



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Learning Centre Annual Report 2007



THE LEARNING CENTRE

UNSW

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Executive Summary of Student Participation in Learning Centre Services at UNSW in 2007

Language and academic skills support to enrolled students is provided by The Learning Centre via face-to-face teaching and online academic skills resources. Face-to-face support is both centrally located and faculty based.

A total of 1520 students accessed the centrally-located services at least once in 2007. The total number of attendances was 2906, indicating that many students accessed support on more than one occasion. A more detailed analysis of the student demographics and types of 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 either through direct teaching or online resources on at least one occasion was approximately 3 600 (see Section 4).

In addition, skills support was delivered through a number of pre-sessional and preparatory programs to a total of 337 students (see Section 5).

Thousands of students also accessed learning resources through the free brochures available to all students in print or via The Learning Centre's website www.lc.unsw.edu.au. This area experienced a substantial increase in page requests (see Section 6).

In 2007, the total number of UNSW (excluding ADFA) enrolled students at 31 March was 36 881. The 5457 students who accessed Learning Centre face-to-face support on at least one occasion (including pre-sessional programs) represented 14.8% of this total.

1. Introduction

In May, The Learning Centre became part of the portfolio of the newly-appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students and Registrar), Professor Joan Cooper. The Centre's work continued to focus on supporting students at all levels of study with their academic skills to enable them to participate fully in the life of the university.

The University's 2007 Student Survey indicated that 80% of respondents rated The Learning Centre's services and resources as helpful. When students suggested changes to the Centre's offerings, the suggestions were mainly requests for more consultations and workshops to be made available and for more discipline-specific resources. The two projects referred to below (funded by strategic priorities funding) will assist in this latter regard.

The collaborative work of Learning Adviser Pam Mort and a number of colleagues in the Faculty of Engineering was recognised by the award of a *Carrick Citation for an Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning*. The citation reads: 'For an outstanding contribution to developing student academic literacy in the Faculty of Engineering UNSW: A partnership approach between Faculty and The Learning Centre'. More information is available at <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/award.html>.

The continued growth in page requests to the Centre's website, particularly the online academic skills resources, was most encouraging. There was an increase of almost 30% in overall page requests to the website and a significant increase in page requests to the online academic skills resources, which are a resource not only for UNSW students but also for the broader community (see Section 6). In response to student demand, The Learning Centre developed a guide for citing electronic sources using the Harvard citation system. *Harvard Referencing for Electronic Sources* is an online resource http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref_elec.html.

Strategic Priorities funding was awarded to The Learning Centre for two projects: the development of an online thesis writing resource for fourth-year Science and Engineering students and an online academic skills site for students at the College of Fine Arts.

Work commenced on the Carrick Institute funded project *Creating a student-centred online learning environment for report writing in the sciences and engineering 2007*. Pam Mort and Sue Starfield of The Learning Centre, together with colleagues at the University of Sydney

and in several science and engineering disciplines, are developing the website.

Diagnostic literacy assessments were carried out for the entire first-year Engineering cohort (over one thousand students) and identified many students as 'at risk' (see Section 4.2). The credit-bearing course ENG0380 is now available for these students but the uptake is still relatively small. The reasons for this are being investigated.

Online booking for the individual peer writing consultations was offered for the first time and proved very successful.

Ian Collinson, who has taught at The Learning Centre for a number of years, completed the Graduate Certificate of University Learning and Teaching and is to be congratulated on his achievement.

2. Staff

Director

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

Learning Advisers

Linda Burnett, BA *Adel.*, M.LITT.*UNE* (.6)

Ian Collinson, BA(Hons), PhD, GradCertULT *UNSW* (.6)

Dominic Fitzsimmons, BA/LLB (Hons) PhD *UNSW* (.7)

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

Shannon Kennedy-Clark, BA MA *UNSW* (.4)

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

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

Administrative Officers

Valerie Caulcutt (Finance and Admin)

Coralie Venus, BA(Hons) *UNSW*, Dip T (Prim) *S.Aust* (Workshops and Resource Centre)

Publications and Web Officer

Tracey-Lee Downey, Design Cert *Syd I.T.*, BA(Hons) *UNSW*

University Orientation and Study Skills Tutors

Gwyn Jones (Coordinator)	Peter Nugus
Ian Collinson	Bronwen Phillips
Dominic Fitzsimmons	Jamie Roberts
Shannon Kennedy-Clark	Warwick Shapcott

Academic Preparation Program Tutors

Pamela Mort (Coordinator)	Dominic Fitzsimmons
Gwyn Jones	Maria Zueva
Ian Collinson	Bronwen Phillips
Tracey-Lee Downey	

Peer Writing Assistants

Michele Bastian	Catharina Nawangpalupi
Brooke Dinning	Peter Nugus
Jesse Goyette	Geoff Quick
Rebecca Gray	David Rajaratnam
Brahmaputra Marjadi	Jamie Roberts
Phillip Mills	James Ward

Law Peer Tutors

Ya'el Frisch	Chong Nga Loi
Zhiyan Cao	Eugene Quah
Yi Guo	Derek Wong
Nicole Hirsowitz	Jenny Jing Yi Ji
Jing Jin	Wen Hui Wu
Diana Levi	Roy Yu
Anna Lewis	Victoria Tan
Brent Michael	

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

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

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. Table 3.2 shows the number of individual students enrolled at central Learning Centre support including PG Coursework Day. The attendance totals therefore indicate that many of the students who attend either an individual consultation or a workshop/resource consultation do so on more than one occasion. In addition, specific workshops were offered to postgraduate coursework students on a Saturday in March (see below for more information).

