

The student induction programme is critical in the formation of the new students' impressions of their University and course of choice. This early experience of University life and an effective transition can influence the students' commitment to the course and their willingness to persist. Traditional induction programmes have been timetabled for completion in Week 0 when students are rapidly integrated into their new environment. Many students find this experience overwhelming, some fail to engage and many find induction dull, uninspiring and irrelevant within the context of their programme choice. This experience leaves a significant impression on the students and is a factor in early withdrawal from programmes.

With rapid increases in students numbers in HE and widening access initiatives resulting in more diverse student, the traditional week of induction activities is no longer seen as an acceptable timescale for entrants to adjust to their new environment, to engage with the independent learning requirements of tertiary education, and to comprehend their academic obligation.

The Extended Induction: Engaging and empowering students to become independent learners project, has a multistranded approach. It aims to address a number of the key issues identified as reasons for poor engagement with the programme and early withdrawal. The development of the various strands of the project will incorporate approaches which have been widely identified as good practise, such as pre-induction, early engagement, social engagement, peer guiding, extended induction, enhancing learning skills and development of independent learners. The key strands include: the development of a Pre-induction virtual learning environment to encourage early engagement; the redesign of Week 0 induction to enhance social engagement and the development of learning communities; and the extension and integration of induction enhanced learning skills and support mechanisms into the core curriculum to ensure all students can access the skills and support that they required to become independent, reflective learners.

#### Objectives of the Project

- To design and implement an extended induction programme which will engage and empower students to take responsibility of the transitional experience and their subsequent learning experience.
- To design and launch a pre-induction virtual learning environment to encourage early engagement in the learning experience.
- To design and implement a student centred Week 0 induction programme using senior student "guiders", programme specific staff and the Academic Development Tutor as facilitators of student transition, and in the development of learning communities.
- To extend and integrate the introduction and development of key transition and learning skills into the Semester A core curriculum and Personal Development Planning provision within the Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences.