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Pre-arrival blended learning approach to smooth transition to University

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Starting a new university course can be a daunting experience – whether students are transitioning straight from high-school or embarking on a second degree at a new institution, there is a wealth of information they must assimilate while learning to navigate around both the real and virtual worlds of their chosen university. It is therefore essential that we support our diverse student population through this period of transition by the provision of accessible resources. Following on the success of our well established "Big Vet Wee Vet" pre-arrival buddy scheme, in 2017-18 the BVMS Programme at the University of Glasgow School of Veterinary Medicine adopted a blended learning approach by providing pre-arrival access to a suite of pages on Moodle and Mahara. These have been designed to help our new intake prepare for arrival in Glasgow, become familiar with the purpose and function of each of these virtual learning environments and familiarise them with key people, places and available support. Our new students are then required to complete a series of tasks both prior to and during induction week – some online, some face-to-face - to ensure they are getting to grips with the structure and functionality of our virtual learning environments and becoming familiar with what to expect from life at Glasgow University Vet School.

This presentation will showcase the Moodle and Mahara orientation and induction pages and present user analytics demonstrating the level of student interaction and engagement with these resources for 2017-18 and 2018-19. We will present feedback from students on the resources and an evaluation of the impact they have had on the level of support required for our new intake during transition to university. The presentation will also demonstrate the transferability of this approach to other on-campus courses.