

2015-2016

Gateway Orientation Report 1

Centre for Teaching and Learning

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Introduction

The aim of this report is to create a baseline understanding of experiences of Gateway Orientation from the perspective of Gateway Presenters, Residence Heads, faculty members who work with faculty orientation, and students. The report will detail experiences, challenges and recommendations from the various unit of analyses in 2015 and 2016.

During the Process Re-engineering session in 2015, the aim of Gateway Orientation was explained as: To welcome first-year students, familiarise students with the university, ensure students are registered for their programmes, refer students to academic advising, career counselling and other support services on campus, and orientate students around the services that the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (UFS) provides.

When probed, at the Process Re-engineering session, to describe the planning process, the Student Affairs team provided the following information:

The Gateway Orientation planning starts in August. The Orientation office sends the current programme to all student service providers and requests suggestions for additions and changes. The planning is concluded in November and students who have applied to the university receive an electronic copy of the programme. Students receive hard copies when they arrive on campus. The programme kicks off with the Welcoming (just before registration). The rest of the Gateway Orientation programme continues on the first day of registration and runs for one week. Rag takes place in the second week and Gateway Orientation sessions are repeated in this week for the benefit of the students who could not attend. Colleges (composed of residences and day residences) attend Gateway Orientation. The SRC and day residences are working on including off campus students in their day residences so that they can also attend Gateway Orientation. Students can access the information presented in Gateway Orientation online on KovskyLife.

In 2016, students received a smaller version of the programme – an A5 pocket guide instead of the larger A4 book. This pocket guide was also made available as an interactive eGuide on KovskyLife. The Faculty Preparation Programme was also a new initiative in the Gateway Programme in 2016, where faculties, CTL, the Library, and Student Counselling and Development were included as part of a half day programme.

1. 2015

This part of the report will detail experiences of Gateway in 2015, challenges and recommendations from Gateway Presenters, Residence Heads, faculty members who work with faculty orientation, and students.

2. Sample

2.1 Gateway presenters

Seven Gateway Orientation presenters were approached, via email, to complete a short questionnaire about their experiences of Gateway Orientation. Of the seven presenters, five responded.

2.2 Faculties

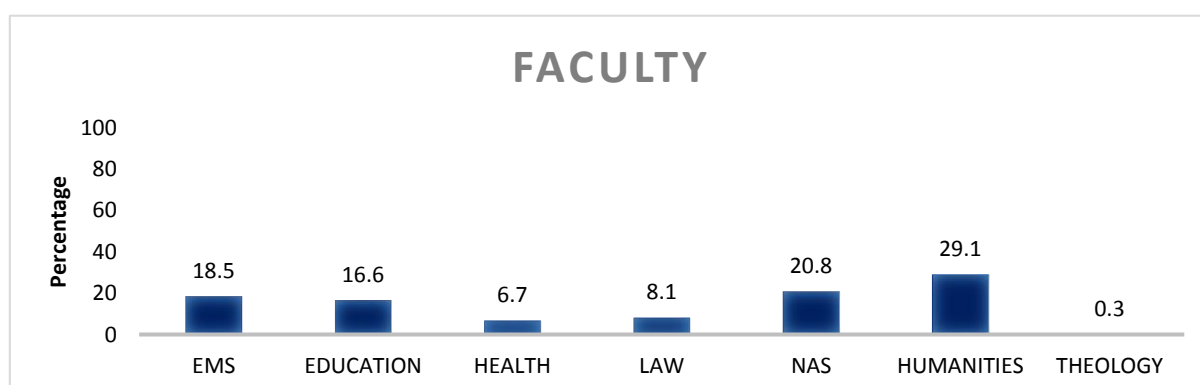
The seven faculties were approached, via email and telephone, to engage in short, semi-structured interviews about their role in Gateway Orientation and additional initiatives they may have to orientate students. Economic and Management Sciences, Law, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Health Sciences and Theology were available to meet within the time frame of this research project.

