

One size does not fit all:

Developing an effective orientation for mid-year entry students



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Transition Office

Orientation activities



The importance of O'Week / orientation

- Vince Tinto (2008): 'access without support is not opportunity.'
- Sally Kift (2008) The next, great first year challenge: Sustaining, coordinating and embedding coherent institution-wide approaches to enact the FYE as "everybody's business".
- Trevor Gale (2010, p.9): 'opportunity confined to support is not equity.'

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The importance of O'Week / orientation

- O'Week - help[ed] them feel welcomed", "assisted them to make connections with their faculty" and "helped them feel more prepared for life and learning at university" (Wilson, 2003, p. 5).
- Attending O'Week – has an impact on retention and student satisfaction (Wilson, Nelson et al...)
- Flinders SSP – O'Week attendance is a predictor of student's engagement with the University, and is associated with improved retention. [Higher risk students who attended O-week had a reduced rate of attrition]

Review of Student Learning Support, 2012

-that the University adopt a comprehensive framework for academic orientation and transition of students – whole-of-institution approach.

- clarify the expectations of university study (e.g. the time commitments required) and develop their sense of direction and purpose;
- provide clear guidance on where students can access support and resources (both physical and online);
- enhance the academic skills and learning readiness of first year students;
- provide opportunities for students to develop social networks.

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The orientation/transition framework

- Academic preparedness** – being aware of the academic requirements of university study, and developing the requisite skills; feeling confident in one's academic capacity or self-efficacy.
- Social engagement** – developing a sense of identity and belonging by identifying with one's academic discipline or profession, establishing relationships with students and staff, making friends, and generally participating in University life.
- Physical orientation** – familiarising oneself with the University environment, knowing where lecture and tutorial rooms are, how to navigate around the Library, where to find support services and how they can be accessed.
- Institutional/administrative knowledge** – knowing how to enrol, change topics, withdraw, how to hand up assignments, and understand general student policies and procedures.

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Mentoring Programs



Academic support/intervention strategies



Academic support



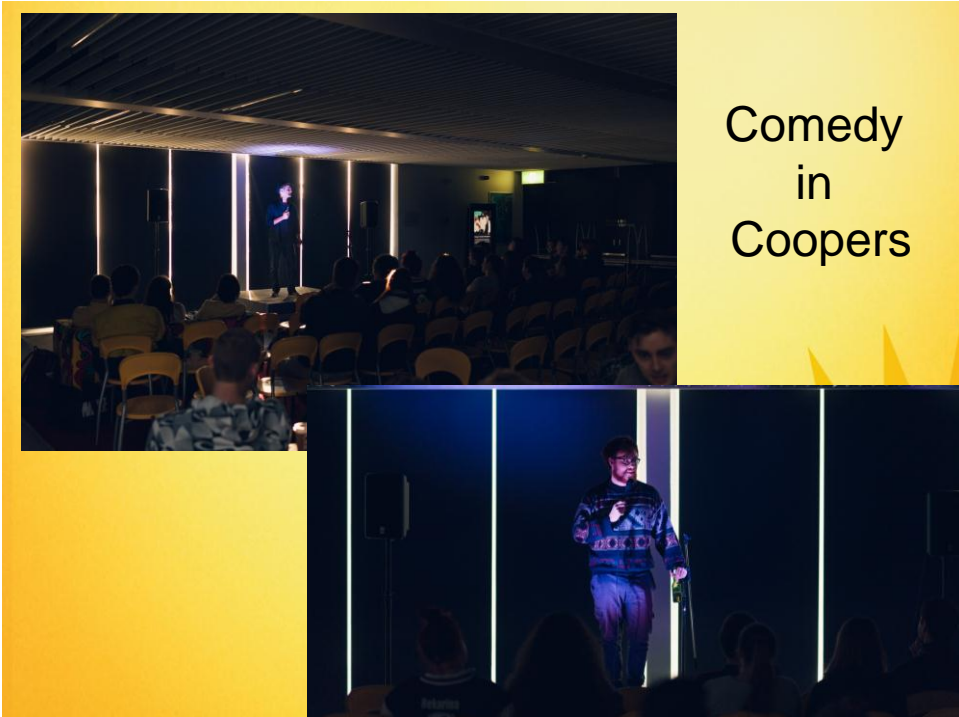
Services on campus



O'Fiesta



Comedy in Coopers



Satisfaction and Impact

Everyone was very nice and engaging. I was offered a lot of opportunity by a lot of different people and I feel very welcomed here.

I could only attend on Monday and to the O'Fiesta night due to working commitments, but from my experience I gained considerable amounts of knowledge. I was able to learn my way around before classes started rather than going in on the first day not knowing.

I had so much fun I went 4 out of 5 days. I also brought friends with me that weren't going to come and they said it was so much fun they want to go the next year. I transferred from Adelaide University and therefore went to their O-Week last year. It was not nearly as fun as Flinders O-week. I felt much more included and the activities were very fun.

