

## FIRST YEAR TRANSITION AND ORIENTATION

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### 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline how CQUniversity's program of orientation and transition activities and services identify and provide for the needs of incoming students through the relevant academic and support service orientation courses.

The document outlines the basic procedures underpinning first year transition and orientation activities and services across all CQUniversity campuses.

The policy and procedure is designed to ensure parity in terms of deliverables and outcomes for new CQUniversity students commencing their studies on regional and metropolitan campuses or via distance education.

These procedures facilitate the First Year Transition and Orientation at CQUniversity by providing for the needs of incoming students through the relevant academic and support service orientation courses. The First Year Transition and Orientation policy and procedure is facilitated by the Student Experience Directorate, notably the Student Advice team and the Student Success team (who are responsible for the management of new student enquiries), the Student Communications team (who are responsible for outbound communication to new students), the Student Mentor Course Officer (who is responsible for the coordination of support to new students via the Student Mentor Course), and the Corporate Events & Graduation team (who are responsible for the planning and management of orientation events).

### 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all CQUniversity staff and commencing students in ELICOS, undergraduate and postgraduate units.

A comprehensive first year transition and orientation course is made available to all new undergraduate students to CQUniversity.

This document provides guidance to both staff and students on the course of events and transition services offered to students.

**3 EFFECTIVE DATE TERM** 11 July 2016 (Term 2, 2016)

### 4 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

[Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act 2000](#)

[National Code of Practice 2007](#)

[Central Queensland University Act](#)

### 5 POLICY STATEMENT

CQUniversity provides a structured course of orientation and transition activities and services to support new students to become familiar with the tertiary environment and the skills and knowledge needed to succeed.

This course is delivered online and face to face to build awareness and understanding of key academic and administrative processes, policies and services, to prepare students for successful learning and promote early engagement within their learning communities.

CQUniversity recognises that all new students benefit from support and preparation for tertiary learning; therefore, there are mandatory aspects of the orientation and transition course.

Commencing undergraduate students must complete the Student Readiness Questionnaire when they accept an offer to study at CQUniversity.

Commencing undergraduate and postgraduate students must also complete compulsory components of orientation online during their first term of study.

International students must have a specific session covering the issues/points stipulated in the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (the National Code 2007).

In addition, there are recommended orientation and transition activities which are offered to students based on their mode of study, course and location. These include familiarisation with the University's virtual and/or physical environment, administrative and academic processes, and support services. These also include opportunities to interact with academic and professional staff and peers, build self-directed learning skills and access student mentors.

## **Compulsory Orientation and Transition Activities**

New students to CQUniversity benefit from opportunities to become familiar with the tertiary environment including the academic and support services provided by their University.

Along with general orientation activities, new students may have particular needs or issues requiring specific support and interventions. At CQUniversity, it is mandatory for new undergraduate students to complete the Student Readiness Questionnaire once they accept an offer to study.

New students also complete a compulsory component of Orientation Online so that essential elements of the higher education learning context, such as academic integrity are understood prior to commencing study.

In addition to these compulsory activities, international students must also participate in a specific course of activities and events as stipulated in the National Code.

## **Recommended Orientation and Transition Activities**

It is acknowledged that the first year of learning can present challenges to all new learners, particularly those students from backgrounds in which higher education might not be a typical path. Regardless of the mode of study or campus, CQUniversity provides structured orientation courses to cater to the diverse needs of learners who may be at different stages of preparedness for university. These experiences ensure new students have opportunities to:

- Identify and meet key academic, support and other relevant campus staff to build connections within the University
- Be introduced to CQUniversity's Learning Management System and understand how it is used to support learning
- Familiarise themselves with academic and support services that will assist with the development of successful study and learning habits
- Participate in a peer mentoring course to build peer networks; and
- Develop a sense of belonging to the University

CQUniversity aims to deliver a consistent standard of orientation content across campuses and delivery sites.

Orientation Online provides information for new students and practice opportunities to use features of the Learning Management System prior to commencement of studies. Orientation Online is also a resource for students to refer back to during their first two terms of study because transition is an ongoing process.

## **Evaluation and Feedback**

Evaluation and feedback from new students about the Orientation activities provided by the University remains a key feature of the process of continuous improvement. At the conclusion of the orientation course, new students

are asked to participate in a survey which asks questions about their orientation experiences. Based on these results, the course of events is continuously modified to remain focussed on student needs.

## **Preparing students to be self-directed learners**

The CQUniversity approach to orientation and transition is based on the expectation that all new students develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to be successful self-directed learners. Therefore, orientation and transition activities provide opportunities for students to realise their roles and responsibilities in shaping their own student experience.

## **6 PROCEDURE**

### **Compulsory Orientation and Transition Activities**

#### **6.1 Student Readiness Questionnaire (SRQ):**

The Student Readiness Questionnaire (SRQ) is an evidence-based, early intervention course. It consists of a short survey which asks questions pertaining to the student's personal situation, and expectations of being a student. SRQ invitations are emailed to undergraduate students who have accepted an offer with CQUniversity. SRQ results are assessed so that support is provided to students based on their individual circumstances.

#### **6.2 Orientation Online:**

Orientation Online is an interactive, self-paced course designed to familiarise students with the key aspects of the learning context and introduce university services. It is located in CQUniversity's online learning management system. Undergraduate students who have accepted an offer with CQUniversity are automatically enrolled into Orientation Online from one month prior to the start of term. Orientation Online will remain open to the students to complete for their first two terms of study.

#### **6.3 Additional procedures for international students:**

With regard to the orientation sessions which are specifically structured for international students, a particular emphasis is placed on providing information on and access to:

- Support services available to assist with the transition into life and study in Australia
- Legal services: availability and the referral process
- Emergency and health services – for example, campus security
- Facilities and resources
- Complaints and appeals processes; and
- Information on visa conditions relating to course progress and, if applicable, attendance.

Attendance records will be kept for international students attending the international orientation sessions. Late arriving international students will be provided with all of the above information in structured small group or one on one sessions.

### **Recommended Orientation Activities**

#### **6.4 Face to Face Orientation:**

An orientation course can be conducted at each CQUniversity campus or supported study location. Face to face activities build on the online experience by providing opportunities for new students to meet peers, academic and professional staff, and familiarise themselves with their campus environment and services.

#### **6.5 Peer Mentoring:**

All undergraduate students have access to student mentors for the duration of their first year of study. Mentors do not provide academic tutoring or counselling, but rather assist new students with study skills support and navigating University services. This could be via the Student Mentor and Leadership Course or similar course.

## 6.6 Evaluation:

Online evaluations of the orientation course will be conducted annually. The results from all campuses will be collated, analysed and reported to the Learning and Teaching Committee of Academic Board annually.

## 7 RESPONSIBILITIES

### Compliance, Monitoring and Review

7.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience & Governance is responsible for overall implementation of these procedures. The Director, Student Experience is responsible for ensuring compliance to these procedures. Changes to these policy and procedures will be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience & Governance.

### Reporting

7.2 Staff and student evaluations of the Orientation Course will be conducted annually. The results of these from across campuses will be collated, analysed and reported to the Learning and Teaching Committee of Academic Board annually.

### Records Management

7.3 All records relevant to this document are to be maintained in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

## 8 DEFINITIONS

Refer to the University [glossary](#) for the definition of terms used in this policy and procedure.

## 9 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

### Related Policy Document Suite

### Related Legislation and Supporting Documents

[Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act 2000](#)  
[National Code of Practice 2007](#)

Approval and Review	Details
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This document is a combination the existing First Year Transition and Orientation Policy, Procedures and Principles documents.