH central database.

#### A4.3 ***The impact of ASAs***

- Line Managers and key staff from all institutions are able to provide numerous examples where ASAs have added value to current practices. The majority of Line Managers and key staff also noted that there is value in a post specifically devoted to articulation and articulating students. The ASAs have provided a variety of bespoke information and support to staff and students through a variety of mechanisms as noted above. ASAs have strengthened links between the partner colleges and the universities.
- The ASAs have made a significant contribution to establishing the ELRAH articulation database. There is, however, still much work to do to ensure that the full range of articulation data is located and made available to students and staff in the region.
- Opinion, however, is divided as to whether the ASAs have made significant differences for articulating students as there is a lack of long term ‘hard’ data. A small number of interviewees thought that there is no particular value in having an ASA post as they previously had articulation agreements and activities to support articulating students. Some of the key staff had previously covered the tasks undertaken by the ASA role.
- Articulation agreements and activities existed prior to the ELRAH initiatives and most interviewees indicated that they would continue to provide for articulating students after the conclusion of ELRAH. However the majority of those interviewees also noted that it would be difficult for them to provide the number and range of bespoke support activities for articulating students across their institutions and to deliver them with the same consistency and quality as currently happening under the guidance of the ASAs.

#### A4.4 **Monitoring and evaluation**

- ELRAH management and ASAs are committed to having regular and consistent monitoring and reporting of activities to demonstrate impact of the posts on enhancing articulation. There are a growing number of activity reports which provide numbers of those attending events and the number of guidelines etc distributed, student evaluations of activities, and monthly monitoring against ELRAH and institutional objectives.
- Interviewees noted that currently it is not possible to run UCAS reports on those students who have applied to articulate and those who have been offered a place. The system relies on data being entered into the notes section of UCAS. The limited completion by universities of the notes section of the UCAS form, which identifies articulating students, hinders monitoring and other activities.
- In some cases a small number of ASAs did manually extract data from UCAS and report their findings to staff; this was welcomed but it is a time consuming process and does not offer a practical basis for going forward.

#### A4.5 **The articulation route**

- Universities reported that they are under pressure and not all Schools are honouring their articulation agreements.
- The perception of some staff was that in the current difficult financial and economic climate, there appears to be an increasing number of students opting for the articulation route as it saves them both time and money.

### A5 Recommendations

#### A5.1 **Overarching recommendations**

- The ASA Network should continue to be funded beyond July 2011.
- That the ELRAH objectives and institutional objectives for the ASA post should be set in relation to their contribution to a succession strategy.
- That the objectives for the ASA post be set in the context of each institution's articulation policy and/or strategy.
- That all systems and processes implemented and enhanced by ASA at institutions are clearly documented with an agreed succession plan.
- That ELRAH works with institutions and UCAS to ensure that articulating students are readily identifiable in the UCAS system and within universities' reporting systems to enable the monitoring and tracking of students' applications, progression, retention and outcomes.

#### A5.2 **Sub recommendations**

- The ASA role should focus on the development of activities, resources and systems as part of a strategy to embed processes in institutions to support and enhance articulation.
- It would be beneficial if articulation agreements included some commitment by all partners to a certain level of activity and support for articulating students as well as defining the articulation route.
- That the ASAs have regular access to senior management of the colleges and universities to enable them to gain support for initiatives and keep them informed thus enabling the ASA to more effectively carry out their roles, duties and responsibilities and agreed priorities.

- That the ASA role is given a high profile across the institution and for staff and students to be given the opportunity to understand how the ASA role works and how it can help them. How well the ASA is profiled within the institution is important and impacts significantly on their ability to successfully to implement initiatives.
- That senior management undertake to smooth the access for ASAs to tutors, lecturers and to students to enable them to deliver support that is embedded into students' programmes.
- That the ELRAH Network be facilitated by ELRAH management to ensure that it maintains a strategic focus and ASAs continue to have access to best practice and support for the implementation of initiatives.
- That while the next phase of data collection may include activity reports, it should focus on the focus the development of mechanisms that allow for consistent collection of data that clearly demonstrates an increase in the number of articulation places available and the uptake by students over a long term.
- That the ASAs continue to develop in collaboration with their institutional colleagues' new ways of encouraging students to opt for the articulation route and embedding those initiatives into practice.
- There is a need to monitor and record the extent to which Schools within universities are honouring articulation agreements; ELRAH management should seek to agree a strategy with partner HEIs about this might be done and the role, if any, the ASA should play in this.

A5.3 In the following sections we report on the findings of the interviews with stakeholders; we first present the response from the different categories of college-based staff and then responses from the various staff in the HEIs.

## **B INTERVIEWS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN COLLEGE**

B.1 The stakeholders' responses are presented under the main headings of the interview schedule used with each group of staff (see Appendices B-D). We have included direct comments from staff: these represent the range of views expressed and illustrate the main points emerging from the interviews.

### **B1 Responses of the Articulation Support Advisers in colleges**

#### **B1.1 Establishing Objectives**

B1.1.1 The ASAs responded that their current roles, duties and responsibilities have been decided on and prioritised through a combination of ELRAH objectives and the needs of the institutions and agreed to with the institutional Line Manager and ELRAH Manager. Their first set of objectives was focused on an investigation of existing provision and activities for articulating students. ASAs spent the first several months gathering information to determine the state of articulation in their respective colleges. The second set of objectives was about initiating and developing activities. As ASAs gained experience and knowledge of good practice from participating in the ELRAH Network they became more confident and were able to have more input into their objectives. ASAs discuss progress towards objectives on an ongoing basis and take part in performance development reviews (PDRs).

#### **B1.2 Where the ASA post is located**

B1.2.1 Most ASAs who are in student facing locations (eg student services and learning services) believe that their positions are located in the right place for them to be most effective. Where their post is located further away from direct students contact ASAs perceive their location to be more remote.

B1.2.2 ASAs pointed out that how well they were profiled within the college made a difference to their access to students and staff. If senior college staff embraced the ASA post then they tended to open doors in terms of access to students and staff across the college and ASAs were not limited to specific areas. Senior Management helped to smooth the way for new initiatives to be implemented and enhancements made.

B1.2.3 One ASA summed up her situation:

*"I am very well supported at college 1 and get invited to meetings with Departments Heads, reports are given to Head of Section and the Vice Principal. This has helped to profile my role. At College 2 I have more restricted access to students and staff and I have to rely on Line Manager and work within boundaries."*

#### **B1.3 Where ASAs have been most effective**

B1.3.1 The ASAs thought that they have been most effective through working in collaboration on initiatives with colleagues at their colleges, and with the colleges and universities in the ELRAH Network. ASAs identified a range of activities where they believed they had been particularly effective. They have collated and centralised existing agreements and uploaded information into ELRAH database and been involved in developing new articulation agreements with universities. They have enhanced support for students and staff on the UCAS process by improving information delivered online through their Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and at workshops. Tutors were provided with tailored UCAS guidelines and 1:1 help with

writing references. Students were provided with the tailored UCAS Student Guide, offered workshops on writing personal statements, drop in sessions and 1:1 help.

#### **B1.4 Where ASAs have been least effective**

B1.4.1 ASAs identified several areas where they have not been as effective as they would have wished: access to departments to run study skill sessions, access to students because of their busy schedules and being able to connect with tutors because they have other priorities. They identified a need in some cases to build partnerships with HEIs and to develop protocols for dealing with articulation agreements as it is currently piecemeal and not as well organized as it could be. Also some ASAs noted that when trying to facilitate articulation agreements, the college can be seen as having lesser standing which presents a challenge when negotiating agreements.

#### **B1.5 Are the right measures in place to demonstrate the achievements of the ASA post?**

B1.5.1 Most ASAs noted that they can demonstrate that initiatives happened and that they played a part working together on objectives but that the project has not run long enough for them to demonstrate overall effectiveness as they have not yet been able to track students through the whole cycle.

B1.5.2 ASAs noted that the ELRAH team is working on improving data collection to demonstrate improvements in articulation. Current emphasis is on monitoring articulation agreements at institutions and through the ELRAH database. Also more emphasis has been placed on evaluating activities such as UCAS and study skill workshops and visits to universities.

B1.5.3 Current ASA monitoring activities include a range of activities such as:

- Monthly activity reports to ELRAH which describe and quantify their activities.
- Implementation of standardized questionnaire to gather student feedback eg on UCAS workshops and study skill workshops.

