Supporting independent study in transition: reflective questions for tutors and course teams

Pre-university student experiences and theories of independent learning

1) What kinds of ‘independence’ have students been required to develop and demonstrate in order to succeed at school or college?

2) What assumptions about ‘independent learning’ do students commencing your programme arrive with? What do they imagine being an ‘independent learner’ will involve them being able to do?

Independent learning in your discipline

3) What does ‘independent learning’ mean (and not mean) in your discipline?

4) Do the expectations for student ‘independence’ change over the course of the programme and if so, how is this: a) reflected in what students are required to do and the levels of structured support to enable them to do so; and b) communicated to students?

Supporting independent learning across the programme

5) How and when are students introduced to what ‘independent learning’ means in your programme?

6) How are assessment and other tasks designed to enable students to develop their capacities for independent learning?

Supporting independent learning in the first year of study

7) What are the specific expectations for independent learning in the first year? How would you recognise a student as being ‘more independent’ at the end of their first year of study?

8) How does the first year curriculum support students in developing their understandings of what is meant by ‘independent study’ and how they can develop their capacities for it?

9) How do assessment tasks in the first year provide space for students to develop their own practices of independent study?