

Commencing Student Transition Experience Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) To document the University's approach to the induction and support of students commencing (or re-commencing) coursework study ('transitioning') at La Trobe University.

(2) This Policy and Procedure outlines La Trobe's commitment to providing all commencing coursework students, across all campuses, with a coordinated, coherent, inclusive and equitable transition experience, via a positive range of activities, tailored to their needs, that supports student success and retention at La Trobe.

(3) La Trobe commits to providing materials and activities, both face-to-face and online, which enable students to manage their own learning, at a pace appropriate to their requirements, and to engage with university life and their future careers/aspirations to their fullest capacity. La Trobe will provide all commencing coursework students, including La Trobe Online and Open University Australia students, with useful and timely information and positive impressions and experiences of the University, its staff, its academic programs, support programs, and related resources, supporting them to become global citizens and 'be the difference' in an ever changing and evolving world.

(4) La Trobe University's Commencing Student Transition Experience, and its constituent elements; Discover La Trobe (semester long), Orientation Week (week zero), Succeed@La Trobe, curricula and co-curricula activity, will be designed and evaluated against initiatives that are consistent with Future Ready.

(5) Student Transition is a whole of university activity. It consists of a series of initiatives, programs and events which are timetabled throughout each semester. Student Transition encompasses four key pillars of student engagement/experience activity which are brought together under the banner of 'Discover La Trobe':

1 - Orientation week (O-Week)

2 - Succeed@La Trobe (including Student Developmental Advising)

3 - Curricula Activity

4 - Co-Curricula Activity

(6) Under each pillar sits a series of initiatives designed to support student transition at all stages of the student lifecycle.

(7) Student transition usually begins three weeks prior to the start of each semester to coincide with student arrival on campus (accommodation service 42 week tenancy) and dovetails with TAFE activity into the regions where dual enrolment activity may take place.

(8) Pre-semester activity, which includes welcome email campaigns, the Nurture campaign, enrolment sessions and other informal engagement opportunities for students offered places at La Trobe within first round offers, are held during the weeks preceding Orientation Week and often start during December. These activities are timetabled for students and are part of the official university calendar of events.

(9) Orientation week is held in the week prior (week zero) to the official commencement of classes, and is included in the academic calendar as the official start of the academic semester. Orientation Week is designed to reach all

commencing on-campus and La Trobe Online domestic and international undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in Orientation Week.

(10) La Trobe Online will provide Online students with an online orientation program, that will be designed to meet the specific needs of online students. This will be in consultation with relevant departments and colleges and will be delivered on a rotating basis to account for multiple student intake periods throughout the year.

(11) Colleges (Student Transition, Achievement and Retention Teams) and La Trobe International will be expected to provide an Orientation Week program to meet the needs of their students, whilst Student Engagement will coordinate the development of an overarching framework of activity, in collaboration with Colleges, facilitating the delivery of the program across all campuses.

(12) The overall design, planning, coordination, provision and evaluation of the Student Transition Experience will be the responsibility of a university-wide steering group – Commencing Student Transition Experience Steering Group. Strategic leadership for ‘Discover La Trobe’ will sit with La Trobe Learning and Teaching with operational responsibility sitting with Colleges in partnership with key stakeholders across the university.

(13) Discover La Trobe is a semester long transition program encompassing pillars two, three and four. Activities are timetabled across the semester, usually in themed weeks, and offer students opportunities to access support and information as they require it. This flexible approach to providing students with support services is strategically managed to provide key services such as exam preparation and support when students need it, and takes into account all semesters/cohorts commencing at La Trobe.

(14) Students are also encouraged to be self-advocates for their own support requirements and to seek appropriate support as necessary throughout their studies.

(15) For a variety of reasons, many commencing students are unable to attend Orientation week. Therefore, all organisational units need to ensure systems are put in place to identify late commencing students and students commencing second year subjects after the award of advanced standing and, ensure information is provided to facilitate their engagement with their courses, their peers and their learning communities. Late commencing students should be provided with the same information that all other students have received and therefore opportunities for them to access this should be provided as part of Discover La Trobe and usually within the first three weeks of commencement.

Section 2 - Scope

(16) Applies to:

- a. All campuses of La Trobe University
- b. All commencing undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students
- c. All coursework courses in which students are commencing
- d. All coursework courses delivered in online mode (La Trobe Online)
- e. All La Trobe staff who have contact with commencing students: Colleges, La Trobe Learning and Teaching, Student Wellbeing, Equity and Diversity, Student Services and Administration, La Trobe Sport.
- f. Student Associations.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(17) La Trobe University is committed to providing students enrolled in face-to-face, blended and online courses with a range of activities that supports student success and retention at La Trobe.

