



## Orientation and Transition Policy and Procedures

### 1. PURPOSE

To describe Curtin's policy, standards and processes for the University transition programs for students. The policy has a particular focus on students who are new to Curtin, but will also have relevance to current students who are commencing any study period.

### 2. APPLICATION

All staff and students of the University. Campuses other than the Bentley campus shall be responsible for developing and coordinating their own transition activities following the guidelines within this Policy and with appropriate liaison with the Student Transition and Retention Team (START).

### 3. EXCEPTIONS

*Nil*

### 4. DEFINITIONS

(Note: Commonly defined terms are located in the [Curtin Common Definitions](#). Any defined terms below are specific to this document)

#### **New-to-Curtin Student**

Is any student who has not previously studied at any Curtin University campus, and for the purposes of Orientation, not previously studied the course at Curtin, or attended that particular campus before.

#### **Orientation**

Is the generic term for a series of academic, administrative and social activities that are conducted to assist students to make a successful transition into their course and to Curtin.

#### **Orientation Week**

Is the week immediately preceding Week One of the standard teaching semester at the Bentley campus. Other campuses may not necessarily require a full week, and may refer to the program generically as Orientation. **Orientation** provides an opportunity for students to become familiar with Curtin services and facilities by participating in course introductory sessions and various skilling and information programs. It also enables students to collect unit outlines and address enrolment, timetabling and administrative matters prior to the start of the first teaching week.

For the purposes of communication with students, the alternative term O-Week is acceptable usage.

#### **Re-enrolling Student**

Is any student who is continuing in the same course of study.

#### **Student Transition and Retention Team (START)**

Is a team of Curtin staff who assist students with transition into the University, connect students to sources of support, and provide advice on orientation, transition and retention.

#### **Transition**

Is conducted at many levels across the university and students are considered to be in transition upon entering the University and/or their course, moving from semester to semester and upon graduation. While the term has this wider definition, the terms "transition programs" and "transition activities" are generally used within this policy to refer to a range of interventions directed at assisting new-to-Curtin students.

#### **Unit Outline**

Informs students of the essential requirements of a unit being studied.

### 5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 The University will provide an induction to student life at Curtin for students providing valuable information relating to academic, administrative, and social activities in order to assist students to make a successful transition into their course and to Curtin.

5.2 Students are expected to participate in orientation activities to identify relevant academic, administrative and social support facilities.

## 6. OBJECTIVES

### 6.1 Orientation

Orientation programs delivered at the commencement of the study period aim to prepare students for University life by outlining the facilities and services (academic, administrative and social) that are available.

### 6.2 Transition

Transition programs delivered at the commencement of study must be viewed in the context of a developmental process which includes:

- The student's pre-enrolment contact with the University,
- Entry to the course of study,
- Progress throughout the course, and
- Exit from the University.

The needs of a wide range of participants should be considered. This includes students entering courses as traditional first year students; International students; students admitted to later points of their courses with Recognition of Prior Learning; students switching courses; students admitted from known "at-risk" demographic backgrounds including equity target groups and other groups that may be identified from time to time; postgraduate students; and re-enrolling students. It is also important to consider the location of the student. While delivery of transition programs will not be identical on all campuses, the University seeks to ensure equivalent quality of standards regardless of the student's location.

The broad goals of transition programs are:

**Student Development:** assisting new students to participate comprehensively in University life. This will include appropriate intellectual, emotional, social, ethical, physical and spiritual development during the course of the student's enrolment.

**Academic Achievement:** equipping students to achieve at least satisfactory levels of academic performance, with a clear preference for the highest possible standard.

**Student Retention and Persistence:** encouraging students to remain enrolled and persist through the remainder of their studies with Curtin.

The shorter term attributes of orientation and entry year transition programs are these:

**Valuing the new student:** demonstrating to new students that they are welcomed and valued by the University in general and their enrolling area in particular.

**Communicating Self-Efficacy:** assisting students to develop a belief that their own efforts significantly affect their chances of future success.

**Delivering a Meaningful Experience:** relevance to the subsequent student experience and the student's future goals.

**Effective Delivery of Information:** sufficient and timely information for the student to begin study in their course, and timely delivery of other information during their first period of study.

**Making Connections:** assisting all new students to become part of the University community. The program should link new students with peers, senior students and staff. In particular, new students should be made aware of who to approach for assistance.

## 7. PROCEDURES

### 7.1 Responsibilities

7.1.1 The central orientation program on the Bentley campus for new-to-Curtin students will be coordinated by the Student Transition and Retention Team (START).

