



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Integrating students into the academic community: Examples of Good Practice

LeedsforLife

Enhancing the Transition in Year 1

Integrating students into the academic community: Examples of good practice

Introduction

“Leeds for Life will enable students to work together with staff to understand what makes them distinctive as a Leeds graduate.”

www.leeds.ac.uk/leedsforlife/index.htm

One of the aims of Leeds for Life is to ease the transition from school or college into Year 1 at the University as the crucial first step in maximising the benefit of studying at Leeds.

This collection of good practice is not intended to be definitive or in any way prescriptive. It is simply a collection of examples which colleagues from around the University have offered to us of what works well for their students. The examples have been put together quickly and, where possible, a standard format has been applied.

We hope the collection will give new ideas to Schools looking to refresh their current induction programme and that it will inspire everyone to at least consider something different.

We welcome feedback on the ideas presented here and in particular on new ideas you have tried as a result of reading this booklet. We also invite any new contributions to help build up our database of good practice which will, in 08/09, be provided online.

How to use this collection

Page 4 provides a Case Study Matrix showing which examples of good practice relate to which of the six aspects of the induction process we have identified. If there are particular aspects of the induction process you would like to target, you can easily see which examples are most appropriate.

Feedback

Please send any comments or new examples of good practice to David Gardner in the Learning and Teaching Support Office: d.gardner@leeds.ac.uk

Appendices

Helping staff to induct students

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Jonathan C Darling, Quen O Tang, Aarti Patel, Jennifer C MacCarthy and Katharine L Warburton, University of Leeds School of Medicine (THE CLINICAL TEACHER 2006: 3: 210 – 214. Copyright Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006)

Induction checklists

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Acknowledgments

This booklet has been prepared by the 'Enhancing the Transition in Year 1' working group of the Leeds for Life Project:

Andrea Jackson, Earth and Environment (Chair); Julia Braham, Skills Centre; Clara Davies, SDDU; David Gardner, LTSO; Kevin Linch, History; Susan Nash, LUU; Abi Matthewman, Faculty of Arts; Gavin Reid, Chemistry.

The Group would like to thank all those named in this booklet who have been brave enough to put their heads above the parapet and contribute to this first attempt at gathering good practice in this very important area.

Student induction: case study matrix

	Case study	Communication	Orientation	Building an academic / professional community	Extended induction	Curriculum integration	Academic support
1	Sixth form conference (Biological Sciences)						
2	Extended induction programme (Healthcare)						
3	Making a success of your time at Leeds: workshop (POLIS)						
4	Study skills website (Faculty of Arts)						
5	Social events in induction – peer mentoring & personal tutoring (Faculty of Arts)						
6	Postgraduate study assistant scheme (Geography)						
7	Level 1 residential field trip (Geography)						
8	Planting trees (Geography)						
9	Treasure hunt (Chemistry)						
10	Homework club (Chemistry)						
11	First-year poster session (Chemistry)						
12	ChemSoc activities (Chemistry)						
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14	History Society first year social (History)						
15	Induction text messages (History)						
16	School student newsletter (Law)						
17	Induction week quiz (Earth & Environment)						
18	Field-day Friday (Earth & Environment)						
19	Extended induction meeting (Earth & Environment)						
20	Tuition support scheme (Earth & Environment)						

	Case Study	Communication	Orientation	Building an academic / professional community	Extended induction	Curriculum integration	Academic support
21	Skills week (Earth & Environment)						
22	Bonding and electronic project (Electronic & Electrical Engineering)						
23	Peer mentoring (Biomedical Sciences)						
24	Fish & chips, and rounders for new students, peer mentors and staff (Biomedical Sciences)						
25	Speed meetings (Biomedical Sciences)						
26	Personal tutorials plus lunch (Biomedical Sciences)						
27	Programme meetings with Programme Managers (Biomedical Sciences)						
28	Academic and career development module (Business School)						
29	Scholar peer information network (SPIN) (Access & Community Engagement)						
30	Extended induction for Engineers (Civil Engineering)						
31	Writing skills at University (Business School)						
32	Extended induction (School of Humanities)						
33	Writing skills workshops (Faculty of Arts)						

Student induction: Examples of good practice

1 Sixth form conference (Biological Sciences)

What is it intending to achieve?

Provides an opportunity for Y12 students to sample life as a Biological Sciences undergraduate.

How does it work?

Students attend the two-day residential conference. They attend lectures, practical classes, have campus tours and spend time with current undergraduates. We also talk to them about the admissions process and settling in to the University.

How do you know if it is successful?

We have had lots of informal feedback from past attendees saying that it really helped them to consider which course was right for them, what they should look for in a university and in helping them feel less scared by the move to HE.

Do you have any resources to support it that you could share?

Would be happy to talk to others planning such a venture.

www.fbs.leeds.ac.uk/admissions/conference/index.htm

Contact: Jane Device j.device@leeds.ac.uk

3 Making a success of your time at Leeds: workshop (POLIS)

What is it intending to achieve?

Helping first-year students make friends and get to know each other to form an academic community. Helps students gain a better understanding of how studying at university differs from their previous learning experiences, what it takes to be a successful POLIS student and the support facilities, available to them.

How does it work?

A one-hour workshop delivered in week two to all first-year undergraduates. The session is delivered by POLIS academic staff and Skills Centre staff. The workshop involves interactive activities and generates as much small-group discussion as is possible in a lecture theatre. It dovetails with other general induction activities

How do you know if it is successful?

Student feedback on induction asks for specific feedback on this workshop – it has been well evaluated for both the previous two years of delivery

Do you have any resources to support it that you could share?

Workshop PowerPoint available on request.

Susan Paragreen, [POLIS s.a.paragreen@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.paragreen@leeds.ac.uk)

Julia Braham, Skills Centre j.braham@leeds.ac.uk

Victoria Honeyman, POLIS v.c.honeyman@leeds.ac.uk

2 Extended induction programme (Healthcare)

Induction programme for new students

From September 2008 this will be an extended induction programme

What is it intending to achieve?

Introduce students to key professional issues relevant to their studies. The extended induction is so that students are not overloaded and receive timely information.

How does it work?

For example, six weeks after commencing their studies and immediately before they start clinical practice, clinical liaison staff speak to them about expectations, conduct etc.

How do you know if it is successful?

Opportunity to provide feedback through clinical placement documentation and discussion with Clinical Liaison Staff.

Contact: Monica Murphy m.m.murphy@leeds.ac.uk

4 Study skills website (Faculty of Arts)

What is it intending to achieve?

Provides additional support for students in the Faculty, including Study Skills and information about learning & teaching (for example, what are tutorials/lectures and how to prepare for them).

How does it work?

Student self-access.

How do you know if it is successful?

Student and staff feedback.

www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/studyskills

Contact: Tess Hornsby t.r.hornsby-smith@leeds.ac.uk

5 Social events in induction – peer mentoring & personal tutoring (Faculty of Arts)

In 2007/8 there were efforts in various departments in the Faculty to combine the introductory events of the peer-mentoring scheme both with initial meetings with personal tutors and also social events to which members of staff were invited.

Contact: Tess Hornsby t.r.hornsby-smith@leeds.ac.uk

7 Level 1 residential field trip (Geography)

What is it intending to achieve?

An opportunity for new students to get to know the staff and their peers, with a gentle introduction to fieldwork

How does it work?

All first-year students spend a weekend away either at the east coast or York, in about week 5 of semester one. Costs fully covered by the Department.

How do you know if it is successful?

Excellent feedback from the first years after it has run for the first time.

Do you have any resources to support it that you could share?

Happy to share the overall format of the weekend, but some activities are of course specific to geographers.

Contact: k.arrell@leeds.ac.uk

6 Postgraduate study assistant scheme (Geography)

What is it intending to achieve?

Provide learning support for geographical concepts, issues and skills.

How does it work?

Simple online applications (self-referrals) are dealt with by a coordinator who matches the student with an appropriate research postgraduate student according to the problem or issue. The two then meet one-to-one to discuss the problem/issue.

