



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Learning Centre Annual Report 2004



THE LEARNING CENTRE

UNSW

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Summary of Student Participation in Executive Learning Centre Services at UNSW in 2004

Language and academic skills support to enrolled students is provided by The Learning Centre via face-to-face teaching and via online academic skills resources. Face-to-Face support is:

- Centrally-located
- Faculty-based

A total of 1200 students made use of the centrally-located services at least once in 2004. The total number of attendances was 2367, indicating that many students accessed support on more than one occasion. A more detailed analysis of the student demographics and support accessed is provided in Section 3.

From the available data, the total number of students accessing skills support delivered through the Faculties and Schools on at least one occasion was 2693 (see Section 4).

In addition, skills support was delivered through a number of pre-sessional and preparatory programs to a total of 454 students (see Section 5).

Several thousand students also accessed learning resources through the free academic skills brochures available to all students in print or via The Learning Centre website <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au> (see Section 6).

In 2004, the total number of UNSW (excluding ADFA) enrolled students at 31 March was 38, 111. The 3893 enrolled students who accessed Learning Centre face-to-face support on at least one occasion represented 10% of this total.

The Learning Centre's Operational Goals 2004

1. Maintain and develop academic skills programs and learning resources, both generic and subject-specific, which address students' language, communication and study skills at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at UNSW.
2. Engage in university-wide initiatives to improve the quality of learning and teaching at UNSW.
3. Develop online academic skills resources to enhance students' experience of learning at UNSW. Develop a transition to academic study site for new students and a website that provides educational resources for students on how to write well and avoid plagiarism.
4. Maintain the career development program for Learning Centre staff.
5. Collaborate with student services units to contribute to the provision of an exemplary educational experience for UNSW students.

1. Introduction

In 2004, The Learning Centre continued to focus on its core activities of supporting students' development of their academic language, learning and communication skills. This support was delivered both centrally, in the Centre itself through individual consultation and through the workshop program (Section 3), and through the Faculties (see Section 4). Visits to The Learning Centre website showed a substantial increase over 2004, particularly to the academic skills resource pages (Section 6). The *First Steps: A Beginner's Guide to University* online resource, which aims to support students in the transition to university study, was launched at the beginning of the year. An interactive online resource on writing well and avoiding plagiarism was developed during the year to be launched in 2005. Through increased collaborative activity in the Division of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Quality Improvement) (see Section 8), Centre staff were able to extend the outreach and impact of the Centre. New initiatives included the Enabling Skills project, ICT Assist and Sessional Staff Development. The Learning Centre continued to provide tutor training on request with approximately 100 tutors having the opportunity to participate in a four-hour workshop on facilitating learning. Similarly, The Learning Centre continued to participate actively in providing a range of student support services at key points in the student experience such as orientation and induction (see Section 12 in particular).

2. Staff

Director

Sue Starfield, BA MA PhD *Wits*, LèsL MèsL DEA DPFE *Paris III*

Learning Advisers

Linda Burnett, BA *Adel.*, M.LITT.*UNE* (part-time)

Ian Collinson, BA(Hons), PhD *UNSW* (part-time, temporary)

Dominic Fitzsimmons, BALLB (Hons) PhD *UNSW* (part-time)

Gwyn Jones, BA *WLU*, BEd *Tor*, MAEdAdmin CertTESOL *UNSW*

Pam Mort, BA DipProfArtStud. *City Art Institute*, GradDipEd *Nepean C.A.E.*, MA *Syd.*

Lyn Hallion, BA DipEd MEd Cert TESOL *UNSW* (part-time)

Maria Zueva, DipHEd *Thames Valley*, GradDip *Otago*, DipTESOL MA *Victoria*

Administrative Officers

Valerie Caulcutt

Coralie Venus, BA (Hons) *UNSW*, DipT (Prim) *S.Aust* (Independent Learning Centre)

Publications and Web Officer

Tracey-Lee Downey, Design Cert *Syd I.T.*

Reception

Lagi Puni

University Orientation and Study Skills Tutors

Gwyn Jones(Coordinator)

Ian Collinson

Bronwyn Philips

Dominic Fitzsimmons

Monica Kerretts

Shivaun Weybury

Maria Zueva

Linda Burnett

Lynn Hallion

Academic Preparation Program Tutors

Pamela Mort (Coordinator)

Linda Burnett

Jenny Butler

Ian Collinson

Susan French

Lisa Holloway
Bronwyn Phillips
Geoff Quick
Saskia Rogers
Maria Zueva

Peer Writing Assistants

Lester Adorjany
Jenny Butler
Plamen Chotchov
Tricia Daly
Brooke Dinning
Susan French
Keren Hammerschlag
Daniel Hanafi
Lisa Holloway
Michelle Imison
Monica Kerretts
Vincent Ndinisa
Peter Nugus
Geoff Quick
Kathy Raheb
Saskia Rogers
Warwick Shapcott

Law Peer Tutors

Simon Cowan
Frances Foster-Thorpe
Cameron Grant
Christopher Hartley
Jessica Kim
Angelique Leondis
Yumin Liu
Samantha Newman
Sian-Lee Ooi
Julie Porteous
Eugene Quah
Frances Voon

Workshop Tutors

Susan Angus
Angela Barrett
Plamen Chotchov
Tracey-Lee Downey
Ginette Farcell
Joseph Indaimo
Pamela Karantonis
Bronwyn Phillips
Kathy Raheb
Pierre Richard

3. Centrally-based Language, Communication and Academic Skills Support

The Writing Assistant consultation program, the academic skills workshops and the learning resources available to students in the Independent Learning Centre comprise the centrally-delivered support provided by The Learning Centre. Support provided directly to the Faculties and Schools is described in Section 4.

