Identifying and assisting students at risk

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Who are the students at risk? Where 'risk' is failure to complete their degree.

- Academic problems
  - background
  - study skills
  - motivation
- Social problems
- Language problems

Identification on academic performance

Students at Risk (SAR)
- Cohort 1: Failed 50% of first semester of study
  Required that student meets with a Student Advisor (Attendance recorded)
  Student completes a questionnaire which requires them to reflect on the semester - discussed with Advisor and together come up with strategies with strategies to help (Success in semester 2 workshop)

Unsatisfactory progress

- Cohort 2: Failed 25-50%
  Recommended that student see a Student Advisor *
- Cohort 3: Failed 50% once*
  Required that student see a Student Advisor#
- Cohort 4: Failed 50% twice*
- Cohort 5: Failed 50% three times*
  * in most recent 3 semesters

How do we help the students in first year to avoid being at risk?
What caused study difficulties in semester 1?

- Ineffective study skills including managing workload 56%
- Dealing with personal/family/emotional issues 42%
- Balancing work/social life/study 22%
- Had unclear idea of idea of the directions of the degree 20%
- Health problems 15%
- Language problems 8%
- Made the wrong subject choice
- Felt that did not fit in or identify with University environment of peer groups
- Rural or isolated background

Identify academic problems earlier - end of semester 1 too late

- Mid-semester tests or other ongoing assessment
- Tutor’s feedback
- Additional tutorials for students with less background

Provide information on how to get help

- Transition program - Science 101

Aims of Science 101

- To provide students who are new to University with a set of basic skills with which to tackle first year science subjects
- To create links for first year students to fellow students and members of staff within the Faculty
- To facilitate progress to second year Science
- To familiarise students with the services available to them

Format of the Science 101 program

Part I
- 2 structured introductory sessions
  - Maximising value of lectures, tutorials/workshops and practical classes
  - Study styles and strategies (Language and Learning skills unit)
  - How to get help, careers in Science Kick Start Your Career

Part II
- formation of study groups

Is the Science 101 transition program helping?

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Provide information on how to get help
- Transition programs
- Learning Centres
- Easy access to appropriate websites

Each Learning Centre
- maximizes personal staff/student interaction;
- targets extra assistance;
- provides access to supplementary resources;
- facilitates students' meetings with peers;
- encourages a sense of learning community.

Links to schools - a two way interaction for greater understanding

Students
- Workshops - bringing students to the University before first year

Teachers
- Awareness of transition issues
  - Science 101
  - Learning Centre
- Intimate knowledge of the VCE curriculum
  - development of new subjects
- Casual conversations

Easy access to appropriate websites
- www.science.unimelb.edu.au/1styear/