



## The University of Limerick first seven weeks programme

The first seven weeks is an initiative at the University of Limerick designed to provide strong, enhanced and targeted support to students during the very early weeks of their time as UL students. Recognising that successful early adjustment is linked to subsequent success, we provide a range of information, target our resources, and interact with our new students in ways that make them know we care about them and are interested in their successful adjustment. Each of the first seven weeks has its own theme, designed to focus students' attention on various issues that we know are important for settling in and thriving as a higher education student.

### Themes for the first seven weeks and associated events

#### Week 1

##### **WELCOME, SETTLING IN, FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND**

The theme of this week is aimed at helping students to settle in, get their bearings, get comfortable with their surroundings and from the very start set up good habits that will stand to them in the longer term. The First Seven Weeks facebook page will be a key source of information. Each building across campus will have First Seven Weeks guides to provide extra help to students, directing them to different parts of the campus, answering their queries and showing them around.



## Week 2

### STUDY SKILLS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

The theme of this week aims to provide new students with as much information as they need to help them set up good study patterns, apply and develop their skills and manage their time well. Supports, events and messages will include:

Communication and literature on effective study skills and time management; A series of free study skills sessions focusing on organising, study/life balance, key study skills, scheduling time; Discipline specific peer support initiatives; Study skills blog with insights and advice from existing UL students and academics; A special emphasis on the importance of lecture attendance and showing links between lecture attendance and academic performance.

## Week 3

### MEET YOUR ADVISOR WEEK

We want to make sure that all new students have met their advisor by this week, so if they haven't done that during earlier weeks, this is the time! This week we will distribute an advisor checklist to guide advisors' interactions with new students and we'll disseminate an advisee checklist to students too for the kinds of useful questions they might discuss with their advisors during these early weeks. We'll also be using the first seven weeks facebook site messages to focus on advisor/advisee success stories.

## Week 4

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING WEEK

This week pays special attention to health and wellbeing, encouraging students to make deliberate efforts to focus on staying well and being healthy. Supports to assist this will include:

The provision of free passes for new students to Arena fitness sessions; Promoting events from medical, counselling and pastoral centres; Health science experts showcasing key issues in health and wellbeing; Drug and alcohol awareness events and self-monitoring questionnaires to help students to reflect on and enhance their health related habits; Workshops on stress management and coping with life at university.



## WEEK 5

### LEARNER SUPPORT CENTRES

This week draws attention to the range of helpful learning centres that are part of the UL campus and that help learners to tackle challenges in maths, science, language, and academic writing. Each of the learner support centres showcasing the learner support services.

## WEEK 6

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & VOLUNTEERING AWARENESS

This week will encourage students to start developing a civic engagement orientation and will help to integrate new students with some of the most important features underpinning UL undergraduate education: an emphasis on becoming engaged citizens.

## WEEK 7

### CRITICAL THINKING AND LONGER TERM PLANNING

This week will shine a light on the importance of critical thinking as a major element of successful engagement with learning at UL as well as getting students to think about their longer term engagement with their studies at UL. We'll produce and distribute a critical thinking checklist that will be useful for students from all disciplines, we'll help students to start generating their own personal academic plans; there will be postgrad speakers at four faculty-organised events focusing on how students developed their research focus and exploring their research achievements within and across disciplines and this week the facebook site will focus on broadening students' awareness of issues and insights beyond their own disciplines. There'll also be some sound advice to help students start planning and preparing for exams and other assessments.