

Contact between new and existing/ex-students

What did/do you do?

We have been providing opportunities for the new students to get in touch with the existing or ex-MA students.

Who is involved?

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How do you do it?

We have provided opportunities for the new students to get in touch with students who are on the course or have just completed it:

- In the Induction week. In the past five years we have been inviting students who have just completed our programme or are doing PhDs to meet the new students in the induction week. We particularly arranged the meeting early in the induction week for the new students to meet the 'old' ones. The focus of the meeting would be sharing good practice for achievement and learning from others' lessons. I would introduce the ex-MA students to the new cohort and leave the room and let them talk to each other.
- During the programme. The ex-MA students and PhD students would leave their contact details before the end of the meeting so that the new students can contact them if needed.
- Prior to the course. We have volunteers to be our ambassador for the programme whose emails we could pass on to the new comers.

Why do you do it?

Studying in a new environment could be very daunting. For most of my students, it would not only be the first time studying in another country but also the first time leaving home. They could have millions of questions about the programme, how they can be successful, what modules to choose and what is like living in Newcastle, etc.

Does it work?

This has been working well. Every year students are asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire about the Induction programme. They always commented positively on the meeting with ex-MA students, although only about a third completed the on-line evaluation.

"I think it's better to have more ex-MA students for us to talk to. Two of them are not enough. We have lots of questions to ask them". □□

This student's comment also shows that students like to talk to ex-MA students, though finding an enough number of them could be an issue, as our programme is one year, and most of the students would have gone home or are travelling.

They do ask a lot of questions. Informal feedback suggests that some of the new students do contact ex-MA or PhD students at various stages of their study, seeking advice on from the course work to their research projects.

Teaching and Learning Case Study

HaSS 'communicating with students' project, 2010/11

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Coherent Curriculum theme:

- Student engagement
- Student induction