How do you know if it is successful?

Not used as widely as it could be, but those who have used it have found it very helpful.

Do you have any resources to support it that you could share?

Materials only really appropriate for Geographers, but the idea could be repeated elsewhere.

www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/studentinfo/pgstudyscheme.html

Contact: geo-help@leeds.ac.uk

8 Planting trees (Geography)

The School of Geography is committed to carbon neutrality. We have a long term policy to reduce our carbon footprint and an immediate policy to offset where we can't reduce. As part of this policy, staff and students spend a weekend each year planting trees with Tree Responsibility, a local reforestation organisation. We regard it as an important part of our commitment, both on a local and global scale, and an opportunity for members of the School to engage with a practical aspect of their academic training.

www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/images/events/other/trees2007/index.html

Contact: Louise Waite l.waite@leeds.ac.uk

9 Treasure hunt (Chemistry)

Introduced to encourage interaction amongst staff and students and to help students find their way around the Campus before the commencement of their studies. The students were randomly divided into groups and given set places and information to collect from round the campus. There was a small prize for the winning team. Despite it being a voluntary event, there was almost a full turnout and, by the end, students were obviously interacting very well within their groups.

Followed up by: induction meeting

An informal social gathering was arranged as part of the first year induction meeting to encourage interaction between staff and students. This went well as it consolidated the links created on the Treasure Hunt and encouraged further interaction between different groups.

Contact: Barbara Radford b.radford@leeds.ac.uk

10 Homework club (Chemistry)

A voluntary “homework club” for first-year students was set up to take place for between one and two hours a week throughout the session to help with the transition from school to university. Students are informed by email and by lecture announcement. The sessions are based on the subject of the following week’s tutorials and are run by academic members of staff with some postgraduate assistance. Attendance tends to vary depending on the difficulty of the material, but feedback from the students indicates that they are grateful for the opportunity to raise any problems they have understanding the subject matter.

Contact: Dr Gavin Reid g.d.reid@leeds.ac.uk

11 First-year poster session (Chemistry)

Students work in their personal tutorial groups on a project of their choice, asking “what can chemistry do for me and others; emphasising enterprise in the use of that chemistry?”

This encourages research and teamwork skills.

The poster presentation day (towards the end of semester 2) brings staff and students together as an academic community.

Contact: Dr Terry Kee t.p.kee@leeds.ac.uk

12 ChemSoc activities (Chemistry)

Provides an opportunity for students in different year groups to socialise. Staff are invited to some of the events e.g. the ChemSoc Ball at the end of the year. Students commonly mention these activities to staff to say how much they enjoy them.

Contact: Alison Stewart (President) chm5a3s@leeds.ac.uk

13 Integrating study skills into a module (History)

What is it intending to achieve?

Equip students with the skills for UG-level History study.

How does it work?

A module (HIST1050 / HIST1817) that teaches skills through practical experience of closely reading a historical monograph tied with skills sessions in the class and dedicated library classes (run by Library staff), an Induction to Assessment lecture and assessment exercises on the grade criteria. The module is compulsory for all History and JH with History students. It includes assessments designed to test their skills and intellectual development.

How do you know if it is successful?

Student module evaluation.

Basic details at <http://webprod1.leeds.ac.uk/banner/dynmodules.asp?Y=200708&M=HIST-1050> and <http://webprod1.leeds.ac.uk/banner/dynmodules.asp?Y=200708&M=HIST-1817>

Contact: Dr SJD Green s.j.d.green@leeds.ac.uk

14 History Society first year social (History)

What is it intending to achieve?

Encourage students to meet other students.

How does it work?

In conjunction with the History Society, the School organises a First Year social towards the end of Induction week. The social is held directly after a group personal tutor meeting / meeting with peer mentors; a free drink is provided by the School. The History Society advertises their activities and meets students. Staff and peer mentors are encouraged to attend.

How do you know if it is successful?

Evaluation of induction.

Contact: Dr Kevin Linch k.b.linch@leeds.ac.uk

15 Induction text messages (History)

What is it intending to achieve?

Better communication of induction events to students in Induction Week.

How does it work?

Students are sent text reminders of important events during Induction Week to ensure that they know where they should be. At this stage, most won't be fully aware of University e-mail or the Portal.

How do you know if it is successful?

Evaluation of induction.

Do you have any resources to support it that you could share?

It uses the Texttools system. www.txttools.co.uk/loginPage.do

Contact: Dr Katherine Arrell k.arrell@leeds.ac.uk

16 School student newsletter (Law)

The School of Law student magazine Spotlight focuses on student experience. Students are encouraged to share their stories, successes and advice with others, thus promoting a sense of community within the School.

See one issue: <http://www.law.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/news/spotlight-summer-2011.pdf>

Contact: Marika Hildebrandova m.hildebrandova@leeds.ac.uk



17 Induction week quiz (Earth & Environment)

What is it intending to achieve?

Encourage students to meet other students, staff and peer mentors. Build sense of community.

How does it work?

Staff members run a quiz for new students in the middle of Induction Week (this ran in the SCR in 2007 and in the Refectory in 2005 and 2006). There are refreshments and prizes for the winning team. Personal tutors are encouraged to attend and meet their tutees.

How do you know if it is successful?

Very good uptake and positive feedback from students.

**Contact: Esther Burton esther@env.leeds.ac.uk or
Julie Philpott julie@env.leeds.ac.uk**

18 Field-day friday (Earth & Environment)

What is it intending to achieve?

Encourage students to meet other students, staff and peer mentors during Induction week. Build sense of community.

How does it work?

All students, staff and peer mentors are invited and encouraged to attend a day out to Malham Cove for a walk in the morning followed by lunch in Malham village. Coaches arrive at Parkinson Steps and Bodington Hall at 8.30am to collect students on the Friday of Induction Week. They arrive back at the University around 3.30pm. Students only have to pay for lunch.

How do you know if it is successful?

Very good uptake by students (five coach loads last year) and staff. Feedback from students suggest this is a good way for them to engage in conversation with staff from the School.

**Contact: Esther Burton esther@env.leeds.ac.uk or
Julie Philpott julie@env.leeds.ac.uk**

19 Extended induction meeting (Earth & Environment)

What is it intending to achieve?

Remind students of important information they may have forgotten, or not been able to digest in Induction Week. It also provides the opportunity to give students further important information.

How does it work?

A meeting with all students in week 4 of semester 1.

How do you know if it is successful?

Positive feedback from students who attend.

**Contact: Esther Burton esther@env.leeds.ac.uk or
Julie Philpott julie@env.leeds.ac.uk**

20 Tuition support scheme (Earth & Environment)

What is it intending to achieve?

Additional academic support for students struggling with particular modules.

How does it work?

Students are provided with a member of staff they can contact if they are struggling with a particular module. This member of staff then finds a tutor (often a postgrad) who can meet one to one (or meet a group of students) to provide some additional assistance. The scheme is also linked to attendance monitoring of compulsory modules such that if a student starts not attending they are contacted to ascertain whether this is a result of difficulty with the work and an offer of assistance through the scheme is made.

How do you know if it is successful?

Increased attendance of students who would have previously not been attending due to difficulty with module.

**Contact: Esther Burton esther@env.leeds.ac.uk or
Julie Philpott julie@env.leeds.ac.uk**

21 Skills week (Earth & Environment)

What is it intending to achieve?

Provide the opportunity for students to practice skills they have already learnt as part of their programme, and obtain new skills that will assist them in future years.

How does it work?

Week 6 of semester 1 is a dedicated week of skills based workshops and fieldwork activities for Level 1 students. This involved staff from the Skills Centre, the Library, the Centre for Ethics and Safety Services, as well as staff from the School. Second- and third-year students were also used to assist with several sessions.

How do you know if it is successful?

We are hoping to see improved essay / report writing.

Contact: Andrea Jackson andrea@env.leeds.ac.uk

22 Bonding and electronic project (Electronic & Electrical Engineering)

What is it intending to achieve?

To introduce new Level One students to one another and give them an early flavour of building something in electronics.

