‘Coming in mid-stream’
A Report on Accelerated Entry Programs as a Social Inclusion Initiative: the BSW exemplar

Principal Investigators
Dr Rosalie Pockett
Dr Margot Rawsthorne

Senior Project Officer and Report Author
Dr Alexandra Young

Additional Data Analysis
Kashmira Dave (PhD Candidate)

Faculty of Education and Social Work
The University of Sydney
…I think we’re really good at getting them here...but it would be good if the uni was genuine about funding, that’s orientation, support, mentoring and learning support, language support that would be really inclusive, rather than saying you can come, sink or swim. (Staff member 6)
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We would also like to thank the Social Inclusion Unit at the University of Sydney for providing funds through the Widening Participation Grant Scheme 2011-2012 to undertake this important research.

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Executive Summary

The Social Work and Policy Studies program at the University of Sydney received a Widening Participation Grant (2011-2012) from the university to investigate the experiences of current and former students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) accelerated entry program. The program allows students who have completed specified TAFE Diplomas, accelerated entry into the second year of the four year degree. The BSW accelerated entry program commenced in 2006 and is now part of Commonwealth initiatives under the Australian Qualifications Framework (2011). Students entering university via this pathway reflect wide diversity in cultural, language and educational backgrounds.

The research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the accelerated entry program as a social inclusion pathway for students entering the BSW degree. It also aimed to explore what barriers exist for students utilising available support structures and to understand what further strategies can be developed to support transitional learning for these students.

Accelerated entry BSW students were invited to complete an online questionnaire about their experiences at university and/or to participate in an interview. Twenty five students fully completed the survey and five in-depth interviews were conducted. Interviews were also conducted with seven staff members involved in the program from TAFE and the University of Sydney. The study received ethics approval on 3 May 2012 from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Sydney University and fieldwork was conducted between June and November 2012.

The research found that the BSW accelerated entry program is an effective social inclusion pathway which encourages TAFE students to enrol at university. The proportion of students who received TAFE credits and enrolled directly into year 2 of the BSW degree in 2012 was 17.8 per cent which has since risen to 18.6 per cent of all year 2 BSW enrolments in 2013. These figures highlight the significant way in which participation at university can be increased by accelerating students who have completed a TAFE qualification and enter university via an alternative pathway.

The findings present the experiences of students entering university via the BSW accelerated entry pathway and a number of recommendations are made around four key themes.

1. Curriculum Reform
   1.1 It is recommended that the current BSW degree program be revised in order to ensure that students transitioning from TAFE are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully undertake the BSW degree program.

1.2 It is recommended that BSW accelerated entry students have access to an academic writing course in order to develop the necessary writing skills to successfully complete the BSW degree.

2. Student Preparation and initial engagement
   2.1 It is recommended that the Learning Centre workshops in academic literacy for BSW accelerated entry students receive recurrent funding to help students transition from TAFE to university.
2.2 It is recommended that the Learning Centre workshops in academic literacy for BSW accelerated entry students be extended to two weeks to encourage greater acquisition of research and writing skills.

2.3 It is recommended that attendance at the Learning Centre workshops in academic literacy for BSW accelerated entry students is strongly recommended by the Social Work and Policy Studies program.

2.4 It is recommended that BSW accelerated entry students be given extra help to negotiate the enrolment process and university system.

2.5 It is recommended that TAFE students receive improved orientation to the University of Sydney.

3. Ongoing Student Support
3.1 It is recommended that the role of the Learning Centre be reinforced with TAFE students at the Faculty orientation and students are made aware of the support mechanisms available at Sydney University.

3.2 It is recommended that the Social Work and Policy Studies program develops a comprehensive mentoring program to provide initial and ongoing support to students enrolled in the BSW accelerated entry program.

4. Dissemination of results to stakeholders
4.1 It is recommended that the results of this study be widely disseminated in order to improve the experience of TAFE students who have enrolled in the BSW accelerated entry program.

4.2 It is recommended that further research be undertaken with BSW accelerated entry students including an evaluation of the implemented recommendations.
1. Introduction

This report outlines the evaluation of an existing accelerated entry program for the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. This program commenced in 2006 in response to the Australian Vice Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC) Cross-Sector Qualification Linkages Policy. This policy has since been further developed and is now part of the wider Commonwealth Australian Qualifications Framework (2011).

The Australian Qualifications Framework (2011, p. 8) specifically emphasises the importance of developing student pathways through education, for example, among its objects it:

- Supports the development and maintenance of pathways which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between different education and training sectors and between those sectors and the labour market, and

- Supports individual’s lifelong learning goals by providing the basis for individuals to profess through education and training and gain recognition for their prior learning and experiences.

The BSW accelerated entry program enables students who have successfully completed a TAFE Diploma in a related field, for example, community welfare work, youth work, alcohol and other drugs work or community services management, accelerated entry into second year of the four year BSW program. This research project provided an opportunity to examine the effectiveness of the accelerated entry program as a social inclusion strategy.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The access and participation of students from low socio-economic backgrounds into higher education has received considerable attention since the Bradley Review (Bradley et al., 2008). The Federal Government has set a national target of 20% of participation of students from low socio-economic backgrounds by 2020 and put in place targets through university compacts and a series of university targets.

To support the meeting of these targets the Federal Government has put in place both reward funding (should the University meet its target) and the Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP) to support both widening participation activity with pre-tertiary students and to support current students from low socio-economic backgrounds success at this University.

University of Sydney targets

The university has agreed to the following targets for the participation of students from low socio-economic backgrounds as part of its compact agreement with the Federal Government.

The targets are for participation across the undergraduate domestic cohort. Students are currently identified on the ‘interim’ measure set by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) made up from a combination of census
collection district data and Centrelink status. The final measure (expected to be made up from Centrelink, parental education, school attended and census collection district data) was to be released in late 2012, however this has not yet occurred.

It is not possible for the university to identify students internally using the ‘interim’ measure as Centrelink status is not available automatically to the University. Internally the ‘old’ postcode measure is still used to track participation and set targets for students from low socio economic backgrounds. These sit lower than the proportions on the new measure.

The Planning and Information Office at the University of Sydney has calculated targets for low socio-economic status students (LSES) who are commencing and continuing their studies. In 2009, the base rate of 7.5% was calculated using the Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) classification of the student’s postcode of their permanent address. A student is classified as LSES if they live in the lowest 25 percent of postcodes within NSW. This rate is set to increase in a manner specified by DEEWR (Planning and Information Office, 2012).

According to statistics prepared by the Planning Office at Sydney University (Personal communication, May 2012) the participation rate for students from low socio-economic status (LSES) backgrounds rose by .35% between May 2011 and May 2012. This meant there were an additional 129 students from LSES backgrounds attending Sydney University. The Faculty of Education and Social Work accounted for 26 of these students which translates into an increase of 1.9 percent in the participation rate of students from LSES backgrounds in the Faculty (Personal communication, May 2012).

**What the literature says...**

Existing research suggests that if the government’s target of 40% of 25-34 year old Australians are to obtain university qualifications by 2025 is to be achieved, university programs will need to find ways to facilitate opportunities for university study for those communities where there has been no tradition of university attendance. These communities include lower middle and working class Anglo communities as well as members of newly arrived groups (Birrell, 2010). Birrell (2010) further argues that these lower-middle and working class Anglo families in fact have lower university attendance and aspirations than those whose parents come from Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) birthplaces.

Accordingly, cultural diversity per se cannot be assumed to widen participation. At present preliminary data has been collected on language backgrounds of students enrolled through the BSW accelerated entry program but this is insufficient to establish that the pathway is acting to widen participation. The evaluation will establish whether the accelerated entry pathway is providing opportunities to students who may not have gained entry to university via the more usual ATAR process.

Student diversity sits well with the educational goals of social work, social justice and social change. Hurtado (2006) notes that this diversity creates the ‘discontinuity needed to evince more active thinking processes among students, moving them from their own embedded worldviews to consider those of another’ (p. 189). This research will create an understanding of the diverse range of students enrolled in the accelerated entry pathway which is consistent with the values of the Social Work and Policy Studies program in supporting student diversity at Sydney University.
In supporting and evaluating transitional learning initiatives for international students, Owens, (2011), poses the question ‘How can curriculum be revised to accommodate the needs of diverse learners?’ (p.43). Owens argues that the development of new academic courses and the revision of existing ones should aim to embed transitional learning initiatives which are consistent with the accepted key principles of good practice in undergraduate education (Chickering and Gamson, 1994).

Owens (2011, p.42) further examines a ‘for-credit’ course developed specifically for a diverse student population at a Central Queensland University. The undergraduate course titled ‘Principles of University Learning’ focussed on ‘learning to learn’ in the Australian university context. The course ‘sought to make ‘encultured’ approaches to learning explicit, invited students to reflect on their own learning and teaching preferences and expectations in relation to the Australian model and provided guided development of independent and collaborative learning skills and strategies across the range fo common assessment modes’ (Owens, 2011, p. 44). The evaluation of the ‘Principles of University Learning’ course found that students who successfully completed the program improved their learning outcomes significantly and were better able to work independently, as well as collaboratively, across assessment genres and contexts (Owens, 2011, p. 49). These arguments add support to transitional learning initiatives for accelerated pathway students, such as TAFE students.

Widening Participation Programs

The University of Sydney has developed a significant and well-regarded widening participation program. The University was successful at the end of 2011 in a bid for $21.2m from the federal government with four other Sydney-based universities for the Bridges to Higher Education program. The University of Sydney has taken a lead role in the development of the Bridges consortium (for more information see http://bridges.nsw.edu.au/) which was the largest successful consortium bid in Australia. ‘Bridges’ will allow the university to continue the successful work with several established programs including the Compass - Find your way to higher education program (http://www.sydney.edu.au/compass); the E12 program, the Broadway Scheme and the Pemulway and Gadigal programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It will also significantly expand its work with other universities in the South West and Western Sydney Regions.

In 2012, the Faculty of Education and Social Work received a Widening Participation Grant for $25,000 from the Social Inclusion Unit at the University of Sydney to evaluate the accelerated entry program into the Bachelor of Social Work.

The BSW accelerated entry program at the University of Sydney was developed with two clear objectives to:

• Be part of a broader social inclusion strategy for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds who wished to pursue a professional qualification in social work;

• Participate in the wider Commonwealth initiative of the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy under the auspice of the Australian Qualifications Framework (2010) and previously the Australian Vice Chancellors’ Committee [AVCC].

The demand for the program has consistently increased and is clearly demonstrated by student enrolment statistics in the BSW. Using the second year enrolment statistics provided by the Faculty of Education and Social Work (Personal communication, 2012) the number of
students receiving TAFE credits and therefore entry into the BSW accelerated entry program has increased from three students in 2006 to 21 students in 2011, 18 students in 2012 and 24 students are currently enrolled in second year.

Although successful completions have been achieved by accelerated entry students, there is a group of students for whom progression is difficult. This is demonstrated by withdrawals from the program and a cohort of students who have difficulties progressing beyond the first year. For the BSW accelerated entry students, the first year on campus equates to year 2 of the BSW degree because they have received credit for their prior learning at TAFE. The basis of admission to university was highlighted to be a ‘consistently significant indicator throughout all analyses’ according to an Early Attrition Analysis conducted by Sydney University (2011. p. 19). The analysis found that ‘students admitted through TAFE were consistently in the top two groups for highest rates of attrition for all analyses’ (Planning and Information Office, 2011, p. 19). Mature age students were another group consistently in the highest rates of attrition which is significant as the BSW also accepts higher numbers of mature age students for inclusion in the BSW program.

McMillam (2005, p. 37) notes that ‘in order to reduce attrition, institutions need to ensure that students enter with the skills needed for success in a university environment, or are provided with early opportunities to acquire these skills’. In recognition of the difficulties some first year students experience at university, Lizzio (2006) developed a framework to understand the orientation and transition needs of students commencing university studies. The ‘five senses of success’ outlines areas of student need and provides some information on how to tailor strategies to help students better make the transition to university life. Lizzio (2006, p. 3) links student success at university with their:

- Sense of capability
- Sense of connectedness
- Sense of purpose
- Sense of resourcefulness
- Sense of academic culture.

He invites practitioners working with first year students to reflect on the current strategies used with first year students transitioning to university education, by providing a framework to explore current practices and to reflect on different orientation and transitioning practices which could be utilised in the university environment (Lizzio, 2006, pp. 4-11). This may have implications for future strategies in relation to the BSW accelerated entry students.

The BSW program

Central to the BSW program at the University of Sydney is the understanding that the social work profession is committed to tackling social injustices and inequalities through political and social engagement with current issues. This is achieved by responding to personal needs through the provision and development of personal resources and community services, and through social reform and activism, including advocating for policy and institutional change (Faculty of Education and Social Work 2008, p. 3).

The code of ethics adopted by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) informs the program at Sydney University affirming that: ‘The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and
liberation of people to enhance wellbeing…Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work’ (AASW, 2010, p. 7).