#### **B1.6 The extent to which articulating students have specific needs**

B1.6.1 The ASAs believe that articulating students have similar issues to other groups, in particular, mature students. Their issues are often with, for example, travel, finance, family pressures and childcare. Those students articulating into 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years often have issues with adjustment to independent university study and they often need help with study skills and referencing. They can also have difficulty adjusting socially as others have already established friends. Articulating students “*need to hit the deck running*” and have a limited time to get up to speed with university systems and course requirements. Articulating students often need help to access support during their study for a degree.

B1.6.2 Mature students often know what they want out of articulation, they often have a job at the end of it and return to education to achieve a specific goal. A number of younger college students who could articulate choose not to do so because they wish to stay with their peers and go into year one of the degree programme.

## **B1.7 Articulation Support Advisers (ASAs) contribution to ELRAH Objectives**

### *(i) Extending the range of information and support available for articulating college students*

The ASAs have been very active in introducing new and customized support available for articulating college students. The ASAs described their role as collaborating with colleagues in their colleges and in the ELRAH Network to develop and implement a range of initiatives to enhance student information and support.

Below are examples of the range of activities identified by the ASAs:

- More detailed information on articulation agreements in prospectus, summer school booklet and on website.
- Creation of a calendar showing UCAS deadlines and college milestones/deadlines.
- Drop-in sessions on articulating to university offered throughout the summer as well as the academic year.
- Customised and updated UCAS guides for staff and students.
- Evaluated existing UCAS application processes, led to the delivery of 'bite size' workshops.
- UCAS workshops and Get Set for University" workshops delivered.
- Contacted external agencies and organized SAAS presentations and online application workshops.
- Spreadsheets created to track UCAS applications that are then returned to students to amend.
- 'Applying to University' section created on the college VLE (Moodle) with information specifically tailored to college students including bespoke Study Skills course and resources and other information to help them prepare for university study.
- Library resource guides are now on VLE (Moodle).
- Talks to classes during induction on ELRAH, applying to university, and support available in the college. Delivered talks to students before the HE Fair on the UCAS application process.
- Held an ELRAH stall at Open Evening for school parents.
- Organised an HE Fair in the college – over 15 universities, colleges, and institutions and over 200 students participated.
- Worked with Learning Support staff to identify and contact Learning Support students; permission was obtained to pass on their Learning Support Plans to the university at which students hold a conditional offer. Students were provided with a copy of the ELRAH "Additional Support" Booklet.

### *(ii) Increase in the numbers of students using information and accessing support*

ASAs stated that students now have access to much more support that was previously available. There are more UCAS and study skill workshops on offer; more 1:1 sessions and face-to-face help with eg UCAS personal statements; and it is easier for students to access information on the VLEs and link to the ELRAH website. More information is available to students through the FE/HEfairs.

ASAs noted that this year there is more emphasis on keeping records and evaluating activities more consistently. They now know the number of UCAS guides distributed

and numbers attending UCAS workshops but for some ASAs, student evaluation of the workshops had not yet been implemented. In some cases, a feedback form had been included as part of the development of student intranet VLE pages.

*(iii) Monitoring improvements in levels and accuracy of articulation information available to students*

The ASAs believe that their collaborative approach through the Network has improved the accuracy of information for students. Monthly reports help to monitor activity and highlight areas for development. They noted that the establishment of the ELRAH database has ensured a central repository for articulation agreements and the links to HEIs and college websites provide good access for students and staff. The tailored UCAS student and staff guidelines provide up-to-date and accurate information.

Highlighting the UCAS timeline to college students and staff and developing application tracking mechanisms has meant that this year more students met application deadlines while the help provided to students with personal statements has improved the overall quality of this aspect of their UCAS application. The ASA organised 'Get Set' workshops have provided students with consistent information and a chance to further develop the skills they need for degree studies.

*(iv) Improving levels of information to tutors and colleges about students' success in gaining advanced standing*

ASAs noted that the problem with readily accessing information about potentially articulating students via the UCAS reports and tracking software means that it is difficult to monitor their applications and, in particular, to see who has received advanced standing. It is possible to use the notes column to check if a place has been offered to an articulating student but this it is reliant on the tutor doing this. Because of the large numbers involved in some institutions, it is not practical to go into each application and see who was successful in gaining advanced standing.

ASAs also noted that:

- Spreadsheets have been created with information on the students for whom references are needed and this is sent to the tutors on a weekly basis.
- Some ASAs did a manual check of UCAS data which showed more students are applying to articulate into university.

*(v) Identifying gaps in articulation routes and developing formalized articulation agreements*

The ASAs have been active in identifying informal and formal articulation agreements in place in their colleges. They outlined a range of work they have undertaken with staff to formalise informal routes to develop new articulation agreements.

Previously, articulation agreements were usually held in departments by individuals and this resulted in some articulation agreements going missing when the member of staff left. This system also relied on individuals to keep the agreements up to date and to alert students to the articulation opportunities. ASAs have worked on locating all agreements and ensuring they are centralised at college level. ASAs noted that they have spent a considerable amount of time collecting and checking college

articulation information, before sending this on to ELRAH where it has been used to populate the ELRAH database.

Through the efforts of some ASAs to facilitate agreements there has been closer curriculum mapping in certain subjects between colleges and universities. One ASA used UCAS data to check the most popular university routes against the articulation routes held by the college to make sure the routes were being used by students.

### **B1.8 The ASA Network**

B1.8.1 The ASAs are very positive about how the regional ASA Network has helped them to do their job effectively through the sharing of good practice. The Network has been helpful in linking participating colleges and universities. The Network is a central point of contact for ASAs.

B1.8.2 The ASA Network has been active in sharing and implementing good practice between their institutions and between the college and university sectors. The institutions where the ASAs are based have contributed to the ELRAH database and have ensured that there are web page links from their institutions to the ELRAH website. Through the Network ASAs have arranged college visits to universities. With ELRAH colleagues, ASAs have developed and coordinated academic skills resources for the web site covering pre-entry transition resource. ASAs identified that there was a gap in transition support with no apparent support given to students once the UCAS application process had finished. This led on to the creation of 'Get Set for University Workshops' that consisted of activities to help students understand the differences between college and university. Also an additional support needs booklet was created detailing who students should contact for extra support at university. ASAs have contributed to dissemination of activities through conferences and publications.

B1.8.3 ASAs gave a mixed response to the question whether it is possible to determine if articulating students get consistent support and advice irrespective of the university concerned. Most ASAs believe consistency has improved because of the sharing and implementation of good practice through the Network but others are not sure how this might be measured.

B1.8.4 ASAs are more confident in the reliability of articulation agreements and arrangements for tutors and students. Articulation agreements now stipulate the number of places available for advanced standing. ASAs have been involved in ensuring articulation agreements are up to date and centrally located and help to act as gatekeepers for agreements. Tutors now know that the ASA role exists and where to find them. Students have more information and support both online and in terms of physical resources and advisor contact. Articulation agreements are published on ELRAH website and in the college prospectus. In one college they have PR events when new articulation agreements signed.

## B2 Responses of the College Line Managers

### B2.1 How the ASA position has improved articulation information and support for HEIs and articulating students

B2.1.1 In the view of college Line Managers, the ASA post has improved information and support for staff and articulating students in numerous ways. Articulation agreements have been centralised and are now comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate. ASAs have supported the creation of new articulation agreements resulting, in some case, in more guaranteed places.

B2.1.2 ASAs have worked with other staff to look at what colleges do for articulating students and to enhance current provision. ASAs have improved information to articulating students about going to university and this is much clearer. There is now guidance on referencing and study skills. The ASAs have been active in updating the VLE which provides online support for articulating students and staff. ASAs are trying to improve information on monitoring the acceptance and rejection of places. Line Managers identified the need for improvements in universities' completion of the notes section of UCAS and giving information on offers and acceptances of advanced standing.

B2.1.3 The Line Managers were clear that ASAs have raised awareness of articulation in the colleges. They have arranged visits to universities and more staff are visiting universities as a result of ASA's encouragement. There has been an increase in the number of signed articulation agreements. ASAs have greatly improved college relations with HEIs with respect to articulation agreements. Colleges have found that it has been good to have a dedicated ASA college person and a dedicated ASA HEI person.

B2.1.4 The college Line Managers pointed to a range of contributions by the ASAs: to centralised induction; provision of information on articulation; workshops on UCAS application, and study skill workshops. ASAs share best practice in colleges and HEIs. In colleges they have found it helpful to have a dedicated post to "drive events along". ASAs have adapted UCAS Guides to meet their college needs and provided UCAS workshops for students as well as supporting staff with their UCAS references.

