
National Academy of Professional Studies (NAPS)

Student Orientation Policy and Procedure

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1. Overview

Orientation is an important process in a student's introduction to NAPS and their chosen professional course of study. Reflecting best practice in student orientation (see references below), NAPS sees orientation as an ongoing process rather than a single, often isolated event or single week of events. This policy and procedure provide the principles and guidelines to be followed in developing and operationalising NAPS' student orientation practices.

2. Purpose

This policy provides the guidelines and processes to ensure NAPS Orientation follows best practice and meets NAPS strategic goals. It provides the policy and guidelines for:

- making students feel welcome to the NAPS learning community;
- informing students about what is expected of them and what they can expect from NAPS;
- introducing students to their lecturers, administrative team and to their peers as well as other students;
- introducing students to the profession and initiating them from the very beginning into a culture of professionalism that is key to NAPS' learning program;
- facilitating and ensuring the successful transition of students into their chosen courses of study and progression through their course of studies in NAPS;
- identifying students who may be at risk from an early stage of their admission so that the Academy will be best prepared to offer them assistance;
- tracking student progress, giving them early feedback and helping them to take full advantage of the preparatory assistance in English and other support services provided by NAPS;
- ensuring international students particularly are assisted in adjusting to living and studying in Australia;
- monitoring retention, progression and completion rates of through courses of study to enable review and improvement by the Academy; and
- making sure that students know where they can go for help and to have their questions answered.

3. Best Practice Principles

NAPS is committed to the following best practice principles for its Orientation procedures:

Senior people involved as well as current students and alumni

- Orientation is most effective when senior staff are committed and involved and are held accountable for ensuring that students have a good beginning to their new learning adventure. It is, therefore, the policy of NAPS to ensure the full participation by its senior staff in its orientation programs.

Orientation involves the whole institutional team

- While senior leadership is required, NAPS also recognises that orientation is a team game. Each person in our community is expected to go out of their way and play their part in ensuring students feel welcome and are fully engaged in our learning community.

Orientation as an ongoing process

- Orientation is an ongoing process, not a one-time event or an opportunity mostly to party. At NAPS, orientation is viewed in stages occurring primarily over six weeks during which NAPS does everything that can be done to ensure students get off to a good start and are settling well into and feel a part of our professional learning community.

4. Orientation Outcomes

From our orientation process, NAPS aims to meet the following principles:

Results for Students

NAPS aims to ensure that through our Orientation processes, all our students:

- feel welcomed;
- know that they are valued and important;
- are interviewed as part of the initial assessment protocol as a foundation for early assessment in the relevant program and feedback communicated to students;
- are assessed to see if they need extra help in English and if so, are enrolled in the English language support program;
- are provided with copies of the Student Handbook and familiarised with the key contents;
- know what their units involve and what is expected of them, both inside and outside the classroom;
- have their course progression routinely tracked from the initial stages of enrolment onwards;
- from overseas are supported with information on housing and other wellbeing needs and informed of cultural practices that will help them adjust to learning in a new society;
- can have their concerns addressed early so that they are confident that, if they do their part, they can and will succeed;
- know where they can go to get their questions answered, where to get help and how to take full advantage of our learning and other resources;
- can access career preparation and prospects, right from the beginning;
- feel part of the wider professional and general community of which NAPS is a part;
- affirm their choice of institutions and choice of careers;
- have a clear set of goals and concrete plans on how to achieve them;
- feel motivated, engaged and excited to be studying; and
- feel they have a good foundation for their first trimester at NAPS and beyond.

Individualised

We know that each student is different and that they have particular needs. By getting to know our students and their biography we want to tailor our message as best we can to the individual student. We use technology, such as social media, to ensure that orientation involves communication in multiple directions so that we can meet these individual needs. We will provide brief student profiles to our team so that they can easily get to know student names and something about them. We will also seek to use technology (e.g. virtual tours of campus; social media tools and data analytics) to facilitate individualisation of the students' orientation experience.

Many Opportunities for Connection

To help ensure our aims are realised, NAPS orientations are full of opportunities for interaction. One-way information flows have limited effectiveness. NAPS will give students opportunities to interact with their peers, lecturers, administration team and our whole community and will encourage them to make the most of these opportunities. This is reflected in our Orientation Day program which after formal introductions, moves into getting to know you and cultural awareness games.

Addresses Emotional as Well as Logical Concerns

Orientations is about more than one-way information. How students feel about their learning plays a significant role in their motivation to learn. This is especially so for international students who are learning about a new culture, adjusting to living full-time in a new environment and improving their skills in both academic and everyday English. Therefore, it is important to give students an opportunity to express their concerns and fears, provide constructive and positive feedback, and to have issues addressed.

Introduction to a Professional Culture

As a professional academy, NAPS views orientation as an important opportunity to introduce students to a 'culture of professionalism'. NAPS seeks to involve members of the profession and professional bodies to be involved in our orientation program. Business students will hear from members from the accounting profession and leaders from Australia's Islamic business community to provide them with an awareness of what is involved in serving as a CPA or working in a business or cross-cultural setting.