The Bachelor of Social Work at Sydney University is a four year degree program. The BSW is a sequenced program in which the first two years allows students the freedom to choose from a broad range of units in the liberal Arts, thereby providing a foundation for focussed professional studies in the final two years of the degree (Faculty of Education and Social Work, 2008, p. 4). In the first year of the course students study predominantly subjects from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences including the compulsory study of Sociology for students enrolled in the first year of the BSW.

In the second year of the BSW, students undertake a combination of subjects offered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Education and Social Work. It is compulsory for students to study either Psychology for Social Work (offered through the Faculty of Education and Social Work) or one intermediate unit of Psychology (offered through the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) in each semester, as well as Australian Social Policy, Indigenous Australia: An Introduction, Research Skills for Social Work and one senior unit of study from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The third and fourth years of the BSW program comprise both class work and field education. Class work in the third and fourth years is organised as an integrated Issue Based Learning Curriculum which recognises that students are active participants in their education with an emphasis on the interdependence of theory, policy, research and practice (Faculty of Education and Social Work, 2008, p. 5).

Students enrolling in the BSW accelerated entry program receive one year credit for their TAFE studies and therefore enter university in the second year of the BSW program. The BSW accelerated entry students are required to complete in their first year, the requirements expected of all students enrolled in the BSW in year 2, including both the compulsory subjects offered by the Faculty of Education and Social Work and the senior units of study chosen from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Although these students have received credit for their prior TAFE studies, they have never attended university before and have not completed any junior units from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The expectation, however, is that they perform as second year students, even though they are only in their first year at university.
1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

Research Questions

The research aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How effective is the accelerated entry program for students entering the BSW degree as a social inclusion pathway?

2. What barriers exist for students utilising available support structures?

3. What further strategies can be developed to support transitional learning for these students?

Research Method

A mixed methods approach was used (Bryman, 2008; Walter 2010) which included:

- A 30 question survey which was developed by researchers and sent by email to all students who participated in the accelerated entry program (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the survey and Appendix 2 for the accompanying letter outlining the purpose of the study). 34 responses were received to the online questionnaire which was derived from the validated Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL at the University of Sydney) 2011 Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ). The questionnaire was divided into four sub sections in relation to the BSW accelerated entry program, including: overall experiences, experiences with staff, experiences of university resources and an overall rating of experiences of the course (see http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/sceq/SSEQ_questionnaire.pdf). In addition to the quantitative questions, students were also asked some qualitative questions developed from the ITL’s standard group open response questionnaire (see http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/feedback/preview.cfm?qu=stgor).

- Five semi-structured interviews were conducted with students. Two interviews were conducted with current students and three BSW graduates were interviewed (see Appendix 3 for the student interview schedule and Appendix 4 for the Participant Information Statement for students).

- Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with key staff members (from the university and TAFE) who have taught this group of students, or who have been involved with them in a targeted way, for example those in the Learning Centre, who have run specific, learning support programs (see Appendix 5 for the staff interview schedule, Appendix 6 for the Participation Information Statement for staff and Appendix 7 for the staff consent form which was signed prior to each interview).

The researchers had also planned to conduct a number of focus groups in order to provide students with an opportunity to participate but who may not wish to be interviewed individually. Due to the limited response, however, only semi-structured interviews were conducted. Student participants were required to sign a consent form prior to being interviewed (see Appendix 8) and at the end of each interview they were given a resource
sheet outlining support services within the university should they require access to these services (see Appendix 9).

As the study involved students who were in a potentially vulnerable position with the researchers, who were also teachers on the program, the data collection and all student contact was undertaken by a Senior Project Officer who was also responsible for ongoing student liaison and data analysis. This also enabled the research results to be analysed independently of staff teaching on the social work program. The study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), University of Sydney - protocol number 14730.

**Preliminary Data Analysis**

Preliminary analysis of student data available via the student information system, ‘Flexis’ enabled a ‘snapshot’ to be developed of the students enrolling in the BSW via the accelerated entry program since it commenced. Demographic data including age, gender, postcode/suburb, place of birth/language spoken and TAFE facility attended was aggregated. Progression through the course has been captured through enrolment data for units of study and completions through to final graduation.

Between 2006 and 2012 (not 2013), 93 students have enrolled in the BSW from the TAFE accelerated entry program. Of these 24 have withdrawn, failed or transferred from the course. Of those currently enrolled (69), 16 have successfully completed the degree and graduated with a BSW. The remaining 53 are enrolled across Years 2, 3, and 4 of the degree. Of the 16 students successfully completing the degree, one achieved the University Medal and three have achieved honours results.

The largest number of students is enrolled in Year 2 of the program, which is the first year on campus for students. Some students opt to enrol part-time in their first year of the degree program. This year is a transition year from other learning environments to university study and poses significant challenges for students (Lahood, M. 2011). Student at risk data compiled by the BSW program suggests that for many accelerated entry pathway students this is an extremely challenging transition.

**Data Analysis**

Questionnaires were aggregated using an Excel spreadsheet and then loaded onto an SPSS database for descriptive statistical analysis. Semi-structured interviews provided thick data on student experiences and a thematic analysis of qualitative data from transcribed interviews was undertaken. Data analysis was undertaken by the principal investigators and the senior project officer.

**Limitations**

The take up for the student questionnaire and the focus group was low— the link to the survey with an email invitation was sent out three times and this achieved an unexpectedly low figure of 30 responses. We can only speculate on possible reasons for the disappointing response rate. Possible reasons may have been that some students had not been enrolled in the course for a while and had ceased their contact or sense of engagement with the university; that some students may not have trusted the process; that on-line questionnaires
assume that potential respondents have regular access to email and the internet off campus and this may not have been the case; or other unknown reasons. The disappointing response may also demonstrate the inherent difficulties in engaging with this student cohort.

Difficulties were also experienced recruiting student participants for interviews and focus groups. ‘Snowballing’ techniques were tried but still only managed to achieve five completed interviews and no focus groups.

A further limitation of the study is that there were no participants from diverse backgrounds who participated in the student interviews. All the students interviewed spoke English at home and there were no students from non-English speaking backgrounds or who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

On the practical side, compiling the list of email addresses was difficult as we were unsure if all the students who were eligible for inclusion in the sample had been included. There was also uncertainty surrounding whether the email addresses held in the university records were still current and/or correct.
2. Key Findings

2.1 QUANTITATIVE STUDY WITH BSW ACCELERATED ENTRY STUDENTS

Results from the online student questionnaire

Using data obtained via the ‘Flexis’ system, together with student record information obtained through the Faculty of Education and Social Work, a list of email addresses was developed to target students who are currently, or who have been enrolled, via the accelerated entry program in the Bachelor of Social Work. This contact list included students who have successfully completed the BSW degree, as well as those who may have withdrawn, failed or transferred to another degree course or university.

On four occasions between 30 July 2012 and 23 October 2012, 119 emails were sent to students and ex students with an invitation to participate in an online survey (see Appendix 2). The invitation contained a link to a survey which had been developed using SurveyMonkey software and contained both quantitative and qualitative questions (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the online questionnaire).

The initial response rate was low and after a number of attempts to encourage participation, a decision was made to close off the survey on 31st October 2012. A total of 34 participants started the survey with 25 participants (73.4 per cent) completing the survey. This represents a starting rate of 28.6 per cent and a completion rate of 21 per cent.

The survey was completed by 85% females and 15% males aged from 21 years to 51 years. 54% of respondents were born in Australia and 46% were born elsewhere, including Sierra Leone, China, United Kingdom, Philippines, Burma, Afghanistan and New Zealand. Four students in the sample came from a refugee background and one was an international student. The majority of participants spoke English at home (18 students) with a variety of other languages including Chinese and Creole also spoken in the home. No respondents were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

All students had enrolled in the BSW degree between 2003 and 2012 and the sample consisted of nine students enrolled in 2nd year, five enrolled in 3rd year, six enrolled in 4th year, one suspended and five who had completed their degree. The sample was equally spread with half of all respondents being the first in family to attend university and the other half having had family members who had attended university. Forty per cent of participants had caring responsibilities and 81% had work responsibilities. A more detailed overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample can be found in Appendix 10. The following section highlights the important findings and detailed discussion of the online survey.
Over half (55.2 per cent; 16 students) of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that ‘there is a lot of pressure on me as a student in this degree course’ with just over one quarter of students surveyed (27.6 per cent; eight students) answering ‘neutral’ in relation to this question. Only five students (17.2 per cent) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This finding suggests that the majority of accelerated students experience some degree of pressure in relation to their studies in the BSW program.

While just under three quarters of the students (72.4 per cent; 21 students) agreed or strongly agreed they ‘usually had a clear idea of where I am going and what is expected of me in this degree course’, only around one quarter (24.1 per cent; 7 students) disagreed with this statement.

Sixteen of the twenty nine students (55.1 per cent) who responded to the statement ‘it is always easy to know the standard of work expected’ replied they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The highest number of students agreeing with the statement was 11
students (representing 37.9 per cent), but interestingly, ten students also disagreed with the statement (representing 34.5 per cent).

In answer to the statement ‘It has often been hard to discover what is expected in this degree’, half of the students surveyed (50 per cent; 14 students) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. One quarter of students (25 per cent; 7 students) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement and one quarter remained neutral, which suggests they may have found it difficult at times to understand expectations.

There was overwhelmingly positive agreement with the statement ‘My degree course is encouraging my development of relevant, ethical, social and professional perspectives’ with 16 students (55.2 per cent) strongly agreeing with the statement and ten students (34.5 per cent) agreeing with the statement. The results show that twenty six students from the total of 29 students who answered this question believed that the BSW is providing relevant professional perspectives. No students disagreed with the statement and three students (10.3 per cent) remained neutral.

Summary:

Thus, even though students understand what they have to do in terms of the expectations surrounding the work, they feel pressured as students in the BSW course. Students surveyed overwhelmingly believed that the BSW degree course is providing them with the development of ethical, social and professional perspectives in relation to becoming a social worker.
Student learning experiences

Just less than half of the participants (48.3 percent; 14 students) agreed that ‘I am generally given enough time to understand the things I have to learn’ with an additional four students (13.8 per cent) strongly agreeing that this is the case. Four students (13.8 per cent) disagreed with the statement answering that they were not generally given enough time to learn and one student strongly disagreed with the statement (3.4 per cent).

Just over half of students in the survey (51.7 per cent; 15 students) agreed or strongly agreed that ‘feedback on my work is usually provided only in the form of marks or grades’. Seven students (24.1 per cent) disagreed that feedback was only in the form of marks and grades and three students (10.3 per cent) strongly disagreed. Four student answered ‘neutral’ in relation to this question. The results suggest that in most cases, feedback is provided in written form rather than through discussion with students.

There was high agreement with the statement that ‘the degree course has improved my skills in written communication’ with twelve students (41.4 per cent) agreeing with the statement.
and eleven students (37.9 per cent) strongly agreeing with the statement. Only one student (3.4 per cent) strongly disagreed that the degree had improved their written communication skills and five students answered neutrally.

The statement ‘The sheer volume of work to be got through in this degree means it can’t all be thoroughly comprehended’ polarised the sample of students who participated in the survey. Eight students (27.6 per cent) answered each of the categories ‘disagree’, ‘neutral’ and ‘agree’ which means that overall twenty four students (82.8 per cent) answered across three categories which reflects a high degree of diversity in experience. Four students (13.8 per cent) strongly agreed that they could not comprehend all the work in the degree course because there was so much of it and one student (3.4 per cent) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that the experiences of TAFE pathways students is that just over 40 per cent surveyed believed that the volume of work impeded comprehension of the material included in the course.

Nineteen students (65.5 per cent) agreed that the degree course ‘is developing my ability to use oral, written and/or visual communication’ with a further eight students (27.6 per cent) strongly agreeing this was the case. Thus 27 of the 29 students (92.5 per cent) who answered this question believed the accelerated BSW program was positively developing their oral, written and/or visual communication skills. Two students (6.9 per cent) answered ‘neutral’ to this question and no students disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement.

Just under half of students (48.3 per cent; 14 students) agreed that the online experiences in the accelerated BSW have helped them engage in learning. Three students (10.3 per cent) strongly agreed that the online experiences had helped them, making a total of 17 students (58.6 per cent) who agreed with the statement. Six students (20.7 per cent) answered ‘neutral’ to this question and six students (4 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed) that the online experiences had not helped them engage in learning.

