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NUDGE CAMPAIGNS

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# New Transfers – Mindset Fall



# Driving Student Success Through Nudges

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A **nudge campaign** is a communication strategy, built upon a data-informed insight, that an institution designs to nudge a targeted group of students to achieve a specific, measurable outcome.

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**Nudges** are small pushes in the right direction that do not require prescribed actions, but encourage certain behaviors. When students are presented with a nudge sent from a trusted person at your institution, they have the freedom to make their own choices with information about behaviors we know are more strongly associated with positive persistence and graduation outcomes.

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- Kuh, George D., et al. *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

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**Growth mindset** is the notion that if a student believes that she can overcome challenges over time and with effort, and that her abilities are not fixed, but can grow, she will respond resiliently when challenges arise.

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- Yeager DS, Dweck CS. Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational Psychologist*. 47: 302-314. DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2012.722805

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# About the Nudge Campaign

## Opportunity

For many institutions new transfer students have significantly lower persistence than average providing a clear opportunity to improve persistence with a nudge.

## Goal

The goal of this nudge campaign is to nudge new transfer students into behaviors that will aid in their success within the current term and persistence into the next term.

## Students

The target student group for this nudge campaign is new transfer students, e.g., transfer students with 0 terms completed. If your institution has a small new transfer student population, consider including both 0 and 1 terms completed.

## Owner

The owner of the the nudge campaign is the person responsible for sending the nudges to the students and receiving and acting upon replies from students. Choose the most appropriate person at your institution to send the nudges. Remember, emails sent from a person the student knows are most likely to be read. Advisors or faculty are often appropriate owners for a nudge campaign.

## Strategy

This nudge campaign is a series of mindset nudges designed to help new transfer students build a growth mindset. The nudges are intended to build upon each other and can be reinforced through a call-to-action.

Nudges are sent at four different points during the academic term and utilize the following mindset principles:

- Growth Mindset
- Empathy
- Normalizing
- Goal Setting

## First Two Week of the Term

### Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

**Subject Line:** We're here to guide you through this transition

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

You're a [MASCOT] through your hard work and achievement. I'm so glad you're here, and we believe in you.

All new beginnings can be difficult. Many students find it challenging to connect with new friends, get involved, and meet different expectations.

We're here to guide you and support you. In the meantime, if you're experiencing these or other types of challenges during your transition, think about what types of strategies you have used in the past that you might use now.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

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### Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

**Subject Line:** We're here to guide you through this transition

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

You're a [MASCOT] through your hard work and achievement. I'm so glad you're here, and we believe in you.

Connecting with your peers at [INSTITUTION NAME] is important. It will help you make the most of your time here and want you to share what makes you unique with the rest of your community. You are what makes [INSTITUTION NAME] great!

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

## Prior to Midterm Exams

### Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

**Subject Line:** You're closer to your goals than ever before

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Overwhelmed? This time in the [TERM/SEMESTER] students often are feeling stretched by academic demands and the demands of life. Feeling like you're in over your head is totally normal.

Hard work and perseverance are two attributes we know students just like you can use to achieve your goals. Today, it's preparing for midterms, but keep your goal of completing your program in mind! Each day your diligence and effort gets you one step closer.

You may be feeling a bit overwhelmed, but that's okay! What matters most is that you are going through the learning process.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

Keep up the hard work,

[SIGNATURE]

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### Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

**Subject Line:** You're closer to your goals than ever before

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Did you know the brain is like a muscle? It only grows if you work beyond your current abilities.

If you're feeling like you're on track and meeting expectations with little effort, then I hope you will consider new opportunities that will help you stretch your learning even further.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

Keep up the hard work!!!

[SIGNATURE]

# After Midterm Exams

## Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

**Subject Line:** What will it take to reach your goals?

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Did you know that research shows that ability is achieved through the steady process of active learning and practice? Grades don't always reflect a person's full academic potential!

Sometimes students question their major, or they find the content of a course does not always connect with them. That's totally normal!

I want to encourage you to continue challenging yourself, especially as you think about courses for next semester.

Think about the next steps in your educational journey. What do you need to do now to get you to your goal of completion? Working hard to finish this [TERM/SEMESTER] well is a great way to get a head start on next [TERM/SEMESTER]'s success.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

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## Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

**Subject Line:** What will it take to reach your goals?

Hi [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Congratulations on getting through your midterms! As you consider courses for next [TERM/SEMESTER], think about which ones might challenge and stretch your learning.

A great way to get advice about courses is to connect with other students who are further along in your program.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

[SIGNATURE]

# Last Two Weeks of the Term

## Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

**Subject Line:** Flex those learning muscles & finish strong!

Hi [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Wow! The [TERM/SEMESTER] is almost over. It went by so quickly. You have just one last push to get through finals. I imagine this [TERM/SEMESTER] was challenging.