Clearly Communicate Set Expectations

Students learn best when they clearly understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from NAPS, their academic staff, their peers and the entire NAPS team. Orientation is also an opportunity to ensure students understand the expectations of SS019 Student Code of Conduct and what is defined as "cheating" under the Australian education system.

Early Assessment and Access to Preparatory Materials

During the first six weeks, NAPS will ensure there are early opportunities to re-assess students, who although meeting admission criteria, may show evidence of not having successfully settled into study or who may need additional preparation in order to study to their potential.

NAPS will work with our students to help them to achieve the NAPS graduate learning outcomes and also to develop their professional, living and 'soft' skills.

This learning will also be supported through online courses on the NAPS Skills Hub. Students will be encouraged to showcase their skills through the development of a personal ePortfolio.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

NAPS aims to ensure our orientation programs and procedures continue to improve. To do this, as well as getting student feedback on the Orientation Day, NAPS will conduct an annual evaluation of the various aspects of our orientation program and incorporate feedback from our students.

5. International Students

NAPS appreciates that international students face several challenges when they arrive in a new environment to study. The Academy is dedicated to facilitating the adjustment of international students to Australia and to the NAPS' academic environment. Accordingly, wherever possible, the Students Services Team will arrange:

- to meet and greet at airport (can be requested via the Admission Form);
- to assist students to secure home stay or other preferred housing arrangements;
- an appointment for students to meet with English language support personnel;
- for students to attend relevant briefing and orientation sessions; and
- counselling for students on issues concerning their studies and visa arrangements if they have matters causing them concern or which could become problems in the future.

6. Information to be Provided for Orientation

The information to be provided to students is outlined in the Outcomes above and also provided in NAPS SS007P Orientation Program which will be available as a brochure for students on the NAPS website and from the Student Services desk.

The NAPS Student Services Team will organise the students' orientation, including the Orientation Day.

On their first day at NAPS, students will be welcomed, their questions answered and information about NAPS provided as per the Orientation Outcomes listed above. The team will ensure all students have the NAPS Student Handbook which contains all the information students need to know to make the most of their time at NAPS (also available to download from the NAPS website).

Students are required to attend an orientation session and sign off on this activity. NAPS will ask students to complete SS007F Student Declaration Form for Orientation to provide feedback and to ensure that NAPS has their latest details for the NAPS' database including contact details and more information about their background, language skills and any special challenges so that additional support can be arranged.

7. Review

NAPS Student Services Manager will be undertaking an annual review of the processes involved in Orientation. In addition to student feedback, any staff members who wishes to make any comments about these procedures are also encouraged to forward their suggestions to their supervisor or to the NAPS Student Services Manager.

8. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding these procedures should contact the Student Services Manager or the NAPS' Registrar.

9. Additional Resources

A wide range of best practice resources were used to develop the NAPS Orientation program and process. The following are useful for future reference:

Role of The First Year/Commencing Student Co-Ordinator. Griffith University, 2005, https://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Role%20of%20the%20First%20Year_Commencing%20Student%20Coordinator.pdf. Accessed 20 Dec 2018.

Griffith University. *Leadership For Transition And Learning: Features Of An Effective Student Orientation Program (2016)*. Griffith University, 2016, Accessed 20 Dec 2018.

Macdonald, C. "What do new students gain from a one-week orientation program?" *Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Student Services*, (1995):5, 5 – 16.

McInnis, C. & James, R. with McNaught, C. (1995) "First year on campus: Diversity in the initial experiences of Australian undergraduates." Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS).

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McInnis, C., Hartley, R., Polesel, J., & Teese, R. (2000) "Non-completion in vocational education and training in higher education." Canberra: AGPS.

Monash University. *Transition Policy*. 2002 https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/rtf_file/.../Orientation-and-Transition-Policy.rtf. Accessed 20 Dec 2018.

Pitkethly, A. & Prosser, M. (2001) "The First Year Experience Project: a model for university-wide change." *Higher Education Research & Development*, 20(2), 185 – 198.

Round (2004) "Survey of literature on student retention." *Student Services: University of Northumbria*. Tinto, V. (1987)

Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition. (2nd edition) Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. Tinto, V. (1993)

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	A004 Assessment Policy SS011 Students at Risk: Early Intervention Policy SS012 Students at Risk: Early Intervention Procedure SS013 Student Progression and Exclusion Policy SS014 Student Progression and Exclusion Procedure SS007F Student Declaration Form for Orientation SS007P Orientation Program SS019 Student Code of Conduct SS010 NAPS Skills Hub Framework
Applicability to Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth)	1.1 Admission 1.3 Orientation and Progression 2. Learning Environment 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety 3. Teaching 5. Quality Assurance 7. Representation, Information

Document History

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