

Vice Chancellor Awards : Programs that Enhance Learning

ECU UniPrep Schools : Collaborative educational partnerships in learning and teaching

Synopsis: For the innovative educational partnership model UniPrep Schools, that enhances learning through the provision of an embedded pathway to higher education for underserved secondary students.

Overview of UniPrep Schools

Since 2018 Western Australia has seen a decline in students completing four or more ATAR subjects to qualify for direct university entry post-school, further amplifying the existing gap for underrepresented groups accessing higher education (Olds et al., 2022; Watson, 2019; Pilcher & Torii, 2018). This decline is due to elements such as high school rankings and profiling of students, as well as a lack of availability of ATAR subjects in regional and remote schools who have small cohorts. Literature suggests that ATAR is an antiquated system designed to service a limited number of students (Olds et al., 2022; Russell et al., 2021; Watson, 2019; Pilcher & Torii, 2018). As the decline in ATAR was being voiced by peak education stakeholders (TISC, 2021), teachers raised concerns about the gap in curriculum content between Vocational with General subjects and ATAR subjects following the move to binary of pathway streams (Shergold, 2021, p. 60; see Appendix B, Table 4). Parents also commented that the binary of pathways did not account for range of student abilities and interests, with students having to choose between VET (then paired with General subjects) or ATAR pathway in Year 11 and Year 12 (WACSSO, 2017). These intersecting concerns were recognised by ECU educators who drew on the field of enabling education to design a complementary subject stream.

Enabling programs have historically provided access to university to educationally disadvantaged cohorts. ECU had established enabling programs, such as *UniPrep*, however it could only be completed post-secondary. ECU's other offering, *University Aspirations*, was based on parts of *UniPrep* and only delivered externally to two low-SES schools. While *University Aspirations* could be used for university entry into ECU, the program had not been designed specifically for high school students. The units operated distinctly, delivered by teachers with little support or oversight by the university. Additionally, it was not scalable and in a 2019 ECU course review concerns regarding retention and conversion of the small cohort of students the program serviced were raised. Following the course review, a fit-for-purpose high school embedded university pathway program was proposed that would target students who currently were being underserved by the binary of ATAR and VET/General streams. Such a pathway would "enrich schools' cultures and facilitate greater academic success at both university and school for disadvantaged students" (Hughes & Brown, 2014, p. 2). As Olds et al note, "cohorts such as these require evolving and reformed education systems that are integrated, purposeful and equitable" (2022, p.2). The program needed to be academically rigorous but also offer flexibility in design and delivery for a range of classroom contexts. Enter the UniPrep Schools team and program. Recognising the 'gap' in the Year 11 and Year 12 subject streams, particularly for regional and remote students, as an opportunity rather than a problem, the UniPrep Schools team designed a robust and scalable partnership model to meet the needs of students and schools. Consequently in 2020, *University Aspirations* was reshaped and redesigned into *UniPrep Schools* to reflect the academic rigour required for university study, embed accessible and provide inclusive access.

The distinctiveness of UniPrep Schools is recognised in four intersecting elements. Firstly, it is a purposefully designed access pathway, responding to educational inequities through partnerships with specific schools and for select students. Secondly, UniPrep Schools is underpinned by a carefully designed curriculum and structure. The curriculum and pedagogies have been developed by enabling education experts with input from experienced high school educators who are delivering the program. The curriculum is tailored to the high school context and adaptable through the delivery options. It is where academic rigour meets a high support environment. Thirdly, the nested approach of students engaging in a high support high school environment, whilst transitioning to university learning is important for the cohort of students the program targets. Finally, the partnership model is a people-rich train-the-trainer framework where the expertise of each contributor is respected, allowing both enabling and school educators to be responsive to context. Since 2020, the partnership model of the program has supported high school teachers to deliver the course to high school students, with continual communication and collaboration with the UniPrep Schools

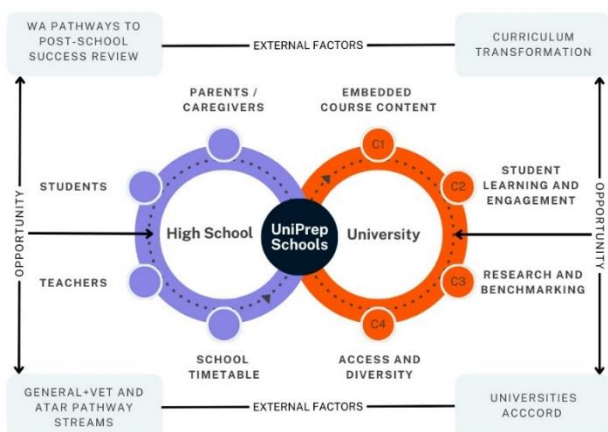
academic team. This nesting of university preparation units within their familiar setting of high school exemplifies the integrated and purposeful design of the program to enhance learning. Students are now able to choose a university pathway program alongside their VET, General or ATAR subjects and on completion of UniPrep Schools (and WACE) can apply for a range of ECU undergraduate studies.

More broadly, the program is enriching school communities and the careers teachers. Through collaborative educational learning and teaching practices, UniPrep Schools has grown from 4 high school partners in 2019 to 38 high school partners in 2024, providing a pathway for 1477 to achieve university entry. Further, through research dissemination and sector collaborations UniPrep Schools is nationally recognised as a benchmark for other universities looking to create a high school embedded pathway program to meet the diverse needs of their student communities. The wide-reaching impact of UniPrep Schools is captured by the Principal, Girrawheen SHS: *“Our teachers have reported increased job satisfaction and professional growth, thanks to their involvement in program implementation. Moreover, the positive ripple effect extends beyond our school community. Many of our students are the first in the family to complete high school and with entry to university and a positive start they are set to break the cycle of lower health, financial and life outcomes for the future generation.”* (Principal’s Letter of Reference, Girrawheen SHS, 2024). Notably, the recent WA Pathways to Post-School Success Review report recognised the place of university pathway programs in senior secondary school noting, “the effectiveness of enabling programs as outperforming other pathways to higher education for students from non-traditional or equity cohorts” (2024, p. 43). This changing narrative of ATAR as the sole successful pathway to university, will continue to be driven by teachers, parents and university educators who collaborate for better post-school choices for all students through the addition of *UniPrep Schools* to senior school subject streams.

Criterion 1: Distinctiveness, coherence and clarity of purpose

The program's main purpose is to broaden tertiary access for underrepresented students and enhance school students' levels of preparation for university study. This goal was achieved through the innovative development of the partnership model between high schools and ECU. Figure 1 below depicts the innovative UniPrep Schools partnership model. UniPrep Schools is located at the centre showing the connection between high school stakeholders (students, parents/caregivers and teachers) and the university criteria that contribute to the program’s purpose, design, delivery and support.

Figure 1: UniPrep Schools Partnership Model



The context for this model includes the external factors that influence embedding a university pathway program into senior high school such as the gap between ATAR and General streams, university curriculum goals, and sector changes. The strength of this model is recognised in one Principal’s statement *“we know that there is a significant transition that needs to happen when students move to university, and the strength of the UniPrep program is that it provides a framework for this transition”* (Principal Email Feedback, Manea Senior College, 2023).

UniPrep Schools bridge partnership model supports a diverse and sustainable cohort of students through people-rich connections (Gale & Parker, 2015). Partnership development commences through several key

conversations between the UniPrep Schools team and high school Executive about purpose and suitability of the embedded program. High schools accepted into the program are established as partners through a Collaboration Agreement with ECU. The Collaboration Agreement specifies the required commitment from and responsibilities of the high school, the eligibility and academic entry requirements for students, specifications for proportional enrolment, class sizes and continued commitment to General and ATAR subjects, as well as the responsibilities of ECU. The Principal of Alkimos Baptist College commented: *"We chose to engage with the UniPrep in Schools program as it provided a missing piece of the puzzle in terms of student choice and access in the post-high-school landscape. As a school we believe in the necessity of ATAR level subjects and that they provide a very good level of academic rigor for personal and academic development for students wanting to pursue university courses. We also support and endorse the General pathway for students pursuing non-university opportunities"* (Principal Comments, Alkimos Baptist College, 2023). Through this partnership model UniPrep Schools addresses the gap and opportunity between current General and ATAR pathway streams for underrepresented students at select high schools.

