Your subject and preparation week

In the new academic calendar 2016, there are two Orientation and Preparation weeks before the start of scheduled classes for most courses. For most of you who are on calendar A, these Orientation and Preparation weeks start on March 7; if you’re on calendar B these weeks are combined into a single week starting February 22. The Orientation and Preparation weeks are designed to give all students resources and tools that they need to be prepared for day one of their scheduled classes.

There are some new requirements for what must be provided to students in all subjects by the start of the Orientation and Preparation weeks. Not all students need to orient to study, but all are now required to prepare during this time.

We have characterised Orientation and Preparation week support that subjects are expected to offer at 3 levels:

**Bronze:** This is the basic level of welcome activity that is expected for all subjects under the new AC2016. We expect your UTSONline site to be live, and for there to be some simple, interactive elements common to all subjects here for Preparation. These basics will help students gain an overview of what to expect in your subject.

**Silver:** This level of preparation for study activity will introduce some extra quality or interactivity over the base level. We have a few suggestions of good things you could add to your basic UTSONline site to get students better prepared for a good start with your subject in Week 1, and become more engaged and interested.

**Gold:** This level will have some best-practice elements to give the students the best possible start when you begin face-to-face interaction in your first week. Do not go too far with interaction of course! It is important that students are not overloaded with preparation activities, and come keen, enthusiastic and ready for study.

We do not want to add another checklist at this busy time, but instead to provide some helpful tips on how to ensure that your Faculty response is the best possible to the new Calendar Year.

We are here to help - so if you need help on this topic, contact your IML Faculty learning technologist or IML Faculty liaison contact or come to a UTSONline drop-in session. For more information about the new academic calendar, access Staff Connect and search for Academic Calendar 2016.
The clock is ticking

Remember, the clock is ticking towards the Orientation and Preparation weeks of this upcoming semester. **Your Faculty will already have told you YOUR KEY DATES** by which you need to be ready. This note summarizes the general dates which are important for everyone preparing students for study in the new calendar. If you are uncertain, **CHECK** your own Faculty deadline date requirements.

**IN GENERAL**, your UTSONline site with Subject Outline and basic subject preparation materials must be available to students **at the very latest** by March 7(A) or February 22(B). If you start early enough then you can work your way up from Bronze to Gold.

In the (reverse) countdown below we will assume that your launch date is Calendar A. If you are Calendar B, things happen more quickly. These weeks will tick by quickly:

0  **March 7 2016**: Your UTSONline Site **must** be live and available to students who are preparing for your subject. Please note that the subject outline should be available by this time in UTSONline even to students in block or distance mode whose start is delayed (unless an appropriate delay has been previously agreed).

-1  **29 Feb 2016**: Your UTSONline Site **could** be live and available to students who are preparing for your subject - so it should be loaded and ready by now. There are advantages to making your site and your preparation resources available early. The ITD FL team can open your subject site a week early if you wish, OR your Faculty may already require this - so **CHECK**.

-2  **22 Feb 2016**: Testing week: this would be a good time to ensure that everything you want the students to see works as you expect. Ensure that you have the site ready to TEST. View it as your students will view it and see from the student perspective if everything you are asking makes perfect sense. Ask someone else to look at it in that way. Think about how long it might take students to do the preparation and don’t forget that reading the subject outline and other materials might take them much longer than it takes you. Your purpose is to inform, enthuse and ready them for study, not to overload.

If you’re on Calendar B, your site must be live and available by now.

-3  **15 Feb 2016**: Last chance to realistically get help to finish any complex introductory resources like video and quizzes. Don’t underestimate the time it takes to polish the new introductory resources you will have made. A bad video is not a replacement for some really good text announcements; but a good video or screencast might add some personality. You should have thought through by now if you can upgrade your online preparation from Bronze to Gold.

-4  **8 Feb 2016**: This will be a very busy week for academics who have not used UTSONline very much before. There are drop in sessions scheduled from w/c 22 Feb but you can always contact your **Faculty Learning Technologist** now for help. There are also lots of **self-help resources** and there is the telephone and email. If you are unsure of what you should be doing, now would be a good time to ask.

-5  **1 Feb 2016**: Tick, tock. If you’re on Calendar B, you only have three weeks to go. Make that call to IML now!