3.1 Postgraduate Coursework Day

On Saturday 20th March, a series of workshops was offered specifically for postgraduate coursework students who are unable to attend workshops on offer during the week. The workshops on offer were:

- essay writing for postgraduates;
- report writing for postgraduates;
- writing a critical review;
- presentation skills;
- reading skills for postgraduates; and
- PowerPoint.

Seventy-seven students registered for the workshops, some of which were offered twice, resulting in an overall workshop attendance of 131.

3.2 Writing Consultations

Any UNSW student may make an appointment to see a Writing Assistant to discuss an assignment on which they are working. Writing Assistants are senior students who undergo regular training in The Learning Centre. They offer feedback on the organisation and structure of students' writing but do not proof-read or correct minor grammatical errors. Consultations are offered on both Kensington and COFA campuses.

A total of 862 consultations took place in 2004. As 437 students registered for a consultation, a number of students obviously returned for a subsequent consultation.

3.2.1 Peer Writing Training

Dominic Fitzsimmons co-ordinates the Peer Writing Program, including developing and facilitating induction and ongoing training for new Peer Writing Assistants; monthly skills development seminars

for all Writing Assistants; informal consultations with Peer Writing Assistants during semester as well as individual half-hour review and reflection meetings with each at the end of semester.

Table 3.1 shows the total number of student attendances at both individual writing consultations and academic skills workshops and includes student usage of resources in the Centre's resource centre. The attendance totals indicate that many of the students who attend either an individual consultation or a workshop/resource consultation do so on more than one occasion.

Table 3.1 Total number of student attendances at central Learning Centre support

<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops & Resources</i>	<i>PG Coursework Day</i>	<i>Total</i>
862	1374	131	2367

Table 3.2 shows attendance by gender (each student considered once only) and indicates that female students seek assistance at almost double the rate of male students.

Table 3.2 Attendance by gender at central Learning Centre support

	<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops & Resources</i>	<i>PG Coursework Day</i>	<i>Total</i>
Female	293	415	48	756
Male	144	271	29	444
Total	437	686	77	1200

Table 3.3 shows attendance (each student considered once only) by English language status and indicates that the majority of the students who sought centralised assistance identified as being from a non-English speaking background. However, a third of the students stated that they were from an English-speaking background.

Table 3.3 Attendance by English language status at central Learning Centre support

	<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops & Resources</i>	<i>PG Coursework Day</i>	<i>Total</i>
ESB	186	201	24	411
NESB	251	485	53	789
Total	437	686	77	1200

In terms of program level, more postgraduate students accessed central Learning Centre support overall, and this was due to their attendance in large numbers at workshops and their resource usage (see Table 3.4). More undergraduate students made use of a writing consultation than did postgraduates.

Table 3.4 Attendance by program level at central Learning Centre support

	<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops & Resources</i>	<i>PG Coursework Day</i>	<i>Total</i>
Undergraduate	252	195		447
Postgraduate	172	472	77	721
Staff/visiting fellows		19		19
Not advised	13			13
Total	437p	686	77	1200

Table 3.5 shows attendance by residence status at Learning Centre support. Figures from postgraduate coursework day were not available. It is noteworthy that while more local undergraduates make use of the Centre's services, more international postgraduates avail themselves of the services.

Table 3.5 Attendance by residence status at central Learning Centre support

	<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops & Resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
International Undergraduate	98	95	193
Local Undergraduate	154	101	255
International Postgraduate	115	289	404
Local Postgraduate	57	183	240
International Staff/visiting fellows		14	14
Local Staff/visiting fellows		4	4
Not advised	13		13
Total	437	686	1123

Table 3.6 shows student attendance by Faculty at writing consultations. Arts and Social Sciences constitute the largest group, possibly reflecting the nature of assessment in the Faculty.

Table 3.6: Attendance at writing consultations by Faculty (each student once)

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>No of Students</i>	<i>%</i>
AGSM	5	1
Arts and Social Sciences	148	34
Built Environment	31	7
COFA	62	14
Commerce and Economics	62	14
Engineering	47	11
Law	11	3
Medicine	21	5
Science	44	10
Not Advised	6	1
Total	437	100

3.3 Academic Skills Workshops and Resources

A total of 725 students attended at least one of the academic skills workshops offered by the Learning Centre and/or accessed learning resources. Table 3.7 indicates that in terms of Faculty uptake, 21.5% of the students were from Arts and Social Sciences, 18% from Engineering and Commerce and Economics respectively and 13.4% from Science.

Table 3.7 Attendance at academic skills workshops and resource usage by Faculty* (each student once)

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>No of students</i>	<i>%</i>
AGSM	5	.7
Arts & Social Sciences	156	21.5
Built Environment	31	4.3
COFA	47	6.5
Commerce & Economics	131	18.0
Engineering	135	18.6
Law	68	9.4
Medicine	49	6.8
Science	97	13.4
Other	6	.8
Total	725	100

*36 students were enrolled in combined degrees

Table 3.8 shows overall student attendance in 2004 by each workshop type with some workshops being offered on several occasions, particularly conversation and pronunciation.

