

ROUTLEDGE FOCUS

# SUPPORTING THE STUDENT JOURNEY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

How Pre-Arrival Platforms Can Enhance  
Widening Participation

Edited by  
Wendy Garnham and Nina Walker



# Supporting the Student Journey into Higher Education

This book will provide an in-depth look at the development, functionality and appeal of pre-arrival platforms to aid transition into higher education, including a range of provisions.

Ensuring a smooth transition into higher education study is increasingly seen as key to both retention and success, both in the initial weeks of study and beyond. Pre-arrival platforms offer students a range of opportunities, which might include the chance to familiarise themselves with the practices and policies of their new institution before teaching begins. This book will explore these platforms from three different angles: their development, use and appeal to diverse audiences in higher education, and case studies illustrating their incorporation into practice. It will provide a comprehensive overview of not only the different ways in which such platforms add value to the transition process but also the way they embrace diversity and widening participation in higher education from the very beginning of an individual's higher education career. With chapters written by individuals from a variety of roles in higher education, this text will also provide the reader an insight into issues arising from the use of these platforms.

It will be essential reading for educational, academic and staff developers working with departments and their institutions to develop their support structure for new students as well as for those directly involved in widening access/participation programmes.

**Wendy Garnham** is Professor of Psychology at the University of Sussex, UK.

**Nina Walker** is Associate Professor of Learning and Teaching at the University of Hertfordshire, UK.

## **The Staff and Educational Development Association Focus Series**

Series Editor: Stephen Powell

The SEDA Focus series is for everyone interested in teaching, learning and assessment in higher education. Books in the Series are scholarly and practical, written by educational developers and researchers on up-to-the minute topics, bringing together experience and practice in a theoretical context. The Series is for educational, academic, staff and faculty developers, subject academics developing their professional teaching interests, institutional managers and everyone working to improve the quality of student learning. SEDA (The Staff and Educational Development Association) is the long-established professional association for staff and educational developers in the UK, promoting innovation and good practice in higher education.

### **Titles in the series:**

#### **Supporting the Student Journey into Higher Education**

How Pre-Arrival Platforms Can Enhance Widening Participation

*Edited by Wendy Garnham and Nina Walker*

#### **Perspectives on Teaching and Learning Leadership in Higher Education**

Case Studies from UK and Australia

*Edited by Josephine Lang, Namrata Rao and Anesa Hosein*

#### **Active Learning in Higher Education**

Theoretical Considerations and Perspectives

*Edited by Wendy Garnham and Isobel Gowers*

For more information about this series, please visit: [www.routledge.com/SEDA-Focus/  
book-series/SEDAF](http://www.routledge.com/SEDA-Focus/book-series/SEDAF)

# **Supporting the Student Journey into Higher Education**

How Pre-Arrival Platforms Can  
Enhance Widening Participation

**Edited by Wendy Garnham  
and Nina Walker**

First published 2024  
by Routledge  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2024 selection and editorial matter, Wendy Garnham and  
Nina Walker; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Wendy Garnham and Nina Walker to be identified as the authors  
of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has  
been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright,  
Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or  
utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now  
known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any  
information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the  
publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or  
registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation  
without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Garnham, Wendy, editor. | Walker, Nina, 1969– editor.

Title: Supporting the student journey into higher education : how pre-arrival  
platforms can enhance widening participation / Edited by Wendy A.  
Garnham and Nina Walker.

Description: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2024. |

Series: SEDA focus | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023056660 (print) | LCCN 2023056661 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781032548036 (hardback) | ISBN 9781032548029 (paperback) |

ISBN 9781003427575 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: College preparation programs—Psychological aspects. |

College student orientation. | Motivation in education.