2.3 Residence Heads

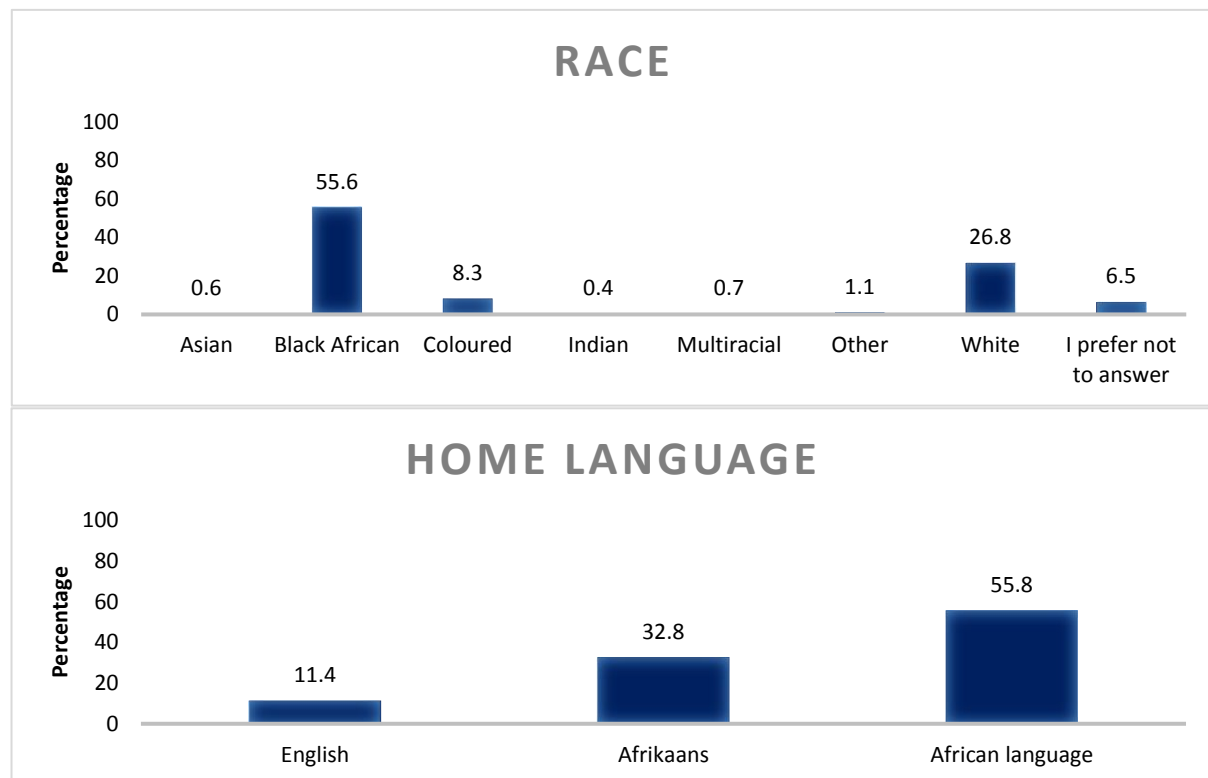
Ten full-time Residence Heads were invited to participate in a focus group as they work with the student development programmes in the residences and are thus actively involved with the planning and execution of first-year orientation in the residences. Of the ten Residence Heads, five were able to participate in the focus group.

2.4 Students

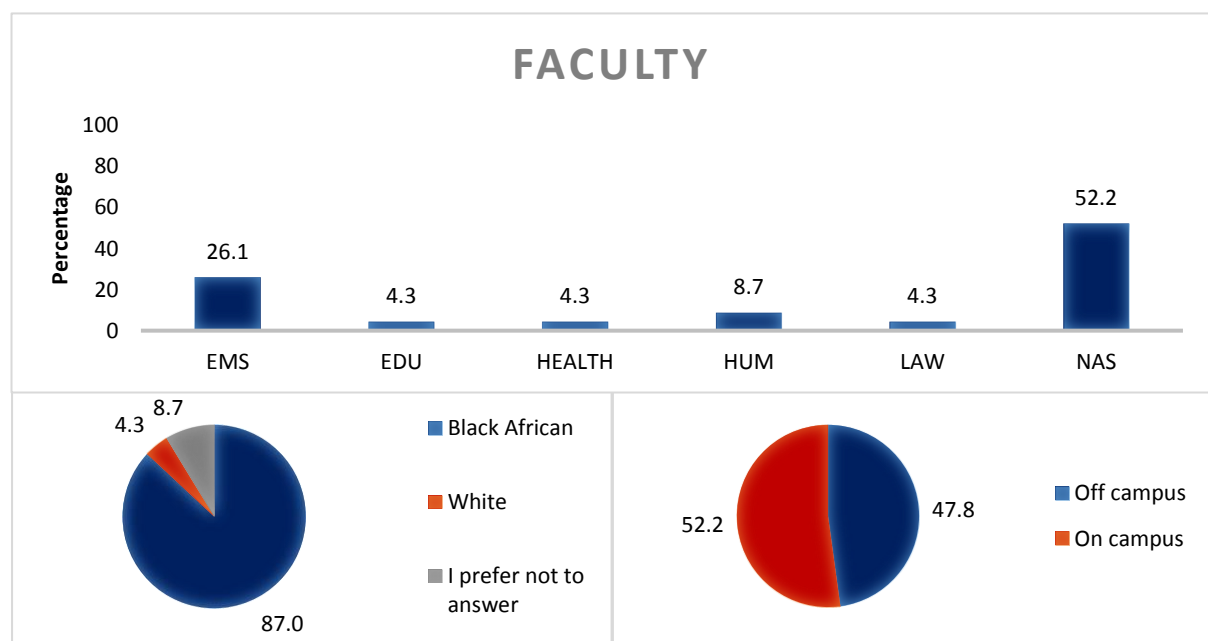
UFS101 students were invited via Blackboard, Facebook and email to complete the survey, and were contacted via telephone to participate in the focus groups. The Residence Heads and P3 Mentors also circulated the link to the survey in their residences. There were 723 students that completed the Gateway Orientation survey online. Of the respondents, 68.4% were female and 31.6% were male. The majority of the students (80.8%) were between the ages of 18 and 21 years. Of the respondents,



41.7% reported that they are first-generation students. The graphs below depict the students' reports of faculty, race and home language.



There were 76 students who indicated that they would attend the focus groups, however, 23 students attended. Of the focus group participants, 56.5% were female and 43.5% were male, while 34.8% of the participants were first-generation students. All of the students, except for one, registered for the first time in 2015. The graphs below depict the students' reports on faculty, race and where they live.



3. Student experience of Gateway

3.1 Gateway Orientation Survey

Of the 723 students that responded to the Gateway Orientation survey, 73.4% said that they attended Gateway Orientation. The majority of the students who did not attend reported that they did not know about Gateway Orientation (42.2%) and that they were not in Bloemfontein during Gateway Orientation (24.5%). Faculty Orientation takes place during the Gateway Orientation programme. Of the respondents, 48.8% said that they were required to attend Faculty Orientation, and 52.8% reported that they did attend Faculty Orientation, while 12.2% were unsure if they attended or not.

