

Session 7

MANAGING CHANGE WITH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT STUDY PLANS – A CASE STUDY FROM THE FACULTIES OF SCIENCE, UWA

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With the introduction of New Courses at UWA from 2012, the Faculties of Science have developed an individual study plan approach for managing student enrolments in preparation for the changes that lie ahead. This approach is intended provide an effective tool for students to manage their enrolment, and develop a student culture of high engagement and low dependency in relation to their interaction with Faculty student support services.

We have found the benefits of developing study plans for all BSc students this year to be:

- Students take a greater interest and ownership of their degree, as they have thought through to the end of the degree and have mapped their own pathway through to completion. They have their own personalized plan that they can change at any time. Now they often come into advising sessions with a copy of their plan.
- Majors from other faculties are now mapped out for a student. This makes it easier for any course adviser to review the student's enrolment without having to go back and check the rules each time a change is submitted. This will be important with the introduction of New Courses in 2012, which provides greater flexibility for science students to undertake majors from other faculties. The plans will reduce the need for multiple consultations and will not be dependent on which advisor is dealing with the enrolment.
- Course advising has improved as we now know what the student is planning in relation to their future enrolments. This means that the student doesn't need to go through it each time they see a new advisor as the information is more readily to hand.

We also found the following during the process –

- Students are unclear as to what they need to do to complete the requirements of their degree, even in very structured programs where there is little choice.
- A number of students had to change their 2011 enrolment as they had not picked up the right units for their major (even though these are clearly outlined and readily available in hard copy and online).
- A number of students had miscounted their units and were surprised when we told them that they would need to pick up another unit to meet the points requirement of the degree.
- It is much clearer to see a student's pathway when they have to complete enabling units. It also makes it clearer to the student how long it will take them to complete the requirements of the degree if they have to take enabling units

Presenters Biography

Dr Jane Hallos is the Student Adviser for the Faculty of Life & Physical Sciences at UWA. The Faculty has approx. 4,000 undergraduate science students, and Jane provides advice and guidance on all aspects of student enrolment including academic, administrative and pastoral care.

Ms Katherine Williams is a Senior Project Officer in the Faculty of Life & Physical Sciences. Katherine developed the concept of the individual student study plans, including the web interface to capture the data.