Summary:

There was overwhelming support that the accelerated BSW is developing student skills across all forms of communication including written, oral and visual communication. While the online learning experiences offered in the program helped student learning, they were not acknowledged as strongly as the oral, written and visual communication skills. This result is further enhanced by 23 out of 29 students answering that they felt they had improved their written communication skills. Over three in five students (62 percent) believed they were generally given enough time to understand what they needed to learn in the course and that the most common form of feedback was in the written form.
Student experiences with staff

Please tell us about your experiences with staff in the BSW accelerated entry program

Figure 3: Student experiences with staff in the BSW accelerated entry program

Thirty students from a total of 34 students answered each part of this question. Over half of the students surveyed (56.6 per cent; 17 students) agreed or strongly agreed that ‘the teaching staff normally give me helpful feedback on how I am going’. Four of these seventeen strongly agreed (13.3 per cent), while the most frequent response to this question was agreement with thirteen students choosing this option (43.3 per cent). Three students (10 per cent) disagreed with the statement and two students (6.7 per cent) strongly disagreed and believed that teaching staff did not normally give helpful feedback. Eight students were undecided as to whether teaching staff normally gave helpful feedback which is quite high for a neutral position and requires more analysis in future studies.

The most common answer to the statement ‘the staff make a real effort to understand difficulties I may be having with my work’ was made by eleven students who nominated the ‘neutral’ position. This suggests that students were unsure about the level of effort made by teaching staff in relation to the degree program or that they had a variety of experiences with different staff members. Seven students (23.3 per cent) agreed that staff make a real effort
and a further six students strongly agreed that staff make an effort to understand the difficulties students might have with their work. Four students disagreed (13.3 per cent) and two students (6.7 per cent) strongly disagreed and believed that staff did not make a real effort to understand their work difficulties.

Twelve students (40 per cent) believed that staff ‘effectively support my learning’ and a further nine students (30 per cent) strongly agreed that their learning was supported by staff. This means that 70 per cent of the sample (21 students) shared this belief. Five students (16.7 per cent) answered neutrally and three (10 per cent) disagreed with the statement and one student (3.3 per cent) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Students were split in terms of their opinions about whether staff at the University of Sydney supported their transition from TAFE to University life. The most frequent response (30 per cent; 9 students) was agreement with the statement with a further five students (16.7 per cent) strongly agreeing that their transition was supported by University staff. This means that a total of 14 students (46.7 per cent) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that University staff supported their transition from TAFE to university life. To balance this up, nine students either disagreed (20 per cent) or strongly disagreed, however, (10 per cent; 3 students) with the statement and seven students (23.3 per cent) remained neutral.

Summary:

Overall, helpful feedback was delivered to students by teachers who supported their learning, but the survey results reveal uncertainty about how much real effort staff made to understand their situation as TAFE pathways students. More students in the survey, however, felt supported in the transition to uni than did not feel supported, with a significant number of students answering this question in an undecided manner.
The highest response in answer to the question ‘the degree course administration is effective in supporting my learning’ was agreement by over half (53.3 per cent; 16 students) of the participants. This question refers to the work of staff who work in the administrative office of the Faculty of Education and Social Work. Three students (10 per cent) also strongly agreed with the statement. Eight students (26.7 per cent) answered neutrally which suggests, that for over a quarter of students surveyed, there is uncertainty about the role of the degree course administration. Two students (6.7 per cent) disagreed with the statement and one student (3.3 per cent) strongly disagreed.

Ninety per cent of students surveyed agreed (73.3 per cent; 22 students) or strongly agreed (16.7 per cent; 5 students) with the idea that ‘resources on the University of Sydney websites supported my learning’. Only two students had mixed feelings about this statement and one student (3.3 per cent) strongly disagreed with the sentiment of the question.
Over three quarters of the sample (76.7 per cent; 23 students) agreed (56.7 per cent; 17 students) or strongly agreed (20 per cent; 6 students) that ‘the library resources are appropriate for my needs’. No students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, but seven students (23.3 per cent) answered neutrally which suggests that further information could be given to students about the library and what kind of resources, and how, they can access library resources.

There was a mixed response to the question ‘the extra curricular activities at the University of Sydney have helped me develop as a person’. The highest response was ‘neutral’ with half the students (15 students) choosing this option. Eight students (36.7 per cent) agreed with the statement and only one student strongly agreed. Four students (13.3 per cent) disagreed with the statement and two strongly disagreed (6.7 per cent). This suggests that there is work to be done on the involvement of TAFE pathways students in university life.

Similarly, the answers to the statement ‘the support facilitates (Learning Centre/Student counselling) are adequate for this degree’ received mixed responses. Just over half of the students either agreed (36.7 per cent; 11 students) or strongly agreed (20 per cent; 6 students) with the statement, but ten students (33.3 per cent) answered neutrally. Two students (6.7 per cent) disagreed with the statement and one student (10 per cent) strongly disagreed.

Summary:

The results to this question suggest that the degree course administration is effective in supporting students’ learning. The high number of ‘neutral’ responses suggests that either the students have had limited contact with the administrative section of the department or they are unclear about the role played by administration within the department.

There was very strong agreement that the Sydney University website resources supported student learning and that the library resources where indeed suitable for students needs. The results in relation to the extra curricular activities suggest that with such a high ‘neutral’ response that students may not be involved in the extra curricular activities available on campus.

While just over half of the students surveyed believed the support facilities were adequate for the degree, one third did not comment either way and ten per cent did not believe the resources were adequate for the BSW degree program.
Overall student ratings of their experiences of the BSW accelerated entry program

Over two thirds (66.6 per cent; 20 students) of the thirty students who answered this question responded that “I feel part of a group of students and staff committed to learning”. Seven students (23.3 per cent) strongly agreed with the statement and 13 students (43.3 per cent) agreed with the statement. Eight students (26.7 per cent) were neutral in relation to the statement and two students (6.7 per cent) disagreed with the statement suggesting that they did not feel part of a group committed to learning.

When students were asked to comment on the statement ‘I feel I do not belong to the university community’, results were split. Two thirds of the sample (20 students; 66.7 per cent) either disagreed (14 students; 46.7 per cent) or strongly disagreed (6 students; 20 per cent). This suggests that the majority of the students surveyed feel that they do belong to the university community. In contrast, however, one third of the sample (10 students; 33.3 per
cent) of participants either agreed (7 students; 23.3 per cent) or strongly agreed (3 students; 10 per cent) with the statement which means they feel they do not belong to the university community which is of concern.

In answer to the question ‘I tend to feel isolated within this department/school’, nineteen students (63.3 per cent) either disagreed with the statement (33.3 per cent; 10 students) or strongly disagreed (30 per cent; 9 students) with the statement. This is a positive reflection of how students feel in the department. It is of concern, however, that five students surveyed or 16.7 per cent of the sample either agreed (2 students; 6.7 per cent) or strongly agreed (3 students; 10 per cent) that they feel isolated in the department or school. Six respondents (20 per cent) in the sample chose to answer ‘neutral’ for this question.

Seventy per cent of students (21 students) either agreed (13 students; 43.3 per cent) or strongly agreed (8 students; 26.7 per cent) that ‘overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this degree course’. This is a good result. In contrast, two students (6.7 per cent) strongly disagreed with the statement which means they are not satisfied with the course and seven students (23.3 per cent) answered in the neutral position. This is quite a high number and suggests that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the course. Perhaps this neutral group of students see the strengths and weaknesses of the course.

Summary:

Overall, the majority of students who undertook the online survey feel part of a group of students and staff committed to learning and perceive that they belong to the university community. The majority also tend not to feel isolated within the department and are satisfied with the degree course. These results indicate that although the majority positively rate their experiences of the accelerated BSW entry program, this sentiment is not felt by the total group and that there is room for improvement in order to improve the experiences of some students within this group.

Most useful or worthwhile aspects of the BSW accelerated entry program

Twenty two students answered question seven which asked ‘Please list three things about the accelerated entry into the BSW program that were most useful or worthwhile and explain why each was important’. Twelve students skipped the question. Of the twenty two students who answered, all provided at least one useful or worthwhile comment about the accelerated BSW program. Twenty students provided two things that were useful for them and thirteen students provided three things that were useful in relation to their experiences of the accelerated BSW. In total there were fifty five responses to this question. The question has been coded thematically according to each of the fifty five responses.

While some students provided information on things which were useful in relation to the accelerated BSW entry program, as well as, providing an explanation as to why they were useful, others did not outline why their answer was important. One student also provided two reasons within their answer, thus there were 56 responses analysed for this question.
The most useful thing noted in relation to the BSW accelerated entry program was the Learning Centre. Over 20 percent of the comments spontaneously made by students were in relation to the significant role played by the Learning Centre in relation to their university experiences.

The Learning Centre was seen as important for the following reasons, which are listed from the most significant to least significant and the number of times each comment was made is listed in brackets at the end of each bullet point:

- Provides support with academic writing and referencing (5)
- Provides help and support with learning needs (3)
- Helped with learning university rules and expectations (2), and
- Helped students connect with other TAFE students (2).

The next most useful thing noted by students about the accelerated entry into the BSW was the recognition given to the prior learning gained through completion of a relevant TAFE qualification. Almost 20 percent of comments made were in relation to how the practical student experiences at TAFE had provided students with skills which were important in their further learning of the BSW degree. These experiences were believed to be a significant part of the accelerated BSW because of the following reasons:

- TAFE provided practical based teaching (4)
- Field work began from year 1 in TAFE (1)
- TAFE work placement provided experiences which students could draw on at university during class discussions (1)
- The TAFE Diploma provided a framework and understanding of what Social Work is all about (1) and
- That TAFE students were not treated any differently to other university students (1).

Just over 12 percent of students commented on the beneficial aspect in the accelerated BSW entry program which allowed them to skip first year university study and enrol straight into second year University. While for some this transition was difficult (as will be discussed in the next section) most were positive about this aspect of the degree course. Skipping first year was seen as advantages because:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most useful things about accelerated entry into the BSW program</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Centre</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE provided practical based learning</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipping first year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful staff (tutors, teachers, administrative staff, library staff)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes of the course</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing an opportunity to attend University</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring program/meet and great others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of other TAFE students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• It shortened the degree by one year (4)
• The financial advantages of not having to incur another year’s fees (2)
• Students did not have to take subjects which were perceived as unrelated to the course (1).

Students found the helpful staff at the university just as important as skipping a year with just over 12 percent of students commenting on this aspect of university life. These comments were made in relation to a wide range of university staff members including: tutors, teachers, administrative staff, library staff and disability services staff. The most common reason why this comment was made related to the support offered by university staff with four students noting this reason. Other reasons included references to:

• Cultural competencies (1)
• The fact that staff understood that not all students have the same abilities (1).

Just over ten per cent of the comments were made in relation to the positive structure of course. The aspects of the accelerated BSW program which were noted as useful included:

• The course provided practical and theoretical knowledge (1)
• Small class sizes (1)
• Encouraged group work (1)
• Incorporated guest lecturers (1)
• Used online discussions (1).

Seven per cent of comments were made in relation to communication. One comment related to how the university website provided good information for the transition from TAFE to university and the other two comments were in relation to the benefits of the degree course in enhancing oral communication skills (1) and written communication skills (1).

Equally as important as communication were the comments relating to the idea that the accelerated BSW program provided students with an opportunity to attend university. This was seen as important because without the TAFE pathway, some students would miss out (4). The example was given that some students do not always get the entry marks in High School and the accelerated entry provides a second chance to study at university.

Over three per cent of comments were made in relation to the mentoring program or the ‘meet and greet’ provided by the Faculty and another three per cent of comments related to the support provided by other TAFE students enrolled in the BSW degree. The Faculty led mentoring program and introduction session were seen as helping the transition from TAFE to university and allowed TAFE students to identify others in a similar position to themselves (2) The support from other TAFE students was identified as social support and friendship (2).

The ‘other’ category represents a comment made about the lack of support for students from non English speaking backgrounds. This comment is perhaps best seen in relation to the responses to question 8 which asked for improvements to the accelerated BSW entry program.
Suggested improvements to the BSW accelerated entry program

Twenty one students responded to question eight which asked ‘Please list three things about the accelerated entry into the BSW program that could be improved and explain why these changes would help the program’ with one idea for suggested improvements to the accelerated BSW program. Sixteen students provided two suggestions for improvement and thirteen suggested three things which could be improved in the program. Overall there were 50 responses recorded for this question. Two answers were written as ‘not applicable’ which means there was a total of 48 responses analysed in relation to question 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things that could be improved with the accelerated entry into the BSW program</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater awareness by staff of the challenges faced by TAFE students transitioning to university, including more learning support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help TAFE students improve their skills for university</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a mentoring program</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better orientation to university life</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve second year subject choices</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater support for mature age students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved access to information about the accelerated entry to BSW program</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No improvements needed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were a range of comments made in relation to how the accelerated entry into the BSW program could be improved. The two most common comments related to the need for encouraging greater awareness by staff of the challenges faced by TAFE students transitioning to university, including more learning support (22.9 per cent of comments) and the need for TAFE students to be helped to improve their skills for university (20.8 per cent of comments).

Students outlined the reasons why they believed the course could be improved in relation to staff for the following reasons:

- greater guidance with assignments and marking of assessments (5)
- more supportive staff (2)
- increased awareness of what students learnt at TAFE (1)
- greater understanding of the impact of coming from a non English speaking background (1)
- the alienation experienced by students entering second year (1)
- the pressure felt by students to perform at second year standard (1).
The students in the survey believed that improvements to the program could be made in order to help TAFE students enhance their skills, in relation to:

- essay writing skills (4)
- research skills (3)
- learning skills (1)
- research skills (1).

