



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Enhanced Academic Induction

### MA Health, Science and Society

11<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**Session Hosts:** Abby Shovlin, Marion Smith (Course Director) and Alette Willis (Lecturer)

**Student Panel:** Janis Wilson, Jen Telfer, Rebecca Walker, Kirsty Scott and Ailsa Golightly

#### Background:

Abby Shovlin was introduced to Marion Smith by Chris Doye at last year's IAD annual lunch. Initial discussions about Induction Planning were held then in 2013. In 2014 Marion Smith approached Abby Shovlin to assist in planning and delivering an enhanced academic induction for the first cohort of students on the new MA in Health, Science and Society.

A series of meetings were held in which AS advised on academic induction matter and induction procedures in general. Where AS was not able to answer MS's question directly she consulted with her colleagues in the Induction Team, Academic Services and IAD.

AS and MS planned a **Welcome Talk +** style event which consisted of an initial welcome talk on the Monday of Fresher's Week and an activity based and student led induction session on the Thursday. The plan of the activity based session was as follows:

- Introduction and welcome from MS, AW and AS
- AW opened the event with the '**story of your name**' as an ice breaker. This enabled all students to learn each other's name and talk a little in the group.
- AW talked and introduced the course that she will be delivering
- MS then talked about how to prepare for the first course on the programme, progression and submitting course work. MS also talked about what to do if problems arise.
- **Talks and Q and As from charities** (students on this new MA may choose to volunteer for credit in semester two in two local charities)
- **University Challenge group quiz** (ten multiple choice questions on: University info that we hoped students would glean from Fresher's Week, referencing in the Social Sciences and interesting/ surprising Public Health statistics,
- '**Just a minute**' style debates on topical public health issues (MS and AW's session overran so this activity had unfortunately to be missed out)
- AS on **IAD information/Learn Better walk through/HEAR/Edinburgh Award**
- **Student Panel** (each panel member talked for for 2 minutes about their student experience and passed on their advice/tips)
- **Q and A with student panel and pizza** (MS and AW left the room)

**Aims of the session:**

- To be enjoyable
- To be useful to new students and relevant to their specific needs as MA Health, Science and Society students
- To allow students an opportunity to meet with their peers
- To allow students an informal space in which to ask questions
- To whet students' appetites for the courses they were about to study
- To encourage students to take a proactive approach to studying, learning and university life
- To raise awareness of support services/networks
- To build students' confidence before classes begin

**Feedback**

<b>Key</b>
<b>Green: aims achieved</b>
<b>Orange: negative feedback</b>
<b>Yellow: what we could do differently next time</b>
<b>Pink: feedback on presenter</b>

All students attended the session (9 in total) and all students filled in feedback forms

	<b>Completely Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Completely Disagree</b>
<b>This was an enjoyable session</b>	7	2	0	0	0
<b>This session was helpful for me as a new students</b>	7	2	0	0	0
<b>This session allowed me an opportunity to get to know my fellow students</b>	5	4	0	0	0
<b>This session encourages me to be proactive in my approach to studying, learning and university life</b>	8	1	0	0	0

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Would you recommend that the University hold more of these subject specific and activity based inductions for new students</b>	9	0	0

### Free text Comments

<b>The best activity of today was:</b>
The quiz was very enjoyable, gave us an opportunity to talk more with fellow students
The quiz because it encouraged group work
Quiz was fun!
The chance to speak to older students in a bit of a casual setting. It made them seem easier to approach. It meant that you weren't shoved in front of them and told to ask question, it was holding a conversation.
The general feel was just really optimistic and positive
The quiz as I learned a lot of new things
Meeting other students from different years
No particular, all equal
The student panel coming to speak

<b>If you were designing an induction week for new students, which activities from today would you choose to feature? (please feel free to add in any ideas of your own):</b>
The quiz was definitely a good feature. Including food is also a great idea, very informal
Meeting with the student panel
Quiz
The quiz was fun as it gave knowledge about the university and as I mentioned the older student panel was good. Abby made most of the activities fun and the way she presented the information made it easier to understand
Everything
The storytelling bit-you learn about other people
Talks from other students and ice breaker quiz
Ice breaker and Q and As

<b>Would you recommend that we make any changes to the session?</b>
There were things that should have been included which were not as time ran out
Longer?
Instead of lining up the panel which is a bit daunting maybe it would be best to dot them around the room
None
More activities that involve getting to know other people
No very good
No
Maybe more actual activities?

### **In order to plan and deliver this session, AS undertook the following tasks:**

- A series of consultations with Marion Smith
- Provided slides on Interruption to Study procedures for the School Welcome talk
- Advertised role of 'Student Induction Facilitators'-designed flyers and liaised with Katie Scott and emailed her network of contacts
- Recruited 5 students for Student panel
- Provided training for these students
- Designed the session with a specific focus on Health, Science and Society
- Designed activities and delivered them on the day
- Ordered pizza and brought refreshments
- Gathered feedback on the event

### **Comments from AS**

This was a highly successful and enjoyable session. One of the best parts of the afternoon was the interaction between the student panel and the new students. The student panel ate pizza with the new students and answered their questions in this informal setting. Both the panel and the new students enjoyed this greatly which could be seen from the level of interaction and extended conversations.

I received a lot of anecdotal feedback from students as they were leaving the session saying that they had enjoyed the session greatly.

### **Suggestions for improvement:**

- Agree and run through the timing schedule with all presenters on the day so that all activities can be covered in the allotted time frame.

### **Comments from MS:**

The event ran smoothly, although the presentation from the two charities took longer than expected. Although this was positive and beneficial in itself, it did mean that we had to omit an activity later in the afternoon. **This second session worked really well as a follow-up to the initial session earlier in the week.** The initial session also included an ice breaker activity, so students had learnt each other's names, received various kinds of information about the Programme and the School, and had time to experience some of the Fresher's Week events and activities before coming back together again. The second session allowed them to capitalize on all this diverse experience and return with a platform to bring to the meeting and each other, with ideas and questions to share. **All the students participated fully and made contributions to the group** although this clearly was a bolder step for some than for others. **Abby is a very lively presenter, and the students appreciated and responded very warmly to her contributions.**

The general mood on departure was that the students had a level of familiarity with each other and with the Programme and University that could not have been achieved through either one session or a more simple information-imparting session. These students were keen to start on their courses, but also nervous, and might well have felt as though they were left too long without contact had the second session not taken place. I was fortunate to meet Abby and to **benefit from the advice and activities she was able to bring to induction.**