



## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** SPICE International

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

**Abstract:** This online resource, now available through Open Moodle site, is an interactive set of activities designed by students and for students to introduce international students to a learning and teaching environment at Edinburgh Napier University. The topics and activities were selected by former international students and informed by students' own words, making this a student-led orientation to support international transitions.

**Description:** The resource's intention was to address the needs of international students coming to the UK HE learning and teaching environment, identified in a collaborative research project (Foster, 2011). Specifically, the aim was to design a student-led, interactive, activity based package which would allow students to feel welcomed and supported in their transition to the new learning and teaching context (Foster, 2013). The resource was developed with the help of internal and external (TESEP) funding and quickly attracted the attention and praise from NUS, SPARQS, HEA and many UK HEIs for its student-centred approach to international transitions.

SPICE International is open to all international students choosing a programme of study at Edinburgh Napier, regardless their location and programme of study. It is generic in nature and student driven. However, it also has many subject specific examples and there are two distinct routes (undergraduate and postgraduate). The students complete exercises and receive feedback on their performance – they can revisit the exercises to improve their performance and come back to their work after they begin their study at Napier. They receive a certificate of completion and their record of work can be viewed by the Programme Leader or Year Tutor who, based on the record of student's SPICE International performance, can easily identify at the start of the programme, the areas which require further attention and recommend to the student at the start of the programme what areas to develop and how. This ensures the students are not only welcomed and supported at a very early stage of application to Edinburgh Napier, but they can receive further specialist support on arrival (there is no time wasted on 'getting to know the student'). Overall, the resource

has received to date a lot of praise from the students who enjoy slowly familiarising themselves with the new learning and teaching environment, at their own pace (or in class with a tutor at partner colleges/universities) and feel welcome.

One challenge that remains is to ensure the resource is well publicised to students (through Admissions office) and owned by the programme teams so the Programme Leader promotes it and encourages students to use it before and post-arrival to Napier (or the start of Napier programme for distant learners). The programme teams need to feel they own SPICE International, rather than it being 'Monika's' or 'the university's' resource.

### Lessons learnt

The main learning has been in the power of involving students as co-creators of resources for students! It is a much more time consuming task than producing something myself (!) and developing SPICE international involved working with 200+ students, and a very laborious process of selecting what to include and how, testing and trials, etc. However, the result has been overwhelmingly positive in creating a resource 'for students by students' which has this distinctive student-led feel.

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