

**Bridging the Gap
Transition Research Project
Information Sheet**



AIM OF THE PROJECT

The project is sponsored and funded by Newcastle University to learn about student transition from schools and colleges to higher education. The aim is to find out about the experience of transition for those planning to go to university and those already in their first year of university life, and whether improvements to the process can be made. This will be achieved by gathering evidence from a range of stakeholders including teachers, lecturers, Local Authority staff and students currently in secondary education and those students in their first year of tertiary education. The project will run to July 2009.

A significant element of the project will be the synthesis of knowledge already held about students in transition, and the impact of programmes to support them. Fresh data will be collected from Northumberland school applicants, from applicants in North East colleges and from students post-entry who have experienced pre-entry or induction programmes, to increase our knowledge of student expectations and experiences. The outputs will be in a range of communication media, to suit specific purposes.

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- 1. Synthesis of data** from recent research and development projects.
- 2. Liaison with other transition projects** to pool knowledge of transition issues, identifying what works and what does not in the context of supporting transition.
- 3. Data collection a)** pre-entry, from young and mature NE school and college students and staff, to identify: applicants' concerns regarding University entry; what engages / excites them about university entry; current preferred modes of learning and teaching; experience of support for assessment processes; expectations of learning and teaching at University; and expectations of University experience.
- 4. Data collection b)** from staff and students who have engaged in activities to support transition to University, to evaluate the transition experience. This will be in the form of case studies.

Schools:

Group interviews with: two groups of 6 to 8 university applicants in Year 13 / 12.

Individual interviews with:

- a senior member of staff with responsibility for transition to university
- a member of staff supporting students in their university applications.

Colleges:

Group interviews with:

- a group of 6 to 8 17/18 year old university applicants
- a group of 6 to 8 mature university applicants

Individual interviews with:

- a senior member of staff with responsibility for transition to university
- a member of staff supporting students in their university applications.

University:

Individual interviews with: Course leaders/ project leaders with responsibility for student transition in each case study project..

Group interviews with: One group of 6-8 students in their first year of university life in each case study project.

Project outputs

- a) Dissemination event and project report** to participating institutions
- b) Practical recommendations** to inform University pre-entry and induction programmes
- c) Video-clips** of entrants' hopes and fears of university life, for use in staff development sessions
- d) Vodcasts** to aspirant students by current students regarding university life, for University website
- e) Learning walks** for University staff in schools and colleges to improve understanding of applicants and their context, and to improve knowledge of the 14-19 curriculum and its implications for University transition.

CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL

The project team is committed to ensuring that data are collected only from those who are fully informed. All participants will be asked to confirm their consent. We will request consent to record all interviews. All participants and institutions remain free to withdraw at any point. The project has been cleared by the University Ethics Committee and the team will work consistently within the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Code of Ethics for Educational Researchers.

DATA COLLECTION

The project conforms to the requirements of the Data Protection Act. All paper records will be kept securely locked. Electronic data will be password protected and only accessible by the project team. Data from all cases will be stored using school/college pseudonyms and individual roles only. No individual teacher, lecturer, LA staff and students will be named in any report of what has been learned.

DATA USE

Data will be used in two ways. Individual organisation data will be analysed and fed back to the school or college. Individuals will not be named. Rather the role (e.g. learners, head of department, parent) will be used where necessary. As some identities may be discernible because of their unique role, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed. This will be made clear to all participants. Case descriptions will be fed back to individual project. Both sets of data will be in the final project report. Pseudonyms and roles will be used rather than organisation or individual names. The identity of some organisations may be discernible and all participants will be made aware of this.

CONTACTING US

Please feel free to contact the University research team at any time:

[Professor Ann Briggs, ann.briggs@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:ann.briggs@ncl.ac.uk)

[Jill Clark](mailto:jill.clark@ncl.ac.uk) Senior Research Associate jill.clark@ncl.ac.uk

[Ian Hall](mailto:i.r.hall@ncl.ac.uk) Research Associate i.r.hall@ncl.ac.uk

Partners:

Gemma Kirkbride Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions, Newcastle University.

Claire King Northumberland County Council School Improvement Service

The project website can be found here: [Newcastle University Transition Project](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/projects/item/2833)
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/projects/item/2833>

Newcastle University Transition Project Consent form



The Newcastle University Transition Project has been explained to me, and I have received a copy of the project protocol.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I may withdraw at any time.

I also understand that data supplied by me will be treated ethically and confidentially. However, as some identities may be discernible because of their unique role, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Signature

Name

Date