Here at UWS we know that our mature age students perform a juggling act, managing study with other competing demands such as work, family and carer responsibilities. We also know that our mature age students like to be organised.

This guide is designed to give you a better understanding of what university is really like, how it will fit into your life and the support that’s available to you at UWS.

Am I a mature age student?
A mature age student (MAS) is any student that is not a current school leaver. If you were not completing Year 12 when you applied to study at UWS, you’re considered a mature age student.

Why should I go to university?
Mature age students choose to study for many different reasons. Whether you’re returning to achieve a particular career or life goal, or for the love of learning, university is for you.

How many mature age students are there at UWS?
Our student population is diverse, with students from a wide range of age groups and backgrounds. Almost two thirds of our undergraduate students are 21 and over, and around one quarter are 25 and over. No matter what age you are, there are definitely other students like you at UWS.

Ages of UWS students

- Under 21: 36%
- 21-24: 39%
- 25-29: 13%
- 30-39: 8%
- 40-49: 3%
- 50 and over: 1%

*Percentages based on 2013 undergraduate student data*
We have a broad range of courses available at our campuses across Greater Western Sydney. Our bachelor degrees don’t have any prerequisites (i.e. subjects that you need to have studied prior to admission), but there are certain abilities, knowledge and skills (inherent requirements) you need to complete the course. For more information visit uws.edu.au/ir.

Some courses may have additional entry requirements, such as auditions, interviews or meeting specific criteria (e.g. Working With Children Check). For course information visit myfuture.uws.edu.au or contact our Course Information Centre on 1300 897 669.

What can I study?

When you apply through the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC), your application will be assessed on at least one of the following criteria:

» your secondary school result or Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR), Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER), University Admissions Index (UAI) or equivalent
» studies that you have undertaken since leaving school e.g. Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Certificate III or above at TAFE, a private or community college, or prior university studies (minimum two units)
» your result in the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT)
» your work experience, which must be at least one year full-time paid employment.

Each criteria is given a rank out of 100 and we will use the highest rank you have to assess your application. You may also be eligible for bonus points that will boost your rank and improve the competitiveness of your application. For more information visit uws.edu.au/uwsadvantage.

I’ve studied before – can I get credit towards my degree at UWS?

If you’ve studied before you may be eligible to apply for credit for previous study. If you are granted credit, this may reduce how many units you need to do.

There are two types of credit for previous study at UWS:

» **Pathways credit**: if you have completed a Diploma or Advanced Diploma that is listed as an approved UWS VET Pathway, you may be eligible to claim Pathways credit. Find out if you’re in a UWS VET Pathway and claim your credit at uws.edu.au/vetpathways

» **Advanced Standing**: if you have completed any previous study (Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Degree level), you may be eligible for Advanced Standing. Find out more about Advanced Standing and how to apply at uws.edu.au/advancedstanding

Am I eligible to study at UWS?

UWS College is wholly owned by UWS and offers students a pathway to UWS through its comprehensive range of Foundation Studies and Diploma Programs. Successful completion of a Foundation Studies or Diploma Program at UWS College guarantees entry into a UWS undergraduate degree. For more information visit uwscollege.edu.au.
Tell us about yourself:
Technically I am a stay at home mum, but anyone who is a parent of young children knows that this in itself can be equivalent to a full-time job. With the help of my husband I manage to study full-time. I also work with Student Support Services as an ‘Ask Us’ assistant. I have just graduated from my undergraduate degree and I am currently completing my Honours.

What were you doing before you came to UWS?
From starting out as a receptionist, I had a number of career changes which included a stint as a dental nurse. I ended up in banking and finance. After fifteen years I quit, and together with my husband we owned and operated two very successful cafes in the heart of Sydney for the next ten years.

Why did you choose to come to uni?
I have always wanted to go to university. My oldest daughter was starting school and I thought this was the perfect opportunity. I received my university acceptance letter two weeks after I found out I was pregnant with my second child. Life throws an occasional curve ball, but after finding out how flexible uni study could be, I decided to enrol.

What is the most challenging part of returning to learning?
Self doubt and worrying about fitting in. My worries were unwarranted and I can say with all honesty I never felt unwelcome or out of place.

What is the best part of being a MAS?
I pride myself on my time management skills and all that I have learnt from my professional career I apply to my uni work. The diversity of people you associate with at uni can broaden your experiences.

How do you fit uni into your busy life?
I made uni part of my life, not separate to it. I always carry a note book so if inspiration hits me I can write it down. I never leave home without something to read and utilise any opportunity to study. Life will always get in the way and as a MAS you understand that is just the way life is and you get on with it.

What tips do you have for other MAS?
Be organised and write due dates for all your assignments on the family calendar so you can see at a glance your uni work, and can coordinate school, sporting events and dental appointments with advance notice. Don’t be afraid to ask for help from your family. UWS also have wonderful support services that are very accessible; from time management to skills support, or if you just need to chat to someone.

Attending UWS has also shown me that you are never too old to make new friends. I have had the privilege of meeting and becoming the best of friends with fellow mature age students and I have UWS to thank for that. One final tip for my fellow MAS is to remember that when you are at uni age doesn’t matter. You will be amazed what the younger generation can teach you about life outside your own little world.
Yes. We have a variety of scholarships on offer. To see if you’re eligible and to apply visit uws.edu.au/scholarships.

Once you start your studies, if you experience financial hardship you may be eligible for a University Student Loan, Student Grant, textbook or food vouchers. Visit uws.edu.au/welfareservice for more information.

