



## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** Don't Panic: A Psych/SocSci student's guide to surviving 4<sup>th</sup> year

**Transition(s) the practice supports:** This example is part of the 'staying there' transitions area, although being focused on the transition into final year, it has an element of 'moving on' as well. It is aimed at helping students prepare for their dissertation.

**Abstract:** Through this collaborative initiative, students and staff have developed a guide for students to help them prepare for their dissertation with more confidence and less stress and unease.

**Description:** Following the realisation that for many students the transition into their 4<sup>th</sup> and final year had the potential to lead to a considerable amount of stress and unease, a student-led guide to aspects of transitioning into 4<sup>th</sup> year and becoming a successful final year student was developed. The *Don't Panic* guide is intended to be an informative, informal and personally relatable companion piece to Programme Dissertation Handbooks.

The process of writing and designing the guide involved collaboration between past and current students. *Don't Panic* informally addresses some of the more common trials and tribulations of the life of a fourth year student outside of the lecture room, and contains sections including: choosing modules; anticipating and coping with stress; being aware of and improving time management and organisation; dissertation advice; and general commentary on the writers' own experience of fourth year. The aim of the guide is to provide reassurance and support to students - particularly those who may be less engaged with or feel less personal investment in their learning - helping them feel prepared for a successful 4<sup>th</sup> year experience.

This guide has been distributed electronically to 4<sup>th</sup> year Psychology and Sociology students and was also presented at the HEA Annual Social Sciences Conference in Manchester (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> December) under the theme “Inspire: Sharing great practice in Social Science teaching and learning”. The Guide is currently being prepared in print form for distribution to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in Psychology and Sociology. While informal feedback has been extremely positive, the impact of the guide will also be formally evaluated during the first half of 2016. Contingent on the results of this, it is planned that the Guide will be made a formal part of the longitudinal induction programme for all BSc Psychology and Sociology courses at QMU, and form the basis of workshops for Honours students.

Not only do this guide and the accompanying workshops provide a new method of support for students at a difficult and often unrecognised transitions stage, they also acts as a means of breaking down barriers between staff and students and increasing a sense of supportive community within the Psychology and Sociology division at QMU.

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**All examples provided will be posted to the Enhancement Themes website with the intention of including them in the National Transitions map.**