7.1.2 Student Services has a key role in delivering services to ensure the process of admission and enrolment proceeds as effectively as possible. Further, Student Services has a significant role in ensuring students are made aware of administrative processes and policies relevant to their continued enrolment such as the use of the Official Communication Channel, enrolment advice, academic and misconduct appeals and so forth.

- 7.1.3 Faculty office staff, Curtin teaching areas, International Office, Office of Research and Development, Academic Services, Library, Venues, the Student Guild and other areas that may be identified from time-to-time will be responsible for the organisation of relevant information sessions and activities targeted at new-to-Curtin students. Key staff in these areas with such responsibility shall be provided sufficient time and resources to deliver orientation programs.
- 7.1.4 START will consult with representatives from key stakeholders and representatives from these areas will also form a reference group on a needs basis.
- 7.1.5 *There will be specific attention given to aspects of the program specifically targeted at meeting the practical, cultural and social adjustment needs of International students*
- 7.1.6 Students are expected to participate in planned academic and study skills activities for their specific course as their highest priority and to attend the centrally scheduled parts of the Orientation program that are relevant to their circumstances.

## **7.2 Information and Activities**

- 7.2.1 The Orientation program shall include a formal welcome from the most senior available member of the University's Executive, and a Welcome to Country (for campuses located in Australia). When an appropriate representative of the Indigenous community is unavailable to do the Welcome to Country, an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land shall be given.
- 7.2.2 The Orientation program shall include access to information on student equity, the University's Values and the Student Charter.
- 7.2.3 Transition activities shall be academic, informative and social in nature and provide students with opportunities to obtain all course and unit information, guidance on enrolment matters, relevant Occupational Health and Safety matters, and information on University services.
- 7.2.4 Where there is an identified need, specific programs will be provided to targeted groups. This may include students with medical conditions or disabilities, mature-aged students, students from rural/isolated areas, or other such groups as may be identified from time-to-time.
- 7.2.5 Orientation sessions and activities are significant for the university and require careful and long term planning. The needs of the program will be balanced against other proposed activity requests with respect to room booking requests, site services, signage and other relevant internal services. Wherever feasible, centrally scheduled Orientation Week sessions and activities will have a priority on large capacity venues.
- 7.2.6 No examinations are to be held in the Semester One Orientation Week. Semester Two Orientation Week events will be scheduled to allow for supplementary exams to be conducted on the Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday if required.
- 7.2.7 The Wednesday of Semester One Orientation Week shall be Student Guild focussed. To this end, no Faculty, School or central activity should be scheduled on this day from 11 am onwards. The equivalent day for Semester Two will be held in the first week of the standard teaching period to avoid interference with any examinations being held.
- 7.2.8 Enrolling areas shall provide appropriate introductory programs that will enable students to begin to develop skills necessary for academic success within their discipline.
- 7.2.9 Current students will assist in the delivery of Orientation programs. In particular, this includes the use of student volunteers in support of the Central Program, and current students who are student mentors in support of Faculty and/or Departmental programs.
- 7.2.10 The need for transition programs or information sessions aimed specifically at ~~re-~~ enrolling students will vary between teaching areas. The need for such programs is a matter for each teaching area to determine. Teaching areas are strongly encouraged to address the needs of students who are new to the campus and admitted with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

- 7.2.11 After the completion of Orientation, on-line resources will be made available to support students who were unable to attend. It is emphasised that such on-line resources are not to be seen as an alternative to attendance for students who have an internal enrolment.
- 7.2.12 Notwithstanding the importance of attendance at orientation programs, it is necessary to ensure the provision of on-line resources for students enrolled in alternative delivery modes.

### 7.3 QUALITY MANAGEMENT

- 7.3.1 START will conduct formal evaluation of Orientation Week and subsequent transition on the Bentley campus in Semester One of each academic year. Other campuses will conduct their own evaluations using comparable evaluation materials.
- 7.3.2 START will maintain a set of recommended standards for effective practice in transition that will be available to all Faculties and teaching areas. The current set of standards are attached as Addendum One
- 7.3.3 Students should experience a transition program of consistent quality regardless of the area, location and mode in which they are enrolled.
- 7.3.4 Faculty and teaching area staff responsible for transition programs shall be given clear information about the expectations of the role. Particular attention shall be given to this when there is a handover to a different staff member.
- 7.3.5 Transition programs should connect to other programs that are directed at improving the quality of the student experience.
- 7.3.6 Orientation programs should link seamlessly with on-line resources provided through the student portal On-line Access to Student Information Systems (OASIS).
- 7.3.7 The quality of published materials provided to beginning students shall be consistent with the quality of published materials provided to prospective students.

