



Student Transitions: Example of Transitions Practice

Title: Supporting transitions from college to higher education: the campus-based model

Transition(s) the practice supports: The transition from Higher National Diploma (HND) through to part-time Honours degree study

Abstract: There are recognised significant challenges for students progressing from college study to higher education, and the need to navigate both the social and academic aspects of progression and complete the final year of their degree study. In addition to existing articulation and progression agreements with colleges, the campus-based partnership model provides a unique approach to supporting the transition from full-time Higher National Diploma study at college to degree study at The Open University. In this collaborative partnership the university and the college each bring their own strengths to the arrangement. The model allows learners to continue to study in a familiar learning environment within their existing peer support networks, perceived to be of critical benefit to learners and contributing to overall success.

Description: The campus-based model of partnership between colleges and The Open University in Scotland (OUiS) is a development of our articulation activity. The unique model supports the transition experience of students progressing, on a part-time basis, to final year degree study in Social Sciences following a Higher National Diploma (HND), while maintaining a link with their local college, as students use the college as a study base for their Open University (OU) degree. The model has developed since 2011 to five colleges in 2014-15. This Enhancement Themes example of practice focuses on the campus-based model at Fife College.



enhancement
themes

- **The Campus-based Model at Fife College**

The campus-based model was initially developed with Fife College in 2011. The partnership involves the delivery of two OU Social Science modules over a period of two years on a part-time basis. Having completed an HND in Social Sciences at college, students claim credit transfer of 240 credits towards the BA (Hons) Combined Social Sciences. Using Fife College as their study base students study two 60 credit Social Science modules (SCQF 10), and a college tutor acts as their university tutor.

- **Higher Education study in a familiar learning environment**

There are recognised significant challenges for students progressing to higher education from college study, including social and academic factors. For many students, being based at their college is the only option available to them to continue studying due to geographical constraints, caring responsibilities, their employment or disability. The campus-based model therefore provides a flexible opportunity for students to make the transition to higher education study. In particular, the familiar college base represents a 'safe' and supportive environment for learning.

- **Supporting transition within existing peer support networks**

Fife College allows the students to use the OU learning space to develop a tight peer-group network, supporting successful student transition. At the college, students enjoy having access to a distinct learning space that is used often and independently. The face-to-face support is emphasised as the most important aspect of the university learning experience.

I adjusted more quickly than expected. I doubt I would have completed the year however, had I not been college based with the support of peers and an excellent tutor. (Year 2 campus-based OU student, Fife College)

Typically students develop strong relationships with each other, having studied together as a tight-knit group for over two years. Evaluations of the campus-based model suggest that students like this continuity and are also active in trying to bring new members into the group to do the course, which is seen to be one of the strengths of being based at the college.

The structure of the university course necessitates the development of independent learning skills and the ability to conduct independent research, but student feedback has reinforced

the importance of the campus-based support in making the transition. Although there are different learning and teaching cultures in the two institutions involved in this collaboration, it is the drawing together of the two institutions that has allowed successful transition for the majority of students.

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