

# UniStart: A Tertiary Academic Transition Program Providing Students with a Head Start to First Year

UniStart.

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UTAS

# Where are we?



- Only Tasmanian university
- 27 000 Students
- UniStart delivered on 4 campuses:
  - ◆ Cradle Coast
  - ◆ Launceston
  - ◆ Hobart
  - ◆ Sydney
  - ◆ and via Distance mode



# Before we get started

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- What would you like to learn about UniStart from this session?

# What is UniStart?

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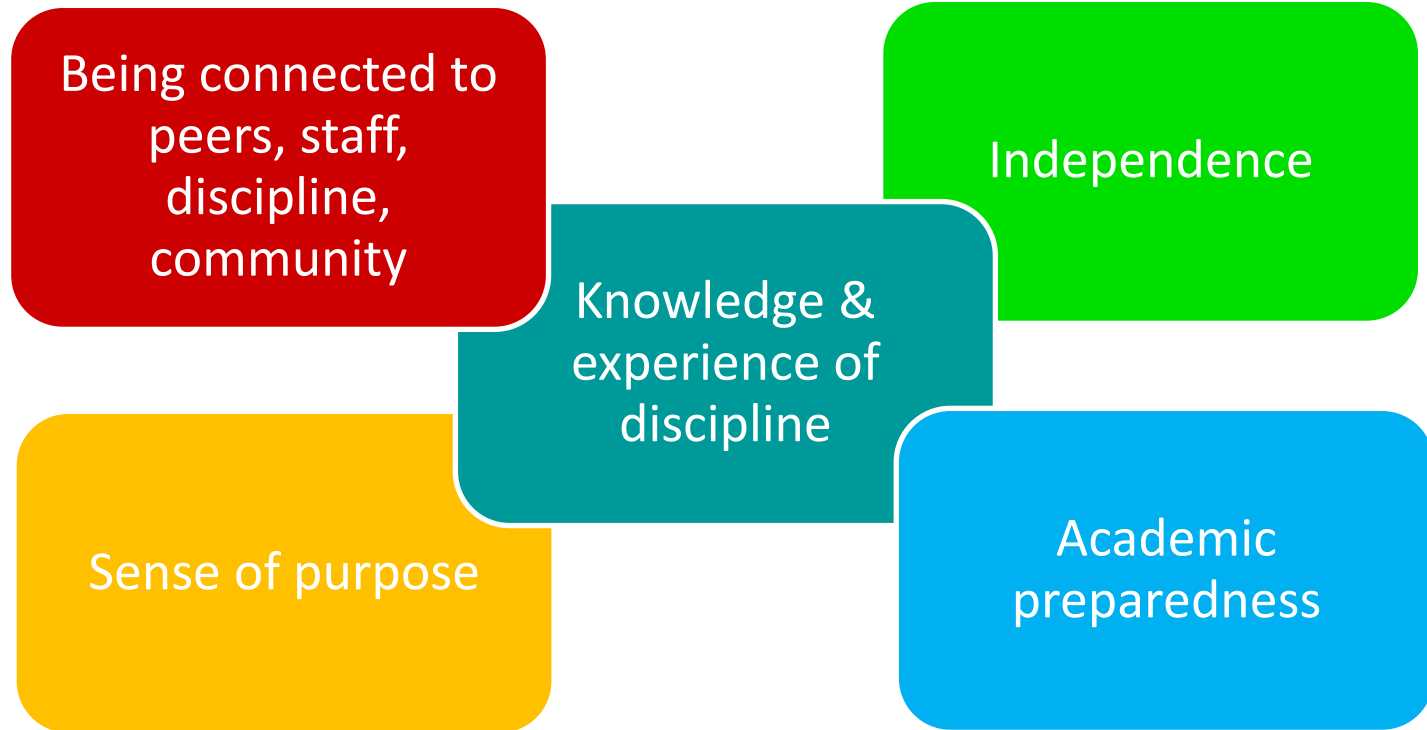
- a pre-semester academic transition program providing students with exposure to the essential academic and study skills that will be required of them as they transition to university.



work out how to 'think' in the discipline  
work out how to study  
find rooms  
find food  
First day on campus  
find parking/transport  
find coffee  
find bookshop  
First lecture  
structure information  
Integrate ideas  
talk to someone  
remember pen  
work out what the educational process are  
Before Easter ...  
remember information  
do readings  
discuss ideas logically  
First independent study  
how not to plagiarise  
access email  
find online learning management system  
pay HECS  
put in forms  
manage enrolment  
find testing place  
First assessment  
find relevant, academic, university-level information  
analyse task  
think critically  
deal with panic  
learn how to submit online  
remember password

