



**GRADUATE  
ENTRY  
MEDICAL  
SCHOOL**

**Transition into Graduate  
Entry Medicine:  
Student experiences and  
the impact of re-orientating  
Orientation**

Dr Louise Crowley, Dr Helena  
McKeague, Dr Sarah Harney



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK  
OILScoil LUIMNIGH

# Rationale

- Large body of work on First Year experience
- Potential challenges:
  - Environmental
  - Financial
  - Social
  - Academic

(Cheng et al, 2015. Transition Models and How Students Experience Change)

# UG to PG

- Emerging work on transition from undergraduate (UG) to postgraduate (PG) taught courses
  - Many students find this transition difficult  
*(West, 2012; Cluett and Skene, 2006)*
  - Many felt more support was needed at the start of the course *(Heussi, 2012)*
  - More information earlier on *(Symons, 2001)*
- RIME grant April 2017

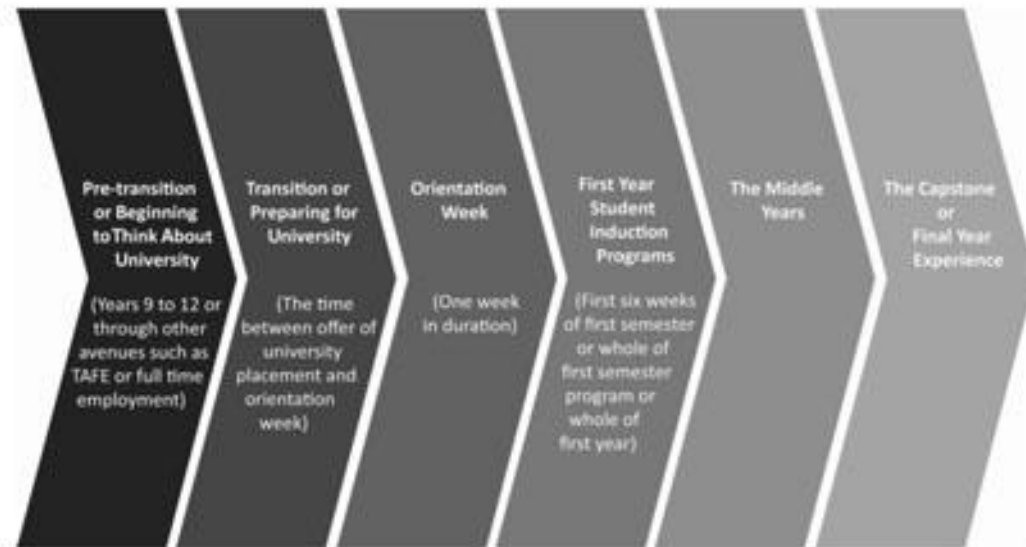
# Defining transitions...

- “ .. a dynamic process in which individual moves from one set of circumstances to another”
  - (*Teunissen & Westerman, 2010*)
  
- ..”process of developing new behavioural responses to cope with some form of discontinuity in an individual’s life space”
  - (*Transitional psychology approach*)

# Models / Theories of Transition

Model Name	Phases					
<b>Bridges</b> Transition Model 2011	Ending, letting go	Transition zone	New beginning			
<b>U curve</b> <b>Theory</b> of adjustment Risque, Moore & Morley 2008	Honeymoon	Culture Shock	Adjustment			
<b>Student Adjustment model</b> Menzie & Baron 2014	Pre- departure	Honeymoon	Party's over	Healthy Adjustment		
<b>Student Experience Model</b> Burnett 2007	Pre- transition	Transition	Orientation	First Year induction programme	Middle Years	Capstone/ Final Year experience
<b>Psychological Model</b> of Student retention Bean & Eaton 2002	<b>Pre- Uni</b> Self-efficacy Normative beliefs Past behaviour	<b>Uni</b> Self-efficacy Coping behaviour Locus of control				

# Student Experience Model



*Figure 2* The student experience model  
(with a focus on first year experience) (Burnett, 2007)

