Preamble

Over the quarter century since its formation, UWS has participated in the internationalisation process which has transformed the higher education system in Australia. This participation is motivated by a desire to achieve international recognition for the quality of teaching and research programs in the University, with the aim to attract talented students and staff to the University from around the world, and to meet the expectation that graduates will have the knowledge and skills to work effectively in a globalising economy and society. UWS is an internationally engaged university in all these dimensions.

The University’s Mission speaks directly to this ambition:

“To be a university of international standing and outlook, achieving excellence through scholarship, teaching, learning, research and service to its regional, national and international communities...”

Internationalisation at UWS also has particular meanings in relation to the Greater Western Sydney setting. The local student population at UWS is already highly “international” in character with approximately 30% of students from homes where languages other than English are spoken, fully reflecting the outcome of Australia’s migration policies since the 1970s and settlement patterns in Australia’s largest city. The 10% of the student population at UWS who are officially “international students” are welcomed into a diverse multicultural community at the University and in the Greater Western Sydney region. The international plan for the University acknowledges and builds on the existing international character of the local students of the University and the international campuses that have been created.

The International Plan is a plan for the University as a whole, and responsibilities for its achievement are set out in an implementation plan in collaboration with the responsible components of the University.

There are four objectives in the Plan:

1. **Partnerships.** Develop targeted international partnerships to support research and educational priorities
2. **The student experience.** Create a superior international student experience at UWS/in GWS
3. **Student mobility.** Develop a suite of accessible international study opportunities
4. **Resources.** Contribute to the organisational and financial strength of the University
Objective 1: Develop targeted international partnerships to support research and educational priorities

The focus of internationalisation of Australian higher education is increasingly on the development of multi-level international partnerships in contrast to an earlier emphasis on the primacy of individual international student recruitment. International reputation is linked to the quality of international partnerships. This theme is emphasised in the Panel Report of the University’s Review of UWS International (2011) and in the Discussion Paper of the International Education Advisory Council, chaired by Michael Chaney AO (2012).

The research trajectory for UWS is strongly aligned with this changing orientation across the sector in Australia. The UWS Research Plan 2012-2014 states under Objective 3 that UWS aims to “Increase the number and concentration of funded research partnerships”, with the expectation that “Institutes and Schools will have well developed partnerships with world-leading national and international research units...” and generally that the University will “pursue international linkages to drive potential research collaboration”. More specifically, the Research Plan under Objective 4 aims to “Ensure that UWS attracts...high quality HDR students to its areas of research strength” with a strategy “to improve international marketing for UWS research degrees targeted to areas of research strength and to where there are international government sponsored scholarships”.

International partnerships are also pursued to advance other areas of University educational strategy, often through Academic Cooperation Agreements. These include pathway arrangements for cohorts of students from overseas universities to UWS, offshore arrangements for the offer of a UWS qualification, provisions for student and staff exchange, and overseas study or service experience by UWS students.

Schools, Institutes and Centres, as well as the International Office will continue to develop international partnerships for research and educational purposes. These may include partnerships with NGOs, government and industry bodies. The strategic intent of all partnerships needs to be clearly identified to align activity with the UWS mission and strategic plan. The potential benefits of international partnerships are maximised by sharing of knowledge in UWS and using the International Office and the new CRM system to facilitate this communication. Oversight by the Executive, and linkage to Schools, Institutes and Centres is achieved by suitable governance arrangements, strong communication protocols and the new CRM system.

Strategies (in addition to those outlined in the UWS Research Plan 2012-2014):

1. Identify the strategic intent in all university partnerships, and their potential to contribute in areas beyond the primary consideration of the partnership.
2. Rank partnerships according to strategic value, measure benefits against costs, identify benefits to partner, and establish relationship management protocols appropriate to level of partnership
3. Develop UWS publicity materials (marketing collateral) on specific research strengths to match the emerging configuration of Institutes and Centres.
4. Develop a governance process for international partnerships under the oversight of the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Engagement and International) and the Executive, connecting the International Office, Schools, Institutes and Centres.

Performance Measures:

1. Annual classification of partnerships as high/medium/low strategic potential
2. Annual audit of success of partnerships in achieving objectives.

Key Performance indicator:

Proportion of successful partnerships as demonstrated by annual audit.
Objective 2: Create a superior international student experience at UWS and in the Greater Western Sydney community.

International students in Australia often face a distinctive set of challenges in housing, transport, work, health, safety, continuing development of English language and in connecting to the Australian community; all of which can impact on their overall experience, and on their success in their studies.

International student well-being and an enhanced quality of the international student experience are emerging as national objectives for the Australian university system. This dovetails with the increasing focus on enhancing the experience of all UWS students. The concept of the overall student experience is one which goes well beyond the classroom experience and level of satisfaction with teaching and depends on a great many areas of the University from the first contact with admissions, to student services, security, welfare, library, campus facilities and accommodation, and eventually, their role as alumni.