The majority of the respondents rated the length of the Gateway Orientation sessions as just right (67.7%) and rated the Gateway Orientation experience as satisfactory (94.9%). More than half of the respondents agreed that:

- Gateway was an enjoyable experience
- Attending Gateway was a good use of my time
- Gateway made me feel welcome at UFS
- Gateway gave me valuable information that can help me succeed at university
- The information presented in the session was accessible and easy to find after the presentation
- Gateway helped me to know what to expect academically at UFS
- Gateway helped me to know what to expect socially at UFS
- At Gateway, I learned about different resources on campus that could help me if I am having academic concerns
- At Gateway, I learned about the different resources on campus that could help me if I am having problems adjusting to the university
- At Gateway, I learned about the different student clubs, groups and associations at UFS that I could join
- Gateway helped me to meet other students
- Gateway staff members were friendly
- Gateway staff members were easy to find on campus
- Gateway staff members were available to help me

3.2 Focus groups

During the focus groups, students were required to complete a focus group workbook. Of the 23 students that participated in the focus groups, 6 (26%) students attended the Gateway Programme.

The students that did not attend reported that they either did not know about Gateway, or they were unable to attend as they were commuter students and did not live in a university residence.

We asked students to describe what the purpose of Gateway Orientation was, their experience of Gateway Orientation, what they learned through the programme and recommendations for improvement. Their recommendations will be detailed in the recommendations section (7) of this report.

3.2.1 Purpose of Gateway

In the table below, the students' understanding of the purpose of Gateway Orientation is highlighted, in order of the amount of comments made (high to low) and an accompanying quote from the students to support each theme. The responses are inclusive of the students who did not attend the programme.

Students' understanding of the purpose of Gateway Orientation		
Theme	Quote from student	
Sessions intended to familiarise students with the university environment	I think the point of the gateway orientation is to help us (new comers) have a better light of how university is both academically and socially. It also helps you find your way easily around campus.	
Aid students' adjustment to university	The point of gateway orientation is to acquaint new/first year students with the university. This helps make it easier for students to settle into the university and it also serves as a platform to meet new/other students who come from different backgrounds from your own.	
Provide students with information	It gave us information about where everything was so that if we ever needed help, we'd know where to go, which in turn would make you feel safe and comfortable and confident in your environment	It's too tough for you to just come here and be independent and do things on your own and how to manage your studies without some mothers telling you that you have to study and whatsoever. And there were many people speaking there, telling us where to go if you need any help, difficulties on our academics, if you fall behind with some things and feel like you're not...you're so depressed about studies and everything...where to go and who to talk to.
Welcome students to university	I think the point of the gateway orientation is to welcome first years and also to inform them more of what to expect from the university.	

3.2.2 Description of Gateway

In the table below, students' description of their Gateway experience is highlighted, in order of the amount of comments made (high to low) and an accompanying quote from the students to support each theme. These responses are specific to the students who did attend the programme.

Students' description of their Gateway experience		
Theme	Quote from student	
Welcomes students and orientates them to university	From my understanding, gateway orientation is a process or orientation where first year students or new students at the university get familiarised with the campus and all things related to it.	
Boring, and too difficult to fit in with all the activities required during RAG	A dreary experience with some valuable info that is more designed for people who don't know what to expect from university.	Most of the time gateway session was a time you know when there's rag going on and as campus students it's compulsory for first years...you know that with the rag you work you bum off...sorry...and then at that moment you're so tired in the morning...so its oh...gateway...like it was rare for us to socialise there...sometimes we just nap.
A series of activities that create the opportunity for student interaction	It was an information session...but what really happened was...I felt like it was more of a bonding session between the first years, 'cos we could get there and meet other people from other reses. Like we didn't really listen to the information given...we just go back to res and read the pamphlets.	Okay...uhm...honestly...I learned...I learned...like I said, where to go when I need whatever and another thing I learned that I was happy about is making friends because we met a lot of first years from other reses so I would get to talk to someone I've never met before 'cos I've been talking with the people I stay with at res...so I get there and meet other people coz at rag you don't get to talk to them because you have to work.
Information sessions to aid students in their academic success	It's a programme designed to assist first years with their academic career at UFS.	
Preparation for university experience	Very good and informative orientation. It seeks to put students in the light, given that there are many challenges at the university.	

3.3.3 What students learned through Gateway

In the table below, what students learned through the Gateway Programme is highlighted, again in order of the amount of comments made (high to low) and an accompanying quote from the students to support each theme. These responses are specific to the students who did attend the programme.

