The Fast Forward Program is a Widening Participation program at The University of Western Sydney. The program aims to raise educational aspirations for high school students from non-traditional backgrounds. The program 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 2015 there will be 53 partner schools and approximately 3,000 participants.

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.

‘My students will see university as a realistic goal. It gives them an opportunity to learn in a different context.’ – Teacher from Chifley College Dunheved
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 staff. Working in small groups, staff members encourage educational aspirations and help students gain skills and confidence. Workshops include time/stress management, exam preparation, awareness of Higher Education options and public speaking, among other topics.

UWS Day for Year 11 Students: UWS Day is a UWS-wide initiative designed to help senior high school students, particularly those in year 11, prepare for their course and career journey. Fast Forward students will be offered a place at a UWS Day event during their Year 11 studies. UWS Day will provide the opportunity for Fast Forward students to speak to current UWS students and academic staff, experience the range of courses available at UWS through interactive workshops and presentations, and learn about scholarships, pathways programs and opportunities to pursue their aspirations.

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 HSC preparation courses 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.

yournutor 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 for revision and study throughout the year.

Fast Forward Scholarship: A Fast Forward scholarship is available to students who 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 Office of Widening Participation, 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 uws.edu.au/fastforward

‘What I have gained from being in Fast Forward is a better understanding of what university is like and a clearer understanding of what I want to do.’ – Student from Jamison High School