Another suggestion was to enhance skills by providing study groups for TAFE students (1).

Just over 12 per cent of comments were made in relation to establishing a mentoring program. This improvement was seen as a way of decreasing social isolation (1) by providing more support (1). Three comments were made in relation to the attractiveness of former TAFE students providing mentoring to current TAFE pathways students enrolled in the BSW program.

The same number of comments were made in relation to the suggestion for a better orientation to university life (10.4 per cent) as making improvements to second year subject choices (10.4 per cent). Of the five comments made in relation to improving the orientation process, two were in relation to preparing students for the challenges of entering second year university, two in relation to explaining the expectations of university life and one comment was made in relation to supporting the transition from TAFE to university.

Of the five comments made in relation to second year subjects, three were in relation to providing more second year subjects targeted to social work and the other two comments related to having a second year transition subject (1) and TAFE students not being disadvantaged due to their lack of assumed prior knowledge (1). The latter comment seems to relate to the fact that since students have not undertaken a preliminary first year subject say in sociology, they are unable to enrol in second year sociology.

Three comments (6.3 per cent) were made in relation to the perceived greater support needed for mature aged students entering university via the accelerated BSW entry program. This was suggested since some mature aged students feel isolated and alienated from younger students (2) and that greater support is required because mature aged students have not studied for a while (1).

Three comments were also made in relation to improved access to information about the accelerated entry to BSW program. This was seen as a good way of improving knowledge amongst TAFE students of the course content and expectations (2) as well as providing a method of increasing enrolments (2).

Other

Two comments suggested that no improvements needed and the other category consists of a number of stand alone comments which were unrelated to the previous discussion. These three suggested improvements were:

- Eliminate stigma shown towards TAFE students
- Tell social work students at the beginning of the program they will require a drivers licence
• Include more group work into the unit of study outlines.

2.2 QUALITATIVE STUDY WITH BSW ACCELERATED ENTRY STUDENTS

Student interviews

Five students were interviewed for this section of the study between 6 September and 5 November 2012. All interviews were held on the Camperdown campus of the University of Sydney. Response rates to the invitation to participate in the in-depth interviews were low and while we had planned to also conduct focus groups, there was not enough interest generated in attending a group discussion. The researchers therefore made the decision to go ahead with in-depth interviews only as the method in this part of the study.

It should be noted that not all those who participated in the interviews had completed the online survey. Some interviewees were recruited via word of mouth by others who had participated in the interview process.

Analysis of the demographic data that was obtained during the interviews

Students were asked at the end of the interview to complete a short questionnaire. This information has been used to describe the demographic variables of the five students who participated in the in-depth interviews. Four females and one male participated in the interviews and their ages ranged from 21 to 55 years. Three participants were born in Australia and two were born in England. There were no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants and no participants who were refugees or international students. The main language spoken by all participants at home was English.

Three of the five participants were the first in their family to attend university. No participants had caring responsibilities while students, but three of the five had paid work responsibility while studying for the BSW degree.

The five participants lived in the following Sydney postcode areas:

1. 2016 - Redfern
2. 2151 – North Parramatta/North Rocks
3. 2100 – Northern Beaches - Brookvale, North Manly area
4. 2042 – Enmore, Newtown area
5. 2099 – Northern Beaches – Dee Why area.

Three of the participants interviewed had completed their studies and had commenced their studies in 2003, 2006 and 2008. One of the two current students interviewed was in second year and had commenced in 2012 and the other student was in third year and had enrolled in the accelerated BSW entry program in 2011.

All participants had completed a Diploma at TAFE in the area of community services/welfare and some had also completed other TAFE courses out of personal interest, for example, in office administration. Two of the participants had completed their TAFE qualification at Ultimo TAFE and two at the Northern Beaches TAFE. One had undertaken the TAFE qualification at Granville and Ouribma TAFE campuses. One participant had
previously enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree, but had discontinued because ‘it was just kind of the wrong time for it’.
Findings from the interviews reflected similar sentiments to those expressed in the quantitative survey results. Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Factors influencing the decision to study social work at Sydney University

How students heard about the accelerated entry program?

All the students interviewed had heard about the accelerated entry into the BSW at Sydney University from their TAFE teachers. Most had heard about the program towards the end of their diploma course and one commented ‘I just heard about it in passing’. This suggests an opportunity to work with TAFE to improve communication about the accelerated entry into BSW program at Sydney University, providing the opportunity to increase student numbers entering the BSW and also improve knowledge about the Sydney Uni course and how it differs from other courses available.

Motivations for studying social work

A common motivation amongst participants for studying social work was the desire to help other people and an interest in social justice issues as outlined below:

Well, I care a lot about social justice and you know helping change structures and power. (Student A, 2nd year student)

The University degree course was seen as an obvious extension of the learning offered at TAFE and as providing a way of developing a ‘much deeper understanding’ of social work:

I’d already done TAFE, I’d gone as far as I could go in community services and I knew that was the area that I was going to be leaning to. So it made sense to come, it wasn’t really about the piece of paper. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

For a current student, completing the degree was seen as the endpoint which would enable greater career choices and options:

Well at TAFE they always mention that you can get work through having a diploma but you always have better options of getting a degree and you’ll get paid more, an you’ll be taken into consideration before the others that have ‘cert fours’ and diplomas. (Student B, 3rd year student)

Motivations for studying social work at Sydney University

Two of the five participants lived close to the University campus. It was therefore a convenient location to study. One participant lived in Western Sydney, but access via public transport was easier to Sydney University than to other locations offering undergraduate Social Work courses.

Other people had told me it was good place to come to, but primarily it was based on ease of getting here. Western Sydney it would have taken me two hours, even though I live in Western Sydney. (Student C, BSW Graduate)
Attending Sydney University was also influenced by the prestige and reputation of the university. It was seen as ‘good to get a degree from Sydney University’ and something that would be looked on well by future employers as one participant commented:

I was being strategic because having a disability I thought to be employed, rightly or wrongly, that this university had a reputation as being up there so I kind of thought, “Well, if that’s on my resume that would look better I guess”. (Student E, BSW Graduate)

Another influence was the ‘sense of familiarity’ students had developed with the campus prior to beginning uni which was formed by knowing people who attending Sydney University. This was described by a BSW Graduate as ‘It just seemed a little bit more like home, I suppose coming here, than going to Randwick, or I don’t know, Blacktown, or somewhere out west, Strathfield or somewhere’. For one participant the aesthetics of the campus was important and it was described as ‘the prettiest’ campus, while for another the course structure was influential in the decision making process to attend Sydney University as described below:

I liked Sydney, as you could choose a lot of arts subjects, so I wanted to kind of explore my own interests, as well as the social work side of thing. (Student D, BSW Graduate)

Three of the five participants commented on the advantages of completing the degree in three years, rather than four years in acknowledgement of the importance of recognising their TAFE qualification.

Expectations before starting University

Most expressed nervousness about attending university and a sense of not really understanding what the expectations would be at Uni and if they would be able to cope with University life.

I was actually really nervous when I first started. (Student A, 2nd year student)

I didn’t realise the work would be so hard. (Student B, 3rd year student)

Also a number of participants expressed the hope they would manage to complete their degree as explained by two participants: ‘yeah that I’d actually get to the end of it’ and ‘hopes to finish one day, which I did, yeah’.

Experiences at Sydney University

First year experiences (when enrolled in Year 2 of the BSW program): Positives

One of the spontaneously mentioned positives about enrolling in the second year of the BSW was the courses offered by the Learning Centre. All students really valued the Learning Centre program which was described as helpful, allowed students to get support straight away and resulted in the development of friendships with people in a similar position.
Although the issue of subject choices in second year was an issue for some, it was not an issue for all students interviewed. One student liked the subject choices:

I kind of like it because it was the research subject which a lot of the students in my year didn’t like and the social policy which I like. So I didn’t have an issue with it. (Student E, BSW Graduate)

A number of students were just relieved to have some success in passing subjects during their first year at university:

...getting through it, because my first assessment sucked. My first sociology essay I failed. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

First year experiences (when enrolled in Year 2 of the BSW program): Challenges

While students were able to describe some positive experiences in their first year at University, the challenges they experienced were certainly far greater. The difference between the learning environment at TAFE and University was stark, ‘It’s like going into a different world’ where the culture is ‘distant’ and ‘separatist’. The TAFE environment was described in the following ways:

• Nurturing - ‘like at uni you’re not being hand-held...whereas at school and TAFE you’re probably being led’ (Student E, BSW Graduate),

• Small groups, and

• Good relationship with teachers – more ‘equals’ than the experience at university, ‘I found TAFE more inclusive, like there were still distinctions between students and educators, but it wasn’t as hard, the lines weren’t as hard core, there was a bit more flexibility’ (Student C, BSW Graduate).

The expectations were different in terms of the standard of work that is required at university and participants particularly mentioned:

• Critical analysis not descriptive

• Theoretical orientation not practical

• Individually competitive versus community orientated

• Essay based not reflective.

As one student explains:

So to come from a practical environment to a theoretical environment with actually different rules for essays and different expectations and different language used, I think that was difficult, not just for me but for everyone transitioning from TAFE. (Student C, BSW Graduate)
These differences were highlighted by the accelerated BSW students’ experiencing difficulties with:

- The writing style needed for assignments – ‘So to come from a practical environment to a theoretical environment with actually different rules for essays and different expectations and different language used, I think that was difficult, not just for me but for everybody transitioning from TAFE. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

- Understanding the referencing requirements for essays – ‘I guess referencing I struggled with the most’. (Student A, 2nd year student)

The students interviewed did not feel that they initially had the right skill set for university, this was made especially clear when they were used to doing well at TAFE and did not do well in their first assessment tasks as outline below:

My first sociology essay I failed, where I got a distinction at TAFE, it was just the highest you could get at TAFE, so it was pretty confronting (Student C, BSW Graduate)

At TAFE if you had a question about an assessment they’d be happy to see you. I actually failed an assessment in the first semester and my tutorial teacher, she was no help at all. She told me I needed to resubmit. I resubmitted and I failed again, so I failed the subject. (Student B, 3rd year student)

There was also some feedback from participants in relation to the BSW orientation and course structure as described by students:

I think it was very in your face, like you just got given this book and you had to choose (subjects) right there and then...It was kind of like a hit and miss really. (Student B, 3rd year student)

One of the challenges that I had in first semester actually was the fact we didn’t have assessments due until after the mid semester break and so it was a bit of a struggle, kind of writing and this was in social policy...but it was hard that first assignment, like I can still remember how stressed I was...this semester has been great where we’ve had stuff, you know, that was the social research essay due in the fourth or third week and it’s just good to have that flow and get something out of the way. (Student A, 2nd year student)

On a social level, participants commonly explained that the experience of attending university in their first year was an isolating experience, in which they felt lonely and intimidated. One student even contemplated leaving university ‘many, many times’:

Being an older student you kind of, you don’t fit into that peer, that younger peer, so that was kind of isolating it a little bit. (Student E, BSW Graduate)

I think probably the biggest thing as being a mature aged student is finding other mature aged students to connect with...I was a bit isolated in the beginning. (Student C, BSW Graduate)
I didn’t know anyone that came here so I was a bit alone, but I met lots of people.  
(Student B, 3rd year student)

Advice to new TAFE transition students entering second year

Students in the study offered some valuable advice to new students entering the BSW program through the accelerated pathway. They felt it was important to reinforce with new students that their completed TAFE studies are a beneficial basis for university. Students described many benefits in having completed TAFE qualifications prior to university entry particularly in relation to the material covered and the practical work experience they had received.