(18) These activities include induction and support programs that are intended to enhance the overall engagement, retention, satisfaction, learning and success of transitioning students.

(19) Such programs must be designed, coordinated, and delivered in ways that are efficient; financially and administratively sustainable; and, engaging, relevant and useful to commencing students.

(20) Transition at La Trobe is an ongoing process, which requires sustained and coordinated support from professional and academic staff across the University. Activities should engage with students to:

- a. facilitate connections to and awareness of services and support
- b. foster peer support and academic networks
- c. develop a sense of capability and resilience
- d. develop a sense of purpose in their studies and future career
- e. develop a sense of belonging to and identity with La Trobe University and their chosen discipline.
- f. La Trobe will provide all commencing coursework students (including La Trobe Online and Open University Australia students) with:
- g. useful and timely information; and,
- h. positive impressions and experiences of the University, its staff, its academic and support programs, and related resources.

Section 4 - Procedure

Part A - Responsibilities of Students

(21) Orientation Week is the official start to a students' academic semester, and as such all commencing coursework students have a responsibility to attend. Students are expected to attend other Discover La Trobe activities, relevant to their needs, held during the semester which are designed to support student success, transition, achievement and retention.

Part B - Responsibilities of the Commencing Student Transition Experience Steering Group

(22) The Commencing Student Transition Experience Steering Group is responsible for ensuring the University provides a high quality, engaging and effective program of activities throughout 'Discover La Trobe'.

Part C - Responsibilities of Orientation Week Working Parties

(23) The Orientation Week Working Parties, on each campus, will be responsible for:

- a. Overseeing the University-wide promotion of Orientation Week and Discover La Trobe activities and initiatives
- b. Reviewing the effectiveness of the Orientation Week program through student feedback gathered from the University-wide Orientation and Transition Survey (or similar tool), and other immediate evaluations conducted during Orientation Week to ensure the relevance and quality of future programs
- c. Reporting to the Student Transition Experience Steering Group (STESG) outlining the organisation of campus-specific activities and identifying appropriate levels of resourcing and priorities for expenditure
- d. Working with Student Services and other service providers to ensure that late enrolling students have access to the same information and services as those provided during Orientation Week.

Part D - Responsibilities of La Trobe Learning and Teaching - Learning Futures

(24) La Trobe Learning and Teaching (LTLT) is jointly responsible with Colleges for supporting Curricula activity under the third pillar.

(25) Working in partnership with the Colleges to develop curriculum-based activities that support student success and retention; its key focus will be on curriculum design and development, with specific reference to:

- a. Assessment design, (including rubrics) aimed at identifying learning needs of cohorts in the first 6 weeks of a program of learning, and throughout the learning cycle;
- b. Scaffolded Learning Activity design aimed at engaging students in the learning process at critical assessment points during a learning cycle;
- c. Peer-supported learning systems, aimed at provision of targeted support at critical points during a learning cycle.

(26) LTLT will assist Colleges in identifying academic preparation and student success indicators and in undertaking an early evaluation of commencing students' potential for successful completion of the course.

LTLT will support Colleges in the evaluation and provision of formative feedback on academic progress and identified needs for additional support.

(27) In support of Co-curricular academic activity, Learning Futures, in collaboration with the College STAR teams, will develop supporting workshops, where needs have been identified (e.g. Writing circles for international students; Improve your grades).

Part E - Responsibilities of La Trobe Learning and Teaching - Student Engagement

(28) La Trobe Learning and Teaching (Student Engagement) is responsible for operationalising 'Discover La Trobe' in partnership with key stakeholders across the university. This will be managed through the development of a framework of activity, in agreement with all key stakeholders. This framework will encompass all activities under the Discover La Trobe Program.

(29) Student Engagement's focus is on building and maximising informal learning experiences of La Trobe University students and contributing to students developing sense of community based on the critical values of diversity, inclusiveness, accountability, innovation and global citizenship.

(30) Student Engagement play the central role in coordinating Orientation Week, Discover La Trobe and the Connect Volunteer program across all campuses. They will be responsible on all campuses for:

- a. Developing, coordinating, evaluating and continually improving Orientation Week and related programs such as the Connect Volunteer Program and Ready4Uni website in consultation with major stakeholders
- b. Chairing of or actively participating in the Orientation Week Working Parties on each campus
- c. Providing stakeholders with templates, guidelines and resources to ensure there is a consistent and equitable approach to Discover La Trobe Week, and specifically Orientation Week, across all campuses
- d. Managing and allocating central room bookings for Orientation Week activities on the Melbourne campus (Regional room bookings are managed by Regional Educational Experience teams)
- e. Developing the content and overseeing the design of the Orientation Week and Discover La Trobe publication and websites.