Table 3.8 Attendance at Academic Skills workshops by workshop type

<i>Workshop Type</i>	<i>Total Annual Attendance</i>
Academic Skills Program	8
Academic Writing for Postgraduate ESL Students	45
Academic Writing for Postgraduates	14
Academic Writing for Undergraduates	9
Active Learning for Exams	4
Advanced Writing Program for PG Research Students	35
Avoiding Plagiarism	5
Conferences: Writing and Presentation	9
Conversation Practice	147
Critical Thinking	23
Developing Critical Arguments Using Evidence: PG	16
Editing and Proofreading	8
Essay Writing for Undergraduates	19
From Go to Whoa: Moving from Reading to Writing	15
Grammar Editing	47
Introduction to Critical Thinking	25
Introduction to Excel	19
Listening and Note-taking	13
Literature Review	15
Managing Postgraduate Reading	14
More Critical Thinking	11
MS Word for Large Documents	70
Oral Presentations	35
Postgraduate Review	8
PowerPoint Presentations	9
Pronunciation	118

<i>Workshop Type</i>	<i>Total Annual Attendance</i>
Reading and Note-Making	17
Reading Critically	20
Reading Skills for Undergraduates	20
Referencing	8
Reflective Writing	5
Report Writing for Postgraduates	7
Report Writing for Undergraduates	9
Skills for Honours Students	2
Talking about Tutoring	5
Talk, Exchange, Listen & Learn (TELL)	30
Thesis Proposals	24
Thesis Writing for Arts & SS Masters Students	4
Thesis writing for COFA	32
Thesis writing for Science, Engineering & the Built Environment	14
Writing a Critical Summary	8
Writing Critically	45
Writing for Law	44
Total	1035

4. Faculties

This section reports on academic skills support for both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework and research students delivered via a School or a Faculty-based program. As the report indicates, support varies in terms of types of input, intensity and duration and is provided in response to a request from the School or Faculty concerned. In 2004, approximately 2693 students accessed Learning Centre support at least once in this way.

4.1 Arts and Social Sciences

4.1.1 ARTS5012

Thesis writing was offered for the first times as a 14-hour course for 23 Arts and Social Sciences Postgraduate Research students.

4.1.2 English

Ian Collinson participated in two, hour-long workshops in the School of English on Managing the Student-Supervisor relationship. The April workshop was attended by nine Honours students, while the May workshop was attended by ten postgraduate students.

Sue Starfield gave a one-hour talk to ten postgraduate research students on thesis writing.

4.1.3 Politics and International Relations

An hour and a half-long workshop on essay writing structures and strategies for masters in International Relations' students was developed and facilitated by Dominic Fitzsimmons and delivered to 15 students.

4.2 Built Environment

A two-hour session on academic English was offered to 15 students.

In Session One, Dominic Fitzsimmons developed and co-facilitated a four-hour academic skills seminar with Wendy Shaw from Geography for 15 Honours students. The focus of the seminar was on thesis structure and rationale and on micro and macro writing skills.

In Session One in Landscape Architecture, Dominic Fitzsimmons and Catherine Evans from the Landscape Architecture program, jointly developed and facilitated four, two-hour workshops for 12, fourth-year

dissertation students. In Session Two, they collaborated again on a series of five, two-hour long research methods seminars for 15 students.

In Interior Architecture one, three-hour workshop for 45 fourth-year dissertation students who were beginning their written thesis work was offered in Session One. A 40-minute workshop on academic writing expectations, especially plagiarism, was offered to 40 second-year students.

A one-hour workshop on oral presentations was offered to 55 Masters of Construction Management students in Session Two.

4.3 College of Fine Arts

Maria Zueva ran a two-hour orientation workshop in week one that was attended by 12 people. The workshop focused on academic acculturation and generic academic skills (effective reading, essay writing, exam preparation, and the research process).

Maria also ran two, two-hour sessions as part of the Honours Seminar for School of Design students. The first focused on the thesis structure, time management and writing the first draft and the second session on the editing process. Six students attended the first session and seven students attended the second session. These sessions were repeated in Session Two for eight students.

Attendance at the new thesis writing workshop program for COFA research students, which was offered for two hours weekly over four weeks in Sessions One and Two, is recorded in Table 3.7.

4.4 Commerce

4.4.1 MARK1014

Forty students attended a three-hour tutorial on poster preparation and design. The Learning Adviser involved spent two hours in October judging the final posters.

4.5 Engineering

4.5.1 Postgraduate Induction Program

The Faculty of Engineering offered a series of lectures and workshops to induct new research students into the Faculty's research culture, its expectations and student responsibilities. About 60 students were involved in a five-day program spread over Session One, consisting of

lectures and workshops. Pam Mort co-facilitated a two-hour workshop on ethical dilemmas for 16 students from a range of disciplinary areas.