Assistance is limited so it’s important that you consider all the costs associated with coming to uni and how you can manage financially before you start your course. For example, if you are giving up full-time work to study, you may need to adjust your spending habits now to prepare for the change in income. If you have young children and will be studying full-time you may need to access child care which will be an additional cost. Or if you live some distance away from the uni campus and need to drive or catch public transport, these are costs you will need to consider and budget for.

It’s worth finding out if you’re able to claim Youth Allowance or Austudy through Centrelink to assist you during your studies. You may also be eligible for the Student Start-up Scholarship, to assist with the upfront costs of study. For more info visit humanservices.gov.au.

Is there financial support available?

How many hours will I spend at university?

As a full-time student on campus at UWS you should expect to spend 12–16 hours each week in lectures or tutorials. These classes may run at any time between 8am and 9pm, Monday to Friday. Practical courses will require out of hours involvement and some courses will require off campus placements.

You will also need to spend time preparing for class, reading, working on assignments and studying for exams. As a general rule, full-time study is similar to a full-time job, around 40 hours per week. If this sounds like too much on top of your other demands like work and family, you may consider studying part-time.

Are there any other costs?

There are additional costs associated with studying, including:

» **Textbooks:** total costs each session can range from around $500–$1200, depending on your course

» **Study materials or equipment:** costs vary depending on your course e.g. a nursing uniform or first aid certificate

» **Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF):** this fee has recently been introduced across all Australian universities and goes straight towards student focused programs and facilities (if you’re an Australian citizen, it can also be deferred like your tuition fees)

» **Travel:** parking permits are required to park on campus. If you are travelling by public transport you may be eligible for a travel concession (discounted travel). For more information visit uws.edu.au/gettingtouni

How long are the teaching sessions?

Most undergraduate degrees are taught in two sessions – the Autumn Session from late February to June and the Spring Session from late July to November. UWS also offers an optional Summer Session from December to February, during which students can study additional units if they’re available.

How much will my course cost?

All undergraduate courses at UWS are Commonwealth Supported (unless you’re an international student). This means your tuition fees are subsidised by the government, giving you a lower rate of fees to pay. If you’re an Australian citizen, you may defer your fees through a HECS-HELP loan. Fees vary depending on which course you study – visit uws.edu.au/fees for more information.
Returning to learning can be quite overwhelming, especially if you have had a significant break from education. To help you prepare we have a range of free student workshops available before session starts:

» **Academic Literacy and Maths:** there are a number of academic literacy and maths workshops that run before session starts. They develop essential literacy skills such as essay writing, critical analysis, referencing, note taking, reflective writing and assignment preparation, as well as maths start skills and preparation

» **Returning to Learning:** a workshop tailored to mature age students that helps you understand University processes, how to manage the challenging roles and responsibilities of student life and develop support networks

» **Introduction to E-Learning:** a hands-on workshop that explores commonly used e-learning systems and tools at UWS

For more information visit [uws.edu.au/workshops](http://uws.edu.au/workshops).

If you feel like you’re not quite ready to start studying at university, you might like to take a preparation course at UWS College or work towards a degree pathway through TAFE or a private vocational college. Visit [uwscollege.edu.au](http://uwscollege.edu.au) or [uws.edu.au/pathways](http://uws.edu.au/pathways) for further information.

To make the most of your studies you will need a basic level of computing skills and access to a computer with the internet. At UWS we use blended learning, which means learning takes place both face-to-face and online (e-learning), even if you are studying on campus. E-learning has many advantages, including the flexibility to access course materials online from anywhere at any time. Some of the ways you will experience online learning include:

» using your UWS student email
» enrolling and registering for tutorials
» accessing course content and recorded lectures
» submitting quizzes and assignments online
» participating in discussion boards.

If you’re worried about it, the Introduction to E-Learning workshop is a great way to get up to speed and feel comfortable using UWS online systems and e-learning tools. There is also IT support available on campus, over the phone, via email, online chat or at [MyIT.uws.edu.au](http://MyIT.uws.edu.au).

Computers are available for student use in the libraries and the computer labs. Computer labs are located on each campus and are accessible 22 hours a day, seven days a week.
The Transition Success @ UWS program is there to ensure each and every new student gets the support they need. As a new student, you’ll get a call from a senior student within your first four weeks of uni to see how you’re settling in. Whether you have a question or need some advice, our senior students are there to help. They’re just like you and know how challenging the first few weeks of university can be – and they’ve got some great advice to help you settle in as quickly as possible.

uws.edu.au/transitionsuccess

‘Ask Us’ assistants

During orientation and the first few weeks of session you will see ‘Ask Us’ assistants around campus. These senior students are here to help with any questions you have. Look for them in the bright green t-shirts.

Is there a library on campus?

All UWS campuses have a library equipped with computers, study rooms and academic resources. Understanding the library system, as well as the methods and skills required to research for assignments, is challenging. The library has a wealth of resources available online, tours at the start of session, as well librarians who can assist you face-to-face, over the phone, via email or online chat.

To help you make the most of the library resources, our libraries are open outside normal business hours and you can access the library’s online resources from anywhere at any time. You can also order books from another UWS campus and we will transfer it to the campus closest to you.

Visit library.uws.edu.au for more information.

Check out the Top Tips from Mature Age Students guide – a collection of hints and tips from current mature age students at UWS.

uws.edu.au/matureage
If I have questions, who can I contact?
If you have any questions about studying at UWS or upcoming events, please contact our Course Information Centre where a current student will answer all your questions.

P: 1300 897 669
E: study@uws.edu.au

You can also visit myfuture.uws.edu.au

If you would like to know more about what’s happening for mature age students at UWS or you have any questions, please visit uws.edu.au/matureage or email matureage@uws.edu.au