



## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** Transition management case study: creating a transition tool box

**Transition(s) the practice supports:**

- Approaches to transitions
- Empowering students through transitions

**Abstract:** With an ever changing student population, internationalisation and strong strategic emphasis on retention, there is a critical need to provide pastoral and academic support to students at key transition points in their degree schemes. However, with increasing diversification in the student body and the problems faced, support must be offered proactively and in a manner which meets diverse student preferences and needs.

Following identification of student difficulties at the University of Aberdeen, a variety of strategies have been devised, developed and implemented, which has improved a variety of key transition points and stemmed the loss of students across the student body.

The resultant “toolbox” provides flexible, student empowered strategies for tailoring to individual School needs.

**Description:** The resultant strategies developed, implemented and optimised at the University of Aberdeen include:

- welcome events, promoting a sense of belonging and publicising available support
- design of a VLE site with support and guidance resources tailored to at risk groups
- drop in sessions for students to come along and discuss difficulties face-to-face
- careers days to promote potential degree end points and encourage career development
- experience advertising events showcasing the unique ways in which engaging in co- and extra-curricular experiences can serve as a launch pad for student careers
- contact with retention coordinator at key points of the academic year

The success of these strategies are measurable in light of retention figures and show improvement from 13.2% student loss across level 3 in 2009 to only 7% in 2011. These numbers continue to decline towards the present time. The incorporation of these support mechanisms alongside the curriculum is a modern necessity and a critical supplement to University education. Recognition of the heterogeneous needs and approaches of the students underpins these strategies and is a vital consideration in terms of “a one option doesn't fit all” approach to transitional



enhancement  
themes

support. Information about the design, set up and logistics of these support measures and their successes since they were implemented can be obtained from the author.

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