Overview

This induction support site was co-developed by the E-Learning Development Team and Biology Department to "ease in" the incoming cohort by providing them with information about their chosen subject, the department and also the university before they arrived in York. It also provided a chance for the students to start introducing themselves to their peers.

The site was first launched prior to the beginning of academic year 2007-08 and has subsequently been revised for the 2008-09 cohort.

The site is divided into several areas with each one including a photograph of one of our current students and a small quote from them covering their first impressions and experiences at York. The individual areas are detailed below.

communication - information - orientation

Need to know

Links to "The New Student Website" where students are given instructions about what to do before they arrive at the university. Gives information about the department and specifics on what to do when here in the Department.

Need to do

Gives information about the student run Biosciences Society, and links to some videos made for e-learning purposes to teach biological science.

What's happening

Explaining the differences in methods of teaching and learning between school and university.

What to expect

This site provides a virtual environment where students could meet before they arrive on the course.

Blog

Helping students to identify their own preferred learning styles.

Learning styles

Mostly positive, but this feature of the site was perhaps overshadowed by other social networking tools such as "Face Book." Students did see the positive side... "makes the experience less daunting."

Conclusions

The site was used extensively during September and October by registered students. Focus group interviews reveal that students valued the 'Catch Up' revision resources, which helped them to prepare for undergraduate studies.

The blog was also used by international students in order to introduce themselves and seek out information. Second year students adopted an active mentoring role in answering queries.

For a detailed evaluative case study of this development visit the Inspiration Tab of Yorkshare Headquarters at http://vlesupport.york.ac.uk