UniPrep Schools is responsive to systemic educational inequity through systematic focus on collaboration with particular schools and for select student cohorts. Analysis of the number of ATAR subject offerings by schools in WA shows variation across schools based on Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) (Appendix A). As such, students from the highest ICSEA-quartile schools complete a higher proportion of ATAR subjects than students from the other ICSEA-quartile schools (Department of Education WA, 2023). UniPrep Schools addresses educational inequity by primarily focusing on schools in low socioeconomic areas and in regional and remote WA, where often no, or few, ATAR subjects are available to study. The Accord final report acknowledges this discrepancy: "For school leavers in some areas, particularly regional, rural and remote areas and some outer-metropolitan areas, their level of preparation is often affected by the limited availability of specialist teachers in some subjects at their schools" (Australian Government 2024, p.34). Therefore, *UniPrep Schools* is a significant endeavour for providing university access for school-aged cohorts across regional and remote WA. This is recognised in the social media post by Derby District High School when celebrating their partnership with *UniPrep Schools* in 2022 noting that the program will provide *"an alternative pathway for students to study at ECU providing a huge opportunity for the future of our young people"* (DDHS 2022). The course provides a pathway to university so students are not disadvantaged by the ICSEA or location of the school they attend. The principal from low ICSEA and regional school Manea Senior College noted: *"as a partner in the education precinct in Bunbury... the UniPrep Schools program is a really valued part of what we do. One of our school priorities is 'Meaningful Pathways', and there's a space that the UniPrep Schools program creates that is hugely beneficial for the right type of student"* (Deputy Principal, Manea Senior College, 2023). This focus is in line with ECU's strategic priorities to widen participation and success in higher education and work in partnership with regional communities (Edith Cowan University, 2022). The importance and impact of these regional partnerships has also been articulated by schools such as Manjimup Senior High School, with the Principal noting *"the program was initially established to increase access to university for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, economically disadvantaged students and those students who would be the first to attend university from their families. The students who choose this pathway have had great success in their future education at Edith Cowan University."* (Principal's Email Feedback, Manjimup Senior High School, 2023). With an understanding that underrepresented students are not only located in regional schools, *UniPrep Schools* in metropolitan areas is available to students who meet specific eligibility criteria at partnership high schools.

Student eligibility criteria for participation in UniPrep Schools includes those who are: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; first-in-family to attend university; on Centrelink income support (student and/or family); face challenges in reaching educational potential due to family or other life circumstances; or Disability. Hughes and Brown (2014) advocate for high schools to partner closely with universities to support university attainment and build cultural capital. They write that: "sustained cultural change can be brought about by using a program that enriches low performing schools and teachers, and which engenders a whole school culture of academic rigour...through providing them with the cultural and social capital and the academic achievement to let them continue on to tertiary education" (p.11).

The characteristics of high schools within the program, as well as the student cohort, demonstrate the clear focus on educational disadvantage. Of high schools with students currently enrolled, 12 (30%) are regional/remote (with 5 of these schools also identified as low ICSEA) and 11 (28%) of the metropolitan schools are low ICSEA (see Appendix A). Currently, *UniPrep Schools* is offered in one in ten of all low ICSEA secondary schools in WA. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the commencing student cohort in 2024 (n=689) are from an equity group, with 21.7% from multiple equity groups. Notably, one-third of these students are the first in their family to access university education.

Figure 2. Proportion of UniPrep Schools commencing enrolments who belong to particular equity groups, 2024.

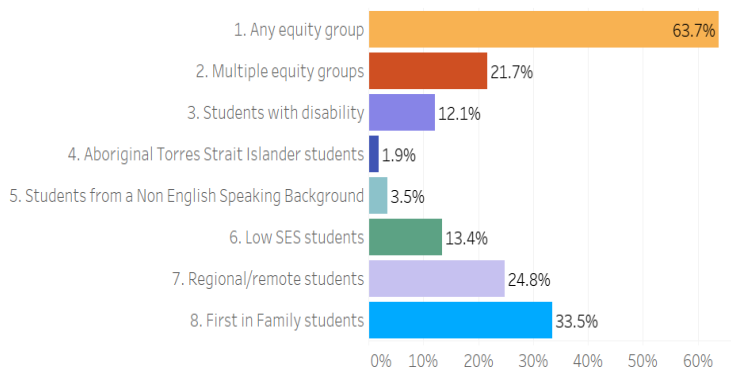


Figure 3. Partner high schools, with at least one class/cohort in that year, 2020-2024

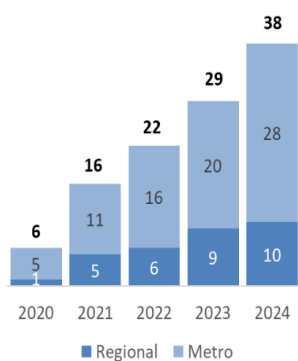
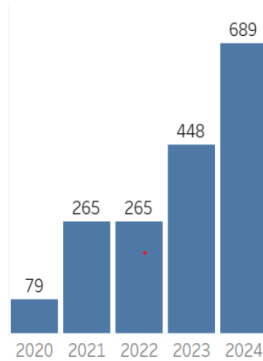


Figure 4. Enrolments – commencing and continuing, 2020-2024



The strength of the distinct partnership model is recognised in the growth of partner high schools (see Figure 3) with an increase from 6 in 2020 to 38 in 2024. *UniPrep Schools* is not explicitly advertised, and partnerships have grown through word-of-mouth between high schools and direct enquiries to ECU. Additionally, the growing volume of students enrolling in *UniPrep Schools* from 79 in 2020 to 689 in 2024 (see Figure 4) reflects the continual demand for the program.

Criterion 2: Influence on student learning and the student experience

This program influences student learning and experience by aligning the curriculum with a learning-centred design, which includes a cohesive structure of teaching activities, resources, support mechanisms, and assessment types. *UniPrep Schools* consists of four units carefully structured to be delivered in sequential order to allow the development of attributes and skills that support success in the latter units. These are UPU0011 Future Ready Skills, UPU0012 Academic Literacies, UPU0013 Mathematics and UPU0014 Society & Cultural Studies. Qualtrics was utilised to disseminate student, teacher and parent surveys (these will be referred to throughout) to ensure all stakeholders had the opportunity to provide Coordinators with feedback to refine the units and program (see Appendix B). UTEI surveys are not used in *UniPrep Schools* due to their focus on the instructor (which for this context would be the teacher) rather than the holistic program. Such unit changes included the provision of additional explicit instruction and scaffolding to support the code switching between high school and university learning modes.

Informed by enabling research, the four units are carefully scaffolded to build upon students' existing knowledge, starting with foundational concepts and progressing to more complex topics (Olds et al 2023; Usher et al, 2023). Scaffolding includes stepping students through challenging ideas with opportunities to check for understanding along the way (Jones, et al, 2016; Hughes & Brown, 2014; Tinto, 2011). This was

achieved by designing initial unit of UPU0011 to cover foundational concepts and then UPU0012 into UPU0014 to tackle more complex topics. *"I think the structure of starting with Learning Skills and Academic Writing are of great value as students are able to first learn about themselves as learners and then gradually apply themselves through assessments. I think when they reflect at the end of both Academic Writing and Learning skills they are clearly able to see how far they've come and gain great confidence in the skills they have acquired"* (Teacher Comment, Survey, 2021). Resources such as study guides, writing templates and output exemplars support students as they prepare for undergraduate-level course work, ensuring that those who are underrepresented in university pathways gain confidence and necessary academic skills. *"The fact that they are better prepared than any other Year 12 students for the rigours of uni. The scaffolding used towards writing a good essay is excellent. The students are also learning to help each other with their work"* (Teacher comment, Survey, 2023). This strategic scaffolding is crucial for students who might not receive similar support at home or in their immediate educational environments (Pires & Chapin, 2022). One student reflected on the impact of the explicit instruction, *"the course was challenging as expected, but accessing the module and assignments were made easy due to the layout - alleviated stress in-class"* (Survey 2022).

