

LTC14D100

Title: Enhancing Student Academic Induction
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Issue

The PVC has tasked ADTP to work with TPPG members and others to **explore ways in which Student Academic Induction can be enhanced for 2016/17**. The ADTP will chair meetings with TPPG and other stakeholders involved in delivery and planning of academic student induction between Jan-May 2015 in order to identify existing best practice at UEA and elsewhere, in order to develop proposals/recommendations for LTC to consider at its meeting scheduled for June 2015.

Planning for Induction in 2015/16 is already in progress the ADTP recognises that making significant changes at this stage would be problematic. As an interim measure, the attached paper simply sets-out some over-arching principles and some additional 'Guidance' focused around a series of 12 themes which can be shared with all colleagues, which will help to ensure that the diverse induction needs of different elements of the student body are taken into account. LTC are asked to consider the attached guidance and to endorse it, for immediate circulation to staff involved in planning/delivery of induction in 2015/16.

Recommendation

LTC members are asked to endorse the brief 'Guidance' notes attached.

Resource Implications

Student Academic Induction requires a close working partnership between academics and colleagues in learning support roles (e.g. DOS) and those in professional services (e.g. LTS). The brief set of 'Guidance' attached does not necessarily require the application of a dramatically enhanced resource (financial or staffing), but will hopefully ensure that the needs of different elements of the student body (e.g. new students, returning students, UG, PGT, international students, study abroad etc) are taken into account in the induction programmes and activities which are provided in 2015/16.

Risk Implications

Successful induction is a key element in ensuring that students are quickly integrated into the academic community. It is also, therefore, a key factor in student retention and a positive student experience. Future enhancements in induction are likely to have a positive impact on student's academic progression and performance, student retention, and a positive student experience of study at UEA, resulting in enhanced NSS/PTES/PRES results.

Equality and Diversity

It is not envisaged that any of the recommendations contained in the report will impact negatively on groups with protected characteristics – rather, the guidance is aimed at ensuring that the needs of all elements of the diverse student population are addressed via student academic induction.

Timing of decisions

LTC members are asked to endorse the Guidance attached, and to support the ADTP in carrying out a review of Student Academic Induction between Jan-May 2015. A comprehensive set of recommendations will be submitted to LTC for approval in June 2015.

Further Information

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Background

The attached Guidance is aimed at ensuring that the diverse needs of the student body are reflected in the planning and delivery of Student Academic Induction in 2015/16.

Discussion

LTC members are invited to discuss and endorse the Guidance attached. Feedback on the Guidance will be very welcome.

LTC members are also invited to endorse the ADTPs suggested review of Student Academic Induction between Jan-May 2015.

Enhancing Student Academic Induction

Introduction

The PVC (Academic Affairs) has tasked **Taught Programmes Policy Group (TPPG)** with carrying-out some work to identify ways in which the delivery of academic induction for students on taught programmes can be enhanced. The ADTP will be convening a meeting of all interested stakeholders involved in UG and PGT academic induction events/programmes in February, and this will be used to evaluate current practice(s), to identify best practice, and to share examples of innovation and practice from other HEIs – with a view to enhancing the quality and impact of induction.

Induction programmes for 2015/16 are already being planned, however, and whilst some enhancements will be able to be integrated into inductions in 2015/16, it is envisaged that the work currently being undertaken under the auspices of TPPG will result in a series of recommendations to University LTC in summer 2015, which will be **rolled-out in 2016/17**.

Academic Induction is taken here to mean those aspects of induction that are geared towards ensuring that students can make an effective ‘transition’ into higher education study at UEA in terms of their successful engagement with their academic studies. Induction, as an activity, is often thought about in terms of what happens in the first week or first few weeks of a programme, but is taken here to include transition between stages or levels of study (e.g. between Stage 1 and Stage 2; between UG and Post-graduate). Each stage of study, and each level of study, brings with it particular academic and study challenges, which is why a students’ progress through a degree programme needs to be supported not by one induction, but by several, each of which has a different purpose and content/shape. In a recent study, Gale and Parker describe effective student induction and transition as “the capability to navigate change”, and this should be our focus in ensuring that induction is fit for purpose¹.

