



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: Making a success of the Associate Student Programme in the School of Engineering and Built Environment at Edinburgh Napier University

Transition(s) the practice supports: Smoothing the transition of Associate Students from college to University by enabling familiarisation with university environments and pedagogic approaches.

Abstract: 2014/15 is the 2nd of four years of Scottish Funding Council's Associate Student Programme (ASP), a key feature of which is that 1st year college students matriculate as Associate Students at their chosen University (as well as their College), with the guarantee of a place (subject to achieving agreed academic entry requirements) on a named degree programme. The ASP is designed to extend student numbers participating in higher education and to promote successful progression to university via the "2+2" articulation model. The School of Engineering and Built Environment (SEBE) is working with 4 partner colleges; and 57 funded students p/a are supported into third year of three specified engineering undergraduate courses¹.

Description: Student support activities have been undertaken in what we have clustered as seven distinct interventions as follows:

1. Induction Day: college students gather from all 4 partner colleges, campus tours, 1st year maths lecture, library introduction, lunch in canteen, Q&A, matriculation advice.
2. Students attend lectures and labs on campus at Edinburgh Napier University (generally 1st & 2nd year timetabled activities).
3. Academic skills workshops: report writing, note taking, referencing etc. delivered by Academic Services staff in college and also on University campus as part of other events.
4. Dedicated events relevant to particular disciplines (e.g. employability skills workshops for Civil Engineers).

¹ HND Engineering Systems to BEng Energy & Environmental Engineering].

5. Site visits (e.g. Helix Country Park, Falkirk: land remediation, drainage, footbridge design).
6. Additional maths support (in response to needs identified by colleges & Edinburgh Napier University).
7. Encouragement to be involved in “other” aspects of University & student life: use of sports facilities, Student Association, placement programmes, Confident Futures etc.

Rather than organise specific activities for Associate Students as a distinct group (which may be counter-productive) events are, wherever possible integrated into corresponding undergraduate timetables. However, it can prove difficult to match what is available for delivery at University with what is relevant for students in terms of their College programme and other commitments (such as part time work). Practicalities such as the availability of appropriate room or labs, University/College staff willingness and availability to participate. Wednesday afternoons (non-teaching at University) have proved to be useful in this regard, however then begins to negate the idea of a teaching free Wednesday afternoon; as recently introduced at Edinburgh Napier and in one of the partner Colleges.

We regularly seek feedback from College students and staff about their experience and the perceived value of the support interventions. Lessons learnt include:

- Involve students (not staff) as guide on campus tour.
- Offer the support to a whole class group rather than just to the funded Associate Students.
- Pro-active communication & co-operation with the colleges; including shared planning in the timing & choice of activity events.

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