The one thing I liked the most was my specific faculty orientation lecture where they put us into mentor groups. I made 3 friends from that and otherwise I don't think I would have made any friends as they are the only 3 I have made so far.

Coming from the University of Adelaide for my undergraduate I was surprised at the change in campus spirit and disappointed I had not elected to go to Flinders for my undergraduate. People are much nicer.

I had a really good time interacting with other flinders students, i found it made my transition to flinders university a treat.



Satisfaction and Impact

It was just quite enjoyable to look around and see what was available without any pressure to have to get involved fully straight away.

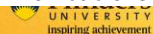
Learning about all the different facilities that are on offer to us was great, it's really good knowing there is so much help around campus if we need it.

Social activities provided me with an opportunity to create friendships, which made the transition to university significantly less stressful.

while I didn't really get to do the organised activities, walking around the stalls and meeting people at lunch was a really good experience. I was able to make friends in o week that I am now close with, which is great.

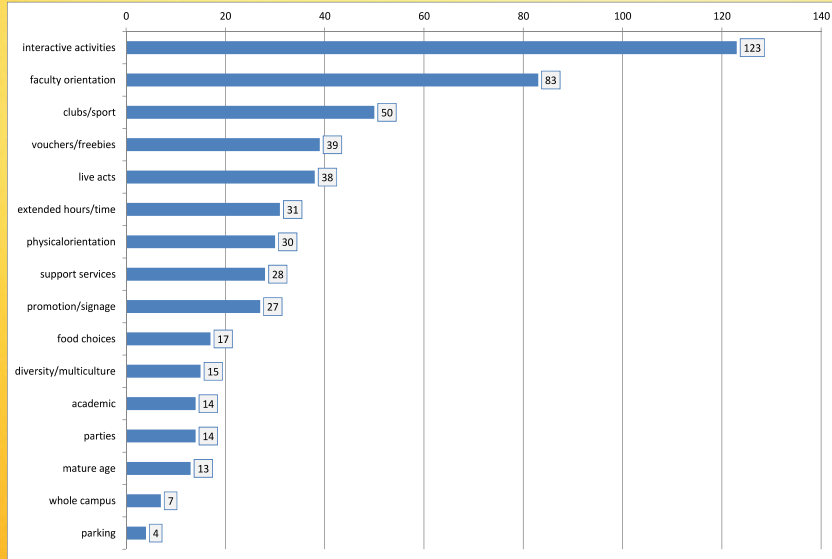
I absolutely LOVED the social activities! I've never felt more welcomed and it put me completely at ease. I found myself able to relax and converse with the other students whom I did not yet know very easily and am no longer intimidated to ask for help

It was a fantastic way to meet other students and know that you weren't the only one who was alone...



Student feedback on O'Week activities, Semester 1

O'Week could be improved by...



Semester 2 O'Week – One size for all

Similar activities, just less of them

O'Week 2014 | Schedule of Events

Time	Monday 28/7	Tuesday 29/7	Wednesday 30/7	Thursday 31/7	Friday 1/8
10am	Stalls Open	Stalls Open	Stalls Open		
10.30am					
11am		Tea for Grownups 11am-12pm	Live Music 11am-12pm		
11.15am	Irish Dancing Demo				
11.30am	Free BBQ	Free BBQ	Free BBQ		
12pm	Fast Friends (aka speed dating) 12pm-12.15pm	Flinders Trivia 12pm-12.15pm	Paper Plane Contest 12pm-12.30pm		
12.15pm	Limbo 12.15pm-12.30pm	Newspaper Dressups 12.15pm-12.30pm			
12.30pm	Anga Competition 12.30pm-1pm	Live Music 12.30-1.30pm	Twister Competition 12.30pm-1pm		
1pm	Live Music 1pm-2pm		Senate Explained 1pm-2pm		
1.30pm		Irish Dancing Demo			
2pm	Tea for Grownups 2pm-3pm	Tea for first years 2pm-3pm	Tea for Grownups 2pm-3pm		
2.30pm	Stalls Close	Stalls Close	Comedy Arvo 3pm-5pm		
3pm					
4pm					
5pm		Quiz Night 5pm-7.30pm			Free BBQ 5pm-6pm
6pm		Includes light refreshments			Outdoor/Indoor Cinema 6pm-10pm
7pm		Registration essential		O'Fiesta 7pm-12am	Location TBC
8pm				Refectory \$10 Students \$15 Non-students	Rocky Horror Picture Show
9pm					
10pm					
11pm					
12am					

Mid-year entry intake from 2009 - 2014

Age Groups

Year:	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
under 20	54	62	90	82	72	116
20 - 24	221	218	236	162	199	218
25 - 29	76	86	101	99	79	72
30 - 39	64	72	81	66	72	61
40 - 49	25	18	30	27	36	36
50 & over	10	16	10	16	13	9
Total	450	472	548	452	471	512