It was seen as essential that new students ‘don’t get stressed if you get one bad mark’ as each of the students interviewed had experienced some problems with the initial assignments. They stressed the need to get feedback from staff in the Faculty and to keep on being persistent as explained by students:

And to ask for help and if you don’t get it straight away you keep knocking on different doors until you get it, and if you don’t get it then complain...If you want something you have to be persistent, you can’t give up with one little barrier. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

...just ask as many questions as you can, and don’t be afraid of sounding like an idiot, because I think everybody’s been at uni for a year, so they all come across as being really smart and then after a while you see through the crap. I’ve just spent the first couple of months, thinking, what on earth does the discourse mean? That sort of stuff, so just ask, because everybody else in the room actually doesn’t know as well. (Student D, BSW Graduate)

I guess the thing I would encourage is to make the relationships with your tutors or lecturers...find out what supports are available. (Student E, BSW Graduate)

Make use of all resources and opportunities in order to maximise your chances of success:

• ‘Get lots of feedback from the faculty.’ (Student A, 2nd year student)
• ‘Do all the Learning Centre stuff you can.’ (Student C, BSW Graduate)
• ‘Find out what’s available and don’t be afraid to seek assistance’. (Student E, BSW Graduate)
• ‘I’d say apply for all the scholarships that you can, because I remember some of the students working almost full-time jobs and trying to study. That’s got to be difficult. There is a lot of support out there, you just have to know where to get it I think’ (Student E, BSW Graduate)

This also extends to becoming involved in campus life as a student explained:

Because university isn’t just about learning, if you’re going to be here you need to also enjoy your time. For most students it’s three years of their time and it does help
broaden you to be involved in other stuff and it can compliment your learning anyway...So not to become isolated, some students come, they just study and they don’t really connect with people but it’s important to connect I think for your own wellbeing. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

Overall experiences of university

Positives

All participants spoke very highly of the Learning Centre program and the ‘wonderful’ staff who run it. It was seen as beneficial both in terms of the academic skills taught as well as generating informal friendships and support networks amongst participants as noted:

Some of the people that I met at first, like a week before class started [at the Learning Centre course] they are some of my closest friends on campus. (Student A, 2nd year student)

In O week they had all the lectures on how to write essays and the marking criteria and stuff, so it was really, really helpful. (Student B, 3rd year student)

These students also stressed the importance of knowing that students could get follow up help from the Learning Centre and also enrol in additional courses. The staff member involved in this program was seen as very diligent, approachable and extremely willing to help students.

One student really enjoyed the knowledge gained since enrolling in the BSW and liked the flexibility of interpreting topics in their own way in order to make meaning:

No, I get excited, we are given a lot of leeway in the sense of tasks and it’s nice to just find some interesting little personal essay or just an idea that I have that I’m interested in and I can explore more. (Student A, 2nd year student)

Another student believes it is important to encourage students to feel confident in their abilities because they have already done some practical work in their TAFE studies. This comment is seen as setting TAFE students apart from other students as they are not so daunted by placement because they have already done many hours of practical work in the TAFE course.

One student loved the experience of being at university as she explained:

Yeah. I think maybe how much I enjoyed it, and I love uni. I’m a big uni nerd. I really think it was great. I liked it, yeah.

Q: And what about it? What was it about the experience that you really liked?

I think being part of a group with like-minded people, and I made some really good friends and I still have a really good support network now, so we’ve all kept in touch on Facebook. (Student D, BSW Graduate)
Challenges

Student participants in the study really highlighted the challenges they experienced with assignments during the BSW undergraduate degree. These difficulties were more acute in second year, but some still struggled in later years. The challenges related to:

- Writing skills
- Research skills,
- Referencing, and
- Keeping up with the readings

These difficulties are highlighted in the following examples:

...like it’s hunting down references instead of kind of being personal essays because it was something that I had to adjust to. (Student A, 2nd year student)

The expectations are really high. I know I personally have never been a really strong writer, at TAFE I got by fine, but coming to university just the expectations blew my mind...You probably have to use a lot of big words. They keep saying you need to research and look into your question but I do...I hand it in, I’d be really proud of it, and then I’d get it back and I’d only get like 58 or something. (Student B, 3rd year student)

Also of interest was the perception that some teachers were unwilling to discuss questions with students as illustrated by the following story:

Just the teachers aren’t as, I wouldn’t say happy, but just, I don’t know. TAFE is a lot more interactive and it’s a lot more personal too, but with here you go to lectures, you have a tutorial and that’s it, you get handed an assessment. But because tutorials are so intense in that one hour, if you have any questions then too bad, because we have to get everything done in this hour. (Student B, 3rd year student)

Student feedback to TAFE about the accelerated entry to BSW program

Students involved in the accelerated entry program felt it was important to tell TAFE that the education provided at TAFE gave them a good background for continuing their studies in the university environment. The practical skills learnt especially were useful in giving students confidence for their first social work practicum:

I’d already done two pracs, even though they were little, I had a little bit more experience than some...so maybe a little bit more of a grip on what it’s like working in an agency, and being in an agency, and about referral and things like that. (Student D, BSW Graduate)

One student explained that university was harder than expected. The expectation was that TAFE provided a good preparation for university, however, the reality was quite different:

As far as my expectations it was a lot harder in my first year than we were all led to expect. For sure.
Q. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Well we were all given the idea that we had been prepared for uni with the way that we had to do our assignments at TAFE that just wasn’t the case. Other people who had come here for uni, they said that uni was easier than TAFE in some ways, but I think that they were just more theoretical people rather than practical people and TAFE is far more practical. *(Student C, BSW Graduate)*

This student went on to suggest that perhaps TAFE could ‘prepare your students better’ in order to cope with the transition to university. This preparation would ‘definitely be around writing skills’ and might also involve having higher expectations of written work at TAFE.

Another suggestion made by a student was the value of having a Sydney Uni staff member talk to TAFE students about the degree program, so students had more of an idea about what the degree program involves:

I’d say if somebody from the university came to have a chat to the students about the social work degree. I think that would probably be the most valuable. Someone from this Faculty...cause we did have a lot of guest lecturers. There would have definitely been many chances to. *(Student A, 2nd year student)*

**Student feedback to Sydney University about the accelerated entry BSW program**

While all the students interviewed had suggestions for how the accelerated entry program could be improved, there was overwhelming support for the notion of giving students credit for their TAFE studies and fast tracking entry into the second year of the BSW program. These sentiments were expressed by the following students:

Just the process of coming straight from the diploma to a second year. I guess I’m just a bit of an advocate for that as well. *(Student A, 2nd year student)*

It was pretty cool. I gained a lot out of it you know. I won heaps of accolades so you know it was a relatively good exercise, but again had I not had that kind of support from the program director, I wonder. *(Student E, BSW Graduate)*

**Importance of support provided by the Learning Centre**

**Academic support**

Recognition of the need for academic support was very high among participants. There is high need for a special program targeting TAFE students on entering university. The course offered by the Learning Centre has evolved over time and is currently being run as a series of workshops prior to the commencement of first semester in year 2 of the BSW degree program. Known as workshops in academic literacy for BSW accelerated entry students, these Learning Centre workshops are essential in recognition that students are expected to operate at second year level but lack familiarity with the university and the support and resources that are available which other students learnt about in first year.
The approach targeting accelerated entry BSW students exclusively was seen as appropriate as it provided a valuable learning environment for TAFE students who had been used to this style of learning as outlined by one student who undertook the first one week workshop offered by the Learning Centre to the TAFE pathways students:

I guess in the Faculty, it’s kind of like you come here and it’s just a small little world you see first and it just slowly expands and you kind of don’t want to have that overwhelming straight away. *(Student A, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year student)*

It was seen as essential to improve communication about the course at enrolment or prior to enrolment as some people had no knowledge of the course:

I did have some friends that did come straight from TAFE and didn’t even know that [the Learning Centre course] existed, so that was a bit worrisome. *(Student A, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year student)*

It was also noted that accelerated TAFE students who come from non English speaking backgrounds still struggle with the demands of the BSW degree program and it is one group which required more language support:

I know the other issue was for people of non English speaking backgrounds coming from TAFE, and they had extraordinarily hard times because there wasn’t the language support. By the time I left there still wasn’t really the language support for them. *(Student C, BSW Graduate)*

**Social support**

The social support which arose as a result of the Learning Centre workshop was seen as invaluable in setting up relationships which provide support, especially during the first year of the course:

I know a lot of friends have struggled a fair bit just with kind of similar things and maybe I didn’t pick it up quite so quickly, but at the same time we have that support, so we all, there’s a bit of a philosophy we are in it together, so that has been good as well...we go and have lunch and share, you know, resources with each other online and just text if we are struggling with something and was some clarification. *(Student A, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year student)*

Another form of support mentioned was using Facebook to keep in contact with other students in second year of the BSW program.

**Mentoring and orientation programs**

When one of the graduates had been an undergraduate there was a mentoring program running which was seen as invaluable for TAFE students in terms of orientation and providing support. Students were divided into the pathways by which they had entered university:

So we had TAFE students, we had students who’d come from other universities, students from school, and they all had mentors that had also come from those
pathways pretty much hopefully. There was always two mentors that would meet with them and ask a whole variety of questions and then try and meet with them again, I can’t remember if it was a few weeks later or a month later. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

The value of the mentoring program for TAFE students was to bring them up to speed with university life:

...they come in a different way to other students, and they don’t have, like missing out on that first year, you don’t learn university rules of being and you don’t learn university language, so you are a step behind, without knowing you’re going to be a step behind, and you have the same expectations placed upon you as other students. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

Also important is to orientate students to the university campus as suggested by one student:

Maybe an orientation around the campus would be the way to go. Because I remember that was just one of things on the list of scary things about the uni, was just how big it was, and all the buildings. (Student D, BSW Graduate)

Feedback on course content and delivery

The participants believed it is important to address the issues raised in relation to second year subjects. This could involve consideration of a broader range of subjects and perhaps including second year subjects that are run internally by the Faculty of Education and Social Work, rather than senior Arts subjects from the Faculty of Arts and social Sciences.

Better meld theory and practice in relation to, for example, counselling skills and group work skills in order to ensure:

...bring the practical and the theoretical together. So that when people go out in the workforce they actually have some skills that they can use straight away and...it would make them better social works because they would have a deeper understanding. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

Emphasise the important weight that TAFE pathways students place on relationships with staff— with field education staff, with the program director, with lecturers and tutors. Based on the research findings there seems to be an opportunity for university staff discussion about how students perceive staff and question whether improvements could be made to these relationships. Some comments made include:

I think that’s where the crux of it is, is the culture of the educator seeing themselves so far apart from their students, instead of collaborators with the students...Part of it is the university culture where if you don’t publish you perish as well, and the focus comes away from the students to being more focussed on the research rather than access and equity and the wellbeing of students is often put to the side. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

It was suggested by student participants that the need exists for a more flexible delivery of the BSW program. It is only currently possible to do year 2 of the program part time and it
was argued that for some students the part-time study method should be extended to include study in third and fourth year of the degree program.

There needs to be some flexibility for mature age students, because they have families, they have lives, or may have chronic illness. As social work they should be setting an example for the rest of the uni about how to accommodate students’ needs, but when I first started there wasn’t that on many levels, for sure. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

Additional comments related to the importance of linking theory and practice in the BSW degree program by incorporating role plays and practice in counselling skills into the course, as well as improve knowledge on delivering presentations.

In order to improve the university experience, it was also highlighted that the relationship between some lecturers/tutors and students could be improved as Louise discussed:

Just access and equity and closing the gap between lecturers and students. It doesn’t have to be so wide. There’s no real reason for it. Yes, there needs to be some distinction, but there doesn’t have to be this big we’re up here and you’re down there, not necessary for good learning. (Student C, BSW Graduate)

**Use of established support services**

*Learning Centre*

All the students in the study had accessed the services of the Learning Centre. The majority had been involved in courses offered by the Learning Centre and had found they helped in their transition from TAFE to university, particularly in terms of skill development and in creating social connections.

...the bit where you set out essays, especially the way you set them out, like the first paragraph should be this, second paragraph would be this, that stuff was really helpful because at TAFE you don’t really write essays...I still have the handouts at home. Actually I think one of them is pinned up on my wall. (Student B, 3rd year student)

Q: Are there any other parts of that, that stand out as being really good?

The teacher...but she was really laid back and she would save the work for you, so she was really thoughtful...like she was really good and she helped, she really did, especially when we had that one on one. I think it should be known that you can have the opportunity to have one on one sessions too. (Student B, 3rd year student)

The learning Centre was seen as essential in helping students to ‘learn the rules’ to succeed at university and improve skills in relation to writing, referencing and making sense of assessment tasks.

Learning how to reference properly. Making sure that you really read the essay question properly, which I did really wrong in one assignment once, and learnt after that never to do that again. (Student D, BSW Graduate)
**Student Counselling**

None of the students interviewed had accessed the student counselling services available on campus at the university.

**Other services**

The other services used by students in the study included:

- Disability services
- Financial support through student services
- Academic support through student services.

A common comment was that students were unaware about the range of services available to them which limits their ability to access services, for example:

> Yeah, because depending on what your health needs are, the accommodations vary very widely. So unless you’re given a list of what you can possible ask for and negotiate for, how are you meant to know what you can negotiate if the whole environment’s totally foreign to you? (*Student C, BSW Graduate*)

> It’s Student Support Services, so I don’t know how I found out about this, but I just had no money, and they’ve got bursaries and things, so that was amazing, so I access that one, so that was just the best, because otherwise, it would’ve been, yeah. (*Student D, BSW Graduate*)

**Additional supports required?**

Some suggestions for additional supports included:

- The option to have either telephone or face to face contact with staff prior to enrolment in year 2. This was suggested in order to decrease confusion about subject selection.
- Increase awareness around individual disability issues for people, for example, ‘don’t lump all people with disabilities together’.
- Provide more information for people with disabilities so that they can access the available supports – so that they know where to go and what to do.