How does it work?

During the first afternoon of Induction Week, students have lunch with their personal tutor and then break in to three groups for activities. These three groups rotate through two one-hour sessions in the labs building a simple project and an one-hour session (competitive for chocolates) learning each others' names and the location of offices and lecture theatres in the School.

How do you know if it is successful?

Through the improved cohesion in recent years since we have run this, the reduced drop-out rate and through feedback from interviewing students.

Contact: Andy Kemp eenahk@leeds.ac.uk

23 Peer mentoring (Biomedical Sciences)

What is it intending to achieve?

Encouraging contact between students before arrival – more satisfactory for the students, giving a familiar point of contact before the daunting first day.

How does it work?

Telephone number are exchanged by consent through our letters.

How do you know if its successful?

Students have given positive feedback, as opposed to more negative last year when Univ asked us not to do it before arrival.

Contact: Sian Crook s.e.crook@leeds.ac.uk

24 Fish & chips and rounders for new students, peer mentors and staff (Biomedical Sciences)

What is it intending to achieve?

New students feel more at ease with staff having peer mentors there too.

How does it work?

F&C delivered and rounders equipment borrowed. Staff serve food and all play rounders.

How do you know if it is successful?

Positive feedback. Wish we could supply the students' bus fares to get there and back.

Contact: Sian Crook s.e.crook@leeds.ac.uk

25 Speed meetings (Biomedical Sciences)

What is it intending to achieve?

A good ice breaker between students.

How does it work?

Students meet each other for a set time, exchange information about themselves and progress around the room.

How do you know if it is successful?

Positive feedback.

Contact: Sian Crook s.e.crook@leeds.ac.uk

26 Personal tutorials plus lunch (Biomedical Sciences)

What is it intending to achieve?

Getting to know tutors and students in same tutorial group.

How does it work?

Group meetings in individual rooms followed by a lunch for all students and tutors in one room.

How do you know if it is successful?

Positive feedback. Lunch really appreciated as so many students find first week hard on the catering front.

Contact: Sian Crook s.e.crook@leeds.ac.uk

27 Programme meetings with programme managers (Biomedical Sciences)

What is it intending to achieve?

Personal contact between students and programme manager for getting to know each other and imparting vital information.

How does it work?

Separate meetings to discuss programme-specific information and answer questions in smaller group. Academic advice.

How do you know if it is successful?

Students have commented that they have been very useful, and they like being part of a smaller group as well part of a very large cohort.

Contact: Sian Crook s.e.crook@leeds.ac.uk



28 Academic and career-development module (Business School)

What is it intending to achieve?

This module (LUBS1960) is used to help build an academic community in LUBS – it mixes students between programmes and encourages different disciplines to work together. Students find its practical skills based perspective engaging. The learning objects listed below indicate the breadth of its aims, which underpin students' academic and career development – particularly whilst in their first year at university.

Learning objectives

On completion of this module, students should have:

- used a range of personal development planning techniques: self-auditing and self-reflection, action planning, monitoring progress, gathering and responding to feedback, reviewing and critical summative reflection;
- developed a greater self awareness;
- developed a capacity for academic and reflective writing;
- developed a CV;
- researched the range of opportunities available to them during the course of their university career for personal and academic skills development;
- developed their own Personal Development Planning process for use in years 2 & 3; and
- worked in teams to develop ideas which support the above learning outcomes

How does it work?

The module is compulsory for BA Accounting, BA Accounting and Finance, BA Business Economics, BA Economics, BA Economics with Transport Studies, BA Human Resource Management, BA Management with Transport Studies, BA Management and Law and BSc Business and Financial Economics and must be passed to enable progression to Level 2. Workshops: 11 x 2 hour (beginning in week 2 of semester 1).

First-year cohort divided in to three groups – each group has between 60 - 80 students

Syllabus covered:

- Survival strategies for university life; introduction to academic and transferable skills at university level; starting a personal log;
- Skills development: individual skills audit and strategies for personal skills development;
- Developing Self-Awareness: using and extending your personal learning styles and developing team skills for group assignments;
- Skills for employability: introducing the graduate labour market, employer priorities when recruiting graduates and feedback on informal assessment of personal log;
- CV writing skills and techniques and targeting applications (for part-time/vacation placements);
- Creating a 2nd and 3rd year Personal Development Plan: introduction to the task of creating a PDP process and documentation for use in Levels 2 and 3;
- Effective Communication: input on presentations; group presentations; and
- Action planning, reviewing the learning and planning a final report

How do you know if it is successful?

- Module review form.
- Student PDP reflections on completion of module provide anecdotal evidence.
- External examiner comments: "Some of the modules, such as LUBS1960 Academic & Career Development, excel due to their innovative syllabus."

Do you have any resources to support it that you could share?

Materials for this module, are available on Nathan Bodington at http://vle.leeds.ac.uk/site/nbodington/lubs/lubs_ug/ug_mods/lubs1960/

**Contacts: Julia Clarke jc@lubs.leeds.ac.uk - Caroline Ramage, Careers Centre c.s.a.ramage@leeds.ac.uk
Clair Souter, Careers Centre c.l.souter@leeds.ac.uk - Julia Braham, Skills Centre j.braham@leeds.ac.uk**

29 Scholar peer information network (SPIN) (Access & Community Engagement)

What is it intending to achieve?

SPIN has two separate aims. The first is to ease the transition to a university environment for new first-year students by providing social contacts from across the University and practical information sessions (e.g. budgeting skills or the location of useful services on campus). The second is to develop the CVs of those who offer to act as group leaders by providing voluntary experience as well as expanding their employability skills.

How does it work?

SPIN is for scholarship winners at the University of Leeds. It works by recruiting existing scholars and training them to provide information sessions to an assigned group of new first-year scholars. When first years have their place and scholarship confirmed, they are invited to join SPIN. Small groups with two or three existing scholars ('group leaders') and up to eight new scholar participants ('group members') are formed. Group leaders send a welcome email before the start of term and group members are encouraged to respond and introduce themselves to everyone else. Scholarships staff organise a face-to-face meeting for the groups in week 1. Groups are then expected to remain in email contact and to arrange at least three further face-to-face meetings with their groups at which they should impart useful information. Examples of such sessions provided by group leaders include volunteering opportunities at the University, a tour of 'hidden' computer clusters on campus, and a finance and budgeting session.

How do you know if it is successful?

SPIN is evaluated using an online questionnaire for group members to complete in their own time and a paper-based questionnaire for group leaders to complete at a debriefing session.

Success is measured in several ways

- i. Ascertaining the number of group members successfully making the transition to university by remaining on course
- ii. Feedback from group leaders identifying benefits such as employability skills which participation in SPIN has helped them to develop.

Contact: Helen Sykes h.v.sykes@adm.leeds.ac.uk



30 Extended induction for engineers (Civil Engineering)

Background

Induction is spread over the whole of Semester 1. A 30-credit module uses the Integrated Design Project (a civil engineering project) as a vehicle for developing personal and professional skills.

Philosophy

- Induction information “drip fed” over Semester 1 with ongoing reminders of key points (students don’t understand the implications of a lot of it until it matters to them)
- Emphasis on team working (the civil engineering profession requires a lot team work)
- Transition to independent learning – the importance of time and task management linked to civil engineering project management
- Emphasis on being “professional”
- The tutorial system is used to support the delivery of the skills.

Induction Week

- Monday pm – students welcomed, given details of activities for Induction Week and meet personal tutors
- Tuesday OR Wednesday – Students participate in group activities based on tutor groups: structures game and treasure hunt around the city (linked to architecture and civil engineering)
- Thursday – site visit (aimed at grabbing students’ interest in their chosen degree subject: Ziff building in Sep 07, Sep 08 likely to be Humber Bridge).
- Friday – briefing session to prepare students for the following week when lectures start.
- Following week – social for all Level 1 students and staff (pie and peas plus “pub quiz” in staff centre).