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

Writing Consultations	Academic Skills Workshops	Resource Usage	PG Coursework Day	Total
1117	1164	349	276	2906

Table 3.2 Total number of student enrolments at central Learning Centre support

Writing Consultations	Academic Skills Workshops	Resource Usage	PG Coursework Day	Total
511	718	148	143	1520

Table 3.3 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 3.3 Attendance by gender at central Learning Centre support

	Writing Consultations	Academic Skills Workshops	Resource Usage	PG Coursework Day	Total
Female	352	421	88	97	958
Male	159	297	60	46	562
Not advised					
Total	511	718	148	143	1520

Table 3.4 shows attendance (each student is considered once only) by English language status and indicates that the majority of the students who seek centralised assistance identified as being from a non-English-speaking background (NESB). However, just under one third of the students stated that they were from an English-speaking background.

Table 3.4 Attendance by English language status at central Learning Centre support

	Writing Consultations	Academic Skills Workshops	Resource usage	PG Coursework Day	Total
ESB	184	187	31	41	443
NESB	327	531	117	102	1077
Total	511	718	148	143	1520

In terms of program level, more undergraduate students made use of writing consultations than did postgraduates, while more postgraduate students (including some staff members and visiting fellows) accessed central support services overall (see Table 3.5). Workshops offered specifically for postgraduate students, both research and coursework, contributed to this.

Table 3.5 Attendance by program level at central Learning Centre support

	Writing Consultations	Academic Skills Workshops	Resource Usage	PG Coursework Day	Total
Undergrad	290	303	51		644
Postgrad	221	410	91	143	865
Staff/ visiting fellows		5	6		11
Total	511	718	148	143	1520

Table 3.6 shows attendance by residence status at Learning Centre support. It is noteworthy that while more local undergraduates make use of the Centre's services than international undergraduates, more international postgraduates avail themselves of the services. Postgraduate coursework day is evidently a contributing factor, suggesting that many international postgraduate coursework students may be working during the week and prefer attending workshops on the weekend. The total number of international students was 824 and the total number of local students was 685. However, 11% of the total international student body accessed central Learning Centre support at least once as opposed to 2% of local students.

Table 3.6 Attendance by residence status at central Learning Centre support per student

	Writing Consultations	Academic Skills Workshops	Resources	PG Coursework Day	Total
International Undergrad	93	122	27		242
Local Undergrad	197	181	24		402
International Postgrad	151	290	59	82	582
Local Postgrad	70	120	32	61	283
International Staff/ visiting fellows		1	3		4
Local Staff/ visiting fellows		4	3		7
Not advised					
Total	511	718	148	143	1520

3.1 Writing Consultations

Students may make an appointment for an individual consultation with a Peer Writing Assistant to discuss an assignment on which they are working. In these consultations, any aspect of the academic writing process may be discussed. Peer Writing Assistants are doctoral students who undergo regular training in The Learning Centre. While Writing Assistants cannot make suggestions about the specific disciplinary content of a student's work, they can help students to reflect critically on their own work and discuss what kind of academic skills will help them with the assignment in question and their longer-term learning. Consultations are offered on both Kensington and CoFA campuses.

Table 3.7 shows student attendance by Faculty at writing consultations. Not surprisingly, given the nature of their assessment tasks, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences students are the largest users of this service.

Table 3.7 Attendance at individual writing consultations by Faculty (each student once*)

Faculty	No. of students	%
Arts & Social Sciences	179	33
Built Environment	21	4
Business	98	18
CoFA	62	11
Engineering	39	7
Law	45	8
Medicine	51	9
Science	44	8
Other	7	1
Total	546	99

* 35 students were enrolled in combined degrees

3.1.1 Peer Writing Assistant Training

Dominic Fitzsimmons co-ordinates the Peer Writing Assistant program, including developing and facilitating induction and ongoing training for new Writing Assistants; monthly skills development seminars for all Writing Assistants; informal consultations with Peer Writing Assistants during session as well as individual half-hour review and reflection meetings with each at the end of session.

3.2 Academic Skills Workshops

Academic skills workshops are offered each session and are typically one to one and one-half hours in duration. Some workshops are offered as a series and may be held once a week for two to seven weeks and others are delivered as 'once only' single sessions. Workshop size is limited to a maximum of 16 students due to the size of the rooms in The Learning Centre and a desire to maintain a fairly informal workshop structure. A total of 96% of the students reported that they had found the workshop they attended either very useful or useful.

Table 3.8 shows student attendance at academic skills workshops per student, per Faculty. As 84 students were enrolled in combined degree programmes, the number who attended was 718. A total of 435 students attended at least one workshop over the course of the year with 283

students attending at least two or more workshops, suggesting that students felt satisfied enough to return. Most students were from the Faculty of Business (including the Australian Graduate School of Management) followed by Arts and Social Sciences, Law and Engineering.

