



Learning Futures
Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor Learning Futures
Western Sydney University
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751
Australia

Project Title: Student Transition And RetenTion (START) Program of Research

Project Summary

The START Program of Research aims to understand the factors relating to the transition, progression and retention of students at Western Sydney University (WSU). It is intended to provide insights into those factors that are important in developing strategies to better support student transition, progression and retention. You are invited to participate in this study conducted by the Office of the PVC Learning Futures. Your participation allows the START Project Team to use this information from students on application and enrolment for university and during their studies at WSU. This information (such as age, gender, postcode and grades)—routinely collected by all universities—will be de-identified and combined, and can then be used in academic research (such as journal articles and conference presentations), in addition to its traditional use in governmental reporting and accreditation. It is anticipated that there will be further subprojects under the START Program of Research that will investigate specific transition, progression and retention initiatives (for example, a specific student support program) with the aim of not just evaluating the program's impact, but to enable us to publish this research in academic journals.

Please be assured that no individual will be identified in any publication or report.

Benefits

Your participation in this research helps us to understand the factors that improve student support and success in university education. The results from this study will assist us in improving teaching methods, student retention and the quality of your learning experiences. Publishing our research helps us ensure the high academic standard of our work.

Risks

No foreseeable risks or discomfort are expected for participants in this Program of Research and any subproject. Your responses will have no impact on your academic results or your relationship with WSU. All information will be de-identified prior to publication.

Participant Information Sheet — START Program of Research

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If at any stage you would like to speak to someone about your feelings and experiences of being a student, or receive support and advice on managing your life/study balance, you can access free and confidential student counselling provided by WSU. To book a face-to-face or online appointment:

- call 1300 668 370 (option 4 then option 1), or
- email counselling@westernsydney.edu.au

Publication of Results

No personal information will be revealed in any publication, and only general (combined) and de-identified information will be reported. The findings of the research may be published in research reports, academic conference presentations, journal articles and books. We will be retaining the information used in research publications for a minimum of ten years post publication.

Withdrawal from the Study

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate, you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you do choose to opt out, no further information will be collected, however, some information you may have supplied previously may be used in subsequent analysis.

For subprojects of this Program of Research, if you have not opted out, you may be contacted to request your participation in surveys, focus groups, or similar research activities. Subproject researchers must gain your explicit consent for participation and you are not obliged to participate in these subprojects and may opt out at any time.

If you agree to participate in this program of research, you do not need to take any action. If you do not want to participate in this program of research or any potential subprojects, please click [here](#) - and click 'Opt Out' on the web page.

Information Storage and De-identification

Please be assured that only the central team will have access to the raw information collected for this Program of Research. However, your information may be used in further transition, progression, and retention related projects for an extended period of time – for example, once the approval for the START has expired a new Program of Research will be sought that will include allowing researchers to access the eligible information collected under START.

The information for this Program of Research will be stored securely for a minimum of ten



years in password protected servers.

What will happen with my information if I agree to it being used in subprojects?

These subprojects will focus on the research into, and evaluation of, specific themes or programs of student transition to, progression through, and retention at, Western Sydney University. Only your data that is related to student transition, progression and retention will be made available to researchers; the START central team will only enable subproject researches to have access to your information that directly relates to their subprojects. For example, a new student support program was offered in 2020 and subproject researchers wish to compare students' academic progress and retention rates to previous years.

Subprojects that wish to collect any further information for you (such as your participation in a focus group) must explicitly get you consent for your participation and will provide full details on what will happen to your information if your consent to be part of the subproject.

The researchers are asking that you agree to the use of your information (data) in this project and to also agree to allow the data to potentially be used in future research subprojects.

You are being asked to agree to your routinely collected and de-identified student information being used for research on transition, progression and retention at Western Sydney University.

Extended consent

When you agree to extended consent it means that you agree that your data, as part of a larger dataset (the information collected for this project) can be re-used in subprojects that are an extension of this project. This request is in line with current University and government policy that encourages the re-use of data once it has been collected. Collecting information for research can be an inconvenience or burden for participants and has significant costs associated with it. Sharing your information with other researchers gives potential for others to reflect on the data and its findings, to re-use it with new insight, and increase understanding in this research area.

To enable re-use of data, it will be held at the University in its data repository and managed under a Data Management Plan. The re-use of the data will only be allowed after an ethics committee has agreed that the new use of the data meets the requirements of ethics review. Only access demonstrably relevant and directly related to transition, progression and retention data will be allowed.

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The researchers want to keep the data for a minimum of ten years from the date of collection for possible re-use.

You are welcome to discuss these issues further with the researchers before deciding if you agree. You can also find more information about the re-use of data in research in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research – see Sections 2.2.14 - 2.2.18.

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018>

Feedback or Complaints

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The HREC Approval Number is H13567.

If you have any other questions not covered by this Participant Information sheet or you have any issues/concerns regarding START, please contact START@westernsydney.edu.au or call (02) 9685 9877.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research, Engagement, Development and Innovation office on Ph. +61 2 4736 0229, Fax +61 2 4736 0905 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this program of research, you do not need to do anything further. If you wish to opt out, please click [here](#) – enter your Student ID and click 'Proceed to opt out' on the web page.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the START central team at START@westernsydney.edu.au.