More holistic → takes student journey perspective

# Aims

- 1.To determine the impact of (a) engaging incoming students online pre-orientation and (b) modifying orientation activities in response to students' needs.
- 2.To evaluate student experiences of the transition into the Graduate Entry Medicine Program at the University of Limerick and the factors that affect their transition

# Methods

- Mixed methods- 2 phases
- **Phase 1**
- Pre-orientation online activity
  - Brief demographic survey / social supports/ concerns
  - Access to videos of GEM graduates describing their experiences.
- Modifying orientation activities to be more student-centred



# Phase 2.



- Qualitative methods, using focus groups to explore students' experiences of their transition and factors that affected it

# Phase 1-Online Activity



- [https://ul.hobsonsradius.com/crm/sites/University\\_of\\_Limerick/gemsorientation2017](https://ul.hobsonsradius.com/crm/sites/University_of_Limerick/gemsorientation2017)

# Survey Results

- 54% students offered place accessed online activity
- Majority between 20-30 years old
  - 20-25: 75%
  - 26-30: 19%
- Nationality
  - Irish 54%
  - Non Irish 46% (Canadian 34%)

- 54% of respondents had never been to Limerick city before
- Almost 50% respondents knew someone enrolled in GEMS
- 28% : student returning to study after years in employment
- 23% : intended to work part-time while on the course

- Non- Irish respondents:
  - almost 2/3 had never been to Ireland before
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  had no family/ friends in Ireland

# Concerns

- Irish Students ( 46)- Top 3 concerns:
  - Workload
  - Money/Finances
  - Ability
- Canadian/ North American ( 31) Top 4 concerns:
  - Homesickness/ making friends
  - Personal ability/ doubts
  - Residency
  - Workload

- EU / Other (8)
  - Workload
  - Money/Finances
  - Work-life balance/ hobbies
  - Homesickness/ making friends

# Phase 1- Orientation changes



- Added small group sessions to second day of orientation
- Prioritising each small groups' main concerns ( post-it notes)
- Staff and faculty representing main disciplines
- Year 2 students present



# FAQs

- PBL
- Study advice
- Anatomy
- Assessment
- Clinical Years / electives
- Career advice ( residency)

# Sample concerns

- “2/4 of roommates have not moved in yet- will we get along?”
- “How to handle patient loss/death “
- “Will any of our lectures be in CERC building? How is parking arranged for us? “

# Other Orientation Activities



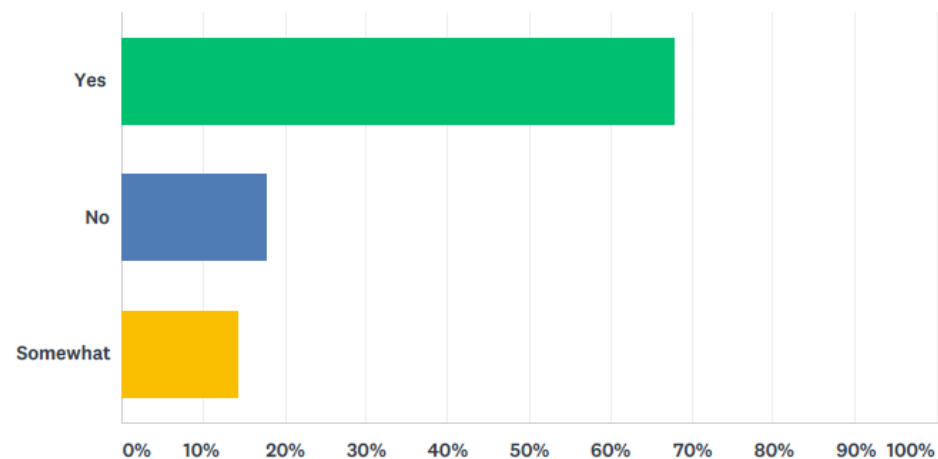
- Peer mentors
- Student support information
- Introduction to PBL/ Clinical Skills
- Garda vetting...

