Course Induction

Examples of pre-arrival activities
Induction at NTU

When planning induction, it is worth considering three stages:

- Pre-arrival activity
- Initial induction (Welcome Week)
- Extended induction (inducting students to new academic activities as they first encounter them)

The Pre-arrival stage

For undergraduate students the pre-arrival stage is the time between mid-August (A level results) and actually arriving on campus at the end of September. The induction goals for this stage are:

- Helping students start to engage with a course community
- Helping students focus on the course, not just the social aspects of starting at University
- Providing students with an opportunity to start to practise working independently (through the pre-arrival task)

There are two main benefits from students engaging with the pre-arrival activities.

Firstly, students start to practise learning behaviours appropriate to their course. Pre-induction activities often include research or questioning activities and are best when linked into course inductions. Students therefore are learning independently, conducting research and, during induction, working with their peers and towards a specified goal.

Secondly, good pre-induction tasks encourage students to think about their course. At a time when students are often excited about their new social life, reminding them about their course can be a valuable activity with benefits to motivation, engagement and focus.

The course induction pages contains six sections:

- My course
- Pre-arrival activities
- Induction timetable
- My learning
- Assessment
- Academic support

Guidance about completing the induction pages can be obtained from each School’s Learning & Teaching Co-coordinator.

Pre-arrival activities

What are pre-arrival activities & how might they be useful?

If a student completed their A’ levels in the summer term, by the time they start in September, it may be four months since they read a text, or pushed themselves academically. That, combined with the heady social whirl of Welcome Week, can mean that they are very unprepared to
engage with induction and transition activities in their first few weeks of term.

Pre-arrival tasks can be one way of pushing learning into students’ consciousness before they arrive at university and help them to have a more realistic perspective about what to expect. Pre-arrival activities are those tasks that can help students begin to start thinking about what their studies are going to be like. It may be worth remember that whilst many students are looking forward to the social life, most are also very excited about starting their studies and will be keen to find out more.

**Student feedback**

To date, student feedback has been good. Two problems however, persist.

1) Initial communication. Students appear not to see the importance of the course induction pages in amongst the other central communications. NTU will continually strive to improve this, and from 2013 onwards school based communications will stress the importance of engaging with both the induction once it starts and the pre-arrival tasks.

2) Embedding within the course induction. Those students who completed the tasks felt undermined when some peers didn’t. Particularly when the tasks weren’t apparently integrated into the induction programme. It made them feel that they’d wasted their time. Please ensure that the pre-arrival task is thoroughly embedded into the induction programme.

Further reading about the use of pre-arrival tasks can be found in:


For further information, please contact:

Ed Foster, Student Engagement Manager, CADQ

Or

Dr Christine Hardy, LTC, School of Art & Design
4 types of pre-arrival activities

- **Research task**
- **Engaging with the literature**
- **Social networking**
- **Key questions about the discipline**

**Research task**

In one classic example from Bournemouth University, nursing students were asked to investigate 10 different influential nursing practitioners. If the students’ surname began with A-E they would look at a particular practitioner, F-H a different one and so on. Once students arrived on campus in Welcome Week, they were then given time to work together to produce a presentation about each practitioner and the week ended with a series of presentations. The approach was deemed valuable because it subtly introduced students to research, preparation and teamwork in an unobtrusive manner. By asking students to work on the task during the induction programme, it also provided the opportunity to catch up if they hadn’t done the pre-arrival task, thereby reducing potential anxieties.

**Reading tasks**

A number of universities ask students to read texts about key themes related to the course. For example asking business students to read a short biography of an influential business leader. These then form the basis of group discussions during the induction programme. Although not practising independent research, they do introduce students to the practice of engaging with and debating issues around a text. I personally like the idea of asking students to purchase at least one textbook before they arrive and do some targeted reading, but have a feeling I’m in a bit of a minority on that idea.

**Social networking**

Although NTU has an official Facebook page, twitter accounts etc., there’s no reason why course teams can’t set up Facebook pages to encourage students to talk to one another, or even to debate a particular theme.

However, whilst students will extensively use Facebook to find new flat mates, they are often more reticent to engage in course Facebook pages prior to arrival. It may be that students are more tentative in putting themselves forward to peers and tutors. Students appear more likely to lurk than engage in online discussions, although often report that they like the fact that this option is offered. Please don’t be disappointed if you get minimal engagement.

**Engaging with the discipline**

One of the goals of the tutorial system is to engage students in discourse about the discipline. What does it mean to be an artist, or a scientist? Many courses teams have found it useful to post pre-arrival questions about the nature of the course.