Assessments are also designed as student-centred, providing regular, incremental feedback that teaches students to understand their progress and apply learnings to subsequent stages (Tinto, 2011). Early assessments are used to gauge student preparedness and provide formative feedback, helping them understand and gain confidence as they progress. As commented by a current parent, *"The course has also given more knowledge around studying and what effective study looks like, which lacks in schools. It has also given them the confidence that was definitely needed. Thank you for the opportunity... I have already seen the study practices learnt in the course being applied by my teenager in the other ATAR units and is bringing success!"* (Parent comment, Survey, 2024). Of this assessment and feedback approach, another parent notes *"Enhancing his academic writing style and experiencing good results/ positive feedback has contributed to his confidence to continue with his study next year 2024"* (Parent Comment, Survey, 2023). By chunking assessments and aligning them with progressively challenging content, the program demonstrates its rigour and depth, countering public commentary on the notion that the content is 'alternative' or 'too easy' (Buti, 2023), and instead giving students opportunities to apply new skills and knowledge to their other senior school subjects. As one teacher commented, *"They appear to have gained a much greater realisation of what university study is about, which has fuelled a stronger desire in some to improve their academics and apply the skills they are learning to their other classes"* (Survey, 2023). The application of new skills and knowledge to other subjects is further evidence of filling a 'gap' in senior school pathways. The influence on learning and transferable skills was also noted by a student who expressed. *"The skills I learnt in modules 1 and 2 were extremely helpful in my ATAR History class. Furthermore...the essay writing skills helped me in ATAR English and ATAR history"* (Student survey 2022). Rigour is also demonstrated in the academic integrity process. It is purposefully designed to be contextual, culturally relevant and educative to help students bridge their understanding from high school to university, while maintaining ECU assessment standards. *"Most useful so far have been the paraphrasing and referencing resources. This has really helped students to understand academic integrity as a concept and how to adhere to it. Learning how to take notes was extremely useful"* (Teacher Comment, 2023). While teacher training days include moderation of previous submissions, annotated grading samples, and cross-marking by UniPrep Schools Coordinators, in 2023, the program addressed 60 cases of academic integrity, ranging from poor paraphrasing to overt copying, with minimal severe cases. Course Coordinators contacted teachers and students to provide further details of the process, along with reflective/rewriting activities for re-education of academic integrity to foster deeper understanding. Teachers were supportive and engaged with the process regarding academic integrity concerns *"The academic integrity focus has assisted students and teachers to develop an understanding of the rigour and knowledge involved in the academic expectations and progress"* (Teacher Feedback, 2023). Interventions of contacting and re-educating teachers and students resulted in a notable decrease in academic integrity breaches in 2024 to 30 incidents.

The program is revised each year to ensure contemporary relevance and include evolving learning technologies. For example, schools have the option to offer the first three modules of UPU0011 Future Ready Skills in Term 4 prior to year start, this content is available in a Padlet created by the UniPrep Schools

team to transition students from known software to the new technology of Canvas unit. *"I think that great strides have been made over the past 2-3 years in terms of using technology such as Padlet, in the lead up to Canvas availability. This helps staff and students to stay organised"* (Teacher Comment, Survey, 2023). In 2023/24 the UniPrep Schools team re-examined the course content to meet the surge of generative AI tools readily available to students and teachers, teaching students the ethical use of generative AI required for university study. New units were developed for delivery in 2024 to meet the contextual learning needs of a secondary school cohort (Jones, et.al., 2016). One teacher reflected *"I am really impressed with the changes made to acknowledge the rise of AI in our students' futures. I feel this is beyond where school curriculum is currently at regarding embracing the technology"* (Teacher Comment, Survey, 2024). These contextual design elements continue to enhance the transition outcomes for UniPrep Schools students and build the practice of teachers collaborating in the educational space between high school and university.

To support learning and the student experience, the UniPrep Schools team consciously enrolls students within the ECU learning ecosystem to widen access to learning resources, and scaffold acculturation. *"The access to the ECU library was a useful tool which I used in other classes which required study. I enjoyed the resources and access we were granted to ECU which made me feel very much like a Uni student"* (Student Comment, Survey, 2023). The decision to enrol the high school students as ECU students promotes a sense of identity with the university and provides students access to facilities including the library and a Student ID card. The integration of the high school with ECU, and vice versa, are essential components of the student learning experience. ECU services like IT offer wrap-around support for student learning, assisting with enrolment and troubleshooting. This support is acknowledged by the schools in such emails as *"Just wanted to say a big thank you to your IT people for helping the Year 11s. I called them, and they helped each student on the phone. They were very patient and friendly, and the students were so excited to have Canvas"* (Teacher Email, 2024). Each new class commences with an orientation session led by an academic of the UniPrep Schools team. This in-person activity anchors the bridge between high school to university self-regulated learning. The teachers adopt a tutorial type setting in their classroom, with one teacher reflecting that this is *"very interactive with students rather than the usual teacher-student dynamic seen at school"* (Teacher comment, Survey, 2023). Further to the structured engagement of students with the digital university and school environment, students are also invited onto campus as part of their transition journey. The students spend a day on an ECU campus participating in workshops facilitated by ECU academics or student ambassadors (STARS). The interaction with current university students continues to be important to high school students, *"Experiencing on campus life and being able to have the ability to see what a typical university day would run like as well as listen to current students journeys"* (Student Feedback, Forms, July 2023). This 'excursion' sets tone of student autonomy and agency as university students. The UniPrep Schools team purposely schedule events across the day to give students experience of university that may change, elevate or transform their perceptions of university life. For example, *"Going to the different workshops and being able to see the school and ask the students/teachers questions"* (Student Feedback, Forms, November 2023) and *"Getting to walk around and explore campus lots I saw that was here that I didn't know you guys had at ecu!"* (Student Feedback, Forms, November 2023) continue to be important transition experiences for students seeking a university pathway post-school. To further support high schools in regional areas in the UniPrep Schools team organised for a bus to bring the students to campus after one teacher commented *"the appetite is there, but for a lot of smaller 'have not' schools, they simply can't get the exposure because they can't afford the travel"* (Teacher Email, 2023). This connection to ECU contributes to the nested partnership whereby students become familiar with university environments prior to commencing undergraduate study and this is particularly relevant to students who are first in family or who are regionally disconnected from a university campus. As reported by Zacharias and Mitchell regional students experience *"ad hoc widening participation programs while at school compared to more comprehensive and integrated experiences reported by students from urban location"* (p. 41, 2020). Notably teachers continue to praise the purposeful experience, *"for my students it has given them a surge in purpose of why they are doing the course and also allows them to see the campus and possible other pathways/ schools of learning they may want to follow"* (Teacher Comment, Email, 2022) and students feel part of the university ecosystem *"I honestly enjoyed it all. The teachers were amazing, the courses that I chose were amazing and I enjoyed every part of it. Also the campus is beautiful and I hope to be apart of the ECU community"* (Student Feedback, Forms, November 2023). The positive impacts on the student

experience of these campus experience days are demonstrated in Appendix B which showcases the publications by partner high schools about these days and the positive impact on their cohort of students.

Criterion 3: Breadth of impact

While the positive academic impact of the program, retention and conversion, will be discussed below, the breadth of impact of UniPrep Schools is additionally demonstrated at local, community and sector levels. At a local level the collaborative partnership model improves students' achievement beyond the program. This is captured by Girrawheen principal who writes of the ripple effect of the program for the community: *"The breadth of impact achieved by UniPrep is remarkable. Not only have our students benefited significantly through access to university, but also our dedicated teachers of the program. Drawing on the interdisciplinary collaboration of the selected teachers, the program has elevated student engagement, retention, and academic achievement in the final years of school"* (Principal's Letter of Reference, Girrawheen SHS, 2024). This ripple effect continues onto their university learning as well. One teacher wrote *"I caught up with some of my 2022 students after their first semester at ECU. They agreed that the following aspects of UniPrep helped them significantly: Research skills and how to use the library, referencing skills, note taking and making, the literature matrix, how to read scholarly articles, academic writing"* (Teacher comment, Survey, 2023). The impact on teachers' professional development is recognised with over 100 teachers trained in the program since 2020. As the partnership approach anchors the UniPrep Schools model, regular feedback is also actively sought from parents/caregivers to ascertain the impact of the program and inform the direction and enhancement of the course.

The positive impact of the program as supportive pathway to university has been articulated by parents/caregivers in anonymised surveys across 2023 and 2024. One parent noted that *"ATAR doesn't suit everyone. This was an amazing alternative that will actually help and prepared my son for when he starts university"* (Parent comment, Survey, 2023). Another caregiver stated that for her daughter UniPrep *"is giving her the skills to thrive at uni now that she knows what she wants to do"* (Parent comment, Survey, 2023). Many parents also reflect on an increase in confidence and responsibility for learning. For example, *"They [UniPrep] are giving him the belief that he could go to University and the tools to achieve admission"* (Parent comment, Survey, 2023), while another parent reflected on the aspiration building impact of the program, stating that the program has given *"my teen the confidence to believe in himself - that he is capable of higher education study"* (Parent comment, Survey, 2023) While the program might be academically challenging, one parent aptly reflected. *"It has made our daughter take a huge step out of her comfort zone and she has had to develop greater organisational skills"* (Parent comment, Survey, 2024). At a community level, the collaborative curriculum endeavours of the UniPrep Schools team and schools has positively impacted non-UniPrep Schools students on a General pathway, who now have a greater awareness of pathway options, which has resulted in more school leavers enrolling in UniPrep on completing Year 12. In 2021 and 2022, 380 students from UniPrep Schools partner high schools enrolled in the post-school UniPrep program as school leavers. These strong enrolment numbers from partner schools represented 31% of all UniPrep students.