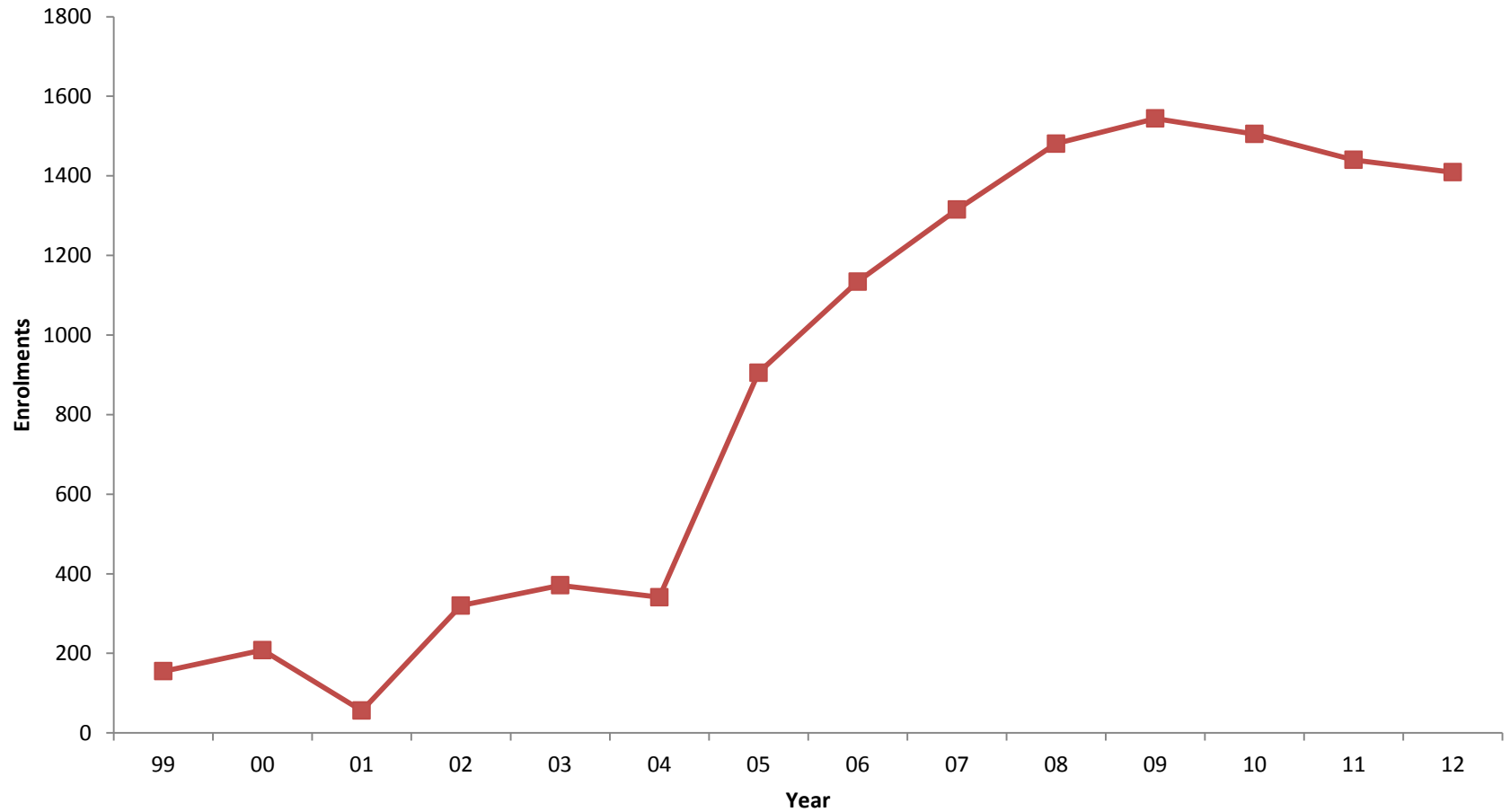
# First Year Framework underpins UniStart

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(Brown, N. & Adam, A; 2010)

# Enrolment





# Intended learning outcomes

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On completion of this unit you should be able to:

- use critical thinking in your university studies
- access and effectively utilise university learning resources
- understand the process of preparing a university level assignment and apply this in your assessment
- demonstrate honesty in your academic work
- critically reflect on areas of strength and weakness in your academic skills and understanding, to enable you to continue to develop these throughout your degree