**Sample Activities**

The following sample activities are drawn from the 2011 pre-arrival tasks. We think these represent good examples of how you might deliver a pre-arrival task. We do not claim that they are perfect, but hopefully will help you to think creatively.
Sample Research Tasks

Accounting & Finance BA (hons)

Animal Biology BSc

Computer Science (Games Technology) BSc hons
Accounting & Finance BA (hons)

We would like you to complete a small task before you come to university to help you prepare for your course.

**Purpose**
The course team believe that it is beneficial to incorporate activities and assessments into the course to build student employability throughout the three years of taught programme. With this in mind we would like you undertake the following two types of activity before you come to join us in September.

**Activity**

On a regular basis read or watch the business news.

If you do not already do this, find a reliable source such as the BBC (television or website) or a newspaper such as *The Times, Financial Times, The Guardian* or *The Observer*. You are not expected to read these cover to cover, 10-15 minutes at a time is fine, but the aim is to become generally informed about economic or business-related headline stories, and also to become familiar with some of the language that is used in these sources.

From a local or national newspaper, find two job advertisements for accountants.

These may be aimed at new graduates or at established professionals. Cut them out or save them to an e-file that you will be able to refer to and print once you are at University.

Comparing and contrasting these advertisements, make notes identifying skills and personal attributes that employers require for accountants;

In addition, using the adverts and your own ideas, list what types of tasks you think accountants undertake as part of their jobs. This activity should take 1-2 hours in total. Your notes may be handwritten or typed – you only need to bring them with you and be able to refer to them to discuss your ideas with other students once you are at University. We will clearly indicate which session they are needed for once you arrive.

**Link to course**
We will refer to this pre-work in one of the early seminar sessions on the course to help you start building a portfolio of your skills that you plan to develop during the course.

**Contact**
Level One Tutor
(Names removed)
Animal Biology BSc

Purpose
To prepare for your very first assignment and Welcome week course specific activities.

Activity
Select a single species of animal that you are interested in and investigate the natural history of that species. Depending on the species being examined, you might cover the evolutionary history of the species, domestication (if appropriate), production and management methods (where appropriate) and any other biological information that you deem relevant. Produce short notes to which you can refer and bring them along to the course-specific sessions during Welcome week. **Do not forget to keep records of where you sourced your information.** You will have an opportunity to discuss your findings both with your Programme Leader (Dr. J. Boyd) and course colleagues during Welcome week and during tutorials about your induction assignment and what it will involve.

Good luck and enjoy.

Link to induction or course
This activity will link directly to both your induction and the Animal Biology course as a whole.

Contact
Subject administrators
(Names removed)
Computer Science (Games Technology) BSc hons

We would like you to complete a small task before you come to University to help you prepare for your course.

Purpose
One of the key skills you will learn at University is how to research independently and locate useful information. Your pre-arrival tasks are designed to get you looking for things, and to help you focus on why it is that you want to spend the next three or four years learning about your chosen subject.

Activity
Find a (dream) job
In these times of economic uncertainty there is no such thing as a guaranteed job. It has never been more important to have a clear focus on the kind of role you want when you finish University, and to understand the skills which are required to secure it. This task is for you to find two advertised jobs in fields in which you are interested in working. The first should be an entry level position, the job you would like (or be prepared) to take as soon as you graduate. The second should be for your dream job, the job that you aspire to once you have obtained the necessary skills and experience. Copy and paste (or screenshot, scan or photograph) the job adverts, where possible ensuring that you know all they key details such as the required skills and experience, salary, location etc.

Find a Video
Using sites like Youtube, 5min, Vimeo or blinkx, locate a video which is some way related to computer technology. The video can be interesting, funny or just useful – but it shouldn't be too long! The videos will be watched in your tutor groups during induction week so prepare a 30 second pitch to introduce your video. Groups will vote for the funniest, most interesting and most useful videos and there will be prizes. Below are some examples of the sort of videos we are looking for.

Dr Jonathan Tepper giving a talk on why Alan Turing is his favourite scientist to interest children in Computer Science.

An example of how to teach the bubble sort method, a method used in computing to organise data.

Implementation of simple games on the sides of buildings 1.

Implementation of simple games on the sides of buildings 2.

A 3D animated film illustrates the highs and lows of technical support.

Link to induction or course
During your induction week, you will discuss both activities within your personal tutor groups on Wednesday 28 September. These tasks have been set to help you reflect on your reasons for choosing your specific degree and to think about your personal and career goals at this early stage. It will also help you to get to know members of your personal tutor group, as well as your tutor.