## 8. LIST OF SCHEDULES

Appendix 1 - Faculty and Departmental Guidelines for Orientation Programs

## 9. OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS/LINKS

[Admission and Enrolment Manual](#)

[Assessment and Student Progression Manual](#)

[Awards and Graduation Manual](#)

[Scholarships and Financial Assistance Manual](#)

<b>Policy Compliance Officer</b>	<a href="#"><u>Michelle Rogers</u></a> , Director, Student Experience   Support Services
<b>Policy Manager</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Review Date</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016

## REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date	Committee / Board / Executive Manager	Approval / Resolution Number	Key Changes and Notes
New	Approved	23/02/2007	Academic Board	AB 14/07	Document No 00070/07
A005/P1.3	Amended	09/05/2007	Council	C 58/07	Document No 00390/07

	Administratively Updated	20/03/2008	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Reformatted and Amended to Reflect Organisational Chart
	Amended	31/07/2009	Academic Board	AB 137/09	Attachment 2 to Document No 01034/09
	Administratively Updated	15/11/2010	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Minor Text Amendments
	Amended	25/05/2012	Academic Board	AB 78/12	Attachments 1 & 2 to Document No 00478/12 (includes title change)
	Administratively Updated	02/09/2014	A/Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Department name change, Professional Standards and Conduct Unit changed to Integrity and Standards Unit
	Administratively Updated	06/10/2015	Director, Legal and Compliance Services	EC 76/15	Executive Manager Title Changes
	Amended	25/10/2016	Council	C 146/16	Removed reference to Guiding Ethical Principles replaced with Curtin Values

## Appendix 1

### Faculty and Departmental Guidelines for Orientation Programs

(Developed August 2011)

New students who are enrolled internally on the Bentley campus are advised that attendance at their faculty, school and departmental orientation programs is a requirement. Participation in the various centrally-scheduled aspects of orientation is optional in that students may choose which of those sessions are relevant. Processes for other campuses should be consistent with these guidelines.

School and departmental orientations are therefore the most critical component of the whole program. For many new students, it will be their first face-to-face experience with staff and with other students.

It is important that this contact:

1. Is a positive experience
2. Delivers information that is relevant and useful to the student in the immediate short term – and avoids seeking to deliver too much information
3. Connects new students to key staff and to other students – i.e. that the program begins to build relationships
4. Delivers the key message that students can easily find information, support and advice as needed at later points in their career at Curtin.

With these broad goals in mind, these Guidelines are provided to assist staff to plan and deliver Orientation programs. In compliance with Curtin's Orientation Policy and to meet good quality standards it is important that the matters below are addressed in a manner that is relevant and applicable to each area. Specific items may best be scheduled at school, departmental or faculty level, and may vary to meet differing discipline needs.

The Guidelines are divided into two sections – required content areas that should be included in the program and general guidelines for good practice in the quality of the orientation program.

#### **SECTION ONE: Required content**

##### **A brief overview of the course – with a focus on what new students need to know now**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- Too much detail can be counter-productive
- Major choices and options within the program
- Career outcomes
- Where to find more detailed information at a later point
- Information regarding the administration of the course

##### **Student Rights and Responsibilities; and Relevant Safety and Legal Issues**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- There are a number of clear standards to communicate that derive from the Student Charter
  - What students can expect from Curtin
  - What Curtin expects from students
- The Integrity and Standards Unit wish to ensure all students are aware of their rights
- Teaching areas need to communicate their expectations of student behaviour.
- Grievance and Complaints processes

In some areas, it will be relevant to address matters such as:

- Safety in the laboratory
- Dealing with hazardous equipment
- Safety requirements associated with practicum placements
- Working with Children Clearances
- Ethical considerations
- Other particular matter that are specific to the discipline area

### **Highlight the significance of Unit Outlines**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- Deliver a strong message that all students are expected to be aware of the content of unit outlines
- Some aspects of Unit Outlines can be addressed in the Orientation period, but it will be necessary to follow up in the teaching weeks
- This is also a point at which academic integrity and plagiarism issues may be introduced – although it will clearly also be necessary to follow up later in the teaching program

### **Orientation to the Department's specific facilities**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- Resource rooms
- IT facilities
- Places for students to meet
- Relevant academic clubs
- Support staff
- Other particular facilities of importance to the teaching area

### **Allow significant time on the schedule for any existing student mentor programs**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- There should be a clear explanation what the mentor program is about and how it operates
- Create time for mentors to interact with new students. This provides an opportunity to build the mentor:mentee relationship and to answer questions that new students may be unwilling to ask of academic staff on an informal basis
- Schedule a campus tour conducted by the mentor – possibly part-way through the program so that they have time to interact and then bring back any issues/queries to a plenary session
- Use mentors to demonstrate departmental facilities
- Mentors may also demonstrate key IT skills to new students in small groups – how to use OASIS, Blackboard, iPortfolio and any other IT platforms of relevance to the teaching area

### **Involvement of senior students**

If there is no mentor program, it is still valuable to invite senior students to contribute to the program. Senior students can do many of the activities listed above.

