

ALTC LSES Environmental Scan

1. Institution :

University of Western Sydney

2. Contact Person (and contact details):

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3. Name of Program/Initiative

‘FYSCO – partnering with academics to support commencing students’

An initiative developed in 2009 to establish a dedicated staff member to support commencing students at school level as they transitioned into university life.

4. Brief outline of program

- Dedicated professional staff member at school level appointed as first-tier point of contact for students within the first crucial weeks of first semester;
- Provide constant access for students during business hours;
- FYSCOs are selected based on specific characteristics such as friendliness, approachability and commitment to student support, undergo training and are experienced with corporate knowledge to assist with student queries at first contact;
- A triage approach undertaken to provide students immediate support, minimising the need for the student to search the university processes to ascertain who the ‘appropriate’ person is
- FYSCOs are introduced to students during Orientation sessions so that they have a familiar face, not just a name as a contact.
- FYSCO’s also coordinate information at school level, ensuring the promulgation of consultation times for all first year unit coordinators;
- Data is also collected on the issues which students approach them for resolution so that institutional level strategies can be implemented where possible to address and prevent common issues arising in the future.

5. Purpose/Aims

- Support commencing students as they transition into university life, especially those of low socio-economic background and/or first-in-family students who may be less confident in help seeking;

- Create a one-stop shop approach for commencing students who are unfamiliar with university system and processes;
- Ensuring those most in need of support are given just in time and appropriate advice;
- Enables academics to effectively manage time to provide academic advice, rather than being approached for more general or administrative issues;

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

- FYSCOs are school specific on each campus that the school has programs. Currently this is across 3 schools at 5 campuses – Campbelltown, Hawkesbury, Kingswood, Parramatta and Werrington South.
- Students can drop into the school office or make contact via phone or email.

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

Category	Y?	Explanation
Policy	N	
Curriculum	N	
Program	Y	
Other (please specify)		

8. **Outcomes**

- Feedback from interviews conducted indicated two major themes:
 - Students sense of relief to have a familiar face to help them out
 - Longer term, ongoing relationships formed between some students and their FYSCO
 - Academics found it was an optimal partnership in managing student queries between academics and professional staff members

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

Conference poster presentation, First Year Higher Education 2011 -

http://www.fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers11/FYHE-2011/content/pdf/Gill.pdf