

Orientation & Transition Support Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the transition support activities and services to facilitate the commencing year for new students commencing a course of study at Macleay College.

Scope

This policy applies to all new students (Commencing Students) enrolled in a course of study at Macleay College, and the staff who are involved in the associated teaching, academic skills and administrative activities.

Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following college policies:

- Misconduct Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Disabilities Policy
- Attendance & Participation Policy
- Monitoring Academic Progression Policy
- Grievances & Appeals Policy for Academic Matters

All documents referenced in this policy can be accessed via the [Forms & Policies](#) section at the bottom of the Home Page of the college website and Handbook section of the Moodle Student Portal via www.mymacleay.edu.au/.

Principles

The Orientation & Transition Support Strategy is based on four key areas – Student Engagement; Academic Progress; Learning Experience and Students at Risk – and identifies actions and activities for each of the key areas across the trimesters and responsibilities for implementation.

Transition Support Activities

Orientation Program

Macleay College conducts a compulsory orientation program at the commencement of each trimester to provide students with information to support their move to tertiary education and life at Macleay College. It is a structured program of activities to enable new students to become familiar with the tertiary environment and the skills and knowledge needed to succeed. This process aims to build awareness and understanding of key academic and administrative processes, policies and services, and prepare students for successful learning and promote early engagement with their learning environment, such as:

- enrolment and course progression requirements, policies and processes
- campus facilities and resources
- assessment requirements, policies and processes

- academic support services to assist with the transition to tertiary study
- counselling and personal wellbeing service
- emergency and health services

Transition Support Services

Academic Skills Support

There are a number of learning and transition support services offered to new students to cater to the diverse needs of learners who may be at different stages of preparedness for tertiary study. These experiences ensure new students have opportunities to identify and meet key academic, support and other relevant campus staff to build connections within the College, be introduced to the Learning Management System (Moodle) and understand how it is used to support learning, and familiarise themselves with academic and support services that will assist with the development of successful study and learning habits:

- a) In Week 1 of each trimester, two lectures are presented on academic writing, essay planning, research methodologies and citation methods. The lectures are repeated so that all students are able to attend. In the ensuing weeks, Academic Skills Tutors work with students one-on-one or in small groups on their essay drafts. These are provided by the relevant teaching staff best suited to the particular learning or skill requiring additional support. Session times vary so that all students have the opportunity to benefit from the program.
- b) As part of the Macleay Positive Education program students are given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire in the first week of classes to determine their top 5 character strengths and identify the areas they wish to develop while at Macleay. Macleay lecturers then use this information to inform their teaching and learning practice.
- c) Macleay College has an Academic and Information Literacy Program which consists of face-to-face instructional; workshops and reference services with the Campus Librarians to build research and writing skills that are the basis for ongoing professional development and achievement, as well as independent lifelong learning:
 - Library Orientation
 - Study Skills & Techniques
 - Harvard Referencing Made Easy
 - Report & Essay Writing
 - Find & Using Information Effectively
 - Advanced Search & Research Strategies
 - Studying, Revising & Doing Exams
- d) The Campus Librarians offer “drop-in sessions” as well as individual or group sessions by appointment to address specific needs. Students are welcome to bring in assessments they are working on for advice on essay structure, grammar, researching, answering the question, logic (of argument or hypothesis), coherence, etc. The Campus Librarians can also assist with time management and study skills and habits, as well as any questions regarding referencing (theory or conventions).

- e) In addition to the Academic & Information Literacy Workshops, academic skills support is also provided as part of the student support initiatives implemented within each faculty. As a routine part of the teaching and learning delivery, Academic Teaching Staff are available immediately before or after timetabled class times for informal consultation with students to discuss issues or answer any questions they may have about that unit of study, for example lecture plans, assessment expectations etc. More formal consultation in relation to specific learning requirements such as additional assistance to understand key concepts or master technical skills, learning difficulties or individual study plans etc. are available outside of normal class times by appointment.
- f) Each Faculty also has Pastoral Carers who are available to meet with students to listen to any concerns they may have in relation to their study or personal matters. They may provide them with support and guidance on matters related to their study in consultation with other faculty members such as Academic Teaching Staff, Faculty Coordinator and Head of Faculty.
- g) At the end of the first trimester, students will book a one-on-one appointment with the Faculty Coordinator to discuss their academic progress in each unit. These sessions are outside of normal class times generally during Week 13 (or Week 1 of a trimester) and may also involve the input of Academic Teaching Staff, Pastoral Carers and Head of Faculty, as required.

Faculty Ambassadors

Faculty Ambassadors play an important role in representing their faculty and communicating with students on matters related to their study as well as informing the College about issues facing students. They are appointed at the end of each trimester in preparation for the next trimester intake and are involved in Orientation week and other transition activities.

Student & Faculty Networking

During each trimester, a faculty event is held for new students to provide them with an opportunity to engage with faculty outside the classroom and network with other students.

Student Representative Committee (SRC)

The SRC plays a key role in organising events and other activities particularly in the first three weeks of the trimester to increase the opportunities for students to engage with staff and faculty. A schedule of events is organised for each trimester.

Peer Assisted Study Sessions

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) Program provide new students with learning support from their peers to improve their academic performance. The sessions are run for students in their first trimester to assist with their transition to tertiary study and align with the weekly lecture timetable and the content on Moodle. They are not designed to replace lectures or engagement with faculty but provide additional learning support. PASS attendance is voluntary however the students will be encouraged at orientation to sign up for the sessions.

Counselling & Personal Wellbeing Service

Transition into higher education can be a stressful time for some students. The pressure of work and the prospect of examinations may generate feelings of stress that become difficult to manage. Events associated with relocating to a different country and new home can also make studying stressful. In addition to academic support, Macleay College provides all students with the opportunity to access an independent professional psychological counselling service to assist them with their journey through college life and tertiary study.

Students can access two counselling sessions (at no cost to themselves) and a third session may be provided at the recommendation of the Counsellor. Students are also invited to contact their Program Leader for a confidential personal discussion. From these discussions, the Program Leader will refer students to the College Counselling Service or third party organisations for specialist advice in mental health and/or other personal health issues.

The College Counsellor facilitates a 'wellbeing' session as part of Orientation program outlining the counselling service, how to succeed in tertiary study, and how to improve personal wellbeing for study successes.

The Student Handbook provides details on how to access the counselling service and provides a directory of national and state Emergency, Community & Health Services.

Access

Students book their individual appointments directly with Academic Teaching Staff, their Pastoral Carer, Faculty Coordinator, Head of Faculty, Librarian or College Counsellor via email. All students and staff are issued with a college email address that follows a standard convention of initialsurname@macleaycollege.edu.au.

Students can access their college email account via the Moodle (the Learning Management System).

Approvals

Next Policy Review Cycle: October 2019

The Student Support Strategy was endorsed by the Teaching & Learning Committee at their meeting of 29 August 2017 and ratified by the Academic Board at their meeting of 11 October 2016.