

## THRIVE IN ORIENTATION

Orientation is your chance to check out life at UNE. There's a lot for you to take in: course information, people and places, campus life, Armidale, and the various activities organised during orientation. You may find it easy or you may find it challenging. We've put together a few hints on how to survive and get the most out of orientation.

## THE RIGHT BALANCE OF INFORMATION AND FUN

Be savvy and think about what you want to get out of orientation- perhaps make a list. You could include who you want to speak to regarding courses, financial issues, activities and clubs you may be interested in. Also, where are you on the having fun vs info gathering scale? Are you at one end where fun is the one and only priority or are you at the other end of the scale where fact and information finding is your only mission and you are perhaps even isolating yourself because of shyness? Think about the right balance to have during orientation.

## SOCIALISING

It's great to get to know lots of people from all sorts of backgrounds. Try to resist the temptation to only stick to one or two others. Try to meet students in different situations such as people who live in another residence or in town, people doing other courses, people from clubs or societies you may be interested in joining. At the same time check out one or two others who you think will be good "mates" or support people (of course this may take longer than orientation).

## HOMESICKNESS

Missing home, family and friends is normal. You've said goodbye to one part of your life and now you are starting a new part. You may feel excited and feel some sense of loss in saying goodbye. The important thing is not to isolate yourself, so keep trying to make contact with others. It is likely that other people share similar feelings and welcome the opportunity to talk. Sometimes it really helps to talk about what you're missing. If you live in "on campus" accommodation there are resident leaders to talk to. All students can also find ways to connect with others via [clubs and societies](#) and [sport and volunteering](#).

## LONELINESS AND FEELING DIFFERENT

Most new students will have a range of feelings swirling around inside. Some feelings are positive while others may be difficult such as loneliness. Remember it takes time to build friendships so the best thing is to start in orientation. This is a time when lots of students are putting energy into getting to know one another. The feeling of being different or an outsider will lessen as you become involved. Sometimes it helps to know that you are not the only one. Even those people who seem to be mixing easily are working hard at it.

## PRESSURE TO CONFORM/HARASSMENT

There are many opportunities to have lots of fun during orientation. However, you may feel pressured into participating in activities that you don't feel OK about. So don't do anything you don't want to, even if everyone else is or even if you are told you "have" to. You have the right to say NO.

Some activities are presented as "good fun" but not everyone feels the same way. If it doesn't feel good to you, you can say: "I'd prefer not to do that", "I don't want to do that right now", "I'll give that a miss thanks", "No thanks, I'm going to do x, y and z instead"

Only say "Yes" to those activities you get a positive vibe or "gut" feeling about. The bottom line is safety and respect. Ask yourself "Is it safe for me or others?", "Is it respectful towards me, towards others?" "How will I feel about this the next day?" "Do I really want this posted onto You Tube or other parts of the web for all the world to see?" Naturally if you have had too much to drink these questions are difficult to answer.

If you are harassed about joining in, talk it over with others and find support e.g. resident leaders.

## **SEX**

You don't owe anybody sex and no one owes you sex (even if you have paid for drinks/dinner). Don't have sex with anyone who hasn't clearly given consent - e.g. if they're drunk – as you could be charged with sexual harassment or assault. If you do have sex, have safe sex. Bring up the subject of using condoms or oral dams with your sexual partner. Discover that there are more ways to enjoy sex than just having intercourse.

## **ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS**

If you are going to drink alcohol here are some useful tips:

- Eat before you drink
  - Alternate alcoholic drinks with soft drink, juice or water, etc
  - Dilute alcoholic drink with juice, mineral or soda water, etc
  - Don't combine alcohol with illicit or prescription drugs
  - Never drive when under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- Take a harm-minimisation approach.

There are a range of free, confidential [student support services](#) at UNE. For support to tackle personal, study and work related issues, contact UNE Student Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) for a free appointment. Phone (02) 6773 2897.

**CAPS wishes you an informative and fun-filled and safe orientation.**

**The support you need to succeed**