Table 3.8 Attendance at academic skills workshops by Faculty (each student once)

Faculty	No. of students	%
Arts & Social Sciences	174	22
Built Environment	28	4
Business	212	26
CoFA	41	5
Engineering	98	12
Law	108	14
Medicine	59	7
Science	80	10
Other	2	.2
Total	802	100

Table 3.9 shows overall student attendance in 2007 by workshop type. Some workshops were offered on several occasions. Essay writing workshops remain popular with students, as do workshops on critical thinking, writing and oral presentations. Academic writing for PG ESL students, which runs over three weeks, was also repeated several times during the year due to student demand. The new series of workshops specifically for Law students was well attended as were the workshops aimed at postgraduate research students - Writing a Literature Review and Writing a Thesis Proposal.

In the course of the year, a total of 52 postgraduate research students joined a thesis writing support group and met on at least six occasions with a small group of peers and a Learning Adviser to discuss their thesis writing. This program has been well received by students and their supervisors.

Table 3.9 Attendance at Academic Skills workshops by workshop type

Workshop Type	Total Annual Attendance
Academic Debate and Discussion for ESL students	12
Academic Writing for Postgraduate ESL Students	73
Avoiding Plagiarism	20
Critical Review for PG Coursework Students	14
Discussion Skills	44
Editing for PG ESL Students	17
Editing Strategies	21
Email Etiquette for ESL Students	9
Essay Writing	73
Essay Writing for Undergraduates	56
Essay Writing for Undergraduate ESL students	9
Grammar Editing	15
Grammar for ESL Students	67
Introduction to Critical Thinking	50
Introduction to Essay Writing	82
Introduction to Oral Presentations	24
Introduction to Report Writing	29
Introduction to Writing a Critical Review	13
Listening and Note-taking Skills	23
Literature Review	82
Literature Review: CoFA	10
Oral Presentations	64
Paragraphs in Academic Writing	4
Paragraph Structure and Argument for ESL Students	11
Paragraph Writing for ESL Students	8
Preparing for Your Review	5
Quick Guide to Essay Writing and Tutorial Presentations	16
Report Structure for PG ESL Students	5
Sentence Structure	31
Thesis Proposals	43

Workshop Type	Total Annual Attendance
Thesis Writing Support	52
Thesis Writing for CoFA	29
Writing a Critical Review: UGs	13
Writing a Critical Review PGs	7
Writing Critically	24
Writing for Law 1: Case Note	57
Writing for Law 2: Reflective Writing	17
Writing for Law 3: Problem Based Assignment	40
Writing for Law 4: Preparing for Law Exam	2
Total	1164

3.3 Postgraduate Coursework Day

As many postgraduate coursework students are employed or otherwise unable to attend mid-week workshops, it was decided to once again offer a number of relevant workshops for this group of students on a Saturday morning in March. Workshops on essay and report writing, reading and writing critically, grammar and oral presentations were offered. Students were able to attend a maximum of two workshops. As Table 3.10 shows, virtually all of the 143 students who registered for the day attended two workshops. The workshops were very highly rated by the students.

Table 3.10 Overall attendance per topic: Postgraduate Coursework Day

Workshop	Total
Advanced Reading Skills	24
Essay Writing for Postgraduates (2 classes)	97
Grammar in Postgraduate Academic Writing	39
Oral Presentations for Postgraduates	26
Report Writing for Postgraduates	40
Writing a Critical Review (2 classes)	50
Total	276

The majority of the students who attended were enrolled in the Faculty of Business with a number of students being from Arts and Social Sciences. Table 3.11 provides a breakdown of the enrolments per student per Faculty.

Table 3.11 Enrolments by Faculty per student: Postgraduate Coursework Day

Faculty	Total
Arts & Social Sciences	34
Built Environment	8
Business	51
CoFA	4
Engineering	9
Law	10
Medicine	11
Science	12
Other	4
Total	143

4. Faculties

This section reports on academic skills support for both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework and research students delivered via a School or Faculty-based program. As indicated, support varies in terms of types of input, intensity and duration, and is a response to a request from the relevant School or Faculty. In 2007, approximately 3600 students accessed Learning Centre support at least once in this way. This figure includes Enabling Skills academic literacy diagnostic assessments (see Annual Report 2005 for more information) that were carried out in Engineering and Social Work Postgraduate Programs (see below) and are reported on under the entries for these Faculties.

4.1 Arts & Social Sciences

4.1.1 ARTS5060 Developing a Research Proposal

Twelve postgraduate research students enrolled in this new credit-bearing course taught by The Learning Centre. The course supports students in the early phase of their candidature as they develop their research proposal.

4.1.2 ARTS5024 Research Writing and Presentation

Sixteen postgraduate research students attended this 14-week, six unit of credit course developed and taught by The Learning Centre. The course takes students through the writing of the different sections of a PhD and Masters by Research thesis, and examines other research genres such as conference papers and presentations and journal articles.

4.1.3 History

Ian Collinson gave an essay writing lecture to all first-year students as part of the School's core skills program. Approximately 130 students attended.

4.1.4 Social Work

Undergraduate Program

The 125-page undergraduate academic skills manual, *Academic Skills for Bachelor of Social Work* was distributed at the first lectures in Session One. A total of 110 copies were printed for the second, third and fourth year undergraduate students. Linda Burnett introduced the manual at a second-year lecture and gave a lecture on academic writing skills, and an introduction to The Learning Centre's services in Session One.

All students who had received copies of the manual completed an evaluation questionnaire. The responses were extremely positive.

