



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: Transitional practices within the Employability & Opportunities Team- Supporting student's transition into Higher Education

Transition(s) the practice supports: The Employability & Opportunities Team provides welcome workshops during Fresher's week for every new student transitioning into study at Edinburgh Napier University, at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Abstract: The workshops welcome each year all new students at Edinburgh Napier University and help their transition into higher education through orienting them in the university, making connections with other students and engaging with their programme of studies.

Description: This Edinburgh Napier University practice started in 2007 with the aim of motivating and inspiring students to engage with their programme of studies and with each other, towards enhancement of academic integration, student experience and student success. To this end, all ENU new undergraduate students attend the 'Making a Successful Start' workshop while the postgraduate students attend 'Goal Setting for Success', both of a duration of two hours, during Fresher's week.

Through a combination of group and individual activities, these introductory workshops provide students with opportunities to:

- Make connections with other students and get to know who will be part of their social and learning networks,
- Begin to work more confidently in groups with fellow students from diverse backgrounds,
- Recognise what they can gain from taking an active part in university life.

More specifically, the workshop targeting undergraduates focus on making a successful start at university. Students are encouraged to think about their goals for their first year of higher education, as well as for their first year after graduation. The students then reflect on the skills, attitudes and knowledge needed to reach these short and long-term goals and how to acquire such skills, attitudes and knowledge –through the curriculum, work or volunteering experience, or other extra-curricular activities.

The welcome workshop for postgraduate students goes further in terms of goal setting, as it gives students practical tools to set their vision and plan towards accomplishing it. Indeed, the students learn how to set goals using the SMART model and how to build strategies towards goal completion by using a planning wheel. The different support mechanisms the university makes available to them to reach their goals are also outlined, such as the career service which provides a CV doctor and assessment training centre.

These welcome workshops benefit students in so far as they contribute to building a personalized student experience by providing awareness of all the different support mechanisms available to them at ENU. Furthermore, by giving students a first opportunity to meet and talk to one another, this practice improves the student experience and the likelihood of academic success. Finally, these workshops are in line with ENU values of ambition – as the students are invited to think about and prepare their future from their first day in HE- and inclusiveness –as every single new students get the same induction workshop. Indeed, in September 2015, our welcome workshops were attended by circa 1990 undergraduate students transitioning into year 1 and circa 270 postgraduate students transitioning into PG studies.

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