

The value of an open, early academic development program to students' transition and first year experience: the UTAS *UniStart* program.

Andrea Adam, Cathy Hartigan & Natalie Brown
Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching, University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania's (UTAS) UniStart program is a pre- and early-semester academic transition support program available to all HECs-eligible incoming students. The aim of the program is to nurture critical thinking and independent study skills in commencing students. UniStart has been offered to commencing UTAS students for over 10 years, with a significant increase both in enrolments and in the flexibility of delivery over recent years. Evaluation of the program indicates that students feel more confident and prepared for their academic studies after undertaking the program and that the majority of students affirm, later in the year, that they have utilised and applied the skills developed in UniStart during their core studies. The program represents an important component of the university's approach to supporting the first-year experience and student transition.