Our students

Swinburne’s approach to the delivery of education was again highly rated by students in 2014 as reported in the 2015 Good Universities Guide. The University received a 5-star rating, the highest possible, for overall graduate satisfaction and maintained strong ratings for the quality of our teaching as well as for generic skill development, and access and equity.

Universities have a vital role to play in preparing tomorrow’s leaders. This includes fostering leadership that will ensure a sustainable future.

At Swinburne, we are incorporating sustainability principles into our teaching and learning programs and equipping our graduates with skills that will assist them to contribute positively to society and reflect our values: innovation, integrity, accountability, diversity, teamwork and sustainability.
At Swinburne, we continue to be recognised for the quality of the educational experience that we offer our students. It is a source of great pride that the University was awarded high ratings for overall graduate satisfaction, and maintained our teaching quality, generic skills, and staff-student ratio ratings in the Good Universities Guide 2015. This speaks volumes about the dedication of our academic staff, the high standard of teaching we offer and why, increasingly, students are choosing to study with us.

Swinburne received $5.5 million in funding as part of the Federal Government’s Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) for the Indigenous Futures Collaboration Project in 2013 – an initiative to help Indigenous students obtain a university education by lifting aspirations and improving retention. In 2014, progress was made on four demonstrator programs working with indigenous communities in Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and Queensland.

We continue to develop innovative teaching techniques that engage and inspire our students in new ways. The rapid growth of Swinburne Online and the continued popularity of online courses delivered through Open Universities Australia have ensured that we are able to provide educational opportunities to students well beyond our physical presence in Melbourne, including many from low socio-economic status (SES), indigenous, and regional backgrounds. Delivering courses through Swinburne Online has allowed us to offer high-touch online education to students who would not have otherwise found their way to a Swinburne campus, including a high proportion of regional students and many students who are first in their family to undertake university study.

**Enhancing student participation in university decision-making forums**

Swinburne is committed to enhancing the student voice at all levels of the organisation. In 2014, a new model of student consultation was trialled and this will continue in 2015. This was designed to enhance the student voice in university life: in faculties, on the Academic Senate and through Swinburne’s Governing Council.

Student Consultative Councils (SCCs) have been developed for each faculty. These SCCs are dedicated to student consultation on student and faculty related issues. Elected student representatives from across each faculty meet directly with senior faculty management four times per year. This extends the student voice in each faculty by increasing student representation and providing a dedicated forum to consider issues of direct relevance to students.

Academic Senate is a statutory body established by Council as the peak academic body within the University, and the principal policy-making and advisory body on all matters relating to and affecting teaching, research and educational programs. In 2014, student representation on the Senate was increased from two to three members.

To ensure that the University Council has direct access to student views, student representatives are now invited to make formal presentations to Council annually to raise matters relevant to them and to put forward views to inform the operation of the Council. The presentations also provide an opportunity for Council members to ask questions directly of the student representatives to inform deliberations.
Embracing social inclusion and diversity

Swinburne is committed to attracting, supporting and reaching out to students from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations and intends to continue to build on its founding commitment to the provision of education that is socially inclusive. Current actions include:

■ Building on our connections to schools and outreach programs to raise the awareness of opportunities for tertiary study and increase participation and educational attainment in low socio-economic status, Indigenous, rural and remote communities
■ Ensuring that we are monitoring and adapting our access pathways to enable more students to study vocational and higher education programs successfully
■ Catering to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds through our study and student support services
■ Utilising our campus locations and our reach through online learning to improve access to education in more communities.

In 2014, we committed over a million dollars to projects to assist students from low socio-economic backgrounds to study at Swinburne. Key initiatives focused on improving how we identify and assist students at risk of discontinuing their studies through the use of data analytics, online support programs and face to face interventions.

We successfully introduced new online academic literacy needs assistance to help students self-identify their study needs and link them to learning support services. Over 500 students completed the Swinburne Academic Literacy Needs Assessment (SALNA) and received feedback on their existing academic skills and areas in which they could benefit from the assistance offered at the University through a new Learning and Academic Skills Centre (LAS) that commenced in 2014. A further program involved the development of on-line self-assessments related to study skills, well-being and academic motivation from which students receive direct feedback and referral information. Over 2,000 students completed these self-assessments in 2014 and received direct feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement along with information that would be of assistance to their self-directed learning.
Learning and Teaching and Swinburne’s Reconciliation Action Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

As a University, the Reconciliation Action Plan is our way of committing to improving the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities and building career aspirations and pathways. It is also our way of learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, history, spirituality and connections to Country. It is the beginning of identifying ways that we can benefit from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and ways of learning to improve our University.

Swinburne is committed to making a substantial contribution to the educational and employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It is our aspiration to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families and communities, and engage in creative and innovative ways of learning and research.

Our 2014–2016 Reconciliation Action Plan commits Swinburne to improve access to Swinburne courses and academic success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through online and blended study options and the use of other digital technologies, new course offerings in fields including Health, and improved induction and support processes and materials.

