**Draft letter to VCs on student electoral registration**

Dear -----------

I’m writing to seek your support on a pressing issue – to ensure that your students are included on the electoral register for the coming academic year. While always important, the issue of student electoral registration has particular significance this year for two reasons:

       Parliamentary Boundaries are to be redrawn on the basis of the electoral register as at December 2015. If students are not registered, constituencies with universities will shrink and the voice of higher education in Parliament will be reduced.

       It looks increasingly likely that the referendum on UK membership of the EU could be held within the academic year. Students could play a crucial role in the outcome of the referendum and maximising their numbers on the electoral roll is vital.

I know that many universities undertake great work in promoting voter registration, but what has made an overwhelming difference has been integrating electoral registration with student enrolment systems.

This approach was piloted at the University of Sheffield last year, where it led 64% of students to register – considerably more than anywhere else of which I’m aware. Although the actual Sheffield questions (of which I attach a screen shot for information) could be approached differently, the key was to make electoral registration integral and requiring an active decision rather than simply pointing students to the Government portal.

This approach has cross-party support and the active backing of the Cabinet Office, which leads the Government’s work on voter registration. It was also endorsed at the recent meeting of the UUK Board and I understand will be highlighted in their next newsletter to universities.

I therefore hope that you will incorporate a small section requiring students to consider electoral registration as part of your student enrolment procedure for this coming academic year. I realise that there is only a short time to make changes for this year, but understand that it is still possible in most cases.

Yours etc