**Time to re-think leave-taking for an unusual model of higher education delivery**

*(DO NOT INCLUDE ANY REFERENCE TO AUTHORS OR THEIR AFFILIATIONS IN THIS DOCUMENT)*

Introduction. In a university with an unusual approach to delivery, student leave-taking behaviours and trends associated with traditional models of university education are different. This is partly because leave-taking has been made more available to students due to the flexibility of the unusual approach. But are there other factors at play? The changing role of an unusual model to inspire students to return, and offer flexibility and personal support on return, is key to student retention and success.

Format of the round table. Work-in-Progress

Point for debate/focus of the work-in-progress/topic for discussion. Flexible leave-taking options for students need to be supported by universities with a deeper understanding of students' perspectives and adequate return to study transition support. What are the changing needs of students and how can changes in leave-taking be managed more effectively through an unusual approach? What is required to support diverse cohorts?

Context/background. The options for deferral and leave of absence has changed significantly with the unusual approach employed, providing students with more choice and flexibility to decide when they study. Careful modelling and monitoring needs to be undertaken to respond to the changing trends, including further investigation of students who disengage with their study following one or more leave of absences and are considered as absent without leave (Harvey et al., 2017).

Intended outcome. A recent research study will be used to share key insights. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in a discussion about the findings, share their feedback and insights, and gain a greater understanding of how leave-taking can be impacted by flexible unusual model delivery.