The breadth of impact is also demonstrated at a sector level. Embedded university pathway programs are relatively new to both the enabling education and secondary-school sectors, therefore rigour was important to maintain course entry standards for both quality assurance purposes, and to ensure that student selection and course level are aligned. Student enrolment and achievement in these programs are not reported to the government, meaning limited information is available outside of the individual universities. With an understanding of the rigour of the program in 2023 ECU senior leadership requested the UniPrep Schools team to contribute to the WA Educational Pathways Review. Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Arshad Omari thanked them for their contribution noting that it would help SCSSA *"understand the rigour we are applying"* (Email, 2023). The UniPrep Schools team has also shared the success of the partnership model with the wider ECU community at ECULTure 2023, as well as nationally at STARS in Brisbane and the NAEEA webinar series and finally internationally at the FABENZ conference roundtable in Wellington (see Appendix C). In 2024, a desire to extend this research and improve understanding of school-based enabling programs, share practice and focus on quality assurance prompted the UniPrep Schools team to lead the development of a benchmarking project between ECU, Murdoch University, University of Southern Queensland, Southern Cross University and University of Tasmania. A

project that was welcomed by the collaborators: *“I think this is a terrific initiative and would welcome the opportunity for UTAS to be involved”* (UTAS, 2024). This project will ensure quality assurance and standardisation, and support portability of high school enabling program across Australia. The benchmarking project uses a framework established by the National Association of Enabling Educators Australia (NAEEA) (Davis et al., 2023) that analyses program objectives, learning outcomes, curriculum, assessment and delivery methods, informing sector guidance on program development. The benchmarking is still in progress, but completion rates, conversion rates, and Course Learning Outcomes have been benchmarked for three universities (see Appendix X). Data shows that UniPrep Schools program has the highest volume of enrolments, and a 78% completion rate in the most recent year. While the rate of completion is lower than Murdoch’s in 2023, enrolment numbers should be taken into consideration with ECU having 299 students, compared to Murdoch’s 229 (see Appendix C).

This benchmarking project led to the development of a large grant through NSCHE which examines at the purpose and efficacy of school-based enabling programs nationally. This grant was successful in round one, with the outcome for round 2 to be shared in late June. Additionally, to further share knowledge and capacity nationally and internationally, ECU has established an In-School Enabling Special Interest Group under NAEEA. This group has grown to 28 members representing 14 universities across Australia (see Appendix C).

Criterion 4: Addressing equity and diversity

UniPrep Schools prime purpose is to promote and support equity, inclusiveness and participation for diverse groups of students. The program through its aforementioned purpose of supporting educationally disadvantaged students, low ICSEA, and regional and remote schools aligns with the objectives of the Equity and Inclusion Plan through its position as an equity pathway where the primary foci are to “increase retention and success for students in identified equity groups” and “increase access and participation for students from equity groups” (ECU, 2022). In the 2022 survey one parent commented on the importance of this pathway for her child with disability *“The ATAR vs General course gap is so wide that my son was bored in General but unable to access ATAR due to Learning Disabilities. The addition of filling classes with apathetic students who are forced to pass in order to get a WACE made the courses a nightmare for him. This is a much better solution”* (Parent Comment, Survey, 2022). The course ensures equitable access to learning, continually reviewing and updating resources to ensure all students, regardless of their study goals, can succeed. This is particularly beneficial for students with diverse learning needs, who may face systemic barriers to higher education through the two-stream pathways of General or ATAR. Parents continue to provide feedback on the program stating, *“What I am grateful for is that my son will not have to wait to go to Uni because he would need to do the course prior to starting as was his original plan. As he is an extremely intelligent student that also has learning disabilities he was unable to do ATAR and the Cert and General courses are incredibly dumbed down which causes frustration and boredom”* (Parent Comment, Survey, 2023). Additionally, by providing online and accessible resources facilitated by teachers, the program models inclusive education practices, thereby addressing the needs of underrepresented groups of students. This is reflected in the comment *“[My] son is twice-exceptional so struggles academically—Dx Dyslexia, Dysgraphia and ADHD—and gets bored easily. UniPrep is focused on his goals so he can see the purpose and responds accordingly”* (Parent comment, Survey, 2023). UniPrep Schools alignment with universal design for learning (UDL) particularly through explicit instruction and multiple means of expression is thereby supporting not just access to the pathway, but access within the pathway. Graduate student Kelly writes *“I found the course content and learning material within the UniPrep Schools Program to be very accessible and engaging to work with, while being simple to understand and learn from”* (IMCC 2022). To support the diverse learning needs of the cohort all curriculum has been designed with the ability to convert text to speech or material to different accessible formats. In 2023 Collie Senior High School contacted the team with a blind student joining the program. All curriculum was revised to ensure it could be converted to braille, the preferred reading method of the student. The positive impact of adaptability of learning materials for accessibility is reflected in the comment. *“Adjustments to assessments worked well. Reasonable adjustments including reducing the number of articles he had to read, as well as only mandating articles that were accessible in plain text”* (Teacher email feedback, 2023). The success of these inclusive initiatives in supporting diverse learners has been recognised by partnership school Peter

Moyes High School, who reached out the ECU and Access and Inclusion to learn more about better supporting students with disability. Holistically, UniPrep Schools actively promotes equity and inclusiveness by expanding partnerships with low ICSEA schools, schools in diverse regions, and designing and delivering accessible curriculum thereby widening participation for disadvantaged students.

Finally, the data on success and retention of students into undergraduate degrees provides clear evidence that UniPrep Schools is an effective pathway for its targeted equity-based cohort and that has positive sustained outcomes for students in their transition to higher education. Such insight is vital to ensure the course is meeting its intended purpose in providing an additional university pathway for students currently underserved by the binary streams in senior schooling, as well as for course quality and reputation, and given recent scrutiny by both the WA Education Minister (McGhee, 2023; Buti, 2023) and the WA Pathways to Post-School Success Review (Department of Education WA, 2024).

Figure 5: Success (pass) rates in first year of undergraduate study at ECU – 2 year average (2021 and 2022)

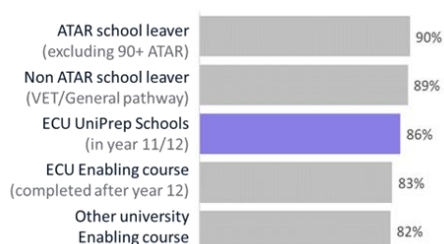
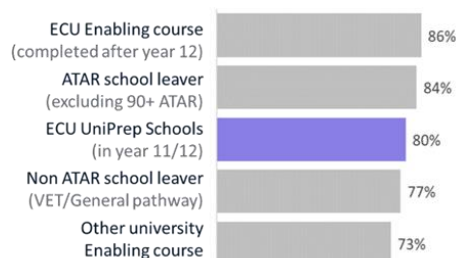


Figure 6: Retention rate from first to second year of undergraduate studies at ECU – 2 year average (2021 and 2022)



In addition to the qualitative commentary shared within this application, the Figure 5 highlights the success (pass) rate of students in their first semester of undergraduate study sitting at 86% endorsing the rigour of the partnership model as an effective transition pathway for this cohort, with Figure 6 showing an 80% retention rate for students into their second year of study. As Alkimos Baptist College Principal remarks *“The benefit of the UniPrep in Schools program is that it has captured and engaged a group of students to pursue university education who are capable, but would otherwise not enter university due to their immediate personal circumstances”* (Principal Comments, 2023). The evidence of academic achievement of UniPrep students demonstrates the strength of the UniPrep Schools’ team, partnership model and enabling curriculum in not only providing access to university for underrepresented students, but in sustaining their journey once they are there.