Classification: LCC LB2351.2 .S84 2024 (print) | LCC LB2351.2 (ebook) |

DDC 378.1/610973—dc23/eng/20231221

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023056660>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023056661>

ISBN: 978-1-032-54803-6 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-54802-9 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-42757-5 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003427575

Typeset in Times New Roman  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

# Contents

<i>About the editors</i>	vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	viii

<b>Introduction</b>	1
NINA WALKER	

## PART I

<b>The development of pre-arrival platforms</b>	7
---	---

<b>1 The practicalities of creating a pre-arrival platform</b>	9
WENDY GARNHAM, KATHERINE KRUGER, EMILY BAKER AND KAREN TUCKER	

<b>2 Student partnership in the development of pre-arrival resources</b>	15
NEIL FORD	

<b>3 Traversing obstacles in developing pre-arrival platforms</b>	24
KELLY EDMUNDS AND BECKY LEWIS	

## PART II

<b>The use of pre-arrival platforms</b>	33
---	----

<b>4 Fostering a sense of belonging</b>	35
EMMA PALMER	

<b>5 Using a pre-arrival platform as an induction tool</b>	42
FRAN GARRAD-COLE	

<b>6</b>	<b>Pre-arrival ‘skills’ platforms: bridging the gap between school and university</b>	<b>49</b>
	LAURA BOUBERT AND JAMES FENTON	
<b>7</b>	<b>How can pre-arrival platforms prepare students to engage with careers offerings through their degree?</b>	<b>59</b>
	VICTORIA WILSON-CRANE	
<b>PART III</b>		
	<b>Diversity in pre-arrival platforms</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Creating a pre-arrival platform that supports international student transition into UK higher education</b>	<b>67</b>
	SARAH WATSON AND HENGYI WANG	
<b>9</b>	<b>Screening and data collection in pre-arrival platforms</b>	<b>78</b>
	REBECCA WILSON	
<b>10</b>	<b>Supporting mature students in transition using pre-arrival platforms</b>	<b>85</b>
	STEVE RUSSELL	
<b>11</b>	<b>Supporting students with non-traditional entry qualifications</b>	<b>92</b>
	PETER ALSTON, DAWNE IRVING-BELL, CLAIRE STOCKS, SARAH MCILROY AND DAVID WOUFF	
<b>12</b>	<b>Using pre-arrival platforms to support postgraduate students’ transition</b>	<b>102</b>
	ADAM PAXMAN	
<b>13</b>	<b>Enhancing student transition to university: innovative pre-arrival platforms through a connective ecosystem</b>	<b>112</b>
	KATHY EGEA, KATIE PADILLA, JASON DO, DEANNA HORVATH AND CHRISTOPHER BRIDGE	
<b>14</b>	<b>What to avoid and what to think about! Creating effective pre-arrival pages for new and returning students</b>	<b>121</b>
	MICHELLE MORGAN	
	<i>Index</i>	<b>130</b>

# About the editors

**Wendy Garnham** is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Sussex and a National Teaching Fellow. As co-founder of the international Active Learning Network, her scholarly interests are dominated by active learning pedagogy. Wendy is a Senior Fellow of Advance HE, a Fellow of SEDA and jointly hosts a regular community of practice for academics interested in Transition into, through and out of higher education. She has edited open access books on active learning as well as a SEDA Special publication on Transitions and contributed a case study to an Advance HE publication on action research. Wendy publishes on a number of blogs including, the SEDA blog and on the Exchange, a University of Sussex blog site as well as the School of Psychology blog.

**Nina Walker** is an Associate Professor (Learning and Teaching) at the University of Hertfordshire and a National Teaching Fellow. She leads the Transition to Higher Education module, aimed at providing a scaffolded entry to higher education, and she also leads the Institutional approach to Personal tutoring. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy with a keen interest in transitions and her PhD focuses on academic confidence. She is an active member of the SEDA Transitions Community of Practice and has edited the publication Pharmacy OSCES. She is a member of the editorial committee for 100+ Ideas for Active Learning. Nationally she works with the Pharmacy Schools Council Student Success Group to support Master of Pharmacy students across the UK. Her work is shared predominantly through conference presentations and also through the National Teaching Repository. Her experience working with incoming students and also her research and teaching have driven her input in this book.



# Contributors

**Katherine Kruger** is Senior Lecturer in Community Engagement and Lead Academic Success Advisor for the Central Foundation Years Programme at the University of Sussex. Katherine is a specialist in modern and contemporary literature and teaches modules with a practical or experiential component on the Liberal Arts BA at Sussex. In her role with the Foundation Years Programme, she has designed and led a number of projects that focus on inclusive, compassionate advising for student success.

**Emily Baker** is Lecturer in Music, Film & Media and Academic Success Advisor for the Central Foundation Years Programme at the University of Sussex. She has over 20 years' experience of working in, and then teaching about, music and the creative industries. In 2023, she completed her doctorate in pop music, aging and time. In her role as Academic Success Advisor, her research interests are largely centred around enhancing academic transitions – working with students to find creative ways to examine, critique, (re)frame and ultimately empower them on their academic journeys.

