Academic Success and Student Success: A Correlating Framework

Professor Jillian Hamilton
Associate Director: Academic Development, QUT
“the likelihood of students persisting and succeeding is, in large part, contingent upon what universities do.”

Tinto (2009)
Kift and Nelson (2010)

- ensuring engagement in learning;
- timely access to support;
- a sense of belonging

+ HESP (2017) Improving retention, completion, and success in higher education:
  - ensuring teaching quality
  - enabling teaching ability of lecturers (Grad Certs)
Through-line:
Academic development >
Teaching capabilities >
Teaching quality >
Student success

TEQSA 2015: Sessionalisation: significant risk to student learning

1. Scale of delegation for student learning
2. Lack of internal regulation of appointments
3. Concentration in large, first year classes
4. Level of sessional teachers’ commencing preparedness.
The likelihood of ACADEMICS persisting and succeeding is, in large part, contingent upon what universities do.
Drawing on a student success framework to
Develop an academic success framework
Illustrate comprehensive implementation
(Sessional staff focus)
Evidence impact on
  • Teaching quality
  • Student success and retention
  • Institutional climate, and
  • Academic success and retention
Make a persuasive case for investment
  • Financial (attrition)
  • Quality
  • Culture and climate
**Question:** How can we ensure student success by ensuring academic success (especially sessional staff)?
Little formal development, resources, support, or recognition
Not systematically integrated into a holistic, coherent framework
Policy vacuum

Chalmers et al. (2003) > Fraser (2016)

essional staff are... Isolated : Untrained : Unsupported

Why not?

• Financial costs (shortsighted)
• Overwhelming numbers
• High turnover due to precarious employment
• Difficulties in communication (identification)
• Need for continuous, ongoing support
• Continuous change: sector-wide, institutional, discipline factors
• Diverse discipline contexts and pedagogies
Focal context: University for the Real World

“QUT is fortunate to have access to a diversity of sessional academic staff who bring their expertise and knowledge of the real world to the class room.”

Robinson et al. (2005)

Sessionals are:

Industry professionals: *Real world learning*

Postgraduate students: *Current discipline knowledge*

Wonder students: *Empathetic insider know-how*

We must:

• complement central development with local contextual development
• foster belonging in faculty life
• provide support

= Institutional readiness for change
(2007) Fellowship Survey, QUT
Asked sessionals (differs from other research)

Sessionals want:
- To do a good job
- Seek support as they need it
- Feel a sense of belonging
- Be recognised for doing a good job.
Conclusion

We must look beyond mitigating ‘risk’ and optimise student success by ensuring academic success. We must systematically:

• **support** new academics to adapt to their new teaching context and role;
• enable them to **build capabilities** through broad and local development;
• promote **belonging** in faculty life; and
• inspire them to realise their full potential by **recognising** and
• enabling the **sharing** of good practices.
student Success Framework (Nelson and Kift)

To reduce avoidable attrition; optimize learning and success:

“top down” cohering institution-wide strategy and policy +
“bottom up” academic and professional staff practices

A precedent

Adapted to Academic Success
Similarities with new staff

Bring diverse disciplines, cultures, knowledge, experience, backgrounds,

And must:

• navigate unfamiliar terrain,
• establish different kinds of relationships,
• gain new knowledge and skills, and
• learn how to apply it in new ways
Academics are more likely to succeed when they find themselves in settings that are committed to their success, hold high expectations for their impact on student learning, provide academic and social support, frequent feedback and recognition of their performance, and actively involve them with other academics and faculty life.
Academic Success Framework

- Academic Development (Curriculum)
- Proactive, local and central support
- Belonging, connected community
- Recognition, Sharing, Advancement

Academic Success
Principles

- Institution-wide strategy for a cohesive, holistic, comprehensive programatic approach to capability building
- Develop stakeholder connections and partnerships (sessionals and faculties)
- Distributed leadership (recognise and harness local leadership capacity), to design bespoke, contextual solutions, connections, and implement on the ground.
- Developed incrementally over time around four pillars
- Strength based and enabling approach, modelling good practices
- opportunities for continuous learning, support, recognition, and leadership capacity building over time
Academic Development

4 Modules = 12 x 3 hr Workshops:

1. Foundations of Learning and Teaching

2. Effective Communication in Face-to-face and Blended Learning Environments

3. Academic Success

4. Teaching in an Australian Context (for International Sessionals)

5. Incremental collection of written and video resources (eg. orientations and welcomes; engaging diverse learners; indigenous knowledges; evaluating practice; effective communication; producing videos)
Impact:

Reach:
- 900 workshop attendances per year
- 300 unique
- Over 90% of new sessionals

Evaluations:
- Program 4.7
- Teaching 4.9/5

However ... generic, remote to context, in the moment (So not enough on its own)
Sessional Academic Success Advisors

Recruiting and training (paid) experienced sessionals to provide local and focal:

- development,
- support and
- sense of belonging

for sessional staff in their schools
Distributed Leadership
Evidence based

Facilitating in-class discussions: 25%
Encouraging critical thinking / writing: 75%

MECA SASA
To help us, help you, let us know your challenges and aspirations as a Sessional Academic?

I provide feedback to my students, but I receive little myself. Am I doing OK? I don't know.

I aspire myself to teach well.

How important is Lex/reframe to my retaining employment?

Sometimes I am scared to ask questions of my Unit Coordinator as I am afraid...
University wide Academic Development modules
- Foundations of Learning and Teaching
- Effective Communication
- Academic Success
- Teaching in an Australian Context

SAS-led School Academic development
SAS produced School Resources Guides and Blackboard sites

University-wide Resources
Guides, Sessional Community Blackboard site

Coverage
(Green = central)
(Orange = both)
(Red = SAS-led)
Development

Sessional HANDBOOK

An Initiative of the Sessional Academic Success program
Proudly supported by QUT's Learning and Teaching Unit

Promoting excellence in learning and teaching by building confidence and capacity within a supportive community of peers.

Prepared by Marli McNeill | Sessional Academic Success Advisor | Learning and Teaching Unit | Chancellery

EXAM, PREPARATION & MARKING

Exam Prep
Share your study tips with students if you wish, while enabling your students to develop their own learning strategies.
Encourage peer to peer learning through the formation of student oriented study groups.
Remember that different students have different learning styles, it's important to consider these differences when suggesting study strategies for your students.
Remind students that the best way to learn and remember content is to start early and stay up to date with course material. This would also help to relieve exam time anxiety.

Marking
Know what the purpose of the assessment is from the start of semester (check with the UC if necessary).
Be consistent.
Mark the assignment not the person (instead of “you did not”, think “your essay did not”).
Don't take student performance personally - acknowledge the potential competing priorities students have in their life.
Use positive feedback as much as possible to reinforce student successes. This will encourage them to become more confident and independent learners.

Library
- The library provides multiple resources to enable student learning and studying:
  - Library: http://www.library.qut.edu.au/
  - StudySmart: http://studyweb.library.qut.edu.au/
  - StudySmart: http://studysmart.library.qut.edu.au/
  - Library: http://library.qut.edu.au/study
  - Ask a Librarian: http://library.qut.edu.au/help

Language and learning support
- https://www.student.qut.edu.au/study/student-counselling

Counselling Services
- https://www.qut.edu.au/about/services/all-services/student-counselling

Student Financial Assistance Scheme

STEM
- https://www.library.qut.edu.au/help/STEm

Free learning activites can drop-in session, study tips, Math, Science and IT students with a concept.
10) What do you do when the classroom MELT will not turn on?

a) Ask a student to fix it
b) Call the IT helpdesk
c) Reschedule class
d) Take students on a picnic

School of Nursing
Sessional staff survival booklet

In keeping with the real experience for student QUT, the following is a compilation of real tips for real sessional academics for real sessional academia.
University wide Academic Development modules
- Foundations of Learning and Teaching
- Effective Communication
- Academic Success
- Teaching in an Australian Context

SAS-led School Academic development
SAS produced School Resources Guides and Blackboard sites

University-wide Resources
Guides, Sessional Community Blackboard site

Individual Consultations with SAS Advisors
Marking training
Pragmatic support events
Instructable videos
SAS-led peer support events

Coverage
(Green = central)
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(Orange = both)
Support

NEED A HAND?

THE SESSIONAL ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM CAN HELP YOU

The SAS program promotes excellence in learning and teaching by building confidence and capacity within a supportive community of peers.

DROP-IN SESSIONS
Details on SoBM Sessional Academic Success Blackboard Community

EATS & TEACHING TREATS AFTERNOON
Details on SoBM Sessional Academic Success Blackboard Community

CONTACT
Michelle Maugham
SOBM SAS Advisor
m.maugham@qut.edu.au

RESOURCES
QUT Blackboard > My Communities > SoBM Sessional Academic Success program
Contact: m.maugham@qut.edu.au
This initiative is proudly supported by QUT’s Learning and Teaching Unit

SCHOOL OF NURSING
SESSIONAL ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM
HELPS YOU SUCCEED

The SAS program promotes excellence in learning and teaching by building confidence and capacity within a supportive community of peers.

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Newsletter
Share your expertise and experiences with your peers in the school of Nursing Newsletter.

Coffee Catch Ups
Contact us for an individual consultation if you need advice and support in your role as a Sessional Academic.

Community
Like to organise a group consultation? Participate in our nursing Facebook community.

Contact your local SAS Advisor Belinda Chaplin. SASA-SON@qut.edu.au
Individual and group advice and catchups for brainstorming ideas
University wide Academic Development modules
- Foundations of Learning and Teaching
- Effective Communication
- Academic Success
- Teaching in an Australian Context

SAS-led School Academic development

SAS produced School Resources Guides and Blackboard sites

Certificates of completion
HEA Associate Fellowship

Development

Training for SAS positions

Sessional Academic

SAS Appointments

Support

Entry into GCAP
HEA Fellowship

Recognition & advancement

Exhibitions of industry outputs

Coverage

(Green = central)

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(Orange = both)

Individual Consultations with SAS Advisors

Marking training
Pragmatic support events

Instructable videos
SAS-led peer support events
SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

DEMONSTRATOR OF THE SEMESTER

AN INITIATIVE OF THE SESSIONAL ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM
HEALTH STARS FINAL
DATE: Tuesday 21st of July
TIME: 9:30am - 11:00am
VENUE: KG-SYN-109
(B8 Musk Ave, Kelvin Grove).

QUT STARS GRAND FINAL
DATE: Friday 7th of August
TIME: 3:30pm - 5:00pm
VENUE: GP-Z-1064
(The Gibson Room).

To register email: STARS@qut.edu.au

To celebrate Sessional teaching excellence, the Learning and Teaching Unit invites you to a showcase of innovative and effective approaches to engaging students in learning that includes:

- Innovation within the teaching context
- Ways of engaging students in learning
- Effective approaches to communication
- Inspiration of peers

The showcases will take the form of 4 minute ‘Pecha Kucha’ style PowerPoint presentations.

Recognition for the most inspiring practice will be selected by Peer Assessment and People’s Choice judged live at the events.

Rosalind Helliwell
2014 STARS Grand Finalist for
LEARNING YOUR ABC’S

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY LEON FRANKS

QUT

This initiative is proudly supported by the Learning and Teaching Unit
University wide Academic Development modules

- Foundations of Learning and Teaching
- Effective Communication
- Academic Success
- Teaching in an Australian Context

SAS-led School Academic development

SAS produced School Resources Guides and Blackboard sites

Individual Consultations with SAS Advisors

Marking training Pragmatic support events

Instructable videos

SAS-led peer support events

SAS-led Community of practice

SAS produced newsletters

Faculty Sessional Facebook Groups

Welcome emails and posters

Development

University-wide Resources Guides, Sessional Community Blackboard site

Certificates of completion HEA Associate Fellowship

Training for SAS positions

SAS Appointments

Entry into GCAP HEA Fellowship

STARS showcases and awards Faculty awards Exhibitions of industry outputs

STARS peer mentoring

SAS orientations

SAS social events

Support

Recognition & advancement

Coverage

(Green= central)

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Belonging

University -wide Resources

SAS produced School

Resources Guides and
Blackboard sites

Development

SAS Appointments

Entry into GCAP HEA Fellowship

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Belonging

Our dedicated, experienced corps of sessional academics play a key role supporting us in our efforts to provide high quality education, which combines theoretical rigour, relevance, and critical reflection.

Professor Pascalis Raimondos, Head of School Economics and Finance

Sessional Academic Success Program
Promoting excellence in learning and teaching by building confidence and capacity within a supportive community of peers.
Contact your local Sessional Academic Success Advisor: business.sae@qut.edu.au
This program is proudly supported by QUT's Learning and Teaching Unit.

CRICOS No. 00213J

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CRICOS No. 00213J

Drawing on their professional lives in the private and public sectors, our sessional academics bring valuable insights into the classroom;

Enriching scholarly debates with perspectives from practice.

