



## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** Supporting students in transition through the Abertay Associate Student Scheme

**Transition(s) the practice supports:** Supporting students from College and International Partner Institutions to University degree study.

### **Abstract:**

A review of relevant literature<sup>12</sup> coupled with informal consultation with practitioners and policy-makers indicate that transition from College to University requires not only support through a strategic and coordinated approach by HEIs, but also that this support should start well before entry to University and continue throughout the first semester, and indeed the first year of study at University; regardless of which year that might be. Moreover, transition support should be integral to the learning experience, before, during and following transition.

Abertay's strategic approach to supporting such student transition is linked to improving preparedness for HE degree level study; easing integration into the university environment, both academically and socially; and encouraging the development of the independent learner<sup>3</sup>. By shifting the focus of transition from student retention and withdrawal to supporting the engagement and empowerment of all students, successful transition can be measured not simply in terms of whether students continue on their programmes, but whether in doing so they are provided with the opportunity to achieve their full potential<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Bathmaker, A. M. & Thomas, W. (2006). Positioning Themselves - Higher Education Transitions and 'Dual Sector' Institutions: Exploring the Nature and Meaning of Transitions in FE/HE Institutions in England. Paper presented at SRHE conference, Brighton. <http://crl.gcal.ac.uk/conf07/parallelabstracts/abstracts/paper8.doc>

<sup>2</sup> Torrance H, Colley H, Garratt D, Jarvis J, and Piper H (2005), The impact of Different Modes of Assessment on Achievement and Progress in the Learning and Skills Sector, Learning and Skills Research Centre, <http://www.itselfjimbutohasweknowit.org.uk/files/AssessmentModesImpact.pdf> [accessed on 11/06/07]

Trotter E. and Roberts C.A. (2006),

<sup>3</sup> Kember D. (2001), Beliefs about Knowledge and the Process of Teaching and Learning as a Factor in Adjusting to Study in Higher Education, *Studies in Higher Education* 26(2), 205-221

<sup>4</sup> Harvey L. Drew S, Smith M (2006), The First-year Experience: A Review of Literature for the Higher Education Academy, [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/research/Harvey\\_Drew\\_Smith.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/research/Harvey_Drew_Smith.pdf) [accessed on 14/05/07]



## **Description:**

Transition support at Abertay is viewed as a longitudinal process which begins before the student enters University and continues throughout their first year of study. Ideally it needs to be part of the institution's mainstream teaching activity, as such, teaching staff, as well as learning support staff, need to understand the multidimensional aspects of transition - academic, personal and social. They need to understand the actual diversity of the student group and avoid generalisations based on learner profile. It is an issue that is explicitly addressed in the professional development of new staff, through the PG Cert HET.

At Abertay University we aim to provide timely, relevant support throughout the student's journey into Higher Education and through their degree study.

This starts with the Abertay Associate Student Scheme, which applies to:

1. those students following an agreed study route at our partner colleges/Universities, which enables them to progress to a named Abertay University degree programme. These students will normally register as Associate Students in year 2 of their courses of study at partner UK institutions.
2. those students studying for an Abertay/SEGi Dual Award delivered in Malaysia and for those in stages 2 of degree courses in Malaysia who wish to complete their final Honours year of study at Abertay University in Dundee.
3. those students who have been jointly interviewed, selected and recruited by Dundee and Angus College in conjunction with Abertay University staff, and are enrolled on the Scottish Funding Council's 'additional funded places' scheme, and who will be completing years 1 & 2 of their HN course at one of the campuses of the College in accordance with the formal agreement between the two institutions and following the requirements of the SFC Outcome agreement for this scheme. At present, this applies to students studying at Dundee and Angus College only. This cohort of students will be registered as Associate Student of the University at year 1 of their HN studies at college.

Abertay's Associate Student Scheme was developed by the Head of Academic Partnerships and has been in existence for some years. More recently, as new developments such as the SFC 'Additional Funded Places Scheme', which is now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year and the University revised academic partnership development with our Malaysian partner have come on stream, the Scheme has been modified to accommodate these new and challenging arrangements. Making the Scheme available to our International transition students begins in 2015.

Being an Associate Student provides these students with an insight into university study and student life in general and at Abertay in particular. They have a structured programme of support which includes, where relevant to clauses 1, 2 and 3 above:

Induction and orientation to the Scheme,

Student engagement activities held at the university,

Support materials and activities to assist them prepare for degree study,

Subject specific Abertay Information

Some access to IS and Blackboard resources, including ASPIRE resource materials [Abertay Articulation Support Programme: Information for routes into Higher Education], a bespoke transition support framework.

Engagement with the Abertay Student Centre and organised student social events where relevant

The administration of the Associate Student scheme for all categories of student noted in clauses 1, 2 and 3 above is undertaken by the AU Partnerships Office.

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