



Reimagining Transitions

Dr Sally Middleton, University of Aberdeen

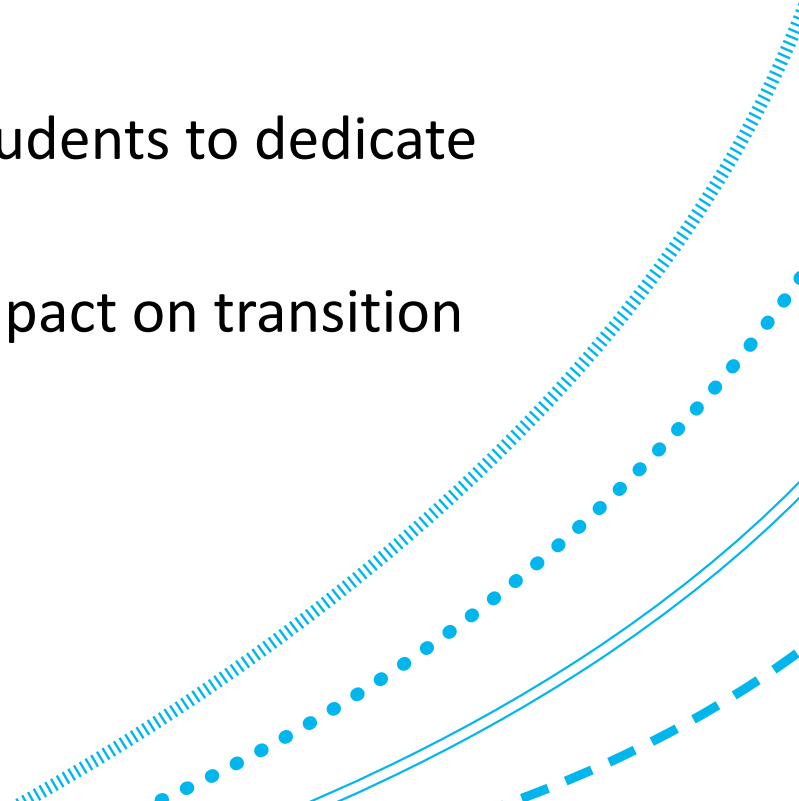
Lisa Baxter, Forth Valley College

Karen Cullen, Queen Margaret University

Welcome to “Reimagining Transitions”

By the end of this workshop, we hope you will have:

- Had a brief overview of what is currently provided by FE and HE, plus what some recent research has told us about transitions
- Considered what has changed over the last 3 years
- Talked about potential collaborations
- Discussed how the cost of living crisis affects the ability of students to dedicate time to preparing for the transition to HE
- Considered how staffing reductions in FE in particular will impact on transition support





College Transitions

Lisa Baxter

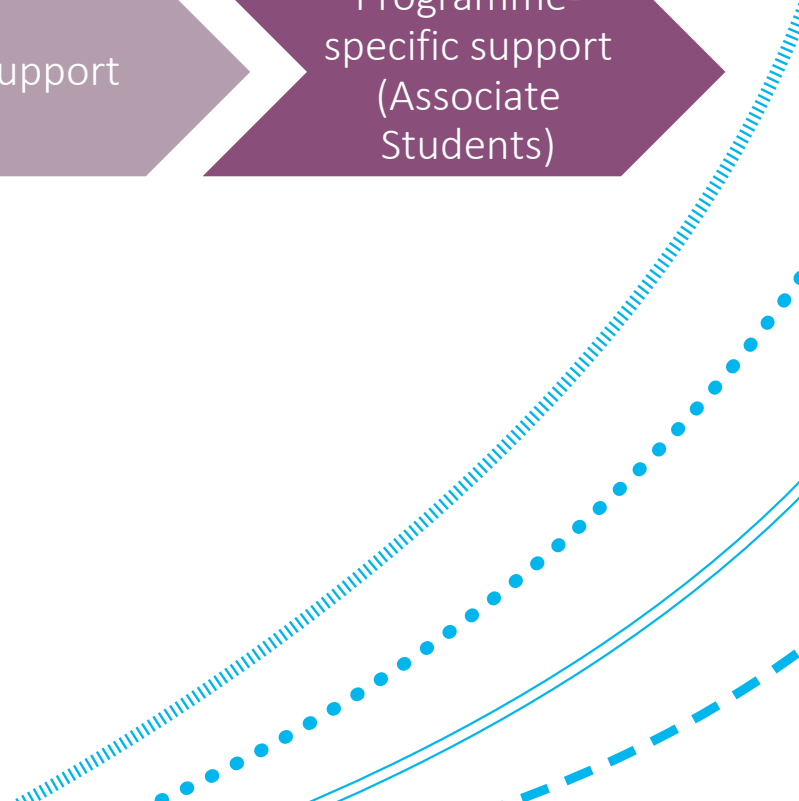
University Partnership Officer,
Forth Valley College

