

TUTOR TRAINING TO IMPROVE FIRST YEAR STUDENT TRANSITION EXPERIENCE: FOCUS ON GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

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ABSTRACT

In large first year science subjects casual tutors often deliver up to half of the face-to-face teaching through practical classes and tutorials. A smooth transition for first year students can be influenced by interactions with tutors, particularly through improved engagement with subject content and understanding Graduate Attributes (GAs). Casual tutors may not be aware of the political changes that impact the diversity of students they teach; for example, widening participation strategies mean that in science we have students with a greater diversity of backgrounds, knowledge, literacy and numeracy skills. This raises questions of how to support casual tutors to deal with more diversity of student backgrounds. Subject coordinators are encouraged to embed GAs into subject content and assessments. Therefore, tutors need to understand faculty-wide GAs in the context of their discipline to effectively communicate these to students. We ran a training session for casual tutors teaching first year science subjects, to provide information on transition, diversity and faculty-wide GAs. Two follow-up surveys (early and late semester) enabled us to identify the challenges faced by casual tutors and whether faculty-wide GAs were communicated to students. Future sessions will be tailored to support tutors as they assist our students through their first year transition.

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