Integrating culture (academic and social) into an EAP provision: A case study of an international induction programme
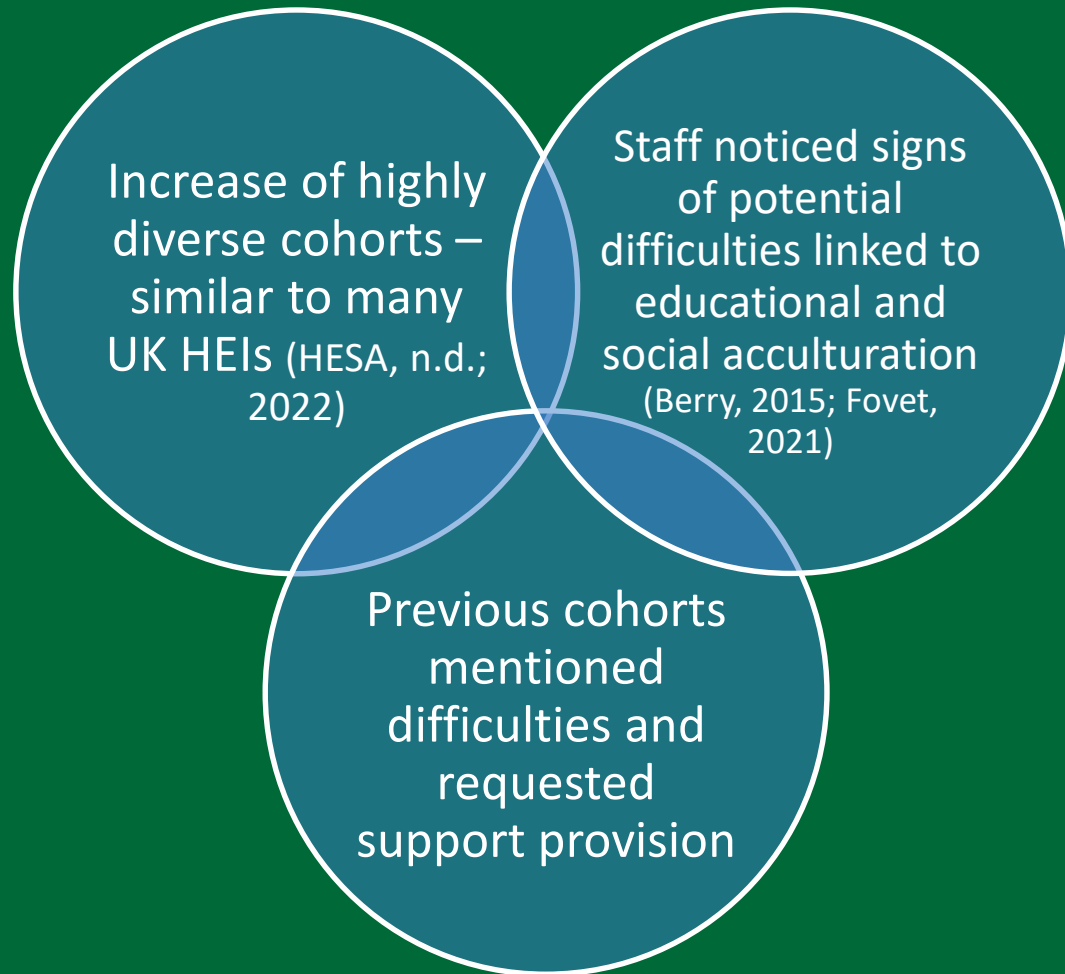
UNIVERSITY *of* STIRLING

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Context

Increase of highly diverse cohorts – similar to many UK HEIs (HESA, n.d.; 2022)

Staff noticed signs of potential difficulties linked to educational and social acculturation (Berry, 2015; Fovet, 2021)

Previous cohorts mentioned difficulties and requested support provision

Response: bespoke and holistic support aimed to address common potential barriers:

- Acculturation stressors (Berry, 1970)
- Crucial understanding of key literacy
- Expectations regarding academic integrity (Berry, 2015; Smith & Khawaja, 2011)

Consultation: staff, students, & alumni.

- Highlighted induction ideal time for increased support = promote & support successful transition
- The need to interweave culture!

Overview of programme

International Students' Induction Programme

8 hours of FREE workshops
- Reading and writing at university
- Speaking and listening skills
- Academic integrity
- Navigating Stirling
- And much more!

