



Grace College

The University of Queensland

O-Week Objectives, Vision & Rules

Version 160831

1. Objectives

(Approved by Council 29 July 2013)

The objectives of O-Week at Grace College, in order of priority, are to:

- orient new residents to:
 - the College, its ethos, values, policies, procedures and rules;
 - the UQ St Lucia campus and its resources for students;
 - their programs of study, the campus(es) at which they are based, and general academic, program and course requirements;
- build a sense of community among new residents, and between new residents, the Student Leadership Team and other student leaders who are present (e.g. Chapel Committee); and
- make connections across the inter-collegiate community through shared activities with other Colleges.

2. Vision & Direction

(Developed by 2015 student leaders, endorsed by the 2015 Student Leadership Team, O-Week Committee and College Administration; Revised in 2016)

2.1 The Role and Naming of the O-Week Committee

The role of the O-Week Committee will reflect the values of Grace College as outlined in the College Values Statement, and the O-Week Objectives as listed above. Both of these policies were approved by the College Council on 29 July 2013.

The O-Week Committee will adopt a positive leadership style underpinned by respect, support and encouragement. They will welcome new residents to the College in a way that enables them to:

- develop a sense of belonging within the college; and
- feel like a **VALUED** part of the community.

From 2017, members of the O-Week Committee will be known as “Coaches”. This is a change from the term “Duchess” which will no longer be used. If a more suitable alternative name emerges in the future, a further name change may be considered.

Under this positive leadership model, the O-Week Committee will be similar to fitness coaches. The motto, “We challenge you to get the best out of you” will be the attitude and motivational drive behind the role. This vision will be captured by critically reviewing WHY, HOW and WHAT purpose lies behind every O-Week activity in order to create a more cohesive and successful O-Week for new residents.

This leadership style implements techniques that endeavour to foster a sense of identity and belonging which in turn encourage a support network that challenges and affirms participants. As a team, the coaching model will be developed to uphold the College values of community, collegiality and care by:

- focussing on participants’ needs,
- developing trust,
- building mentoring relationships,
- encouraging collaboration,
- fostering wise choices, and
- providing a safe context for participants to explore both their personal identity and their new environment.

2.2 Guidelines for O-Week

1. O-Week leaders will use a motivating, excited and energetic tone of voice when addressing the new residents to help build anticipation for the activities and passion for the college
2. Members of the extended Student Leadership Team (SLT) will also take on this attitude when encouraging the new residents to participate in all aspects of the week.
3. The O-Week leader’s uniform will reflect the style of a motivational coach with the O-Week Committee toolkit consisting of:
 - a. a hat,
 - b. sunglasses (aviators will not be worn),
 - c. whistles (for use in large group situations only – not as part of a wake-up routine), and
 - d. other attire to be negotiated with the Student Club Vice President (SCVP) and College Administration (Admin).
4. Fresher uniforms provide an important visual first impression of the College for Freshers and the wider UQ community. They should reinforce a positive image of the College with which Freshers can readily identify. The primary aim of Fresher uniforms is to boost the confidence of the wearers. They must not belittling or sexually suggestive. Continuing to give the uniform a new look is essential to keeping O-Week innovative. New ideas can be developed by the O-Week Convenor and the newly elected O-Week Committee in consultation with College Administration. Fresher uniform strategies that work well and align with the O-Week vision include:
 - a. using lanyards with real names, fresher names and fresher meanings for identification purposes, and
 - b. using Grace College merchandise as a reward system for new residents to reinforce and encourage freshers in gaining a sense of belonging as “Gracies”.
5. The style of the opening and naming ceremony sets the tone of pride within the college. The entire extended SLT needs to be a part of clapping and cheering the freshers on as they take the first step towards becoming a “Gracie”.
6. Learning the Fresher dance becomes our favourite fitness routine following the “we are training you to be one of us” approach; similarly for war cries and college chants.

7. Music sets a great tone for the day and therefore upbeat music will be used as a morning wake-up call to get new residents and student leaders pumped up for the day. Resident Assistants (RAs) and other members of the extended SLT on each floor will be responsible for ensuring all freshers are ready for the day and in the JCR by the designated time using the envisioned motivational style to help build relationships.
8. It is the responsibility of the O-Week leadership team to adhere to all College policies, and particularly to be aware of access and equity issues in considering the well-being of new residents. To ensure the needs of all new residents are met the following strategies will be implemented:
 - a. Time will be designated daily for freshers to debrief in floor groups with their RAs. This debriefing process will allow for student leaders and new residents to re-focus and give feedback on how the week is travelling. It would be preferable for this to be scheduled before the evening activities commence. It is essential that RAs check on their freshers' physical, mental and emotional health during these debriefs.
 - b. Based on feedback from previous years, a stronger emphasis will be placed on the academic elements of the week with a more creative approach to these sessions seeking to increase their value.
9. Through a collaborative effort from the extended SLT, including the Student Club Executive, RAs, O-Week Committee and the Personal Formation Team (PFT which includes Chapel Committee, Wellness Convenors and Student Club Care Convenors), by the completion of O-Week all new residents should have:
 - a. obtained a student ID card;
 - b. participated in tours of the campus(es) at which they will be based for their studies;
 - c. attended UQ Market Day with forewarning that they will need a small amount of cash for club joining fees on the day;
 - d. attended or had the opportunity to be engaged with university contacts including—
 - e. attendance at a UQ Getting Started session, and
 - f. attendance at a sex and gender information session;
 - g. obtained a Go-Card (and TTCC application) and understand the public transport system in Brisbane;
 - h. obtained internet access and student access to the relevant university network (including orientation to CITG, Eduroam, SI-Net [or equivalent] and Blackboard [or equivalent]);
 - i. completed sign up for classes as well as feeling confident with timetabling;
 - j. completed a college gym induction session;
 - k. completed training and practice in college evacuation procedures;
 - l. attend a police talk in regards to safety;
 - m. heard promoted other study skills and orientation workshops available to Freshers through the universities' O-Week programs;