**Informal supports**

Students in the study referred to a number of people who had supported them throughout their transition from TAFE to university which included:

- Family support
- Support from other TAFE students who they made the transition with to university
- Support from TAFE students they met and developed friendships with at university
- Friends outside university
- Program director and Learning Centre teacher were described as ‘encouraging’ and ‘really good and helpful’.
2.3 QUALITATIVE STUDY WITH STAFF INVOLVED IN THE BSW ACCELERATED ENTRY STUDENTS

Staff interviews

Seven interviews were conducted with University and TAFE staff between 25 June and 1 November 2012. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for analysis. Two additional conversations were conducted in order to obtain background information on University and TAFE wide equity programs and these conversations were not recorded.

Participants interviewed for this study had a range of involvement in the accelerated entry into BSW program. Six staff members from Sydney University were interviewed, in addition to one staff member from TAFE NSW. Participant roles ranged from administrative, teaching and research roles. Some participants had been involved in the program in the past and were no longer currently involved, but these people were interviewed in order to understand the historical development of the program.

A few participants had contact with BSW students across the years from second to fourth year, while others had most contact initially in relation to university enrolment or enrolment in the Learning Centre programs.

Perceptions of factors influencing decisions about studying BSW at Sydney University

Staff perceptions about why students study at Sydney University

Staff echoed the reasons given by students as to why they chose to study at Sydney University. Obtaining a Bachelor of Social Work was seen as the next step after completing a TAFE diploma and one which was made a little easier because of the credit received for previous TAFE studies, as outlined below:

And because there’s that avenue as well now, where they’re looking at diplomas for entry requirements, they’re actually getting credit as well, so it’s a four year course now and is going to take you three years. (Staff member 2)

It was also believed that a degree qualification provided a more in-depth knowledge of the discipline, including more theoretical knowledge. One member of staff commented that they believed the decision was also influenced by geography, in terms of where students live and access to the university campus, while another commented that some students travel a long way to attend the Camperdown campus and that perhaps the decision is influenced by the prestige and history of Sydney University as described in the following comments:

A lot of them travel quite a long way and there are universities closer to them, so I actually don’t know the answer to that, I just wonder if there’s something about the status and standing about the University of Sydney and whether if they can get in, they think that’s something they like to do. (Staff member 3)

I think in terms of making choices and different universities have different reputations, there is this concept of the sandstone university...I think it has a reputation that it’s based on, you know, it’s very solid, that there’s not going to be
any floundering or that there should be good practices within the university in terms of teaching practices and how students are dealt with and policies and procedures, that sort of thing. *(TAFE staff member 4)*

It was also thought that student choice was influenced by the content of the undergraduate course offered at Sydney University as well as the practical factors around cost and location. An important factor was seen as word of mouth recommendations of the course as discussed by the TAFE representative interviewed for this study:

...what they hear, you know, there’s a lot of informal discussion amongst students and that travels across TAFE to university teaching practices, content, all those...Where they’ve found practitioners that they’ve admired or felt that have good practice they’ll tend to ask them where they’ve studied. *(TAFE Staff member 4)*

**Staff perceptions of student hopes and expectations of studying at Sydney University**

Staff talked about their perceptions that students wanted a degree in order to ‘open up opportunities for themselves’ and to improve their education. The belief was that TAFE staff would have encouraged students to further their studies in order to open up greater employment and career opportunities. The common thread throughout the discussion was that students would be motivated by a range of factors, depending on the student, however, that external motivations may also play a role, for example:

I imagine too, it’s, you know, given the cohort that I’m familiar with that it’s about children of migrants and making, living the expectations and hopes of presumably your families in the migration experience *(Staff member 3)*

There was the feeling that student expectations vary, with some students having a better understanding of the work load and input necessary to complete a degree as expressed by this staff member:

It varies, depending on the student, some have no idea what they’re walking into, some are really focussed, more the mature age women who’ve often been through life crises they’re usually the ones who really go well because they sort of have an idea, there’s life maturity as well, they not usually struggling with language issues and recent arrival type issues. They might have children issues while they’re here but they usually have more of an idea of the thing, but I think some of them from more disadvantaged or recent arrival backgrounds will have very little idea. *(Staff member 6)*

**Staff perceptions of students enrolled in the BSW accelerated entry program**

All staff interviewed in this study agreed that the students enrolled in the accelerated BSW entry program came from a diverse range of backgrounds. It was noted that they are often the first in their family to attend university and the observation was made that it is difficult to generalise about the TAFE pathway students as group. The students belonging to this entry pathway to university were believed to contain:

- Students who went straight from school to TAFE to Uni who are currently in their early 20s
• An older cohort who are having a second chance at learning and who are often aged in their 30s and 40s, sometimes older and who have families
• People in both groups who are from non English speaking background where English is not their first language and who may also be from a refugee background.
• Within these groups, there are also differences.

This diversity in the student population coming from TAFE to university is also well captured in the following comment:

The literature shows that education and social work attracts students form non-traditional backgrounds, and that seems to be playing out in the statistics. We have far more first in family students than the university overall ... students are all really interesting and they have all really interesting stories, but they’re none of them all the same. (Staff member 7)

The following quotes highlight some of the perceptions about the TAFE pathways students in relation to their different experiences of learning and of the learning environment:

I think there are different groups within and so what they each grapple with and wrestle with is different, so the young ones are often lacking in confidence in that learning environment, often in second year they are really reticent to participate...

I think the older group there’s certainly, this is generalisation to the extreme, but there’s an energy and passion, a commitment that they have that is palpable almost. They’re excited, they almost can’t believe they’re here...it’s a very conscious decision to come to university...I mean you’re making big sacrifices with family and so on for many of them to be able to do this, to come to university at that stage of their life, you know, and it’s only possible to do it full-time in third and fourth years...

But I think there is a number coming through from the TAFE pathways where their English proficiency is a challenge for them and these students struggle and it’s really hard for them, I think it’s really hard for them and I do wonder sometimes whether we do them a favour. (Staff member 3)

This view is further enhanced by the perceived different orientations between TAFE students and university students, in terms of the practical skills focus in TAFE compared to the bigger picture understanding of the world at university which is enhanced by the two by two degree course. This is made clear by the TAFE staff member who participated in the study:

Within the social work paradigm I suppose, you gain an understanding of the broader systems...The complexity of that interaction is not dealt with as intensely, I don’t think in the TAFE sector, it’s a different focus, it’s more about particular practice. So that broadening of understanding and awareness I would to be in more roles because they’ve got a bigger understanding of the bigger picture. (TAFE staff member 4)

The main differences in the learning environments as noted by staff who participated in the study include:
At TAFE:

- Lots of support available to students
- Small classes, often with a maximum of 18 students
- Strong focus on foundation skills, including language, literacy and numeracy
- Opportunity for support classes around foundation skills, in addition to help in essay writing, understanding assessment tasks and study preparation
- Also taught about time management skills, resume writing interview techniques
- Practice in counselling skills
- Option to attend part-time.

At university:

- More emphasis on essay writing and referencing
- Deeper analysis, critical thinking
- Having to attend full-time and fit all their responsibilities around study.

As two participants explained:

It’s a whole different sort of ball game and they’re not used to that. And there’s a lot of adjustment in understanding academic expectations, and understanding the standards of what’s expected. *(Staff member 7)*

It’s great you’ve got a year’s credit but the down side is people think you know more than you do because you’re in second year, the pressure is bigger. *(Staff member 6)*

**Staff perceptions of first year experiences of university (Year 2 of the BSW program)**

All of the staff interviewed for this study acknowledged the difficulties TAFE pathways students experience when initially beginning university. These difficulties are influenced by a range of factors, especially the different learning contexts of TAFE and university and the different expectations of students in each environment.

*University learning environment is vastly different to TAFE*

As noted above, students operate differently in the TAFE and University environments. A common theme among participants was that students experience difficulties with second year entry, both in terms of operating at a second year level and also being at university for the first time, as noted:

I mean they arrive from TAFE and they go straight into second year and so they’ve had no first year experiences at university and I think that’s challenging for them, really challenging, so it’s not just having to operate at a second year level with the credit or advanced standing, they also haven’t been acculturated into university life and the university expectations and ways of writing and thinking and analysing and so on, so I think the impact for them is quite enormous in second year. I think when I see them they’re quite overwhelmed. They’re almost terrified in class. *(Staff member 3)*
Also emphasised was that when students start university in second year, they have not developed a sense of belonging to the university culture which means when they are struggling with their work, the option of discontinuing looms large. For example:

I think it’s a sense of belonging, of feeling part of this place of feeling connected. I know a lot of first year students take a long while to get that, but there’s something about that first year experience that is important and I think it grounds them into this place. So they miss that...so it takes them a long time to get up to speed and fell like they belong. *(Staff member 3)*

Yes, that first year, if they make it through there pretty well, they’ve made it, but a lot of them never get out of second year, the ones that are going to have trouble. A few long runners there take time off and come back. *(Staff member 6)*

Staff believed that these students suffer a ‘culture shock’ when they enter university and recognise the difficulties associated with the transition from TAFE to Uni where ‘it is so unknown...so big, they get lost’.

**Skills required for university are different**

All the staff interviewed highlighted the problems experienced by many BSW accelerated entry students in relation to the skills required to cope at university. This was especially the case for students from non English speaking backgrounds who struggled with poor written English.

There was recognition that the skills required to pass at university were different to those needed at TAFE. Staff believed that initially it was difficult for students to understand the expectations of written work and class participation and the skills required to pass assessments:

...a lot of second years...definitely feel like they’re in second year whereas the TAFE students almost look a little bit shell shocked, startled as they sit in the class and they’re terrified of discussion and participation and I think they’re frightened of whether they’ll be able to cut it. *(Staff member 3)*

There was also recognition that since students enter at second year level, that they have missed the building blocks which others have learnt in first year. For example:

The main challenge is that they haven’t had the grounding they haven’t had the building up of skills which some departments, cause they go straight into Arts they don’t go into Social Work which some departments have given their students the previous year. They’ve perhaps scaffolded tasks or structured so that they’re given some idea of how to go about things. *(Staff member 1)*

It was also recognised that entry into the second year of the BSW which involves learning both social work subjects as well as subjects from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, does not draw on the students’ practical experiences at TAFE. For some students, the theoretical emphasis of the BSW program is experienced as vastly different and challenging to their prior learning experiences at TAFE as explained by one staff member:
It’s like they’re going backwards from having been quite competent and they’ve had placements and they’ve been working in the field to suddenly feeling incompetent and overwhelmed and that this is a whole lot of mumbo jumbo. (Staff member 6)

**Difficulties in course selection and course content is more demanding than TAFE**

A number of comments were made in relation to the limited range of second year subject choices that TAFE pathways students can choose in their first year of university as mentioned below:

Yes, it’s not the full choice, so that is a down side. (Staff member 6)

Well a lot of TAFE students are coming into second year. So in second year they’re actually doing three senior Arts units, and they’re quite...difficult like gender studies is quite theory based and essay based. (Staff member 2)

The students tell me they actually don’t like the choices they are given in general. (Staff member 3)

Also important was recognition that the expectations of written work are higher than TAFE and that students are required to read widely and reference the material they include in their assignments:

...they are required to think quite differently and participate differently and so I think there’s a real acculturation process that happens for them in that first semester of second year. (Staff member 3)

**More support required for accelerated BSW entry students**

While staff recognised that the university provides some support for TAFE pathways students, there was overwhelming agreement of the need to increase the level of support provided to this group of students. Staff believed that the university has an obligation to support students who enter university via an alternate pathway as described in the following quotes:

I think the onus is definitely on the university to provide those transitions. And I guess form both sides in a way this is the government imposition and the sector has to deal with it (Staff member 5)

...but I think they need more support...we’ve seen the need, if you’re going to bring people in you can’t just throw them in the door and say, sink or swim. (Staff member 6)

There was also recognition that the support might take the form of introducing some second year courses that helped make the transition from TAFE to university a little easier. This could involve the re- introduction of sociology for social work or involve the introduction of a foundation unit which attracted credit points and could be undertaken by this group as a second year subject.
We could redo it [Sociology for Social Workers] and run it ourselves would be something we could do, or we could negotiate with sociology to reinstate it. *(Staff member 6)*

Well you could make some foundation units compulsory. I know Arts is thinking about some foundational units...But I would have thought that it would help our social work students from TAFE to do a couple of compulsory foundational units. *(Staff member 7)*

The time to make a difference was seen as in second year as this is when students are most vulnerable, feeling anxious and in need of support. This is effectively summarised by a member of staff:

I think we can make a difference in second year, that will set them up to make the most of the third and fourth years, the professional years of the course so that they can start to think more laterally, more critically, because if they’ve got the foundation in second year they will make the most of third and fourth years...they then link to their learning and they just fly...I don’t think it’s a question of capacity, I think it’s a question of what they’ve been exposed to and the opportunities they’ve had to learn to think differently, more broadly. *(Staff member 3)*

**Tips for future TAFE students starting at Sydney University**

There were a range of suggestions made in relation to tips for new accelerated BSW entry students commencing studies at Sydney University. The tips were made in relation to a number of broad categories which have been listed below:

**Tips on skills required – what is needed and how to get them**

- Remember all the strengths you have and develop these in the university environment, especially in relation to research and writing for assignments.
- Be congratulatory and positive that they’ve made it to uni, but you need to understand that there will be greater reading requirements, and you will need to comment on and integrate your research into your assessments.
- Need to have basic English skills to attend Uni
- Use the Learning Centre early and often to get help with your writing skills
- Do the Learning Centre workshop offered by the university which offers skill development as well as encouraging interaction with others who have entered university via the accelerated pathway.