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D) SUPPORTING MATERIAL : ECU UniPrep Schools

Appendix A – Student and high school data

Table 1. Growth of partner high schools with UniPrep Schools (M = Metro R = Regional RR = Remote)

Partnered 2020 (ICSEA)	Partnered 2021 (ICSEA)	Partnered 2022 (ICSEA)	Partnered 2023 (ICSEA)	Partnered 2024 (ICSEA)
Balga SHS (875M)	Alkimos Baptist College (1035M)	Clarkson Community High School (918M)	Quinns Baptist College (1064M)	Dianella Secondary College (943M)
Manjimup SHS (980R)	Ashdale Secondary College (1034M)	Derby District High School (756RR)	Mindarie Senior Campus (1034M)	St Hilda's Anglican Girls School (1175M)
Peter Moyes Anglican Community School (1078M)	Bunbury Senior High School (1015R)	Wanneroo Senior High School (992M)	Duncraig Senior High School (1078M)	Swan Christian College (1061M)
Emmanuel Christian Community School (983M)	Dale Christian College (1010M)	St James Anglican Community School (1065M)	Carine Senior High School (1093M)	Warwick Senior High School (985M)
Mater Dei College (1052M)	Newton Moore Senior High School (921R)	Lake Joondalup Baptist College (1105M)	Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School (1121R)	YVocational School (942M)
	Girrawheen Senior High School (901M)	Irene McCormack Catholic College (1022M)	Collie Senior High School (921R)	SEDA College (1023R)
	Kiara College (874M)	Kearnan College (1024R)	Harvey Senior High School (943R)	Bullsbrook College (971M)
	Manea Senior College (1029R)			Bunbury Baptist College (1017R)
	Woodvale Secondary College (1065M)			Ballajurra Community College (972M)

Table 2. Regional UniPrep Schools enrolment numbers 2019 - 2023

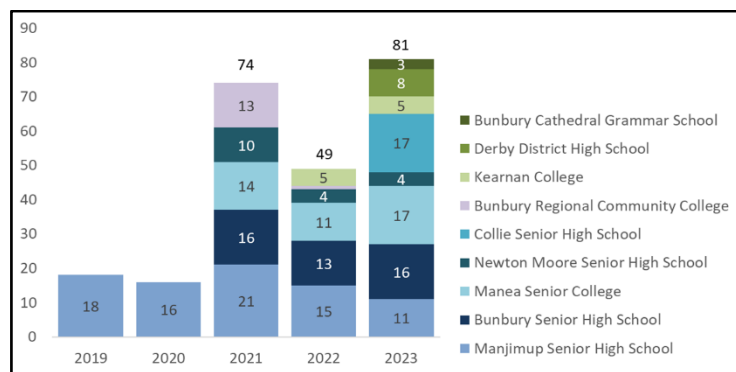
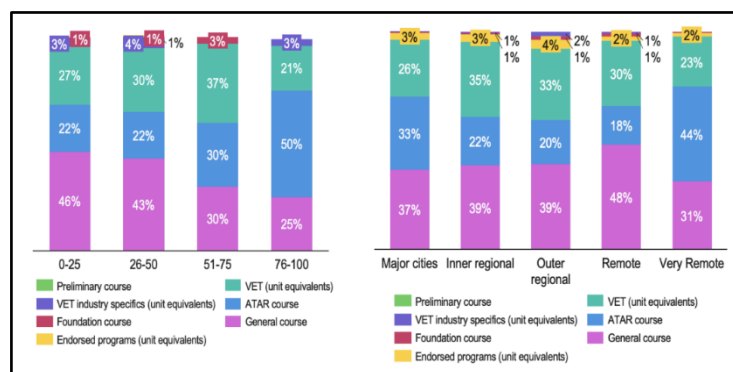


Figure 1. [Student uptake of course types by ICSEA quartile and remoteness](#) (p. 17)



Appendix B – Collaboration evidence between UniPrep Schools and partner high schools

Promotion of UniPrep Schools on high school websites as pathway for senior school students

Manea Senior College

Manea Senior College has partnered with Edith Cowan University (ECU) to offer students a university pathway through the UniPrep Schools Program. We have been offering this Program as a one-year, Year 12 course selection since 2021. However, commencing in 2025 we will *also* be offering a two-year, Year 11 and 12 version of the Program.

This Program complements other senior school studies by helping students to further develop their academic skills and integrates university experiences, including attending tailored open days at ECU South West. UniPrep Schools is an endorsed program that provides up to one-unit equivalent (C grade) for each of the four units successfully completed.

The UniPrep Schools Program contains four academically rigorous units: Future Ready Skills; Academic Literacies; Society and Cultural Studies; and Mathematics. Students complete all four units—over Years 11 and 12 – or in Year 12. On successful completion of those units and successful graduation, students can then apply for most of ECU's undergraduate degrees (excluding courses with specialist entry requirements).

If you're excited about the idea of a skills-focused university pathway that prepares you for the requirements of undertaking a university degree, then ECU's UniPrep Schools Program could be the pathway for you. [UniPrep Schools – Manea Senior College \(maneasc.wa.edu.au\)](https://www.maneasc.wa.edu.au)

Manjimup Senior High School

UniPrep Course - Edith Cowan University

A partnership with Edith Cowan University allows Year 12 students who have not completed an ATAR course or students who find difficulty completing an ATAR course, the option to undertake a UniPrep Course.

The UniPrep Course prepares students for university-level study by teaching them the required skills for academic success, with an emphasis on the student becoming an independent learner. The course is conducted in a supportive and hands-on environment, and covers learning skills, research and writing processes, numeracy tools and accessing knowledge.

A rigorous selection process is undertaken to obtain a place in this course. Successful completion of four modules in Year 12 leads to an alternative entry into a range of courses at university.

<https://www.manjimupshs.wa.edu.au/uniprep-course>

Bunbury Senior High School

Endorsed Program - ECU UniPrep Course This course is designed to provide Year 12 students an opportunity to enter university via alternative means. Entry into this program is based upon students successfully completing Year 11 in their chosen fields. Whilst there are only two examinations in this program, the program does have rigour and requires commitment and good management skills.

Year 12 program allowing students an alternative pathway into ECU University* (*Other universities may accept completion of this program for entry but this is not confirmed)

Students are invited to participate in this program based on Year 11 Semester 1 results.

Students successfully completing a Cert III certificate are eligible for invitation

Enrolment in an ATAR course is required within this program.

<https://www.bunburyshs.wa.edu.au/Senior%20School%20Handbook%202025%20v2.pdf> (Page 11)

Girrawheen Senior High School



OUR SCHOOL ▾ INFO FOR PARENTS ▾ LEARNING ▾

Edith Cowan University

ECU Preparation Course (UniPrep) - Girrawheen Senior high school is one of the very few schools in the Perth metropolitan area to offer an onsite university bridging course to Edith Cowan University. UniPrep is an endorsed program that offers an alternative, direct pathway to University. The UniPrep course aims to provide students with the necessary skills to succeed at a university level and in partnership with Edith Cowan University, Girrawheen Senior High School delivers units that focus on Learning Skills, Mathematics, Academic Writing and the Humanities.

During Year 11 and 12, students will engage in content that prepares them for university level study by teaching them the required skills for academic success, with an emphasis on the student becoming an independent learner. Additionally, students will be introduced to university life at ECU and will have access to course and career advice to assist in making informed decisions about undergraduate degree selection. UniPrep is a challenging, yet engaging course that requires dedication, commitment and perseverance but offers an outstanding opportunity to gain university entrance.

ECU Studioity - A 24/7 tutoring service with instant help and writing feedback in English, Maths, Science and more.

Irene McCormack Catholic College



Alternative University entry - Edith Cowan University UniPrep Schools Program

UniPrep Schools provides an alternate pathway to university through Edith Cowan University. Edith Cowan University aims to enable students from all backgrounds to succeed in higher education and life-long learning. To support this commitment, UniPrep Schools has been approved by ECU's Academic Board as a four-unit course, based on the existing UniPrep University program. UniPrep Schools will complement students' senior school commitments by enhancing academic skills development, integrating university experiences, and providing accessible pathways to tertiary study. The program will also equip students with transferable career development skills and digital literacies. The teaching and learning content, digital learning technologies, and assessments are provided to students before the commencement of each unit through the ECU Online Learning Management System.

Students can now complete UniPrep Schools across Year 11 and Year 12 as part of the two-year UniPrep Schools pathway. This program is competitive and has prerequisites.

"I believe the UniPrep course has been highly valuable to the UniPrep students of 2022, myself included. I think this course achieves its purpose of giving students a solid understanding of the many skills intrinsic to the academic environment of university, for example paragraph structure, study techniques, stress management, APA referencing, behaving in a professional manner etc, as well as preparing successful UniPrep students for university learning and assessment standards"

On a personal note, as a successful UniPrep student myself, I found the course content and learning material within the UniPrep Schools Program to be very accessible and engaging to work with, while being simple to understand and learn from. The lectures presented were all clear, concise, and successfully conveyed their learning material in a methodical way that was simple to understand."



Kelly

Balga Senior High School, Annual Report 2022

UniPrep

Balga Senior High School continues its strong partnership with Edith Cowan University through onsite delivery of the UniPrep course. Available to select Year 11 and Year 12 students, UniPrep Schools is designed as an alternative pathway to university, providing students with an equivalent ATAR score. Traditionally, students have gained entry into courses such as Engineering, Nursing, Teaching and Computer Science.

The UniPrep course aims to provide students with the necessary skills to succeed at university level and in partnership with Edith Cowan University, Balga Senior High School delivers units that focus on Learning Skills, Academic Writing, Humanities and Mathematics. During their Senior School years, students engage in content that prepares them for university level study by teaching them the required skills for academic success, with an emphasis on students becoming independent learners. Additionally, students are introduced to university life at each of ECU's Perth metropolitan campuses and have access to course and career advice to assist in making informed decisions about undergraduate degree selection. UniPrep is a challenging, yet engaging and rewarding, course requiring dedication, commitment and perseverance and in return, offers an outstanding opportunity to gain university entrance.