Contact
If you require any additional information to help you undertake these tasks, please contact one of our Level 1 tutors. (Names removed)
Sample Reading Tasks

Biological Sciences BSc (hons)

Childhood Studies BA (hons)

Physics BSc Hons
**Biological Sciences BSc (hons)**

We would like you to complete a small task before you come to University to help you prepare for your course.

**Purpose**
The aim of this activity is to introduce you to the skill of reading and understanding scientific texts, which may be more complex than the sorts of things you have read before. Reading is an important, but underrated, skill and this activity will also help you to develop your critical and reflective thinking skills.

**Activity**
Before arriving at Nottingham Trent University, we would like you to read one popular science book from the list below:


Each of these is an interesting, accessible text, and each will prove relevant to your future studies. All the books are available for less than £8 through internet retailers – some are much cheaper than this. They are also likely to be available in your local library. If, however, you’d really like to read an alternative science book of your own choosing, get in touch with your Programme Leader (see contact details below), who will advise if your choice is suitable.

As you read, make lists of up to five points under three headings:
- Things you find particularly interesting or surprising
- Things you’re not sure you understand correctly
- Things you’re not sure you agree with.

Note: It can be difficult to question the information presented in books, but we want you to start thinking critically rather than assuming everything you read is set in stone.

Bring the book and your lists with you to the induction activities in Welcome Week, and be prepared to talk about the points you’ve made.

**Link to induction**
This activity will be used to support a hands-on IT session during Welcome Week, in which you’ll have the chance to share your interesting facts and to do some research into the things you’re not sure you understand correctly. Your reading may also form the basis of discussions when you meet your personal tutors in Welcome Week. In addition, the reading will provide important background material for your degree course, and we hope it will give you the confidence and enthusiasm to continue exploring key texts in your field of interest.

**Contact**
If you have any queries about this activity, please contact the BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences Programme Leader, Dr. Rachel Stubbington:

**Programme Leader**
Rachel Stubbington
Email
Telephone: +44 (0)115 848 3769
Location: ERD 130, Erasmus Darwin Building, Clifton campus

If you have any general queries about your degree course, you can also contact the Course Administrator, Liz Martin.

**Course Administrator**
(Names removed)
**Childhood Studies BA (hons)**

**Purpose**
The BA (Hons) Childhood Studies programme values learning about children through thinking about ideas in books, videos, television, our own experiences and experiences of others. This activity is a chance to start on this learning journey. Whilst studying your degree you will be required to read a range of books, papers, journals this activity is designed to start you thinking about yourself as a reader and to further develop your critical and reflective thinking skills.

**Activity**
Before you come to University we would like you to allocate some time to read a book, from cover to cover.

Your task is to choose and read a book preferably about children, that you:
- find interesting
- can bring with you to the early sessions of the course
- you should also be prepared to share with others your thoughts on what you have been reading.

You are free to choose any book you wish, the important thing is that you enjoy reading it and find it really interesting. The choice might include fiction, biography, or other non-fiction books for adults or a book about children's lives specifically written for older children/teenagers.

Here is a list of books that some previous students have read. If you are not already an avid reader you could select a book from the list of titles attached, but we do not want you to feel that you ought to use this list, it is provided simply to give you some ideas.

As you read, please keep some notes as you go along about what most interests, surprises, puzzles you about the content of the book. Notice how you experience feelings as well as think about ideas as you read. And also notice things about yourself as you engage in the process of reading: what most interests, surprises, puzzles you about how yourself, as you read. Note things about why, when and where you read, what it feels like, and what are your qualities and characteristics, as a reader.

Feel free to read more than one book if you want to! Remember the crucially important criterion – you must enjoy it - because it is interesting to you. So if the first book you try, doesn't turn out to be riveting, and you lose interest, then leave it and try another one – don't feel that this is a problem you can't overcome – keep trying until you find your riveting read. It is very important that you are able to say to anyone who asks, while you are reading your riveting read, that "I'm loving it!"

In your first year of the course you will study a module called Inquiry into Learning. This module focuses on how you learn best. The module is designed to increase your awareness of yours and others learning strategies.

**Link to course**
In your first year of the course you will study a module called Inquiry into Learning. This module focuses on how you learn best. The module is designed to increase your awareness of yours and others learning strategies. This activity is to introduce you to the reading skills required as well as being able to review materials and build on the module principles enquiring into your method of learning. Whilst this activity will be followed up in this module, these skills are applicable to every module.

**Contact**
Programme Administrator
(Names removed)
Physics BSc Hons

Purpose
There are several aims of this set of pre-induction activities:
- to help you to make the transition between school or college and university more smoothly
- to make sure there are no gaps in your knowledge of some key principles and ideas
- to get you thinking like a physicist whilst solving some interesting problems.

