

A Good Start...

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Context:

- Increasing focus on student transition, achievement and retention
- Research: Tinto, Kuh, Thomas, Morgan, Race, Brown, Yorke
- Consultation: Meetings with IEB, Faculty Management and Student Services. Staff and Student focus groups.
- Early weeks of first semester hugely important – make or break time.
- Tús maith, leath na hoibre!

What are first year students feeling?

- Nervous *'It is very different from school'*
- Shy *'I don't know anyone, I don't belong here'*
- Anxious *'I don't understand what the lecturer expects of me'*
- Overwhelmed *'We are getting too much information at one time'/
'Getting in for 9am is really difficult'/ 'Too many assessments and deadlines'*
- Worried *'Am I doing the right course?'*
- Lonely *'I feel homesick'*
- Self-conscious *'Everyone else seems to know where they are going'*
- Excited / ready to get started on something new

What was causing these thoughts, feelings & emotions?

- Difficulty making friends
- Fear of not fitting in
- Handling new independence/ living away from home
- New environment/ bigger classes
- Finding way around
- New academic structure/ new language/ modules, semesters, assessments, lectures, tutorials, less feedback
- Information overload in first weeks
- Challenge of getting organised – self reliance
- Time management – self managing

- A Good Start...
- Big welcome/ You matter!
- Seven weeks – seven themes
- Focused on social and academic induction
- Mix of events at institute and home department level
 - Arts, culture, concerts, competitions – opportunities to make friends
 - Study skills, time management, getting organised workshops, peer support, meet the graduate
- Social media campaign/ facebook/ twitter
- Weekly calendars
- Weekly emails to all staff

Student to student initiative

- A Good Start... led by a Student Project Team
- 30 Student Leaders
- Strong connection and identity with new student experience
- For new students we are approachable and positive
- Real understanding; been there, done that..
- We can be agents of positive change
- New voice & insight
- Collaborative and incremental approach

What next?

Thank you.

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