**Developing Institutional Good Practice in Transitions’ Support through Pre-entry, Induction and Learning Support Activities**

The first phase of the project was completed in May 2019 and a report presented at the July LTSEC (the full report is available on the ‘O’ Drive in the All Staff Documents area, LTSEC section of ‘committee papers’, 2018-19, 2019-07-08).

We would like to draw to your attention in particular to two sections of the report, which course teams might find particularly useful when planning Level 4 Transition activities:-

**1. Key messages from the work streams**

1. The integration of the social and academic elements of university life is key to the integration of students into the Course, School and wider University community.
2. The early communication of key systems and structures upon students by staff is crucial in providing students with a sense of continuity and purpose.
3. Course teams and student groups working collaboratively on academic tasks helps develop a strong course identity and creates invaluable support structures for students.

**Implications**

* Acceptance of the idea that social and academic integration are reliant upon each other in order to be most effective, affords the opportunity for wide-ranging, institutional strategies for UW’s strategic approach to improving its retention.

• The role played by academic staff in course teams in developing this approach is essential. Academic staff can provide students with the necessary academic structures in which this social interaction is facilitated.

• The adoption of collaborative or group approach to learning may require some reorganisation of the learning environment, including changes in pedagogical practice, assessment and student supervision. This will necessarily require School and Institutional support.

1. **Planning for Transition at Course Level**

One of the key outputs from work stream 1 is the creation of a time-line of university wide pre-registration student engagement activities. It pulls together all the various strands of institutional work, which help support the start of the student belonging process to UW. Staff can access this at the following [Link](https://uniworcac-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/e_bessant_worc_ac_uk/EpkOxFHjLoVFrNOGEMq44PQBty-pC04V0Y0HWrioGoSwkw?e=WMZ4P7)

**2.1 Internal and External Resources for Course Teams**

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| **Element of Support** | **UW Tried and Tested** | **External Supporting Ideas/Resources** |
| **SOCIAL**  **INTEGRATION** | **Course Induction initiative (SoE):**  In response to students evaluating feelings of being ‘overwhelmed’ with information and having too much input we altered the programme to include more social spaces and make fewer demands of students in respect of task requirements during induction week, whilst remaining visible and offering opportunities for participation of varying kinds.  Further details can be accessed here: [link](https://uniworcac-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/e_bessant_worc_ac_uk/Eq60VhtAlVtMpIpJfe6auboBFNqgeuckET_U_q7XCLPGIQ?e=C6oKTF) | This Birmingham City University initiative focuses on the social and pastoral elements of the first year experience. The approach weaves both SU and academic inputs through the transition into and through the first year experience:  <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/srs_birmingham_city_vs2_0.pdf> |
| **Course ‘Summer School’ (SoE):** Development of a 2 day programme to better meet the needs of students. Programme included following content:   * Expectations of students and staff * Wellbeing / time management * Imposter syndrome (you deserve to be here) * Intro to Blackboard, SOLE and other technology * Intro to Harvard Referencing * Using the library and library services – delivered by academic librarian * Critical reading – how to read effectively, take notes * Academic writing – optional writing practice task and feedback opportunity   Further details can be accessed here: [link](https://uniworcac-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/e_bessant_worc_ac_uk/Eq60VhtAlVtMpIpJfe6auboBFNqgeuckET_U_q7XCLPGIQ?e=C6oKTF) |  |
| **Element of Support** | **UW Tried and Tested** | **Supporting/Ideas Resources** |
| **ORIENTATION** |  | Bucks New University‘Project Right Fit’ looks to engage students pre-enrolment, it explores what information students really need: <http://www.studentengagement.ac.uk/newsite/index.php/reactprojects/bucks-new-university/project-rightfit> |
|  | University of Brighton – ‘Hit the Ground Running’ a project to support the initial transition to HE: <http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/elearningteam/2017/01/16/case-study-pre-entry-module-hit-the-ground-running/> |
|  | Birmingham City University (BCU)run ‘Level up’ to help students make the transition into HE:  <https://www.bcu.ac.uk/media/applying-to-us/level-up> |