What students' learned through the Gateway Programme	
Theme	Quote from student
Embracing diversity	That university is a very diverse place and that we have to embrace and accept one another because we come from different backgrounds and we speak different languages and we do things differently. So for us to be comfortable with each other...and live peacefully...we just have to accept each other.
Campus initiatives and activities they can participate in Support systems	One if the biggest things I learnt about was all the support systems in place in the university that I didn't know about at all. There's a lot of places to go...a lot of people to speak to if you have any problems
University policies	Uhm...I learned a lot of academic policies regarding my modules. They gave me everything. They gave me each and every policy that is applicable to every situation that...that I find myself in. I learned my management of the faculty, it was introduced to me, and I learned that...oh...this is my management of the faculty. I learned the university policies at large of what is expected out of a student and I learned residence's policies, which is also...uhm...what can I say...it was also helpful on how to live in these residences and so on. So I learned...I must say I profited greatly from this orientation. It was very good. It gave me everything...from where I stay...to my class, I learned everything.
Campus layout	the general layout of campus where most classes and faculties are
Establishing self-confidence and a sense of responsibility	I learned how to like live with other people, communicate with everyone. I learned that life is not about me only but I have to live with other people in order for me to proceed in life.
Time management	I learned time management, where I have to sacrifice some of the things in order for me to catch up with my studies and everything
General information	A LOT! Information concerning our own safety on campus, information concerning our health, e.g. the kovsie hospital, where you can go if you want to learn how to drive

4. Presenter's experience of Gateway

There were seven Gateway presenters contacted to complete a short questionnaire – five presenters responded. They were asked about their experience of the logistical arrangements for Gateway Orientation, the evaluation of the sessions they presented, availability of and support from the Orientation staff, the impact of their sessions on students and their recommendations for improvement. The recommendations for improvement will be detailed in the recommendations section of this report.

4.1 Experience of logistics

Three of the presenters felt that the communication of the logistical arrangements could be improved. One of these presenters reported that they were informed of the time and venue of the session; a second presenter reported that the information was not given through on time, though accommodation was made to move the sessions to fit their schedule; a third presenter said that the grouping of students attending the session was not clear. Two of the presenters had problems with the venue – in the one case the lack of air-conditioning during summer negatively affected the session and in the other case the venue was too small. The fifth presenter reported that the venue was large enough and equipment, sound and technology support was in order.

4.2 Evaluations of the sessions

All of the presenters indicated that they did not receive feedback on the sessions, and one of the presenters stated that they were not aware of any evaluations during the session. One presenter also stated that the expectation of the session (in terms of criteria that they were being evaluated against) was not communicated.

4.3 Availability of and support from the Orientation staff

All of the presenters reported that the staff were available and helpful. One of the presenters felt that there was room for improvement, and another presenter reported receiving support from the volunteers but did not see anyone else.

4.4 Impact of sessions on the students

The presenters were not sure of impact, having not received any feedback via evaluation forms or attendance. They reported that though students listen, they were tired and overloaded, disengaged (talking to one another, typing on their cellphones or taking a nap). One presenter said that they gauged 30% of the students were engaged and another presenter said that some students were taking notes and had follow up questions. Another presenter felt that a space should be created where

students can engage in small group discussion outside of the sessions in order to effectively prepare them for university.

5. Residence Head's experience of Gateway

There were 10 Residence Heads contacted to participate in a focus group and complete a focus group workbook – five Residence Heads were able to participate. They were asked about how orientation works in the residences, what their experience of Gateway Orientation is, and their suggestions for improving Gateway Orientation. Their suggestions for improvement will be detailed in the recommendations section of this report.

5.1 Orientation in the residences

All of the Residence Heads indicated that there was not a formal orientation programme run in the residences – the Residence Heads instructed students to attend the Gateway Orientation Programme instead.

5.2 Experience of Gateway Orientation

Four of the five Residence Heads felt that the programme is a good initiative to orientate all students – one of the Residence Heads indicated that the programme assists a lot with academic and social needs and collaborates with departments on campus; another Residence Head reported that the programme is well co-ordinated as it is in college format. However, four of the five Residence Heads said that the programme is too heavily loaded and that students do not adequately benefit due to time clashes. One of the Residence Heads reported that the heavy load has a negative impact on students as they “suffer by the time class starts”. Of the five, two of the Residence Heads indicated that further shortfalls are that students do not learn from the sessions and would prefer to learn about the University and their academics, and the lack of follow-up to investigate the effectiveness of the programme.

6. Other Orientation initiatives on campus

6.1 Faculty Orientation

In the following table, the Faculty Orientation that took place in 2015 is detailed. All the faculties were contacted to participate in interviews in order to get an understanding of the Orientation initiatives on campus. Faculties were asked if their orientation took place as part of the Gateway Programme, if they had orientation for seniors, and if they had any additional initiatives in place to support students through the transition to university.

Faculty	Gateway Orientation 2015	Faculty Orientation	Orientation for seniors	Additional initiatives
EMS	No	2015: Dean meets students during the introduction classes to their modules. Explains progression rules to them during this time.	No	
THEOLOGY	Yes	2015: Faculty orientation takes place as part of the Gateway Orientation programme.	No	Tracking of students marks and follow-up with them; Staff-student interaction on Wednesdays (time scheduled for this)
LAW	Yes	2015: Faculty orientation takes place as part of the Gateway Orientation programme.	No	Commuter students who could not make it to the Faculty Orientation receive the file that was handed out during Faculty Orientation
NAS	Yes	2015: Faculty orientation takes place as part of the Gateway Orientation programme	No	

Faculty	Gateway Orientation 2015	Faculty Orientation	Orientation for seniors	Additional initiatives
HEALTH	Yes - school specific	2015: Faculty orientation takes place before the Gateway Orientation programme does.	No	Undergraduate support programme - in place for any student struggling to adjust to university. Students are also tracked and introduced to the programme if they perform below a certain average; Psychologist available to students; Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube channel

7. Recommendations

In the following section, the recommendations from presenters, Residence Heads and students are detailed.

7.1 Recommendations from Presenters

7.1.1 Communication

- Face-to-face meetings with the Orientation office in which expectations of the sessions and important dates for submission of content for the GPS guide are communicated.

