



Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe

SAILS

Swansea Academy of Inclusivity and Learner Success

Working in partnership with University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD)

## The Student Journey: Keeping on Track

18<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Swansea University, The Great Hall, Bay Campus

### Conference Programme

Time	Event	Location
09:15-9:55	Registration and refreshments	Foyer / Gallery West
10:00-10:15	<b>Welcome</b> from Swansea University Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Martin Stringer	Lecture Theatre GH049
<b>Keynote</b>		
10:15-11:00	<b>Making admissions work for student transition</b> Dan Shaffer, Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA)	Lecture Theatre GH049
11:00-11:15	Break	Gallery West
<b>Parallel workshop sessions</b>		
11:15-12:10	<b>Epigeum online transition courses: 'Skills for Learning, Skills for Life'</b>  Sandy George, Head of the Centre for Academic Success (CAS), Swansea University Michael Draper, Director of SAILS and Associate Professor, College of Law, Swansea University	Seminar Room GH029

11:15-12:10	<b>Life design: A holistic and 'designerly' approach to personal development</b> Lewis Pearson, University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD)	Seminar Room GH014
	<b>Transition support for students on the autistic spectrum: 'Preparation for the journey from home to university'</b> Nigel Mason and Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg, Swansea University Autistic Spectrum Conditions Service	Seminar Room GH001
	<b>Peer Mentoring Schemes: Case studies and best practice from across Swansea University</b> Dave Wilde and Jafar Ojra, School of Management and Gemma Bevan, College of Law and Criminology, Swansea University	Seminar Room GH018
<b>Keynote</b>		
12:15-13:00	<b>Level Up</b> Wil Vincent, Birmingham City University	Lecture Theatre GH049
13:00-13:40	Lunch	Gallery West
<b>Keynotes</b>		
13:45-14:15	<b>Swansea University peer mentoring e-toolkit</b> Michael Draper, Director of SAILS, and Associate Professor, College of Law, Swansea University	Lecture Theatre GH049
14:15-14:45	<b>Life Design</b> Lewis Pearson, University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD)	Lecture Theatre GH049
<b>Panel, plenary and close</b>		
14:45-15:15	<b>Panel and plenary</b> <b>Higher Education Academy retention news</b> Joan O'Mahony	Lecture Theatre GH049
15:15	<b>Conference close</b> Michael Draper	Lecture Theatre GH049

# Keynotes

## **Making admissions work for student transition**

**Speaker: Dan Shaffer, Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA)**

Dan will explore the extent to which a good applicant experience can be used to facilitate a smooth transition into and through a good student experience. Adopting a fair admissions approach to actively identify, support and counter risks to student retention early on will help target co-ordinated student support activities and widen access.

[www.spa.ac.uk](http://www.spa.ac.uk)

### **Dan Shaffer**

Prior to joining SPA in December 2008, Dan held the post of Assistant Registrar at Aston University, responsible for admissions, enrolment, examinations and teaching facilities. Before Aston University, Dan developed his career in admissions across a range of roles at the University of Central England (now BCU), and additionally worked as a part-time visiting lecturer in Psychology alongside his admissions duties. Whilst at both institutions Dan was responsible for developing policy and good practice in higher education recruitment and welfare activities, as well as gaining practical knowledge of the student experience beyond admissions and contributing to national discussions on good practice.

Since joining SPA, Dan has researched and developed a wide range of SPA's good practice guidance, including: applicant experience; complaints and appeals; equality; and planning and managing admissions. His current work includes: raising unconscious and implicit bias awareness; using admissions to bridge the gap for care leavers; and considerations for positive action in admissions. Dan also leads on SPA's co-ordination of the College HE Admissions Community of Practice.

## Level up Mentoring

Speaker: Wil Vincent, Birmingham City University

The statistics about first year dropout rates are well documented, and have been at the heart of Birmingham City University's approach to providing a robust, and joined up approach to transitional support following its participation in the What Works HEA / Paul Hamlyn Foundation programme. In 2016, over 6,000 students received some form of pre-arrival and transitional support through the university's now (almost) institutionalised programme known as Level Up.

This session looks at the development, execution and role of transitional support at Birmingham City University in supporting student development and ultimate retention, and moves beyond the idea of providing an institutional approach to a more three-dimensional approach. Looking at ensuring all students get the same approach and core support, but also offering bespoke support way before students ever enter a HE classroom. It casts a critical eye on the approaches taken to date, and offers the opportunity for institutions to gain valuable insight into what worked well in our university, as well as the opportunities and roadblocks that were encountered along the way.

<http://www.bcu.ac.uk/computing-engineering-and-the-built-environment/welcome-week/level-up-mentoring>

### Wil Vincent

Wil started his research journey in Student Learning Experience through his participation in the *What Works?* Project, whilst a student at Birmingham City University. Following the completion of a Masters degree at BCU, he has moved into working in and researching on student experience, through his role as a Student Success Advisor.