Writing a research overview

Students were required to prepare a project overview and an annotated bibliography of up to five articles related to their research. In week ten, Pam Mort developed and team taught with Associate Professor Diane Wiley and Dr David Clements, a workshop on preparing the project overview and the annotated bibliography of readings related to the students' research. Attendance was voluntary for this program and a total of seven students attended the three-hour workshop which was repeated once.

Pam also attended and gave feedback on the oral presentations of the research overview class in weeks 13 and 14, during which eight students presented.

This was repeated in Session Two for 20 PhD students in the first session of their research program.

Writing the Thesis

A series of four, two-hour workshops (repeated twice) on managing and structuring the thesis, developing an argument, and editing strategies was offered from weeks 11-14 of Session One. Students brought theses to class and some were also provided for analysis and discussion. A total of 21 students attended. Drs Albert Nymeyer and David Clements and Associate Professor Diane Wiley attended the workshops and added their advice and comments.

In Session Two, a workshop on writing for publication was also offered to the 20 new PhD students, and a panel on reviewers' expectations was organised. Members of the Faculty were also on the panel.

4.5.2 Chemical Engineering and Industrial Chemistry

In Session One, The Learning Centre taught the group work, project management, thinking and oral presentation skills component of CEIC1010. The aim was to prepare students for working in large groups on a young achiever project for the rest of the year. The 72 students were divided into three groups and each group attended a two-hour workshop in weeks five, six and eight.

In weeks seven to thirteen of Session One, The Learning Centre taught a component of INDC3110 to ten, third-year students. The students visited a factory and were required to prepare a written report and an oral presentation. The classes covered report writing skills, oral presentation skills, research skills and project management. Feedback on the oral presentations was given in conjunction with the lecturer. The classes ran for two hours each week.

CEIC8312: Safety and Communication in the Process Industries

This six unit of credit, 14-week course for PhD and Masters by research students in the School of Chemical Engineering and Industrial Chemistry was again offered in Session Two. Twenty-four students attended for two hours per week. The course covers managing research, writing a thesis proposal, literature review, oral presentations skills and computer skills for thesis writing.

4.5.3 Civil and Environmental Engineering

CIVEN1021

A four-hour tutorial on report writing processes, structure, style and referencing was offered as part of CIVEN1021 in the Summer Session. This first-year course aimed to introduce students to the expectations of written work in civil engineering. The tutorial was attended by 15 students and team-taught with Associate Professor Stephen Foster.

In weeks three and five of Session One of CIVEN1021, The Learning Centre offered two hours of lectures on similar topics to 130 students and assisted the tutors with planning two hours of tutorials.

CVEN3023

In weeks two, three, five, and ten, as part of CVEN3023, 95 students attended five hours of interactive lectures on group work, leadership and team issues, including conflict resolution strategies. Content included writing and speaking well; executive summaries; using visuals and appendices; rehearsing for a talk and delivery techniques. The students were required to complete a project report and oral presentation as part of a group assignment. The workshops were jointly presented by The Learning Centre, the Counselling Unit and lecturers Associate Professor Mario Attard and Dr Bill Pierson.

4.5.4 Computer Science

A new initiative requested by Dr Albert Nymeyer involved the development and administration in Session One of a writing diagnostic assignment to assess the quality of the 25 new research students' writing. Four of the students were encouraged to use Learning Centre services.

COMP9910 Research management and communication skills was a six units of credit course that was offered in Session Two for three hours per week over 14 weeks to 31 PhD and Masters by research students. The course covered thesis proposal writing, literature reviews, oral presentations skills and research management strategies.

4.5.5 Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications

TELE1010

In weeks two and three of Session One, 250 students in received two, one-hour lectures on report writing and oral presentation skills that aimed to familiarise them with the expectations of written and spoken communication in the school.

Supplemental classes

The Learning Centre again offered a supplemental series of classes to students who had failed to pass the communication component of TELE1010 in Session One. Students were given the option of resubmitting a report and doing an oral presentation. In Session Two, from weeks two to nine, eight students attended 14 hours of classes and one class of feedback from the lecturer and Learning Adviser who taught report writing and presentation skills.

4.5.6 Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

In week one of Session One, 250 first-year students were given a 20-minute talk on how to use the *In a Nutshell* study guide and the range of Learning Centre services available.

MECH4001

In week five of Session Two, a three and a half hour lecture on thesis writing was given to 150 honours students. It was team-taught with Dr Tracie Barber. An overview of thesis structure and the different purposes of each chapter were considered. Sample theses' extracts were examined and students practised writing their research aims.

4.5.7 Mining Engineering

In week six of Session One, ten fourth-year honours students attended a one and a half hour lecture on planning and writing the literature review.

In Session Two, 30 first-year students attended two tutorials on report writing.

4.5.8 Photovoltaic Engineering

In response to a request from the school, a new two-hour workshop was developed and offered to 25 third-year students on report writing conventions and structure. This was repeated in Session Two for 35 students.

A three-hour workshop on thesis writing was developed and offered to 11 fourth-year students.

A writing guide was developed specifically for the School and all students received copies.

4.6 Law

In Session One, 16 students attended a one and a half hour-long workshop for International Masters students in Law.

The Learning Centre continued to develop and facilitate induction and training for the students who act as Law Peer Tutors. Student peer tutors attend a pre-sessional training workshop as well as fortnightly meetings with Dominic Fitzsimmons who coordinates the training. In Session One there were eight peer tutors. At the end of each semester, each Law Peer Tutor has an individual half-hour review and reflection meeting with Dominic, who is himself in regular contact with Associate Professor Prue Vines of the School of Law.