	Learning Skills	Academic Writing	Humanities	Mathematics
Total Cohort	8			
Achieved	8	8	8	8
Not Achieved	-	-	-	-
Mean average achievement grade	75%	69%	76%	77.75%
Overall completion rate of cohort	100%			

The table above reflects the achievement of the eight Year 12 students who completed the four required units successfully. Completion success rate is measured by the achievement of a passing grade, minimum 50%, in all of the required units. Academic Writing is consistently the most challenging unit, requiring the application of a number of recently acquired skills and knowledge.

The students enrolled in the 2022 cohort are currently pursuing the following pathways:

ECU university enrolment	TAFE	Other
7	1	-

ECU UniPrep Schools Student Experiences : Publications by partner high schools





Balga Senior High School Newsletter (2020)

UNIPREP SENIOR SCHOOL

As a welcome break from their studies, the Year 12 UniPrep students were invited to spend the day at ECU's Jondalup Campus. In what was a fun packed day, students were welcomed by key ECU staff around the fire pit before undertaking an Acknowledgment of Country. We were then invited to participate in aspects of the Old Ways, New Ways program which links 'Old ways' of Aboriginal science with 'New ways' of scientific knowledge. This was followed by a visit to the SuperLab where we were able to witness 96 ECU students conducting an experiment in a state of the art laboratory. A number of budding scientists were keen to stay, but a race around campus was planned. During the course of this activity, it became apparent that time management remains a skill that students need to work on! Luckily, we made it in time for the Cybersecurity presentation and students worked in teams to try to crack a variety of codes to break into a lockbox of chocolate treats! Somehow we found time for a class session in one of the many computer labs, a lecture in the School of Business and a visit to the Future Students Team to talk through study options for 2021 at ECU. There was a bit of time left to organise student cards before jumping on the bus and heading back to school after a fantastic day.

Balga Senior High School has a strong, positive and longstanding relationship with ECU and this year we will have record numbers of students gaining direct entry into university as a result of the UniPrep Program delivered at the school. The long term commitment from ECU means that Balga SHS will be in a position to continue to offer our students a direct university pathway. We are extremely grateful to our UniPrep Schools coordinator at ECU, Ms Selenia Temakov, for the hard work that went into organising a fantastic day and for all of her support throughout the year.



Ms Sarah Bath – Program Manager

And then students transitioning to ECU (2023)

WAtoday


Sadaf Darab couldn't speak English when she first moved to Western Australia in 2016. Originally from Iran, Darab moved to Turkey when she was 12, where she and her family waited for three years before being able to move to WA. During that time, she was unable to attend school.

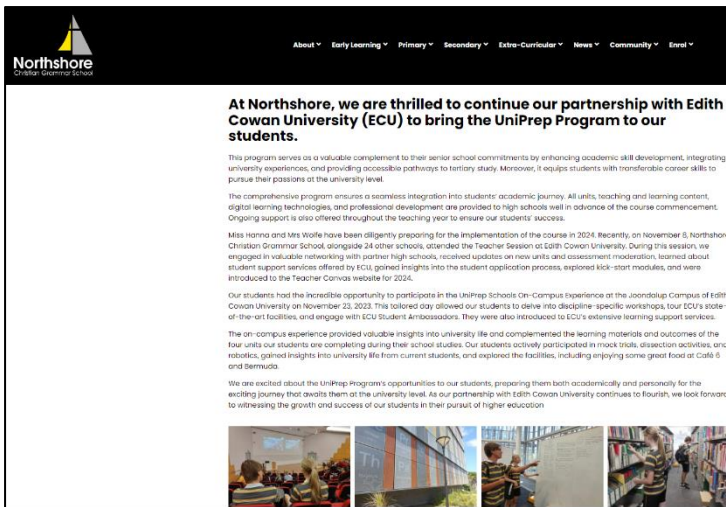
Sadaf Darab and Hollie Williams both said UniPrep had helped them transition straight to university from school, without needing to take ATAR exams.

Now, seven years later, Darab is about to graduate from nursing at Edith Cowan University and has plans to continue her higher education journey by taking on a second degree in medicine from 2024.

She never took ATAR exams while completing year 12 at Balga Senior High School; instead choosing to take an alternative program run through ECU, aimed at bridging the gap between students with lower educational advantage and university.



Northshore Grammar School



At Northshore, we are thrilled to continue our partnership with Edith Cowan University (ECU) to bring the UniPrep Program to our students.

This program serves as a valuable complement to their senior school commitments by enhancing academic skill development, integrating university experiences, and providing accessible pathways to tertiary study. Moreover, it equips students with transferable career skills to pursue their passions at the university level.

The comprehensive program ensures a seamless integration into students' academic journey. All units, teaching and learning content, digital learning technologies, and professional development are provided to high schools well in advance of the course commencement. Ongoing support is also offered throughout the teaching year to ensure our students' success.

Miss Hanna and her staff have been diligently preparing for the implementation of the course in 2024. Recently, on November 8, Northshore Christian Grammar School, alongside 24 other schools, attended the Teacher Session at Edith Cowan University. During this session, we engaged in valuable networking with partner high schools, received updates on new units and assessment moderation, learned about student support services offered by ECU, gained insights into the student application process, explored kick-start modules, and were introduced to the 'Teacher Campus' website for 2024.

Our students had the incredible opportunity to participate in the UniPrep Schools On-Campus Experience at the Joondalup Campus of Edith Cowan University on November 23, 2023. This tailored day allowed our students to delve into discipline-specific workshops, tour ECU's state-of-the-art facilities, and engage with ECU Student Ambassadors. They were also introduced to ECU's extensive learning support services.

The on-campus experience provided valuable insights into university life and complemented the learning materials and outcomes of the four units our students are completing during their school studies. Our students actively participated in mock trials, dissection activities, and robotics, gained insights into university life from current students, and explored the facilities, including enjoying some great food at Café 6 and Bermuda.

We are excited about the UniPrep Program's opportunities to our students, preparing them both academically and personally for the exciting journey that awaits them at the university level. As our partnership with Edith Cowan University continues to flourish, we look forward to witnessing the growth and success of our students in their pursuit of higher education.

Peter Moyes Anglican Community School Mindarie, School Facebook (2020 & 2021)



Peter Moyes Anglican Community School
25 November 2021

ECU UNI-PREP CAMPUS VISIT // Our 2021 Year 12 UniPrep Schools Program students attended an on-campus experience today at Edith Cowan University. They are pictured here with David Schubert, who will deliver the Humanities Unit of the course next year.

Students selected two workshops to attend on campus, in addition to touring the campus facilities and engaging with student ambassadors.

Derby District High School, School Facebook (2022)



Derby District High School
15 November 2022

UNI PREP starts at Derby DHS

15 year 10/11 students at Derby DHS start their University Pathway journey today.

Derby DHS launched the ECU Kick Start Program today, guided by ECU lecturer Shaz Attree with the support of our teaching team Orin Casey and Rhys Bradley at Derby DHS.

The program will provide an alternative pathway for students to study at ECU providing a huge opportunity for the future of our young people. Well done to Mohamed Youssef for the ongoing drive to get an achievable and reliable tertiary pathway for Derby DHS students. Let's get behind this one Derby town. Mr\$\$

54 likes, 1 comment

Jo Greenfield Fox
Sooo good, what an awesome opportunity for Derby students 🥳🥳🥳
1y

ECU UniPrep Schools Student Experiences : Quotes from students

What did you like most about the Experience today?

"Experiencing on campus life and being able to have the ability to see what a typical university day would run like as well as listen to current students' journeys."

"Getting an insight into uni-life, now I feel I know what to expect more."

"The exploring and the teachers seeming enthusiastic".



"I like the way everything was run today as it was easy and I enjoyed the classes and everyone was friendly. The facilities are great here."

"Experimenting with different subjects and the activities added to it."

"Getting to walk around and explore campus lots I saw that was here that I didn't know you guys had at ECU!"

Feedback from students who have transition to ECU undergraduate study

Student journey in U/G study @ ECU



Sadaf : 3rd year
Bachelor of Science
(Nursing)

"It set me up for a smoother transition into university. I think my journey within education would have been vastly different without it."



John : 2nd year
Bachelor of Arts

'The UniPrep Schools course has abundantly prepared me for exactly what to expect during degree studies and has made for a smooth transition into making life easier when tackling assignments – from presentations to essay plans.'



John :3rd year

Bachelor of Science
(Nursing)

"The support provided in Uniprep was realistic to the expectations of University and honestly made going through a degree easier after getting used to the pressure. The skills you learn in Uniprep will never leave you if you practice them correctly."

