



## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** Dundee Academy of Sport

**Transition(s) the practice supports:** School to College/University transition and College to University transition

**Abstract:** Dundee Academy of Sport is a 3 year funded project based at Abertay University and undertaken in partnership with Dundee & Angus College. One of the key aims of the project is to simplify the learner journey from Access to FE/HE through to PhD by smoothing transitions at all points of entry whether at initial point of entry or for students articulating from FE to HE. [www.dundeeacademyofsport.com](http://www.dundeeacademyofsport.com)

**Description:** At school level the project works mainly with schools that are based in catchment areas where there are high levels of multiple deprivation (SIMD20). Traditionally fewer young people from these areas make the transition from school into either FE or HE for a variety of reasons including the fact that often no-one else from their family has ever progressed from school to college or university. Through using sport as a context for learning across the curriculum, the project aim offers the chance to broaden pupils' perception of what college and university life will be like and the opportunities higher level qualifications can bring.

An association with sport and sporting activities develops particular employability skills such as being a team player, flexibility, problem solving and leadership. The project team devise learning opportunities that enable pupils, particularly within senior phase at secondary school, to begin to develop these skills both in school settings and in college/university environments.

In order to provide such opportunities project officers meet with school management and teaching staff to discuss the requirements of pupils within their school. This is translated into a learning opportunity where pupils, for example, join the project team in university and participate in a mini lecture with associated tutorials to experience the difference in learning style within school and university. Wherever possible a series of learning opportunities are planned by the project officer and school to enable pupils to have a number of experiences linking to college and university thereby helping to reduce the barriers to entering tertiary education.

Feedback from pupils who have participated in such interventions indicate the following:



Senior pupils from a local academy attended “A Taste of University Learning” and 95.4% responded that participating in this event gave them more confidence about being in a lecture at university and 90.91% responded that they were more confident about participating in tutorials and asking questions.

The prefect group from a local high school attended “University life” and 90% responded when asked that participation in the event gave them more confidence about being a student at university or college. Sarah, one of the prefect group, commented, *“I feel more informed about moving into uni in the future.”*

To support transition from college to university the project has devised a series of workshops, in consultation with university academic staff and college academic staff that are tailored to assist students studying Sport related programmes consider articulation to university. The workshops are delivered in college at agreed times over the course of the academic year within the parameters of college timetables. These sessions are not mandatory but are strategically timetabled to provide students the option of engaging without being detrimental to any other part of their studies. Within the overall programme of delivery, both HN 1<sup>st</sup> year students and HN 2<sup>nd</sup> year students are invited to attend a conference style event planned towards the end of their academic year that will be hosted in university. This will allow students to experience university, speak to staff familiar with sport related degrees, participate in a lecture from a keynote speaker and explore the facilities. It is intended that this will reinforce the opportunity of direct entry to 3<sup>rd</sup> year of sport related degrees and help better prepare the students to succeed while learning independently within a university rather than college setting.

Finally, the project team provided weekly tutorials for students who have already made the transition from college through direct entry to third year sport related degrees having successfully completed their HND qualification. These tutorials are timetabled activity for direct entrant students based around themes that will assist students to adjust to the new learning environment. Topics such as academic writing, referencing and using specialist software are included in the series of tutorials. It is envisaged that this support will enhance retention and achievement in 3<sup>rd</sup> year sport degree study and as college students will be aware that this programme is available to assist them should they choose to move from college to university as a direct entrant, it may encourage a higher number of students from areas of multiple deprivation to consider progressing to degree level study.

These interventions will be evaluated through questionnaires and focus groups towards the end of this academic year, early next academic year and at the end of academic year 2015/16.

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