Professor Pascalis Raimondos, Head of School Economics and Finance
Advancement

Academic Success pillar

Engaging Curriculum
(Scaffolded Academic Development and Training)

Foundations of Learning
- Engaging Diverse Students
- Student Success and Support
- Assessment and Feedback
- Reflective Practice

Effective Communication
- In Face to Face Contexts
- In Blended & Online Learning
- Producing, publishing videos
- Showcases

Teaching in an Australian Context

Academic Success
- Teaching Philosophy
- HEA Professional Standards
- Principles and Practice of University Learning and Teaching (GCAP unit)
- Scholarly Presentations
- Preparing Abstracts
- Evidencing Good practice
- Presenting Pecha Kucha preparation for STARS

SAS Advisor Training
- Advising and Mentoring
- Designing for Innovation
- Evaluating Initiatives, Impact

Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (remaining units):
- Curriculum Design
- Research & Career Planning
- Scholarly Learning & Teaching
**Academic Success pillar**

**Engaging Curriculum** (Scaffolded Academic Development and Training)
- Foundations of Learning
  - Engaging Diverse Students
  - Student Success and Support
  - Assessment and Feedback
  - Reflective Practice
- Effective Communication
  - In Face to Face Contexts
  - In Blended & Online Learning
  - Producing, publishing videos
  - Showcases
  - Teaching in an Australian Context

**Support & Belonging** (Peer programs, communities of practice)
- SAS program offers school-level
  - Orientations and welcomes
  - Online resources
  - Survival guides
  - Peer advice and mentoring
  - Sessional events, showcases

**Commencing Sessionals**
- Development, orientation, welcome
  - Enabling Phase
  - Sharing good practices
  - Peer mentoring and leading innovation

**Developing Sessionals**
- Consolidation, reflection, recognition
  - Mastering Phase
  - Academic Success
  - Teaching Philosophy
  - HEA Professional Standards Principles and Practice of University Learning and Teaching (GCAP unit)
  - Scholarly Presentations
  - Preparing Abstracts
  - Evidencing Good practice
  - Presenting Pecha Kucha preparation for STARS

**Experienced Sessionals**
- Advancement, leadership training
  - Enabling Others Phase
  - Peer mentoring and leading innovation

**SAS Advisor Training**
- Advising and Mentoring
- Designing for innovation
- Evaluating Initiatives, Impact
- Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (remaining units):
  - Curriculum Design
  - Research & Career Planning
  - Scholarly Learning & Teaching

**Learning and Teaching Unit school facilitators, and peers**
- Support SAS Advisors and Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice participants
- Many other SAS activities
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Impact

A small team ....
Impact on sessionals

• Engagement 85%
• Passion 95%
• Proud to tell people that I work for QUT
• Agency near > 20%
• Access to information, support near > 20%
• Feeling valued > near 20%
• 8 VCs awards for SASAs

Decreased attrition
My teaching abilities were furthered, as was my capacity to support fellow sessional staff. I now feel confident and capable to problem solve and enact change.”

“The program helped to foster a sense of belonging among us as sessional staff members, and that feeling instantly transferred into my teaching—I felt more part of a community, and that shines through in your teaching, as you want your students to be part of that community as well.”
Impact on almost all students, especially first year

I feel that participating in the program/s has helped me to increase my students’ engagement in class activities.

- Strongly Agree (43%)
- Agree (52%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (4%)
- Disagree (0%)
- Strongly Disagree (0%)

I feel that participating in the program/s has enabled me to build rapport with my students.

- Strongly Agree (33%)
- Agree (61%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (7%)
- Disagree (0%)
- Strongly Disagree (0%)

I am more aware of QUT Services and how to refer students to the support they may need.

- Strongly Agree (70%)
- Agree (24%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (7%)
- Disagree (0%)
- Strongly Disagree (0%)

As a result of participating in the program/s I can better assist my students to contribute to discussions and communicate what they know.

- Strongly Agree (37%)
- Agree (54%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (9%)
- Disagree (0%)
- Strongly Disagree (0%)

By applying the skills and knowledge I gained through the program/s I can better nurture the learning of diverse students.

- Strongly Agree (39%)
- Agree (54%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (7%)
- Disagree (0%)
- Strongly Disagree (0%)

As a result of participating in the program/s I care about my students succeeding and I am better at helping them to stay at university.

- Strongly Agree (59%)
- Agree (39%)
- Neither Agree or Disagree (2%)
- Disagree (0%)
- Strongly Disagree (0%)
Impact on the university

- Decrease of staff attrition (cost savings $20K per staff)
- Good University Guide National Ratings 1 * > 5 star ‘overall experience’, ‘learning resources’, (0.2%) off 5 Star for ‘teaching quality’
- Attrition < 1% year on year between 2013 and 2015 (ROI (only need to attribute less than 4% of students who would otherwise have attrited)
- culture of inclusion, connection, improved staff climate
- social capital of the university innovation, realisation of strategic goals.