

# Getting Started: An Institution-Wide Approach to Orientation

Karena T. Thomas<sup>1</sup>, Zarlisht Sarwari<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> The Hub, Gate 8 High St, UNSW Australia, Kensington NSW 2052, [karena.thomas@unsw.edu.au](mailto:karena.thomas@unsw.edu.au)

<sup>2</sup> The Hub, Gate 8 High St, UNSW Australia, Kensington NSW 2052, [z.sarwari@unsw.edu.au](mailto:z.sarwari@unsw.edu.au)

Student transition involves the student capability to navigate change. Much of this capability includes having resources to engage with change conditions (Gale & Parker, 2014). Each students' experience of transition will be unique in light of their background, capabilities, approach and experiences. Transition to higher education begins well before the student initiates a relationship with any institution, and involves a range of transitional experiences including induction, development and becoming (Gale & Parker, 2014).

UNSW established the 'Getting Started' program in 2011 with the aim of offering a streamlined, coordinated induction process to the university, which contributes to an improved entry into tertiary study.

Key components of Getting Started are: integrated face to face enrolment; operational and technical services in a co-located service area; coordinated online and personal communication and the incorporation of a strong brand identity. This approach has evolved into a holistic and streamlined induction process for new students, beginning several weeks prior to commencing their first semester. These online and co-located services are a university asset, often identified by faculties as a tool to foster prospective student relationships.

Even prior to accepting their offer on the Getting Started website, prospective students have access to 'settling in' information online, which equips them with tools to complete their own enrolment and IT processes, whilst promoting essential student support information. The results have been positive and contributes to our continued understanding of the benefits of adopting a "...whole-of-institution approach, where academic and non-academic staff work together quite intentionally to level the academic playing field and support student success" (Kift, 2014).

This presentation will unpack UNSW Australia's best practice for providing a university wide, systematic approach for transitional communication and delivery. It will discuss the successes in 2014 towards a holistic vision of transition, and strategies for development in 2015.

## Key Words

Transition, Institution-Wide, Orientation