



## ARE STUDENTS PREPARED FOR LEARNING IN UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA?

### What a Study Reveals

## POLICY BRIEF

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### WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

A practical challenge facing universities is addressing the level of preparedness of students entering the university environment and participating in active and successful learning. For example, a major aim of orientation programmes organised by universities is to help incoming students become familiar with the learning environment and have the right academic expectations. This is in line with the assertion of Pearson (2009) that many tertiary institutions face challenges with regard to students not being adequately prepared for learning. The consequences are diverse but include difficulties in students' progression to the next level (Cengage, 2020). This policy focuses on students' participation in orientation programmes and the impact on

learning preparedness.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Low learning preparedness among fresh university students is a significant educational issue affecting the quality of education and the prospects of graduates in Nigeria. New student orientation provides opportunities to support the transition and engagement of new students to the academic, cultural, and social environment of the university. Orientation, therefore, is an important part of the student experience. This process helps students become familiar with the university faculty system and the staff. Orientation also helps students understand the academic programmes and the university's values and functions. Based on statistical and interview data drawn from a NISER study, this policy brief examines the extent of students' participation in orientation programmes across different types of universities (federal, state, and private) and its impact on learning preparedness.

Results indicate that participation in orientation programmes is higher in private universities compared to public ones and that effective orientation significantly enhances learning preparedness. Furthermore, less than half of respondents perceive orientation programmes as enhancing learning preparedness to a very high extent as it contributes to improved study habits. Students' poor or non-participation in orientation programmes found in 37% of federal universities, and 40% of state universities studied is quite worrisome.

### Key Recommendation:

The federal and state ministries of education, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), should standardise the university student orientation programmes, and make them compulsory in terms of organisation, programme content and student participation.

## 1.1 Background

Low learning preparedness is a critical issue in Nigerian universities, significantly affecting students' academic performance and future employability. Fresh students' poor participation in formal orientation programmes has not been sufficiently addressed, leading to inadequate preparation for academic and social challenges in the university environment.



Source: <https://www.unn.edu.ng/timetable-for-20172018-orientation-programme/>

The goal of this policy brief is to provide empirical evidence on the impact of orientation programmes on learning preparedness and to recommend interventions that can improve participation in these programmes, thereby enhancing students' readiness for academic success. The brief employed a mixed-method approach, collecting quantitative and qualitative data through structured questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The sample included universities (federal, state, and private) from the North-Central and South-East Nigeria. Detailed analysis was performed to determine the extent of students' participation in orientation programmes and its perceived impact on learning preparedness.

## 2.0 FINDINGS

### 2.1 Participation Levels in Orientation Programmes

The brief revealed varying levels of participation in orientation programmes among different types of universities. Full participation was observed in

13% of federal universities, 9% of state universities, and 62% of private universities. Above-average participation was noted in 10% of federal universities, 4% of state universities, and 19% of private universities. Average participation was recorded in 8% of federal universities, 3% of state universities, and 16% of private universities. Below-average participation was seen in 27% of federal universities, 37% of state universities, and 13% of private universities. Finally, poor or non-participation was reported in 37% of federal universities, 40% of state universities, and 10% of private universities. These findings indicate that private universities showed higher participation rates in orientation programmes compared to federal and state universities.

### 2.2 Impact on Learning Preparedness

Results show that 47.04% of respondents perceived orientation programmes as enhancing learning preparedness to a very high extent, while 24.39% perceived it to a high extent. Only 8.36% of respondents perceived it to a very low extent. Effective orientation was associated with improved study habits, social networking, and overall readiness for academic challenges.



Source: <https://www.acu.edu.ng/orientation-for-fresh-students/>

### 2.3 Factors Affecting Participation

Several factors were identified as affecting participation in orientation programmes. Social networking was the most significant factor, followed by process supervision and evaluation. Active mentoring of students was also important,

while access to information was the fourth significant factor. Overall, private universities demonstrated better implementation and supervision of orientation programmes, contributing to higher participation and preparedness levels.



Source: <https://unilag.edu.ng/?p=43493>

## 2.4 Policy Implications

**Enhance Public University Orientation Programmes:** Public university administrators should utilise existing technologies and expertise to implement virtual and non-virtual orientation programmes effectively.

**Institutionalise Semi-formal Orientation Programmes:** The Federal Government, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), should promote semi-formal orientation programmes involving faith-based and community-based associations.

**Capacity Building for Orientation Facilitators:** The NUC should ensure universities provide adequate training for orientation officials and departmental staff to enhance the effectiveness of orientation programmes.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The study found that participation in orientation programmes significantly enhances learning preparedness among fresh students. Private universities have higher participation rates, indicating the need for public universities to improve their orientation efforts. Effective

participation in orientation programmes is crucial for academic success and the future employability of graduates.

## 2.6 Recommendations

- ❖ **Prioritise and Standardise Orientation Programmes:** Orientation programmes should be advertised and prioritised, ensuring they are goal-oriented and inclusive.
- ❖ **Engage Stakeholders in Orientation Efforts:** Faith-based and community-based associations should be involved in the orientation process to ensure comprehensive coverage.
- ❖ **Address Factors Affecting Participation:** University management should support orientation officials through capacity building and consistent funding to address factors negatively impacting participation.
- ❖ **Implement Suggested Improvements Passionately:** The National Universities Commission should passionately implement the recommended policy options to enhance learning preparedness and outcomes for fresh students.

By adopting these recommendations, Nigerian universities can significantly improve the learning preparedness of their students, thereby contributing to better academic performance and future employability.

### Further Reading

Ahn, M. Y., & Davis, H. H. (2020). Four Domains of Students' Sense of Belonging to University. *Journal of Studies in Higher Education*, 45(3), 622–634.

Babagana I F (2022) Exploring the Information Seeking Behaviour of Colleges



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**This Policy Brief draws from a NISER Study on Enhancing Learning Preparedness through  
Effective Orientation Programmes in Nigerian Universities**