HE Experience at College

- small class sizes
- small campuses
- may have progressed to HNC/HND from SCQF level 5/6 course(s)
- LDW Workshops
- supportive staff e.g. first name basis
- contact with staff out-with class via email and MS Teams
- very structured college timetable
- no module selection
- strict SQA marking criteria
- equivalent level of study and assessment
- excellent feedback from university staff - "well prepared for degree" "perform as well, if not better, than students straight from high school"

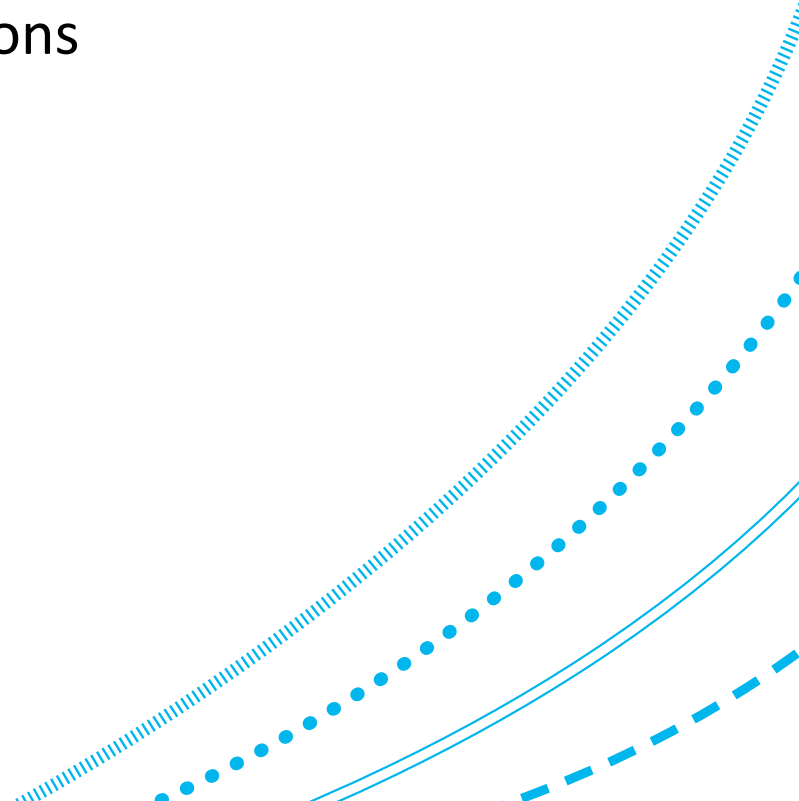


College Transitions



An example of support offered in FE - Forth Valley College

- **University engagement:** stalls on campus, class talks (subject specific), FVC's University Information Days
- **Offer holders:** university events e.g. Applicant Days, online access to IAG
- **When do students engage?** Accepting offers, late applications
- **Spring:** focus on final Unit assessments and Graded Units
- Focus is on UCAS support; enquiries re. Transitions
- Associate Students: more tailored transition support