B2.1.5 College Line Managers commented:

- *The ASA has put in place processes to track students' UCAS applications when returned for amendment and tutor references. The ASA has ... created a spreadsheet ... included UCAS and college deadlines.*
- *The ASA has contributed to marketing ... provided information to staff/students regarding articulation on Open Days.*
- *There has been positive feedback by students on UCAS workshops.*
- *It is good to have the ASA as a central resource and a single point of contact.*
- *Articulation agreements have been centralised.*
- *ASA has been active in building relations with universities and building articulation agreements.*
- *ASA facilitated discussions between college and universities on new articulation agreements – more alignment of curriculum requirements.*

- *ASA has helped with consistency of articulation agreements across the college and with UCAS information sessions for students on completing the form and the personal statement, this has been done in groups and 1:1 sessions. Staff sessions were conducted on the UCAS form and completing the reference. The VLE improved information on the web page on 'Progressing to University' was well received.*
- *The ASA helped to improve pre university information to schools and provide advice on routes to university via HN and get advance standing to university.*
- *We did not have a good experience in the first year of the initiative but now the post holder is an internal member of staff it is much better.*

## **B2.2 The ASA role**

**B2.2.1** In the view of the college Line Managers, the ASA role has played an important part in enhancing the levels of information, guidance and support available to students articulating to degree study with advanced standing. The ELRAH Network has helped with spreading good practice and there are links to the ELRAH website from college websites. The ASAs have been involved in a large range of activities such as:

- *ASA has organised support for UCAS application through 1:1 help, group work, online resources, hard copy guides on going to university.*
- *The ASAs have monitored UCAS applications and supported students by email*
- *ASA has helped to deliver a 'Prepare programme'.*
- *ASA has produced a booklet for students articulating students into university who have additional support needs'.*
- *ASA has facilitated library workshops which were run jointly between college and the university to help students to use library resources.*
- *ASA has enhanced core information for articulating students and organised student visits to university and access to lectures.*
- *There is now more detailed information on articulation agreements in prospectus, summer school booklet and on website.*
- *Raised awareness through a variety of methods and different forums such as student 1:1 drop-in sessions; stall at Open Evening for school parents, organised an HE Fair and arranged talks by universities and visits.*
- *Consistency ... take the load off tutors ... time to speak to students on 1:1 basis.*
- *ASA facilitated study skills workshops.*
- *College website has link to ELRAH website...good info for articulating students.*
- *Worked with other advisors on marketing.*
- *ASA provided tutors assistance with the UCAS form and references*
- *ASAs provided staff with a copy of the ELRAH UCAS student guide and tutor reference Guide.*

## **B2.3 Systems and measures are in place to monitor the achievements of the ASAs**

**B2.3.1** There is a belief that ASAs have added value to existing activities but college Line Managers had varied opinions on the systems and measures that are in place to monitor their achievements. ASAs work with the manager at ELRAH and Line Managers at the colleges to set objectives and participate in personal development reviews.

**B2.3.2** Line Managers commented:

- *ASA reports to me ... regular meetings and updates.*

- *The ASA put a paper to senior management re references from tutors... got buy in from Heads of Dept in 8 Schools... one person (ASA) responsible for monitoring references.*
- *Director of Curriculum and Quality Line Manager... set college objectives and there are ELRAH objectives as well.*
- *ASA monthly reports.*
- *Meet regularly.*
- *Moving to more formal measurements and improving student data.*
- *The ASA had made their own evaluation sheet for activities ... however we do not have any results as yet.*

## **B2.4 Location of the ASA position**

B2.4.1 The college Line Managers stated that the ASA position is located in the right place in their college for it to be most effective. ASAs tend to be in student facing areas. Line Managers have helped to facilitate the ASAs remit to work across the colleges and to promote the ASA role with staff.

B2.4.2 Line Mangers commented:

- *Probably yes ... based in student services.*
- *Had remit to work across the teaching staff... tutor groups.*
- *Yes ... located in a student facing area ... one stop shop for students ... guidance, finance ... the student support area.*
- *ASA has support from other staff.*
- *Reports directly to my position[this]helps with the status of ASA...later may report to Head of Support Team.*
- *Yes, part of one stop shop for student services.*
- *Reports to me ... in Curriculum and Quality [holder of articulation agreements) ... physical location with Student Guidance and Support.*
- *In the first year placed with the most appropriate staff that had been doing this work. ASA needed to talk with other staff.*
- *Not in the right place now ... shift to more student facing.*

## **B2.5 Key Facilitators to the Success of the Position**

B2.5.1 The Line Managers considered key facilitators to the success of the ASA position to be connection with senior management who can give authority to the position and raise their profile across the institution. Some ASAs are invited to attend and report to management meetings. The ASA Network of colleges and universities is most helpful: Line Managers find the Network helpful because the ASAs are able to find the right person to contact to arrange articulation activities and this is a big plus, for example, to arrange visits to universities.

B2.5.2 Line Managers commented:

- *The ASA attends regular management meetings and we receive lots of detail of activities.*
- *Clear understanding of how the role is developing, projects managed.*
- *Accurate reporting and updating of data provided.*
- *Line Manager has overall responsibility for articulation.*
- *Promotion of the position within the college.*
- *Integrate ASA into Learner Support team.*

- *Action plan of activities and presented to senior management ... got buy in and to Heads of Dept and curriculum team leaders.*
- *We had a bad experience in the first year.*
- *It helps that ASA is an internal member of staff ... known and given support in college.*
- *ASA understands the college sector.*
- *Peer support is provided through the Network.*
- *The key issue is profile ... otherwise no impact.*
- *Introduction and access to key personnel ... aware of what ASA has to do to take articulation forward in the college.*
- *As Line Manager little support from ELRAH... one meeting at the very beginning – no support from ELRAH.*

## **B2.6 Existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position**

B2.6.1 Overall the Line Managers do not think that there is any significant existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position.

B2.6.2 A potential barrier is that college tutors often think that they are doing everything that is needed in relation to articulation, including links to universities. There is more that can be done in terms of helping tutors to understand the ASA post, leaving them to concentrate more on academic work. ASA have limited resources and that can be annoying at times for the ASA eg finding funds for buses so students can visit universities.

B2.6.3 Line Managers commented:

- *All UCAS students are aware of articulation – the ASA provided a lot of support.*
- *Some students prefer to go into year 1 and not articulate.*
- *ASA able to seek out articulating students – prior to ASA we were not in a position before to offer the amount of workshops and visits.*
- *Position part time ... would like to have more of ASA's time.*
- *No [barrier] - fitted in with team.*

## **B2.7 Issues for Articulating Students**

B2.7.1 Line Managers opinions vary as to whether articulating students have particular issues concerning their recruitment, support and retention compared with other groups such as access course students or direct entrants. Some doubt there are differences while others believe that there is a significant leap from college to university for articulating students and there is a need for more support for those going into 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of university.

B2.7.2 Line Managers commented:

- *Articulation route is better for some mature students – do it for financial reasons ... issue [is] the jump to self study... go into situation where other students have established their social groups in earlier years... hard for them socially.*
- *No I do not think so...every student is an individual ...no particular cohort has particular issues.*
- *Yes ... students come to college for a couple of years ... develop confidence... gentle approach to degree study.*
- *Staged approach to study ... gain confidence and study skills.*

- *Some departments do not have articulating students.*
- *Concerned that places are limited and under current economic climate could decrease.*
- *Some students told that they should apply for year one more chance of a guaranteed place ... told not to go into 2nd and 3rd year.*
- *Some students do not want to take an articulation route... they would prefer to go in the first year.*

## **B2.8 Value of the dedicated ASA Post**

B2.8.1 Most of the Line Managers noted that there is value in a post specifically devoted to articulation and articulating students. The ASAs provide links between the partner colleges and the universities. They also noted that the ASA has the time to focus on articulation agreements and supporting articulating students and provide staff with up-to-date information. The remainder of the Line Managers were not sure that a post devoted to solely to articulation is required and perhaps there is a need for a broader remit beyond articulation.