He currently leads the Faculty's pre arrival programme for new students, and supports student development and engagement through university through a number of different roles.

## **Peer Mentoring – Developing a scheme and the HEA toolkit**

**Speaker: Michael Draper, Director of SAILS and Associate Professor, College of Law, Swansea University**

This session provides an overview and key points for the development of a peer mentoring scheme and the work undertaken across Swansea University to develop a peer mentoring toolkit for the Higher Education Academy.

<http://sails.swan.ac.uk/peer-mentoring/>

### **Michael Draper**

Michael Draper is Director of the Swansea Academy for Inclusivity and Learner Success and Chair of the Regulations and Student Cases Board. His research interests currently focus on academic integrity and essay mills.

# **Life Design: A holistic and ‘designerly’ approach to personal development**

**Speaker: Lewis Pearson, University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD)**

It can sometimes feel like your life is a roller-coaster and you're not the one in control of the route you're going down. Life Design provides students with a chance to stop and think, gather some information about themselves and make some conscious decisions about where they want to be in the future.

Life Design supports the professional and personal development of students at UWTSD. Its core principles are grounded in the disciplines of design and positive psychology. This keynote details the principles underpinning this approach, the challenges it presents, the response received from students so far and the future plans for Life Design.

<http://lifedesign.uwtsd.ac.uk/>

## **Lewis Pearson**

Lewis Pearson is an award-winning designer and lead on the Life Design initiative at UWTSD. With a PhD in design communication, he brings a unique perspective to personal development. Lewis is passionate about effective communication, problem solving and improving people's lives, and Life Design is built upon these values.

# Workshops

## ‘Skills for Learning, Skills for Life’ online transition courses

**Facilitators: Sandy George, Head of the Centre for Academic Success (CAS), Swansea University and Michael Draper, Director of SAILS and Associate Professor, College of Law, Swansea University**

The **Skills for Learning, Skills for Life** suite of three online courses is designed to support students as they make the transition into and through higher education. The programme will help students focus on their goals and motivations, while teaching them new skills for succeeding in higher education and enabling them to participate effectively in the academic community.

The programme includes three courses:

1. **What is Higher Education for?** – getting the most out of University Life with links to key resources including personal development and Swansea University employability resources.
2. **Introduction to Student Skills** – key resources to support retention progression and attainment of good degree outcomes.
3. **Academic Integrity** – key Swansea University resources to support effective academic practice in assignments and assessment.

This interactive workshop will present all three courses allowing you to explore the content and discuss how the programme might best support your curriculum and learning outcomes, including the embedding of study skills into modules.

<https://www.epigeum.com/courses/studying/academicsuccess/>

### **Sandy George**

Sandy George is Head of the Centre for Academic Success (CAS) at Swansea University. CAS aims to empower students with the skills and confidence necessary to enable them to reach their maximum potential, working closely with academic colleges and other support services to deliver a full programme of academic skills classes and confidential one-to-one appointments in all academic disciplines.

Sandy’s teaching career spans, primary, secondary and H.E. education and has an interest in supporting students through their transition into university and beyond.

### **Michael Draper**

Michael Draper is Director of the Swansea Academy for Inclusivity and Learner Success and Chair of the Regulations and Student Cases Board.

His research interests currently focus on academic integrity and essay mills.

# Life Design: A holistic and ‘designerly’ approach to personal development

**Facilitator: Lewis Pearson, University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD)**

Life Design supports the professional and personal development of students across UWTSD using engaging and informative workshops. For many students it can feel like their lives are going down a certain path and that they are not in control. These workshops provide students with an opportunity to stop and think about their future, and to recognise that they are in control. Tools are provided that are designed to encourage the students to gather meaningful and useful information about their values, personality, skills and aspirations. The students then use this information to make informed decisions about their futures.

This workshop is a taster of some of the content from one of these exciting Life Design sessions. It will give you the same opportunity as it provides students: a chance to learn interesting insights about yourself and to consider the path your life is on. The workshop will also discuss the merits and challenges associated with this method of personal development, and the plan for reaching more students in the future.

<http://lifedesign.uwtsd.ac.uk/>

## **Lewis Pearson**

Lewis Pearson is an award-winning designer and lead on the Life Design initiative at UWTSD. With a PhD in design communication, he brings a unique perspective to personal development. Lewis is passionate about effective communication, problem solving and improving people’s lives, and Life Design is built upon these values.