ECU publications about impact of UniPrep Schools

Deputy Vice Chancellor : Diversity, Students and Equity – Professor Braden Hill and Dr Fiona Navin visit Derby District High School (2024)



Braden Hill
Deputy Vice Chancellor Students, Equity and Indigenous at Edith Cowan University
1mo

At **Edith Cowan University**, we are committed to ensuring access to higher education to all corners of Western Australia. Our fantastic UniPrep Schools program enables this in regional and remote areas where ATAR pathways are limited.

Dr **Fiona Navin** and I headed to Derby to meet with the team making university a reality for their students in partnership with our amazing staff.

While Derby District High School is more than 2000km from our metropolitan campuses, partnering with ECU's **Shaz Attree**, **Selena Tenakov** and **Mike Howie** have created some great relationships and pathways for Derby students who, I'm sure, will be ECU alumni in no time!

Special thanks to **Ash Tunbridge** and **Principal Eliot Money** for hosting us and sharing their vision for the future in terms of our collaboration.

For us, this is about educational equity. We don't mind which university they choose (we hope it's ECU!), we just know that to transform society, higher education has to be an opportunity for everyone.

Speaking to the students was the highlight and I can't wait to see them on campus soon!



ECU Vice Chancellor – Professor Steve Chapman and Mindarie Senior College (2023)



Edith Cowan University (ECU)
3 April · 🌐

🗣️ We chatted with Year 12 student, **Ayla Lewkowski** about her experience doing UniPrep in Schools and how she is coincidentally, a relative of ECU's namesake, Edith Cowan: <https://s.ecu.edu.au/48ytegx>

🏫 UniPrep in Schools is an initiative that compliments General or ATAR commitments and helps prepare students for university-level study by teaching the skills required for academic success and integrating university experiences.

Ayla shared: "The classes are extremely helpful, and I've learnt a lot in the past seven months. I have gained a lot of confidence in university-level essay writing, and referencing techniques, and my math is getting a lot better."

👤 Mindarie Senior College Principal **Jonathan Bromage** (left), Year 12 Student **Ayla Lewkowski** (middle), and ECU Vice-Chancellor **Professor Steve Chapman** (right).



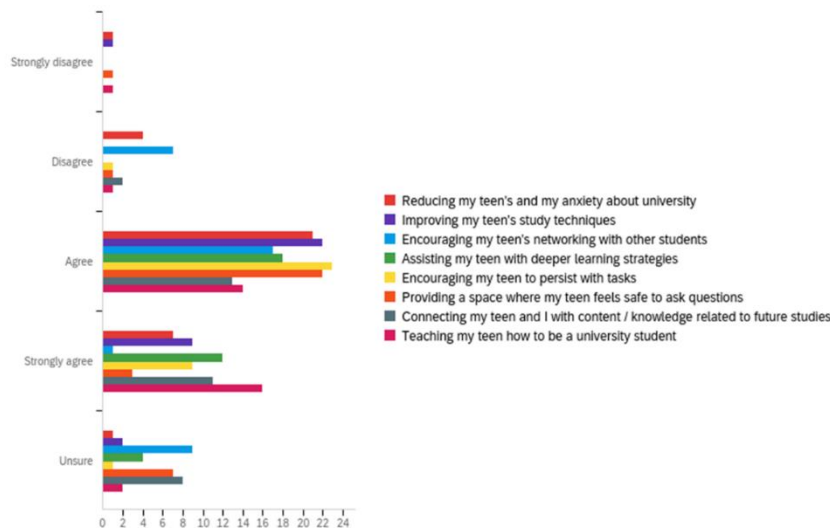
👍❤️ 117

2 comments 4 shares

Parent/Caregiver feedback on UniPrep Schools

[Qualtrics survey start of course](#) [Qualtrics survey end of course](#)

In regard to course delivery of UniPrep Schools so far, please indicate your level of agreement. This applies only to the course content and not the school teacher. Focus on what you are seeing at home. The course is:



Teacher views on university pathway program 2020 vs 2023/2024

Table 4. Teachers views on the UniPrep Schools from redesign to current program

2020 Comments	2023/24 Comments
<p>I am wary of many of the uni preparation courses - the ones that are 6 months and then you can get into a course of your choice, not the ones that help students with essential skills like essay writing or research.</p> <p>I feel that students who do not have the application, aptitude and work ethic think that they can get into uni by doing a 6 month preparation course after they have shown a limited amount of ability in Year 11 and 12.</p> <p>Are we setting students up for failure so universities can get a bottom on a seat?</p>	<p>Following another successful year in partnership with ECU, I am acutely aware of the privilege of seeing another group of well deserving students gain entry into university.</p> <p>This is an immensely valuable program and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of it.</p>
<p>There is a developmental leap from Yr 10 to Yr 11 is huge and a lot of students completing ATAR in this first year struggle to adapt quickly with so much content and reorganising their lives to suit study needs.</p> <p>Completing the Course could count for something in their application for University at the end of Yr 12.</p>	<p>Having taught at both secondary and tertiary levels, it was an excellent exposure to learning in a University type environment.</p> <p>All 3 of our students are putting in a TISC application, so clearly a very positive experience for them too.</p>
<p>A UniPrep course would make it more relevant to their vocation rather than "just another school subject"</p>	<p>2022 students agreed that UniPrep Schools helped them significantly: Research skills, how to use the library, referencing skills, note taking and making, the literature matrix, how to read scholarly articles, academic writing.</p>
<p>I think that Year 11's and 12's can become VERY stressed re exams and how they are going to pass everything and a course that could help with alleviating these perceived pressures would help some.</p>	<p>I appreciate how lucky we are as a school to have this program and am thankful for the opportunity to teach it.</p>
<p>Given this is an alternative pathway to university, in secondary schooling it should be selective which students can be involved in the course.</p>	<p>The Learning Skills unit, and being able to deliver this early on - reinforces key skills that ensure students are not only prepared for university, but their high school studies are enhanced.</p>
<p>I believe that General should attend an extended version so they're not taking the easy route in and being lazy.</p>	<p>Given that academic writing is such a huge departure from the approaches to English taken at secondary level, this component of the course is hugely beneficial.</p> <p>Also, the immersion in the university learning environment really supports students with the transition to university study.</p>
<p>Students can be quite overwhelmed with all the timelines and assessments, not realising that just chipping away at them is better than trying to do it all in one night! Time management is also key as it is so very easy to lose hours in researching and reading without managing to achieve anything constructive.</p>	<p>The increased passion my students have shown when completing UniPrep.</p> <p>Most say it is their favorite course and enjoy the modules.</p> <p>The fact they arrive and start their work immediately shows the relevance of the course.</p>
<p>If universities are providing preparation courses, then I assume that the teaching staff uni feel that undergraduate students are lacking skills in certain areas. If this is the case, would it not be more practical/efficient to let the Year 12 teachers/schools know what skills students are lacking so that we can perhaps start to embed these into Year 11/12 courses and teaching?</p>	<p>Teaching students the fundamentals of undergraduate study that they don't get in their other school subjects. Specifically, APA referencing, paraphrasing, essay structure, academic integrity.</p>
<p>A UniPrep course should develop research skills, assessment / essay writing and identify personal study strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Specific to regional students - life skills required to survive your first year (renting, transport, mental health; connecting with other communities, HECS and finance, skills that will help students get casual work; resume etc)</p>	<p>The students ability to develop the skills to navigate the university and the Canvas sites.</p> <p>The academic Integrity unit which has assisted student to develop an understanding of the rigour and knowledge involved in the academic expectations and progress.</p>
<p>Four essential skills students need to be able to do to succeed in their undergraduate course include being able to read for understanding, write analytically, reference others work correctly, and think creatively</p>	<p>This course is very worthwhile.</p> <p>I have had some past students who have failed units at Uni because they found the level (content) too demanding.</p>

Appendix C – Website, benchmarking and national contributions

1. ECU Website – Industry Career Counsellor Resources


<https://www.ecu.edu.au/industry/career-counsellor-resources>

UniPrep High Schools program

This program is delivered in partner high schools over Years 11 and 12 and complements students' study pathways.

The course runs during school hours. If your school is interested in becoming a partner, download our 2025 flyer and get in touch.

2025 UniPrep Schools



2. Conference Presentations

2023 FABENZ 6th Biennial Conference. Facing Forward: Future Focus for Foundation and Bridging Education.

[Round Table Discussion](#)

[High school to university – enabling transition: High school enabling programs and their evolving place in education](#)


Sample question for round table: This roundtable discussion will endeavour to have attendees share and discuss what these programs offer to students that is perhaps not offered in the current high school curriculum?