**Karen Tucker** is the Student Experience Officer for the Central Foundation Years Programme at the University of Sussex. She is particularly interested in EDI and supports students from underrepresented groups.

**Neil Ford** is Principal Teaching Fellow (Academic Development) in the Centre for Higher Education Practice (CHEP) at the University of Southampton and is passionate about working in partnership with staff and students to improve learning and teaching. His work cuts across the disciplines of education development and learning development and current work includes: faculty liaison, fostering communities of practice in teaching development, development of programme leadership and supporting student transitions. His research interests include partnership between staff and students, enhancing academic transitions, developing structured peer support schemes, teaching development (especially for early career academics) and mentoring (e.g., supporting colleagues to achieve Advance HE recognition).

**Becky Lewis** is Lecturer in Evolutionary Biology at the University of East Anglia. She also holds administrative roles of Transition Officer and Director of Admissions for the School of Biological Sciences. She is particularly interested in the interactions between student social lives, their well-being and their motivation to study, and she has organised several social events to try to improve engagement with the course. Additionally, she is interested in encouraging educators to share best practice with regard to developing skills in undergraduate students.

**Kelly Edmunds** is Associate Professor in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of East Anglia. She holds a University Teaching Fellowship and was the 2022 recipient of the Sir Geoffrey and Lady Allen prize for Excellence in Teaching. She has taught in higher education for more than a decade and is currently Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching and Deputy Head of the Teaching Theme as well as Programme Director for the Science Foundation Year courses. She leads a community of practice focused on student belonging and is passionate about ensuring that higher education is accessible to all and that students are encouraged to develop their resilience and self-efficacy to enable them to thrive.

**Emma Palmer** (FHEA) is Director of Foundation Year at the University of Hull, teaching and supporting Foundation Year students as they transition into and through university. She has been involved in a range of projects over her 11 years of working in higher education, such as a QAA Collaborate Enhancement Project for the University of Hull's Inclusive Education Framework and Toolkit. In 2020, she completed her MA in Education, Inclusion and Special Needs, in which her dissertation reviewed how transition, identities, sense of belonging and communities play a key role in the student journey throughout their time at university.

**Fran Garrad-Cole** (PFHEA and National Teaching Fellow) is a Psychology Teaching and Scholarship academic and is Deputy Head of School at Bangor University where she teaches across the undergraduate curriculum and has held several teaching administration roles such as Assessment Director, Senior Tutor, Disabilities officer and other roles. She is known for her innovation and, in her role as a Teaching and Learning Developer in Bangor University's Centre for Enhancement of Learning and teaching (CELT), has designed and led several institutional projects to address common issues such as student retention, engagement, reassessment and transition. One such project was a four-part transitions and induction project designed to better understand and support incoming students to the University particularly in the context of COVID-19. The project is comprised of the following elements : a Be Bangor Ready pre-arrival website providing high-level information and support for students considering studying at Bangor University; a pre-arrival questionnaire capturing the educational

## x *Contributors*

experiences and upcoming interests and concerns of incoming students to provide context for transition support; an adjustment to exam assessment for first-year students such that exams are minimised in semester 1 and supported with formative assessment in semester 2 and a year-long self-directed online induction module providing timely support for induction throughout the first year at university.

**Laura Boubert** is Chartered Psychologist and Principal Lecturer in Cognitive Psychology at the University of Westminster, where she is Course Leader for the BSc in Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience. She leads modules exploring cognitive psychology for undergraduate and postgraduate students alongside her research on student transitions and brain injury and cognitive disorders. Being a senior fellow of the Higher Education Academy, she has always been passionate about developing students' academic skills so that they can make the most of their time at university and showcase their subject-based knowledge. She has designed and delivered academic skills resources and workshops for over 20 years and is a member of several higher education (HE) groups focusing on how we can support students to transition into HE as successfully as possible.

**James Fenton** is Senior Lecturer at the University of Westminster. He currently lectures in Academic English at the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation. He has over 25 years' experience of English language teaching in 11 countries and has previously lectured in Language Acquisition and Clinical Linguistics in UK higher education. His recent published research explores multilingual language assessment and access to education.

