

## **What can Course Coordinators do?**

First year students have a unique set of challenges that need special consideration in both the planning of the first year curriculum and the delivery of first year material.

The following tips may be useful for Course Coordinators.

1. Training is needed for all first time/ sessional staff in first year teaching techniques.

Those staff members who work primarily with first year students need to be trained in the specific needs of these students. The Specialist Delivery Facilitators run PDs designed to support staff working with first year students. They are able to highlight some of the specific needs of first years and provide staff with specific strategies to support their planning and delivery. It is important that both new and existing staff members be encouraged to attend training to familiarise themselves with some of the specific needs of first year students.

2. Update staff on the resources and support available for students.

Communicate with staff on an on-going basis about the support mechanisms in place for students. Ask staff to actively promote the support available for students, in tutorials and lectures. Information provided to Unit Coordinators can then be passed down to tutors and lecturers.

3. Liaise with the First Year Coordinators.

The First Year Coordinators have been appointed to support the development of strategies to enhance the First Year experience. Meet with them to discuss what programs/ activities/ events are currently being developed or used to support students in first year.

4. Develop feedback mechanisms for students to evaluate their first year experience.

Provide opportunities for students to feedback about the experiences from first year. Allow them to discuss the best and worst experiences of the year. Provide students with a chance to give suggestions about what they would like to see/experience in their first year that might have improved their first year. If any specific programs/ events/ activities are in place to support first year students, make sure there is an opportunity for students to provide feedback on these. Students can respond to programs via a survey completed at the end of a session or by an online discussion set up through Blackboard. For School specific programs, focus groups could be developed, or surveys could be disseminated at the end of semester.

5. Where possible have an early WIL experience in a first year unit.

It is motivating for students to engage with their future colleagues early in the course. It allows students to see the reality of the profession and to appreciate the connection between their study and their future work. In addition to this, it may allow students who are unaware of the reality of the profession an early opportunity to shift to another course, or alter their degree to include a second major or an alternative minor. Allow time and opportunity for students to discuss how to do this.

6. Implement strategies to monitor student exit from courses.

If students look to exit a course, it is preferable to have a discussion with the student before the withdrawal about their reasons for withdrawing. While it is very reasonable for students to be able to withdraw online, there may be circumstances that can easily be altered to support them staying on. Sometimes students don't feel they can drop down to even one

unit, or can apply for extensions etc. A short discussion may be all that is needed to explain the possible options to the student and allow for successful continuation at university. There are several ways of organising a meeting- an email suggesting a face to face meeting just to ensure that there is nothing more the university can be doing can be sent upon a student's request to withdraw.