

Using Prepare for Success: Notes for Institutions

1. Introduction

These notes offer suggestions to institutions in the use of *Prepare for Success* with their international students. They include information about the development and design features of the resource; suggestions for how the content of *Prepare for Success* might be used in conjunction with a VLE or through a university website; a full list of the contents, and a feedback form. The notes are available in two formats: as a web page or a downloadable pdf file (with a feedback form that can be printed out and returned by post).

2. Background to Development

Prepare for Success is an interactive online resource for international students. It aims to help international students prepare for academic life in the UK, particularly in terms of increasing their awareness of typical aspects of British academic culture and of the kind of academic skills needed for effective study in higher education in the UK. It is designed for use by international students prior to their arrival in the UK. As well as preparing students for what to expect during their studies, the activities also provides scope for language improvement. It is intended primarily for international students whose first language is not English and who have achieved an IELTS level between 5.0 and 7.5 or equivalent.

The development of *Prepare for Success* has been funded by the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education through UKCISA (the UK Council for International Student Affairs). This development has been undertaken by a team based in the Centre for Language Study at the University of Southampton with expertise in the design and development of online courses and e-learning materials (created in the form of activity-based 'learning objects') including study skills toolkits.

3. Design of Prepare for Success

Prepare for Success contains 22 individual items of learning material, each of which aims to provide between 20 and 40 minutes of activity-based learning. Activities include interactive quizzes and listening tasks involving short audio and video clips of university staff and students speaking about aspects of life and study in the UK. The range of topics covered aims to familiarise students with cultural and practical matters as well as aspects of academic life in the UK.

The online learning materials in *Prepare for Success* have been developed as Learning Objects (LOs). LOs designed by the Centre for Language Study at the University of Southampton share some key design features. These LOs:

- Are created as self-contained html web pages
- Are stand alone, self-contained items of a similar size or granularity
- Focus on a learning point, topic or theme
- Are activity-based (students 'learn by doing')
- Contain interactive activities employing a range of typical task types (e.g. drag and drop, multiple choice)
- Combine learning material in different media (video, audio, text, image)
- Provide enhanced levels of help, feedback and review to support students' learning
- Employ a consistent style, making them easy for students to use

4. Technical Specifications and Accessibility

A computer with the following capability and (free) software installed is needed to use *Prepare for Success*:

- Sound
- [Java Runtime Environment 5](http://java.sun.com/javase/6/webnotes/install/index.html) or above
(<http://java.sun.com/javase/6/webnotes/install/index.html>)
- [Adobe Flash Player 6](http://www.adobe.com/shockwave/download/) or above (<http://www.adobe.com/shockwave/download/>)
- [Apple Quicktime 7](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) or above (<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>)

These learning materials meet WCAG 2.0 accessibility guidelines and use technologies which are supported by accessible user agents, including assistive technologies.

Accessible versions are available for any activities that normally require the use of a mouse. These activities can be done using a keyboard. To open the accessible version, select the button ('Go to accessible version') at the top of the standard version. To return to the standard version, select the button ('Go to standard version') at the top of the accessible version.

5. Suggestions for Use

Prepare for Success can be used for educational purposes by UK institutions. It may be used in different ways to enhance an institution's pre-arrival support package for its international students.

Institutions can link to the whole resource or to selected parts of it (i.e. individual items from among the 22 LOs in the set) from their own VLE-based, pre-arrival support packages or website. In this way, links to individual items can sit side by side with an institution's own resources in a VLE if desired.

The resource is also suitable for self access use by students, who can be referred directly to the hosting website.

6. Prepare for Success: List of Contents

Here is a list of the contents of *Preparation for Success* with a brief description (for the user) of what each LO contains:

About Prepare for Success

Find out how you can use *Prepare for Success*.

Differences in university study

Listen to international students talking about differences in study they experienced when they came to the UK. Find out what differences there might be for you.

The language challenge

How prepared are you for the language challenge ahead? Watch a video to learn how other international students faced the challenge when they arrived and find out how you can prepare yourself.

Ways of being taught on your course

Explore four common ways of being taught on university courses in the UK. Find out what to expect in a lecture, a seminar, a tutorial and a workshop.

Preparing for online study

Do a quiz to discover how much of your time will be spent online during your studies. Listen to a university tutor talking about the technologies that students use on the course that she teaches.

Adapting to a new life

Watch a video in which students talk about the cultural challenges for students coming to the UK. Then assess yourself to find out how ready you are for them.

Studying independently

Consider different advice about how to study independently and then assess your own study habits.

Academic writing at university

Do a quiz to find out how prepared you are for the academic writing you will need to do at a British university.

Critical thinking

Explore what critical thinking involves and identify any skills that you might need to develop.

Understanding course assignments

Compare course assignments in the UK with those in your home country and practise interpreting essay titles set by British university tutors.

Using what you read in your academic writing

Learn about the correct ways to reference what you read in your own writing. Find out how to avoid plagiarism.

Your relationship with your tutors

Listen to a British student talking about his relationship with his tutors. Do a quiz to find out what to expect of university tutors in the UK.

Using study time effectively

Discover what the best study routine for you might be. Practise organising a day's timetable for an international student on a university course in the UK.

Managing your course work

Consider how you would manage the production of a 2000-word assignment.

Taking part in seminars

Listen to a British university tutor talking about what seminars are like and explaining what is expected of students.

Listening to lectures

Find out how lectures in the UK might be different from those you have attended before and listen for clues in a lecture that can help your understanding.

Reading for your course

Find out how you can manage your course reading list and learn to read more efficiently.

Skills for presenting in seminars

Think about the skills you will need if you are asked to give a presentation on your course. Watch a video of a student presenting to identify some useful techniques.

Working with others

Discover what group work involves and the kind of skills that students need to work together effectively.

Preparing for course work and exams

Listen to an interview with a student comparing exams in the UK with exams in her home country. Identify ways to deal with some common course work problems.

Settling down to study

Listen to student advice on how to settle down to study in the UK. Find out about an exciting competition for international students.

Reaching the end and taking the next step

Do a fun quiz to find out how much you remember. Send some feedback to us on what you think of Prepare for Success.

7. Feedback

We would be very interested in receiving feedback from institutions about their use of *Prepare for Success*.

Please go to the following link to complete a short online feedback form for institutional users: [Feedback form](#)

(http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=nS2s04nKuABPgviMtHbPfw_3d_3d)

Alternatively, print out and complete the feedback form on the following page. The return address is printed at the bottom of the form.

Prepare for Success - Feedback Form for Institutions

1. Please supply the following information:

Name of respondent:

Position:

Institution:

2. How did your institution find out about Prepare for Success?

- From publicity about it
- Heard about it at a conference
- Discovered through a Google or similar search
- Through the UKCISA website

3. Please tell us how your institution is using Prepare for Success:

4. How useful do you think Prepare for Success is for your international students?

- Very useful
- Useful
- Not sure
- Not useful

5. Which parts of Prepare for Success do you think are the most useful?

6. Have you had any problems using Prepare for Success? If so, please give details:

7. Please tell us what other kind of online preparation would be useful for your international students before they come to the UK:

8. Have you any other comments that you would like to make about Prepare for Success?

Please complete the feedback form below and return by post to:

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