The following targets have also been established.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Progress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments in vocational education at Swinburne increased through online and blended study options (and new course offerings in 2016)</td>
<td>&gt;220 enrolments</td>
<td>&gt;240 enrolments</td>
<td>165 enrolments in VE in 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments in higher education increased through online and blended study options (and new course offerings in 2016)</td>
<td>&gt;120 enrolments</td>
<td>&gt;150 enrolments</td>
<td>21 enrolments in HED and 59 enrolments through online in 2014 (total = 80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best-practice strategies identified (including through discussion with alumni) and implemented to induct and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying Swinburne courses on-campus and in online and blended study modes</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>Analysis underway on best practice strategies for student induction Online digital literacy program developed and ready for piloting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Articulation Program (TAP) designed and implemented to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation, pathways, support and success in tertiary education at Swinburne</td>
<td>by 31 December</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>In progress. HEPPP funded Indigenous Futures project has identified higher education pathways for all courses. Pilot programs underway at Swinburne and other providers in their respective states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement support programs to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in online education</td>
<td>by Sept 2014</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>Online support survey completed. Findings to be published in 2015. HEPPP Indigenous Futures project commenced in 2014 to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students transition to HED</td>
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Linking Swinburne values with graduate attributes

Our graduates will be forward thinkers, able to adapt to global challenges and technological advances. They will reflect Swinburne’s values: innovation, integrity, accountability, diversity, teamwork and sustainability. To this end, our students will have the opportunity during their studies to develop skills, attributes and values that they can draw on throughout their career. Specific actions include:

- ensuring that our generic skills, graduate attributes and values are reflected in our course learning outcomes and prioritised within our extra-curricular enhancement activities
- enabling students to evidence their level of attainment through measures and recognition that can be incorporated into their e-portfolios
- establishing more opportunities to recognize and reward outstanding achievements, including excellence in demonstrating Swinburne’s values.

Swinburne Emerging Leaders Award

A new program was developed in 2013 to recognise and enhance students’ employability skills. Called the Swinburne Emerging Leaders Awards, these recognise extracurricular activities: students who qualify for them can have them included on their academic transcript. While a comparison with other universities showed that all Australian universities offer volunteering programs similar to Swinburne’s, this will be the most comprehensive system targeted at employability skills. Students can register for up to seven separate Emerging Leaders Awards (sustainability, community service, work experience, campus life, global citizenship, research and careers). For each Award category, the student describes their involvement and explains the employability skill that they have developed through the experience. These skills map to the University’s graduate attributes and to national employability standards.

The Awards are available for all domestic and international higher education and vocational education students. In 2014 there were over 200 registrations for different awards and 41 students completed these awards in the first three months of operation of the program.

Table drawn from Swinburne’s 2013–2020 Learning and Teaching Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 actions</th>
<th>2015 target/progress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global awareness learners: Design, develop and evaluate activities to engage students in sustainability issues and contextually embed within their course of study</td>
<td>One new initiative within each teaching unit with global issues relevant to course content in all curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embracing social inclusion and diversity: Improve recruitment and retention of low SES, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and supporting them through provision of engaged learning, enrichment activities and learning support service</td>
<td>10% increase in commencing students from diverse backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embracing social inclusion and diversity: The university’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will be developed and include commitment to relevant ATSI related learning and teaching goals</td>
<td>RAP implemented and evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking Swinburne’s values with graduate attributes: Develop a revised set of highly forward-focused graduate attributes and an implementation plan to embed these into the curriculum</td>
<td>Graduate attributes renewed and implemented into the course design process</td>
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CASE STUDIES

Swinburne Apprentices help build new school in India

A team of advanced building, carpentry and plumbing apprentices from Swinburne’s Croydon campus spent two weeks in India, where they helped build a school and improve the lives of students and their teachers in a remote community.

The seven apprentices and their academic supervisor, Jon Wallace, from Swinburne’s Centre for Engineering, Technology and Trades, travelled to the remote village of Jamnya, India to help construct new accommodation for teachers and their families.

The new teacher’s quarters includes hygienic household water management and effluent treatment systems, and incorporates small scale renewable energy systems to provide a consistent, reliable source of power for lighting, heating and cooking.

Migrant Transition to Higher Education program

Swinburne implemented a Federal Government funded Migrant Transition to Higher Education program, which is aimed at assisting students who start in English language and vocational education programs progress through into higher education at Swinburne.

Specifically targeted at migrants and refugees, who may feel slightly separated from higher education, the program helps to build support and create aspirations for 76 students in 2014.

Ultimately, this program is helping students build their confidence, develop their skills and gain new qualifications.

2014 Australian Green Award

Swinburne’s Vocational Graduate Certificate in Education and Training for Sustainability has been recognised for its contribution to building the capacity of educators in sustainability teaching and learning methods. The program was awarded the Australasian Green Gown Award for Learning and Teaching 2014 at the Green Gown Awards in Hobart last year.

This Certificate is designed for all teachers (VET, University Higher Education, Secondary and Primary) seeking to embed education for sustainability in their curriculum, teaching and assessment.

Humanitarian study tour to India

Swinburne students interested in humanitarian work participated in a humanitarian study tour to India. Funded by Swinburne’s HEPPP allocation of funds, the study tour was offered to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who otherwise would not be able to afford a study tour experience.

The students travelled to Delhi and Jaipur and worked for three weeks on various education programs. The programs included helping street children and the empowerment of women from extremely poor backgrounds through education. The learning the Swinburne students obtained raised their awareness and willingness to act on issues of global significance.

Carpentry apprentices build arts centre in Cambodia

Seven Swinburne carpentry students spent two weeks in Cambodia, where they participated in a study tour to help build a local arts centre for the Cambodian community.

The study, which was partly funded through an AsiaBound grant from the Federal Government, allowed the Swinburne students to give Cambodian youth access to arts programs that they previously did not have.