

Learning and Teaching Plan 2009-2011

Preamble

As part of its mission of Bringing Knowledge to Life the University of Western Sydney aims to create a superior and engaged learning experience for its students. During 2009-2011, we will implement a number of strategic initiatives in order to achieve that aim. These initiatives represent the consensus of views at UWS about what attracts and retains students in a comprehensive, research-led, multi-campus university; they are based on our own evidence and on best practice in learning and teaching in Australia and internationally.

For each of the strategic initiatives, the Plan lists a number of improvement actions derived from consultation across the UWS community; they are again evidence-based and validated by best practice in Australia and around the world.

The strategic initiatives and improvement actions together constitute a guide for the creation of annual plans by the Colleges and Divisions of the University. These plans will be reviewed each year, with progress measured against performance indicators.

Many of the improvement actions in learning and teaching entail collaborative work between Colleges and with Divisions, reflecting the belief at UWS that Bringing Knowledge to Life is a whole of university responsibility.

Strategic initiatives and improvement actions

Develop the ability for students to learn in their own time, supported by IT-enabled learning, by

- 1.1 Using flexible learning and teaching methods and innovative technologies that are proven to maximise success in the multi-campus context.
- 1.2 Further enhancing on-line Library access and its integration with units and programs
- 1.3 Developing versatile ICT equipped learning spaces and flexible timetabling methods
- 1.4 Bolstering the staff and system capacity of the UWS e-learning infrastructure to cope with predicted increased demand
- 1.5 Implementing a quality assurance system for e-learning

Create a first year experience that optimises retention and success, by

- 2.1 Establishing an integrated system of first year coordination and advising
- 2.2 Increasing the use of peer assistance
- 2.3 Exposing first year students to our best teachers
- 2.4 Building academic writing and study skills support into core units
- 2.5 Building maths support into relevant programs for students who need assistance
- 2.6 Implementing the learning and teaching aspects of the Disability Action Plan
- 2.7 Establishing transition strategies for students entering via VET and UWS College pathways

Strategic initiatives and improvement actions *cont.*

Implement a comprehensive Indigenous education strategy, by

- 3.1 Implementing the UWS Indigenous Graduate Attribute through developing Indigenous related content and units within UWS courses
- 3.2 Developing modes of study and support structures that attract and retain Indigenous students
- 3.3 Expanding access for Indigenous people to UWS courses with enabling and bridging pathways that improve overall performance
- 3.4 Maximising employment for Indigenous students by engaged learning with partners in business, community organisations and training organisations
- 3.5 Further developing the Indigenous international partnerships to build Indigenous knowledge for academic and research capacity
- 3.6 Building the cultural competency of UWS staff to improve their professional capacity

Increase the effectiveness of staff – including sessional staff, by

- 4.1 Ensuring that academic staff are skilled in learning and teaching approaches and practices in order to improve student outcomes
- 4.2 Where appropriate, providing staff with just-in-time teaching improvement assistance
- 4.3 Developing new models of employment to attract and retain sessional staff and increase their effectiveness and connectedness
- 4.4 Increasing participation in awards for teaching excellence and integrating award outcomes into recruitment and promotion processes
- 4.5 Adopting and encouraging an academic culture that integrates teaching, research and governance
- 4.6 Encouraging communities of practice to increase scholarship in learning and teaching

Strategic initiatives and improvement actions *cont.*

Embed engaged learning in programs, incorporating relevant community, industry and international aspects, by

- 5.1 Developing a suite of engaged learning models associated with the acquisition of UWS graduate attributes
- 5.2 Ensuring that academic staff have access to training and technical assistance to ensure the quality of engaged learning and associated partnership relationships
- 5.3 Implementing an agenda of evaluation and research on engaged learning so as to monitor impacts and areas for improvement
- 5.4 Monitoring the scope and scale of engaged learning with a goal of ensuring that students have access to engaged learning experiences as part of programs
- 5.5 Increasing engaged learning opportunities overseas

Build pathways that attract talented students from diverse backgrounds, including international, by

- 6.1 Expanding the capacity of UWS College and increasing the number of pathways into UWS programs
- 6.2 Further developing our suite of advanced undergraduate, honours and postgraduate coursework programs
- 6.3 Developing innovative links with the VET sector to maximise access to UWS programs, and maximise the employment outcomes for our graduates
- 6.4 Further developing innovative international partnerships to ensure the targeted recruitment of high quality international students
- 6.5 Raising the profile of UWS by expanding productive links with high schools in Western Sydney

Strategic initiatives and improvement actions *cont.*

Ensure students achieve high learning standards, by

- 7.1 Providing on-line Learning Guides for all units
- 7.2 Establishing learning standards by benchmarking with partner universities and professional bodies
- 7.3 Implementing the Criteria and Standards Assessment Policy
- 7.4 Developing a system of staff performance management aimed at improving learning outcomes for students
- 7.5 Further enhancing student feedback tools, appropriate for a diverse range of learning contexts

University of Western Sydney

Locked Bag 1797

Penrith South DC NSW 1797 Australia

www.uws.edu.au