B2.8.2 Line Managers commented:

- *Key person to push forward agenda ... drive it ... improve practice, increase awareness of advanced standing and increase numbers of articulation agreements.*
- *All Articulation Agreements now held centrally in Curriculum Quality.*
- *Each department now receives a report showing the final destinations for their students.*
- *'Applying to University' section created on the college VLE Moodle and library resource guides and study skills. Also ran 'Get Set for University' Workshops.*
- *ASA worked with Learning Support staff... Learning Support students were identified and contacted with their permission passed on their Learning Support Plans. Learning Support Plans sent to University at which student holds a conditional offer. Students were provided with a copy of the ELRAH 'Additional Support' booklet.*
- *Partly sending consistent message of the importance of articulation as a route to university ... consistency of approach.*
- *Providing 1:1 support for students ... additional support for tutors.*
- *ASA...provided additional enhancement... this college had everything in place and running smoothly and embedded.*
- *I do not think a devoted place is necessary.*

## **B2.9 If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?**

B2.9.1 Articulation agreements and activities existed prior to the ELRAH initiatives and most Line Managers indicated that they would provide for articulating students as they had previously done. Other student services would cover some activities and the guidance role would revert back to tutor. This, however, would result in old problem reoccurring such as a lack of consistency and university relationships would be more complicated.

B2.9.2 Line Managers commented:

- *Go by the wayside... not provide 1:1 support, standards start to fall... no lack of willing just takes time to drive articulation forward - good to have a key person to keep it going.*
- *Would not have the time to arrange visits.*
- *Would have to involve cross college staff in updating articulation agreements.*
- *The quality would not be there in the same way ... lack of time.*

- *Most disappointing ... if articulation database not kept up to date.*
- *Quite disappointing ... it has been a good experience for our students.*
- *Need to monitor long term effect for students.*
- *Good to have a dedicated ASA post.*
- *In terms of UCAS ... ELRAH post is a big help.*
- *Revert to working the way we did.*

### **B3 Responses of Key Staff in College (Academic Tutors and Student Support Staff)**

#### **B3.1 How the ASA position has improved articulation information and support for HEIs and articulating students**

B3.1.1 The ASA post has improved information and support for staff and articulating students in numerous ways. For example, articulation agreements have been centralised, they are now comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate. ASAs have worked with other staff to look at what colleges do for articulating students and to enhance current provision. ASAs have been involved in a range of activities including: updating UCAS guides for staff and students; providing bespoke workshops and 1:1 support for students and help for staff in particular with UCAS references. The ASAs have arranged study skills, referencing and library workshops. They have been involved in organising HE fairs, visits to universities including opportunities to attend lectures.

B3.1.2 Key staff commented:

- *Overall quality of UCAS applications was a problem ... ASA added quality control to the process.*
- *ASA brought deadlines forward for UCAS and this meant all students were on time.*
- *No formal articulation agreements before ... 1-2 informal ones ... now we have formal agreements.*
- *Online resources have been available over the past couple of months.*
- *More proactive approach to articulation with students and staff.*
- *Better information on articulation in prospectus.*
- *With increasing competition for places ... articulation is now promoted as a possible route to the same place (university).*

#### **B3.2 The ASA role**

B3.2.1 Many key staff thought that the ASA had played an important role in enhancing the levels of information, guidance and support available to articulating students, for example, articulation agreements had become formalised and centralised and there was greater awareness among college staff of the need to keep articulation agreements up to date. The ASAs have improved the whole UCAS process by enhancing guidelines and providing support in a variety of ways from help to individuals to workshops involving staff and students as well as via the college website with links to the ELRAH articulation database. The ASAs have strengthened the links between colleges and universities for example, through arranging student visits, working with staff on pre-entry workshops and facilitating articulation discussions that may lead to agreements being updated and new ones signed.

B3.2.2 Other key staff, a minority, stated that they were unsure how much input the ASA had had into improving the state of articulation as a number of activities were already in place and working effectively.

### **B3.3 Location of the ASA position**

B3.3.1 Most key staff stated that the ASA position is located in the right place in their college for it to be most effective. A couple of key staff members said that they did not think that the ASA was in the right location because the ASA appears to be restricted in their activities by their location and poor communication.

B3.3.2 Key staff commented:

- *Yes... Learner Advisor Team ... work closely with each other.*
- *Yes should be in college with other student support staff ... in college Network.*
- *Yes ... solid advice and guidance from someone who knows the correct information.*
- *Yes... in a place where students come to get information.*
- *Yes ... very effective in learner support team ... working with multi skilled team.*
- *Yes but will review the initiative and look at role and how it is being implemented.*
- *Yes at present the ASA reports to Principal on HE articulation therefore articulation is on the radar at a strategic level.*

### **B3.4 Key facilitators to the success of the position**

B3.4.1 The key staff considered key facilitators to the success of the ASA position to be the support of senior management to give authority to the position. Senior management is able to arrange a meeting with the Heads of Departments so that the ASA could explain the importance of articulation agreements, of supporting articulating students, the importance of the UCAS process on outcomes for students and how current practice can be improved. Some other key staff were unsure of the key facilitators to the success of the ASA post.

B3.4.2 Overall the key staff did not think that there are any significant existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position.

### **B3.5 Issues for Articulating Students**

B3.5.1 Key staff opinions vary on whether or not articulating students have particular issues concerning their recruitment, support and retention compared with other groups such as access course students or direct entrants. Some doubt there are differences and their colleges are trying to provide “*across the board inclusive service*” while others believe that there is a significant leap from college to university for articulating students and more support is needed for those who enter 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of university.

B3.5.2 Key staff commented:

- *Articulating students are mostly mature students ... a leap from college to university into 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years ... others would have become embedded in the university in their first year.*
- *Especially at level 3 very little time to find their feet ... hard job.*
- *They have difficulty integrating into the social group.*
- *They have difficulty adjusting to academic administration side.*
- *Yes there are issues and it is no different from other subjects ... academic preparation for going to university ... library use, academic writing, referencing.*

### **B3.6 Value of the Dedicated ASA Post**

B3.6.1 Most of the key staff thought that there is value in a post specifically devoted to articulation and articulating students: the ASAs have provided a variety of bespoke information and support to staff and students through a variety of mechanisms previously noted and have strengthened links between the partner colleges and the universities.

B3.6.2 While most of the key staff were positive, a few expressed the view that there is no particular value in having an ASA post as they had previously had articulation agreements in place and provided activities to support articulating students. Some of the key staff had previously covered the tasks undertaken by the ASA role.

B3.6.3 Key staff commented:

- *Provided added value to what was already there ... more thorough ...step by step guides.*
- *Value to the students ...provided up-to-date information on college website and in prospectus.*
- *Students know what is expected of them ... which articulation is a route available to them.*
- *It is positive that we are getting more articulation agreements.*
- *Good that the ASA relates to other HEIs and colleges... access to bigger statistics.*
- *Value in helping students ease into university learning, preparation for study at university can help to alleviate student anxiety and manage expectations.*
- *More university visits ... better communication ... this is significant.*
- *The post has worked well for students' benefit and provided constructive feedback to staff which has been taken on board.*
- *The ELRAH Network provided access to good practice that the ASA could share with us.*

### **B3.7 If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?**

B3.7.1 Articulation agreements and activities existed prior to the ELRAH initiative and most key staff indicated that they would continue to provide for articulating students as they had done previously. There was concern, however, that the overall quality of the service for articulating students would start to decline.

B3.7.2 Key staff commented:

- *ASA has held UCAS together.*
- *Go back to the way it was.*
- *Hardly any formal agreements.*
- *Tutors need someone to broker it for them.*
- *No push forward on articulating agreements.*
- *Great difference to delivering transition workshops... would need to employ another person.*
- *Direct entrants get lost in the system no one to focus on them.*
- *Worry is that in current economic climate slide back to a more optional structure ... less proactive with HEs and vice versa.*
- *Post further down priority list.*

## **C HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS)**

### **C1 Responses from Articulation Advisors (ASAs)**

#### **C1.1 Establishing Objectives**

C1.1.1 In HEIs, the ASAs' current roles, duties and responsibilities have been decided on and prioritized through a combination of ELRAH objectives and the needs of the institutions, agreed to with the institutional Line Manager and ELRAH manager. They noted that objectives for their first year in post were focused on investigating the existing provision and activities for articulating students and identifying, through focus groups, the issues which are common to articulating students across institutions. Objectives for their second year centre on initiating and developing activities.

#### **C1.2 Where the ASA post is located**

C1.2.1 The ASAs believe that their position is located in the right place for them to be most effective. Being located centrally in areas such as Recruitment and Admissions and Wider Access and Retention is effective for ease of contact with key liaison staff and is a good base from which to move outwards to build relationships with other sectors in the institution. ASAs can be effective in working within Schools.

