

Environmental Scan

1. **Institution** University of Sydney

2. **Contact Person (and contact details)**

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3. **Name of Program/Initiative**

Informing curriculum development to support widening participation in the Faculty of Veterinary Science: Investigating relationships between the backgrounds of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Veterinary Science and students' experiences of learning anatomy.

3.1 URL: Not applicable.

3.2 Start Date/Duration: May - December 2012

4. **Brief outline of program**

This study investigates how students' educational and socio-demographic backgrounds are related to their perceptions of, and approaches to, learning anatomy in the Faculty of Veterinary Science. An anonymous survey, comprising three quantitative questionnaires, will be used to investigate students' backgrounds, perceptions of the learning context, approaches to learning and self-predicted overall performance in anatomy; further data about the student learning experience will be gathered by via interviews. This information will be used to improve the anatomy learning outcomes of a diverse student cohort in animal and veterinary science.

5. **Purpose/Aims**

The study addresses the following hypotheses:

(a) Approaches to and perceptions of learning anatomy in the BVSc and BAnVetBioSc degrees are influenced by students' educational and socio-demographic backgrounds.

(b) In the BVSc and BAnVetBioSc degrees, relationships exist among students' perceptions of self-efficacy, students' approaches to and perceptions of learning anatomy and students' educational and socio-demographic background.

The findings of this research have considerable potential to:

- inform development of the veterinary/animal science anatomy teaching curriculum, especially in context of increasing student diversity related to the proposed the change to a pre-veterinary/graduate entry Veterinary Science degree in 2013;
- increase precision of identification of students at risk of poor performance in anatomy units of study and permit greater targeting of support programs for these students;
- raise awareness within the Faculty of impacts of diversity on learning and promote Faculty-wide investigation and implementation of inclusive teaching strategies.

6. **Breadth of program** (is it in a particular subject, program, school, faculty, across the institution, campus, with a particular cohort, etc)

The study focuses on a particular discipline/study area (anatomy) but includes both degree programs within the Faculty. As explained above, it is anticipated that information gained from this study will have wider application across the curricula of both degree programs.

7. **Category (please select all that apply and provide explanation where necessary)**

Category	Y?	Explanation
Policy		
Curriculum	Y	Information gained from this study will be used to inform development of the veterinary/animal science anatomy teaching curriculum, especially in the context of increasing student diversity related to the proposed change to a pre-veterinary/graduate entry Veterinary Science degree in 2013
Program		
Other (please specify)	Y	Support of at risk students - it is intended that this study will increase precision of identification of students at risk of poor performance in anatomy units of study and permit greater targeting of support programs for these students

8. **Resources** (optional – we are trying to determine what sort of resourcing is necessary to make the initiative work)

8.1 **Start up budget:** \$7500 (covers whole project)

8.2 **Ongoing budget:**

9. **Outcomes**

NB Data collection for this study commences on May 15 thus parts 9.1 and 9.2 are not applicable at this stage.

9.1 **Uptake:**

9.2 **Evaluation(s) conducted to date - Informal or formal) – and details of findings:**

9.3 **Evidence of success:**

Identification of statistically significant relationships between student backgrounds, approaches to learning and perception of the environment, leading to specific initiatives that promote inclusive teaching.

9.4 **Evaluation(s) planned (and dates for this/these):**

Data to be evaluated June-September 2012. In addition to statistical/phenomenographic

analysis, a "think tank" will be conducted in November to discuss the ways in which the research data can be deployed within the Faculty.

9.5 Major challenges:

Participation in survey/achieving necessary "power" to identify relationships/associations. Building research outcomes into the curriculum renewal process - obtaining "buy in" from relevant stakeholders.

9.6 Other (Please specify):

10. Publications/Reports (including links to those publically available)

None so far.