

LTC14D191

Title: Report to LTC from Academic Director of Taught Programmes
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Issue

A report from the Academic Director for Taught Programmes on progress on key areas:

- 1) Learning & Teaching Day 2015
- 2) Remark requests
- 3) Draft Senate Guidance on Assessment & Feedback
- 4) Review of Student Academic Induction/Transitions

Recommendation

LTC members are asked to consider the ADTP's report. There are no items for LTC to 'approve', but feedback/comments are welcomed.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications.

Risk Implications

No risks

Equality and Diversity

It is not envisaged that any of the recommendations contained in the report will impact on groups with protected characteristics.

Timing of decisions

This is simply an update for LTC – the report contains no recommendations for approval.

Further Information

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Background

The ADTP's report is a standing item on LTC agenda.

Discussion

The paper is for discussion only and contains no recommendations for approval.

Report to LTC from Academic Director of Taught Programmes May 2015

This report from the Academic Director for Taught Programmes considers progress on key issues as follows:

- 5) Learning & Teaching day 2015 – Thursday 7 May 2015
- 6) Remark requests
- 7) Draft Senate Guidance on Assessment & Feedback
- 8) Review of Student Academic Induction/Transitions

1) Learning & Teaching day 2014

As previously reported, the date has already been fixed – **Thursday 7 May 2015**. By the time LTC meets on 13 May the day will already have passed. Those wishing to see a copy of the programme can find it at the following location: <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/csed/learning-and-teaching-day>. At the suggestion of the ADTP attendees at last year's Day have been sent a simple survey monkey questionnaire in which they have been asked to provide examples of how, following last year's event, they have revised or amended their own practice. This should help to provide an indication of the 'impact' of the event, and it is likely that a similar impact assessment will be employed in the lead-up to the Learning & Teaching Day 2016. The ADTP will be able to provide an oral report on the 2015 event at 13 May LTC.

2) Remark requests 2014/15

In the ADTP's last report to LTC a brief summary of the number of re-mark requests was provided, which indicated the picture across the four faculties in the autumn semester of 2014/15. At the last meeting of TPPG the ADTP indicated that during the remainder of 2014/15 academic year, feedback on the re-mark process would be invited from FLTQCs. This would be taken into account in a discussion of the issue at TPPG early in the next academic year (autumn semester 2015/16). This will focus on identifying any revisions or enhancements to the rules governing re-mark requests and the processes associated with its operation.

3) Draft Senate Guidance on Assessment & Feedback

A revised copy of the draft Senate Guidance is included as a separate agenda item for the 13 May LTC.

4) Review of Student Academic Induction/Transitions

The LTC review working group, chaired by Adam Longcroft (ADTP), will produce a report and make recommendations to LTC for discussion at its meeting in June 2015. In the interim, the ADTP has drafted a memo which sets out:

- 12 key 'principles' on Induction/Transitions previously endorsed by LTC
- Examples of established good practice at UEA, assembled from a detailed analysis of last year's Induction programmes

- A number of 'areas for development', which identifies key aspects of our current practice that could be enhanced.

This memo was circulated on 28 April 2015 to all University staff involved in the planning and delivery of Induction and Transitions activities in 2015/16.

A copy of this memo is attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

Adam Longcroft ADTP

5 May 2015

Appendix A

Appendix A

MEMO

From: **Dr Adam Longcroft, Academic Director for Taught Programmes (ADTP)**

Re: **Planning for Induction & Transitions Support in 2015/16.**

Date: **28 April 2015**

Dear Colleagues,

This memo is intended for all staff of the University (academic staff and those colleagues in learning support and administrative roles) who have some involvement with the organisation of student academic Induction and Transitions programmes and support. A Review of Academic Student Induction is currently being chaired by myself, with the objective of developing some proposals for University LTC to consider at its June 2015 meeting. This will focus on arrangements for 2016/17 onwards.

However, in advance of this the PVC Academic has asked me to ensure that some additional guidance is circulated to staff that can inform planning for Induction & Transitions-related activities for 2015/16.

Consequently, I have set out below some general 'key principles' endorsed by University LTC, and a brief summary of the best practice already identified across the 4 faculties, with a brief summary of key areas for future development.

I would be grateful if colleagues could ensure that the principles and best practice highlighted below can be used to influence and inform planning for 2015/16.

Thank you in advance.

Adam

Dr Adam Longcroft (ADTP)

1) LTC-Endorsed 'Key Principles' to be addressed in School-level Inductions/Transitions Support

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, school support staff, other 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. University LTC has endorsed the following list of 'key themes' that Schools should consider when designing and organising their Induction/Transitions support.

Induction/Transitions 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) **THE ROLE OF ADVISERS** – New students should be informed about the advising policy and the allocation of an adviser for each student. Academic student induction programmes provide an excellent opportunity for new and returning students to meet with their **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 *Careers Central*. 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).
- 13) **JOINT DEGREES** – Consideration should be given to new students starting on degrees run by more than one School. In particular, these students should have their own induction event, covering the expectations of the two Schools, how they will communicate and steps to make them a cohesive well-supported group.