Part F - Responsibilities of Colleges

(31) College STAR teams, in collaboration with Schools, will develop and provide the Orientation Week program to meet the needs of their students. During Orientation Week College and Course information sessions will prepare students for their studies by:

- a. Being explicit and consistent about learning expectations including course and learning outcomes, technological and assessment requirements, and teaching and learning methods
- b. Describing successful approaches to studying in the discipline
- c. Describing the services available to support student transition to La Trobe University
- d. Facilitating connections with staff, peers and services
- e. Promoting involvement in University life including engagement with peers, their Connect Volunteers, later year students, student associations, College and Student Engagement programs.
- f. College STAR teams will be responsible for:
- g. Ensuring that, where possible, enrolment is not scheduled during Orientation Week College and Course specific academic sessions. Where this is not possible all efforts should be taken by the College to ensure that enrolment sessions are available to students at times that do not conflict with College or Course events.
- h. Ensuring (through working with Student Services in the identification of late enrolling students), that late enrolling students have access to the same information and services as those provided during Orientation Week.
- i. College STAR teams, in collaboration with School T&L directors to oversee all academic aspects of the Commencing Student Transition Experience. These teams are managed by a Transition Coordinator.

(32) Each coursework course will identify academic preparation and student success indicators and undertake an early evaluation of commencing students' potential for successful completion of the course, providing formative feedback on academic progress and identifying needs for additional support.

Part G - Responsibilities of Student Administration

(33) Student administration teams will be responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that, where possible, enrolment is not scheduled during Orientation Week College and Course specific academic sessions. Where this is not possible all efforts should be taken by the College to ensure that enrolment sessions are available to students at times that do not conflict with College or Course events.
- b. Ensuring (through working with Student Services in the identification of late enrolling students), that late enrolling students have access to the same information and services as those provided during Orientation Week.
- c. Promoting Orientation Week as an essential activity during enrolment and other Discover La Trobe activities throughout each semester, through related publications
- d. Ensuring Orientation Week room bookings roll over from year to year and take priority over room allocations for non-teaching activities
- e. Ensuring that commencing students' enrolment information is provided to Student Engagement in a timely manner to support the efficient administration of the Connect Volunteer Program
- f. Providing Student Engagement with weekly enrolment information for the first six weeks of each semester to ensure that all late enrolling students can participate in the Connect Volunteer and Discover La Trobe programs.

Part H - Responsibilities of Student Associations and Union (LTSU)

- a. The responsibilities of Student Associations on each campus include:
- b. Designing and delivering high quality and accessible social activities during Orientation Week and throughout Discover La Trobe that are appropriate to the values of the La Trobe University community, and are aimed at encouraging peer interaction and connectedness
- c. Ensuring clubs and societies are present at key Orientation Week and Discover La Trobe activities, including those delivered early in semester
- d. Providing information to commencing students about student associations' services and activities and encouraging commencing students' use of them
- e. Ensuring there is sufficient funding to support these activities as stipulated in each association's Funding Agreement with the University
- f. Ensuring that social activities are not timetabled at the same time as core University-wide or College-based activities and sessions*, and that events that include alcohol abide by relevant policies.

(34) BB*: It is recognised that some regional student associations deliberately timetable programs to run concurrently with other University activities to ensure that students get the opportunity to maximise their involvement in both social and academic aspects of Orientation Week.

Part I - Responsibilities of Student Support Areas

(35) There are a range of organisational units that provide the scaffolding around students' academic life, for example the Equity and Diversity, Indigenous Student Support, Counselling Service, Student Hub and the Ask ICT help centre. These student support areas will:

- a. Promote services and facilities to support students in their health and wellbeing
- b. Provide students with the necessary life skills, assistive technology or tools to meet their course requirements
- c. Ensure the messages that are provided to students during Orientation Week are relevant to their immediate needs in line with the just in-time service delivery model. For example, information about counselling, disability support, housing, transport, financial aid, assistive technologies and being safe on campus and lodging a complaint.

Part J - Responsibilities of La Trobe International

(36) La Trobe International will be responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that international students are provided with essential information on arrival in Melbourne on services to support them whilst they are studying and living in Australia. (As this is delivered on arrival, essential information sessions may be provided before, during and after Orientation Week to capture all newly arriving students). Ensuring that Orientation Week activities are appropriate, accessible and meet the ESOS standards, as well as the needs of international students;
- b. Ensuring that Orientation Week and ongoing Discover La Trobe activity is promoted effectively to international students.