# **Transition support for students on the autistic spectrum: 'Preparation for the journey from home to university'**

**Facilitators: Nigel Mason and Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg, Swansea University  
Autistic Spectrum Conditions Service**

The workshop will describe the journey that students make from the comfortable experience of home life to the unknown world of university living. Our focus will be on the students who have an autism spectrum condition and how new experiences in a new environment with those they have never met before can be made easier by careful planning for transition. Within the planning for transition we will look at:

- Preparation that will support transition and the introduction to the university through an 'Orientation Experience to University Life' that is offered to students prior to the beginning of term which includes an overnight stay at Swansea University.
- Information and discussions about independent living

Though the focus of the workshop is in supporting those with an autism spectrum condition much of the discussions will also be helpful and supportive to students who are anxious about the transition to university as well as all students who maybe have an unrealistic expectation of what university life and independent living means.

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/wellbeing-campuslife/autisticspectrumconditionsservice/>

## **Nigel Mason**

Nigel has a background in Mental Health having worked as a Clinical Nurse Specialist for Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Nigel, having worked for over 25 years in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, retired from the NHS in 2014 and now works part time (3 days a week) as an Autism and ADHD Practitioner within Swansea University.

Nigel and his colleague with whom he has a job share were the first autism practitioners in Swansea University and established the 'Orientation Experience to University Life' due to conversations both with families and students about the difficulties often experienced with the transition from home to university.

Nigel delivers training on autism and ADHD around the country to diverse audiences, which include, the Fire Service, the police, social services, education, health and the voluntary sector.

Nigel strives to enable individuals to reach their own potential and believe in their own abilities.

## **Heather Pickard-Hengstenberg**

Heather is currently doing a PhD. on the transitioning needs of university students with autism prior to starting university and during their time at university. Aiming to develop an 'autism transitioning framework' as a best practice guide for educational establishments to use so that they can effectively understand and support individuals with autism.

Heather completed a MSc. in Autism and related conditions in September 2016.

Heather works as an Autism practitioner and Specialist Autism mentor at the Autistic Spectrum Condition Service (ASC), Wellbeing, Swansea University.

Heather lectures on the MSc in Autism and related conditions course, specialising in the elements related to the transitioning needs of individuals with autism.

Heather is an independent neuro-diverse trainer/course designer and has been doing this for 8 years. She works with foster companies (foster carers, social workers, manager, therapist, psychologists) throughout the UK, continuing to date. With particular focus on supporting 'Looked After Children' (LAC) with autism, dyspraxia, and ADHD.

Heather worked as a lecturer for Gower College (2006-2009), supporting immigrants and refugees transitioning into their new culture/society.

Heather strives to ensure that all individuals with autism (and other neuro-diverse conditions) have the opportunity to reach their full potential; academically, emotionally, socially.

# Peer Mentoring Schemes: Case studies and best practice from across Swansea University

Facilitators: Dave Wilde and Jafar Ojra, School of Management and Gemma Bevan, College of Law and Criminology, Swansea University

Proven to be effective in providing inclusive support in student transition, peer mentoring enhances a student's sense of belonging, builds relationships and supports the transition to new ways of learning, teaching and assessment.

Early in 2016, Swansea Academy of Inclusivity and Learner Success was awarded funding by the HEA Wales to develop an [e-toolkit](#) for student to student peer mentoring. This work contributed to the HEA's Transition, Retention and Attainment (TRA) Strategic Enhancement Theme in Wales.

Based on research, the e-toolkit makes recommendations and provides best practice guidance for those wishing to set up a scheme and includes resources for staff and mentors, such as handbooks, templates and agreement forms.

Colleges within Swansea University are encouraged to use this best practice guidance to set up bespoke schemes to meet the needs of their students.

This workshop will explore the different approaches taken to peer mentoring by a variety of Colleges. It will provide opportunities for colleagues to discuss best practice and share ideas from their own institutions. Participants will also get to experience first-hand some of the training delivered to student mentors.

<http://sails.swan.ac.uk/information-for-staff/>

## Dave Wilde

Dave Wilde moved to Swansea in 2014 with his family to take up the Student Engagement Officer role at Swansea University, which involves supporting students in the School of Management with personal and academic issues. Previously, he managed a team of tutors for the Workers Educational Association in London and worked as a lecturer and a personal tutor/advisor in FE.

## Jafar Ojra

Dr Ojra is a senior lecturer in accounting at School of Management at Swansea University; lecturing both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He is also the SAILS lead for school of management. Dr Ojra has huge industry experience working in different multinational companies. His research interest includes management accounting techniques.

**Gemma Bevan**

Gemma Bevan is a Tutor in Criminology and contributes to teaching at undergraduate level. She is a former Participation Officer with Swansea Youth Offending Service, where she led youth crime prevention initiatives. Much of this work centred on peer mentoring and peer education. Gemma is interested in student-led approaches and alternative support strategies that promote personal development in Higher Education.