Induction information

This information is usually delivered in the personal development slot and linked to project work. It includes:

- Introduction to Student Support services
- Mechanism for dealing with coursework, assessment and feedback procedures. Assessment rubrics
- Library and online searching. Referencing. Plagiarism
- Email etiquette. Use of the Portal
- Module confirmation. Examination procedures, rules for progression, re-sits. Examination preparation including how to find past papers and worked examples
- Actions in case of illness or other problems. Mitigating circumstances procedures.
- Sources of funding – bursaries.

Team working

- Two team days in Semester 1. Presentation by local company (Arups) who describe projects and talk about team dynamics (often bring Leeds graduates to talk). Team activities in tutor groups mixed in with theory and importance of learning skills (based on material from the Skills Centre). At TD1 they write a team contract
- Students encouraged to chair and note-take for a meeting of their group
- Students also participate in one week residential course at CITB in Feb/March for surveying)
- Students are encouraged to review and reflect on team work around March: some decide to peer mark for team activities. Tutors seek feedback from students.

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30 Extended induction for engineers (Civil Engineering)

Transition to independent learning and personal development

- Emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own learning – a bit of theory on the learning cycle
- Writing exercise on research topic (linked to School's research) – formative. Feedback provides input on referencing, report writing styles, researching material, and technical presentation
- Skills development for drawing and IT (all linked to their project).
- Communication skills through oral presentations (individual but within their team). They have one practice oral and one that is assessed. PG demonstrators give immediate feedback at the end of each group presentation
- Practical skills work based on labs and linked to core modules
- Various problem sheets for the more mathematical subjects with examples classes
- Students complete time logs (October and March) and are encouraged to look for "wasted time"
- Design project aims to develop "thinking outside the box" where there is no "right" answer

Professional development

- External speakers used to inspire students to the subject
- IStructE and ICE give talks about professional bodies
- Students encouraged to find summer placements – good links with employers plus Careers Fair (October) facilitate this
- Students complete a Professional Skills folder: evidence of their skills (including those gained beyond the University) plus reflective review of their personal progress and development of their team roles. First submission formative, second submission assessed

Tutorial system

- Tutorials take place weekly throughout Level 1
- Discussions in tutorials are often linked to the project work or skills development e.g. preparation for oral presentation
- Year tutor emails tutors each week with suggestions of what might be discussed in tutorials
- Tutors make sure students have an opportunity for one-to-one sessions
- Year tutor also co-ordinates information on absentees, mitigating information, progression problems: early intervention tries to address issues quickly, whether personal or academic. All appropriate staff within the School may get involved. Students often referred to one of the University support services
- All staff aim for an "open door" policy with students at all levels and all respond quickly to email when not available in person
- There is an on-going debate about the academic role within our tutorial system

Additional information

Civil Engineering now has year tutors (Rosemary Creasey also at Level 2 and Louise Fletcher at Level 3). With large year groups this enables some vertical co-ordination (e.g. students with on-going problems) as well as co-ordination within years.

Contact: Rosemary Creasey r.creasey@leeds.ac.uk



31 Writing skills at university (Business School)

What is it intending to achieve?

This initiative is designed to help students understand what is required to write successfully at undergraduate level. Many LUBS students don't have to complete a long piece of writing until they sit first semester exams, so the sessions included in this activity introduce effective essay writing skills at different stages over Semester 1.

In previous years the Skills Centre and Language Centre ran a series of six workshops over Semester 1 about the transition to UK HE for international students. It was decided to replace these workshops with academic skills support offered across the whole of the first year, rather than target it at international students.

How does it work?

All students attend an extended induction lecture during their first week delivered by John March (LUBS) and Joanne Shiel (Language Centre). Students are helped and encouraged to better understand the academic writing skills expected from them at undergraduate level, are introduced to basic internet research and a set short assignment (1,000 words) about company mission statements. This assignment is generic and doesn't expect any previous business-related knowledge. The work is then marked (by additional paid members of staff) and returned to students in a feedback session two weeks later. At the feedback session John March (LUBS) and Julia Braham (Skills Centre) identify key points noticed during marking, areas for improvement and resources to support their writing skills. Most first-year students take a core module on Academic and Career Development (LUBS1960) delivered by the Careers Centre and Skills Centre. The workshop in week six is aimed specifically at developing writing skills. Students attend this workshop and in week six they then do a second one-hour essay.

The second essays are set by module tutors from different programme areas (e.g. Acc and Fin/Economics/ OB etc) and are based on questions that students should be expected to know after six weeks of study. They are marked by PhD students and any serious issues or concerns are picked up by Joanne Shiel from the Language Centre who arranges supplementary support. In this way it is hoped to identify both home and international students who struggle with writing skills. Formative essay marks and comments are given to personal tutors who are encouraged to discuss the feedback with their students. In this way the exercise is linked in to the whole student experience. Because it involves other module tutors and personal tutors, it is less likely to be seen as a 'bolt on' induction activity out of context with students' learning experiences and offers an opportunity for them to reflect on the transition to higher education and their personal academic development.

How do you know if it is successful?

Although the success of the writing exercise has yet to be evaluated longitudinally, LUBS have evaluated and produced internal reports on both the initial 2006-7 exercise and the expanded 2007-08 programme. Please email John March if you would like a copy of these reports.

Do you have any resources to support it that you could share?

All resources are available electronically.

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32 Extended induction (School of Humanities)

What is it intending to achieve?

Integrate the three Departments into a School; introduce students to new academic environment.

How does it work?

Weekly events, beginning with welcome from Head of School. Introduction to academic work and assessment.

Workshops on assessment e.g. marking scale, grade criteria, looking at examples of students' work. Schedule as follows:

Week	Event	Venue	Notes
0	LECTURE: School Welcome Meeting	Lecture Theatre	ALL HUMS L1 HoS to present
1	LECTURE: Intro to Studying at University- how is it different from School?	Lecture Theatre	ALL HUMS L1 Dr Steve Green to present
2	LIBRARY INDUCTION	Library Conference Room & Lecture Theatre	Compulsory by Department
3	LIBRARY INDUCTION	Library Conference Room & Lecture Theatre	Compulsory by Department
4	WORKSHOPS: Induction to Assessment	Seminar Room	Compulsory for ALL Philosophy Requires 3 PGs tutors
5	WORKSHOPS: Induction to Assessment	Seminar Room	Compulsory for ALL TRS & Classics. Requires 2 PG tutors from each dept.
6	LECTURE: Employability & Enterprise	Lecture Theatre	Samanatha Aspinall WR CETLE to present

How do you know if it is successful?

Student evaluation.

Do you have any resources to support it that you could share?

Details of Faculty-wide 'Induction to Assessment' at www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/good_practice/page_02.htm

Contact: Tess Hornsby Smith t.r.hornsby-smith@leeds.ac.uk

33 Writing skills workshops (Faculty of Arts)

What is it intending to achieve?

Provides additional support for students' written work in Semesters 1 and 2. Academic staff run weekly workshops for undergraduates from across the Faculty. Suitability: All Faculty of Arts UGs.

1. How to write clearly

Say what you mean and mean what you say! Learn how to express yourself clearly in your writing.

2. How to do the research for your essay,

Make effective use of the internet for finding resources.

3. How to defend your argument

Learn how to develop, critically analyse and defend a point of view.

4. How to structure your essay, Skills Centre

Make sure the structure of your essay isn't letting you down! Improve your introductions, paragraphing and conclusions.

5. How to stop worrying and start writing

Learn new strategies for increasing your confidence in writing and avoiding anxiety.

6. How to write in exams

Don't get writers' block in your exam! Prepare how you are going to approach your exams beforehand and you will feel confident on the day. Faculty L&T Enhancement Officer co-ordinates suite of workshops across both semesters. Academic staff team-teach workshops.

How do you know if it is successful?

