Online Induction Guidelines

Going Online

When going online you should welcome your students to the online environment, as you may never actually meet your student face to face. Following is a brief outline of some of the areas you should consider when creating your online course, so that your students feel welcomed to your course.

Welcome from the Course Co-ordinator

The welcome could take a variety of formats and you should include some of the below activities:

- A welcome announcement is essential to alert students to the start of the course and provide some overview information. This is an efficient way to disseminate information to online students. The first-week announcement can include signposting to the resources for online students, e.g. the Institution page links on MyAberdeen, or the Library’s advice page for online learners and a link to the course content. (Online courses will default to displaying announcements first, along with a link to the announcement area on the Course Menu down the left hand side of MyAberdeen, announcements will also be displayed in the Activity Stream.)

- A video clip of you warmly welcoming your students to your online course, providing an overview of the course, the resources and activities, whilst outlining your expectations of the students. (Perhaps using Panopto for your recording)

- A web conference, as a live drop-in session using Blackboard Collaborate online classroom. This gives you the opportunity to meet your students and also provides the students the opportunity to get to know each other. (See: Getting Started with Collaborate). This can also be recorded.

- An introduction and welcome post on the discussion forum. The post can include a welcome, as well as an opportunity for students to post their introductions and meet their fellow peers. The discussion has the benefit of students being able to access this at any time, and also allows those students who missed the live session, to post up their introductions here. You could use the initial post here to provide guidelines on discussion board etiquette, or for the students to outline their experience and expectations of the course. (Creating a Discussion Board)

Course Information

Usually a link is provided as standard on the Course Menu and enables you to upload background information on your course, at the very least including:

- Course Guide: this is a useful overview document providing information such as:
  - The learning outcomes
  - The course structure and materials, including reading lists
  - What is expected of the students such as, hours of study and engagement with materials

- Assessment information e.g. what they will this involve, uploading, key dates

- A link to School Policies, Forms and Resources

Helping the Students

Many of your students may not be familiar with the University of Aberdeen or the online learning environment, so you may wish to ensure the students know where to access relevant resources, such as:

- The Institution Page on MyAberdeen has some useful links to the Library, IT Support, etc
- The Question Mark icon ( ? ) at the bottom of MyAberdeen pages for Help.
- Useful hints and tips regarding studying (see Achieve or Achieve+)
- Contact information (Course Menu, Course Information and include a photo and profile information)
Checklist

☐ A Welcome from the Course Co-ordinator
  ☐ Blackboard Collaborate Classroom
  ☐ Pre-recorded Video
  ☐ Discussion Board posting
  ☐ Announcement

☐ Opportunity for Students to Meet Each Other
  ☐ Blackboard Collaborate Classroom
  ☐ Discussion Board activity

☐ Guiding and Supporting Your Students
  ☐ Course Guide
  ☐ MyAberdeen
  ☐ Collaborate
  ☐ Student Services
  ☐ Course team contacts

Releasing Your Course Materials

☐ Check to see the enrolled students are listed on the course page
☐ Use the preview mode to check what content is visible to students
☐ Check assessment dates and any adaptive release dates
☐ Set the course page to be visible to students

Some Additional Points

☐ Check which students are accessing the course and contact any students not logging in
☐ Retention Centre: set up rule to monitor engagement
☐ Quality Assurance: has a colleague peer reviewed your online course