Part K - Responsibilities of Sports Organisations

(37) There are a range of different sporting associations and centres across La Trobe University. Where applicable these sports organisations will be responsible for:

- a. Delivering appropriate high quality social activities during Orientation Week and throughout Discover La Trobe that encourage peer interaction, safety and community;
- b. Ensuring commencing students are made aware of the opportunities to be involved in sports clubs;
- c. Promoting a healthy student lifestyle through sporting clubs and University sporting facilities.

Part L - Responsibilities of the Library

(38) During Orientation Week and ongoing through Discover La Trobe as required, the Library:

- a. conducts tours and activities to help ensure students are aware of the Library's group and individual study spaces, facilities and service points, both physical and online;
- b. promotes and provides opportunities and incentives to sign up to 'getting started' classes conducted in the first weeks of semester eg. finding materials on a reading list, introduction to referencing;
- c. delivers information via orientation materials about the Library's scholarly resources, information services, and learning spaces;
- d. supports colleges to ensure that information about the Library's discipline specific information resources and services are included in college orientation program.

Part M - Responsibilities of Student Life

(39) The Student Life portfolio, for the purposes of this procedure, includes accommodation services and Ask La Trobe.

(40) Accommodation Services will:

- a. Ensure students within on-campus accommodation are aware that Orientation Week is the official commencement to their academic semester and that these students are strongly encouraged to attend the Orientation Week program
- b. Design and deliver appropriate activities during the residential orientation program and La Trobe orientation program that encourage peer interaction, safety and community, and abide by the University's policies on Student Behaviours and Drugs and Alcohol
- c. Ensure that organised activities and sessions are not timetabled at the same time as University-wide or College-based orientation or transition sessions.

(41) ASK La Trobe will:

- a. Offer a multi-channel service that provides virtual and physical services for students to access useful and timely information about their University life
- b. Offer 24/7 student help via FAQ's available on the La Trobe University website
- c. Offer a service that focuses on and is responsive to the needs of the student.

Part N - Responsibilities of Marketing and Engagement

(42) Marketing and Engagement will be responsible for:

- a. Ensuring Orientation Week and Discover La Trobe is prominently promoted on the University website
- b. Assisting with the design, development and printing of the Orientation Week publication
- c. Providing advice on appropriate strategies to promote Orientation within the University community and to commencing students
- d. Developing and maintaining the La Trobe Student Engagement App (Bayshann)

- e. Supporting the Nurture Program.

Section 5 - Definitions

(43) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Commencing student: In this document a commencing student is defined as any undergraduate or postgraduate coursework student commencing studies at La Trobe University for the first time, including a student entering into a 'second year' or Master's program, or returning to study at La Trobe after an absence of one semester or more.
- b. Cornerstone Subject: Any subject teaching, evaluating and providing feedback on a Graduate Capability (GC) of a course, specifically designed to provide commencing students with a firm grounding in the core threshold knowledge and skills required to learn successfully in more advanced subjects, and evaluates the level of student achievement towards achieving the standard set for Cornerstone.
- c. **Course: A program of study leading to one or more qualifications and in which a student may study one or more Majors. Discover La Trobe: a series of academic and social activities that occur over a six-week period at the commencement of a student's first semester of study. Designed to facilitate student's engagement with their courses, their peers and their learning communities.**
- d. **Course: A program of study leading to one or more qualifications and in which a student may study one or more Majors.**
- e. Discover La Trobe: A series of academic and social activities that occur over a semester long period at the commencement of a student's study. Designed to facilitate student's engagement with their courses, their peers and their learning communities.
- f. Graduate Capabilities (GC): High-level learning outcomes that are described in discipline-specific terms.
- g. Online Orientation: a series of activities that occur online prior to commencement and in the first week of online study periods designed to facilitate a student's orientation and transition to online learning and support student engagement.
- h. Orientation Week: a series of academic and social activities that occur in the week prior to commencement of classes of each semester. Designed to facilitate a student's orientation and transition to La Trobe and support student engagement.
- i. Standard: Component criteria comprising a GC against which a student's achievement is evaluated.
- j. Subject: A unit of study within a course.
- k. Transition: the process by which a student commences, or re-commences after an absence of one semester or more, study at La Trobe University.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

(44) Responsibility for implementation

- a. Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- b. College Pro Vice-Chancellors
- c. College Associate Pro Vice-Chancellors (Coursework)
- d. Pro Vice-Chancellor, International

- e. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
- f. Pro Vice –Chancellor, Regional
- g. Executive Director/Chief Information Officer
- h. Heads of Schools
- i. Regional Campus Heads
- j. University Librarian
- k. Manager, Student Engagement
- l. Director, Educational Experience
- m. Director, Educational Innovation (La Trobe Online)
- n. College Student Transition, Achievement and Retention (STAR) Teams

(45) Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor

(46)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	To Be Advised
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Approval Authority	
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