**Tips for navigating the BSW course**

- Consider doing the first year part time, especially if they are working or have families, are from non-English speaking or refugee backgrounds
- Acess the ‘little blue book’ with information on attendance, requirements of the program and assessment which is available online. Access the Uni student guide with detailed information on HECS, fees, deadlines which is a very detailed and useful resource for new students.
- Attend the Faculty orientation at the beginning of second year which was described as ‘very detailed’.
• Be organised, attend lectures and ask your tutor if you need help.
• Get to know people in the program.

Tips on becoming involved in university life

• Join some university clubs and meet people from other Faculties around the university.
• Get to know people in the BSW program.
• Encourage students to meet up with others in a similar situation for support in order to avoid loneliness and isolation.

Positives/strengths of working with TAFE students

Staff believed that the accelerated entry BSW students add depth to tutorial discussions since they bring a wide range of life experiences to class. While this may not be apparent in second year, as the students enter the later years they gain more confidence and begin to interact more in tutorial discussions:

I think these students add an enormous amount to our program...they bring lived experience, often they’ve had part time jobs and where they live and grew up and went to school and their own life experiences add to the richness in the class for all students, so I think that’s a real strength...incredibly diverse experiences. (Staff member 3)

The practical experience students’ gained in their TAFE diploma means they are often able to bring examples from their TAFE placement experiences to class and contribute positively in tutorial discussions. This was seen as particularly beneficial to the whole social work cohort as their experiences and reflections added to the learning environment for all students.

It is also important to note that due to the diversity of the students entering via the accelerated pathway, that there will also be a diversity of abilities and experiences. One staff member described the success of some of the students who entered university via TAFE:

Some of our best students came that way (through TAFE) so that’s good. I think we had two years in a row where the it was a student from TAFE who came top...We’ve had some great students, you inadvertently find out their background is from TAFE and you wouldn’t know, because they’re real stars. So that’s good because I think people often see the ones who are failing and everyone gets negative about it. (Staff member 6)

Challenges of working with TAFE students

As discussed previously, the challenges in relation to working with TAFE students at university have to do with the diverse range of abilities of this student group, for example:

The range of abilities and the range of experiences the students have had at TAFE. Now some students that I see have had experience researching...Others have only really ever been asked to describe, and they are really gobsmacked when they find that there’s another kind of writing that’s going to be asked of them here. (Staff member 1)
As I said before it’s not all of them that will be really challenged, for some of them that will be fine and they will succeed and they will manage that transition very well, but for the ones that don’t I think there are real issues. (Staff member 5)

Some students also have little experience of independent learning as in the TAFE environment the emphasis is on concrete learning and students are provided with handouts and less emphasis is placed on self-directed learning. It is also important to understand that some students may experience difficulties because of their personal backgrounds, for example, personal difficulties relating to their refugee experiences or having limited family supports for education.

Yes, language apart from the language implications, there are cultural and family baggage, and or lack of baggage which is even worse. (Staff member 1)

There may also be different cultural understandings of academic honesty, especially how culture impacts on how information is incorporated into essays for example, and that authors being quoted directly may be a way of showing deference to the author, rather than it being an example of plagiarism. There may also be limited understanding of the expectations of university assessment as outlined in the following quote:

...they think they know all about referencing and things because it’s been ticked off at TAFE, but it’s not really been properly taught to them or implemented...Maybe being a bit more rigorous with things like that. So their expectation is a little bit higher about what’s required. It’s not that they can’t do it, it’s just that they’re not given the right sort of direction about what the expectation is. (Staff member 7)

Overall perceptions of the BSW program

Perceived strengths

It was felt that the teachers on the BSW program try and get to know the students in second year when students undertake a number of mandatory subjects within the BSW program. There is believed to be an effort by staff to support the students in second year, an understanding which they bring to their teaching of the students in later years when they do the remaining two years of the BSW degree program.

We get to know them and can assist them and support them so, you know, students get opportunities to resubmit and come and talk to us and bring drafts and, and I think we certainly guide and support them and offer every opportunity to get them through and that’s going to help because we’re a smallish school but we do know each and every one of these students by the end of second year...in terms of where they’re up to with their learning I think we’ve got a pretty good handle on that. (Staff member 3)

The fact that students are given the opportunity to attend university who may never have been able to enrol was seen as a positive in the Sydney University’s BSW program. The diversity of students who enter university via this pathway was seen as positive for the social work profession:

It’s great for social work because we have people from all sorts of backgrounds which you need in social work. (Staff member 6)
One staff member commented on the positive aspects of the enrolment process and the fact that the TAFE students received ‘credit on the spot’. The process when a student fails a subject was also described as ‘quite personal’ as a number of people from the department work with the student to develop a future study plan:

Every time someone doesn’t pass something they actually are getting help, they’re not just left to say “oh right, you failed”, and then students have an opportunity to say maybe why they didn’t pass or if there is an issue...there’s this whole process where you’re actually getting help. *(Staff member 2)*

**Perceived challenges**

The challenges in relation to the BSW accelerated students entering the course are that students enter the degree program in second year and do not get the learning opportunities offered by successfully completing first year. While the benefits of students having undertaken a TAFE diploma are recognised in terms of the practical skills students begin university with, there are challenges for students in understanding and being able to deliver what is expected of them in the university environment. Perhaps more support from the university might enable a better transition to university learning as described by the following staff member:

I just reiterate that it’s the support that is given to them, I think in second year and I think it would be a much richer experience for them and wouldn’t take them as long to, you know, find their feet and make the most of the opportunity that is the university education...it’s tough for them. *(Staff member 3)*

In addition, the content of the senior subjects from the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty and the expectations of their learning abilities are also seen as difficulties for accelerated BSW entry students.

Some have mentioned that they find the Australian social policy really difficult...they find that subject quite hard, the content. *(Staff member 2)*

Other factors mentioned which impact on student ability to pass the BSW course is the ability of students with the English language. For some students, written English is a struggle which makes it difficult to succeed in written assessment tasks.

English as a second language is a big thing, they are busy doing too much paperwork to survive...you don’t have to do particularly well at TAFE. I think some people it’s truly not, you know, realistic, it’s too big a jump intellectually...but there are some people how you wonder how they coped at TAFE getting in. *(Staff member 6)*

I think TAFE used to have something but that’s the gap I think too as well as the Learning Centre you need stuff around English as a second language, people learning, getting better at English. *(Staff member 6)*

**Feedback from TAFE on the BSW accelerated entry program**
TAFE encourages students to attend university after completing their diploma and see the benefits of establishing better links between TAFE and universities. A range of suggestions were made to enable the links with universities to be well maintained, including:

- Inviting social work students to attend a TAFE class and discuss progression to university.
- Encourage TAFE students to attend university open days.
- Have a TAFE open day and have a representative from TAFE and Sydney uni together so the students see ‘TAFE and university together side by side which is a strong image’.
- Suggestion to get ex- TAFE students back in at various stages of their degree program to talk to TAFE students and answer questions about the degree program.
- Provide TAFE with statistics about completion rates of TAFE students who have entered the accelerated BSW pathway which would also strengthen the partnerships.
3. Discussion and Conclusions

The Commonwealth Government rewards tertiary institutions for meeting targets which result in an increased number of students from low SES backgrounds attending universities. Sydney University currently strives to be more socially inclusive and is trying to increase attendance rates by students from low SES and diverse backgrounds. While TAFE students are an example of this targeted group, they are also recognised by university research results as having a high rate of early attrition.

Since the inception of the BSW accelerated entry program, there have been increasing numbers of TAFE students entering Sydney University via the TAFE entry pathway. These students now account for around 19 per cent of all students enrolled in year two of the BSW undergraduate degree. They are therefore a significant group of students both within the Social Work and Policy Studies program and in the Faculty of Education and Social Work.

While Sydney University currently receives HEPPP funding to fund projects such as this research study, it is unclear whether such funding will be ongoing. It is therefore essential to explore alternative funding mechanisms available in the Faculty and university, in order to fund initiatives for this vulnerable group of students.

The results of this research highlight that students find the accelerated entry into the BSW degree appealing because it reduces the overall number of years at university, and allows an alternative pathway for students to obtain a university qualification. While students believe the degree program builds on the practical skills they developed at TAFE, many students surveyed and interviewed had difficulties initially adjusting to the university environment. This was particularly the case in their first year of university in which they were enrolled in the year two of the BSW degree program and were expected to operate as a second year student in terms of research and writing abilities.

Staff interviewed in the study also acknowledged the early difficulties experienced by many TAFE students on entering university. It was acknowledged across all three groups surveyed: students who completed the online survey and the students and staff interviewed that a number of strategies could be implemented to enhance and improve the experience for students enrolling in the BSW accelerated entry program and strengthen this social inclusion initiative.

The majority of students who undertook the online survey felt part of a group of students and staff committed to learning and perceived that they belonged to the university community. These results indicate that although the majority positively rate their experiences of the accelerated BSW entry program, this sentiment is not experienced by the whole group and there is therefore room to improve the experiences for the entire student cohort.

The students in the survey were extremely positive about the Learning Centre as were the students and staff in the interviews. The Learning Centre was seen as essential in providing BSW accelerated entry students with the ability to acquire skills needed for success at university. Attendance at Learning Centre courses was also perceived as providing students with an opportunity to meet other TAFE students. The learning Centre was therefore recognised as providing students with both academic and social support.
Students who responded to the online survey and who participated in the interviews stressed the importance of acknowledging that their educational experiences at TAFE had provided them with a good basis for attending university. Students believed their practical skill development at TAFE provided a good base for the transition to the BSW degree program. The students interviewed believed their TAFE experiences were especially helpful in the third and fourth years of the degree which involved fieldwork placements.

Staff also recognised the practical skills students developed at TAFE, but at the same time, there was recognition of the different learning environments and associated levels of expectation which were experienced by TAFE students at university. Students in the online survey noted that greater awareness could be shown by staff in understanding the challenges faced by TAFE students transitioning to university. In the interviews with students it was clear that they did not feel that staff recognised the skills they had developed at TAFE. It may be that some staff work according to a deficit model with TAFE students which could be enhanced by adopting a strengths based perspective and providing support while they learn how to negotiate the system and the rules of research and writing assignments.

Students highlighted the differences they experienced between the TAFE and university learning environments. The expectations of TAFE learning were seen as more practical and accessible, while at university the learning environment was not well understood initially by TAFE students who struggled in the new learning environment.

Both the qualitative and quantitative research with students confirmed the need for more support in terms of skill development and orientation to the university. While a number of students in the survey commented on the need to improve second year subject choices, the majority of students interviewed spoke at length about the difficulties they had experienced in relation to second year subject choice. The students interviewed also discussed the pressure associated with the expectation that their skill level would be comparable to a second year university student.

Staff commented on their experiences of working with TAFE students who had experienced difficulties in second year and confirmed the difficulties that students expressed. As with the students in the study, the benefits of skipping the first year of the degree were clear to staff, however, staff were concerned that the entry of students into the second year of the degree program resulted in students not being given enough support to engage with the material and succeed with the assessment tasks at a second year level.

Owens (2011) supports the development of new academic courses and the revision of existing programs in order to aid transition to the university learning environment. The findings of this study support the need for a transition course to address the specific needs of TAFE students entering university, especially in relation to the highly noted need for writing and research skill acquisition. There are a range of options which could be investigated including assessing merits of allowing the BSW accelerated students to enrol in writing subjects available to first year students in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (WRIT 1000 and WRIT 1001) or further developing the Learning Centre workshops in academic literacy.

The results also highlight the need to consider adapting or revising subjects offered to students in their first year of university (year 2 of the BSW program). This could involve the possible introduction of a second year subject which focuses, for example on sociology for
social work. Another alternative might be the inclusion of the sociology subject matter in a summer school course offered to new enrolling BSW accelerated entry students which also incorporates the material currently delivered in the week long course offered by the Learning Centre. If the course were run over a month and students were required to attend, it would allow students not only to have the opportunity to become familiar with the university campus and develop friendships with other students, but also allow for some scaffolding of writing skills which could be developed over the life of the program.

It must be acknowledged that the second year subjects in which the BSW accelerated entry students enrol are not only taught by staff in Social Work and Policy Studies, but also by staff from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Koori Centre (now part of the Faculty of Education and Social Work, but separate at the time fieldwork was undertaken). This means there are additional considerations in order to address some of the issues highlighted by participants in the study.

