

**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY





# Enhancing the Student Experience Through UWS Summer

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# Introduction

- Higher education reform
- ‘the need for provision of flexible learning options to support student who may have work, family and other commitments’  
(Smarter Australia: An agenda for higher education 2013-2016 Universities Australia 2013)
- Explore new revenue opportunities
- Streamline business processes
- Provide students with a more enriching learning experience

## Background

- University's Academic Year Review was conducted in 2012
- Staff and students were canvassed for their views on a move to a trimester system
- Students unanimously wanted greater flexibility and choice
- The majority of staff and students felt that a trimester system would be too rigid and stressful

# Governance

## MANAGEMENT

- Steering Committee – Governing group
- Academic Advisory Committee
- Business Operations Advisory Group



## IMPLEMENTATION

- Marketing and Communication Group
- Academic Registrar's Working Committee
- Business Planning and Implementation Working Groups

## Methodology

- An overarching project implementation methodology was applied with a continuous improvement cycle designed to provide a structured approach to reviewing and improving performance
- It was a comprehensive university-wide strategy with nothing left to chance

## Methodology: major components

There were three major components of the initiative:

1. Broad engagement with schools and business units
2. Specific issue based engagement
3. A detailed Marketing and Communication Strategy

## Methodology – Student Survey

Students were asked to complete a 10 minute survey to provide feedback on:

- Their needs and expectations
- Whether they would recommend Summer to family and friends
- What they really liked
- What could be improved



## Results – Summer Cycles

Category	Pre-Cycle 1 2012/13	Increase 2013 - 2014		Cycle 1 2013/14	Increase 2014 – 2015		Cycle 2 2014/15
		#	%		#	%	
Units Offered	16	89	556.3	105	128	122	233
Students Enrolled	1107	4488	405.4	5595	1603	28.7	7198
Unit Enrolment	1181	6123	518.5	7304	2302	31.5	9606

Analysis of the data showed that 1,330 (18.5%) of those who undertook study during UWS Summer in 2014/15 were also students in Summer Cycle 1 (2013/14).

## Results – Cohort Analysis

- There was only a marginal and statistically insignificant difference in the academic performance (GPA) between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 with a mean GPA of 3.85 and 3.86.

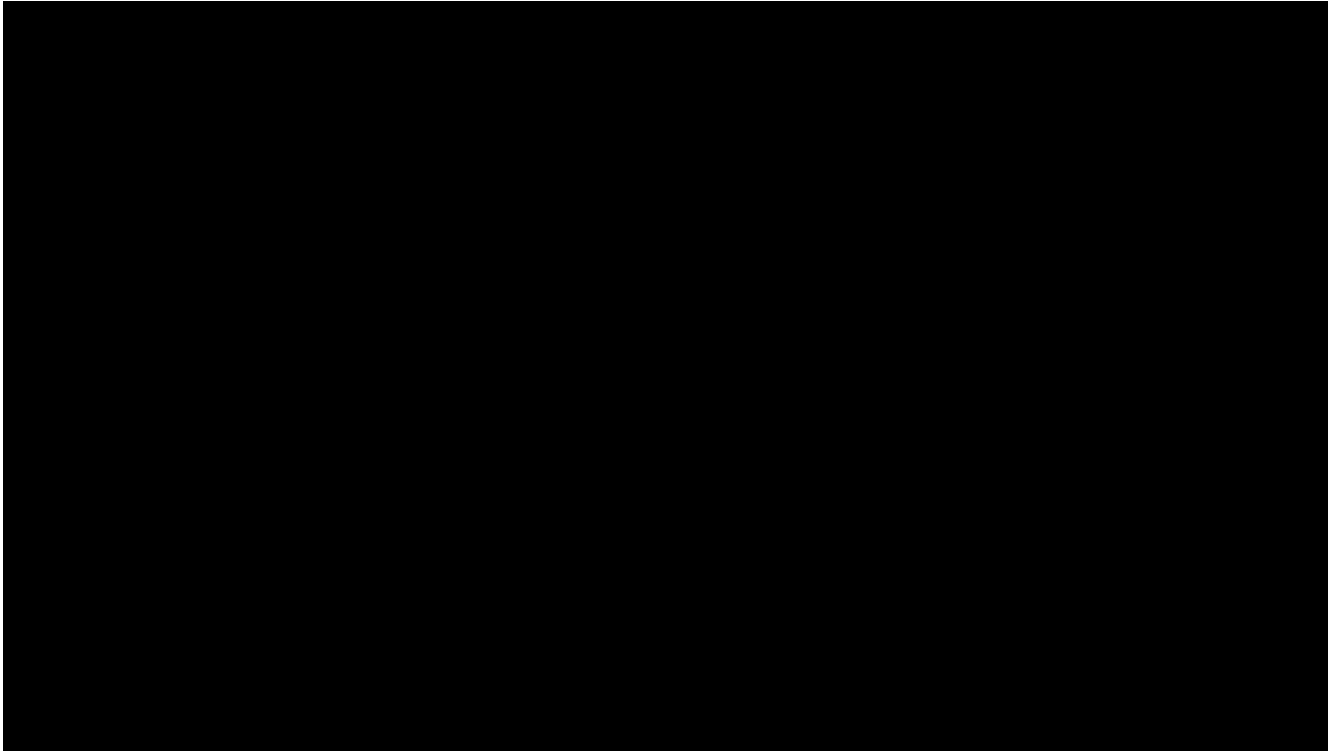
## Results - Resourcing

- Summer was fully funded based on calculated estimates
- Significant revenue was generated with an overall student load of 1192.3
- Summer generated a significant cash flow during each cycle while reducing costs

## Results – Student Survey

- 2068 (30.1%) of students who participated in Summer responded to the survey
- 92% felt that the standard of Summer was adequate or more than adequate
- 85% felt that the length of the Summer sessions was ‘just right’
- 41.5% preferred an equal mix of online and face 2 face content while only 5.9% preferred online only content
- 57.5% indicated that they would participate in Summer again
- 88% indicated they would recommend Summer to family and friends

## Student Feedback: What I enjoyed most ...



## Lecturers

While there were some challenges along the way, some lecturers who participated in the teaching and coordinating of Summer found it quite rewarding.

*“What a pleasure to arrive back from a month in the UK on Monday 6.1.14 and then front up for a brand new Summer School class ..... at 9am on Tuesday 7.1.14 to find a bunch of keen, delightful, engaged and committed students. For the first time in over 25 years of teaching to a variety of students, every student in the class on Day 1 had accessed, downloaded and read the Learning Guide, read the required chapters of the text, interacted with the activities on vUWS and arrived early ready to begin! I have congratulated these Social Work students on this first in 25 years..... at each meeting the students have been prepared, engaged, motivated, challenged, ready to engage in critical thinking and have been an absolute pleasure to teach and work with.”*

## Conclusion

This study suggests that the introduction of greater flexibility and choice in programs meets the needs of and enhances opportunities for students.

The 3 key implementation issues identified that were critical to the success of this project are:

1. On-going consultation with staff and students
2. Detailed operational planning
3. Adequate resourcing