#### **C1.3 Where ASAs have been most effective**

C1.3.1 The ASAs considered that they have been most effective by working in collaboration with colleagues at the HEIs on key area such as: providing bespoke induction programmes targeted at the needs of articulating students; implementing a library outreach programme; providing ongoing support to articulating students for example by emails; providing a range of embedded academic skills workshops and information sessions; improving and tailoring student evaluations and using their feedback to improve services.

#### **C1.4 Where ASAs have been least effective**

C1.4.1 ASAs are not as effective as they would like to be in areas such as accessing students via embedded workshops and information sessions because they are dependent on tutors freeing up time for them to deliver sessions. They identified challenges in terms of having the necessary influence to move things forward since Colleges/Schools within the HEI are often too busy to support initiatives. The ASAs pointed out that while they can set up a new initiative, they have to rely on others to move it through the system; sometimes Colleges/Schools are not able, or willing, to deliver what is needed for articulating students.

#### **C1.5 Right Measures in Place to Demonstrate ASA Achievements**

C1.5.1 ASAs noted that they can demonstrate that initiatives happened and that they played a part on working together on objectives. They conduct formal evaluations via student questionnaires for a number of activities such as the induction programmes and library outreach programme, the information gathered is used to inform future practice. It is more difficult, however, to demonstrate long term impact of initiatives, for example the ASA can tell the numbers who came to the induction programme but not what happened subsequently to the students during their degrees as this data is not yet readily available.

## **C1.6 The extent to which articulating students have specific needs**

C1.6.1 The ASAs believe that articulating students have similar issues to other groups, in particular, mature students. Their issues are often to do with, for example, travel, finance, family pressures and cultural adjustment to the style of university study. Other challenges for articulating students include: a limited time to get up to speed with university systems and course requirements and they can have issues with adjusting to a social group as others have already established friends.

C1.6.2 Mature student prefer to articulate as it is more cost and time effective for them.

## **C1.7 How the introduction of the Articulation Support Advisers (ASAs) resulted in and/or contributed to ELRAH objectives:**

### *(i) New and customised support available for articulating students*

The ASAs have been very active in introducing new and customized support for articulating students at their chosen HEI. The ASAs described their role has being to collaborate with colleagues, locating and talking to 'the right people' (eg senior managers, Heads of Departments across the HEI, other student services advisors) to get a commitment to making their initiatives happen.

As previously noted, while the ASAs can facilitate initiatives by providing the shape and direction, they are reliant on others to help make the initiatives work, for example, they drew on others' expertise for the delivery of the library outreach programme; nevertheless this also means that "if they do not want you to work with them it all falls down". The ASAs also rely on other staff knowledge of their students. ASAs have found that if they can get an initiative to work in a key area of the university and that this is recognized more widely within the institution, then other Schools may follow.

The ASA identified a range of customised activities and resources for articulating students and staff that they have produced or carried out: they conducted focus groups on the needs of articulating students; produced customised information sections for articulating applicants in the form of new 'Welcome' web pages; provided tailored induction programmes including the delivery of transition support and academic skills in week one (induction week) and 'Getting Started' workshops; customised and delivered embedded academic skills workshops in target programmes; delivered presentations on the transition to Honours. Activities were evaluated by students and deemed to be successful.

### *(ii) Making a difference to the accuracy, quality and consistency of the information/support available to articulating students*

ASAs have responded to needs identified by students in the focus groups, for example, referencing was identified as "a nightmare". They responded by providing pre-entry workshops targeting referencing and other academic and library skills. The 'Welcome' web pages contain pre entry activities for articulating students and links to other web resources eg finance, library and childcare. They have also formulated new articulation agreements.

The ASAs explained that they are trying to develop a systematic and coherent set of pre-entry activities for college students. They are building on previous work and, with others, are developing an over-arching support framework for articulating students. In one HEI this has been endorsed by the Student Experience Committee.

*(iii) Monitoring the use of information by articulating students*

ASAs noted that they track the use of information provided by them and other support staff at pre-entry, during induction and then later through support e-mails.

The ASAs believe that they have increased awareness of support services and encouraged articulating students to access them but it is difficult to trace variations in the uptake of support to specific ASA interventions.

*(iv) Monitoring any increases in levels of retention, achievement and progression to honours*

ASAs report that it is difficult to monitor any increases in levels of retention, achievement and progression to Honours over time using the current reporting mechanisms within their university. They recognise that long term tracking is required but they are reliant on what is possible in terms of how the institutional system is set up and operates.

One university has several years of data on the numbers of articulating students which meant the ASA was able to monitor the number of articulating students coming to particular programmes and match this against the articulation agreements with particular colleges. In this university, the ASA was also able to identify articulating students and to track their progress against standards of achievement and retention data. This ASA is able to obtain reports to inform programme leaders about articulating students but in the other universities, the ASA is not able to provide this information. Programme leaders do not get a list of who the articulating students are and while this information could be obtained manually, this is too time consuming to be feasible.

It was thought that students are increasingly coming into the university with advanced standing and the ASAs hope to track more accurately over time at pre-entry, induction and post entry stages to determine if there are demonstrable differences in retention, achievement and progression.

*(v) Monitoring improvements in levels and accuracy of articulation information available to programme leaders at universities*

The ASAs are able to provide the Schools/subject areas that are most active in articulation with a detailed set of guidance notes on the key elements to include in a tailored induction programme for articulating students. One ASA produced a set of recommendations for School practice in supporting articulating students as a result of review of the active articulation areas. As noted above, in one university it was possible for the ASA to produce summary reports of articulation routes and volumes and a compilation of comparative year - on - year articulation data. Other universities have been provided with an articulation agreement template which has led to consistency in practice.

## **C1.8 The ASA Network**

- C1.8.1 The ASAs are very positive about how the regional ASA Network has helped them to do their job effectively through the sharing of good practice. As one ASA noted the Network was: "Innovative, fantastic ... one of the best parts of my job." The ASAs believe that the Network has led to joined up thinking and improved consistency across institutions. The Network has been helpful in linking with colleges and other universities and they now know the people to talk to about articulation. The Network is a central point of contact.
- C1.8.2 The ASA Network has been active in sharing and implementing good practice between institutions and between the college and university sectors: the ASAs who have developed new resources are able to share with other universities and colleges through the Network. The institutions where the ASAs are based have contributed to the ELRAH database and have ensured that there are web page links from their institutions to the ELRAH website. With ELRAH colleagues, ASAs have developed and coordinated academic skills resources for the web site covering pre-entry transition resource. Through the Network, ASAs have arranged college visits to universities. ASAs have been active in shared conferences and dissemination activities.
- C1.8.3 The ASAs thought that, as yet, it is not possible to determine if articulating students get consistent support and advice irrespective of the university concerned but that consistency has clearly improved through the sharing of good practice that the ASA Network has enabled.
- C1.8.4 Overall ASAs feel more confident in the reliability of articulation agreements and arrangements for tutors and students because they have audited the existing provision and have worked to enhance consistency of agreements eg through the use of a template.

## C2 HEI Line Managers

### C2.1 How the ASA position has improved articulation information and support for HEIs and articulating students

C2.1.1 The HEI Line Managers considered that the ASA post has allowed their institutions to do more for articulating students, to enhance their experience and to support staff because the ASAs work across the whole institution. With a large number of degree programmes, the universities have found it helpful to have a central point of contact to talk to about articulation routes across the institution. The ASAs work well with academic staff at their university, with colleagues at other HEIs and with the partner colleges. The ASA has a greater understanding than individuals of the breath of articulation agreements and is able to make recommendation to Schools about gaps and how they can improve practice.

C2.1.2 In the view of the HEI Line Managers, it has been very helpful for their institution to have someone totally focused on the needs of articulating students. The ASA can smooth pathway for articulating students and improve information available to them. Although institutions have had a lot of articulating students over several years and already had activities in place, the Line Managers stated that ASAs had enhanced practice. The ASA post has helped them to get a *“Better handle on the issues for articulating students”*.

C2.1.3 The HEI Line managers identified a number of ways in which the ASAs have helped: they have been active in organising bespoke activities for articulating students and have undertaken tasks such as coordinated timetabling of workshops with Schools across the university; taken the lead on the development of the induction and study skills workshop materials; and conducted briefings with staff facilitators and student assistants. The workshops in some cases have reached several hundred students. The ASAs also provide ongoing support to students and up date information regularly; they have also updated the information for students and staff on articulation on the universities’ websites.