The *Law Peer Tutor Handbook* was developed by Dominic Fitzsimmons and designed by Tracey-Lee Downey and made available to all tutors.

4.7 Medicine

Between two and five first-year medical students attended weekly, hour-long communication skills classes in Session One. Students' timetables made regular attendance difficult. This continued in Session Two with one regular attendee.

Gwyn Jones attended two meetings to brief the tutors on the report writing criteria developed by The Learning Centre for the students to use in the Foundations phase of the new medical curriculum.

4.7.1 Pathology

In Session One, 57 third-year pathology students attended two, one-hour lectures on presentation skills, followed by 19 small group meetings to assist the groups to prepare for their presentations.

4.7.2 Public Health and Community Medicine

CM 9100

Assignment management (CM 9100), an academic skills course, was again offered to 15 international postgraduate coursework students in the Masters of Community Health and Health Services Management course in Session One. The course was offered for two hours each week over 14 weeks, and was offered again to 12 students in Session Two.

Research Management

Within the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, eight research students attended a 12-week, two hours per week course on managing the thesis writing process.

Research seminars in Public Health and Community Medicine

In Session One, seven PhD students attended a two-hour workshop on writing proposals. This workshop was repeated in Session Two for nine students.

Two PhD students attended the two-hour reading for research seminar in Session One.

Seven PhD students attended a two-hour workshop on writing proposals in Session One.

A seminar on writing critiques was attended by six students in Session Two.

Writing the literature review was attended by eight students in Session Two.

Presenting research was attended by eight PhD students in Session Two.

In addition, Gwyn Jones collaborated during both sessions with the Medical Illustration staff of the Faculty of Medicine to present a one-hour workshop on poster presentations at the School retreat for 60 PhD students during the PhD induction program.

4.8 Science

4.8.1 Aviation

In AVIA1321, in weeks five, ten, 13 and 14, The Learning Centre gave a series of lectures that aimed to embed graduate attributes' development into the first-year course. Content included: learning styles, group work, report writing, plagiarism, exam skills, oral presentations, and feedback on group oral presentations. A total of 75 students attended nine hours of lectures.

4.8.2 Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences (BABS)

In late February, 62 honours students in the following programs—BIOT4053, BIOC 4103,4318,4428, BIOT4073, MICR 4013—attended a four and a half hour long school-wide induction program on thesis writing—structures and processes. This workshop was repeated prior to Session Two for the new intake of 18 students.

4.8.3 Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences (BEES)

In week five of Session One, 120 second-year students attended two, two-hour workshops on exam skills, including study preparation, analysing and planning answers and time management in exams.

Students were given practice in writing exam answers and feedback was given by a Learning Adviser and the Lecturer.

4.8.4 Optometry

Linda Burnett developed a customised academic literacy manual, *Academic English and Communication Skills for Optometry*, and designed and implemented a diagnostic academic literacy assessment and provided feedback to students and the lecturer, Dr Junghans. She then taught sessions on academic literacy and provided individual consultations to six students in the masters' course, Clinical Imaging. This project was developed as part of the Postgraduate Coursework Awards (see 8.5).

4.8.5 Psychology

Gwyn Jones presented six, one-hour lectures on writing and presentation skills to 300 first-year Psychology students in Sessions One and Two.

Dominic Fitzsimmons developed and facilitated a three-hour *Writing for Psychology* workshop for masters' students in Forensic Psychology at the request of Associate Professor Jane Goodman-Delahunty. It was attended by 11 students.

5. Pre-sessional and Preparatory Programs

The Learning Centre provides several pre-sessional and preparatory programs as described below. A total of 454 students attended these programs in 2004.

5.1 University Orientation and Study Skills (UOSS) course

The Learning Centre again delivered the UOSS component of the University Preparation Program, an access program for prospective mature age students who do not meet the University's entry requirements. The UOSS course explicitly teaches the academic skills essential for university success and is run each session for 14 weeks. Students are taught in small groups of about 20 and meet weekly for two hours. A total of 166 students enrolled in Session One and 157 students in Session Two.

5.2 Academic Preparation Program (APP)

The Learning Centre again provided the 50-hour *Academic English and Communication Skills* component of the AusAid sponsored *Academic Preparation Program* for international scholarship students. A total of 57 students attended the course over three weeks prior to Session One, while in July, 17 students attended prior to Session Two.

5.3 Commerce and Economics Preparatory Program (CEPP)

This new preparatory program for indigenous students was launched at the beginning of the year. The Faculty requested Learning Centre assistance in developing and teaching the academic skills component. Four students attended over several weeks.

5.4 Indigenous Pre Law Program

Once again The Learning Centre developed and facilitated the academic study skills component of the pre-law program for 21 indigenous students in collaboration with the Faculty of Law prior to Session One. Dominic Fitzsimmons taught either alone or as part of a team for a total of 28 hours.

It was decided to offer the pre-sessional programs at the end, rather than at the beginning of the year, so a second pre-law program was run in November and December. It was attended by 12 students over three weeks. The Learning Centre's contribution was for 30 hours of individual and team teaching.