Student Learning Services

- **8 x 1-hour over 2 weeks online**
  - 6 workshops – key academic skills
  - 2 conversation/Q&A sessions – alumni & staff
- **3 occurrences in autumn, 1 in spring**

- Students:

Autumn 2022	Spring 2023
313	171

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Programme design

Programme aim:

- Reduce stressors to increase positive outcomes (Smith and Khawaja, 2011; Wadworth et al., 2007)
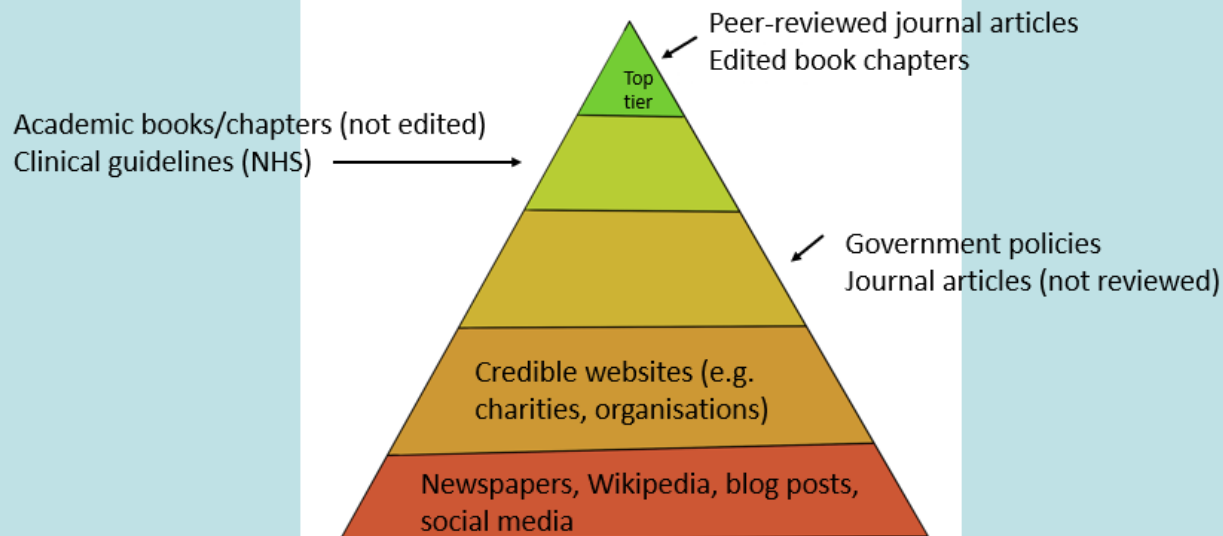
1. EAP (4 skills), academic skills, and acculturation combined.

- Interweaving language & acculturation for optimal success (Fovet, 2021)

- Relatable examples – linking theory to everyday

- Short, sharp, targeted – order of workshops specific to occurrence

Speaking in class: informal English

	Lectures	Seminars/tutorials	Workshops	Labs
Typical expectations	• The lecturer does all of the talking whilst you listen and take notes. • Questions should normally only be asked at the end of the lecture, or during breaks.	• Students are expected to do most of the talking. This is your chance to share your thoughts and ideas with peers!	• Normally more informal than a lecture, with your speaking in-between lecture and seminar levels. • Lecturer will let you know if it's ok to ask question whenever you wish or to wait until the end.	• A very practical (hands-on) class. You will typically be speaking to people as you work together. • You can normally ask for help whenever you wish.

Hierarchy of sources

Peer-reviewed journal articles
Edited book chapters

Academic books/chapters (not edited)
Clinical guidelines (NHS)

Top tier

Government policies
Journal articles (not reviewed)

Credible websites (e.g. charities, organisations)

Newspapers, Wikipedia, blog posts, social media

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2. Free to all and online to ensure inclusivity and accessibility

- Traditional pre-sessional optional

- Ensure avoidance of accidental marginalisation or isolation (Plotts, 2021)

3. Best practice e.g. trauma-informed pedagogy

- Esp. important as Stirling is University of Sanctuary

Feedback (individual workshops)

Average score: 4.8/5

Refreshed memory on key concepts

Introduced studying expectations in a UK HEI

Talked to other students and asked questions

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Feedback (overall programme)

Average score: 4.6/5

Reassurance about available support

Overview of Stirling helped with acculturation (Berry, 2015)

Promoted sense of belonging at Stirling

Programme impact (students)

Students reported feeling:

- **More settled and prepared to start studying at Stirling**

Students reported that the programme:

- **Helped them to feel like they belong to the Stirling community**

- **Enabled them to feel a connection to both staff and students**

Programme impact (institutional)

95% of int. students satisfied with their virtual orientation programme (2% higher than UK benchmark)

Satisfaction with orientation went up 7% (average) compared to 2018

90% of int. students satisfied with their learning experience at this stage (on par with UK benchmark)

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Next steps

Expansion of induction model to whole university:

- **International**

- **UG**

- **PG**

- **Mature/advanced entry**

- **Online/commuting**

Still focusing on reducing stressors (mental, emotional, educational) that could impact academic performance (Smith and Khawaja, 2011; Wadsworth et al., 2007)

Each strand tailored to that cohort

- **Logistics and expectations**

- **Critical thinking**

- **Research strategies**

Maintain a focus on cultural integration based on experience and feedback (Fovet, 2021)

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QAA case study

- **Induction programme recently published as a 1-page QAA case study (pp. 14 & 15) as part of the campaign to support and enhance the experience of international students in the UK.**

- **Click on this link to navigate to the QAA case studies document – a free QAA log in may be required.**

Thank you!

Any questions?

References

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