

RH100 Panel 3 Report

Date: Wednesday 8 March 2023

Panellist Attendance – 50%

Departments in Attendance – Student Engagement and Sport, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Discussion Topic – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion during Induction and Integration

The RH100 panel looked back at their experiences during the Induction and Integration period and discussed how to embed our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion framework during the start of session experience.

Panellists informed the university that...

- Students who arrived during the COVID-19 pandemic have a different experience to that of their peers, feeling that their induction experience was limited.
- The events on the app are good but there is a lot of information which can sometimes be overwhelming. Only the web version of the app calendar is screen reader accessible.
- Student societies and communities are not always welcoming and inclusive of mature students or postgraduate students as university culture is stereotyped as being an experience for those in their late teens and early twenties.
- When starting university, students are mainly concerned about meeting new people and would like more opportunities to do this.
- For students to feel a greater sense of belonging, there need to be a greater sense of community for students to engage with.

Panellists therefore suggested...

- Introduce an EDI module on moodle, however, there was concern that this would be a 'box-ticking' exercise.
- Create a better sense of community and build a 'university spirit' through different types of events and supporting other members of the community. For example, hearing more about RHUL on University Challenge.
- Provide more support to international and first-generation students with a particular focus on wellbeing support.
- Host educational events on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Introduce a specific role focusing on equality, diversity, and inclusion to student societies.
- Organise more events focusing on different cultures and better advertising international days such as cultural nights out and more versions of the SU Cultures and Faith Festival.

What next?

Matthew Searle, Head of Student Engagement, will share this report with those on the Induction and Integration Working Group. Katerina Finnis, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager, will share this report with the Inclusive Culture and Environment Strategy Group. Both will consider any quick wins and longer term strategic interventions which could be consider over the next three years.

Appendix

1) Which parts of your lived experiences would you like other students to know about and reflect on during integration and induction?

- Can be a lot to take in - confused/not sure what to do
- More consideration for commuting students
- Clear instructions of what we need to do before the start of the year

2) How would you help your fellow students build a greater sense of belonging before arriving, and during their first few weeks with us? What types of events/experiences/communications would foster this?

- Centralised timetable for all events
- Pre-arrival meeting opportunities for students
- Degree specific events
- Virtual tours of campus

3) How would you communicate what's expected as a member of our community to your fellow students in the run up and during the start of Autumn term? Reflecting on your own experience of integration and induction, at what point do you think you'd be most receptive to this, and why? In what formats would you be most receptive to this, and why? How could we ensure these messages reach every student?

- A weekly 1-slider that can be sent to all lecturers and they have it at the start of a lecture talking about highlights/top things to look out for during the week
- Short videos or an interactive module
- Concerns about a moodle module being a box-ticking exercise
- Physical copy of the handbook – helps ADHD and request an audio handbook
- Have a Teams channel for each year group that makes public announcements as everyone has Teams

4) How would you begin to build an awareness and understanding of experiences and perspectives of people from a different background to you?

- Build an awareness and understanding about different perspectives by being able to hear more about their experiences in either a video or in discussions between small groups.
- Create opportunities for interaction and meeting new people
- Optional lecture about different perspectives
- Guest speakers from different backgrounds - listen to people talk that you wouldn't ordinarily hear from