7.1.2 Scheduling

- There should be fewer presentations.
- Presentations should be shorter as students are already overwhelmed.
- Building of floats for Rag and Gateway Orientation should not take place at the same time.
- The financial presentation should be scheduled during the welcoming weekend when parents are present as the students are not as concerned about the payment of accounts.

7.1.3 Logistics

- Bigger venues and planned breakaway sessions where students can get together in groups and discuss what they have learned in each session.

7.1.4 Different approach to Orientation

- Upload all of the information to KovskyLife and introduce students to finding information on the Intranet. Introduce students to key role players to answer their questions.

7.2 Recommendations from Residence Heads

- The programme should be less loaded, and the focus of the programme should be the following:
 - Students and student development
 - Registration
 - Finance
 - No Student Hungry Campaign
- The amount of social and sport events should be reduced.
- Information should be consolidated into shorter sessions.
- RAG (float building) should be removed as students are hungry – the programme is quite full and very little time is afforded to eating. Also, many residences are plunged into debt as a result of the float building.

7.3 Recommendations from Students

The recommendations from students are indicated in the order of frequency, from high to low.

7.3.1 Accommodate off campus students

- Off-campus students should be accommodated in the Gateway Orientation Programme.
 - Communication to off-campus students can improve. Students who are not in a residence or day residence should be informed timeously about Gateway.
 - Transport for off-campus students should be made available so that they can attend Gateway.

"I do feel however that it was more available to students either living on campus or living off campus but have joined a day res, because I have friends who live off campus and are not in a day res and they were not part of that because they didn't know what time it was. So I feel like maybe we can avail it to even maybe off-campus students a little bit more."

7.3.2 Move Gateway Orientation to a more suitable time

- Gateway should take place when classes start, when commuter students are on campus.
- Gateway should also be held at the beginning of the second semester to re-orientate students.

"Gateway takes place at a time that which students are not at all at the university before the class's starts, so it does not accommodate students who live off campus because they come usually when the classes start. So I think that's the critical point that gateway should improve on. It should be held at the period of which it includes everyone, because you find that students coming here who live off campus, they don't know where classes are, they don't know nothing. It's a problem."

"I think it can be held at the beginning of the year and at the beginning of the second semester in order to re-engage the main purposes of why are here. Just a few sessions each semester."

7.3.3 Scheduling

- Information regarding the purpose of Gateway and when it takes place should be clearer.
- Details about each session should be communicated as students unintentionally attended repeat sessions.
- Resident students had a full schedule (activities in addition to Gateway) and so would often go to Gateway hungry – either time should be provided to eat or food should be provided during Gateway.

"And maybe...as well...if you can put up a schedule...like...for what they are going to say in the discussions...that can help as well because maybe I know about the health center as well and I don't want to listen again...maybe just us, or put posters on campus or something that says that okay today"

we're going to talk about blackboard...or today we're gonna talk about that...maybe so that you can just know what you're going to listen to...I think that can help as well."

"Uhm...I don't know...uhm...somethings more like refreshments...juice...finger foods...because (giggles)....because as she said, when you come from rag farm you are tired...you're hungry...cause...there's limited food there that you can go for...you can't really go back to the bridge because you have to move as a unit...as a res..."

7.3.4 Delivery of sessions

- Sessions should be more interesting and entertaining so as to engage students.

"I said because most of the times when we go there we're really tired, so one thing that really caught our attention and that actually made us remember were the entertainment you know...sometimes they'd do like little acts and some dances you know and just put on some scenarios where your safety is put on risk, you know...so that took the focus from the talking and then oooh, now you wanna see these people acting and performing, ja...so that made it more interesting for us go there...ja...though I can say that we cannot only rely on the entertainment coz after all, it's the information that matters, but the information accompanied with entertainment made it more interesting and made it...makes it easier for us now to remember what gateway was about."

"I think they can make it more interesting because like you said, it's really hard to concentrate when you're really tired so when you get there and there's just the speaker talking from slides, then, that's not commanding attention from you. You just get there, talk or sleep. But if they make it interesting...I don't know how...but...ja...I think...it will be more effective. But the information is relevant so...yeah."

"Speakers should talk more fluently. Get to the point quicker and find props or give give out prizes to keep the students awake and so that they want to participate. Try to leave out unnecessary things."

7.3.5 Motivation and psychological support

- There should be more information on the physical location of support services on campus.
- There should be more motivational talks given.
- Information about identifying that you need help should also be made available.

"You don't know Kovsky Health, you don't know where to get it, like I unless of someone directs you and say "you can go to student counselling its where- where where-where". We don't know where it is. Maybe if it can be somewhere where everyone can be able to go there and reach help and everything, and have like the career guidance and all those staffs somewhere maybe where can we go"

"Could possibly emphasise where to get help when you need it and how to identify when you need it. Offer more motivational talks."

7.3.6 Senior students

- Senior students who are first years in residences should be exempt from Gateway Orientation and rather attend an accelerated orientation.

“By allowing students who have already been to university an accelerated orientation as they already know what to expect.”

8. 2016

This part of the report will detail experiences of Gateway in 2016, as well as challenges and recommendations from Gateway Presenters and students. The second report, which will be circulated in July, will include the students' evaluation of each session.

In 2016, the main change that took place in the Gateway Programme was the inclusion of a Faculty Preparation Programme. This programme comprised of Faculty Orientation and an introduction to the Library and Information Services, Student Counselling and Development and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The student experiences of the Faculty Preparation Programme, and the rest of the sessions offered in the Gateway Programme, will be detailed in a follow-up report.

