

**Moving Forward and beyond:
enhancing progression through partnership.
A university-wide initiative to enhance the first-
year experience and to develop independent
lifelong learners**

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Moving Forward and the GCU Transition and Progression Framework

- The GCU Transition and Progression Framework integrates and supports all activities linked to supporting student transition and progression within the schools and at central level.
- The Framework represents a coordinated, institutional strategy and evidence-based practice.

The GCU Transition and Progression Framework is divided in two parts:

Part One (Strategy)

Vision

Principles/strategies for
effective transition &
progression support

Reflective questions

*Approaches/action plans
mapped to principles/strategies*

Part Two (Resource)

Vision

Principles/strategies for
effective transition &
progression support

Reflective questions

*Examples of practice (GCU and
beyond)*

Strategies and Principles of effective transition support¹:

Strategies/Principles of effective transition support (pre-entry & transition)	Reflective questions based on the principles of effective transition support	Examples of action points based on strategies U - University/centrally led S - School led U/S - Joint central/school action
<p>Pre-entry guidance and support to enable students to make appropriate and informed choices in terms of programme and institution; supporting the preparation for university level learning and clarifying expectations of the academic and social dimensions of the university experience.</p> <p>... and more</p>	<p>How can we make sure that students make 'informed' decisions? How can we ensure clear and unambiguous expectations? How can we engage students with the university prior to their arrival on campus? What kind of information do students need and when? I.e. timely provision of information! Have we asked students that question?</p> <p>... and more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better liaison with schools and colleges, including visits from university staff and student mentors to schools and colleges as well as GCU-led support via the website. Ensuring better co-ordination mechanisms are in place between staff undertaking such activities. U/S Engagement with students prior to application and entry via campus visits, open evenings, web-based support and guidance, peer mentoring schemes and through collaborative approaches with schools, colleges and the community. U/S The Summer School option and opportunities for pre-entry preparation should be made available to all new students in a variety of forms. U <p>... and more</p>
<p>Strategies/Principles of effective transition support (learning, teaching and assessment)</p> <p>Learning, teaching and assessment strategies should include embedded transition support at all stages of the student life cycle to achieve a holistic learning experience across the university (e.g. LTAS and iLearn-Framework)). That is to say that transition support and other forms of learner support should be embedded into the curricula of all four years of undergraduate study as well as postgraduate study.</p> <p>... and more</p>	<p>Reflective questions based on the principles of effective transition support</p> <p>How can transition support be embedded into the curriculum for all stages of the student life-cycle? What form of transition support needs to be embedded at what stage of the academic year/student life-cycle? What other forms of student support can/should be embedded into curriculum? How can such support be combined with an innovative pedagogy that ensures that students are enabled to become independent/self-directed learners? (scaffolding model)</p> <p>... and more</p>	<p>Examples of action points based on strategies U - University/centrally led S - School led U/S - Joint central/school action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontloading L1 – in terms of student contact /support. Transition is problematic and requires more resources to solve these issues. A low cost system leads to poorer results and more problems. U/S Need to audit student's reasons for withdrawal. U/S Implementation of LTAS and iLearn-Framework U <p>... and more</p>

¹ For more information on effective transition support and issues in relation to the first-year experience see the project reports of the QAA Enhancement Themes 'The first year' (<http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/FirstYear/default.asp>), York, M. (2008) *The first-year Experience of Higher Education in the UK*, Higher Education Academy, (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/publications/FYEFinalReport.pdf>), Harvey, L & Drew, S. (2006) *The First-year Experience. A Review of Literature for the Higher Education Academy*, Higher Education Academy (http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/research/Harvey_Drew_Smith.pdf). A descriptive bibliography, a descriptive set of website links and more information on examples of good practice will be made available on the Moving Forward Wiki and the Moving Forward website in due course.

Role of Moving Forward

- The Moving Forward team continues to offer guidance and support in relation to the implementation of the Framework as well as transition and progression in general.
- Schools and departments are encouraged to share their priority actions and associated timelines with Moving Forward to support the development of an integrated timeline for the implementation of the Framework.
- The consultation process underpinning the Moving Forward initiative is continuing throughout its duration and feedback from staff and students is invaluable and always welcome.
- We are constantly looking for more examples of practice to share with the GCU community.

How the Framework has been received...

Event (12 responses):

- 42% found the Framework **Very Useful**
- 55% found the Framework **Useful**
- 3% found the Framework **Not useful**

Mini CoPs (49 responses):

- 18% found the GCU Transition and Progression Framework **Very Useful**
- 63% found the GCU Transition and Progression Framework **Useful**
- 19% did not respond to this question

Part 2: GCU Transition and Progression Framework: Examples of Practice and Case Studies

- Framework as a resource
- Examples of innovative and effective practice (internal and external)
- Case studies
 - Showcasing some examples of practice
 - Sharing and developing practice
 - Evaluation tool for Moving Forward

Case study 1: POP Module

- Dr Irene Bonnar and Gayle McKay: Professional Orientation and Practice Module, School of Built and Natural Environment

Overview:

- Credit bearing, long thin, Level 1 module for all students on UG programmes at level one in the school, began in 2002
- Module framework aims to enhance ‘belonging and becoming’ -
 - Induction activities, including 20% assessment mark (part of module assessment and includes peer assessment)
 - Professional development activities, including engagement with professional bodies
 - Effective Learning Service and Careers support at appropriate milestones
 - Discipline specific activities, including peer assessment

- **Aim:**
 - To allow information to be delivered at a more manageable pace avoiding information overload
 - Encourage and enhance student engagement with Professional development
 - Create a sense of belonging
- **Outcomes:**
 - Improved levels of progression within the school
 - More time for absorbing information
 - Greater engagement with professional development and the field of study, fostering a sense of belonging and subject identity
 - Currently being rolled out across other programmes

Case study 2: Extended Induction Project using student mentors

- Dr Julie Rattray, School of Life Sciences and CA Scholar

Overview:

- Developed by the first year tutor in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences department
- A Multi stranded approach, firstly developed a student centred extended induction programme using student mentors, first offered in September 2008 to all first year Bioscience students.

Aim:

- To help students become forward thinking, independent learners from an early stage by assisting student integration, engagement and empowerment.
- Improve departmental progression and retention rates

Aim:

First strand developed - redesign of week 0 induction to enhance social engagement and develop learning communities: -

- Shape new student's perceptions of University and course choice
- Provide a good transition experience helping to shape student commitment
- Help students adjust to new environment, engage with independent learning requirements and comprehend their academic obligation

Outcomes

- Student mentors recruited and paid (mostly 2nd and 3rd years) to assist in induction process. Programme-specific staff and the school's ADT acted as facilitators
 - One day training sessions provided for mentors
- Induction week had a socialisation focus in addition to providing information relating to study skills and university life
- Mixed response recruiting mentors and their experiences
- Staff involvement very poor
- Delay with ethical procedures: delays evaluation and further development

Moving Forward Event (February 2009)

- Six Mini-Communities of Practice (Mini CoPs) established:
 - Learning, Teaching, Assessment, and Feedback
 - Preparation and Induction
 - Peer Support and Mentoring
 - Liaison with Schools and Colleges
 - Marketing and Communication
 - Student Empowerment and Staff/Student Communication
- First meetings have been held and feedback has been outstandingly positive: 98% found the Mini CoP meetings useful or very useful (response rate=62%).

The Moving Forward team:

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Website:

<http://www.academy.gcal.ac.uk/movingforward/index.html>

Wiki:

<http://www.caledonianacademy.net/spaces/movingforward/>