

UWE welcomes the students of 2007

**Welcome Weekend 22 and 23 September 2007
Frenchay, St Matthias and Glenside Campuses**

A year on from top up fees universities are becoming more customer focused and this weekend the University of the West of England is putting on a big welcome as 7,000 new students arrive. The Welcome Weekend at UWE was piloted last year to help students, many of whom are leaving home for the first time, to settle in, get oriented and to make friends.

Steve West, Acting Vice-Chancellor explains, UWE's Welcome Weekend is, we believe, a uniquely fantastic introduction to University. We have thought long and hard about how it feels to be a student arriving in a strange city for the first time and we have worked with current students to find out how to make the first few days a positively exciting and reassuring experience. The Welcome Weekend is not to be confused with the Freshers Week held by UWE and all other universities it is all about helping students with the practicalities of moving in, saying goodbye to Mum, Dad, partners and friends and making new friends quickly that will help you settle into life at UWE. We believe that the success of our first Welcome Weekend in 2006 has contributed to a decrease in drop out rates in the first year. This has been a staggering achievement and one we wish to build on.?

The Welcome Weekend events take place at three of UWEs campuses at Frenchay, St Matthias and Glenside. New students are greeted as soon as they arrive and current student ambassadors and removal men help transport all the students' worldly belongings to their new homes in student accommodation.

Sue Fox, UWE's Operations Marketing Manager, has co-ordinated the weekend for the past two years and she said, 'We had so many comments from parents who had previous experience of leaving older children at other universities and many said how much easier parting had been seeing their child happily settled on day one. We have learned so much from evaluation of last year's event and have incorporated all student suggestions to make this year even better.

To help students make friends with others who are in the same accommodation, Faculty or course we have created a special game of snap. Each new student is presented with a red UWE lanyard and Faculty colour coded card holder with cards in different colours for different accommodation. As students spot others with the same colours this acts as a great ice-breaker. As students arrived last year they all said that the welcome was so much more than they were expecting.

New students will be able to take part in decorating a specially designed 'Banksy style' Graffiti Wall that will provide a backdrop to the party event at Frenchay Campus. We will have a steel band and Barbeques, a Beach Party with a surf simulator and a Carnival Fun Fair theme party. The new nursery will be open for student parents with a bouncy castle and face painting for the children. We want to create a festival atmosphere so that students feel that they have arrived somewhere

really exciting. An idea that we will repeat from last year is the UWE Diary Room where students can tell a 'Big Brother' how they feel about their first day at UWE.

Last years comments can be viewed on a specially produced video on the UWE website at <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/inPictures/video.shtml>

For the full programme of events at each Campus please see <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/welcomeweekend/>