

YOUR GUIDE TO THE FIRST FEW WEEKS : SCHOOL OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERING & ANALYTICAL SCIENCE AN INDUCTION/ WELCOME BOOKLET & DIARY

1. Background

It is well understood that high quality induction and transitional support provides the foundation for a successful and satisfying experience at University. It is known to be key in supporting student retention by fostering an environment within which the student feels supported and able to access help to overcome difficulties they may encounter.

As part of a larger scheme to enhance the provision for students during induction each new undergraduate student enrolled on to an undergraduate degree programme in the School of Chemical Engineering & Analytical Science (240 in total) was provided with a diary/ information booklet to cover activities in the first 4 weeks.

It was felt that the provision of a bound booklet which enabled students to have easy and ready access to information which they would need during the first weeks of study at the University would ensure that students were more familiar with the information, felt acclimatised and acculturated into the institution more readily and more speedily and that such a document would allay some of the initial anxiety and concern around what is expected.

Additionally the booklet incorporated diary and planning pages to quickly introduce the students to initial ideas about time management and independent learning in a way that was readily understood.

We anticipated that the booklet would ease the transition that the students made as well as reinforcing a sense of cohesion and connectedness to the institution and other students on their course. The information provided was specific, timely and relevant and the design of the booklet was deliberately chosen to be sufficiently robust to last the first month but not so official looking as to deter the students from writing in it.

2. Aims and Objectives

It was intended that the booklet would:

- Provide relevant and crucial information relating to activities scheduled in the first 4 weeks of the academic year
- Foster a sense of community and belonging to the academic and social groupings of which the student is a member
- Introduce students to key members of staff and give contact details which will be relevant throughout the first year

- Present students with some of the concepts that we hope to inculcate as independent learners within an academic, research community
- Support students in making the transition to study in HE in the UK from their previous learning experiences, whether in the UK or internationally
- Begin to clarify students' expectations of studying at The University of Manchester, and the University's expectations of them
- Contribute to enabling students to engage with and develop understanding of the factors which contribute to academic success, including developing an awareness of their own strengths and weakness in terms of skills and knowledge
- Alert students to relevant material available through the LearnHigher site

3. Design

The booklet given to students was A5 size. Copies were available in a larger typeface in A4 and electronically for any students either identified as requiring this or who requested it.

The booklet was printed in house with internal pages produced in black and white

Covers were printed on card and faced with a laminated sheet to provide an extra amount of rigidity

4. Evaluation

Students responded to a questionnaire given out in a taught session at the end of the first month. 80% of the students judged the booklet to have been useful of whom 65% had made use of the diary pages.

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