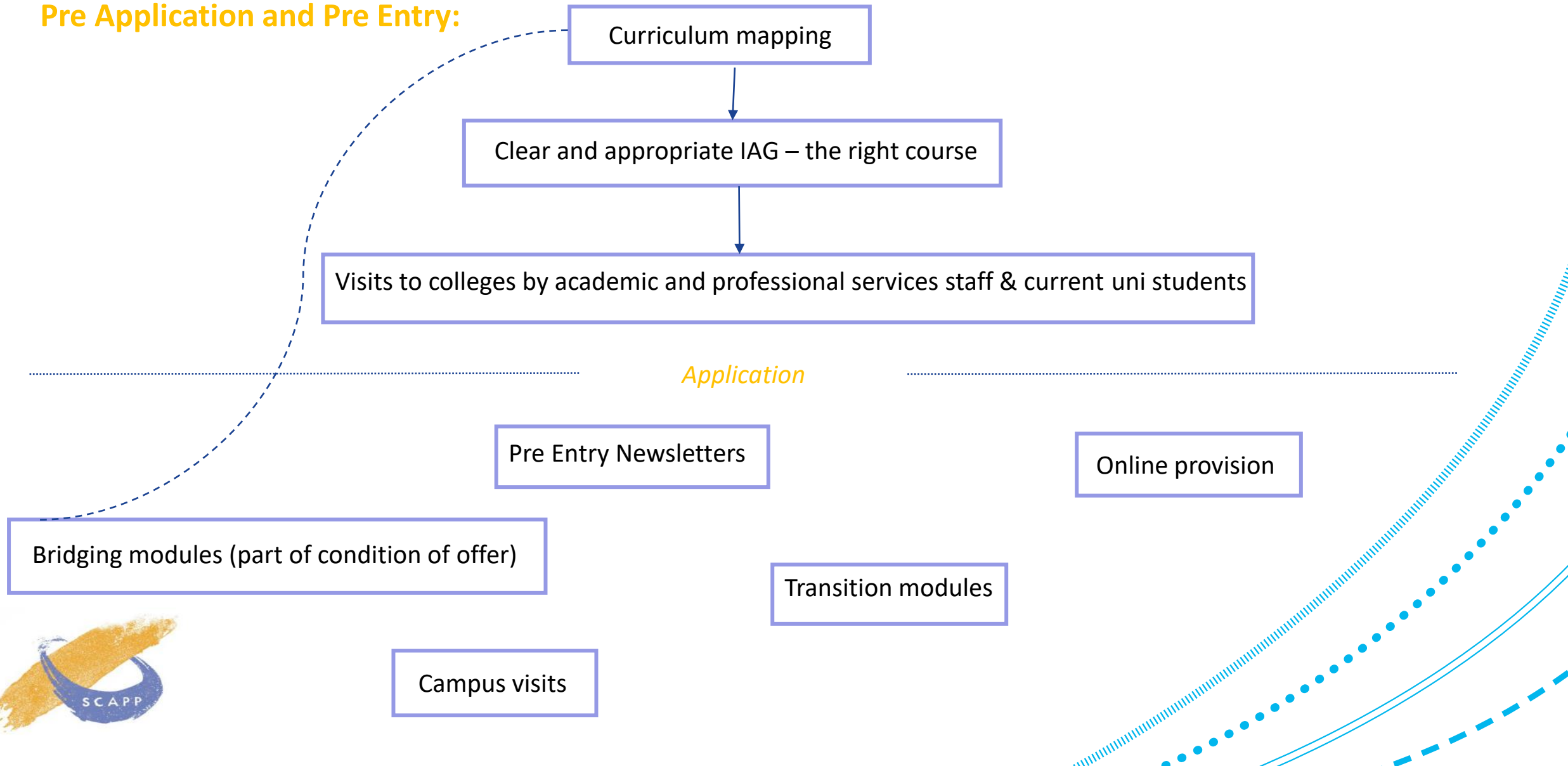
Transition from College to University

Karen Cullen

College Partnership Manager,
Queen Margaret University

Transition from College to University

Pre Application and Pre Entry:



Induction and beyond...it's a whole institution approach

Transition modules

Bridging modules

Face to face enhanced inductions covering academic skills, assessment at uni, using resources etc
Often student led
Some generic/some course specific

Buddying/mentoring

Longitudinal inductions

Formative assessments – practice in a safe space



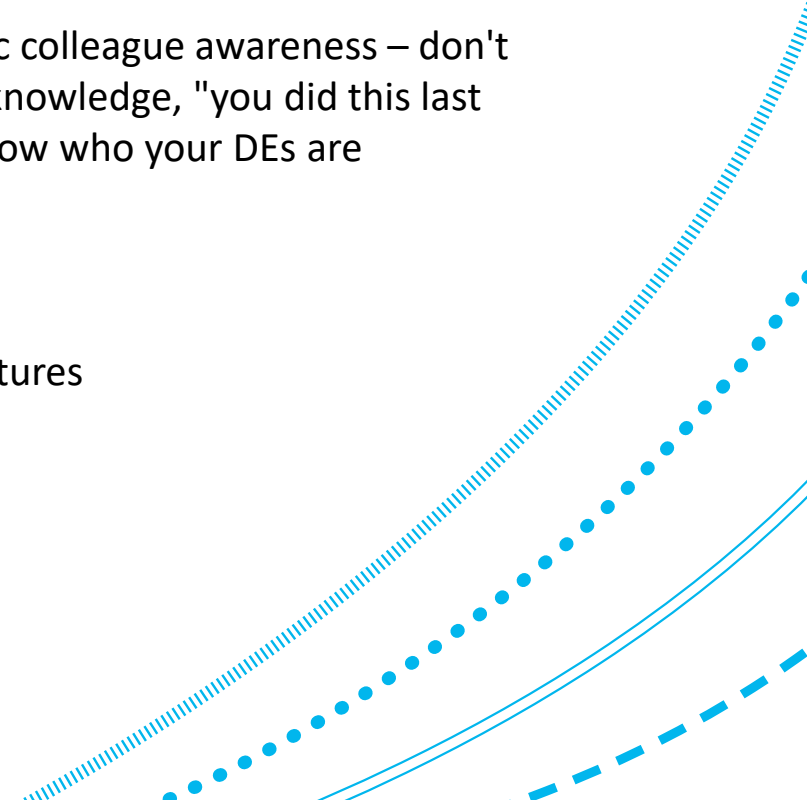
Academic colleague awareness – don't assume knowledge, "you did this last year", know who your DEs are

Online provision of resource on VLE

Week 0 catch up lectures

Stay on Course support

Social opportunities – get to know current students



Supporting the resilience of advanced entry students through peer and academic support

Dr Sally Middleton @SallyMidAbdn

Dr Jacqui Hutchison @jacqui_Hutch

Dr Heather Branigan @HeatherBranigan



Phases

1

**Phase 1: Understanding the
AE experience**

2

**Phase 2: Enhancing peer and
academic support**

3

**Phase 3: Enhancing staff
awareness and support**

Phase 1: Understanding the AE experience

Aims

- **Research Question:** What are advanced entry students' experiences of preparedness and support in relation to their transition to university?
- Produce **recommendations** that can be implemented to support students.
- Disseminate **key findings** within own institution and across the sector more widely.