C2.1.4 Workshops and other events such as student induction have been evaluated by students and these evaluations indicate that students find support such as bespoke induction activities very useful.

### C2.2 The effectiveness of ASA role

C2.2.1 Most HEI Line Managers commented that it was early days in achieving objectives and that it was hard for them to tell how effective the ASA role is in enhancing the levels of information, guidance and support available to articulating students. The ASA role sits alongside other student facing advisers in the universities who give guidance full time in their respective areas of responsibility, some of whom had previously been involved with articulation activities as part of the institution’s overall recruitment and pre-entry programmes. ASAs have assisted with various interventions that were already organised by the university before the inception of the ASA post and these interventions included pre- and post- entry activities for articulating students. However, the Line Managers see benefit in a having specialist person – the ASA post - who understands issues, provides useful information and support documentation.

C2.2.2 Line Managers noted that ASAs had been very effective in liaising with advisors in partner colleges and other universities. They thought that the ASAs have worked effectively together as a team providing greater levels of up- to-date information and sharing of good practice. The ELRAH Network has added significantly to the quality of information on articulation agreements and to supporting documents and activities for students and staff.

C2.2.3 Overall the Line Managers considered that the ASAs have contributed to ensuring that the processes for supporting articulating students are more streamlined, effective and efficient.

### **C2.3 Systems and measures in place to monitor the achievements of the ASAs**

C2.3.1 The HEI Line Managers noted that the work of the ASAs is contained within the objectives and strategies for the department in which they are located. They are agreed at the start of the year and progress towards them regularly reviewed. ASA projects are measured and monitored constantly within team in which they are based, there is not a specific system for evaluating ASA work. In the universities where the ASA is not employed by them, the Line Managers have tended to adopt a light touch approach to supervising the ASA which has allowed them autonomy and freedom to work across the university and to implement initiatives. These Line Managers try to have meetings two or three times a year to review progress against objectives and to set new objectives, outcomes and milestones.

C2.3.1 The ASAs have undertaken a range of activities and these are evaluated as part of universities' formal student evaluation process with feedback used to improve services. In some cases the ASAs had a significant role in organising evaluations, reporting findings and undertaking follow up actions.

### **C2.4 ASA position is located in the right place for it to be most effective**

C2.4.1 The Line Managers stated that they believe the ASA post is located in the right place for it to be most effective. ASAs are in student facing areas such as in Recruitment and Retention and in Wider Access and Retention Services. The ASA is able to work effectively with other advisers on some university-wide initiatives and provide a voice for articulating students. For example, one ASA is on the transition and induction group and was asked to set up and lead a side group for transition and induction for articulating students.

C2.4.2 Line Managers commented:

- *The ASA has strong links with academic staff, recruitment and retention team and student services.*
- *Works really well ...with Wider Access and Retention Services... there is synergy.*
- *ASA has run improving writing for applications forums... functional and effective ...ASA work with student advisors.*
- *Yes ... works closely with recruitment and admission and College Liaison Officer.*

### **C2.5 Key facilitators to the success of the ASA post**

C2.5.1 The Line Managers noted that one of the most important key facilitators to the success of the ASA post is to gain the acceptance of senior management and engage their support for the post. Senior management need to know why ASA post is there, the benefits it brings to the university and how it can contribute to it. Having senior

management 'buy in' can open doors to Colleges and Schools by raising the status of the articulation route and emphasising its importance. ASAs also need to be able to engage with staff across the university and build collaborative relationships. Line Managers pointed to the ASA Network as another important facilitating factor to the success of the ASA post.

#### C2.5.2 Line Managers commented:

- *The ASA Network helps the ASAs to see what others are doing and feedback to us the bigger picture.*
- *Willingness of others across university and colleges to collaborate with the ASA.*
- *Collaboration with academic staff lent credibility to activities and they encouraged students to attend.*
- *Influence of the ASA has taken time to embed, being outsider was not a particular problem, because the posts are aligned to university goals and have a broader perspective.*
- *Others realised that ASA had a remit re articulating students.*
- *ASA needs to build strong links with key people in schools and academics*
- *ASA has own office space... is part of broader student support team and is provided with some administration help.*

### **C2.6 Existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position**

C2.6.1 Most Line Managers do not think that there is any significant existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position. Operationally, the creation of the ASA Network has been a great success and is a big help in the process of supporting articulation.

C2.6.2 The Line Managers noted that if others in the university do not recognise that articulating students require additional support, then the ASA could have problems in managing to have initiatives implemented. Sometimes it is difficult for the ASA to engage with students on an ongoing basis because of time pressures on students, for example, they may come to an academic skills workshop but are then unable to attend follow up workshops even when they recognise that the need to do so and would benefit from this additional input.

### **C2.7 Issues for Articulating Students**

C2.7.1 Line Managers think that there are some particular issues concerning the recruitment, support and retention of articulating students compared with other groups such as access course students or other direct entrants. They do, however, have similar issues to mature students such as travel, child care, study skills and adjusting to university study. In some universities routes for articulating students are more straightforward than other routes as there are agreed pathways.

#### C2.7.2 Line Managers commented:

- *There are challenges for direct entrants to university eg self directed study and time management.*
- *ASA has done research on what articulating students think are the issues.*
- *Mature HNs have not been in education for a long time and there is a confidence issue, they are expected to keep up. The university is a different culture than what they are used to and they have lots of competing pressures.*
- *Recruitment is not specific to articulating students, all considered equally.*

- *Issues for direct entrants occur 5-6 weeks into the term, they are likely to mention they are having difficulty.*

## **C2.8 Value of the Dedicated ASA Post**

C2.8.1 As reported above, the Line Managers are positive about the contribution of the ASA and believe that ASAs have enhanced practice. They see that there is value of a post specifically devoted to articulation and articulating students. ASAs can give time to developing this worthwhile route that saves students time and money. ASAs can encourage links with colleges more and provide better in depth knowledge about articulation. Articulation route is increasingly being used by students. ASAs are helpful in alerting the university to the need to align curriculum in certain subject areas with college provision.

C2.8.2 ASAs provide a focal point for articulating students. Articulating students are a unique group and universities are not necessarily resourced for all specific groups as they recruit from all over the world and some universities tend not to have specialist people to look after these groups. Some universities might not invest on an ongoing basis in this kind of position although the tasks would revert back to previous post holders therefore from the university perspective it is good to have ELRAH meeting an external need. This is in the context where student places are under threat and universities are struggling to grow as the number of places is being reduced.

C2.8.3 Line Managers commented:

- *ASA has helped to increase the number of students using this route and there is a growing market in articulation.*
- *The ASA has established articulation routes.*
- *ASA has been trying to align the curriculum to ease the passage from colleges.*
- *ASA has helped others at the university with articulation agreements.*
- *ASA has helped with greater understanding of the needs of articulating students.*
- *University runs pre-entry courses but ASA got direct entrants more in focus.*
- *ASA has run improving writing for applications forums ... functional and effective ... ASA work with student advisors.*
- *ASA arranged visits by colleges to the university and the ASA contacts have helped tutors and students.*
- *The ASA has focused on students providing them with clear information and the best chance of being offered a place.*
- *Support and retention ... engage with additional activities trying to get things embedded into students' courses so they will attend as part of their programme ... have to work at it programmes tend to be very full.*
- *ASA trained students to call direct entrants and offer support.*

## **C2.9 If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?**

C2.9.1 Articulation agreements and activities existed prior to the ELRAH initiatives. Line Managers stated that they would undertake the same level of activities as at present but hoped that the benefits of the ASA post would be sustained.

C2.9.2 Some Line Managers believe that academics would drop specific activities because of pressure that they, and the university, are under. The ASA positions have not been expensive positions for the university because of the additional support and the positions are aligned to university goals.

C2.9.3 Line Managers commented:

- *Budget and team fit were fine... we would like to do [the same] however there is a huge pressure to do as little as possible to meet the pressure of the budget.*

### C3 Responses of Key Staff in HEIs (Academic Tutors and Student Support Staff)

#### C3.1 How the ASA position has improved articulation information and support for articulating students

C3.1.1 Some key staff pointed out that prior to the establishment of the ASA post, induction and orientation activities specifically designed for articulating college students did not exist. Key staff noted that it was good to have the ASA to bridge this perceived gap in services and support for articulating students. ASAs have led on the development of a bespoke programme for all articulating students and raised awareness of their needs with staff.