**Victoria Wilson-Crane** has over 25 years' experience of working in education in formal and non-formal settings. For 16 of those years, she has been working for Kaplan International and is currently Senior Director of Innovative Student Learning. She leads the Centre for Learning Innovation and Quality, a team of 20 leaders and developers across quality assurance and enhancement, learning measurement and evaluation and learning design. She holds a Ph.D. in Lifelong Learning, which explored the experiences of young people in transition from school to further education. She is Fellow of Advance HE and Senior Fellow of the Staff and Educational Development Association.

**Hengyi Wang** (FHEA) is Senior Student Academic Success Advisor at the University of Sussex Business School. Over the past 10 years, since travelling from mainland China to the UK to study for a degree programme, she has been supporting international students through all stages of their university journeys. As an academic success advisor, where more than 30% of students are Chinese, she has developed a strong link with the Chinese

international student community. She also works as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champion in the Business School, responsible for the School's EDI initiatives. Prior to her current role, she has worked as an International Support Advisor for foundation year, international year one and degree course students. Her professional and personal experiences have given her in-depth insight into how universities can best support international students through their transition into UK HE.

**Sarah Watson** is an academic developer at Sussex, where she supports international student transition. This responsibility draws upon her previous experiences of working closely with international students as a pre-sessional tutor at the University of Southampton and her support of international student transition at the University of Roehampton. Before becoming an Academic Developer, she worked as a student academic success advisor, providing support to a largely international student community. Her preliminary studies into the potential barriers to learning for non-EU students in the University of Sussex Business School (USBS) were presented at the School's Teaching and Learning Conference. Extending this work, she became the co-recipient of both a British Academy Small Research Grant and the Warwick International Higher Education Academy External Collaboration Fund. Both funds help develop research into, and resources to support, the international student experience in UK HE.

**Rebecca Wilson** is a student development professional at the University of St Andrews and holds a PhD in International Relations. She has practical experience of lecturing and tutoring students, as well as specialising in the transition of students into the University, including expertise in mentoring, study skills and the award-winning pre-arrival platform: the 'Transitions Toolkit'.

**Steve Russell** has been working at Aston University for 20 years in both Pharmacy and now Bioscience teaching on several different programmes from our Foundation in science program to Masters level. He is part of the physiology teaching team, personal tutor and the biology lead for the foundation program. He has a Masters in Education and is Fellow of Advance HE.

**Peter Alston** is Associate Professor of Educational Practice and Dean of Education Services at BPP University. He has a background in information systems and web development & programming, and he holds a doctorate in e-research and technology enhanced learning. He has worked in higher education for the past 18 years in a number of public/private universities across undergraduate, postgraduate & apprenticeship provision, working collaboratively with colleagues across multiple disciplines to enhance curriculum design/delivery and the student experience. His scholarly interests

lie in electronic assessment (specifically the implications for policy and practice in HE), the use of technology to support teaching and learning and the student transition to higher education.

**Dawne Irving-Bell** is Professor of Learning and Teaching at BPP University, UK. She is a National Teaching Fellow, Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, holds a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence and received a National Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Teacher Education. With a passion for visual-thinking and technology education, she established The National Teaching Repository an Open Education Resource with proven reach and impact across the global higher education community. She is an editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Social-Media for Learning* and through her work within the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) is committed to raising the profile of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

**Sarah Mellroy** is the Dean of International Higher Education and Dean of the Business School at BPP University. She has responsibility for the University International and DNA strategy and has a proven track record in designing and developing innovative education solutions to meet the needs of students who look to the UK for practical programmes which enable them to develop demonstrable employability skills. She is an accomplished conference speaker engaging with professional bodies and employers in the UK and globally and is an advocate for the ongoing UK International Higher Education Strategy. She is committed to sharing best practice across the sector on the benefits of investing in supporting international inbound students to achieve their potential.

**Claire Stocks** is Associate Professor of Educational Practice within the Learning and Teaching team at BPP University. She has worked as an academic developer for the last 18 years, after completing a doctorate in American Literature at Keele University. She has a particular interest in supporting the development of novice academics, whether they are doctoral students who teach or dual professionals who have moved into academic roles from practice or industry backgrounds. She has been a Senior Fellow of Advance HE since 2016 and has presented and published in the areas of both American Literature and Academic Development.