9. Sample

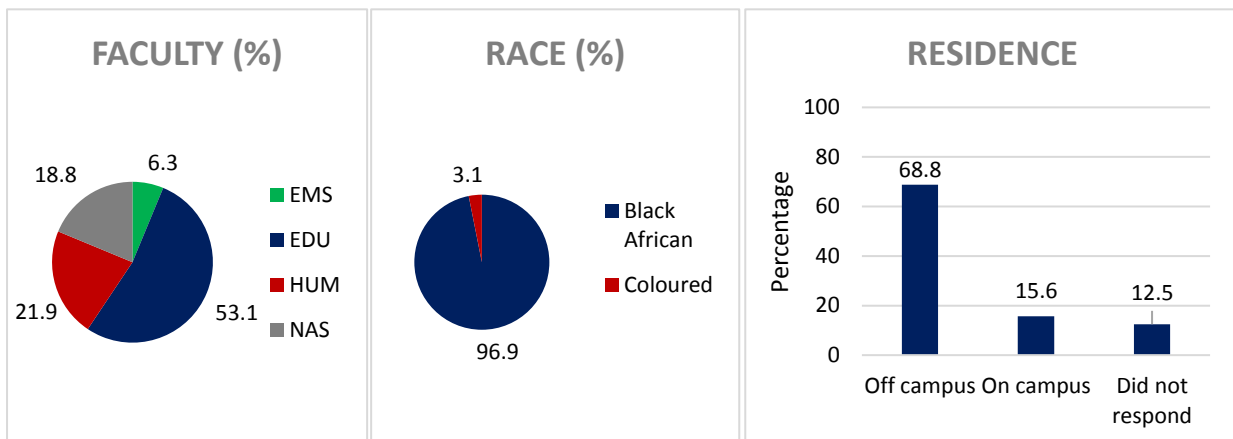
9.1 Gateway presenters

There were 21 Gateway Orientation presenters approached, via email, to complete a short questionnaire about their experiences of Gateway Orientation. Of the 21 presenters, 12 responded.

9.2 Students

In order to understand the experiences of students on both campuses, the QQ student experience will be shared in this part of the report. The Bloemfontein student experience of every session will be shared in the follow up report. A focus group was also conducted on the QQ campus, with the same questions asked of the BFN students in 2015. Students were invited to participate in the focus groups, via SMS.

There were 40 students invited to attend the focus groups – 37 attended. However, only 32 participants completed the demographic data section in the workbooks. Thus, the demographic data in this section is specific to 32 of the 37 participants. Of the focus group participants, 62.5% were female and 37.5% were male, while 59.4% of the participants were first-generation students. All of the students registered for the first time in 2015. The graphs below depict the students' reports on faculty, race and where they live.



10. Student experience of Gateway

10.1 Focus Groups

During the focus groups, students were required to complete a focus group workbook. Of the 37 students that participated in the focus groups and completed the workbook, 30 (81%) students attended the Gateway Programme. The students that did not attend reported that they either did not know about Gateway, or they were unable to attend as they were commuter students and did not live in a university residence.

We asked students to describe what the purpose of Gateway Orientation was, their experience of Gateway Orientation, what they learned through the programme and recommendations for improvement. Their recommendations will be detailed in the recommendations section of this report.

10.1.1 Purpose of Gateway

In the table below, the students' understanding of the purpose of Gateway Orientation is highlighted, in order of the amount of comments made (high to low) and an accompanying quote from the students to support each theme. The responses are inclusive of the students who did not attend the programme.

Students' understanding of the purpose of Gateway Orientation		
Theme	Quote from student	
Provide students with information	The point of Gateway Orientation is to make student aware of the different resources that are available to them to welcome the students to the university life and how they can access that information that they need	The point was to teach or inform us prospective students about the university and what to expect in the years of being a student
Welcome student to university	It is to welcome 1st year Students. Make them to feel at home. To make sure that there is no student among first years whom will be confused about university during lectures.	To help students feel welcomed and know their way around campus. To also know where they can get resources to help them with their studies
Aid students' adjustment to university	The point, it's to make first year student to adapt to the new life which is a varsity life.	The point of Gateway orientation is to help new students to adapt to a new environment and learn more about the events that take place in the university.
Sessions intended to familiarise students	Is to give first-year students and opportunity to know the corners of the university and to know others.	

with the university environment		
Advise, motivate and inspire students	The point is to motivate, inspire first year students so that they can know what they came here for and also to help them to strive towards their different destinations.	To teach students about what should they do to be successful, to advice them to focus on their studies and to do the right choice on choosing the course

3.2.2 Description of Gateway

In the table below, students' description of their Gateway experience is highlighted, in order of the amount of comments made (high to low) and an accompanying quote from the students to support each theme. These responses are specific to the students who did attend the programme.

Students' description of their Gateway experience		
Theme	Quote from student	
Welcomes students and orientates them to university	Is the session that help the student about to feel comfortable at our University, and not afraid to ask the staff member and how meet the staff.	I can describe Gateway Orientation as an helpful program especialy to first year students for being welcomed on UFS
Information sessions to aid students in academic success	It is an informational and a useful programe which should be continued as it help student to have a sence of direction to words their studies.	Gateway orientation is the system that is held in campus for first year students that helps them on how to adapted to the institution and to know their faculty management and also how they can be successfully in life.
Preparation for university experience	An eye opener to whats ahead and what to expect and handle myself as a successful student	Attending a few sessions enlightened and improved my outlook on what the university is all about
Clashed with registration and not enough information about academics	My experience was bad because I was not done with my registrations, they took the whole week. And it was mostly about support services and very less of Academic services.	

