Returning To Learning
A Guide for Undergraduate Mature Age Students
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.
What can I study?

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.

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

UWS offers a range of Tertiary Education (TE) pathways into popular university degrees that generally provide guaranteed entry and credit transfer from your vocational/higher education studies towards a related UWS degree.

Credit transfer is also known as Advanced Standing or recognition of prior learning (RPL). All courses which carry predetermined credit into like degrees are listed at uws.edu.au/pathways

If you can’t see your course listed here, do not be concerned, the university will assess applications for advanced standing on an individual basis and whether an applicant is eligible to receive credit or not. This also applies to previous studies at other tertiary institutions and relevant experience. For more information on this process visit uws.edu.au/advancedstanding

Am I eligible to study at UWS?

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

Are there any other pathway options to UWS?

UWSCollege 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 UWSCollege guarantees entry into a UWS undergraduate degree. For more information visit uwscollege.edu.au
Is there financial support available?

Yes. We have a wide range of scholarships on offer to new and continuing students. The selection criteria of our scholarships varies, to see if you’re eligible and 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

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.

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.

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 much will my course cost?
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 [UWSCollege](http://www.uwscollege.edu.au) or work towards a degree pathway through [TAFE](http://www.uws.edu.au/pathways) or a private vocational college. Visit [uwscollege.edu.au](http://www.uwscollege.edu.au) or [uws.edu.au/pathways](http://www.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
» accessing your marks
» 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.
What support is available once I start uni?

At UWS we have a great range of support services available on campus and online to make your transition to university as smooth and easy as possible:

Student Central
- **Student Central**: Your first point of contact for all student queries, information and forms. uws.edu.au/studentcentral

Academic skills support
- **Hub for Academic Literacy and Learning (HALL)**: online and face-to-face academic literacy support. uws.edu.au/hall
- Workshops and online resources on topics such as public speaking and time management. uws.edu.au/workshops
- **Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS)**: study groups run by student facilitators. uws.edu.au/pass

Accommodation
- UWS offers a wide range of accommodation on each campus, providing you with high quality, affordable accommodation that gives a rich and balanced living and learning environment.

Child Care
- Available on all campuses, providing high quality education and care for children 0–6 years. Discounts apply for UWS students. uws.edu.au/childcare

Maths skills support
- **Mathematics Education Support Hub (MESH)**: online and face-to-face maths support. uws.edu.au/mesh

My Course Planning
- Held at the start of session, My Course Planning (MCP) sessions offer you the opportunity to find out more about your course and receive assistance in selecting units for study or applying for Advanced Standing. uws.edu.au/mycourseplanning

Orientation
- At your Orientation session you will find out more about your course, have the opportunity to meet students and academic staff, explore your campus and ensure that you are prepared to start classes. uws.edu.au/orientation

Social
- **MATES@UWS**: mentoring program that connects first year students with other new students and mentors in later years of study. uws.edu.au/mates
- **Family friendly social activities** on campus, as well as student groups and clubs. uwscampuslife.com.au

Student Support Services
- **Chaplaincy and Multifaith facilities** available on all campuses. uws.edu.au/chaplaincy
- **Counselling Service**: free and confidential service available in person and via phone or email. uws.edu.au/counsellingservice
- **Disability Service**: support for students with disabilities, chronic health conditions and temporary injuries. uws.edu.au/disabilityservice
- **Student Welfare Service**: assisting students with financial difficulties, legal problems, accommodation, Centrelink, University disciplinary matters, food and book vouchers, grants or loans. uws.edu.au/welfareservice

UWS Careers
- Services and resources to help students and recent graduates with career education.
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.

Top Tips from Mature Age Students

Patricia
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
When you are at uni age doesn’t matter. My self-doubt and worries about fitting in were unwarranted. I can honestly say I have never felt unwelcome or out of place.

Mary
Bachelor of Community Welfare
Time is precious when studying so utilise every minute you can. Remember that those precious minutes you spend studying, reading, attending tutorials and lectures is getting you one step closer to your degree.

Jamie
Bachelor of Music (Honours)
Don’t underestimate the value of working with your peers. If you don’t know something, chances are somebody else does. Don’t be afraid to ask for help.

Amanda
Bachelor of Arts Master of Teaching (Secondary)
It is important to maintain a healthy balance between your university commitments and everyday life. Remember to take breaks during assessments, whether to read a book, spend time with loved ones, or even take a walk to clear your head. Everyone needs time to unwind.
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