

## Student Induction into E-learning (SIEL) Project

### Developing Best Practices for Prospective and New Student Introduction to E-Learning

**Project Leader:** Professor Kerri-Lee Krause (Director, Griffith Institute for Higher Education, Griffith University). **Project Officer:** Celina McEwen (GIHE, Griffith University)

**Partners:** University of Southern Queensland (Link Affiliates), IMS Global Learning Consortium, Inc. and Australian Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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**Further information:** Kerri-Lee Krause ([k.krause@griffith.edu.au](mailto:k.krause@griffith.edu.au))

University students' early experiences with e-learning can be either a barrier to retention or contribute to the likelihood of persistence. As technology-enabled courses and programs continue to grow at exponential rates and provide global reach, the levels of completion, retention and persistence of students who study mainly in online contexts are areas of considerable concern to academic staff and administrators.

Recent research supports the fact that the effective use of technology in learning, teaching and curriculum design requires a better understanding of the expectations of students, staff and institutions, along with preparation and induction into the use of technology to foster positive learning and student outcomes. To address this gap, the project examines several areas of best practice to enhance the first year experience in online learning environments. These include: assessment and communication of expectations relating to online learning; strategies for inducting and advising students about online learning environments; adoption, design, organisation and support of relevant technologies; and professional development for academic staff.

Findings from this study will lead to the establishment of an effective, peer-reviewed methodology for introducing first year students to online learning environments. The best practice areas will provide a framework to enable students and higher education institutions to level-set and establish their respective expectations for academic success, as well as address issues of completion, retention and persistence during this most vulnerable phase of the student life cycle. While this project focuses specifically on identification of best practices in online e-learning environments, many of the principles will apply equally to blended and hybrid learning contexts.

GIHE's participation in this international project will help inform the development and promotion of the adoption of international best practice standards in the area of technology-enabled learning.