

One size does not fit all – developing an effective orientation for mid-year entry students

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Most universities offer comprehensive orientation activities that try to address what have been identified as the needs of commencing students such as academic and social engagement, in order to improve their retention (Wilson & Lizzio 2008; Pitkethly and Prosser 2001). These are, by and large, effective (or at least becoming more so). However, one group of commencing students do not appear to be as well catered for – the mid-year intake. This presentation examines some standard mid-year orientation programs to see how well they cater for the needs of the mid-year intake. It will contend that one size does not fit all and that the mid-year commencing students are disadvantaged, often neglected and are deserving of more targeted attention tailored to their specific needs. **One way to assist them would be to inform them of any obstacles/short-comings they may encounter and how these can be allayed. This could be done at a generic level by O'Week organisers, academic advisors or First Year Advisors as part of Faculty orientations. However, while this might be useful, it does put the onus onto the student. I would argue that the Schools themselves, and more specifically topic coordinators, should take more responsibility for mid-year entry students and should attempt to address any disadvantages that accrue from their specific enrolment.**

Key Words

Mid-year entry, orientation, transition