

**The first year experience in a new higher education landscape: What are the factors influencing the quality of the student experience? What are the priority areas for change and innovation?**

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The first year of higher education is a pivotal point for effective innovation and change in teaching and learning in universities. This keynote will broadly evaluate the progress that has been made in enhancing the first year experience and the gaps and issues that remain. This will be done against the backdrop of the changing context for higher education as universities diversify, reconsider the purposes and structures of undergraduate education, and re-negotiate their relationships with communities. The keynote will explore a set of critical questions associated with the quality of the first year experience, including:

- the nature of the undergraduate curriculum, including the role of assessment in enabling curriculum change;
- new patterns in student expectations and student engagement and their influence on the transition to university;
- the unresolved issues of equity and the under-representation of certain groups of people;
- the role of ICT in creating independent learners, in particular the growing interest around e-portfolios.

Drawing on a series of studies by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education over the past decade, including recent work on student finances and equity for Universities Australia, the keynote will examine the 'unfinished business' in improving the quality of higher education and propose priority areas for university action. The paper will address the question: What ought the first year experience be like in 2020?