# Activity

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- People bingo

# Timetable

	Start	Morning sessions (there will be a morning tea break)	Lunch break	Afternoon sessions	Approx. finish
Monday	8.45 Register 9.00 Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction</li> <li>Lectures and note taking</li> </ul>	12:00-12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical thinking &amp; writing</li> <li>Stress and time management</li> </ul>	3.30
Tuesday		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orientation Day. For more details, visit <a href="http://www.utas.edu.au/first-year/orientation">http://www.utas.edu.au/first-year/orientation</a></li> </ul>			
Wednesday	9.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic writing: Analysing assignment questions</li> <li>Academic writing: Gathering information</li> <li>Using the UTAS Library: Research practice</li> </ul>	12.15-12.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic writing: essay structure</li> <li>Oral presentations and tutorial participation or Library Tour</li> </ul>	3.30
Thursday	9.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic writing: Delving deeper</li> <li>Critical reading</li> <li>Planning an essay</li> </ul>	12.30-1.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning online Hands-on session</li> <li>Punctuation and grammar or time for some writing</li> </ul>	3.30
Friday	9.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic honesty and referencing</li> <li>Academic writing: Editing</li> </ul>	12.30-1.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback on your writing</li> <li>Studying across the university</li> <li>Last minute questions</li> </ul>	3.30

# Important Skills

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- How to structure an essay
- Critical thinking
- Research
- Navigate online environments
- How to reference (understand why to reference!)
- Note-taking

# Why culture shock?

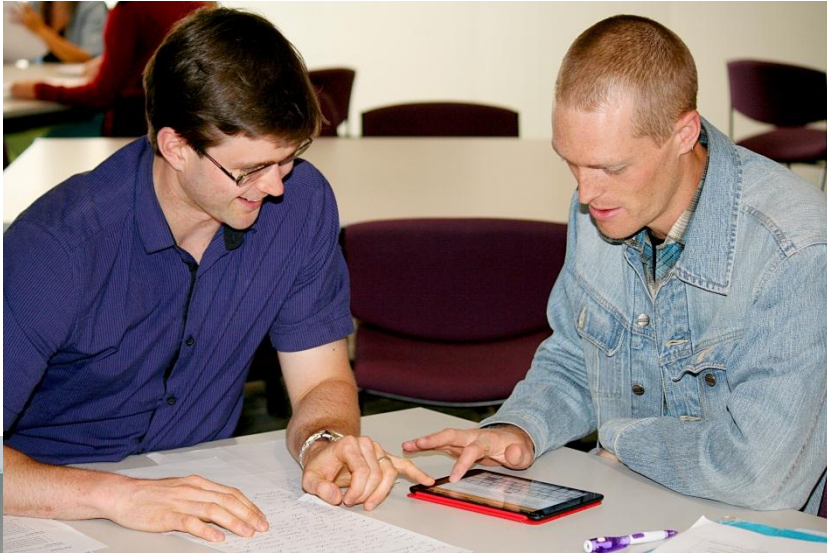
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- Acknowledging transition into university is culture shock
- Understanding different models of culture shock (U and W curve)
- Recognising stressors
- Being aware of strategies to reduce impact

# Lectures



# Group work



# Reflection

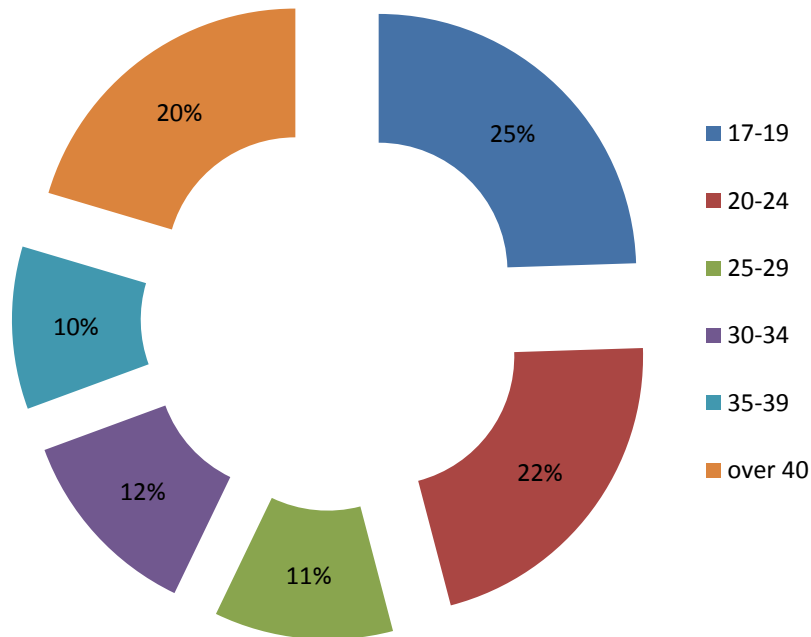
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# Who are our students?

