CET Transition to University

Using your time and talents well

International Student Support Unit (ISSU)
University of Sydney

May 31, 2010

Who are we?

ISSU = International Student Support Unit
✓ Professionally qualified psychologists and/or social workers
✓ Experienced in working with students from different cultures and language backgrounds

May 31, 2010

University of Sydney
International Student Support Unit
ISSU Staff

Head ISSU: Lidia Nemitschenko
Senior Counsellor: Paul O’Donohue
Counsellors: Maria Pirrello
              Gabby Pritchard
              Jill Abeshouse
              Gail Hart
Administrative Officer: Angela Mason

ISSU: What do we do?

We help international students:

- Cope with the challenges of living and studying in an unfamiliar culture
- Achieve a rewarding and enjoyable student experience.

ISSU services include:

- Individual psychological counselling to students and family members
- Welfare advice
- Assistance with accessing other support services in the University
ISSU Counselling Service is:

- Free
- Confidential
- Culturally sensitive

ISSU Programs & Services

- Daily Arrival Information Sessions
- Orientation
- Accommodation Sessions & Accommodation Officer
- “Succeeding at University” Seminar Early in Semester 2

Other ISSU Activities

- Trips and Activities Program
- Accompanying Partners Program
- Returning Home Seminar
- Monthly Newsletter on the Web
- Online Information
Where to find us!

- ISSU
  - Level 5
  - Jane Foss Russell Building, City Rd (next to Wentworth)
  - 02 8627 8437
  - www.sydney.edu.au/issu

- Counselling Service:
  - 02 8627 8433
  - www.sydney.edu.au/counselling

ISSU Opening Hours:
- Monday-Friday 9am to 5pm
- Early and late appointments can be made
- Emergency after hours contacts:
  - 02 9351 3333, or
  - Freecall 1800 063 487

Contact Us
- To make an appointment, contact ISSU by:
  - Telephone: 8627 8437
  - E-mail: ISSU.info@sydney.edu.au

- Come to our office in the Jane Foss Russell Building
  - Walk-in sessions daily 2pm - 3pm
Challenges

Stresses for international students are dealing with the challenges of:
- Loneliness
- Homesickness
- Adapting to a new environment and culture
- Adapting to a new educational culture
- Language
- New study skills and study requirements

Challenges

In addition to usual student issues, international students are meeting the challenges of:
- Complying with visa requirements
- Accommodation: Finding an appropriate and affordable place to live
- Financial stresses
- Family expectations
- Health Problems
- Unexpected difficulties

What Do I Need to Know about Sydney University

- Rules: Faculty requirements, Special consideration, Referencing
- Support Services: ISSU, Learning Centre, Library, Student Services
- Assessment and grades
- Subject choice: Assumed knowledge, Subject progression
- Learning context: Can be specific to Australian context
University Policies

We can help with:

- Understanding University and Faculty course progress or course requirements e.g.
- Staying on Track
- Special consideration
- Reduced Load
- Leave of absence on health/compassionate grounds
- Referral to other appropriate people or offices

Special Consideration:

Academic staff will take into account illness or misadventure which has affected your academic performance or ability to complete work on time.

This is called 'special consideration'

For Special Consideration You Need:
1. Professional Practitioner Certificate
2. Complete necessary form and submit to Student Centre

If you need Special Consideration:
- Book to see an ISSU counsellor
- If you are ill, see a doctor straight away and get a medical certificate

Remember success comes from

- Independence
- Perseverance
- Learning & Mindsets
Success

- Seek ISSU support and welfare advice for yourself or family members
- Obtain information and/or Consult:
  - Faculty Advisors
  - International Student Advisors
- Attend workshops and seminars at:
  - Learning Centre, or
  - Maths Centre, or
  - Counseling Service
- Use online information and resources

Ways to make things better

- Prevention is better than cure
- Seek help early and, if necessary, regularly
- Create flexible plans and make university top priority
- View mistakes as a basis for positive learning
- Asking for help is not a sign of weakness – it is an intelligent problem solving strategy

Ways to make things worse

- Overload in an effort to catch up
- Not learning from mistakes and possibly associated wishful thinking
- Isolating yourself from other students
- Skipping classes and convincing yourself that the course can be self taught
- Not seeking help and not talking to others about your real experience of university
Academic Requirements:

- Attend lectures (though not mandatory)
- Attend and participate in tutorials (often assessed)
- Complete assignments on time (lose marks if late)
- Attend lab sessions if your course has these
- Do independent library research and reading

Assessment and Grades

Your progress will be assessed by:
- Assignments during semester
- Presentations
- Tutorial participation
- Reports
- Class Tests
- Exams and quizzes: (Mid-semester and end of semester)

Assessment and Grades

Marking:
- May be different from your home school
- Work is evaluated relative to performance of all other students in the group
- Grades allotted under the ‘normal distribution curve’ for many subjects
Language

- Academic English
- Colloquial
- Unique to the language
- Referencing

Balanced lifestyle

- Be organised: Timetable, travel and study, clubs and societies, act early on problems.
- Exercise 45 minutes three times a week for mood and fitness
- Eat proper meals
- Be careful of drugs and alcohol
- Relaxation (include this in timetable)

Developing a Social Network

- Give yourself time
- Can be difficult due to language and time commitments
- Need to make an effort to engage
- Sometime need to take a risk
- Don’t take it personally
- Join in Unimates and clubs and societies
Vital skills

- Independence
- Assistance-seeking skills
- Perseverance
- Resilience

Independence

Make sure you know:

- Time of your lectures?
- When your first/next assignments are due
- How you plan to keep track of due dates and hand assignments in on time
- What you have to do to prepare for your assignment
- What is your priority for university this week?

Assistance

- Define the problem:
  What are you being asked to do? What don’t you understand?
- Have you asked your tutor or lecturer about this?
- Identify where to get help: lecturers, tutors, student advisors
- Know what these people do to assist with uncertainty about courses and academic procedures
- Student Services offer support with disabilities, psychological, financial problems
- Have other students similar problems? What do they do? Talk to them.
- Check your guide to student services for more information
Perseverance

- Ebb and flow of the academic year –
time management and balance of activities
outside study – timetable
- If stress gets very high or motivation very
low, access support services early
- Not unusual for students to fail assignments,
change their mind about courses. Confusion
or disappointment can be worked through
- Think: what can I do to improve and where
can I get help?

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Resilience:
Developing enduring skills for
dealing with psychological distress

- Managing uncomfortable feelings:
stress, confusion, disappointment can
be worked through: individual
appointments, workshops and groups
to provide skills and support
- Mindsets for developing your potential
skills. How your thinking helps or
hinders - explore your attitudes around
Commitment, Control, Challenge

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Important Dates 2010

Semester 2
DAIS Daily Arrival Information Sessions  21 June - 13 August
Orientation Full Degree Students  21-22 July 2010

Last day to add a unit  Friday 6 August
Last day for withdrawal  Tuesday 31 August
Last day to discontinue without failure (DNF)  Friday 10 September
Last day to discontinue (Discontinued – Fail)  Friday 30 October
Important Contacts

- Services for students
  Many resources to help you succeed at University
  - www.sydney.edu.au/stuserv/
  - www.sydney.edu.au/scholarships/
  - www.sydney.edu.au/careers
- University Security Service
- SUPRA - Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association
- SRC - Students' Representative Council