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Comparison of student intake across semesters in 2014, by age group

% Age Groups

2014	Mid Year	Beginning Year
under 20	23%	42%
20 - 24	43%	36%
25 - 29	14%	10%
30 - 39	12%	9%
40 - 49	7%	3%
50 & over	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%

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Comparison of entry pathways, 2014

Basis of Admission (%)	Mid Year	Beginning Year
Higher Education Course	26%	26%
Secondary Education	31%	47%
TAFE Award	18%	7%
Mature Age	20%	12%
Professional Qualification	0%	1%
Other	4%	7%
Total	100%	100%

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Local / International Student Entry by course type

All students 1503		Postgraduates 886 (60%)	
International	Start	Mid	% total Mid Year
Postgraduate	385	255	40%
Undergraduate	327	75	19%
Exchange/Study Abroad/NonAward	103	105	50%
Total	815	435	35%

Comparison demographics summary Start year/Mid-Year entry (2014)

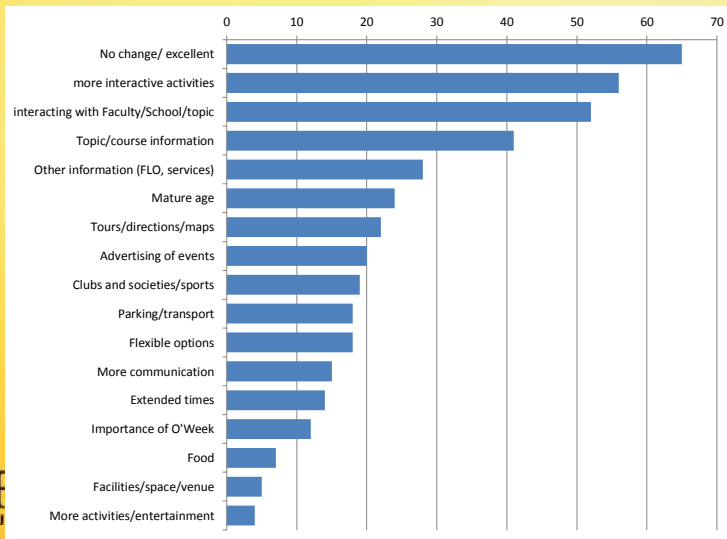
- Predominantly postgraduates – approx. 60%
- High proportion international – $435/1503 = 29\%$
- Mostly mature-age - 23% under 20, compared to 42%
- Less likely to be school-leavers – 31% compared to 47%
- Alternative entry – 38% compared to 19%
- More likely to enter professional degrees – nursing, psych, social work.

Academic and Social issues

Differences

- Central O'Week during semester (first week)
- Less time/opportunity to engage
- Smaller cohort, fewer activities, less 'buzz.'
- Less likely to have mentor
- Less likely to have Course orientation
- More likely to be overlooked
- Treated as continuing student

Qualitative feedback with respect to improvements



Selected Feedback

- Opportunities to meet course coordinators and talk personally about the topic information shown on websites, for those who struggle to interpret large bodies of text.
- Lectures on the particular courses and how to approach your first day of uni. Found their wasn't enough lectures just on my degree and what too do.
- Student interaction things to enable us to meet new people within our courses if we cannot attend our specific introduction events.
- Integration activities for students that would help benefit the many types of students, those who are social butterflies and those who are the independent people who function better by themselves or with singular people.

Student survey results

Feedback via O'Week surveys

- Want more academic focus
- Want more Faculty-specific/ Course interaction
- More staff /student interaction
- More ways to engage
- Feel isolated
- Feel disadvantaged

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Student Success Program (reported finding)

Communication with mid-year entrants was challenging, since these students were more likely to struggle with transition and engagement, both socially and academically.

Established friendships and numerous references to semester one material in topics often exacerbated the feeling of isolation.

SSP Officers worked harder to alleviate the general lack of awareness of services, tours and/or the mentor program.

Solutions

- Change timing of orientation (worried about lack of attendance)
- Inform students of issues they will face (onus is on student)
(SLC run a two-day intensive prior to start of term)
- Inform Faculty staff/ work with First Year advisors to be aware of student needs/issues (not sure how this would help)
- Target activities to the cohort (some effort should be made to cater for difference)
- Need for topic coordinators/tutors to be aware of issues facing mid-semester cohort (issues not just social but academic)

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Why it's worth doing well

The social activities that I took part in really helped me to create a personal connection with the university as well as with a few of the students which has really helped me to settle into Flinders University and I feel as though I really belong to the Flinders community. I am so proud to be a student at Flinders University and given the chance I would love to be a part of O'Week in the future, mostly so I can instill this sense of pride in other prospective students as well as hopefully inspire them to consider Flinders as their first choice for university. I feel so at home on campus and **I'm loving Uni life so much and I have O'Week to thank!**

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