

“Raising the Profile”

John L. Morton
University of Glamorgan

By their very nature Foundation students are students who would not be in HE at all in the absence of the Foundation Year programme. By the time they graduate they will have delivered both student numbers and income which can be crucial to both Awards and Institutions.

A good Foundation Programme can only work if the staff involved are committed to the concept of Foundation access in the first place. If they are not, Foundation Programmes are merely shuffled off onto the most recently appointed member of staff and students do not benefit from what they really need; lecturing staff who are committed to the student body, and who appreciate the extra problems which level 0 students can face.

Discussions will centre on two examples from the University of Glamorgan, one “bottom-up” and one “top-down”. Both of these illustrate that there can be an institutional reluctance to accept level 0 students as proper members of the student and university community.

The first topic centres around two comments from a lecturer:

- Who looks at these Level 0 courses and makes sure that they fit the students for Level 1 ? Whoever it is they are not doing a good job.
- Who is the person with final responsibility for retention in the University ?

The second discusses the following comment from an External:

- Most students entering 1st year from your Foundation Course had failed. Is the Foundation Course preparing students correctly for the degree courses?

Hopefully this should produce a stimulating discussion. How can these comments be refuted? Should they be?