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**Abstract**

This article explores challenges in ensuring effective student transition from school or college to university. It examines the complex liaison needed for students to progress to appropriate courses, settle into university life and succeed as higher education learners. Secondary data (international literature on transition and the formation of learner identity) are analysed to identify underpinning concepts. Primary data are taken from two studies of student transition in England using student and staff surveys, student focus groups, staff interviews and staff?student conferences that discussed selected project data sets. The article goes on to offer a model of the process of transition and the formation of learner identity. It proposes that the development of higher education learner identity is essential to student achievement and is initially encouraged where schools, colleges and universities adopt integrated systems of transition. This has clear implications for practice for higher education administrators, academics and quality officers.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)