One of the distinctive aspects of student academic induction programmes is that they are rarely led solely by academic staff, and require a complex and effective working **partnership** with staff in professional services (e.g. LTS, DOS, LIB, ISAT) and with students (e.g. students reps, student ambassadors, UUEAS Officers).

ACTIONS FOR LTC:

Student Academic Induction in 2015/16

Given the fact that planning around student academic induction is already in progress for 2015/16, the ADTP would like to suggest that LTC merely endorses a brief set of ‘Guidance’ notes as set out in **Appendix 1**. These contain some over-arching principles and some themes which should be addressed by School of Study in school-level and/or programme-level inductions.

Student Academic Induction in 2016/17

It is proposed that LTC endorse the following: during the period Jan-May 2015 TPPG will coordinate activities involving all relevant stakeholders, focused on identifying future enhancements in relation to student academic induction with a view to roll-out in Sep 2016/17. These activities will result in a set of written proposals for LTC to consider at its meeting in June 2015. If approved, it may be possible to apply some of the recommendations for inductions starting in Jan 2016.

¹ Trevor Gale & Stephen Parker (2014) ‘Navigating change: a typology of student transition in higher education’, *Studies in Higher Education*, 39:5, pp.734-753.

Appendix 1

LTC Guidance on Student Academic Induction for 2015/16

Over-arching Principles

1. Induction is part of a longer process of transition from secondary to higher education or from undergraduate to postgraduate study that extends beyond the first weeks of a student's course.
2. Effective induction is an important means of ensuring that students are supported throughout their time at the University.
3. Induction should cover both academic and non-academic issues, recognising that the 'student experience' is complex and both areas need to be addressed to ensure a positive experience.
4. Academic aspects of induction should be delivered via a partnership between academic staff, colleagues in learning support and professional services roles (e.g. Learning enhancement team, Library staff, Careers staff, LTS staff etc) and students (e.g. Student ambassadors, student reps, Union officers, student volunteers).
5. Academic induction should address the information, skills and knowledge required to enable students to engage in effectively in their studies.
6. Undergraduate, IM and taught postgraduate students have different needs in relation to induction and these should be reflected in the induction activities provided. Part-time or mature, foundation year students, international and interdisciplinary students (e.g. students on Joint Degrees), and students with SpLDs and physical disabilities should also be taken into account.

Key themes to be addressed in School-level Inductions

Individual Schools of Study have a very important role to play in planning effective student academic induction. These activities will often involve working in partnership with its own students, local support staff, professional services staff (e.g. in LTS, Library, DOS), and the UUEAS. However, the responsibility for coordinating School-level inductions and those specific to individual programmes lies primarily with the School.

Induction activities within schools should address:

- 1) **WELCOME** - Students are made to **feel welcome** to the academic community of staff and students in the school, with an explanation of the structure/features and distinctive features or ethos of the school in question.
- 2) **OVERVIEW** - Students have a **clear overview** of the salient characteristics of their chosen programme of study – with the particular features of each Stage of study clarified, and optionality clearly explained. Distinctive elements like placements etc need to be outlined, as well as frequency of lab session, lectures, PBL sessions, seminars, workshops etc. The concept of research-led teaching needs to be 'unpacked'.
- 3) **EXPECTATIONS** - Students are aware of the **level of commitment** (e.g. study hours) and **standards** expected of them (e.g. marking scales/criteria).
- 4) **SKILLS AND ASSESSMENT** – Student academic induction should address subject-specific study skills, introduce subject methodologies, and methods of learning and teaching in the subject. It should also explain the roles of formative and summative assessment, and the use of assessment feedback to improve academic performance. Initial guidance can be provided on the level of writing, communication and numeracy that will be expected.