3. Rules

(Determined by College Administration as at 30 August 2016)

The rules are based on a resolution of the College Council in May 2008; further discussion around O-Week by the College Council prior to the July 2013 meeting; and discussion between College Administration and the Student Leadership Team following the approval of the O-Week Objectives by the College Council. The process of selection/election accords with the Constitution of the Grace College Student Club as at August 2016.

3.1 The Process of Selection/Election of the O-Week Committee is:

1. Expressions of interest in being a member of the O-Week Committee will be called for in September.
2. All potential members of the O-Week Committee will be required to attend a workshop in September on the College ethos, appropriate leadership styles and the significant duty of care involved in the role. This workshop will be organised by the Principal and Dean of Students, but may involve external resource persons.
3. The Student Club will conduct an additional briefing session led by the previous O-Week Convenor (Student Club Vice President). This session must accord with the College's ethos, values, policies and procedures; and will not contravene the focus of the workshop run by the College Administration.
4. Formal applications will be requested following the workshop and briefing session.
5. The Principal or Dean of Students will review the applications in consultation with the Student Club President, the Senior Resident Assistant and the previous O-Week Committee Convenor (Student Club Vice President).
6. The Principal or Dean of Students will not approve an application from anyone who has failed to attend the compulsory workshop.
7. A shortlist of no more than 10 applicants will be agreed by the group identified in (5) for submission to the Student Club and the election process.
8. The elected O-Week Committee and the O-Week Committee Convenor (Student Club Vice President) will be required to attend training provided by the College at the end of the year that covers:
 - the College Risk Management Plan and student leadership responsibilities,
 - anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-bullying,
 - coaching skills for leaders,
 - working with young people under 18 years of age, and
 - a review of the previous O-Week program and evaluation;
9. Any elected O-Week Committee member who fails to attend the compulsory end-of-year training for reasons other than ill health or compulsory study requirements will not be permitted to return to the College for P-Week or O-Week, and thereby be excluded from O-Week planning and participation.
10. One opportunity to catch up on training will be provided for any elected O-Week Committee member who missed the compulsory end-of-year training for reasons of ill health or compulsory study requirements. If the catch-up opportunity is not taken up, that person will not be permitted to return to the College for P-Week or O-Week, and thereby be excluded from O-Week planning and participation.

3.2 The Role of O-Week Convenor

In collaboration with College Administration, the Student Club Executive, the O-Week Committee, Resident Assistants and the Personal Formation Team, the O-Week Convenor will:

1. organise the O-Week program in accordance with the College's ethos, values and policies;
2. focus on the College's stated objectives for O-Week; and
3. plan a program to cover the period from 1.30 pm on Sunday to 5 pm on Friday of O-Week.

3.3 The Role of the O-Week Committee

In collaboration with College Administration, the Student Club Executive (and especially the Vice President and O-Week Convenor), Resident Assistants and the Personal Formation Team, the O-Week Committee will:

1. lead the O-Week program in accordance with the Colleges' ethos, values and policies;
2. focus on the College's stated objectives for O-Week;
3. be aware of the importance of their leadership positions as role models for the new members of the College community;
4. use a coaching model of leadership as outlined in section 2.1 of this document;
5. be aware that they are working with young people and young adults who are still establishing their own independent identities and who have the right to explore their identities in an emotionally safe environment;
6. hold or obtain Blue Cards as volunteers working with young people under 18 years of age;
7. develop appropriate risk management plans for all major O-Week events;
8. obtain an appropriate licence and university approval for any O-Week activity involving alcohol;
9. adhere to the Orientation Week Committee Code of Conduct;
10. ensure that all elements are included in the O-Week program for all new residents as stated in section 2.2.9;
11. allow O-Week participants sufficient time to eat their meals without interruption;
12. plan and encourage a minimum 8½ hour organised-activity-free break each night with the earliest wake-up call during the week being 7 am (e.g. 10.30 pm to 7 am, or 11 pm to 7.30 am);
13. recognise and inform O-Week participants that they do not have to take any inappropriate orders from any other College's students leaders (duty of care);
14. inform O-Week participants of the procedure for raising any concerns about O-Week activities or behaviour in a safe environment;
15. make a commitment to O-Week with a positive leadership style, displaying enthusiasm for the entirety of the week.
16. only participate in activities, for example ice-skating or Wet n Wild, AFTER all freshers have been accounted for and any issues have been dealt with.