3.3.3 What students learned through Gateway

In the table below, what students learned through the Gateway Programme is highlighted, again in order of the amount of comments made (high to low) and an accompanying quote from the students to support each theme. These responses are specific to the students who did attend the programme.

What students' learned through the Gateway Programme		
Theme	Quote from student	
Information for academic success	Since I attended the library orientation I learnt how to search for books that are available in the library using internet from the computers.	I learned that the UFS is one of the most highly ranked tertiary education institution in South Africa, and that UFS101 will provide skills and information that one needs for the future.
Campus layout	I got to know the locations of various venues and like the library building, science buildings, the new one and the old one etc. Also the residences.	
General information	At the Gateway Orientation I leaned about my university school, how it works; where do I find the faculties and how to access information and also I learned or I felt that feeling of being welcomed	
Embracing diversity	I learned that I must not discriminate others, because we are all equal. I must treat others as my brothers and sisters. We must not be racist. Everything is my responsibility.	People don't treat you differently because you are not the same race as them
Socialising and working with others	I learned to work in groups, and a little experience about how to cope on the university as a new student.	That I should be a socialite, learn to live with others, so that at the end of the day UFS becomes a friendly environment.
Campus initiatives and activities they can participate in	I learned mostly about organisations that I really liked to join and how to overcome my academic challenges.	I learned that as a UFS student you should be an all rounder, not only focus on your studies, but there are other activities one can do such as sport, debate, F1 programme. Etc.
Faculty specific information	How to attend and how my faculty work and the individuals of my faculty from the lecture to other lecturers.	
Time management	That I should adjust my daily activities to prioritise my studies	

11. Presenter's experience of Gateway

There were 21 Gateway presenters contacted to complete a short questionnaire – 12 presenters responded. They were asked about their experience of the logistical arrangements for Gateway Orientation, availability of and support from the Orientation staff, the impact of their sessions on students and their recommendations for improvement. The recommendations for improvement will be detailed in the recommendations section of this report.

In 2016, all of the sessions were evaluated and presenters were aware of the evaluation forms that students were completing – the feedback will be detailed in the follow up report.

11.1 Experience of logistics

The majority of the presenters had a positive experience of the logistical arrangements for Gateway, saying that communication took place in advance, the programme was made available timeously, and that arrangements were well organised. One of the presenters said that her department was not originally on the programme, and she therefore appreciated the Gateway Office providing them with a slot in the programme and the opportunity to present. Three of the presenters, however, experienced problems with the logistical arrangements. In one case the presenter was informed about the presentation at the beginning of the session and therefore was unable to present the first session. In another case the presenter was told that she had four hours to present, and checked in with a fellow colleague the day before the presentation and had to then edit her presentation to fit into a two hour slot. In the third case, the presenter experienced various changes in the programme and had to contact the Gateway Office to enquire as to when they would present.

11.2 Availability of and support from the Orientation staff

The majority of the presenters reported that the Gateway staff were friendly, available and very helpful. One of the presenters would have liked confirmation of the programme two days before her presentation, and another presenter reported no help with the sound and set up at the session she presented in.

11.3 Impact of sessions on the students

The presenters were unsure of the impact of the sessions on the students, as they await feedback. One presenter said that the impact was minimal as the student attendance was poor. Most of the presenters reported that the students were engaged during an interactive activity.

12. Faculty Orientation

In the following table, the Faculty Orientation in 2016 is detailed. Most of the faculties participated in the Faculty Preparation Programme which took place as part of the Gateway Programme. The student experience of each of these sessions will be detailed in the follow up report.

Faculty	Faculty Preparation Programme 2016	Faculty Orientation	Orientation for seniors	Additional initiatives
EMS	Yes	2016: A presentation on the faculty rules was made during the Faculty Preparation Programme, and students were also introduced to CTL, the Library and SCD.	No	
THEOLOGY	Yes	2016: A presentation on the faculty rules was made during the Faculty Preparation Programme, and students were also introduced to CTL, the Library and SCD.	No	Tracking of students marks and follow-up with them; Staff-student interaction on Wednesdays (time scheduled for this)
LAW	Yes	2016: Students were introduced to the Law Association during the Faculty Preparation Programme, and students were also introduced to CTL, the Library and SCD.	No	Commuter students who could not make it to the Faculty Orientation receive the file that was handed out during Faculty Orientation

Faculty	Faculty Preparation Programme 2016	Faculty Orientation	Orientation for seniors	Additional initiatives
NAS	No	2016: A full day presentation on Faculty Orientation was held.	No	
EDU	No	2016: A full day presentation on Faculty Orientation was held.	Unsure	
HEALTH	No	2016: Faculty orientation takes place before the Gateway Orientation programme does.	No	Undergraduate support programme - in place for any student struggling to adjust to university. Students are also tracked and introduced to the programme if they perform below a certain average; Psychologist available to students; Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube channel

13. Recommendations

In the following section, the recommendations from presenters and students are detailed.

13.1 Recommendations from Presenters

The recommendations from presenters are indicated in the order of frequency, from high to low.

13.1.1 Move the Gateway Programme to a more suitable time

- Off campus students did not attend the sessions. Gateway should be expanded to include off campus students. If possible, change the dates for when Gateway is presented.
- The academic orientation should take place after Rag and after registration in order to include all students in the programme.