Social Development Postgraduate Program

Work with Dr Eileen Baldry and Ms Linda Bartolomei on an enabling skills program in the *Graduate Programs in International Social Development*, School of Social Work, continued. This involved approximately 80 postgraduate students. The collaborative revision and production of the 122-page course manual, *Academic Skills for Social Development Postgraduate Programs* (3rd ed.) was carried out and preliminary meetings have been held about the 4th edition, which will be available in March 2008. A brief introduction to the manual and the services provided by The Learning Centre was given at first lectures in the Social Development program. The School of Social Work funded the printing costs of both the post-graduate and undergraduate manuals.

Book proposal

In collaboration with Dr Eileen Baldry, Dr Michael Wearing and Dr Mark Hughes, Linda Burnett developed a proposal for a book on writing and study skills for social work students in response to an invitation by Sage publishers.

4.2 Engineering

4.2.1 ENGG0380 Academic Discourse in Engineering

This credit-bearing course was offered in winter session in intensive mode for four hours per day over 11 days. Nine undergraduate engineering students enrolled and completed the course. Dr Iain Skinner, course coordinator, assisted with course orientation and the marking of final reports and oral presentations. Student evaluations were

favourable and all students showed improvement in their academic literacy.

4.2.2 ENGG0360 Communicating in Engineering and Science

In Session Two The Learning Centre, in conjunction with the Faculty of Engineering, designed a six unit of credit academic literacy course for the new Diploma in Science and Technology. This course will be offered in Session One, 2008. It will also be available as an elective for BEng students who wish to further develop their academic literacy, report writing, and presentation skills.

4.2.3 ENGG1000 Design and Communication in Engineering

ENGG1000 is a common first-year course for commencing BEng students. Ten schools in the Faculty of Engineering collaborate in the course delivery. The Learning Centre had input into this course as follows:

As part of *UNSW Enabling Skills Policy*, all ENGG1000 students completed a short written task in week 2 of Sessions One and Two. Learning Advisers and Writing Assistants assessed each student's writing for structure, appropriateness, style, grammar and reading comprehension. Feedback on students' academic literacy skills was provided online via WebVista. Students identified as weak or 'at risk' (Session One: 469 of 1104 students (42%); Session Two (82 of 125 students (65.5%) were then invited to enrol in ENGG0380 (see 4.2.2)).

In Session One, thirteen hours of lectures were delivered to eight schools. These included:

- Civil and Environmental Engineering (100 students),
- Mining Engineering (60 students),
- Biomedical Engineering (77 students),
- Mechanical Engineering (180 students),
- Petroleum Engineering (40 students),
- Chemical Sciences and Engineering and Computer Science Engineering (88 students).

Learning Centre lectures covered the following topics: teamwork, leadership, presentation skills, posters, design proposal reports, and design reports. For Mechanical Engineering students, feedback on design proposal reports was also provided. All lectures were team taught by a Learning Adviser and an Engineering Lecturer.

In Session Two, the School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering hosted the ENGG1000 course. Two lectures were delivered to 120 students; one was on design proposal reports and one provided feedback to students on their report writing. Lectures were team taught with the course lecturer, Dr Carl Reidsema.

4.2.4 Chemical Sciences and Engineering

INDC3110 Industrial and Environmental Chemistry

A communication skills component of the course was delivered covering 15 hours of tutorials. Third-year students visited industrial sites to observe and document systems, processes, issues and achievements for a range of chemical industries. Fifteen students received instruction, practice and feedback on their individual field trip reports, group work and their group presentations.

CEIC1000 Sustainable Product Engineering and Design

The Learning Centre delivered a two-hour lecture (repeated) on group work, oral presentation skills and writing for the web to help students prepare for a group oral and web-based assessment task. Forty students were enrolled in this first-year course.

CEIC8312 Safety and Communication in the Process Industries

This compulsory course for Second Session research students prepares students for their first review and offers opportunities for students to reflect on and improve upon their project management, networking and communication skills. The 17 research students enrolled in the course received instruction, practice and extensive feedback on their research writing and speaking (eg literature review, thesis proposal, conference abstracts, and practice presentations). A weekly class (two hours per week) was offered over 14 weeks. A tutor was provided by the school to assist with the marking of draft and final reports and to give feedback on oral presentations.

4.2.5 Civil and Environmental Engineering

CIVEN3023 Civil Engineering Practice 3A

In Session One, two interactive lecturers on leadership, collaborative writing strategies and techniques for improving report writing, focussing on common weaknesses in third-year reports, were delivered to 100 third-year students.

CIVEN4030 Honours Thesis Part A

In Session One, two interactive lectures on supervisor expectations, assessment criteria, structuring the literature review, reading, note making for research, and thesis structures were delivered to 60 fourth-year students, who were beginning their fourth-year research project.

4.2.6 Computer Science and Engineering

COMP9910 Research Management and Communication Skills

This compulsory course for second session research students prepares students for their first review and offers opportunities for students to reflect and improve upon their project management, networking and communication skills. Twenty-five PhD and MEng research students completed this compulsory course. Classes were offered weekly (three hours over 14 weeks). The school provided a tutor to assist with marking and feedback on oral presentations. Students received instruction, practice and extensive feedback on their research writing and speaking (eg literature review, thesis proposal, conference abstracts, and practice presentations)

Exam Skills for Computer Science and Engineering (CSE)

The Learning Centre was approached by a CSE fourth-year student to develop and co-present a workshop on computer science exam strategies. Fifteen students attended a two-hour workshop. The workshop was well received and students appreciated both the generic and discipline-specific advice and the opportunity to practise sample exam questions.