5.5 Preparatory Medical Program

Four students attended the academic skills component of this program for indigenous students. The component was held over two weeks for a total of six hours prior to Session One. Five students attended the program offered at the end of the year.

5.6 Preparatory Social Work Program

Seven students took part in the pre-sessional program over four weeks prior to Session One for a total of 18 hours. Four attended the program offered after Session Two for prospective students in 2005.

6. Learning Centre Website Use and Resource Development

During 2004, requests received by The Learning Centre website (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>) increased significantly. The site received 292, 655 page requests between March and November (see Table 6.1). The most popular section of the website remained the online academic skills resources. This section received 162, 437 requests for pages and downloadable PDF files.

A new online resource *First Steps: A Beginner's Guide to University* (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/firststeps/>) was developed by Ian Collinson and Tracey-Lee Downey. *First Steps*, designed to assist new students with the transition to university study, was launched in March and received regular visits, as Table 6.2 shows.

The Centre developed an innovative online resource on writing well and avoiding plagiarism. This new resource will be launched at the beginning of 2005.

Table 6.1 Number of page requests March-November 2004

Months 2004	Total requests for pages	Average no. of requests per day
March	42,799	1,380
April	33,789	1,126
May	34,782	1,122
June	25,359	859
July	22,973	741
August	39,869	1,286
September	33,913	1,130
October	32,798	1,058
November	26,373	879
Total	292, 655	

The Learning Centre website registered the least traffic during June and July, the university's mid-year recess period. Many users accessed the website directly, were referred through Web CT, or followed links from other UNSW sites. Many other users accessed the site as a result of

search engines, or followed links from other universities or educational websites.

Table 6.2 contains a breakdown of page requests per section of the website from March to November 2004.

Table 6.2 Number of page requests per section March-November 2004

	<i>Online resources</i>	<i>First Steps site</i>	<i>Using a case study online workshop</i>	<i>UOSS website</i>
March	21,151	950	1,886	3,161
April	18,704	574	1,159	1,980
May	19,459	1,257	1,222	1,473
June	13,869	933	777	1,162
July	10,468	885	978	1,449
August	22,206	833	1,375	2,630
September	20,786	947	1,176	1,248
October	20,533	662	1,039	1,490
November	15,261	770	968	1,800
Total	162, 437	7, 811	10, 580	16, 393

Breaking down individual page requests, the most requested page was the on-line study skills resources index page (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/olib.html>). Many other sites, including the UNSW WebCT interface, link directly to it. Of the resources, the most consistently requested were: the Harvard referencing style guide; the introduction to essay writing; report writing; note-taking; thesis proposals and avoiding plagiarism.

The other most frequently accessed pages were those containing Learning Centre Workshop information, links to other sites, and information for students.

The site received requests from Australia (education and commercial sectors), Singapore, Canada, New Zealand and the United States Higher Education sectors.

During the year the Harvard and APA referencing guides were updated. A booklet on report writing was developed and produced for the School of Photovoltaics. An academic skills resource booklet was developed for postgraduate students in Optometry (OPTM7307 Clinical Imaging).

A handbook for the Law peer tutors was also produced (see 4.6).

7. Tutor training

Gaining the essential skills needed to run tutorials can be seen as developing a key postgraduate attribute. In 2004, The Learning Centre offered morning-long tutor-training workshops in response to requests from schools or faculties. A total of 97 tutors were able to access support for their teaching through The Learning Centre.

Four tutor-training workshops were run for postgraduate research students who tutor in the Faculty of Engineering. These four hour-long sessions covered small group facilitation skills, promoting active learning and planning and managing a tutorial. There was input from Engineering staff on the specific nature of tutorials in Engineering. A total of 55 students participated in the training.

Similar workshops, contextualised to the disciplines concerned, were offered in the School of Psychology (15 tutors) and the Department of Statistics (eight tutors).

Eleven students attended a university-wide tutor training workshop offered by The Learning Centre in Session One.

The School of Computer Science and Engineering requested that The Learning Centre run a tutor training workshop for undergraduate students who tutor in the school. This was offered jointly with Dr Richard Buckland, who teaches in the School, for eight tutors.

Dominic Fitzsimmons took part in a Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences three-day tutor-training program in which he developed and facilitated a two-hour session on assessment, marking and feedback.

In addition, Leon Wolff of the Law School invited The Learning Centre to participate in an induction program for sessional staff in the Law School.

The Director was invited to brief tutors on the Management Skills course of the EMBA at the Australian Graduate School of Management about Learning Centre support services for students.

8. Participation in initiatives of the Division of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Quality Improvement)

The Learning Centre continued to participate actively in divisional initiatives to enhance student learning.

8.1 Enabling Skills

During the year, the Director of The Learning and Teaching Unit, Michele Scoufis, Isabella Trahn from the Library and The Director of The Learning Centre, Sue Starfield, collaborated on a document entitled *Enabling Skills*, which argued that the University needed to consider greater support provision for students in terms of both information and academic literacy.