Descriptive Themes and Recommendations

Institutional support plays a key role in 'settling' students

Induction events for AE
Personal tutors, knowledge of AE status

Having realistic **expectations** facilitates preparation

Highlighting similarities and differences in course content between college and university
Somewhere to ask questions that feel 'silly'

Social support is important in reassuring AE students

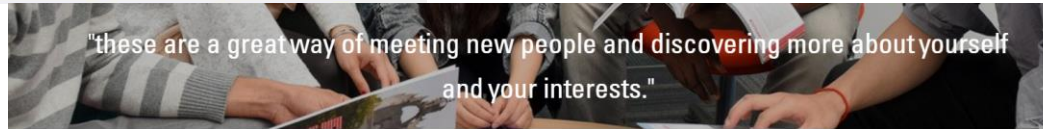
Peer support about what to expect
Opportunities to meet other (AE) students

Phase 2: Enhancing peer and academic support Aims

- **Overall aim: Develop student-led content to provide peer support for advanced entry students**
- Support materials *for students by students*
- Practical tips and '**unknown unknowns**'
- Formats: Videos, Podcasts, Blogs

Advanced Entry Toolkit – Some Examples

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Entry' section of the University of Aberdeen's support portal. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the university logo, 'Home', 'FAQs', and a search bar. Below this, the 'Advanced Entry' title is displayed. The main content area features a video player titled '2. Benefits' with a play button and a hand holding a play button icon. To the right of the video, there is introductory text: 'This resource is for students who have entered university directly into L2 or L3 of studies. We understand that this can be a daunting time, and you may have many questions about what the experience is like, what your studies will involve, and what skills you might find useful as a UoA student.' Below the video, there are three buttons: 'Guides', 'Info', and 'Links'. At the bottom right of the video player, it says 'Last updated on 02 November 2022'.



Many students find joining clubs and societies to be a great way to meet other students and try new things. Explore opportunities for how to get involved here:

When I began university, I felt like I didn't belong there. I didn't think I was clever enough, and this really came down to my own insecurities. As much as I do feel that college had prepared me for how to research and write academic pieces of work, the standard of work was much harder in university compared to college. The lecturers don't offer you as much guidance compared to the college lecturers, and there is more of an expectation to work out how to do things ourselves. Also, there was a lot of statistics in Psychology which was something that was not covered in a lot of depth at college - this was something that I really struggled with.

It is very common to take a while to adjust and feel like you belong. It is important that you know that you are not alone - in fact, there are hundreds of students who join university through advanced entry every year! Most importantly, there is lots of support available to you. You can explore the 'links' section of the advanced entry toolkit to explore support available to you

LINKS

Advanced Entry Support

- Entry From College Information
- Bursaries and scholarships

University Systems and IT Support

- Student IT Services
- MyAberdeen
- MyTimetable

Academic Support

- Academic Writing
- Student Learning Service
- Student Learning Service

Pastoral Support

- Student Support
- Personal Tutoring
- Counselling Service

Social and Peer Support

- ALISA

Phase 3: Enhancing staff awareness and support

Aims

- Overall aims: To (1) understand and (2) enhance staff **support to support** AE students through staff survey/interviews (1) and staff workshop (2).
- Understand ‘pockets’ of support across the university
- Generate examples of good practice
- Develop support materials and a workshop for staff surrounding AE support

Insights from Staff Survey

- General themes from staff survey:
 - Staff's perception of challenges faced by AE students align with those from student focus groups (e.g., sense of belonging, shift in expectations and learning environment, (misplaced?) assumptions of knowledge of learning environment).
 - Range of support offered (e.g., summer schools, induction upon entry, social events) but perception is that this ends upon entry.
 - Mixed responses in terms of staff knowing who to contact within their school about AE students in particular.
- Next Steps
 - Staff Workshop

Thank You!

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Reimagining Transitions

Next: Working in your groups, you have 25 minutes to discuss the 4 topics we have set:

1. Looking back: what have we learned since 2020
2. Now: Financial Constraints - For students, for FE, for HE
3. Looking forward: IAG - what is missing, how can we improve?
4. Looking forward: Transitions -what is missing?



Reimagining Transitions

Finally! Scan the QR code below and give us your post conference ponderings. The padlet will stay open for 1 week. We will then summarise all thoughts from the session in a short report, publicised via SCAPP.

Thanks for taking part!