4.2.7 Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications

ELEC4011 Ethics & Electrical Engineering Practice

In Session Two, a one-hour interactive lecture was delivered on analysing exam questions, critiquing past student answers and exam preparation. The lecture was taught with Dr Iain Skinner. In the lecture, students observed the Learning Adviser and the lecturer marking the past student answers in real time. Attendance was high and the lecturer reported that students performed better in the following exam than in previous years when attendance was lower. Seventy fourth-year students attended the lecture.

4.2.8 Graduate School of Engineering

GSOE9400 Engineering Postgraduate Research Essentials

In Sessions One and Two, The Learning Centre co-facilitated a number of activities within this induction course, totalling 30 hours in Session One and 27 hours in Session Two. Sessions included co-facilitation of workshops on:

- project management,
- ethical dilemmas,
- writing a literature review,
- preparing the research overview assessment task,
- critiquing journal articles,
- preparing a talk on research and
- feedback on oral presentations and submitted written work.

The school provided a tutor to assist with feedback on written work. A total of 191 PhD and MEng students completed the induction course in 2007.

GSOE9405 Research Management and Communication for Engineers

This course was delivered for the Graduate School of Engineering in Sessions One and Two. In Session One, 12 research students attended and in Session Two, eight research students attended. Students were from the Schools of Civil Engineering, Chemical Sciences and Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Spatial and Information Systems Engineering, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, and Petroleum Engineering.

Students who perform poorly in GSOE9400 are invited to enrol in GSOE9405. This course prepares research students for their next review and offers opportunities for students to reflect and improve upon their project management, networking and communication skills. Students receive instruction, practice and extensive feedback on their research writing and speaking (eg literature review, thesis progress report, conference abstracts, and practice presentations). The course is delivered each week for two hours over 14 weeks.

4.2.9 Mining Engineering

Writing a Literature Review

In Session One, 40 fourth-year mining engineering students received instruction and practice in structuring their literature review for their honours thesis project. Two, two-hour tutorials were delivered.

Thinking and Writing the Literature Review: Facilitator's notes and student resource book

In 2007, The Learning Centre was requested to develop the literature review workshop materials into a published format that included a student's workbook and facilitators' workbook for *Mining Engineering Education Australia*. These books are now available for all fourth-year mining engineering students and their lecturers at UNSW, the University of Queensland and Curtin University of Technology.

4.3 Law

4.3.1 Law Peer Tutor Program

The Law Peer Tutors program continued in Sessions One and Two with 14 later-year students acting as tutors to small groups of first-year students on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Dominic Fitzsimmons coordinated and facilitated the training and ongoing academic mentoring of the Law Peer Tutors. He also wrote the problem for the Beginners Mooting Grand Final.

4.3.2 Law Peer Tutors' Handbook

Ongoing development by Dominic Fitzsimmons of the *Handbook* continued, including resources designed for the subject-specific workshops for first-year law students.

4.4 Medicine

4.4.1 Undergraduate Medicine Program: Foundations

Five Learning Centre staff delivered a two-hour report writing workshop to the ten groups of students in the foundations phase of the new medical curriculum. Approximately 200 students attended. The

workshop focused on the report writing component of the Foundations program, enabling students to peer review each other's draft reports and also dealt with academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism. Assessment criteria for the task were drawn up by Gwyn Jones and provided to the students and Faculty staff. A student feedback sheet was also developed.

4.4.2 School of Medical Sciences

Pathology

In Session One, a total of 48, third-year pathology (Path3205) students attended two lectures on collaborative learning and oral presentations skills, plus individual small group follow-up consultations. Thirteen group meetings were held with Gwyn Jones, the Learning Adviser involved. These meetings were highly valued by 95% of the students surveyed.

4.4.3 Writing in Pathology Pilot Project

In Second Session, Gwyn Jones was involved in the continued development of *Academic Science Literacy Skills* in the trial of a skills focus package in Web Vista. A total of 149 second and third-year students were enrolled in Pathology2100. These students represent a mixed cohort from the Schools of Medical Science, Sports Science and Pathology. The focus of this intervention was to improve the structure and quality of the major written media assignment. The project involved a monitoring marking meeting with the course tutors. There was a marked improvement in the structure of the finished reports.

Pharmacology

In Session Two, Gwyn Jones presented a lecture on academic essay writing skills for 125 second year Pharmacology2011 students. This lecture focused on the criteria and structure of the critical essay assignment developed for this course.

4.4.4 School of Public Health and Community Medicine

PHCM9100 Academic Skills

This academic skills course is a credit-bearing course designed and taught by Gwyn Jones. It is a compulsory elective for international postgraduate coursework students in the Masters of Community Medicine and Health Service Management. In Session One, 19 health professionals attended the course, while in Session Two, 22 attended the 12 week, two hour a week program.

4.4.5 Rural Clinical School

Three academic skills workshops were run concurrently to support 37 rural and indigenous foundation students during their first cycle. These workshops were designed around the skills required to successfully complete the first written report assignment.

4.4.6 National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research

In May, a seminar on academic writing was delivered to 15 postgraduate students after extensive liaison and development of appropriate materials and relevant content.

4.4.7 Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute

In July, a session on writing well in science was delivered to 12 postgraduate students, again after liaison and development of appropriate materials and content.

In Session Two, a three-hour oral presentation workshop was held for 18 postgraduate research students. The students presented their draft 'review' presentations and received peer feedback.