Enrolments by Age



# What do our students tell us? [2012]

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- 97% of students rate it as good or above, with 71% stating it was excellent.
- 91% said they had used or applied what they had learnt at UniStart during their first semester courses.
- 94% of students attending feel more confident about starting University

*“To be honest, as the cut-off date (the point of no return) for my degree was looming, I expressed my concerns to my wife, that maybe I wasn't ‘smart enough’ to study at University Level, I was... contemplating discontinuing , but I decided to continue with Unistart ... After completing Unistart I know what is expected and how to achieve it taking one step at a time that was shown to me throughout the UniStart course, from note taking in various settings to planning your essays, through to submission and beyond, I am now confident that I can definitely accomplish what I have set out to achieve.”*

# Student feedback

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- *“Thanks for the really fantastic week of learning last week at Unistart, it has really helped me change from being quite nervous about this whole uni thing to being really excited about making a start.” (2013 Med Student – from college).*
- *“I have been meaning to say a big thank you for all your valuable information last week. It has certainly made me feel much more prepared at my first lecture. I would personally recommend the course to anyone starting out at university.”(2013 BA - mature age- CALD).*
- *“Thanks again for a great unit. There hasn't been a day that I didn't use something from the unit.” (2012 BA – mature age, CALD student).*
- *“UniStart was awesome :D... I think it should be compulsory!!” (2012 mature age).”*

# What do our students tell us?

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When asked what they most liked about the program, responses covered both the formal and hidden curriculum aspects of the program which matches the overall aim of UniStart.

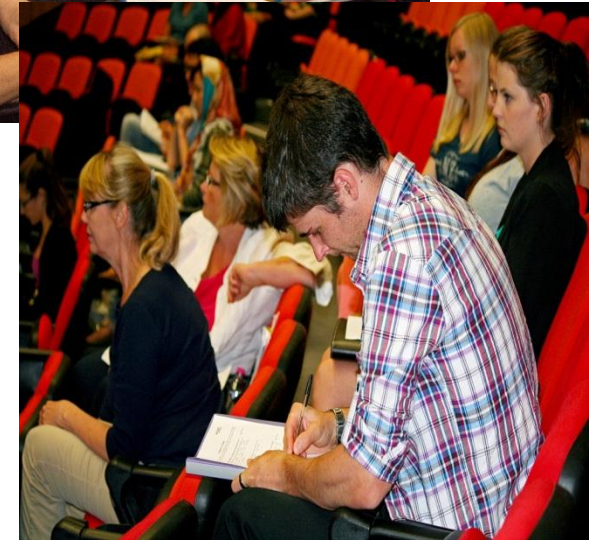
*“The support available at any time and the quality of the provided resources.”*

*“Meeting new people across different disciplines not only your faculty or school.”*

*“The presenters were extremely respectful and seemed to have a great understanding of the challenges that may be daunting to the variety of students across a variety of ages and backgrounds. I found them to be passionate about their work and at all times inspirational. They made it very clear that help was available should we need it.”*

# UniStart – institutional and national awards

2010 –UTAS Vice Chancellor’s Award for outstanding contribution to student learning  
2011 - Australian Learning and Teaching Council *award for enhancing the first year experience through a program nurturing confidence, critical thinking and independent study skills in commencing students.*



# Reflection and Questions

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- Revisit the question you posed at the start of this session
- Has this session covered your area of interest
- Any questions?

# Come and visit us !

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# References

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- Wilcox, Paula, Winn Sandra & Fyvie-Gauld, Marylynn. (2006). It was nothing to do with the university, it was just the people: the role of social support in the first-year experience of higher education'. *Studies in Higher Education*, 707-722.
- [www.utas.edu.au/unistart](http://www.utas.edu.au/unistart)
- [www.utas.edu.au/student-learning](http://www.utas.edu.au/student-learning) [UniStart is delivered by the UTAS Student Learning team]

# Contact Details

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