

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

Mature Age Student Starting-out and Introduction to e-Learning Workshops

3.1 URL: www.uws.edu.au/matureage

3.2 Start Date/Duration: 2009 – ongoing.

4. Brief outline of program

Funded and promoted as a joint program with the UWS Counselling and Library staff, the Mature Age Student Starting-out and Introduction to e-Learning workshops introduce newly enrolled mature age students to some of the skills they need to manage the challenges and expectations of university life. As part of these workshops students have the opportunity to explore, (hands-on), the online learning environment that will become an intrinsic part of their study as well as access to resources at UWS.

5. Purpose/Aims

The first part of the workshop (run by UWS Counsellors) is particularly helpful for new students who are the first in their family to attend university and may not have the cultural advantages of having family &/or friends who understand the expectations and demands of university.

Mature age students at UWS comprise approximately 40% of the student population and, around 21% of these are from LSES postcodes where there may be more limited exposure to computer time and technical know-how.

Many mature age students who have not grown up with computers are anxious about their computer skills and ability to address the tasks of online learning - such as downloading podcasts, online submission of assignments or working with software such as 'Turnitin'.

The Introduction to e-Learning component of these workshops endeavours to offer these new students the opportunity to become familiar with the UWS online learning environment as well as giving them the basic skills to look for, find and, access available assistance and complete basic on-line course requirements.

6. Breadth of program

This program targets all new mature age students studying at UWS. The workshops are offered prior to the commencement of academic sessions, on all campuses at the beginning of the year and, at Parramatta campus for the mid-year intake. The workshops also offer existing students an opportunity to share their experience, tips and hints with the new students, as both guest speakers and workshop assistants.

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

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

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

8.1 Start up budget:

8.2 Ongoing budget: The Mature Age Student Starting-out and Introduction to e-Learning workshops require on-going funding as seeded funding was used (and is now running out) to pay for the initial and pilot workshops.

9. Outcomes

9.1 Uptake:

The Introduction to e-Learning attendance has increased by 247% from a successful 2012 pilot program with 34 mature age students to 118 students in February, 2012.

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

Student evaluations offered at the end of the workshops as well as follow-up evaluations invited by email after 3-4 weeks are consistently positive with 100% of attendees indicating that they would recommend the workshops to their peers and 97% reporting sustained or increased confidence in navigating the UWS online systems as a result of attending these workshops.

9.3 Evidence of success:

Follow-up tracking of GPA results showed the average GPA of students attending 2009/2010 MAS Starting-Out Workshops was 4.49 compared with the average GPA of 3.69 for the 2010 general MAS population.

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

9.5 Major challenges:

Funding.

9.6 Other (Please specify):

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

Attached to this email is a copy of the funding proposal for the continuation of the Mature age Student Starting-out and Introduction to e-Learning workshops containing detailed descriptions and evaluation data.