2) Good Practice in Existing UEA Induction/Transitions Programmes

- **Student Union Welcome Sessions** – student sabbatical officers and student reps get a chance to welcome students and explain UUEAS services/societies etc.
- **Careers sessions** – led by careers staff. Early introduction to Careers services and concept of ‘employability’ and transferable skills, linked to Graduate Attributes and Skills Award.
- **L&T Hub Induction** – led by LTS staff, brief introduction to processes supporting learning and teaching.
- **Security advice** – led by security staff.
- **Library Induction** – arguably one of the most important things we can do with our students during the first couple of weeks. These tend to work best when they are ‘active learning’ sessions – e.g. treasure hunts, quizzes in small groups etc.
- **Sportspark & Student Societies**– Sport and clubs are a key element of the student experience at UEA. A number of Schools build-in a ‘SOC MART’ sessions.
- **Student Performance Accelerator** (e.g. NBS) – A ‘Handbook’ that focuses on rapid development of self-insight (e.g. into preferred learning styles) and the development of HE study skills (including referencing).
- **Meet the staff** – Most schools have a ‘meet and greet’ session of some kind early-on during the Induction week. Ideally, this should bring students from different cohorts together (overt activity to tackle ‘silos’).
- **Professionalism Lecture** – this is key for ‘professional programmes’ but arguably something similar would be beneficial for all degree programmes since this cuts to

the heart of academic integrity – our students are all likely to progress to a career in a ‘professional setting’.

- **Meet your adviser session** - most Schools have a session (of varying length/duration) where students meet their advisers either individually or in small groups. This should arguably be compulsory for all induction/transitions programmes.
- **Basic Skills session** – these introduce students to basic study skills, e.g. referencing/citation/essay design/writing skills.
- **Specific/dedicated sessions led by DOS** – some Schools build these in, some don’t. Helpful in ensuring that students are aware of and able to access the support services provided, when they need them.
- **Dedicated sessions for Joint Degree students** – some schools build-in sessions focused on ensuring that students on Joint Degrees understand the context in which they will be studying. These are likely to be useful for all students on Joint Degrees.
- **Explanations of pedagogical approach** – some schools provide dedicated sessions where the pedagogical approaches used to teach subjects are explained to students.
- **Introductions to Blackboard** – dedicated sessions on how BB is used to support learning and communicate with students.
- **Introductions to Laboratories** – these provide a ‘gentle’ introduction to what can often seem like a ‘scary’ learning environment.
- **Use of student buddies** – a really effective means of ensuring peer-to-peer support and effective student integration.
- **Campus Tours** – several schools offer these. Arguably essential for all courses/subjects.
- **Course Director talks** – provide a user-friendly and very bespoke introduction to the particular degree on which students have embarked.
- **Subject ‘taster’ sessions** – these are used in a number of schools. Normally short, and limited in number – provide a means of easing students into the study of some key themes/concepts associated with their subject, but NOT formal delivery of module content.
- **Early formative assignments** - where students get to engage in collaborative or individual formative exercises that provide an early insight into their ‘level’ of performance (e.g. knowledge of subject, standard of English etc).
- **Evening Parties and other social events** – relatively common feature in induction programmes. These promote rapid socialisation/integration. Often the focus is on a particular Year group (e.g. 1st years) but these could easily bring together different cohorts.

3) Areas for development

- **Length/Duration** - Some Induction programmes are arguably too short/limited – some only last 1 day, most only last 1 week. Some are 2 weeks. Colleagues are encouraged to consider how induction/transitions support can be ‘phased’ or ‘staggered’ over a period of weeks or a whole semester, and made more ‘timely’

– e.g. detailed guidance on plagiarism/collusion/referencing occurs prior to submission of 1st substantive piece of formative or summative work.

- **Social events** – activities of a social nature are important in building a sense of ‘belonging’ and in ensuring that students are quickly integrated into our community. Research into induction activities indicates that successful social integration results in effective academic integration and enhanced retention and performance.
- **Developing Resilience**- More emphasis, certainly in professional schools, on enabling students to develop their capacity to withstand stress and to adapt to the transitions they face throughout their programmes. Research demonstrates that improving resilience and developing a realistic mind-set can prevent/reduce stress.
- **Cross-cohort activities** - More emphasis could be given to bring different cohorts of students together from different programmes. This is important in ensuring that students are aware of the diverse community of scholars/students they are joining.
- **Student-led activities** – these do not currently feature prominently in our induction programmes and should do in the future. Schools may wish to think about how/where student reps and PAL mentors could ‘lead’ specific aspects of induction into the University. Buddying systems work very effectively in some schools.
- **Use of technology (other than VLE)** – more use could be made of social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) before, during and after induction to support integration and to build a sense of belonging. Research demonstrates that effective use of social media can enhance rapid integration.
- **Explaining Key Regulations** – it seems likely that time could profitably be devoted to ensuring that students develop a better understanding of the regulations and policies that apply to them and their programmes e.g. Word Count Policy, Attendance Policy, Extenuating Circumstances Regulations, CoP on Placement Learning, Plagiarism & Collusion Policy.