### **The “Study Start” Presentation**

START is available (on Bentley campus) to attend school, departmental and/or Faculty sessions to deliver this mandated short presentation. Ensuring that this information is delivered to all International students is a part of Curtin's ESOS compliance – and the information is also of relevance to domestic students. This session removes the need to seek multiple speakers from across many support areas and keeps the information succinct. Other campuses should seek to present a short summary of available support services.

This presentation is an overview of key information on Curtin's support services including:

- The Learning Centre
- Counselling
- Careers
- Housing
- Student Wellbeing and other Advisory services
- Recreation and the Stadium
- Brief overview of Guild services
- Parking and transport
- Campus security
- Disability support
- Financial support

Contact a Student Advisor to book a Study Start presenter for your program. Ph: 9266 2662 or email [start@curtin.edu.au](mailto:start@curtin.edu.au)

### **The IT Environment**

New students should be provided with appropriate information about the IT needs associated with their course. As noted above, it can be productive to invite mentors or senior students to work through this with new students in small groups.

Matters to take into Consideration:

- Providing information about availability of computers to students; plus the terms and conditions associated with student use of Curtin computers
- Maximising new students' understanding of OASIS
- Introducing students to Blackboard and iPortfolio
- Introducing students to any other course-specific IT resources

### **Activities that build social connections**

A key goal of the program is that new students should meet and interact with other new students, current students and the staff that they are likely to be working with. Consider programming activities that increase the chances of this happening.

There are many options, including:

- Morning tea, lunch, BBQ, or other food-orientated socialising
- Team games
- The use of Turningpoint or similar technology to encourage student interaction
- Campus and/or departmental tours by mentors
- An engaging group assignment to help students network and make friends in their course
- Utilising intra and inter-department sporting opportunities via Curtin Stadium
- Connecting new students to Curtin Volunteers.

## **SECTION TWO: General Guidelines for Orientation Program Quality**

### **Minimizing unhelpful duplication**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- If there are sessions at both faculty and school/departmental level, it is important to ensure there is not needless presentation of the same information.
- At the same time, it is not necessarily poor practice to reinforce particular key messages to new students

### **A welcoming and positive atmosphere**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- The choice of venue for departmental sessions matters. Book the best possible venue that is available.
- Congratulate beginning students on their choice of university and course; and their success in gaining entry.
- It is useful to accentuate that students' own actions make a difference to their success
- The quality of speakers - use people who have some rapport with an audience.
- Keep the number of speakers to a minimum as students lose interest if there are too many
- Involve your current students – either your mentors or other senior students if there is no mentor program. See further note on this elsewhere.
- Outside of formally scheduled sessions – aim for all staff to be as helpful and courteous as possible. One very negative experience for a student can outweigh many positive experiences.

### **Introduction to the staff that new students need to know**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- This will most likely include the Head of School, Unit/ Course coordinators, some Lecturers, and relevant administrative staff.
- Students will need access to the names of these key people after the event as they will very likely forget – a handout, a follow-up electronic message or URL can help.
- They do not all need to make a speech
- Do not waste students' time on introducing people who are not directly relevant to the transition into their course

### **Encourage students to attend the centrally scheduled Orientation activities**

Matters to take into Consideration:

- Ensure all students have access to the Orientation program materials; and advise those who don't have these materials where they are available from.
- Especially encourage students to access any introductory programs offered by the library
- Depending on when departmental Orientation programs occur, it is helpful to encourage students to attend the centrally programmed sessions. However, some of these will have

passed by the time some departmental sessions are conducted. Students can be advised that all orientation information is accessible via a dedicated StartUp channel within OASIS

### **Student Guild Input**

It is important to include input from the Student Guild, particularly at faculty level sessions. Students should be made aware of:

- The Guild's role as their representative and advocate
- The Guild's role as a service provider
- The opportunities that the Guild provides for students to become involved in extra-curricular activities

### **Opportunities for new students to ask questions**

New students may feel reluctant to ask questions in large groups. It is worth introducing processes that allow them ask questions in different settings. Options include:

- Informal questions directed to student mentors whilst on campus tour
- Schedule a senior student panel – new students will often direct questions to current students
- Set up a “Post Box for Questions” that students can drop a note into – and schedule a “debrief” session at the end of the program to answer them.
- Identify the persons and/or offices where students can take queries

*For further information please contact START (Student Transition and Retention Team);  
Email [start@curtin.edu.au](mailto:start@curtin.edu.au) or phone 9266 1663*