Student evaluation; annual review meeting.

www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/good_practice/page_20.htm

Contact: Tess Hornsby Smith t.r.hornsby-smith@leeds.ac.uk



How to introduce students to the new learning environment: induction to medical school

Jonathan C. Darling, Quen O. Tang, Aarti Patel, Jennifer C. MacCarthy and Katharine L. Warburton, University of Leeds School of Medicine, Leeds, UK

Students go through a period of rapid change

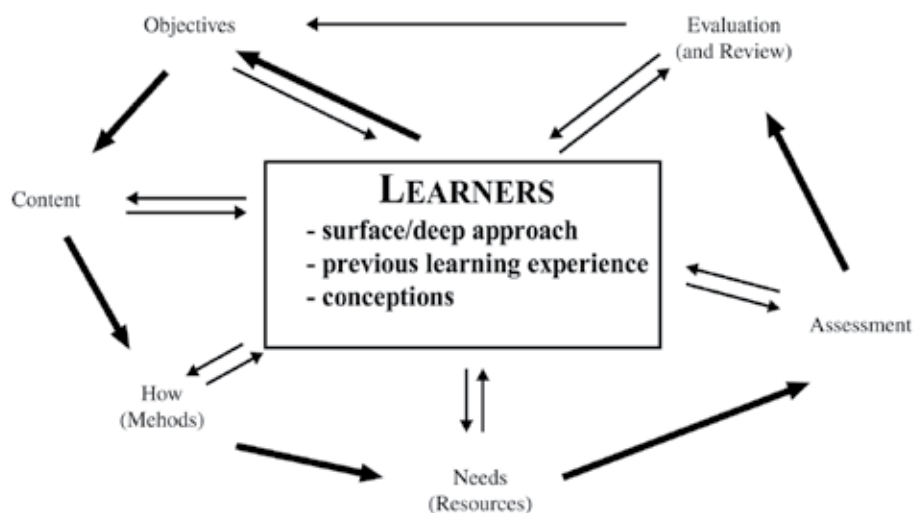
There is nothing in the medical education literature on the induction of students into medical school, and this perhaps reflects a perception that it is not an important part of the curriculum. We attempt to explain why we think it is important, and offer some suggestions on designing an induction programme.

WHY IS AN INDUCTION PROGRAMME IMPORTANT?

The importance of proper induction into a new environment, whether as a student or an employee, is increasingly being recognised as important if students are to make the most of their learning opportunities, or employees to be effective in their jobs. An exami-

nation of any effective organisation will show that induction of staff is taken seriously. The importance of induction in higher education was recognised formally by the Quality Assurance Agency in its subject review programme.¹

The first weeks at medical school are an important time for new students and can have an



Many will be feeling lost and insecure

Figure 1. The 'LOCH NAE' approach to module design. Note: Loch Nae is an imaginary Scottish Lake! Source: Adapted from George Brown.²

impact on their approach to the whole course. It is a time of transition when they are exposed to a new environment, new people and new values, while at the same time losing close

contact with old support systems and values. Students go through a period of rapid change. A good induction programme can help to lay the foundations on which the rest of the course can be built.

DESIGNING AN INDUCTION PROGRAMME

The Introductory Programme at Leeds was originally designed by

Box 1. Aims and objectives of the Leeds programme

Aims

1. To orientate to the medical school and the course
2. To introduce the main themes and structure of the course
3. To inspire (with realism)
4. To facilitate the building of friendships and support networks
5. To reflect the overall curriculum approach to teaching and learning
6. To encourage students to begin a self-directed and reflective approach to learning

Objectives

Students will:

1. Understand the overall structure of the course and its main components
2. Know the main themes of the course and what these refer to
3. Understand the distinction between the core curriculum and the student selected components
4. Appreciate the importance of basic science in clinical medicine, and how these relate to one another
5. Receive practical information relating to the first weeks and months of the course
6. Get to know and work with other students through small-group work
7. Be aware of different approaches to learning, and how to learn more effectively
8. Gain an overview of assessment in the course
9. Know about student progress files and student appraisal
10. Have clinical exposure through clinical cases
11. Be aware of formal and informal support networks and student social and support structures
12. Gain a wider perspective of medicine in Leeds and beyond, in its historical, clinical and research context
13. Be inspired and challenged by some of the material

Established students know what is important to the new intake

one of us (JCD) in 1999 as part of the new Leeds curriculum, in consultation with the curriculum implementation group and student representatives. It has evolved over the years, and the latest version was designed by all of us.

A systematic approach is helpful when designing any course or teaching package, and we have adapted George Brown's² MORAL C acronym, which is focused around content, to our own 'LOCH NAE' acronym (which produces a more logical sequence starting with the students ('Learners') (see Figure 1). Find out as much as you can about them. How many will there be? Are they coming straight from school, or a gap year, or are they mature students? How many are local and how many from abroad? Remember that most of your students will be at a point of major transition in their life. Some will have formed embryonic support

networks, but many will be feeling lost and insecure.

Next consider the **Objectives** of your programme (see Box 1). Bourner and Barlow³ suggest the following aims for any induction programme: introductions and getting acquainted; developing supportive relationships; acquiring relevant information; coping with the problems of transition; developing learning skills; and empowering students. In their words, students are at a 'change fulcrum', and there is no better time to introduce new expectations.

Content grows out of objectives. List in detail the material that needs to be covered. Some sessions may be fixed – for example, University registration. The temptation is to include too much content (especially as lectures). Keep asking yourself, 'Do students really need this

now?' Ideas that have worked well for us are shown in Box 2.

Next decide **How** to deliver the programme. We have tried to reflect the overall philosophy of the whole medical course in Leeds: to increase overall coherence and integration, reduce lectures in favour of interaction and self-directed activity, and introduce an earlier clinical emphasis. We include small-group interactive sessions on nearly every day of the programme. These allow students to get to know each other, and are popular. We use a variety of approaches for facilitation/teaching of the small groups, including sessions run by clinicians, students from other years, and the first-year students themselves.

Then design what you **Need** to deliver your programme. Consider accommodation, especially if you are going to include small-group work. Arrange speakers and facil-

Box 2. Ideas for an introductory programme

1. *Getting to know you* – meet in small groups facilitated by students from other years and do some 'ice-breaking' exercises
2. *An early first day* – in response to student feedback, we moved the first day of our programme into the previous week (Freshers' Week) and included a small-group activity, enabling students to meet earlier
3. *Clinical cases* – students rotate in small groups through two or three interactive sessions where clinicians present clinical cases in an accessible and interactive way
4. *Hippocratic Oath* – small groups consider elements of the Hippocratic Oath and contemporary issues arising from it. These are fed back to the whole group and encourage dialogue about what it means to be a doctor
5. *Student scenarios* – small groups consider scenarios where hypothetical students encounter important problems and again feed back. This is a helpful way to cover difficult issues such as plagiarism, professionalism and whistleblowing, and covers student support too
6. *Medical Blind Date* – a light-hearted introduction to some of the ethics of rationing medical treatment, delivered by students
7. *Visit to Thackray Medical Museum* – do you have a unique local resource? We are fortunate in having this one, and include a free (but optional) visit, both to encourage students to do something together in small groups, to leave the University campus, and to give them a sense of the medical history of Leeds
8. *Group photograph* – well received and fun
9. *A 'Welcome' reception* – one of the few free lunches that we give our students!
10. *Tours* – of University/Hospital campuses – although these were appreciated by the students, with increasing student numbers this has become logistically difficult at Leeds and we now no longer include formal tours
11. *Core course material and assessment* – this gives students who are itching to get going something to get their teeth into
12. *Study skills* – a lecture on approaches to study is helpful
13. *'Big picture' lecture(s)* – one or two lectures by inspiring and challenging speakers are a memorable and important part of our programme.