C3.1.2 Some key staff commented that there has been a marked improvement for them through having the ASA to facilitate activities for articulating students. Others had previously provided activities for articulating students, for example, a compulsory study skills bridging programme in their subject area, but the ASA has an institution-wide focus and is able to organise activities beyond subject boundaries.

C3.1.3 Key staff commented on some of the specific support for articulating students that the ASA had implemented for example:

- *When ELRAH rep was first in post they ran focus groups and identified needs of articulating students... showed that articulating college students did not have such a great experience when they first came to university... changes were made... bespoke programme at induction, study skills targeted at student needs.*
- *This year we really go it right for articulating students.*
- *The ASA fitted into tutorial slots in the regular programme and provided support and information to articulating students.*
- *Prepare for University programme was extremely useful.*
- *A major difference is that the ASA targeted articulating students for UCAS study skills workshops and has time for these students.*
- *We now target direct entrants with the ASA to develop a range of college to university activities.*
- *Getting Started workshop made a huge difference.*
- *The ASA is able to reach articulating students earlier in the process.*
- *In terms of transition, there has been a significant increase in number of workshops on learning about university culture, academic skills, social needs, study skills and where to go to get help.*
- *We have a direct entrant working group that the ASA is on... there are more people to discuss issues.. made up of support staff and academics.*
- *Better informed when they arrived ... better study skills, library skills, know how to access study support and student services.*
- *We are now clearer about type of skills that articulation students need to develop.*

#### C3.2 ASA position is located in the right place for it to be most effective

C3.2.1 Most key staff in the HEIs believe that the ASA post is located in the right place for it to be most effective, however some others wondered if there should be more ASAs located in subject areas. ASAs currently are located centrally in areas that provide support services to students across the institution. Being part of central services provides ASAs with an overview across the institution and access to the expertise of

others in their departments. Being located in teams that provide services to students across the university is also helpful since the team has more power to action initiatives and to seek support from the Head of Department to make things happen.

#### C3.2.2 Key staff commented:

- *Yes connects well with other team members... student services.*
- *Yes, although I have wondered about lines of communication ...need more clarification around roles who does what.*
- *More things are being done for students and staff.*
- *In Admissions ... ASA has contact with other HEIs and links with Head of Administration and access to administration statistics.*
- *Shame not more closely linked with subjects.*
- *Better informed ... more formal.*

### C3.3 Key facilitators to the success of the ASA post

C3.3.1 The key staff considered that one of the most important key facilitators to the success of the ASA post is to gain the acceptance and support of senior management to allow interventions to happen with the faculty support. Another key facilitator is the location of the ASA post - in central service areas - which enables them to work closely with other student advisers to plan interventions.

#### C3.3.2 Key staff commented:

- *Communication with tutors has helped.*
- *The ELRAH Network supports the work of the ASAs ... they share good practice.*
- *The ASA is keen to improve practice for articulating students and help academic staff to get involved in articulation. The working group is making steady progress on promoting support for articulating students and feeds into the upper levels of the university*

### C3.4 Existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position

C3.4.1 Key staff opinions vary on whether or not there are operational barriers to the success of the ASA post. Some key staff thought that there were no barriers, ASAs have a clear remit to work with direct entrant and things seem to run smoothly. They have access to wider ELRAH Network and are able to share ideas. The ASA posts work well and have been very effective, as one key staff noted “*overwhelmingly positive*”.

C3.4.2 Other key staff, however, thought there are barriers to the success of the ASA post and that these are outside the control of the ASAs. They identified, for example, that the pressures on university recruitment is likely to be a barrier as there has been a big increase in the number of applicants for limited places. Recruitment and selection are tougher than in previous years and this will affect college students aiming to articulate. Although some Schools are trying to honour the agreed numbers of places in articulation agreements this does not happen in all Schools. There is pressure to recruit students with high UCAS points and students who will undertake a full four years of study in the university and who will therefore bring in more funding than an articulating student who will be in the university for a shorter period; this is a key performance indicator for departments responsible for recruitment

C3.4.3 Other barriers identified by key staff that ASAs cannot influence, but which affect the numbers articulating, is that that some college students who are eligible to articulate choose not to, in particular, younger students who prefer to go into year one with their peers.

C3.4.4 Key staff pointed out that everybody is very busy and it is hard to keep articulation in focus on the agenda. Often progress is slow with establishing articulation agreements.

C3.4.5 An issue or barrier that some key staff pointed to is that the ASA “*is thinly spread*”, at times s/he may not have sufficient leverage within Schools and cannot get deep enough or have a strong enough voice to ensure that initiatives are implemented.

### **C3.5 Issues for Articulating Students**

C3.5.1 Key staff think that there are some particular issues concerning the recruitment, support and retention of articulating students. While they have similar issues to mature students, they also face particular challenges. There have been issues of how prepared articulation students are in terms of curriculum requirements and universities have worked directly with colleges to address these issues. For example, it was identified in one subject that articulating students were failing in one specific area, this was resolved by a review of the curriculum match with colleges and students received additional support; without this intervention, the university would not have retained those students.

C3.5.2 The ASAs have held focus groups with students and liaised between the students and staff about the issues in the groups. Lecturers generally have been responsive to the ASAs’ information on what the issues are for articulating students. In one case, for example, they resolved a problem of students failing a particular course because they were not sufficiently prepared by their colleges through offering different options of study and providing students at induction with clear advice about the best choices to make to maximize their chances of success.

C3.5.3 Key staff commented:

- *I think there are specific needs...they do not start at level 1 where everything is much smoother and clearer for the student.*
- *Yes [specific needs]for articulating students moving from college to university can be very daunting.*
- *If you go into 3rd year ... flag up issues... not understood that you cannot submit drafts ... fail and re-sit...also issues with deadlines.*
- *Massive cultural differences for 2nd and 3rd years.*
- *A lot of mature students articulate into the 2nd year... no issues with retention there can be issues with support... academic skills, referencing.*
- *Especially at level 3 very little time to find their feet ... hard job.*
- *Difficulty integrating into the social group.*
- *Difficulty adjusting to academic admin side.*
- *Problem with retention of articulating students.*

### **C3.6 Value of the Dedicated ASA Post**

C3.6.1 Key staff considered that there is value in a post specifically devoted to articulation and articulating students. Some academic tutors commented that in busy academic departments, where there are competing priorities, it is helpful to have the ASA post reminding them to make this much part of their agenda otherwise they would not necessarily focus on developing articulating agreements or on bespoke support for articulating students.

C3.6.2 Key staff commented:

- *ASA post draws attention to concerns of articulating students raise awareness of student experience.*
- *Prior to ASA appointment no named contact for articulating students either prior to coming to university or during their time here – now support for whole journey ... more seamless.*
- *Induction Day... very useful ... coordinate and focus on articulating students ... data on student experience useful... more useful at the end of the year.*
- *ASA helped with UCAS references made such a difference.*
- *Tutorials for articulating students helped.*
- *ASA organised university visits.*
- *There needs to be transition info and support at college and university.*
- *Crucial to have someone to look after articulating students otherwise lost in the system – Module leader not aware of them ... ASA can raise awareness of the group.*

### **C3.7 If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?**

C3.7.1 Articulation agreements and activities existed prior to the ELRAH initiatives and some key staff thought things would revert back to how they were prior to the ASA taking up the post. Some key staff thought that provision that had been put in place as a result of the ASA post could be integrated into other people's remits. Other key staff, however, thought that without the ongoing support from the ASA (emails and meetings every few months) it would slip from their agendas.

C3.7.2 Key staff commented:

- *The post needs to be longer... you need a focal point, it draws attention to articulating students.*
- *[would be] No pressure re articulation agreements.*
- *Take a lot more time to organize events – and with organising agreements we do not necessarily have the contacts, skills and knowledge.*
- *Great difference to delivering transition workshops would need to employ another person*
- *Direct entrants get lost in the system with no one to focus on them.*
- *Widening Access not able to take care of Direct Entrants in the same way as ASA.*
- *Not sure if good practice would be integrated as you need extra time for that.*
- *The danger is that you make improvements and leave it at that when there is a lot more to do for students.*

## APPENDIX A ELRAH ARTICULATION SUPPORT ADVISER: EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

### A1 Colleges

- A1.1 Has the introduction of the Articulation Support Advisers (ASAs) in partner colleges resulted in/contributed to:
1. An extension of the range of articulation information and support available to college students.
  2. Increased use of articulation support services and information by college students offered by the ASAs.
  3. An improvement to the accuracy, quality and consistency of information/support available to college students when:
    - students are considering next options;
    - students are preparing for transition from college to university;
    - students arrive at their chosen HEI.
  4. Improvements in levels and accuracy of articulation information available to tutors in the colleges.
  5. Improvements to levels of information to tutors/colleges about articulation student success eg:
    - success in gaining a place with advanced standing;
    - achievement of degree level qualifications.
  6. Identification of gaps in articulation routes and the emergence of formalised articulation agreements.
  7. Any increases in applications for degree places with advanced standing from college HN students.
  8. Any increases in the number of offers of degree places to students with advanced standing.