On August 3 2004, the Academic Board endorsed the recommendations of the discussion paper *Enabling Skills at UNSW* (available at <http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/skills/enabling.html>) approving in principle and authorising the conduct of trials of the following processes:

- (i) For all commencing UNSW students, early feedback on a written task within the program is to be completed by week 5 or equivalent. This would allow identification of students requiring substantial assistance, as well as areas of particular difficulty for whole classes, so that students can be assisted and difficult areas addressed; and
- (ii) students identified as requiring substantial assistance in academic literacy and academic English-language skills will be allowed to enrol in credit-bearing courses in English and academic literacy.

The Learning Centre was asked to trial an early identification process in 2005. In November, a forum was held with speakers from the Universities of Sydney and Wollongong, where early diagnosis of students' academic literacy has been in place for some time, invited to talk on their approaches to both assessment, feedback and support, including the provision of credit-bearing courses. The forum was attended by about 30 people.

8.2 Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT)

The Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT) program for UNSW teaching staff consists of an intensive five-day workshop and four additional half-day workshops. The FULT program targets teaching staff with little or no experience of teaching in higher education. Sue Starfield participated in Day One of this week-long course which was offered on five occasions during the year. She was also asked to participate in several of the half-day workshops on the topic of responding to student diversity.

8.3 Graduate Certificate in Higher Education

Having completed FULT, staff may choose to enrol in the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education. The Director of The Learning Centre co-facilitated the *Student Learning* module with Jan McLean, the course coordinator, in May and September.

The Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching is a UNSW program under the auspices of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Quality Improvement) and is offered by the School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

8.4 ICT Assist

Throughout Session 2, 2004, an innovative trial service was put in place to pilot a model of integrated services freely available to UNSW staff and students, to assist them to develop the skills and awareness that would enable them to be competent and confident enough to work and study in their respective IT operating environments. A number of products and services providing face-to-face and virtual basic IT training and assistance were introduced.

The trial ICT Assist project was a joint initiative of a range of units of the Division of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Quality Improvement), principally the University Library, and UNSW IT Services. Divisional Units that contributed include EDTeC, The Learning Centre and the Staff Development Unit. Student Services and the University Union also contributed.

The Word for Large Documents and other ICT-related workshops previously offered by The Learning Centre are now offered through ICT Assist. The Learning Centre assisted in this transition, providing workshop materials and offering ICT trainers the opportunity to observe workshop sessions.

8.5 Postgraduate Coursework Awards

Linda Burnett was a joint awardee with colleagues from the School of Optometry and Vision Science, the Faculty of Science and EDTeC for a project to further develop teaching, learning, and assessment within OPTM7307 Clinical Imaging. Her specific role was to develop contextualised academic literacy resources for the students and develop a diagnostic literacy assessment procedure.

Sue Starfield and colleagues from the School of Politics and International Relations were awarded a grant to devise and implement a comprehensive 'Managing Diversity' program in the postgraduate coursework program in International Relations and to help teaching staff manage student diversity more effectively, thereby enhancing students' learning experiences.

Both awardees participated in the 2004 UNSW Learning and Teaching Forum held in December at which the project outcomes were reported.

8.6 Sessional Staff

Sessional teachers are all those members of staff not in tenured or permanent positions, including tutors, casual lecturers, demonstrators, clinical tutors, and people external to the university from the professions or industry. A project to support sessional teachers with managing the specific demands of teaching on a casual basis, such as developing effective and supportive relations with other staff, communicating with students, and being informed about important issues and processes such as school and faculty evaluation and assessment processes, was initiated through the Division and located within The Learning and Teaching Unit. A steering committee consisting of the Directors of The Learning Centre, The Learning and Teaching Unit and EDTeC was set up to manage the project and provide oversight of the development of useful and relevant UNSW policies relating to sessional teachers and development opportunities at school, faculty, and university levels for sessional teachers, such as induction programs, learning and teaching workshops, and online training.

9. Research Supervisor Workshops

The Learning Centre participated in two workshops for new research supervisors during the year as part of panel discussions on support services available to research students and their supervisors.

10. Research Mentor Program

The Director facilitated a day-long workshop on writing for publication for approximately 20 researchers.

The Director gave a lunchtime talk to approximately 20 research supervisors on thesis writing.

11. Conference Presentations by Learning Centre Staff

Starfield, S. The evolution of a thesis-writing course for Arts and Social Sciences research students: What can applied linguistics offer? Invited paper in Colloquium on teaching and researching thesis and dissertation writing, *2004 TESOL Convention*, Long Beach, CA.

Ravelli, L. J., Starfield, S. & Thornton, L. PhD Thesis introductions: Sociology and History". Paper presented to the *Australian Systemic-Functional Linguistics Association Conference*, Brisbane, July. (Paper also presented to the School of Modern Languages Research Seminar in 2004).

Starfield, S., Ravelli, L. J. & Thornton, L. 'This is why this thesis is a strange piece of writing': The generic structure of 'new humanities' research theses. Paper presented to the *Applied Linguistics Association Australia Conference*, Adelaide, July.

12. Publications by Learning Centre Staff

Starfield, S., Wordpower: Negotiating success in a first-year sociology essay. In L. J. Ravelli & R. A. Ellis (Eds). *Analysing Academic Writing* (pp. 66-83), London: Continuum.