4.4.8 Garvan Institute of Medical Research

In Session Two a one and a half-hour lecture and discussion session was held for 17 postgraduate research students.

4.5 Science

4.5.1 Aviation

AVIA1321 Fundamentals of Aviation

In Session One, a two-hour lecture was delivered to 50 first-year students on report structure, group work and oral presentations. Learning Centre staff also attended six hours of oral presentations and gave feedback on students' performances.

4.5.2 Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences (BABS)

BABS Honours Introduction to Honours and Scientific Research

In Sessions One and Two, a five-hour workshop on literature reviews, thesis structures, and project management was delivered to fourth-year honours students. This workshop is part of the school's O-Week honours research induction program. Forty students attended in Session One and 10 students attended in Session Two.

4.5.3 Psychology

In Session One, several meetings were held to embed the academic literacies identified by the enabling projects of 2005 and 2006, into the current first-year program.

5. Pre-Sessional and Preparatory Programs

5.1 University Orientation and Study Skills (UOSS)

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 20-25 and meet weekly for two hours. A total of 149 students enrolled in Session One and 119 students enrolled in Session Two.

5.2 Academic Preparation Program (APP)

The APP is a five-week academic preparation program for commencing AUSAID, ADS and privately-funded postgraduate international students that is coordinated by International Student Services. The Learning Centre delivers a three-week component (56 hours) covering academic skills, academic literacy, and oral presentations.

In Session One, 24 students (two classes) and in Session Two, 19 students (one class) attended the Academic English and Communication Skills component of the APP. A three-day research component was delivered for students who were completing a PhD or Masters at UNSW. Follow up two-hour workshops in weeks three, six and seven of Sessions One and Two were provided to assist students in managing their studies and preparing their coursework and research assessment tasks. Students were from Vietnam, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, China, Mozambique, New Caledonia, Bhutan, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and Thailand.

5.3 Indigenous Pre-Law Program (IPLP)

Dominic Fitzsimmons designed and taught the Academic Skills component of the IPLP, including ongoing development of resources. This included over 40 hours of class contact, both setting and marking

assignments including reflective notes and exams, as well as participating in recommendations for offers of enrolment. There were 10 students in the class.

5.4 Indigenous Preparatory Medical Program

Nine students attended the academic skills component of this program for indigenous students taught by Gwyn Jones. The program was held at the end of Session Two and was offered over four weeks for a total of 12 hours face-to-face. A study kit was developed for this program.

5.5 Indigenous Preparatory Social Work Program

Seven students took part in the pre-sessional program for prospective social work students. The academic skills classes were team taught by Gwyn Jones and Peter Hawkins in November over four weeks for a total of 20 hours. A study kit and scaffolded reflective learning journal was developed for this program.

6. Learning Centre Web and Resource Development

During 2007, The Learning Centre website <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/> received 874 191 page requests, an increase of 29.5% from the previous year (see Table 6.1). The most popular section of the website was the online study skills resources. This section received 586 412 requests for pages and downloadable PDF files, an increase of over two hundred thousand requests.

Many users accessed The Learning Centre website directly, were referred through WebVista, or followed links from other UNSW sites (see Table 6.3). Other users accessed the site as a result of search engines, or followed links from other universities.

Table 6.1: Total number of page requests to The Learning Centre website: January-December 2006 and 2007

	2006	2007
January	35 441	49 295
February	42 843	59 815
March	80 135	97 648
April	73 009	83 897
May	77 387	99 242
June	50 652	51 283
July	46 303	59 066
August	61 176	75 175
September	55 599	79 326
October	60 967	93 413
November	52 352	75 055
December	39 362	50 976
Total	675 226	874 191

Table 6.2 provides a monthly breakdown of page requests per section of the website, comparing 2006 and 2007 figures. As Table 6.2 indicates, the most popular section of the site remains the online academic skills resources, which registered an increase of over 200 000 page requests in 2007. The Plagiarism and Academic Integrity website <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html>, developed by The Learning Centre for the University, showed a reduction in traffic during

2007. In 2006 the transition to university study resource *First Steps*, <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/firststeps/>, underwent substantial revision with the addition of new information addressing the needs of non-school leaver (mature age) students. The site is being regularly visited, as Table 6.2 shows. In past years visits to this section have peaked in January. However, while there was a reduction in the number of requests in the first half of the year, visitors increased in the lead-up to Session Two and in the latter months of 2007.

6.2 Specific areas within The Learning Centre website 2006-7

	Plagiarism & Academic Integrity		Online resources		First Steps		Using a case study workshop	
	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Jan	2660	1935	14 198	29 611	8882	6305	1467	1423
Feb	3099	2927	18 378	34 081	6091	5935	1651	1538
Mar	5628	5037	37 912	60 950	5020	4105	2152	2271
Apr	4713	4194	40 428	55 372	3631	2516	1536	2097
May	4639	3970	43 780	69 469	3949	3969	1869	2332
Jun	4138	2820	28 979	31 795	2313	2564	1572	1794
Jul	3281	3248	24 757	36 620	2653	2953	1332	2063
Aug	3810	2891	33 573	50 109	3110	2375	1445	1710
Sept	2322	2715	34 983	56 794	2051	2195	1811	1909
Oct	2639	2900	39 934	68 298	1767	2210	1656	2461
Nov	2353	2280	34 946	56 088	2141	2016	1744	1876
Dec	1864	2076	24 814	34 288	2662	2945	1289	1702
Total	41 146	36 993	376 682	586 412	44 270	40 133	19 524	23 131

In March 2007, a detailed analysis was carried out to determine how website users access The Learning Centre site. This data provides an interesting window into the referral routes users follow to access the website. Four main types of referrer were identified: UNSW websites; search engines; universities, schools and colleges within Australia; international universities, schools and colleges. Table 6.3 provides a breakdown of the main access paths from within UNSW itself for March 2007. Many students are now accessing Learning Centre information from within the university's Learning Management System (WebVista).