### A2 HEIs

- A2.1 Has the introduction of the Articulation Support Advisers (ASAs) resulted in and/or contributed to:
1. The introduction of new, and customisation of, support available for articulating students at their chosen HEI.
  2. An improvement to the quality and consistency of information/support available to college students when students arrive at their chosen HEI.
  3. Increased use of support services and information offered by the ASAs and other support staff on arrival at university and throughout the degree programme.
  4. Any increases in levels of retention, achievement and progression to honours. *(May not be possible to measure at this stage and to clearly attribute to Adviser)*
  5. Improvements in levels and accuracy of articulation information available to programme leaders in the universities.
  6. Identification of gaps in articulation routes and the emergence of formalised articulation agreements.

### **A3 Regionally**

1. To what extent has the existence of the Articulation Support Adviser Network enabled sharing of ideas, practice and workload that has led to improvements to information and levels of support available to articulating students.
2. Is there evidence of transfer of practice between Institutions and between the two sectors.
3. To what extent is support and advice more consistent regionally irrespective of which university articulating students are applying for (scope: would be restricted to the ELRAH most active HEIs only).
4. Increased confidence in reliability of articulation agreements and arrangements from tutors and students.

## APPENDIX B      ARTICULATION    SUPPORT    ADVISERS:    DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

### B1      Purpose of the discussion

- B1.1    The purpose of the discussion is to gather first hand information on how the position of Articulation Support Adviser has impacted (so far) on enhancing the levels of information, guidance and support available to students articulating to degree study.

### B2      What happens to the data collected?

- B2.1    With your permission we will tape the discussion and/or take notes. Only the CES research team will have access to this information which we will then analyse to identify key themes and issues. The report to ELRAH will contain only grouped anonymised responses and no individual will be named in it.

### B3      The discussion format

- B3.1    The discussion will take approximately 40 - 50 minutes. The questions below will guide the discussion; we will not necessarily cover every question nor ask each one in turn. There are three parts to the discussion:
- Part 1: General discussion about the ASA role
  - Part 2: Focuses on the work of ASAs in college and universities respectively. A specific aspect concerns how the achievements of your post can be demonstrated.
  - Part 3: Focuses on the regional Network

#### Part 1

1. In your current role (s) how have your duties and responsibilities been decided on and prioritised?
2. Is your position located in the right place for you to be most effective?
3. Where do you think you have been most effective and least effective and why?
4. Do you think the right measures are in place to demonstrate the achievements of your position? If yes – please provide some examples, if not please suggest others.
5. To what extent do articulating students have specific needs, or face different issues, compared with other groups such as mature students, students on access courses or direct entrants?

**Part 2:** The questions below are prompts for discussion; you will not need to answer all of them; some may not be relevant to you depending on your specific remit.

#### **The following questions are for ASAs based at colleges:**

- How have you gone about extending the range of information and support available to college students; do you keep records of this?
- Has there been an increase from the time you began in your post until now in the numbers of students using the information and support that you provide? What kind of records do you keep to show if usage has increased?
- How far (to date) has your post has made a difference to the accuracy, quality and consistency of the information available to students when considering next options, preparing for transition from college to university and when they arrive at their chosen HEI? How can you demonstrate this?

- What are the key mechanisms you are using to improve the levels of information to tutors and colleges about students' success in gaining a place with advanced standing, their progress and achievement of degree qualifications? How can you demonstrate that the levels of information have improved?
- How have you gone about identifying gaps in articulation routes and the emergence of formalized articulation agreements; do you keep records of this?
- How do you monitor any increases in applications for degree places with advanced standing from HN students? What information can you access about this?
- How do you monitor any increases in the number of offers to students of degree places with advanced standing? What information can you access about this?

**The following questions are for ASAs based at HEIs:**

- How have you gone about introducing new and customized support available for articulating students at their chosen HEI? How can you demonstrate what you have achieved?
- How far (to date) has your post made a difference to the accuracy, quality and consistency of the information/support available to articulating students when they arrive at their chosen HEI. How can you demonstrate this?
- How are you monitoring the use by articulating students of the information offered by you and other support staff on arrival at university and throughout their degree programme?
- How are you monitoring any increases in levels of retention, achievement and progression to honours? What information can you access about this? How far will you be able to demonstrate the impact of your post on this?
- How are you monitoring improvements in levels and accuracy of articulation information available to programme leaders at universities? What information can you access about this?
- How have you gone about identifying gaps in articulation routes and developing formalized articulation agreements? Who owns the documentation and how is it monitored?

**Part 3: Region Network**

- How has participating in the ASA Network helped you in your post?
- Can you provide a couple of examples where you think there has been the sharing of good practice and then implementing it between your institution and others and between the college and university sectors?
- Do you think that articulating students get consistent support and advice irrespective of the university concerned and how might one tell?
- Do you feel more confident in the reliability of articulation agreements and arrangements for tutors and students?

**B4** Is there anything else you would like to raise that has not been covered in the discussion so far?

## APPENDIX C      LINE MANAGERS: DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

### C1      Purpose of the discussion

C1.1      The purpose of the discussion is to gather first hand information on how the position of Articulation Support Adviser (ASA) has impacted (so far) on enhancing the levels of information, guidance and support available to students articulating to degree study.

### C2      What happens to the data collected?

C2.1      With your permission we will tape the discussion and/or take notes. Only the CES research team will have access to this information which we will then analyse to identify key themes and issues. The report to ELRAH will contain only grouped anonymised responses and no individual will be named in it.

C2.2      The discussion by telephone will take approx 30 minutes.

### C3      Areas for discussion

1. What has improved for your institution and articulating students as a result of having the ASA position? How can you tell?
2. How effective is the ASA role in enhancing the levels of information, guidance and support available to students articulating to degree study with advanced standing from colleges?
3. What systems and measures are in place to monitor the achievements of the ASAs?
4. Do you think the ASA position is located in the right place for it to be most effective? If yes why and if no why not?
5. What do you consider are the key facilitators to the success of the position?
6. Are you aware of any existing or potential operational barriers to the success of the ASA position?
7. Are there particular issues concerning the recruitment, support and retention of articulating students compared with other groups such as mature students, access course students or direct entrants?
8. What is the value of a post specifically devoted to articulation and articulating students?
9. If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?
10. Is there anything else you would like to raise that has not already been discussed?

## APPENDIX D      KEY STAFF: DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

### D1      Purpose of the discussion

D1.1      The purpose of the discussion is to gather first hand information on how the position of Articulation Support Adviser has impacted (so far) on enhancing the levels of information, guidance and support available to students articulating to degree study.

### D2      What happens to the data collected?

D2.1      With your permission we will tape the discussion and/or take notes. Only the CES research team will have access to this information which we will then analyse to identify key themes and issues. The report to ELRAH will contain only grouped anonymised responses and no individual will be named in it.

D2.2      The discussion by telephone will take approx 30 minutes.

1. What has improved for you as a result of having the ASA position? How can you tell?
2. What has improved for your articulating students as a result of having the ASA position? How can you tell?
3. Do you think that the ASA position is located in the right place to be most effective?
4. What kind of support is in place to facilitate the success of the position?
5. Are there any operational barriers to the success of the ASA position?
6. Are there particular issues concerning the recruitment, support and retention of articulating students compared with other groups such as mature students, access course students or direct entrants?
7. What is the value of a post specifically devoted to articulation and articulating students?
8. If this position no longer existed what do you think would happen?
9. Is there anything else you would like to raise that has not been covered in the discussion so far?

**CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SOCIETY  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
ST JOHN'S LAND  
HOLYROOD ROAD  
EDINBURGH EH8 8AQ  
SCOTLAND**

**DOCUMENT No. 1135**

**TEL: 0131 651 6238  
FAX: 0131 651 6239  
Email: [ces@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ces@ed.ac.uk)  
<http://www.ces.ed.ac.uk>**