The O-Week Committee will not:

1. intimidate, bully or harass Freshers because they will use coaching leadership techniques which support, encourage, challenge and affirm participants;
2. adopt personas which intimidate Freshers (even in jest) because such an approach disregards their position as role models and mentors in the College community;

3. yell in a threatening way at Freshers as a normal part of their leadership technique because this works against establishing the coaching/mentoring relationship;
4. yell or whistle through the College PA system at any time because this is a health and safety issue;
5. force O-Week participants to make physical contact with any other person against their will, force Freshers to participate in any activity, especially ones which may open Freshers to humiliation or embarrassment, or single out any Fresher without prior agreement from that person (but strongly encourage participation in group activities through “challenge by choice” techniques);
6. discourage Freshers from attending official University, Faculty or Program O-Week activities because the focus of O-Week is assisting the transition to university.
7. be influenced by another College’s unhelpful leadership style, for example, the staunch, unresponsive persona.

3.4 The Role of College Administration

The Principal and Dean of Students will:

1. arrange for the following introductions to College life to be organised for Freshers prior to 1.30 pm on the Sunday of O-Week:
 - explanation of College’s core values and key characteristics which demonstrate the core values,
 - explanation of residents’ duty of care and responsibilities while living in community,
 - highlighting of 2 key College rules (no alcohol to be kept or consumed in the accommodation blocks, and no male guests between 11.55 pm and 8.30 am) and explanation of House Committee discipline system,
 - explanation of security system, guest protocols and foyer duty,
 - reminder that their personal effects are not covered by the College insurance policy,
 - explanation of kitchen and dining room procedures, floor kitchenette protocols, laundry facilities, and linen changes,
 - obtaining of academic gowns for Formal Dinners and photographs for Dining Room photography board,
 - opportunity for meeting in their floor groups with their Resident Assistants;
2. have the opportunity to vet the complete timetable for O-Week;
3. roster themselves to attend all major events during O-Week;
4. develop an alternative O-Week program if the O-Week Committee has not provided the complete O-week timetable to the Principal by 31 January;
5. intervene at any point where the behaviour of the O-Week Committee or the O-Week program contravenes the College’s ethos, values, policies and procedures.

3.5 Returning Residents in O-Week:

Normally, the only returning residents who will be permitted to be on-site during O-Week will be:

- O-Week Committee;
- Student Club Executive;
- Resident Assistants;
- Chapel Committee;
- Wellness Convenors;

- Care Convenor;
- Social Assistant;
- College Photographers;
- Red Frog volunteers.

Any other returning resident wanting to be on-site prior to Moving-In Day must gain approval to be there from the Principal or Dean of Students. In applying for approval, they must indicate the reason why it is necessary for them to return early.

3.6 Fresher Participation in O-Week

There is an expectation that all freshers who sign up for College O-Week will participate in the program. New residents will be encouraged to engage in the activities, on a “challenge-by-choice” basis, as they are designed to challenge new residents in order to motivate participation in the remainder of the college year. In order to foster and facilitate this participation:

- a. All activities will be clearly explained before commencement.
- b. No student will be asked to undertake any activity against their will or that defies the well-being of that student.
- c. If a new resident decides not to participate they must remain with the group. When outlining the participation expectations at the start of the week, new residents should be encouraged to inform their RA or any other student leader when they choose not to participate.
- d. All O-Week activities must be adequately planned and approved by the Principal and Dean of Students in accordance with the College’s ethos, values, policies and procedures.
- e. The O-Week Convenor and O-Week Committee may choose to use a positive participant motivator such as the introduction of the Goblet Point system.

3.6 Areas for Ongoing Development

Catching the vision of the coaching/mentoring leadership role opens up creative possibilities for new activities and different ways of managing activities that are repeated each year. The following are changes that are continuing to evolve and develop:

- a. **Opening Ceremony**—The opening ceremony should foster a sense of community and college spirit. Calling freshers up six at a time shortens the process and lessens the potential for freshers to feel intimidated or singled out.
- b. **Fresher Volunteer**—It’s good to foster an environment of volunteerism so providing opportunities for freshers to help out is important. However, the Fresher volunteer procedure must be reframed. Instead of asking for volunteers to complete tasks for the O-Week Committee (e.g. filling their water bottles, etc.) the freshers should only be asked to volunteer to help each other (e.g. “Can I please have a volunteer to help ... carry the eskies?”)
- c. **Fresher Graduation** – O-Week is all about the Freshers, not the O-Week Committee therefore, Fresher Appreciation will be replaced with a Fresher Graduation, as a major objective of O-Week is to teach the Freshers how to be Gracies! The purple hats that are a reward for winning the Inter-College Fresher Dance Competition could instead be used as a reward for successfully becoming a “Gracie”. A suggested activity for the event is reading everyone’s meanings allowed again and saying for example, “Perper, Gracie Perper”.