2023 STARS Conference In Conjunction With AMHHEC

Presentation : [Communities of practice in secondary school enabling programs](#)

Sample slide from presentation using feedback from teachers in the community of practice.

Community of Practice : Teachers

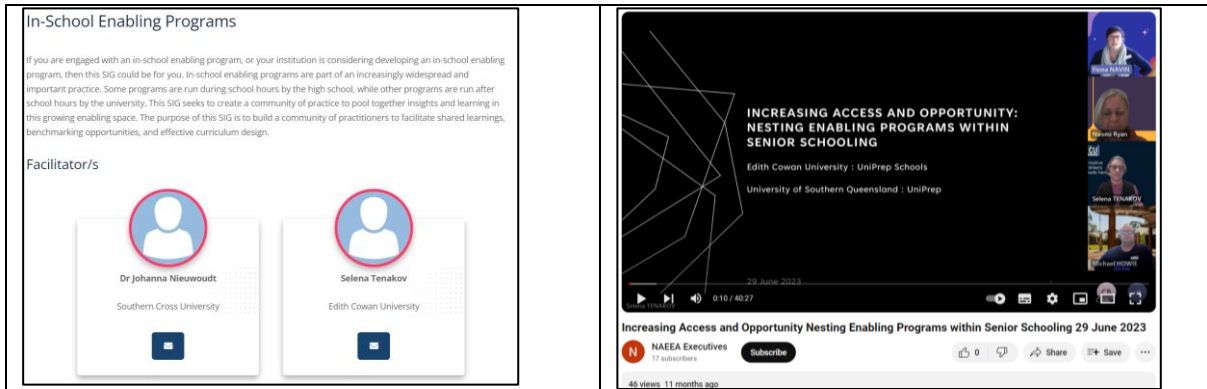


<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Feedback 2020</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">“Three terms is just too rushed, but then students aren't ready at start of Year 11.”</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Action 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kick-start week of three modules and one assessment (via Padlet). Timed with On Campus Experience. Applications are then done after 'kick-start' <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Response 2023</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">“ Sets the expectations and rigour prior to Term One, Year 12.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Feedback 2021</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">“The content in Blackboard is convoluted. We are constantly having to go back and forth between tabs to make sense of what is to be done, how to do it, task requirements, etc”</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Action 2021/22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embrace LMS change Streamline learning artefacts Declutter PPTs Early access to resources <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Response 2023</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">“I think that great strides have been made over the past 2-3 years in terms of using technology such as Padlet, in the lead up to Canvas availability. This helps staff and students to stay organised.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Feedback 2023</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">“The content provided by ECU is neither a curriculum nor lesson plans - while this provides space for teachers to go about providing the course with their own style, it can also be a source of frustration to try to guess as to how they are intended to be used and what else might need to be included.</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Having a detailed curriculum to follow or full lesson plans that can be adapted would greatly help.”</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Action pending ?</p>
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3. National conversations about university pathways embedded in high schools

[National Association of Enabling Educators Australia](#)

<p>Co-Facilitator for Special Interest Group Current NAEAA SIG collaboration with 14 universities across Australia using Padlet</p>	<p>Webinar Series 2023</p>
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4. National benchmarking project for school-based university pathway programs

Table 4: High School University Pathway Course Entry Standards Comparison of the Four Benchmarking Institutions

	Edith Cowan University	Murdoch University	Southern Cross University	University of Southern Queensland
Course Name	UniPrep Schools	FlexiTrack High	UniStart for Schools	UniPrep
School Entry Processes and Requirements - <i>What are the requirements on the schools for this program?</i> - <i>How is the program promoted?</i> - <i>How are schools added to the program?</i>	Target schools: - regional or remote - ICSEA of 1010 (or less). - have students that fit the eligibility criterion listed below. Not advertised or promoted, schools are not approached by ECU. Program is based in the high school and delivery by teachers (with training and support from ECU).	Target schools: - regional or remote - have students that fit the eligibility criterion listed below. Not advertised or promoted, schools are not approached by MU. Program is based in the high school and a team-teaching model of delivery by teachers in the school timetable and tutors in the online space (with annual and ongoing training and support from MU).	Target schools: SCU campuses footprints. No marketing, except by Future Students Team as part of general promotion of SCU when visiting schools. Program is delivered at school, by school teachers during school time, and teachers mark assessments. All resources, assessments etc. provided by SCU. Quality assurance, assessment moderation, and support from SCU.	Target schools: any secondary school across Queensland with focus on those schools within footprint of campuses. Program is marketed widely through the UniSQ Marketing and Future Students/ Schools Engagement Team. Program staff also visit schools to build partnerships. Program is online, some schools offer scheduled class time for completion for students whereas some students are doing program in addition to scheduled curriculum.
Student Entry Requirements - <i>What are the entry requirements for this program?</i>	Students must be Australian Citizens, Permanent Resident or be on a Humanitarian Visa. Students are recommended by the principal through the completion of a Principal Recommendation letter. - Must be in Year 11 or 12 - Attend a Learning Partner School - Meet one of the following eligibility criterions: a) low SES backgrounds b) first in family c) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander d) have a disability e) have had family or other life circumstances that have affected their education f) in a regional or remote area.	Students are selected by schools. Must be in Year 12. Attend a Partnership School. Demonstrate English competence for entry into the program, applicants must demonstrate that they have achieved 'B' or higher in general English or a 'D' or higher in ATAR English in Year 11.	Attend a participating school. Students selected for program by the school. Must be in Year 12 and ATAR eligible (ATAR-eligibility waived on discretion of coordinator, in consultation with school).	Students must be in enrolled Year 11 or 12 (approval can be sought for Year 10 entry depending on need) in a school, home learning environment or distance education facility across Queensland. They also need to be Australian Citizens, New Zealand Citizens residing in Australia or be on a Permanent Humanitarian Visa.

English Language Requirements - Minimum entry requirements. - Does the successful completion of program replace high school English competency?	Recommended Year 10/11 English B grade (General) or C grade (ATAR), but at schools' discretion. Completion of course fulfils English competency requirements.	Entry level noted above. Students must meet a minimum standard in English through the completion of the university preparation course.	At schools' discretion. Admission to SCU courses requires evidence of English Language proficiency only for students from countries where English is not the standard language of instruction.	Students should be at the level of passing Essential English, C grade or above. Students are expected to have an equivalent to IELTS 5.5 to be enrolled. Principal's discretion and Versant Testing can be used to determine equivalency.
Cost - What is the cost of the course for schools and/or students?	Regional/remote: Free Metro ≤ 1010 ICSEA: Free Metro ≥ 1010 ICSEA: School annual fee	Fee: \$1200 Fee waiver available for Equity students upon application.	Fee-free for students. No cost for schools.	Program is fee-free.
Core Subjects and Electives - Title and code for core units - Title and code for electives	Core Subjects: -Future Ready Skills -Academic Literacies -Society & Cultural Studies -Mathematics Electives: -None	Core Subjects: -Academic Culture and Literacies -Knowledge in the Arts -Knowledge in the Sciences (including mathematics) Electives: -Introduction to Health Professions -Introduction to Education -Introduction to Criminology and Digital Media	Core Subjects: -UniStart (UNIP0001) Electives: -None	Core Subjects: -Transitioning to University (AEP1111) -Applied Academic Literacies (AEP1112) Electives: -None
Time to Completion - How long to complete units? - How long to complete the program?	Course duration: 1 - 2 year delivery methods available Units duration: 1 - 2 terms (depending on delivery method)	Course duration: 1 - 2 year delivery methods available Units duration: 1 - 2 terms (depending on delivery method)	Course duration: 15 weeks (During school Terms 2 & 3)	Each course in the program is 14 weeks long. Flexibility in pattern of enrolment, however, it is suggested Year 11's take AEP1111 in Term 2 and 3 and then when in Year 12 take AEP1112 in Term 1 and 2.

Benchmarking Student Outcomes: Completion and Conversion of High School Enabling Programs

		2020	2021	2022	2023
Edith Cowan University (ECU)	<i>Participants (Year 12)</i>	76	199	205	299
	<i>Successful Completions</i>	59	130	166	232
	<i>Completion Rate (%)</i>	78%	65%	81%	78%
	<i>Enrolled in Undergraduate course at ECU</i>	29	71	85	84
Murdoch University (MU)	<i>Participants</i>	102	185	232	229
	<i>Successful Completions</i>	102	174	192	218
	<i>Completion Rate (%)</i>	100%	94%	83%	95%
	<i>Enrolled in Undergraduate course at MU</i>	75	96	125	92
University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ)	<i>Participants</i>				122
	<i>Successful Completions</i>				45
	<i>Completion Rate (%)</i>				37%
	<i>Enrolled in Undergraduate course at UniSQ</i>				23