Student emphasis is on providing opportunities for social interaction

Table 1. Student feedback regarding the key objectives of the programme

	2003	2004	2005
Number of students completing feedback (% of total)	135 (53)	120 (47)	147 (62)
'I understood what I was supposed to do and the objectives of the programme'	99	96	99
'I have a basic understanding of the overall structure of the course (i.e. three course phases and when examinations occur)'	85	91	91
'The programme has helped me get to know other students in my year'	89	94	90
'If I had a personal/academic problem, I would know where I could get help'	95	93	88
'I know about the general student and medical student social and support structures'	99	99	100
'Overall, I felt the introductory programme met my needs'	97	96	96
'I felt inspired by some of the material in the week'	98	95	94

Note: The percentages of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements are given. Feedback was completed at the end of the programme.

itators well in advance, define what written information students need to be given (kept to a minimum), and take students through it to highlight important items. Assessment is unlikely to be appropriate for any Induction Programme although we have tried a light-hearted quiz in the past. And, as with any teaching programme, Evaluation is important, particularly when a course is new, or if changes have been made (see Table 1).

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

From the outset, involve students from other years in designing and delivering your programme. This

is a key part of the Leeds programme. Leeds medical school has two separate student societies – MEDSOC (dealing with social aspects) and MSRC (Medical Students Representative Council) (responsible for student support and representation in the medical school). Every year, both societies help to run the introductory programme (see Figure 2). Having recently experienced induction themselves, established students know what is important to the new intake. Participation by students already actively involved within the medical school ensures that new students are inducted by well-informed, confident and approachable peers. This has a

positive influence on the way new students approach the course.

Student involvement in the induction process demonstrates that a student's voice is valued within the medical school. It encourages interaction between year groups, which helps them to settle in a 'family' atmosphere. The medical school introductory week complements the University's Freshers' Week, and enables students to mix with both medical and non-medical freshers.

Student representatives aim to provide a diverse range of information for students from different social and cultural backgrounds as well as different age groups. New students can relate more easily to these contributions, and are more relaxed, more willing to interact, and will let their guard down when meeting peers rather than staff.

Students are involved in the induction process from the beginning. Alongside the first documentation sent out by the medical school, freshers also receive a 24-page welcome booklet written and produced by MEDSOC. This booklet aims to reassure students that they will be received warmly, and have plenty to look forward to on arrival in Leeds. This eases the transition from one academic experience to



Figure 2. Coloured sashes help key student representatives stand out from the crowd. From left to right: Aarti, Jenny, Quen and Katie.

Students are encouraged to get involved in MEDSOC



Figure 3. Students sporting freshers' pack t-shirts.

the next, and makes the process less daunting.

One of the main student contributions to induction is to make new students feel welcome, and to help them put into perspective all the information, emotions and experiences of the first few weeks. If freshers feel overwhelmed and vulnerable, the student sessions are a source of reassurance. Key information in an MSRC handbook provided on arrival helps students to separate the wood from the trees!

While academic staff focus on ensuring that new students have the necessary information to progress with their studies, student emphasis is on providing opportunities for social interaction and building foundations for the following five years. Students are encouraged to get involved in MEDSOC and MSRC, so that they feel included and accepted. This is aided by various gimmicks, such as the freshers' packs, which include freebies and a wittily designed t-shirt (see Figure 3). Being part of

an army of identically dressed first years on a night out not only raises a few smiles but also helps everyone to feel united and part of a team. The freshers' packs also include a short description of various societies and sports teams affiliated with the medical school and university. This gives the freshers an opportunity to identify the activities they might like to continue into their university life, or to discover new hobbies to pursue.

In our Medical Undergraduate Mentoring Scheme (MUMS), older students act as 'academic parents' of younger students and meet them early in the programme. This promotes a family atmosphere, with friendships made across the years. Regular 'family reunions' strengthen these ties, which are an important form of support throughout the course.

CONCLUSION

It is important to induct students properly into medical school, and we have outlined a practical approach to designing an induction

programme. We compare our programme to preparations one might make for climbing a challenging mountain. Once the expedition team come together, time is taken to look at the mountain, the route, the dangers, the rules of the mountain and team building, and to attend to practical details such as checking equipment. This assures a successful ascent for all. It is no less ambitious to take several hundred medical school students up the 'mountain' of becoming a doctor, and time spent carefully designing an induction programme will be a good investment.

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1. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. *Subject review handbook October 1998 to September 2000*. Gloucester: QAA, 1997.
2. Brown G, Partington J. *Effective engineering education*. Sheffield: The Universities' and Colleges' Staff Development Agency (UCoSDA), 1995.
3. Bourner T, Barlow J. *The student induction handbook. Practical activities for use with new student groups*. London: Kogan Page, 1991.

Appendix 2

Induction checklist 1: The first week....?

Adapted from Sheffield Hallam University guidance to faculties on organising induction week.

		How / When?
Orientation	<p>How are students introduced to their university accommodation?</p> <p>How do they get to find their way around the geographical layout of the University?</p> <p>How do they get to find their way around the structural organisation of the University?</p>	
Social	<p>How are students welcomed to people in their department and their course?</p> <p>How do they get to meet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both teaching and support staff? • their fellow students? • students in other years of the course? <p>To what extent is time built in to the week for students to meet others, to browse and explore their new surroundings and to reflect on their new experiences</p>	
Support Services	<p>How are students introduced to the University's support infrastructure?</p> <p>How do they receive induction to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning resource centres? • Student's Union? • student support network? • computing facilities? • other services? 	
Academic	<p>How are students introduced to their course and the academic expectations?</p> <p>When, how and in what form are they are provided with information about their course e.g. handbooks, timetables, book lists?</p> <p>How are expectations about study skills clarified and are they introduced to learning models and preferences?</p> <p>When and how do they receive guidance about assessment regulations, options and progression routes?</p>	
Administrative	<p>How, when and where are students registered on their course and enrolled on modules?</p> <p>How, when and where do they sort out their student card and student union membership?</p>	

Appendix 3

Induction checklist 2: Induction through curriculum design

Based on findings of Harvey *et al* (2006), Yorke & Longdon (2008), Moon (2005)

Communication: Quality of communication is key	
How do you ensure that students are provided with accurate information, in advance, about their programme of study that reflects the reality of the course?	
How do you avoid information overload? - e.g. by trickling in stages over a week or longer	
In what ways is induction linked to the subject or embedded within the programme design / delivery?	
How do you ensure that induction involves active participation by students? - students don't want to just be told what they will be doing but want to actually be doing it	
How can you use technology to help students form a relationship with the institution before they arrive? e.g. Stepping Stones 2HE http://dec.bournemouth.ac.uk/steps/index.html	
Expectations: Students may have rigid prior conceptions regarding what and how to learn	
How do you ensure that processes and procedures are transparent so that students are clear about what is happening at each stage – e.g. during registration, assessment etc?	
How can you ensure that students are disabused of their preconceptions gradually as part of a careful change management process rather than finding out the hard way e.g. by lack of success?	
To what extent have you identified opportunities in the curriculum where student independence can be promoted, and where students can be given assistance to become autonomous learners?	
Learning & Teaching: Students prefer student-centred active learning and intimate teaching environments where there is close proximity between staff and students	
To what extent do you recognise the importance of the first lecture as a part of students' induction to a course and use it to help clarify expectations regarding HE study?	
How can you use the learning and teaching environment as a mechanism for forging social relationships?	
Do you provide opportunity for first-year students to be taught by the most experienced and renowned staff members?	
Are there ways that you could reverse the structure of teaching so that first-year students have small group teaching rather than large group lectures? e.g. Enquiry-based Learning (EBL), group projects	
Assessment: Formative assessment and feedback need to be provided early and often during the first year so that students are familiarised with academic expectations	
How do you recognise the importance of the first piece of assessed work and how can you use it to clarify expectations more generally? - e.g. academic level, writing, referencing and avoiding plagiarism	
How can you ensure that the first piece of assessed work is strategic, at the level of the programme, and planned? - e.g. an appropriate assessment in week 1 to clarify referencing conventions	
How could you translate collaborative learning into students' assessment rather than solely focussing on individual assessment, and as a way to understand conventions and avoid collusion?	
How do you help students to understand the "language" of assessment from the outset – credits, levels of learning, learning outcomes, wording of questions and expectations in response ?	
How do you train students how to interpret and use feedback?	
How do you prepare students for the workload and how to manage it?	
Support: First generation students tend to have naïve and unrealistic expectations about support and overestimate the level they will get	
How is the personal tutor role exploited in setting students' expectations about support?	
To what extent is there an ongoing process that promotes a continual discourse between the student and the institution? – a proactive, preventative model rather than a deficit model of support	
How are students encouraged to seek help early on so that small issues don't build up?	
How are students who arrive late given induction and support? – e.g. those through arriving from overseas or clearing	

Appendix 4

Induction checklist 3: Organising inclusive social events

Inclusive Community Award

Leeds University Union (LUU), in conjunction with the International Student Office and Equality & Diversity, has developed an Inclusive Community Award. The Award was set up to encourage Junior Common Rooms (JCRs) to make efforts to remove barriers to inclusion within their halls of residence. JCRs are student-led committees in University-owned halls of residence that are formed by volunteers and supported by wardens, sub-wardens and others in halls. JCRs are required to help organise sports teams, social events and deal with issues in halls.

