

Dive into Uni: Preparing students for University Readiness

Lisa Wirihana¹ Judy Craft² Karin Medew³ Ken Lyons⁴ Martin Christensen⁵ Maria Oram⁶

¹Academic Coordinator for Nursing (Queensland University of Technology [QUT], Caboolture Campus) ²Lecturer, School of Biomedical Sciences (QUT, Caboolture Campus) ³ Acting Caboolture Library Manager (QUT, Caboolture Campus) ⁴ Academic Coordinator for Creative Industries (QUT, Caboolture Campus) ⁵ Associate Professor in Nursing (QUT, Caboolture Campus) ⁶ Counsellor/ Welfare Officer (QUT, Caboolture Campus)



Transition to university can be a highly stressful time of change and adjustment for commencing students. Students entering university with limited prior academic success may be at more risk of failure than their peers (Palmer, Bexley & James, 2011). Under preparedness relates to unrealistic workload expectations, social isolation, and academic curriculum and assessment expectations (James et al, 2010). Bridging courses are a common response to addressing the needs of students with limited prior academic experience (Greenfield, Keup, & Gardner, 2013). In 2014, the Caboolture Campus of Queensland University of Technology (QUT) piloted a cross faculty bridging course designed to engage students in learning to become university ready. The goal of this transition program was to foster a sense of belonging and normalise help-seeking behaviour. Students who attended the series of workshops will be closely followed through their first year of university to ascertain the effectiveness of the pilot course.

Not drowning, waving.
These sessions will help you understand what university is like, and how you can prepare for any challenges.

Dive in - Transitions	For most people starting new things is exciting but also scary. Find ways for making your transition to university successful.
Checklist	Discover all the study skills that you already have, as well as those that you don't yet have.
Learn how to learn	Understand how you learn in order to study effectively and maximise your opportunities at university.
Plan for a good start	Take this opportunity to think about financial, practical, family and other issues which will impact your study. Develop a plan for successfully incorporating university study into your life.
Check-in 1,2,3	Take the time to reflect on the journey so far. Reflect and recalibrate.
Ride the wave	Take this opportunity to review your progress and make plans for the coming semester.

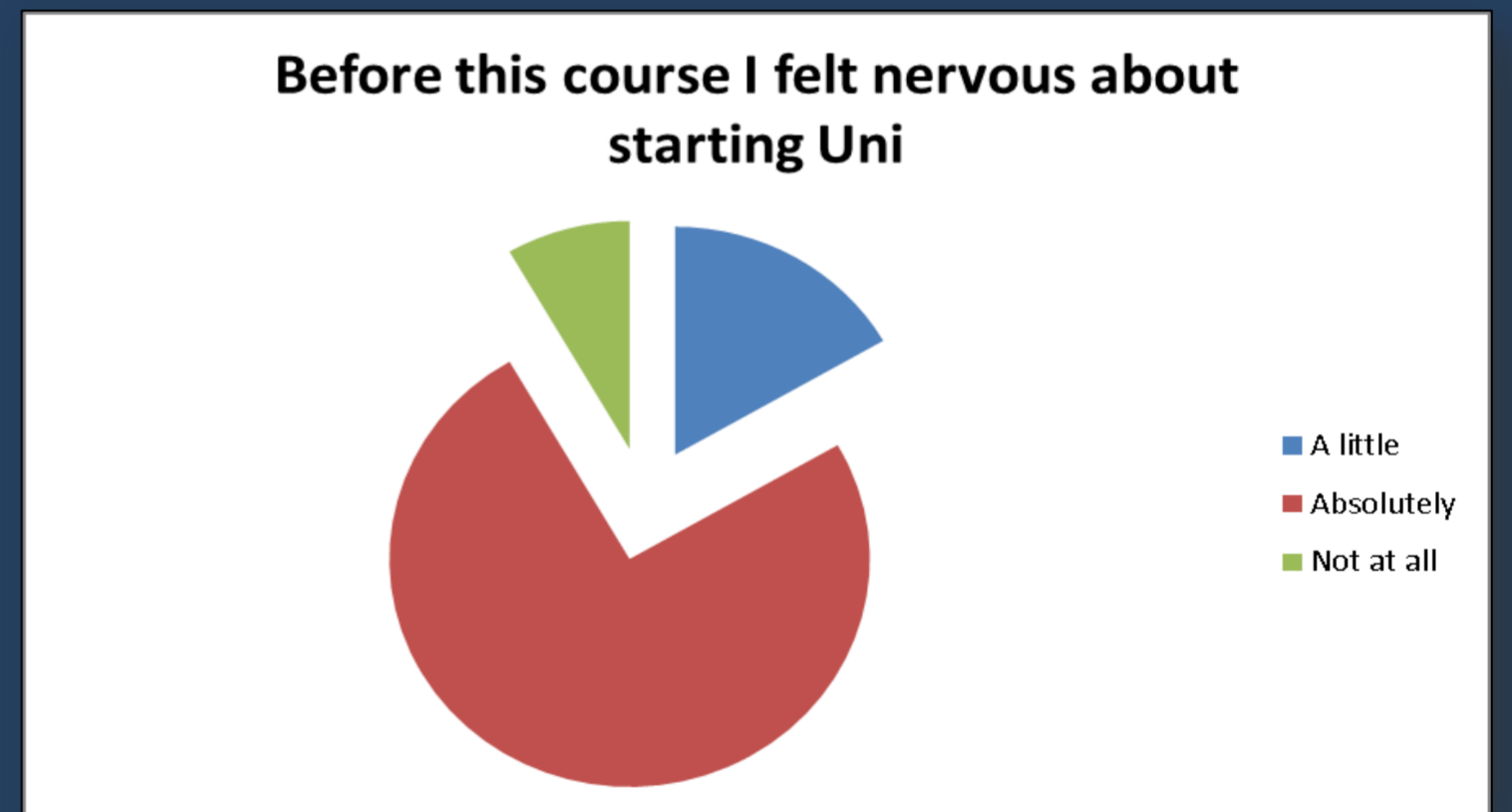
Special strokes
These sessions are specific to Nursing.