Table 6.3 Visits by the UNSW Community: One Month Snapshot (March 2007)

Requests from UNSW Referrers*: March 2007	
Requests	Referrer
2103	UNSW Corporate site search engine/ UNSW Directory
552	UNSW My eLearning Vista tools page
279	UNSW VISTA Student Support Page
275	ELISE
178	School of Physics
162	School of Computer Science
139	UNSW foundation year resources page
106	Faculty of the Built Environment
110	eMed system, Faculty of Medicine
88	MBT program
64	Future Students page, UNSW Corporate site
55	AGSM
46	Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
41	ADFA library
32	Faculty of Business
31	ATAX
30	School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications
29	School of Public Health and Community Medicine
28	UNSW Counselling
27	School of Social Sciences and International Studies
19	Information Literacy page, UNSW Library
19	Faculty of Law
15	School of English
12	myUNSW Portal
11	Master of Business and Technology Subject Guide, UNSW Library
10	Graduate Research School

*The web page/ site from which users followed links

6.1 Academic skills resources

As methods for referencing electronic sources change rapidly and do not always keep pace with the development of new technology, in response to student demand The Learning Centre developed a guide for citing electronic sources using the Harvard citation system.

As the existing style information did not fully cover electronic referencing, The Learning Centre adapted and modified available style information to create citations for new electronic sources.

Harvard Referencing for Electronic Sources is an online resource http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref_elec.html.

6.2 Online Learning Environment for Report Writing in Science and Engineering (Carrick Institute Funded Project)

During 2007 Pam Mort worked with The Learning Centre at the University of Sydney on a collaborative Carrick Institute funded project to develop an interactive online report writing resource.

Two UNSW assignments were chosen from which to develop two modules: a research paper in second-year Microbiology and a field trip report in second-year Mining Engineering. By the end of 2007, the microbiology report instructions and notes were completed, and 35% of the field trip report instructions and notes were completed. Ethics approval for interviews with staff and students was also given; interviews were completed (six in total); and training in Question Tools software was completed.

In 2008, transcription of interviews, finalisation of field trip report module and report content quizzes are to be completed. Student evaluation of the online resource is expected to commence late 2008.

6.3 Fourth-Year Thesis Writing website for Engineering and Science Students

In Session Two, funding from UNSW Strategic Priorities Funding enabled the development of an online interactive resource for fourth-year students writing a bachelor thesis. Research involved surveys of students and staff in regard to expectations, concerns and advice. Recommended theses were also examined and extracts used to model

features and conventions typical for an undergraduate thesis. Student and academic staff feedback on the site has been positive and the site will be publicly available in early 2008.

6.4 Other Resources

A range of new text and multimedia resources was purchased for The Learning Centre resources library. As many current resources utilise video or cassette tape technology, it was necessary to update to digital resources to meet students' needs and to ensure that resource materials are current and relevant.

7. Sessional Staff Development

The Learning Centre continued to run tutor training workshops for Postgraduate Research students in the Faculty of Engineering at the request of the Faculty. Six, four-hour workshops were offered in 2007 for about 80 students. A shorter workshop was run for 15 new Psychology tutors at the beginning of Session One.

8. Participation in Initiatives of the Division of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

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

8.1 Foundations in University Learning and Teaching (FULT)

Sue Starfield again participated in the running of Day One of the FULT program, which is now compulsory for all new academic staff. She took part in five of the programs offered during the year.

8.2 Learning and Teaching Awards

Pam Mort and four Engineering lecturers (R. Ford, I. Skinner, P. Hagan and C. Daly) received a Carrick Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning for '*Outstanding contribution to developing student academic literacy in the Faculty of Engineering UNSW: A partnership approach between Faculty and The Learning Centre*'.

8.3 Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching

Sue Starfield again co-taught the *Student Learning* module of the *Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching*, which is a compulsory module of the Certificate that is offered to the University's teaching staff. The module is offered in each session and is taught in two day-long blocks.

8.4 Learning and Teaching Nuts and Bolts Series

Gwyn Jones, Pam Mort and Sue Starfield presented a lunchtime session on building writing skills in the curriculum for teaching staff who wanted to help their students improve their academic writing skills within their courses. The talk was based on several initiatives The

Learning Centre has been involved in to promote the development of students' writing skills across a number of disciplinary areas.

9. Publications

Starfield, S. Recent research into student academic writing. In *International Handbook of English Language Teaching* (Volume II). J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds). Norwell, MA: Springer pp. 875-890.

(with Brian Paltridge) *Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language. A handbook for supervisors*. London: Routledge Falmer.

(with S. Arkoudis) 'In-course Language Development and Support'. Discussion paper for *National Symposium: English Language Competence of International Students*. Paper commissioned by Australian Education International (AEI) in the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as background for and to aid discussion at a *National Symposium: English Language Competence of International Students*, held 14 August 2007 in Sydney.