JCRs can apply for the Award on the basis of the inclusiveness of social and other events they have organised and if successful the award provides £400 towards their funds that can be used to organise end-of-year events.

The criteria for the award could be considered when designing School or Society-based social events both at the start of and throughout an academic year.

The criteria have been adapted for this purpose and are outlined below:

Efforts are made to remove barriers to inclusion. For note, six strands of diversity to consider are: - Race - Gender - Disability - Sexual orientation - Age - Religion	
An awareness of the different groups of students within the cohort has been shown	
A range of activities has been planned, appealing to the whole community	
Activities have been planned with a multi-faith calendar in mind, and others' commitments have been recognised and appreciated	
Activities have been planned with a consideration of a variation in students' budgets	
Accessibility of events, sports teams, hall of residence facilities and related information has been thought through and any necessary adaptations either completed or planned	
The methods used to promote activities have been made accessible to all students and staff have made a significant effort to promote verbally	

For further details of the actual Inclusive Community Award scheme contact Anna Daniel in LUU on a.daniel@leeds.ac.uk or 0113 380 1329

Appendix 4

School of History induction questionnaire (online) Induction Week

Please take the time to complete this questionnaire. Your feedback will enable the School of History to make positive changes to the Induction Week programme for future years.

NOTE: you should read the following points about this questionnaire.

- You can only view the questions at this time.
- You will only be able to record one set of answers.
- Each set of answers can only be submitted once.
- You will be able to subsequently look at your answers.

Question 1	
Please state which programme of study you are on.	
A	Single Subject History
B	International History and Politics
C	Joint Honours
D	-
E	-

Question 2	
Which Induction Week activities did you find most useful?	
A	The welcome from the chairman and a chance to meet all History staff
B	Elective enrolment
C	The History Society Social at the Faversham D
D	Peer Mentoring meetings & tour
E	Programme meeting (Friday)
F	Other (type in comment box)
~ This question allows for a free text comment ~	

Question 3	
Do you have any comments relating to improving the Induction Week activities?	
A	Please write comments.
B	-
C	-
D	-
E	-
~ This question allows for a free text comment ~	

Appendix 4 continued

School of History induction questionnaire (online)

Question 4	
Did any of the activities organised within the School of History clash with other events held at the University? e.g. society meetings	
A	Yes
B	No
C	-
D	-
E	-
~ This question allows for a free text comment ~	

Question 5	
The School of History has piloted the Peer Mentoring scheme this year. Have you made contact with your peer mentor?	
A	Yes
B	No
C	-
D	-
E	-

Question 6	
If so, have you found them helpful?	
A	Yes
B	No
C	N/A
D	-
E	-
~ This question allows for a free text comment ~	

Question 7	
Are you aware who your personal tutor is?	
A	Yes
B	No
C	-
D	-
E	-

Appendix 4 continued

School of History induction questionnaire (online)

Question 8	
Have you seen your personal tutor twice - once at the start of term and once in weeks 4 or 5 (if not please comment below)?	
A	Yes
B	No
C	-
D	-
E	-
~ This question allows for a free text comment ~	

Question 9	
What parts of the induction week did you find disappointing?	
A	Please write comments.
B	-
C	-
D	-
E	-
~ This question allows for a free text comment ~	

Question 10	
Would you have liked the opportunity to take all your modules in the School of History (although places are limited)?	
A	Strongly agree
B	Agree
C	Neither agree nor disagree
D	Disagree
E	Strongly disagree
~ This question allows for a free text comment ~	

Question 11	
Would you have found it useful to have a list of suitable modules from outside the School of History to help assist you in choosing your electives?	
A	Strongly agree
B	Agree
C	Neither agree nor disagree
D	Disagree
E	Strongly disagree
~ This question allows for a free text comment ~	

Appendix 5

Literature review: student retention and the transition to HE

An increasing body of research on student retention, see in particular Yorke (1999) and most recently Yorke & Longdon (2008) has identified the most crucial time to support students, the time when they are most vulnerable, is when making the transition to HE from school (or other prior study, either in the UK or overseas). During this period, students are adjusting to a different learning and teaching environment that may seem more aloof and uncaring and which requires students to take a greater level of personal responsibility for their studies.

Some students find it difficult to make this transition and are unable to cope with the academic demands placed on them. Induction and support during this transition is vital to ensure that all students are familiarised with academic expectations and provided with early opportunities for formative feedback so that they develop in their learning and their confidence.

Why do students leave?

Yorke & Longdon (2008) have undertaken considerable research in the area of student retention and their most recent findings suggest that there are seven major reasons for non-completion, namely:

- Poor quality learning experience;
- Not coping with academic demand;
- Wrong choice of field of study;
- Unhappy with location and environment;
- Dissatisfied with institutional resourcing;
- Problems with finance and employment; and
- Problems with social integration.

What are the areas of difficulty?

Work by the Open University (Tresman, 2002) has shown that the timing and quantity of information provided to students can have an impact on student retention. In particular, some of the factors that can increase students' tendencies to withdraw are:

- an overload of complicated information
- a confusing array of points of contacts and information
- conflicting information or conversely a lack of information
- mismatch between expectations and the realities of the course of study
- unable to manage time, too high a workload
- lack of feedback or help in study management
- inability to redeem early failure.

Factors that develop
throughout the first
semester



Loughborough's DART project suggest that difficulties faced by all students entering HE may be associated with the following factors:

- A less structured and supported learning environment (i.e. a more independent, "self-directed" learning environment);
- A different style of teaching (e.g. lectures as opposed to lessons);
- New learning and teaching contexts (e.g. laboratory work);
- Unfamiliarity with new learning environments (e.g. large lecture halls); and
- Unfamiliar learning practices (e.g. using online materials).

Moon (2005) has identified several factors that can impact on students' decisions to stay or withdraw particularly for those students from families where there is no history of participation in HE:

- Issues concerning time and its management;
- Understanding what is required in HE, standards, etc;
- Difficulties in writing in an academic setting;
- Referencing (also related to writing);
- Volume of work (also related to time management);
- Self-confidence issues;
- Social issues that could affect the quality of learning;
- The significance of the first assessed piece of work; and
- Need for more IT support.

Appendix 5 continued

Literature review: student retention and the transition to HE

Moon (in agreement with other retention research) concluded that drop out was not due to a single key factor, but the accumulation of several minor issues and that students needed to be encouraged to seek help early on so that small issues didn't build up. York St John's work (LSC report, 2003) also found that "failure to either solve or rationalise what were often minor problems had led students to feel unable to cope, and eventually contributed to their decision to leave".

A key issue in student retention (see Thomas, 2002 and Yorke & Thomas, 2003) is for students to achieve social and academic integration early on - i.e. they need to have made friends and feel 'part of' the institution within the first few weeks of their course. Even nominally full-time students may have significant travel time to and from their place of study, or have outside commitments such as part-time work or caring responsibilities - all of which can impact on their ability to integrate and socialise with their student peer group and engage with informal support networks that contribute to their sense of 'belonging'. International students need time to adjust to their new surroundings and may experience culture shock and home sickness.