- 5) **REGULATIONS** – Students should be introduced to **key regulations** which enable them to engage effectively with their studies: e.g. policy on plagiarism & collusion, policy on attendance, policy on extenuating circumstances etc.
- 6) **RESOURCES** – Students should be introduced to **key academic resources**. These might include key learning resources (e.g. IT labs, library search facilities, e-resources etc) as well as key sources of study-related information (e.g. LTS website, DOS website, e-Vision, Blackboard).
- 7) **KEY STAFF** – Staff in key School roles should have an opportunity to talk about their roles in order to ensure that students know who to approach if they have a question or problem: e.g. plagiarism officer(s), teaching directors, assessment leads, head of school, faculty manager, course directors/programme managers, senior adviser etc.
- 8) **PERSONAL ADVISERS** – Academic student induction programmes provide an excellent opportunity for new and returning students to meet with their personal advisers. This helps to forge or maintain a healthy communication between students and their advisers and ensures that students feel supported.
- 9) **STUDENTS AS PARTNERS** – Students need to know how they will have an opportunity to work in a partnership with staff in their School. They need to know how their voice can be expressed and heard, and how the School will respond to student concerns. SSLC Officers and student reps have a key role to play here to explain how SSLCs work, role of the reps, use of module evaluations.
- 10) **INTEGRATION** – The student academic induction should include an opportunity to meet and work collaboratively with other students in their cohort, as well as (ideally) opportunities to meet students from different stages of study on their own course, or on different courses. Functioning and purpose of PAL, and other peer-mentoring schemes can be explained.
- 11) **CAREERS** – Student should be provided with a clear sense of the graduate attributes they will develop whilst on their course, and how their course will prepare them for the world of work or a successful transition into a graduate level job or further HE study. Students should be provided with information on the Careers Service at UEA, and be encouraged to go into CareersCentral as a p. This is especially important for returning students.
- 12) **DIFFERENT NEEDS** - Induction events and activities within Schools should consider the different needs of UG, PGT, part-time, mature, foundation year, international and interdisciplinary students (e.g. students on Joint Degrees).

Key points from the PVC Academic Affairs

Schools are asked to ensure that the following notes provided by the PVC (Academic Affairs) are used to inform the delivery of inductions. These are available in PPT slide format from the LTS website.

Student academic engagement & expected study time

- The University assumes a 40-hour working week. A 20 credit module equates to 200 hours study time in total (including lectures, seminars, assessments, independent study etc)
- Therefore, a piece of work accounting for 25% of a 20 credit module might be expected to involve around 50 hours of effort.

Student success

- First Class and Upper 2nd Class degrees count as ‘Good Honours’.

- All students with the academic qualifications to gain entry to UEA should be able to achieve Good Honours, with sufficient effort.
- In 2013/14, over 75% of graduating UEA students gained Good Honours.
- Employers who recruit graduates are increasingly looking for those who achieve 2:1s or above. More than 75% of companies required a minimum of 2:1 degree in 2012, up from 52% in 2004, as scramble for graduate jobs intensified (*The Guardian*, July 2012).

Assessment

- Summative assessment counts towards final marks, but formative assessment is vital for gaining feedback on your work.
- Feedback comes in all sorts of forms: (individual written comments on coursework; verbal feedback to whole class, generic exam feedback, tutorials, advising sessions etc).
- Assessment & feedback is a partnership between staff and students (a two-way process where feedback is provided, but also needs to be reflected upon, taken-up and used).

Feedback and feed-forwards

Effective feedback:

- Includes a feeds-forward element – enabling students to see how their work and learning on one assignment feeds into those which follow.
- Clarifies what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards).
- Encourages ‘time and effort’ on challenging learning tasks.
- Delivers high quality guidance that helps learners ‘self-correct’.
- Has a positive impact on learning.
- Encourages interaction and dialogue around learning.
- Facilitates the development of self-assessment and reflection.
- Supports the development of learning communities.
- Encourages motivation and self-esteem.
- Provides information to lecturers and tutors which can be used to help shape teaching and assessment strategies in the future.

Employability

- A degree takes about 1,000 days and time will fly by. You should be thinking about preparing yourself for the world of work, and for job interviews from **Day 1** at University.
- The Careers Service have a range of services to help students prepare CVs, prepare for interviews and run mentoring and internship schemes.
- Employability and skills development is embedded into the curriculum within the School, and extra-curricula activities also help develop skills and gain valuable experiences.