<http://aei.dest.gov.au/aei/shop/products/publications/publication624>.

10. Conference presentations by Learning Centre Staff

Sue Starfield 'Assessing academic literacy in higher education: Challenge and responsibility'. Paper presented at *American Applied Linguistics Association Annual Conference*, Costa Mesa.

'Researching academic writing'. Invited presentation in colloquium on researching writing *Applied Linguistics Association of Australia* conference, Wollongong.

(with Jan McLean) "I had started the assignment in trepidation and finished thinking': Immersing university teachers in a writing-rich environment". Paper presented at *International Society for Scholarship in Learning and Teaching (ISSOTL)* conference, UNSW.

(with Anne Quinlan) *International Society for Scholarship in Learning and Teaching (ISSOTL)* 'Students as scholars: Weaving threads of understanding of the final year undergraduate research experience. A case study from the built environment'. Paper presented at *International*

Society for Scholarship in Learning and Teaching (ISSOTL) conference, UNSW.

'What can we learn from research into what examiners look for in a thesis?' Presentation to *An Interdisciplinary Student Conference on Crime and Justice* run by The Crime and Justice Research Network (UNSW, July 2007).

'What can we learn from research into what examiners look for in a thesis?'. Presentation to the *CofFEE-SHE Heterodox Winter School and Postgraduate Workshop* (UNSW, July 2007).

Dominic Fitzsimmons 'The Indigenous Pre Law Program and incremental radicalism'. Paper presented to the *Indigenous Studies Indigenous Knowledge Conference*, 11-13th July, UTS, Sydney.

'The accidental Occidentalism of German literature: Revisiting Erich Kaestner's *Emil and the Detectives*'. Paper presented to the Conference: *Ta(l)king Pleasure in German Culture: A Day in the Dialectical Playground*, Faculty of Arts, School of English, Media and Performing Arts UNSW, October, 2007.

'A doctor's tale – the story of a PhD'. Presentation at the postgraduate students in Criminology network CRJN, July 2007.

11. Contribution to the University, the Profession and the Community

11.1 Courses and Careers Day

Ian Collinson provided two lectures on the topic: 'High School to Uni: making the change'.

11.2 Info Day

Ian Collinson provided two lectures on the topic: 'High School to Uni: making the change'.

11.3 Graduate Research School

Sue Starfield presented a talk titled *From Finish to Start: Writing your thesis with the end in view* at the Graduate Research School Thesis Submission Seminar in each session at which several hundred students were present.

Learning Centre staff were present at the university-wide orientations held each session to advise new postgraduate research students on support options.

11.4 International Student Services

Dominic Fitzsimmons facilitated a workshop on deepening academic learning skills during postgraduate research.

11.5 Orientation

Prior to Session One, a Learning Adviser attended a two-hour panel and discussion for ACCESS students. About 40 students attended. Learning Centre services were outlined and students' questions answered.

The Learning Centre participated in orientation sessions for postgraduate coursework students prior to Sessions One and Two.

The Centre also took part in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences orientation for its own postgraduate research students in Session One.

11.6 Membership of University Committees and Working Groups

Sue Starfield was a member of the Undergraduate Studies Committee and attended the Committee on Education.

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

Valerie Caulcutt and Coralie Venus were members of the Divisional Level 2/3 Occupational Health and Safety Committee Group.

Sue Starfield was a member of the organising committee of the *International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL)* 2007 conference hosted by UNSW in July.

Dominic Fitzsimmons was a member of the Indigenous Legal Education Committee.

11.7 Review of School of Education

Sue Starfield was a member of the review of the School of Education in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

11.8 Thesis writing workshop at UWS

Sue Starfield ran a workshop on thesis writing for students from non-English speaking backgrounds at the University of Western Sydney.

11.9 Panel discussion at Education Faculty UWS

Sue Starfield was invited to participate in a panel discussion at the Education Faculty retreat, University of Western Sydney, on the topic: *Linguistic and cross-cultural support for international students in Masters of Teaching*.

11.10 Women in research workshops

Sue Starfield ran a workshop on writing for publication for the Women in Research program at UNSW.

11.11 Association for Academic Language and Learning

Gwyn Jones attended the *Forum on Transition Programs* held at the University of Western Sydney.

11.12 Shalom College

Dominic Fitzsimmons facilitated a workshop on academic learning and tutoring for tutors at Shalom College.

11.13 Reviewing of journal and conference papers

Pam Mort reviewed two abstracts for ISSOTL 2007.

Sue Starfield reviewed articles for a number of journals *including English for Specific Purposes* and the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*.

12. Professional Development Learning Centre Staff

Valerie Caulcutt completed File Maker Pro Essentials in February.

Tracey-Lee Downey attended Basic Operations with InDesign and How to Engage your Customers using Web 2.0, Wikis and Blogs in February and Advanced Operations with InDesign in March.

Dominic Fitzsimmons completed modules towards the completion of the Foundations of University Learning and Teaching course.

Ian Collinson completed the Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching.

Coralie Venus attended three OSDS Learn@Lunch courses offered by UNSW. They were Effective Meeting Participation; Chairing a Meeting and Decision Making in Meetings.

13. Visitors to The Learning Centre

Yuko Ota of Waseda University, Tokyo visited The Learning Centre to discuss the support provided to international students at UNSW.

Deborah Coleman-George of the University of Adelaide's Language and Learning Services visited The Learning Centre to find out more about UNSW's support provision in these areas.