

2E Supporting Student Transition from Glasgow International College

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The growth of the international student body represents a rapidly changing environment for learning, teaching and student support across the higher education sector. At the University of Glasgow, both the Internationalisation and the Learning and Teaching strategy stress the centrality of a culturally diverse learning environment that supports students from enquiry to graduation. The University's partnership with Glasgow International College (GIC) is key to achieving these objectives. However, the academic, linguistic and cultural diversity that international students create necessitates a series of complex transitions that are yet more complex when students enter the University through the pathway programmes offered by Glasgow International College (GIC). Students entering second year at university from GIC must first negotiate the transition to higher education at GIC and then a second transition to the UoG soon afterwards. Indeed, many students who enter university study at non-traditional points or on short PGT programmes have to successfully adjust to higher study quickly in order to attain grades which allow progression into the latter stages of study.

This study focuses on international students' transition from GIC to the second year of undergraduate programmes in the UoG. We consider qualitative data drawn from interviews and focus groups with 81 international students who are, or were previously, at GIC. In particular we explore international students' experiences of transition, coping strategies for managing their academic and social transition and perceptions of the roles of social media and peer mentoring in enhancing transition support. In setting out our proposals for a model of transition support we seek to demonstrate the joint responsibilities that Universities and pathway providers have towards supporting international students and offer some suggested ways for working together.