You're so close to finishing this [TERM/SEMESTER] and that will get you one step closer to your goals. Keep working hard to finish strong, and keep reminding yourself why you're here!

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

Study well for finals; and see you next [TERM/SEMESTER]!

[SIGNATURE]

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## Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

**Subject Line:** Flex those learning muscles & finish strong!

Hi [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Wow! The [TERM/SEMESTER] is almost over. It went by so quickly. You have just one last push to get through finals. I imagine this [TERM/SEMESTER] was challenging, but your hard work and effort is likely to pay off!

Keep up the hard work to get you one step closer to your goals of completing your program!

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION]

Study well for finals; and see you next [TERM/SEMESTER]!

[SIGNATURE]

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## Call-To-Action

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*A nudge campaign is intended to encourage student behaviors that lead to an increased likelihood of success. To have an impact on students' likelihood to persist and graduate, the nudge must alter students perspectives or illicit actions that increase their chances of meeting their educational goals.*

*A nudge can be reinforced with a request for a student to think or behave in a way that will likely improve their educational outcomes. This is a **Call-To-Action**. Including a call-to-action in a nudge is optional, but highly recommended. Nudges that ask a student to do something specific make it significantly more likely that they will do it and it will have an impact.*

*It is important not to overwhelm the student by including a long list of resources or choices. Include just one call-to-action and make it specific to the target student population.*

*Four calls to action are described below along with examples of each.*

# Types of Calls-To-Action

## 1 Thought Exercise

Students' attitudes and beliefs can be changed simply by asking them to think about a question or reflect on a hypothetical situation. For example, asking students to remind themselves about the reasons they are going to college can reinvigorate a sense of determination to help carry them through a tough point in the term.

Thought exercises have the benefit of being powerful yet not requiring any additional resources beyond sending the nudge. They also provide students cognitive tools they can use anytime to increase their resilience when facing challenges.

## 2 Link to a Resource

Your institution has resources available to support students throughout their academic journey. You may also know of resources outside your institution that would be helpful for certain student groups. Provide a link to a resource related to the purpose of the nudge or to the targeted student group. This call-to-action leverages existing resources without requiring additional time or new initiatives.

## 3 Request to Signup or Attend

Your institution has a variety of support activities already in place for students, such as orientation sessions and student clubs. Ask students to signup, attend, and participate in one of these events or activities. This also has the benefit of not requiring any additional resources to support students beyond what is already allocated.

## 4 Schedule an Appointment or Visit

Ask students to schedule an appointment with someone in their academic support network. The call-to-action may be especially impactful for students in need of acute intervention such as students with Very Low and Low persistence predictions.

Asking students to schedule an appointment or visit an advisor, faculty, success coach, mentor, or academic support center requires the capacity to handle the influx of students wanting to utilize those resources. This is especially important to consider when using this call-to-action in a nudge campaign with a large targeted student group.

# Thought Exercise Examples

## Remember goals and aspirations

Think about the reason you applied to [INSTITUTION NAME] in the first place. Remind yourself about those goals and aspirations; you can achieve your goals here.

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## Use good habits

Good habits you discovered as a first-year student are the ones you can re-use to experience success this year. What habit will you use this week to prime yourself for success in your classes?

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## Address challenges

Now is the perfect time to consider a *new* way to tackle a *new* challenge. Working through new challenges is how we all learn. What new challenge are you facing? What is one way you will address this challenge today?

# Link to Resource Examples

## Study tips

Final exams are coming up. Click here for tips on how to beef up your study skills.

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## Time management resource

Juggling life and school is challenging. Here is a link to a guide on time management that may help.

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## Getting around

Getting around campus can be tricky. Here are links to campus maps and shuttle routes.

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## Learn about support services

Did you know that you have access to [WRITING CENTER/TUTORING/SUCCESS CENTER] to support you while you learn and grow at [INSTITUTION NAME]? Click here to learn about how you can take advantage of these services.

# Request to Signup or Attend Examples

## Join a student club

At [INSTITUTION NAME] we have a variety of student clubs you can join to meet students with similar interests as you. They are a great way to get connected to your learning community. An information session with representatives from the various clubs will be held at [TIME AND LOCATION]. Come to the session and meet student like yourself.

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## Attend orientation

It's important to attend one of your upcoming orientation sessions. They provide information that will help you be successful as you start your journey as a [MASCOT NAME].

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## Signup for an activity

A bunch of your fellow [MASCOT NAME] are volunteering at a local school this weekend. There are lot of opportunities to get involved with your peers and give back to the local community. Signup for an upcoming volunteer opportunity.

# Schedule an Appointment or Visit Examples

## Advising appointment

Schedule an appointment with me so we can review your plan for next term.

## Tutoring center

[COURSE NAME] provides foundational information you will need in future courses. Like many students, if you feel like you need support learning the material, visit the tutoring center.

## Office hours

Making a connection with your professors is important. Make a goal to visit all of your professors at least once this term.