# Evaluation of Orientation

- Response rate 18.79%

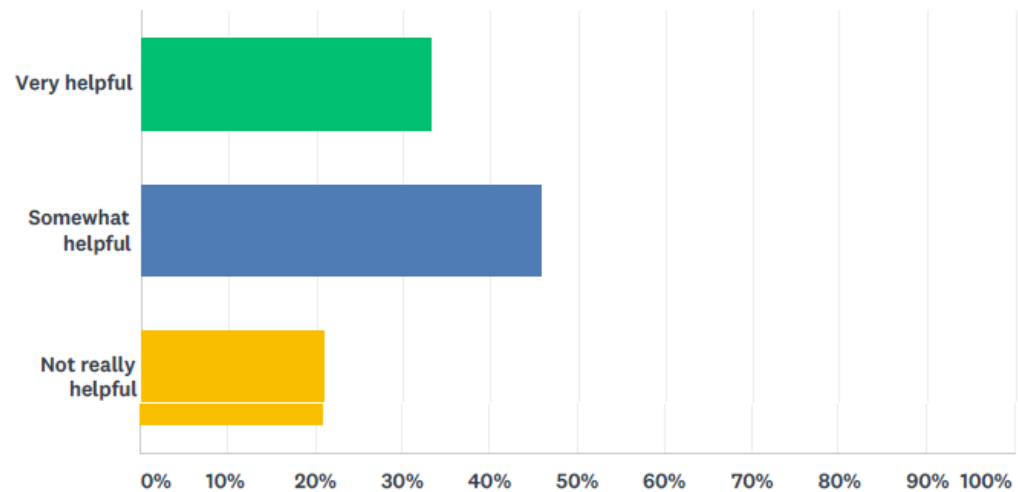
Q1 Did you access the pre-arrival online activity before you arrived in GEMS?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



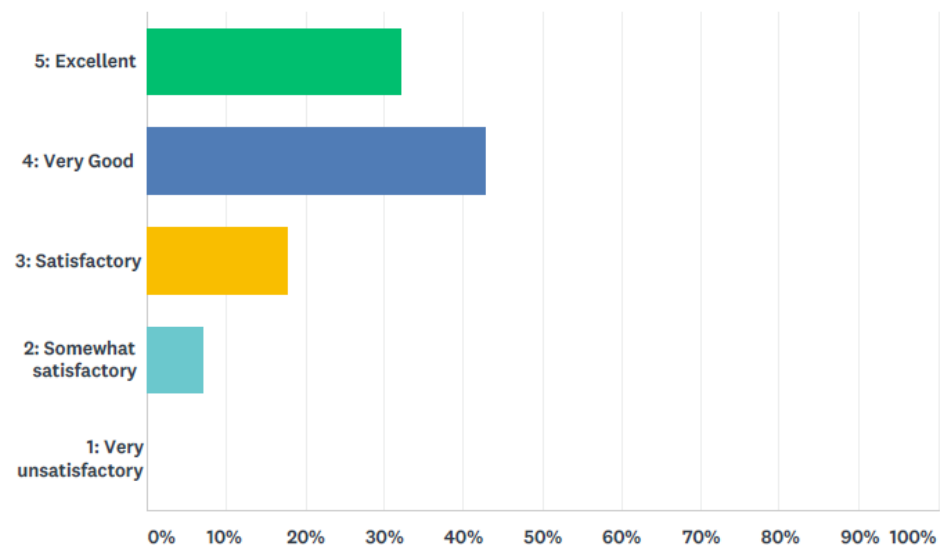
## Q2 If yes, was it helpful to you in preparing to come to GEMS?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 4



Q6 Thinking back, with specific regard to the small group sessions on Thursday 31st August from 9am to 11am, how would you rate them in terms of how useful they were?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



# Free text comments

- Wanted more input from students already in course
- Simulated PBL case

# Conclusions

- Similar challenges to FYE
  - Environmental
  - Financial
  - Social
  - Academic
- Expanding online content may help with common concerns- risk of overload?
- More senior student involvement
- More explicit support over first few weeks
- Phase 2 findings will hopefully guide further changes to orientation and/or online activity