International students are a great resource of knowledge and experience and facilitating the interaction of local and international students is to the benefit of all. On the global scale, Australia’s place in the world will be substantially affected by the attitude of international students who have left Australia but who maintain a capacity and interest in engagement with Australia and in ongoing networks with Australians. The ability to make connections and friendships with Australians, while a student, is a key to this national interest.

UWS is distinct from many universities in the extensive international nature of its domestic campuses, and in the multicultural communities around its campuses. There is the opportunity for UWS to take innovative approaches to enhancing international student well-being through engagement with regional communities. Community engagement may become a distinctive part of the University’s attraction to prospective international students.

Strategies:

1. Measure the international student experience at UWS against university and sector benchmarks, identify strengths and weaknesses and develop plans to address any weaknesses and capitalise on strengths.

2. Link UWS community engagement to an enhanced international student experience. Investigate the potential for communities in the Greater Western Sydney region to become involved in supporting international students.

3. Develop peer mentoring programs between Australian and international students.

4. Assess the gaps in the English language and literacy skills of international and domestic students as they progress through their studies at UWS, and develop a targeted approach to support in each School.

Performance Measures:

1. University Experience Survey overall satisfaction rates: first and final year, international vs domestic students.

2. UWS commencing student survey overall satisfaction rates: international vs domestic students.


Key Performance indicator:

International Student Barometer: UWS vs sector.
Objective 3: Develop a suite of accessible international study opportunities

UWS Graduate Attributes make direct reference to international perspectives by:

- a demonstration of knowledge which understands the local and international relevance of the chosen field(s) of study; and
- “bringing knowledge to life” through responsible engagement and appreciation of diversity in an evolving world.

Opportunities for domestic students to have a direct experience in studying overseas can greatly facilitate the achievement of these Graduate Attributes.

There is a reinvigorated national agenda to encourage Australian students to undertake an overseas study experience because of the transformative effects on learning and understanding that often occur. Schemes include the longstanding government supported International Student Exchange Program that allows students to study a semester overseas at the Australian student contribution rate. This has been given an Asia focus and additional resources as an outcome of the Australia in the Asian Century report. Moreover, with Sydney as Australia’s foremost “global” city, it is expected that many graduates of UWS as a Sydney metropolitan university would take the opportunity of an international study experience, if attractive and accessible.

UWS has the highest number of low SES students in any Australian metropolitan university. The capacity to take up the opportunities for an overseas study experience is, for many students, constrained by the cost and by work commitments. Additional resources are now available through the Federal Government’s Australia in the Asian Century project to expand opportunity.

The driver for international study opportunities comes from Schools who identify the best partnership arrangements that will facilitate and encourage student mobility, and design curriculum which includes and encourages these options. These mobility partnerships may also be targeted for wider academic or research collaboration where appropriate.

**Strategies:**

1. Assess the current demand for outward mobility by students in particular courses, and the aspirations of Schools to include international study experiences in the curriculum, and develop a targeted University plan to enhance outward mobility.
2. Develop curriculum that enhances the international dimensions of the Graduate Attributes, in particular through the facilitation of international study experience.
3. Design and implement an equity strategy for outward mobility utilising available funding sources and philanthropic donations.
4. Build a renewed communication strategy around the international study experience involving International Office, Schools, Marketing and students returning from overseas.
5. Evaluate the case for a flagship program of “UWS Ambassadors” or “Whitlam Ambassadors” who undertake overseas service learning as part of their academic program.

**Performance Measures:**

1. Number of Schools and Institutes who develop an international mobility plan.
2. Number of students per School participating in an international study experience and growth year to year.
3. Level of low SES student participation in international study experiences.

**Key Performance indicator:**

Annual audit by Schools, Institutes and UWS International of the number of students participating in an international study experience.
Objective 4: Contribute to the organisational and financial strength of the University

The University has sought to build sustainable international enrolments generally in line with the projected growth of the University, and comprising about 10-11% of total enrolments. With the easing of growth in domestic student enrolments in 2012, there is scope to increase the proportion of international students in 2013-2014, if international market conditions permit.

International student targets are set on a revenue basis and by course, rather than just on a student numbers basis, and course prices for international students are set no lower than for a domestic student (student contribution plus Commonwealth contribution), and should cover differential marketing and recruitment costs.

The International Office plays the leading role in general international recruitment through agents and direct applications, and works in close collaboration with Schools, Centres and Institutes and the office of PVC (E&I) when institutional partnerships are the basis of student flows. The efficient processing of international applications supports recruitment while ensuring compliance with University admissions policy, and legislative requirements under the ESOS Act and Streamlined Visa Processing guidelines.

Strategies:

1. Stabilise international student enrolments in 2013-2014, and achieve growth in targeted areas, market conditions permitting, including a focus on masters coursework and higher degree research students.

2. Develop a pricing strategy based on a clear understanding of margins in all courses, and recognition of constraints and opportunities of market conditions.

Performance Measures:

1. International enrolments and revenues against targets.

2. Application processing time.

3. Legislative compliance.

Key Performance indicator:

International revenue against target.