**David Wooff** is Associate Professor of Educational Practice, and Director of Apprenticeship Quality and Compliance for BPP University. He is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching (FCCT), the Society of Education and Training (FCET) and the Royal Society for Arts (FRSA) and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA). He holds the position of Chair of the National Teaching Repository. He has widely published in the fields of technology education and teacher training. His current

interests lie in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and the impact and benefit of apprenticeships and work-based learning.

**Adam Paxman** is Academic Skills Advisor with the Student Engagement team at Edge Hill University. Adam provides academic skills and information skills guidance to undergraduate and taught postgraduate students through both face-to-face and virtual 1–2–1 appointments, face-to-face or virtual embedded sessions and face-to-face workshops or webinars. His role also includes a specific focus on induction and transitions. He previously taught and supported learning in further education, worked as a freelance illustrator and, while lecturing in higher education, specialised in contextual studies for several undergraduate design disciplines.

**Kathy Egea** leads the First and Further Experience (FFYE) Program at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and is Senior Lecturer in the Teaching and Curriculum Team (TACT) within the central T&L unit. In enabling a whole of university approach to student transition success, her passion is to connect, link, draw on practice and build communities of those passionate about the student transition experience, in both curricular and co-curricular spaces. The FFYE program (formerly FYE) engages a huge community of academics, professional staff and some students to share, learn and connect through grants and forums to support. The program has won national recognition through OLT citation (2016), finalist in 2021 CAULLT Global Good Practice Award. Kathy co-leads the FYE national Australasian Network for STARS (see [unistars.org](http://unistars.org)) and was awarded the 2021 STARS Fellow for her work in creating the conditions for practice change around student transition.

**Katie Padilla** is the manager of Global Mobility Programmes Inbound for UTS International. She has 19 years of professional experience in international education, living and working in various countries including, France, Germany, Spain, the UK, Argentina and Australia. She has a strong passion for developing exchange programmes which are sustainable, inclusive, welcoming and accessible to a diverse group of students and is currently responsible for managing the Inbound Study Abroad and Exchange program at UTS.

**Jason Do** is an Engaged Learning Coordinator who has been working in the student engagement area for 5 years at the University of Technology Sydney, Faculty of Engineering and IT. He leads the design, delivery and ongoing support of student engagement initiatives and projects in his faculty with the aim to increase student satisfaction, success, retention and well-being. His initiatives involve working together with student leaders, cohort focused programmes and first and further year experience projects in the teaching and learning space.

**Deanna Horvath** is Senior Lecturer in the School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport at La Trobe University in Melbourne. She is passionate about supporting first-year students and has been teaching large first-year subjects across health at different Victorian universities for over 15 years. She has received an Australian Award for University Teaching (AAUT) Citation for her work in developing programmes to support student transition and success. She is interested in university preparation programmes, transition, the first-year experience and the use of technology in online learning design.

**Christopher Bridge** is a Research Fellow in teaching innovation at La Trobe University and the University of New England. He has worked extensively in learning and teaching since 2004, including in international student support; academic skills development; supplemental instruction; internationalisation of the curriculum; assurance of learning; student success, transition and retention; teaching technologies including 360 video, teaching with a tablet computer, and 3D animation; personalising the student experience using learning analytics; and in supporting skills development in teaching academics through communities of practice and practice-sharing. His current research investigates generative AI in higher education.

**Michelle Morgan** is a national and internationally recognised Student Experience Transitions Specialist across all levels of study and is extensively published in the area. She is currently Dean of Students at the University of East London. She is a Principal Fellow of the HEA, Fellow of the AUA, an elected council member of UKCGE and Student Minds Mental Health Charter Assessor. During her varied career, she has been a faculty manager, lecturer, researcher and academic manager. She describes herself as a ‘Third Space Integrated Student Experience Practitioner’ who develops initiatives based on pragmatic and practical research. She has more than 50 publications and has presented more than 100 national and international conference papers (including 52 keynotes and 30 invited papers). She has developed a free portal for staff which provides a range of information and links for anyone interested in improving the student experience in higher education [www.improvingthestudentexperience.com](http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com). She was creator and PI/Project Lead of an innovative, £2.7 million, 11 university collaborative HEFCE grant, looking at the study expectations and attitudes of postgraduate taught (PGT) students. The project contributed evidence that introduced the PG Loan Scheme.