PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study on the academic performance of students from various socioeconomic backgrounds and how facets of their personality affect their academic achievements. The main aim of this study is to identify the academic constraints faced by students who are the first in their family to study at university.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you have just started a degree at the University of Sydney. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don’t understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. So it’s up to you whether you wish to take part or not.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

✓ Understand what you have read
✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below
✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You may make or save a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.
(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- Dr Stefanie Schurer, School of Economics, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and Charles Perkins Centre, Senior Lecturer (Chief Investigator)
- Dr Rebecca Edwards, School of Economics, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Lecturer (Co-investigator)
- Prof Colm Harmon, School of Economics, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Professor and Head of School (Co-investigator)

It is funded by an Australia Research Council Discovery Early Career Award and by an Australian Research Council Centre for Excellence.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

You will be asked to fill out a survey that consists of three parts (A,B,C). It will take you approximately 12-15 minutes to complete.

1. **Part A - Personality**: You will be asked to respond to a standard personality questionnaire. You will be shown a series of adjectives or statements that may or may not apply to yourself, and then you are asked to rate on a scale from 1-5 or 1-7 whether the adjective or statement applies to you.

2. **Part B - Family background**: You will be asked about your family situation when you were growing up, the educational background of your parents, whether you had mentors at school, whether you currently live with your parents and so on. In most cases you should tick one box (that applies) only, but in some cases you are allowed to tick all that applies.

3. **Part-C – Personality of a hypothetical individual**: You are presented with three hypothetical persons (description of about four sentences), and then you are asked to rate each person’s personality in the same way as you were asked to rate yourself in part A. The questions are so-called “vignettes” or sketches and your answers will help us to adjust for the different ways that survey participants, including yourself, use the scale to rate personality.

If you are a student in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), the survey invitation will be sent to you by email from FASS in Week 1 of S1 2015. FASS will send you two more reminders within the next five weeks upon the first invitation, if you have not yet completed the survey. If you are a student in another faculty you will have heard about the study through advertising around campus, for example, posters and flyers distributed at key locations on campus, Facebook or during O-week, via which we seek to encourage you to participate.

An important feature of this survey is that we will attempt to link your survey responses with your student admission data and your student record information as you progress through your degree over the years. We need to link these different sources of information to be able to study the relationship between personality with academic performance at the aggregate level for example, and to assess on average whether certain personality traits are more important for success for students who are the first in their family to go to university. Thus, we will ask you at the start of the survey whether you consent to linking your survey responses with your student record and admission data. Such linkage will be based on your unikey/student email address (that we will ask you to enter as consent to link). It will not be possible to identify you personally during the analysis or in the any publication produced from the collected data. Only the chief and
co-investigators of this study (listed at (2) above) will have access to a your unikey and student identification number in order to link the survey responses with your student record and admission data. No researcher will ever have access to your name.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

It will take you approximately 12-15 minutes to respond to the survey.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

The main aim of this study is to interview students at the beginning of their undergraduate study in February 2015 across all faculties.

(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Submitting your completed questionnaire is an indication of your consent to participate in the study. You can withdraw your responses if you change your mind about having them included in the study, up to the point that we have analysed and published the results. You can do this by email sent to Chief Investigator Stefanie Schurer: stefanie.schurer@sydney.edu.au.

If you decide to withdraw from the study, we will also not contact you at any further stage when we intend to follow up on our initial sample.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from being in the study. By being in the study, you have the chance to win one of five iPad Air 2, 16 GB, valued at $619 or one of 20 $50 iTunes vouchers.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

We aim to collect both survey data and administrative data from your admission file and from your student records over your undergraduate career at the University of Sydney.

The process of collating these new data will involve several steps. Once the survey data is fully collected, we will merge (if you the student approves) the survey information with
student admission and student record based on your student identification number (SID). We will obtain both your admission files and student record data from the Student Centre with approval from the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Education. At no point in the merging process can we see your name or full address.

Only the CI and Co-Investigators will have access to the list if SIDs. It will enable us, if necessary, to compile a list of student numbers in order to run a follow up survey (subject to ethics approval).

All data will be stored electronically and will require password login for access. Electronic copies will be stored on university servers with back up. Hard copy materials will be stored in the offices of CI Stefanie Schurer (Room 2214, Level 2, Charles Perkins Centre, University of Sydney) and Co-I Rebecca Edwards (Room 428, Merewether Building H04, University of Sydney).

The survey data will be collected with the online tool NUBIS, a service provided by researchers at the Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research, University of Southern California. The application works on both smartphones and tablets.

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications. The results will be published as working papers (e.g. IZA Discussion Paper Series), an internal white paper in conjunction with the Planning and Information Office with recommendations for improving the university’s social equity policies, and in peer-reviewed international journals (Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A; Economics of Education Review, Journal of Human Resources).

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

We will keep the information we collect for this study, and we may use it in future projects. By providing your consent you are allowing us to use your information in future projects. We don’t know at this stage what these other projects will involve. The database that will be established through this project may be used internally by the PIO. We would also like to establish a database of de-identified data that other researchers could utilise for further research. We will seek ethical approval before using the information in these future projects.

For this reason, we keep the data in perpetuity, stored securely on a password-protected network drive, which only the researchers can access.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.
(11) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Dr Rebecca Edwards and Dr Stefanie Schurer will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact both researchers directly via email: rebecca.edwards@sydney.edu.au and stefanie.schurer@sydney.edu.au.

(12) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. Feedback, in the form of a publication, press release, or public talk, will be available on the study website - http://sydney.edu.au/arts/economics/survey/ after the study is finished.

(13) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney (Approved on 18 November 2014). As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

• **Telephone**: +61 2 8627 8176
• **Email**: ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au
• **Fax**: +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

*This information sheet is for you to keep*