Student induction: forming a relationship with the institution

The STAR project at the University of Ulster (Cook *et al*, 2005) offers the following guidance for the purposes of Induction:

- Induction activities should familiarise students with the local area, the campus and its support services.
- Induction activities should highlight students' academic obligations and the obligations of the staff to the students.
- Induction activities should support the development of those independent study habits suitable for higher education.
- Induction events should provide the foundations for social interactions between students and the development of communities of practice.
- Induction activities should promote the development of good communication between staff and students.
- Induction is required to manage transitions between elements of courses.

Building on this and in light of work by Thomas (2002), induction has a number of wider aims:

- to familiarise students with the culture of the institution and provide an opportunity for them to integrate with the institution and develop a sense of belonging
- to provide information to students about institutional processes and procedures
- a mechanism for giving early feedback and providing academic support and guidance to individual students
- to provide personal tutoring and support to students and referral to other support agencies or information

Students' transition to HE and the need for the formation of a relationship between the institution and the student indicates that this is something that takes place over time and cannot just occur in the first week.

Induction should not just be about introducing students to the workings of the University and the course they have enrolled upon. It is about helping students to make the transition from their previous study to the requirements of study in an HE environment and is an opportunity to enable students to review and enhance their preparedness for study at HE level.

Students form judgements about an institution and its provision very quickly and they need to develop a sense of 'institutional fit' within the first few weeks - to feel welcomed and to develop a sense of belonging (see Thomas, 2002). This institutional fit relates to all aspects of provision - academic, social and cultural. Students need to know that there are people like them there and that the place is for people like them.

Induction needs to be considered as a process spanning the whole of the first semester, if not over the whole of the first year, rather than merely an event or activity at the start of the academic year.

Appendix 5 continued

Literature review: student retention and the transition to HE

Recruitment, pre-entry information & enrolment

Davies & Nedderman (1997) indicate that important factors in reducing drop out are to provide students with detailed publicity and pre-entry material, enrolment and pre-course support before their arrival so that effective support can begin before students commence their studies. This may enable some things to be already familiar to students when they first arrive and they may know where they have to be and what they should be doing when they first get there.

This ties in with Allen (1999) who found that students with a positive first impression of the University may be extrinsically motivated to persist and Trotter & Roberts (2006) who found that programmes with high retention worked harder to attract students and were more likely to:

- be involved in outreach work
- have direct links with local schools and colleges
- provide accurate, up-to-date prospectus entries, web-sites and leaflets.

Thomas (2002) also comments on how the quality of pre-course contacts can affect students' relationship with their institution.

Yorke & Thomas (2003) found that students may be more likely to persist in an HEI if they have developed a relationship with that HEI and are strongly of the opinion that it will assist them in realizing their goals. They found that providing information between application and enrolment could start to develop the student/institution relationship e.g. through:

- sending newsletters, e-mails, text messages
- having teams of students in high visibility t-shirts to welcome student at enrolment.

Induction

Trotter & Cove (2005) found that students' decisions to withdraw are significantly affected by the degree of their intellectual and social integration into the life of the institution.

Based on Tresman (2002) it is evident that clear, accurate, consistent information in well-structured documentation is important, and that the quantity of information provided and the timing of its distribution needs to be carefully planned. Tresman advises that information, advice and guidance should be provided in a range of formats – electronically, paper-based, verbally, on notice boards etc. – and that, whether for current or prospective students, it should:

- accurately reflect the focus and content of the course
- make expectations clear by painting a realistic picture of:
 - the time commitment (both contact time and private study)
 - workload
 - level of difficulty involved.

Bennett (2003) found that students who missed the first few weeks of Semester 1 were more likely to feel lonely and isolated and be generally dissatisfied with the programme e.g. those coming through clearing or from overseas. This may indicate that students who arrive late need to receive a bespoke induction that helps them catch up and integrate quickly.

Attendance requirements

Gracia & Jenkins (2002) found that students who passed their course had attendance rates ranging from 67% - 98% (average = 88%) whilst those who failed had attendance rates of 53% - 92% (average = 69%).

Trotter & Roberts (2006) found that programmes with high retention monitored attendance strictly and had an ethos that attendance was a requirement with procedures in place for contacting absentees.

Rust (2004), on the other hand, explored requirements for attendance and concluded that compulsory attendance did not sit well with notions of autonomy, independence and student-centred learning. Rust recommends that students be required to attend sessions where activities core to the programme are undertaken and that are perceived by students to provide a value-added experience that is relevant and motivational.

Appendix 5

Literature review: student retention and the transition to HE

Teaching and learning strategies

Trotter & Roberts (2006) found that induction in programmes with high retention:

- was more activity-based
- actively involved students and gave opportunities for students to get to know each other, through ice-breakers etc, and to meet as a cohort
- had links to the forthcoming semester and the course
- got to know the students and tried to identify and remedy possible problems.

Thomas (2002) recommends collaborative teaching and learning that promotes social interaction with students through academic activities.

Trotter & Roberts (2006) found that programmes with low retention had learning and teaching strategies that gave a lecture followed by a tutorial whereas this format was not mentioned by high retention programmes. All programmes had a variety of L&T methods.

Assessment

The STAR project (Cook *et al*, 2005) recommends that students should be set assignments to do as soon as they arrive. They suggest that this helps students to integrate into university life as quickly as possible and makes them aware of the quality and quantity of work expected from them straight away. Giving students too much freedom can be counterproductive and they may need a more structured environment to start off with,

Moon (2005) suggests that well-supported peer and self assessment from early on in a programme has the effect of better enabling students to understand what is required of them and that assessment criteria and examples of student work, marking exercises etc could be used to help this understanding process. Moon recommends that students need a very slow and gentle build up to the first assessed work with provision of feedback on short pieces of writing or other representations of learning relevant to final piece.

Yorke (2002) recommends formative assessment only in the first semester of the first year (with summative assessment deferred to end of first year) to give time for students to acclimatise and adjust to standards in HE. He suggests that summative assessment at the end of the first semester places pressure on students and does not make sense when they only have to pass the first year. Whereas, Trotter & Roberts (2006) found that programmes with high retention levels used formative assessment (in its strictest sense of not contributing to the final mark) less than those with low retention but had summative assessment (contributing to the final grade) throughout the first year but which had a formative function in that it also informed student learning – a sort of formative/summative assessment. Trotter (2006) also conclude that continuous summative assessment provides an incentive and motivation to study.

Student support

The National Audit Office's most recent report on student retention (NAO, 2007) states as one of its recommendations that:

“Student support, including tutoring systems that provide sufficient access to academic staff, should positively emphasise the opportunity to improve grades rather than simply addressing learning deficits. Academic and administrative staff should review systems and processes in this light”.

This fits in well with Leeds for Life and current proposals to Learning and Teaching Board for a more structured and purposeful approach to personal tutoring by academic staff.

York St John University (LSC Report, 2003) investigated staff and student perspectives of support in a range of pre- and post-1992 HEIs and conclude that:

*“The role of the academic / personal tutor was found to be crucial ... **the ability, availability, approachability and response speed of academic / personal tutors** was seen to play a major role in students decisions to stay or leave”.*

They emphasise the importance of academic / personal tutors developing a relationship with their students by getting to know them individually as early as possible - to develop a sense of trust and a level of personal interest that makes the students feel valued and provides them with opportunity to air, and possibly resolve, problems before they seem or become insurmountable through the burden of additional issues.

Conclusions

Key features of induction that can contribute to the development of a learning community and so aid students' transition to HE are:

- provision of accurate and realistic information about a course, with consideration of the timing and manner in which this is provided, including clearly stated expectations regarding study, attendance etc;
- early contact and on-going dialogue between students and their tutor;
- social and academic integration;
- early assessment with prompt and encouraging feedback;
- the ability to generate a sense of cohort for those that are studying together;
- opportunities for students to mix with both staff and each other – socially and academically;
- facilitating students working together so that they can form friendships and provide peer support for each other; and
- opportunities for students arriving late to integrate and be brought up to speed quickly.

Appendix 6

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