Activity

The first pre-induction activity makes use of the textbook, so try to obtain a copy in advance of coming to NTU. Although you will be able to purchase the textbook from the Campus bookshop, this wouldn't leave you with much time in which to conduct the aforementioned activity; furthermore, demand for the book may be high, in which case supplies might run out and there may be a delay in re-stocking.

Read the section of the book on *How to succeed in Physics by really trying* (pages 11-12), as this will help you to understand some of the differences between studying Physics at School or College and studying it at University. Then go on to read sections 1.1 to 1.6 (pages 1-10), which cover some fairly basic physics ideas that will be built on from the very start of your course – most of the content may well simply be valuable revision, but some of it may be new to you, depending on exactly which syllabus you studied before coming to NTU.

Finally, here are some physics brain teasers that should be fun to solve and will get you into the groove of thinking like a physicist – we can debate the answers during induction itself.

What causes the ocean roar that you hear in a seashell?

A road that is initially flat may develop a bump, and soon thereafter ripples appear down the road, which extend for greater and greater distances, but with the same periodicity. Similar phenomena are seen on ski trails & railway tracks. What causes them?

Imagine blowing up two identical balloons, one much more than the other, then joining them together with a short length of tube. What happens, and why?

There are many stories about ships encountering huge (30 - 40 metres) waves which suddenly appear and then disappear. What could cause them?

When you turn on a light switch, exactly what determines how long it takes for the light to come on?

Link to induction or course
The directed reading will support all of your first year studies, but especially the Laboratory Instrumentation and Physics Skills and Ideas of Motion: Galileo to Einstein modules. During the main induction week we will make some time to discuss the answers to the brain teaser activities.

Contact
Programme Leader (Names removed)
Sample Social Networking Activity

Early Years & Educational Development BA (hons)
Early Years & Educational Development BA (hons)

We would like you to complete a small task before you come to University to help you prepare for your course.

**Purpose**
The purpose of this activity is to encourage you to meet others on your course before your induction begins at the end of September.

**Activity**
The activity is to log on to the Jhp Facebook page and to find at least one other person who is doing the same course title as you are.

**Link to induction or course**
You will be given time to meet this person/people during your induction.

**Contact**
Facebook name: (removed)
Sample Tasks to Help Students Engage with the Discipline

Architecture, BArch (hons)
Broadcast Journalism BA (hons)
Fashion Accessory Design (BA Hons)
Quantity Surveying BSc Hons
Architecture, BArch (hons)

You are about to enter the B Arch (Hons) in Architecture degree programme in the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment. Give some thought to the following statement:

Nikolaus Pevsner wrote: ‘A bicycle shed is a building. Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture.’ What is the difference between building and architecture, and what do you think this difference is?

- How do you think this difference might be manifested in the course and the curriculum?
- What are the merits of architecture beyond building?
- Can there be ‘architecture’ without architects?

What are the wonderful qualities of great works of architecture? Is architecture an art or a science?

These are questions which you must ask yourself now, as first year students, and to which you may not have an answer in the form of a self-confident and mature understanding of the purpose, aims and meaning of architecture, possibly until after you graduate. It is important that these questions are etched in your mind as you begin in the quest to understand good architectural design.

The B Arch Programme aims to develop your ability to perceive, conceive, and make architecture. A series of carefully designed projects will introduce you to a range of architectural ideas and creative challenges. These invite you to discover the elements and orders, which make up the "language" of architecture. The projects also require you to represent architectural concepts with convincing, finely crafted drawings and models. The most important outcome of this process is an architectural "attitude", a way of understanding the world, which is unique to the discipline of architecture. As this attitude develops, you will respond more critically, creatively, and confidently to the design issues posed by each assignment.

Above all, the B Arch Programme is an exploration. You are encouraged to question the design objectives posed by each project. In every case, you will be expected to challenge conventions, to imagine new possibilities and then to commit yourself to a clear design idea. Your tutor will support this mission. However, the whole class your instructors and your peers are valuable collaborators who can offer constructive comment and help you to recognise the merits and potential of your work.

The B Arch Programme challenges your potential to be creative not only in craft but in thinking. Your time management skills will be challenged, as will your wits. Your presumptions will be challenged and you will engage the discourse of architecture in intellectual, intuitive, visual and tactile ways. Instead of direct instruction, you will be tasked to create intelligent and meaningful designs.

