The *Fast Forward Program* provides school students with opportunities to increase their awareness of university and further study beyond high school and helps to raise their educational aspirations.

The *Fast Forward Program* is a partnership between the University of Western Sydney and Greater Western Sydney schools which helps students to see the value of continuing their education through to year 12 and beyond. It began in 2004 and has continued to grow, offering the opportunity for enhanced academic and personal achievement to a large number of Greater Western Sydney students. In 2013 there will be 54 partner schools and approximately 2400 participants.

The program encourages students to strive for their personal best and to see tertiary study as a realistic and viable post-school option. They participate in experiential learning which develops their skills and fosters familiarity with the university environment.

*Fast Forward* recognises the importance of engaging students with the concept of lifelong learning and the benefits of post-school education as early as possible so that they can more knowledgeably plan their pathways in the senior years of schooling and post-school study.

The following elements of the program give students the chance to be involved in a wide range of activities.

- **Fast Forward Awards Evening:** Students and their parents are invited to attend a UWS campus early in Year 9 to take part in an Awards Evening. This acknowledges the academic and leadership potential that led to students’ selection in the program. As well as welcoming new participants, the evening is a chance for students and parents to learn more about the program and hear from inspirational speakers including UWS student role models.

“What I gained from being in *Fast Forward* is that if you enjoy doing something, work hard so that you can do it in the future as your career” – *Student from Jamison High School*
• **Fast Forward University Days:** In Years 9, 10 and 11, students attend a Fast Forward University Day at a UWS campus. They see more of the university and learn more about what tertiary education has to offer. They participate in workshops, including sessions on Aspirations and Barriers, Effective Habits for Teens, and Matching Interests and Personalities to Career Pathways. There are also opportunities to meet UWS students who give an insight into life as a university student by sharing their knowledge and experiences.

• **In-school Workshops:** Workshops are presented to participants by UWS students trained as mentors in the program. Working in small groups, mentors encourage educational aspirations and help students gain skills and confidence. Workshops include time/stress management, exam preparation and public speaking among other topics.

• **Year 11/12 UniM8s:** Students are matched with a UWS student whose course of study relates to their interests and ‘shadow’ that student to classes for a day. They get a taste of university life, become more familiar with a local campus, and can ask an expert what it’s like being a university student.

• **Year 12 Conference:** Students in Year 12 will be eligible to attend the annual Year 12 Conference which aims to provide opportunities for students to meet with a wide range of education and industry professionals and explore the options available to them after they have completed their high school learning.

• **HSC Preparation Courses:** Students will be able to attend one full-day HSC preparation course paid for by the Fast Forward program. These workshops provide an opportunity to prepare for the HSC, with courses led by experts familiar with the requirements of the HSC.

• **yourtutor and SkillsBuilder:** Students will have access to an online homework centre which includes free online tutoring and the use of an extensive bank of practice questions and quizzes all year for revision and study.

• **Fast Forward Scholarship:** A new scholarship has been developed to encourage Fast Forward students to actively participate in the program and make the most of the opportunities it provides by rewarding their hard work and dedication with financial support for tertiary study at UWS. A scholarship offer worth $20,000 will be made to selected students.

• **Support in First Year University:** Students who go on to study at UWS are offered additional information or support where needed to make the transition to university smoother. Many students become role models for the younger students entering the Fast Forward program, creating further leadership opportunities.

As part of the program, students also receive Fast Forward workbooks, newsletters and other helpful tools for their use at school. Fast Forward is a key program under the UWS Schools Strategic Plan, which focuses on working with schools to improve the educational opportunities and attainment of students in Greater Western Sydney.

For more information contact us on fastforward@uws.edu.au or visit our website at www.uws.edu.au/fastforward

“The evidence was that students were engaged and listening all throughout the day, Fast Forward keeps on getting better each time.” – Teacher from Sarah Redfern High School