Introduction to Nursing 1-7	Talk to your academics about studying Nursing at QUT. Learn about general professional concepts as well as science concepts as they apply to nursing.
Get ready for Science in Nursing 1 & 2	Understand the relevance of science to clinical practise and everyday life, and be familiar with medical terminology and 'medical talk'. Session 2 includes an overview of science for the nursing course, how to plan your study and assessment for science, and tips for studying science.

Freestyle
Free time is scheduled for you to continue working at home or on campus. Drop in help is scheduled for specific tasks towards the end of the program.

Swimming lessons
These sessions will help you develop essential study skills so you can be ready for the start of semester.

Writing 1, 2, 3	Make sure you have the basics right. Learn why a sentence makes sense with the grammar you have probably forgotten. Learn how to construct effective paragraphs and various types of essays at university.
Research 1, 2, 3	It's easy to find information but getting the best scholarly information quickly is a skill. Use databases efficiently to find high quality, relevant information for your assignments. Learn to reference using QUT Cite Write.
Reading	Learn how to unravel academic language and make useful notes.
Maths essentials	Refresh your maths skills. Develop a problem solving approach to a range of maths topics selected from place value, fractions, percentage, scale, algebra, measurement.
IT Skills	Computers are central to your learning at university. In this session you will learn the basics, develop confidence using Microsoft Office, and know about other tools and resources to continue your IT skills development.
Presentations	In-class presentations are a fact of life at university. Learn how to prepare effectively, manage your nerves, and get your message across.
Groups	Learn about your role as a team member, how to plan your team project, and what to do if things get tense.
Exams	Tips and tricks to help you revise before the exam, and make an exam plan as well as strategies for dealing with exam stress and anxiety.
Assessment submissions	Understand the processes to follow for assessment submissions at QUT.
QUT Blackboard	Learn how to access the units you are studying and use the communication and assessment tools.
QUT student systems	Personal assistance with student administration processes including class registrations.



References
Greenfield, G. M., Keup, J. R., & Gardner, J. N. (2013). Developing and sustaining successful first-year programs: A guide for practitioners. [EBL]. Hoboken: Wiley
James, R., Krause, K., & Jennings, C. (2010). The first year experience in Australian universities: findings from 1994 to 2009. Melbourne, Vic.: Centre for the Study of Higher Education.
Palmer, N., Bexley, E. and James, R. (2011). Selection and participation in Higher Education: University selection in support of student success and diversity of participation. Retrieved from http://www.go8.edu.au/_documents/go8-policy-analysis/2011/selection_and_participation_in_higher_education.pdf