

From Diploma to Degree –Managing the VET student experience

*Janelle Davis, Relationships Manager UWS/VET
Learning and Teaching Unit, University of Western Sydney*

Supporting VET students making the transition to University requires quality systems that provide seamless articulation pathways and effective credit transfer management. In this session you will discover how UWS has radically shifted its position to become a University with a practical and innovative model to support the VET student experience. The use of collaboration, communication and technology has allowed UWS to manage its VET relationships efficiently, equitably and consistently. This session will describe how shifting to a centralised model for managing VET relationships resulted in vast improvements for students and efficiencies for UWS. This metamorphosis has resulted in UWS now being a University that can reflect its ethos of providing access and participation for the people of greater Western Sydney. Join us in discussing how state of the art VET management can be developed and implemented.

Nuts and Bolts Session Outline: addressing FYHE Topics

- Teaching and/or supporting large FY cohorts
- Enhancing equity and participation
- Institutional transformation and the FYE

UWS has close to 20% of VET students enrolling in its programs each intake and seeking credit for VET studies. In recent years UWS identified deficits in the way it managed its VET relationships. The absence of transparent information about pathways and credit transfer spawned uncertainty and a lack of confidence by potential and new students seeking recognition for their VET studies. By deliberately focusing on how to achieve a better experience for VET students UWS made the decision to resource a position that would be dedicated to managing all aspects of its VET business.

This presentation aims to highlight the benefits of centrally managed VET articulations and how this approach has led to responsible and sustainable pathways that use the following four consistent and common principles in their design.

- Collaboration
- Care
- Consistency
- Communication

These four overarching principles have been integral in getting UWS on track with how it manages VET relationships and in getting those involved heading in the same direction. At the centre of all developments and strategies has been the student experience, from how credit is assessed to systems that underpin administrative processes for students. For example, looking at credit mapping and the impact on what specific credit means for students performance and progression in their degree.

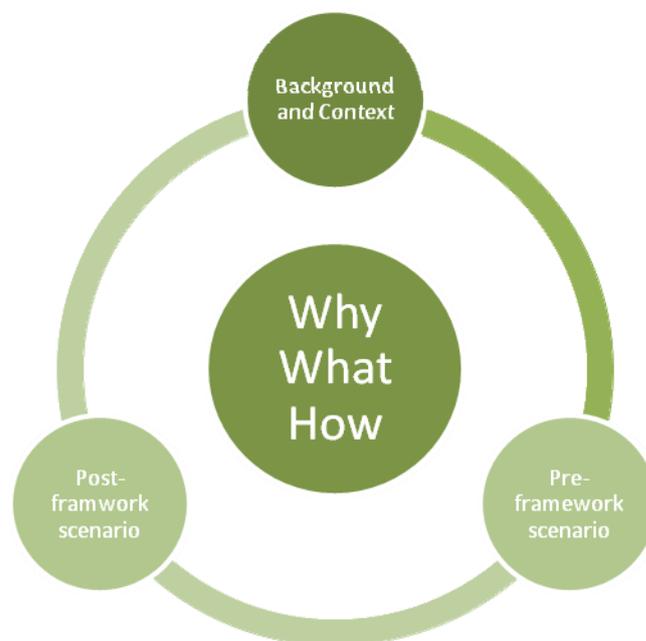
‘From Diploma to Degree –Managing the VET student experience’, Janelle Davis,
Nuts and Bolts

Caring about how decisions and actions will impact on individuals is vital to all planning and concepts in relation to VET business management.

This workshop will openly demonstrate the processes used and the learning experienced of creating and shaping a fully operational system for working with Academics, VET providers, Administrators, Student Support specialists, Marketers, IT and Communication experts to ensure an operation that is responsible, efficient and student focussed.

Session Plan

This presentation will be delivered using Power Point slides for making key points and telling the story of before and after the framework was designed and implemented. To provide a clear account of the process and how the model was created and used I will demonstrate with before and after scenarios of the new framework being in place. By detailing the student experience in the pre-UWS/VET system days and comparing it with what happens now from a student perspective this will lead the discussion to the “nuts and bolts” of why and how the model was created that is used today. The issues raised are anticipated to be common across the Higher Education sector in relation to managing pathways and credit for VET students moving across the sectors. Initiatives used in this model will provide information and shared learning for other university’s to consider how this kind of approach or parts thereof could be applied in their own setting. The diagram below has been created to show how I plan to deliver the session.



‘From Diploma to Degree –Managing the VET student experience’, Janelle Davis,
Nuts and Bolts

Background and Context

Using Power Point slides I will explain the context of what influenced the University to focus on the need to manage its VET relationships in their entirety and what they hoped to achieve by doing so. Providing a brief background at the start of the session will allow the audience to have an understanding of the context and environment that triggered this journey. It may also provide participants the opportunity to compare their own environment and relate similar characteristics they may be experiencing or have experienced to their context.

Pre-Framework Scenario

This scenario will explain what the typical VET student experience was like prior to the new system being implemented. It is designed to emphasise the lack of information and communication, lack of transparency, inconsistency of practice and a serious deficit of service for the VET student in their first encounters with the University. It will demonstrate the unnecessary hoop-jumping and inefficiencies that impacted heavily on the first year experience and beyond. It is envisaged that many of the issues raised will resonate with members of the audience.

Post-Framework Scenario

This scenario will show the same student as above but in the new context with the current systems and processes in place. It is aimed at demonstrating the vast differences in the first year student experiences ranging from communication, consistency of practices, streamlined systems and the use of technology to contribute towards a much improved and transparent VET student system for managing pathways and credit processing. This scenario will demonstrate how improving many behind the scenes processes combined with careful planning using a student centric focus can make a difference between a positive and negative experience for the student.

Why, What and How

This segment will explain what, why and how the various components of the model were developed and implemented and what we are planning to do in the future to build on the existing framework for further improve services and the student experience. I will explain the importance of Communication, Collaboration, Care and Consistency. This section will also include details of the technology used to assist in providing a superior level of service in regard to credit processing for commencing VET students and conclude with a brief demonstration of how the system works.

‘From Diploma to Degree –Managing the VET student experience’, Janelle Davis,
Nuts and Bolts

Discussion

If participants want to ask questions or make comments they will be asked to wait until the end of the presentation to ensure the presentation is kept to time and is delivered in its entirety. Leaving 15 minutes for questions and discussion will allow the audience an opportunity to participate and focus on parts of the presentation that are most relevant to their organisation. I will also provide handouts of the power-point for people who would like them at the presentation with my business card attached for contact details should they want to make contact later.