- What are the pleasures and delights of architecture?
- What are the serious shortcomings of contemporary architecture?
- Why is there little relation between what is pleasurable and delightful and what is seriously wanting?
- The world of architectural discourse is full of questions, many of which cannot be verbally fully explained away but can be convincingly understood through a combination of architectural expression. The course encourages adventure, critical & creative thinking, and creative & communicative expression; through the course you will begin to develop perspectives of understanding that will go much of the way to allow you to form a coherent, substantiated and cogent view of architecture.
To recap the question: What is the difference between architecture and building?

**Activity**
Prepare and bring a 500-word essay describing your thoughts on the issues above in relation to the question: ‘What is the difference between architecture and building?’

**Link to (induction or course)**
During your induction week, you will attend an ‘architectural design studio’ induction, at which you are expected to bring this essay, a sketchbook and some pens/pencils.

**Contact**
We would like you to do this independently, but if you do have questions please contact:

**Senior Lecturer**
(Names removed)

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**Broadcast Journalism BA (hons)**

We would like you to complete a small task before you come to University to help you prepare for your course. Before coming to Nottingham Trent University, students should familiarise themselves with news content and styles across all media. To that end we require you to:

- Read *at least one* national newspaper and one local newspaper twice a week.
- Watch at least one national news main programme (e.g. *Ten O’clock news* or *Newsnight*) at *least once a week*.
- Listen to *at least one* national speech-based radio news magazine programme (e.g. *The Today programme* or *PM* on BBC Radio 4) once a week.
- Visit *at least one* online news site (e.g. BBC news online/ Sky news online) at least once a week.

While doing these activities students should have a critical awareness of the style and content with regard to the target audience.

**Link to induction**
Having undertaken the pre-induction activity, students will have an awareness of news in its various forms, and this will help them to take part in the induction week task of finding a news story in Nottingham and planning its execution.

**Contact**
**Programme Leader**
(Names removed)
Fashion Accessory Design (BA Hons)

We would like you to complete a small task before you come to University to help you prepare for your course.

**Purpose**
The reason for doing this project is to get to know a bit about you when we all meet in September, but the challenge is to form a regular habit of documenting your thoughts and observations.

**Activity**

**Summer Project 2011: A Visual Diary**
You are asked to keep a visual diary over the summer holiday, making entries every day, recording observations; events; ideas and conversations through a variety of media including, drawing collage; writing; painting, and photographs.
You will need to work in an A3 or A4 sketchbook for this project and use this over the summer period. Start this project as soon as you receive your welcome package, complete 1 page (or double page) in your visual diary for each day.

Every page should include the date and the location. Make this project personal to you, but remember we will be looking at your diaries at the beginning of term, so don't include anything you are not prepared to share with your group.

Tell us about your family, friends, favourite possessions, passions. Record your travels, show us what you've been up to i.e. festivals and gigs you have been to, hobbies, interests.

Carry the diary with you at all times, draw everything that you see, hear, touch, or experience; even what you or the person you are with is wearing.

**Link to course**
You should continue to keep the diary up until we meet you on 26 September 2011 for your induction week. You will be asked to bring this book with you for your first tutorial which will be the following week commencing 3 October.

**Contact**
(Names removed)
We would like you to complete a small task before you come to University to help you prepare for your course.

**Purpose**
Give some thought to the following statement and think about how it might influence you.

**Issues of sustainability have been identified globally as a fundamental challenge facing the world in which we live.**

You are about to start a degree course in the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment. Sustainability is an area of huge consequence affecting every individual and every aspect of our lives. Sustainability is fundamentally important to how all built environment industries are arranged, organised and inhabited; it impacts on every element and aspect that drive the decisions that built environment professionals make. We hope the question we are about to pose will stimulate some thinking about this very complex area and your ethical position in relation to it.

**Activity**

**Question: What particular aspect of sustainability would you champion and why?**

You are only allowed to choose one aspect. You need to be able to make a considered and rational argument about why this chosen issue or aspect should be the single most important priority to the world. Pretend if you like, that you are a world leader and have a once in a lifetime opportunity to determine a key sustainability priority for the forthcoming 12 months. What would it be or what would you do? Why is it more important than anything else? What consequence will this proposal or proposed action have? (maximum 250 words)

Remember that all the students on your course are being asked the same question and will no doubt identify different issues all of which contribute to describing the complexity of what is referred to as the sustainability agenda. Think laterally and creatively, there is no limit to what you can propose and no right or wrong answer, so long as you can justify your proposal.

**Link to induction or course**
During your first term you will have an opportunity to discuss this within group tutorial sessions so while you are not being asked to, for example, write a formal essay you may want to make some notes, collect some evidence together (e.g. newspaper / magazine articles) that will support you in being able to discuss convincingly and argue your case to your peers.

**Contact**
If you have any questions about this or any aspect of your course please contact: Programme Manager Level 1
(Names removed)