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Recruitment and retention of students - an integrated and holistic vision of mathematics support.

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Summary: Students' lack of preparedness for the mathematical demands of higher education is affecting a wide range of programmes in universities worldwide. In the UK this has been recognized at the highest levels and provoked several inquiries. The ability to use mathematics in courses as varied as nursing, bio-sciences, and business is an essential skill for success. Any factors that diminish students' ability to perform competently will impact upon large groups. Consequences include failure, loss of self-esteem and financial losses. Conversely, strategies that improve performance lead to improvements in retention, progression and cost-effectiveness. This article details the way a research-led university has faced the challenges and brought mathematics support high up its strategic agenda, leading to a university-wide support strategy. It describes the implementation of this strategy and shares experiences gained for the benefit of policymakers and practitioners who are interested in enhancing their own institution-wide support provision.

Classification: B40 D45

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