

## Naomi

*“They (Student Support Co-ordinators) would be a great help to the next group of juniors coming to Brookes from my country as we have encountered problems.”*

Naomi is a third year international student who arrived in Oxford with others from her home region college to study at Brookes. Naomi's initial arrival at Brookes was problematic as no-one in the group had received pre-arrival packs of information though Naomi had been in email communication with the university with information on their time and place of arrival in Oxford. Without specific information or maps Naomi assumed that there would be some form of assistance on arrival however as it was a Sunday there were no help or information support services available. Without phones or maps and assuming that they should go to campus, it took the group about 4 hours before they were finally in their hall of residence after seeking help from passersby. Without any information services or maps they did not know even know where to locate food outlets and went without until the following day.

Although Naomi timed her arrival on the understanding that registration was in week 0, it turned out that for her school of study it was not until some time later. As a result the group spent a week without bus passes or much information on how to proceed. Even her attempt to obtain a bus pass took longer as the guidelines provided omitted to advise that the application required a copy of the university contract and not only photos. On campus for the first time Naomi approached the main reception desk for initial information. Though they provided leaflets as a newcomer it was initially difficult to find the way to registration.

After settling in to her studies the advice and information that Naomi required was related to her modules. Assuming that the Student Union would be a source of information she was referred back to lecturers. Lecturers advised her how to change modules but she has had difficulties as PIP did not always update appropriately. Naomi experienced similar problems when she needed to register for a second semester having not succeeded at one of her first semester modules. Advised by the academic office to continue with her next semester despite PIP not updating, Naomi has now completed her examinations without being certain if the system is correctly reflecting her achievements that will lead to her continuing with her qualification.

During induction Naomi learnt about the role of personal tutors (now Academic Advisors) but was not aware of the process to follow in order to seek information or assistance from them how one might take up the option to seek advice. It has though been of help at Brookes to be part of a group from her home region as they have been able to provide mutual support. In addition Brookes has now appointed senior helpers who speak the same home language and these have provided useful information on finding their way at Brookes and in the city as well as providing information on where to eat. Unaware of the existence of Student Support Co-ordinators, until she saw reference to them in the recent survey on student support, Naomi considers that they could be of value to the next intake of students coming

This story was collected as part of the Evaluation of the Revised Student Support at Oxford Brookes University. Naomi is not the student's real name.

See <https://wiki.brookes.ac.uk/display/pedres/Student+Support+Evaluation>

from her home region. She hopes the next intake will be provided with timely pre-arrival information and would also hope they are advised not to arrive on a Sunday.

Helpful services to Naomi at Brookes have included the library where help included information on free membership of the Bodlean Library which Naomi took up and found useful. She also found the IT technician helpful with setting up wifi on her laptop. For most difficulties Naomi makes use of Google search and related forums.

Despite a problematic arrival at Brookes Naomi speaks warmly of her study time here. At the time of the interview she had a remaining problem to resolve before leaving university and returning home. Although a number of Brookes staff in various offices she consulted had advised her that there was a dedicated graduation office, no one was able to explain where it was or who to seek out in order to obtain two extra tickets for family members to attend her graduation at the end of June.