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| **Element of Support** | **UW Tried and Tested** | **Supporting Ideas/ Resources** |
| **PREPARATION FOR**  **LEARNING** | Webpages to help Students understand the academic skills they will need at university:  <https://library.worc.ac.uk/guides/preparing-for-university> |  |
| **Course initiative (SoE):** Feedback initiative  Focused on revised practice for the release of grades in order to create a more supportive an environment for our students. Initiative also increased student engagement and satisfaction with the assignment feedback process.  Further details can be accessed here: [link](https://uniworcac-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/e_bessant_worc_ac_uk/Eq60VhtAlVtMpIpJfe6auboBFNqgeuckET_U_q7XCLPGIQ?e=C6oKTF) |  |
| **Module initiative (SoSES):**  This initiative was designed to increase student attendance and, in so doing, to increase engagement and achievement.  Further details can be accessed here: [link](https://uniworcac-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/e_bessant_worc_ac_uk/Eq60VhtAlVtMpIpJfe6auboBFNqgeuckET_U_q7XCLPGIQ?e=C6oKTF) |  |
| **Module Initiative (SoE):**  This initiative had 3 aims:   1. To encourage engagement with weekly set reading 2. To enable all students to engage at the most appropriate level for them. 3. To model effective teaching and learning and gauge student understanding in order to adapt planning   Further details can be accessed here: [link](https://uniworcac-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/e_bessant_worc_ac_uk/Eq60VhtAlVtMpIpJfe6auboBFNqgeuckET_U_q7XCLPGIQ?e=C6oKTF) |  |
|  | **Module and/or Course initiative (SoE)**  This initiative sought to increase student engagement with resource lists and addresses the the need to for students to read more widely in their preparation for summative assignments.  Further details can be accessed here: [link](https://uniworcac-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/e_bessant_worc_ac_uk/Eq60VhtAlVtMpIpJfe6auboBFNqgeuckET_U_q7XCLPGIQ?e=C6oKTF) |  |

*NB We are conscious that there are likely to be many more internal examples of excellent transition practice and we urge Schools to encourage staff to document their initiatives so that this column can significantly grow.*

**2.2 Possible Activities for Course Teams to consider when planning for the Student Transition Experience**

**Transition Phase 1: Student Preparedness, Welcome and Entry**

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| **Element of Support** | **Activities** |
| **Social Integration** | Send welcome email from CL and course team |
| Set up social media platform to open up informal communication between students and staff |
| Create peer to peer buddy/mentor scheme with 2nd/3rd year students |

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| **Element of Support** | **Activities** |
| **Orientation** | Send course specific information and details about what students can expect on arrival |
| Alert students to any events for specific groups of students |
| Communicate your expectations re: attendance and engagement |
| Do you have any podcasts/videos you could send so that students can see their new surroundings in advance |
| Let students know in advance, If possible, who their PAT is/ how they can make contact with him/her |
| Alert students to any careers/employability opportunities related to your subject area |

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| **Element of Support** | **Activities** |
| **Preparation for Learning** | What are the most useful, pre-arrival, learning tasks you might you set? |
| Communicate your principles and strategy for learning, teaching and assessment |
| What are the skills students would find most useful to practice to prepare them for first weeks of classes? |
| Is there a single key text (rather than a reading list) you would want students to read before start of semester 1 |

**Transition Phase 2: Induction and belonging within an Inclusive Learning Community**

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| **Element of Support** | **Activities** |
| **Social Integration** | Set up early face to face meeting with course team – organised activities tend to be less intimidating than ‘meet and greet’, networking events |
| Course based group activity which introduces students to the subject and starts course bonding process |
| Welcome week is ideal time to launch peer mentoring /buddy groups |
| Highlight opportunities that exist across University for students to meet new people |
| Signpost services for people who will perhaps take longer to develop relationships and struggle to feel they ‘belong’ |

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| **Element of Support** | **Activities** |
| **Orientation** | Create a programme of information, which is time sensitive, so students only receive information on a ‘need to know’ basis. 2nd and 3rd year could identify the information a new student needs, the best way to communicate it and access it etc. |
| Create an orientation video, which new students can review on their own, at a later date (this is something perhaps 2nd and 3rd year students could help create? |
| Limit number of ‘passive’ presentations to a minimum |
| Communicate requirements for specific groups of students (international |
| Introduce Students to their PATs |
| Campus/City tour – led by 2nd/3rd year students with course team in attendance – ideal opportunity to reinforce message about how they stay safe, look after each other, ensure they always stay in groups when returning from a night out |

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| **Element of Support** | **Activities** |
| **Preparation for Learning** | Induct students to learning in your subject |
| Introduce students to the new vocabulary they need to know and understand e.g. formative assessment; its meaning, its value and its relationship to summative assessment |
| Offer guidance about how students can make best use of ‘out of class’ time |
| Talk to students about the University’s attendance policy, not just the importance of regular attendance/engagement, but about early communication with us (e.g. PAT, CL, ML, peer mentor/buddy) about reason for absence etc. or any other reasons which are affecting progress on the course |
| Introduce students to the learning support you offer and which is supplemented elsewhere in the University |

## **Transition Phase 3: Support for Student Learning and Progression**

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| **Element of Support** | **Activities** |
| **Academic and Social integration** | Use the Library Services Learner Journey toolkit to embed study skills into your curriculum: <https://library.worc.ac.uk/services/academic-staff-support/library-teaching>.  Speak to your Academic Liaison Librarian to develop appropriate sessions: <https://library.worc.ac.uk/help/contact> |