13.1.2 Logistical arrangements

- Need to make the logistical arrangements so that all sessions can take place in the EBW Auditorium – the Kopsie Church is too far for students to walk and this results in poor attendance.
- There should be consequences if residence committees do not bring their students, attendance was poor and residences control for this.
- The marketing should be improved – include posters in the registration halls and hand out flyers to students during first year registration (attach these to the verification documents).
- Technical support should be provided before each session.

13.1.3 Delivery of sessions

- Sessions should be shorter and presented in a more inclusive way, making use of videos for example.
- When there is a large group in attendance, rather split the group into smaller groups for discussion in order to improve the engagement in the session.
- The sessions should be compulsory, e.g. students with disabilities did not attend the sessions. If the sessions cannot be made compulsory, then sessions must be built in for CUADS students specifically.

13.1.4 Communication

- The programme/schedule should be provided well **in advance**, as the time in which Gateway is scheduled is a very busy time for those involved in RAG and registration.

13.2 Recommendations from Students

The recommendations from students are indicated in the order of frequency, from high to low.

13.2.1 Move the Gateway Programme to a more suitable time

- Gateway should not take place during registration. Students are **registering** and therefore cannot attend Gateway. Gateway should take place before registration in order to prepare students for the university experience, or Gateway should take place when students have completed their registration so that that is out of the way and students can concentrate on Orientation.
- Gateway should be **extended** by a week – run for two weeks – in order to **accommodate all students**.

“I think it can improve if the orientations can be before registrations, so as to give us time to attend every session”

“It must took place when all students are done with registration”

“I think they must increase the time for the orientations because according to me they are very essential for first year students.”

“By extending the period of the orientation so that students doesn’t struggle when the classes are starting.”

“The gateway can increase the time for their orientation so that it cannot be short for students to can therefore be adapted to the Varsity conditions.”

“By extending the time or duration. Instead of a week, they would make it two weeks or so to accommodate all students.”

13.2.2 Delivery of sessions

- Sessions should be more **interesting and entertaining so as to engage students**.
- There should be **time allocated** for students to ask **questions**.
- Allow more **time for students to work through the information** that is presented.
- **Include lecturers and senior students** in the presentations.
- **First aid** should be available during **sports** activities.

"They could improve by making other short games so that students cannot get bored with long speeches and other presentations."

"Make it less formal, in order to keep students interested"

"I think they should've made it more practical, e.g. the library orientation"

"Give us more time during the session of Gateway Orientation, and give us time to ask questions"

"I think the Gateway orientation can improve the library orientation by hiring more assistants during the orientation because some of us are slow and the people who are orientating are too fast."

"They can include senior students during their presentations and also make it a point that academic advising is well presented and on point."

"By including lectures on the orientation so that we can use them."

"I honestly think the level it's on is perfect, but when they give students the sports to do they should consider health services on standby due to those who suffer from asthma attacks but want to participate as well"

13.2.3 Scheduling

- Sessions should be **repeated** during various time slots in order to accommodate more students.
- The amount of **venues** and the **time** per session should be **extended**.
- **Time** should be **used effectively** during the sessions.

*"There must be **different time slots to accommodate everyone**."*

"It can improve with the extending the time and venue."

*"I think it can be improved by making sure that all the students at the orientation benefit all. It **doesn't have to be too long** so that we as students we can enjoy the session, and another thing they must make sure that they use their time effectively."*

13.2.4 Communication

- Students should be **notified via SMS about when and where to attend** the Gateway Programme.

"Maybe it can improve your socialization with them like notify us when, where to attend."

"It can improve by telling the student on time so that they can attend the gateway on time"

"They must tell the students on time that there will be orientation by using SMS to our phone so that we can all attend"

13.2.5 Evaluate the Gateway Programme

- The Gateway Programme should be **evaluated**.¹

“Can improve by also ask the student about the experiensis in this university.”

“Making follow ups and research on the reasons why some students do not attend orientation”

13.2.6 More information

- More information on **social engagement** should be provided.

“I could provide more information on the social events and residential events of the learners.”

Conclusion

The aim of this report was, firstly, to provide a baseline understanding of orientation initiatives on campus, namely Faculty Orientation, Residence Orientation, and the Gateway Programme, and secondly to report on recommendations from the various stakeholders involved, namely students, Residence Heads, and the presenters of the sessions in the Gateway Programme. A survey was conducted in the second semester of 2015, as a first effort to collect data on the student experience of the Gateway Programme. As the results of the survey did not provide much insight into what worked and what didn't, the CTL team conducted a focus group with students on the Bloemfontein campus. A focus group was also conducted with students on the QwaQwa campus in 2016 – it is interesting to note that many of the experiences and recommendations are similar. A focus group was conducted with Residence Heads on the Bloemfontein campus, interviews were conducted with faculty representatives, and short open-ended surveys were circulated to the presenters of the Gateway Programme.

The follow up report will include the students' experience of the Faculty Preparation Programme and each session that was presented in the Gateway Programme.

¹ The Gateway Programme on the BFN campus is in the process of being evaluated by CTL, for the years 2015-2016. After a discussion with colleagues at both campuses, it was agreed that the CTL team should visit the QQ campus to conduct a focus group with students there in order to also get data applicable to the QQ student experience for 2016. The reference to evaluation here is evaluation of each session in the Gateway Programme, as that has not yet been conducted on the QQ campus.