Starfield, S., Why does this feel empowering?: Thesis writing, concordancing, and the 'corporatising' university. In B. Norton & K. Toohey (Eds). *Critical Pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 138-157). Cambridge University Press

Wu C.L., Ngatai L, Sweeten, J. & Mort, P. First year aviation: Integrating content with information literacy and learning support schemes, in *First Contact: The challenge of Integrating Graduate Attributes from First Year: Proceedings of the first year Forum 2003*. UNSW Teaching and Learning Unit, Sydney, Australia.

13. Contributions to the University, the Profession and the Community

13.1 Courses and Careers Day

The Learning Centre participated in Courses and Careers Day in September and offered a talk on managing the transition from school to university.

13.2 HERDSA SIG

Learning Centre staff again participated in the professional activities of the NSW Language and Learning Special Interest Group (SIG) of HERDSA (Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia), attending meetings of the group during the year.

13.3 Info Day

The Learning Centre staffed an information stall at Info Day in January and offered talks on how to be a successful student.

13.4 Mentor training

The Learning Centre participated in the training for Peer Mentors, co-facilitating two full-day training sessions for Law (14 students) and Computer Science and Engineering (20 students) with the Counselling unit in February. The Learning Centre also assisted with medical students' mentor training.

13.5 Orientation Activities

The Learning Centre played an active role in the numerous student orientation activities listed below.

13.5.1 Arts & Social Sciences Postgraduate Research Induction

The Director addressed about 60 postgraduate research students in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences about the range of relevant Learning Centre support available to them.

13.5.2 International Student Services

At international student orientation sessions, the Director introduced The Learning Centre services and Gwyn Jones gave a talk on 'Aussie English', which was well received. New international students attended special orientation sessions in the Independent Learning Centre to alert them to the range of resources available.

13.5.3 Law School Tea

In Sessions One and Two, The Director was invited to talk to new international postgraduate students about The Learning Centre at a welcome tea in the Law School.

13.5.4 PG Coursework Orientation

The Learning Centre participated in the university-wide orientation session for postgraduate coursework students prior to each session.

13.5.5 Postgraduate Research Student Induction

In each session, the Director spoke at the university-wide induction evenings for postgraduate research students and introduced them to The Learning Centre services.

13.5.6 Smart Start

The Learning Centre spoke to Access students attending an orientation session about managing the transition to university successfully.

13.5.7 Uniprep

The Learning Centre ran a number of academic skills workshops in 'O' Week prior to Session One on topics such as essay writing; reading and note taking; avoiding plagiarism; oral presentations; listening and note-taking; writing for Law; writing for science and engineering; writing for the social sciences and humanities. These were very popular with students with all sessions filled to capacity.

13.5.8 New medical curriculum orientation

Learning Centre staff were asked to act as facilitators for the day-long orientation program for first-year Medical students starting the new curriculum.

13.6 Membership of University Committees and Working Groups

Sue Starfield was a member of the Reference Group for the UNSW Learning and Teaching Plan 2005-2007.

Sue Starfield was a member of the Undergraduate Studies committee.

Gwyn Jones and Sue Starfield were members of the University Preparation Program Management Committee.

Sue Starfield was a member of the Student Equity Network and the Rural Students' Network.

Sue Starfield and Pam Mort participated in the activities of the Post-Graduate Research Interest Group (PGRIG), a cross-faculty grouping that meets regularly to discuss issues and policy for postgraduate research students and supervisors.

Sue Starfield regularly attended meetings of the Committee on Education and was a member of the plagiarism working party.

Sue Starfield and Dominic Fitzsimmons were members of the Peer Mentoring Steering Committee.

13.7 Visitors to The Learning Centre

Dr Sandra Gollin of the University of Western Sydney visited The Learning Centre to discuss UNSW initiatives that support postgraduate coursework students.

13.8 Visits to other Learning Centres

The Director was invited to give a talk on the UNSW Learning Centre to the staff of the Academic Skills Centre of the Australian Catholic University at their bi-annual conference held in Sydney in June.

Dominic Fitzsimmons was invited to meet with colleagues in The Learning Centre at Monash University to discuss the UNSW Peer Writing Program as they are considering implementing a similar program. He also visited similar units at La Trobe and the University of Melbourne.

13.9 Workshop for Staff Development Unit

In February, an orientation to study skills was held for 12 UNSW staff members enrolled in academic courses through the *Learning Alliance* program.

14. Professional Development of Learning Centre Staff

The career development scheme's implementation was maintained over the year, with all staff reflecting on their career and development goals within the context of the Centre's goals and meeting with the Director to discuss these during the year.

UNSW Learning Centre staff and their counterparts at the University of Technology, Sydney, met on two occasions to share their experiences of and resources for working with postgraduate research students.

Pam Mort and Gwyn Jones attended a conference on Enabling Programs held at The University of Newcastle.

As part of their ongoing professional development the Learning Advisers met on four occasions to discuss the following topics: academic attribution (eg citing and plagiarism); writing and critical thinking; the information literacy tutorial (LILT) developed by UNSW library staff; online resources for helping students to develop their academic vocabulary.

Several staff members attended a workshop on evaluation offered by a member of the UNSW Learning and Teaching Unit.

Ian Collinson and Tracey-Lee Downey attended the Symposium on Promoting Academic Integrity held at The University of Newcastle.

Gwyn Jones and Pam Mort attended workshops on dealing with difficult people and on managing people at Sydney University, and a Career Development workshop run by the UNSW Staff Development Unit.