



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice: Glasgow Caledonian University

Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: Welcoming and Engaging Care Experienced Students

Transition(s) the practice supports: care experienced students (formerly known as care leavers) to make the transition from school or college to university as part of GCU's commitment to widening access and actualising our motto 'For the Common Good'.

Abstract: GCU continues to demonstrate its commitment to students from a care-experienced background with targeted outreach and support. Our dedication and practice extends to accommodation assistance and priority financial support through our care leavers' bursary. In line with our corporate parenting responsibilities we work in collaboration with partner Glasgow City Council secondary schools to deliver a number of activities to support pupils make the transition to Higher Education. In addition we support college students to make the transition to GCU and we offer all care experienced applicants tailored information, advice and guidance with their transition to study at GCU.

Description:

Following on from previous successes, in 2014-15 GCU established new pre-entry activities targeting care experienced students, which we have continued through 2015-16. In line with our corporate parenting responsibilities this support includes:

- A one-to-one mentoring programme for senior school pupils from S5-6 stage, assisting with researching and planning future academic and career options. This was delivered in 2014-15 to 20 pupils by a dedicated team of GCU staff, and engaged pupils through weekly school meetings, as well as campus activities and email/text communications. For session 2015-16 the team is mentoring 16 pupils aspiring to university study. Eight of these pupils have applied to GCU for entry in 2016.
- Working in partnership with the programme MCR Pathways alongside other HEIs to organise taster campus visits to each institution for approximately 25 care experienced pupils on their programme.
- A working partnership with MCR Pathways coordinators in other schools to offer



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additional complementary support, for example participation in scheduled visits to the university.

- A communication plan to promote our support nationally to Local Education Authorities, schools and colleges which offers additional opportunities, which care-experienced students can elect into. This includes for example, a tour, mentoring through our MAPS initiative, advice and support on applications and interviews.
- Our GCU working group continues to drive forward the agenda and support provision. We support eligible care experienced students with free accommodation in the university halls of residence for up to two years and priority financial support through our care leavers' bursary, as well as a guaranteed interview to work as a Student Mentor for the university.
- At an institutional level care experienced pupils are considered a priority group within our newly contextualised admissions policy.

Over the last three years the numbers of care experienced students, who ticked the box on UCAS remained steady at around 12 or 13 entrants. In September 2015 GCU welcomed 20 care experienced students. Whilst we are delighted about this increase, which includes a number of students who took part in pre-entry activity, it is too early to credit this to a change of practice. Two of the 20 gained entry as a result of the new contextualised admissions approach. However we will continue to monitor any change to numbers over the next few years to evaluate the impact of the implementation of our pre-entry activity on applicants and enrolments.

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All examples provided will be posted to the Enhancement Themes website with the intention of including them in the National Transitions map.