The research aimed to answer three questions, the first of which was ‘How effective is the accelerated entry program for students entering the BSW degree as a social inclusion pathway?’ The results of the study suggest that the BSW accelerated entry program is an effective social inclusion pathway in relation to getting students from diverse backgrounds enrolled at university. Based on the proportion of students who currently receive TAFE credits, 18.6 per cent of year 2 enrolments in the BSW degree program, this pathway represents a beneficial way of enhancing participation by students via a non traditional pathway into higher education.

The research results highlight opportunities which exist however, to improve the participation rate of TAFE students in degree courses and these will be outlined in the next section by way of detailed recommendations relating to curriculum reform, student preparation and initial engagement and ongoing student support.

The study also aimed to understand the barriers experienced by BSW accelerated entry students to using available support structures. While just over half of the students surveyed believed the support facilities were adequate for the degree, one third did not comment either way and ten per cent did not believe the resources were adequate for the BSW degree program. The results suggest that while some students may have used the support facilities, students may have a limited knowledge about the range of support structures available to students and this includes being involved in social aspects of university like as a way of developing support structures.

Of the five students who participated in the interviews, none had used the counselling services for example. It may be beneficial to provide more detailed information to the BSW accelerated entry students about what supports are available and the benefits of broader involvement in university activities. It is also important to be mindful that due to constraints, such as work responsibilities, caring responsibilities or limited English, alternate strategies may need to be used to encourage participation and use of the support facilities at Sydney University.
The research also aimed to explore further strategies which can be developed to support transitional learning for these students. The study found that future strategies should involve strategies in relation to:

- Curriculum development
- Student preparation and engagement, and
- Ongoing student support
- Dissemination of research results.

These areas form the basis of the recommendations which have arisen from the study and which will be fully outlined in the next section of this report.
4. Recommendations

The key areas around which recommendations are made include:

1. Curriculum reform
2. Student preparation and initial engagement
3. Ongoing student support
4. Dissemination of results to stakeholders.

The recommendations are outlined below and a number of strategies are suggested in order to achieve each recommendation.

1. Curriculum Reform

1.1 It is recommended that the current BSW degree program be revised in order to ensure that students transitioning from TAFE are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully undertake the BSW degree program.

This recommendation can be achieved by:

- Investigating the introduction of a year 2 subject which introduces students to sociological concepts needed for the study of Social Work which they did not encounter as they received credit for the first year of the degree program.

- Investigating the introduction of a foundation to learning subject which introduces students to university learning, including the acquisition of writing and research skills.

1.2 It is recommended that BSW accelerated entry students have access to an academic writing course in order to develop the necessary writing skills to successfully complete the BSW degree.

This recommendation can be achieved by:

- Exploring the possibility of BSW students enrolling for academic writing units of study offered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Considerations for both recommendations include:

- Emphasising with staff from the Faculty of Education and Social Work and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences that students transitioning from TAFE need time to adapt to the new learning environment.

- Ensuring that assessments are ongoing throughout the semester, not only towards the end of the semester.

- Exploring the possibility of undertaking years 3 and 4 of the degree on a part-time basis if requested by students.

- Discussion of the pedagogy used throughout the four year BSW degree program.
2. Student Preparation and initial engagement

2.1 It is recommended that the Learning Centre workshops in academic literacy for BSW accelerated entry students receive recurrent funding to help students transition from TAFE to university.

2.2 It is recommended that the Learning Centre workshops in academic literacy for BSW accelerated entry students be extended to two weeks to encourage greater acquisition of research and writing skills.

2.3 It is recommended that attendance at the Learning Centre workshops in academic literacy for BSW accelerated entry students is strongly recommended by the Social Work and Policy Studies program.

These recommendations can be achieved by:
• Requesting recurrent funding from the Faculty of Education and Social Work and the University to continue running the Learning Centre program.

• Exploring additional content to be covered in a two week program in consultation with academic staff from Social Work and Policy Studies and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

2.4 It is recommended that BSW accelerated entry students be given extra help to negotiate the enrolment process and university system.

This recommendation can be achieved by:
• Students who have received TAFE credit receiving a letter or phone call from the Faculty with details of a designated staff member they can contact should they have enquiries about their enrolment.

• Provision of detailed information on second year subject choices.

2.5 It is recommended that TAFE students receive improved orientation to the University of Sydney.

This recommendation can be achieved by:
• Recognition by the University of Sydney that TAFE students are a known ‘early attrition’ group who require inclusion in the targeted orientation programs offered to specific students groups by the university.

• Development and production of a resource for new and continuing BSW accelerated entry students which provides tips for new TAFE students (as outlined earlier in section 2.3 of this report) and outlines the various ways in which students can become involved in the life on campus.

3. Ongoing Student Support

3.1 It is recommended that the role of the Learning Centre be reinforced with TAFE students at the Faculty orientation and students are made aware of the support mechanisms available at Sydney University.

This can be achieved by:
• Incorporating this information into the Faculty orientation seminar.

• Making a resource available for students at orientation outlining details.

3.2 It is recommended that the Social Work and Policy Studies program develops a comprehensive mentoring program to provide initial and ongoing support to students enrolled in the BSW accelerated entry program.

This recommendation can be achieved by:
• The development of individual and small group mentoring.

• Developing a fieldwork placement opportunity for a student to revisit the previous mentor scheme and research other mentor programs offered by Faculties at Sydney University. The student would be required to develop a proposal and action plan for a mentor program targeting BSW accelerated entry students in 2014.

• Embedding responsibility for the mentor program within workload allocations.

• Contact with TAFE to discuss the results of this study and discussion of suggestions for increasing student readiness at university.

4. Dissemination of results to stakeholders
4.1 It is recommended that the results of this study be widely disseminated in order to improve the experience of TAFE students who have enrolled in the BSW accelerated entry program.

This recommendation can be achieved by:
• Wide distribution of the report.

• Presenting the results to university and TAFE staff in a range of settings which could include, workshops and staff and faculty meetings.

• Inviting BSW accelerated entry students to take part in an ongoing consultative process with staff about their experiences at university.

• Writing journal articles for publication based on the findings and conclusions of this study.

4.2 It is recommended that further research be undertaken with BSW accelerated entry students including an evaluation of the implemented recommendations.
References


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Personal Communication, Director Social Inclusion, The University of Sydney, 17 May 2012.


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Appendix
Appendix 1: Online student survey
Appendix 2: Letter to accompany online student survey
Appendix 3: Student interview schedule
Appendix 4: Participant Information Statement – Students
Appendix 5: Staff interview schedule
Appendix 6: Participant Information Statement - Staff
Appendix 7: Staff consent form
Appendix 8: Student consent form
Appendix 9: Student resource sheet
Appendix 10: Demographic details from online student survey
Appendix 1: Online student survey

**ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE**

We greatly appreciate your co-operation in responding to this questionnaire. In making a decision to voluntarily participate in the research project named above, you understand that:

1. Participation involves completing an on-line questionnaire which will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

2. You can withdraw from the study at any time during the course of completing the survey by clicking the ‘exit and clear’ button. Your withdrawal will not in any way affect the relationship with the study investigators. You understand that it is not possible to withdraw form the study once the survey has been submitted.

3. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research study, you can contact the Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney by phone on +61 8627 8176, by facsimile on +61 8627 8177 or via email at ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au

4. The research study is strictly confidential and no information about you will be used in any way that reveals your identity.

Do you agree to participate in this survey?
Yes
No

Questions are taken from the ‘2011 Student Course Experience Questionnaire [SCEQ] plus ‘2010 Survey of Higher Degree Research Students’.

All the questions are answered on the scale:
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree

1. There is a lot of pressure on me as a student in this degree course.
2. The teaching staff normally give me helpful feedback on how I am going.
3. I have usually had a clear idea of where I am going and what is expected of me in this degree course.
4. The degree course administration is effective in supporting my learning.
5. It is always easy to know the standard of work expected.
6. I am generally given enough time to understand the things I have to learn.
7. The staff make a real effort to understand difficulties I maybe having with my work.
8. Feedback on my work is usually provided only in the form of marks or grades.
9. The degree course has improved my skills in written communication.
10. The sheer volume of work to be got through in this degree means it can't all be thoroughly comprehended.
11. I feel part of a group of students and staff and staff committed to learning.
12. It has often been hard to discover what is expected in this degree.
13. The library resources are appropriate for my needs.
14. I feel I do not belong to the university community.
15. My degree course is encouraging my development of relevant, ethical, social and professional perspectives.
16. Resources on the University of Sydney websites (e.g. Blackboard, degree course sites, faculty sites, etc.) supported my learning.
17. My degree course is developing my ability to use oral, written, and/or visual communication.
18. The extra curricular activities at the University of Sydney have helped me develop as a person.
19. The teaching staff effectively supported my learning.
20. The support facilities (Learning Centre/Student Counselling) are adequate for this degree.
21. My online experiences helped me engage in my learning.
22. I tend to feel isolated within this department/school.
23. Staff at the University of Sydney supported my transition from TAFE to University life.
24. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this degree course.

Qualitative questions: These questions are adapted from the ‘Standard Group Open Response Questionnaire’ developed by the Institute for Teaching and Learning, the University of Sydney and used to evaluate a unit of study.

25. Please list three things about the accelerated entry into the BSW program that were most useful or worthwhile and explain why each was important?
26. Please list three things about the accelerated entry into the BSW program that could be improved and explain why these changes would help the program?

Please complete the following demographic questions:
1. What is your gender? Male/Female
2. What is your age? ....................
3. Were you born in Australia? Yes/No
4. If born overseas, where were you born? ..............................................
5. Are you:
   a) a refugee?
   b) an international student?
   c) neither of the above?
6. What is the main language you speak at home? .................................
7. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage? Yes/No
8. What is your postcode? .................................
9. In which year did you enrol in the BSW? .............
10. In which year are you currently enrolled? 2nd year, 3rd year, 4th year, suspended, completed
11. Where did you obtain your TAFE qualification? ......................
12. Are you the first one in your family to attend university? Yes/No
13. In addition to attending university do you also have caring responsibilities? Yes/No
14. In addition to attending university do you also have paid work responsibilities? Yes/No

Thank you for your time.

Please click here to submit your responses and exit.
RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO BE SENT WITH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student,

You are receiving this email as you are enrolled or have been enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree via the TAFE accelerated entry pathway.

The Social Work and Policy Studies Program is undertaking a small research study to find out more about the university experience of students entering the course in this way. The study will help us review the pathway initiative and make improvements to support the student experience.

If you would like to participate in the study, please click the following link which will take you to a questionnaire to be completed. The questionnaire will take about fifteen minutes to complete. By completing the questionnaire you are giving your consent to participate in the study. The questionnaires are anonymous and all information will be de-identified in the study.

Link to questionnaire:

A Participant Information Sheet about the study is attached for your information. As you can see it is possible to participate further through volunteering to be interviewed or by attending a focus group. These will be conducted on campus in the Faculty of Education building in a meeting room which is located on a different level to staff in the School of Social Work and Policy Studies. If you would like to participate in a focus group or interview, please contact me either by email: alexandra.young@sydney.edu.au or by phone on 93516434.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email and your participation is greatly appreciated.

Lexie Young
Research Assistant
Appendix 3: Student interview schedule

‘Coming in mid-stream’ – accelerated entry programs as a social inclusion initiative: the BSW exemplar

Interview Guide for semi-structured Interviews with Students

Introductions and information about the study

How did you hear about the accelerated entry program into the BSW at Sydney University?

What made you choose the University of Sydney? What were your hopes/expectations of coming to the University of Sydney?

Can you tell me about any previous studies you have undertaken either in Australia or elsewhere?
Why do you want to do Social Work?
Prompts: Is the degree qualification important/other reasons

What were your expectations of university before you commenced your studies?
Prompts: preparation/no preparation/realistic/unrealistic/no idea

Tell me about your university experience?
Prompts: Difficulties/challenges/positives/surprises

In particular, experiences in the first year of study (Year 2)
Prompts: Transition from TAFE/new ways of learning/expected and unexpected challenges
Experiences in the remainder of their course if appropriate

What are/were some of the challenges of university study and your participation in the course?
Prompts: Negotiating system/self directed learning/assignments/assessments/learning expectations/other

Thinking back on your experiences how might they have been improved/a better experience
Prompts: What did they find helpful/supportive or unhelpful/unsupportive

Did you use any established student support services such as the Learning Centre; Student counselling; etc
If yes can you tell me more about that?
If no why weren’t they used?
What other types of support would have been helpful
What supports did you have to help you in your studies/Informal supports?

What advice would you give to new students coming into university studies in this course from TAFE
Prompts: Tips/ Dos and don’ts

What feedback/advice/information would you give to TAFE about your experiences?
Prompts: student preparation/orientation/

What feedback/advice/information would you give to the university about your experiences?

In a few words how could your university experience be improved?

What are your future plans/ambitions?
Prompts: once study is completed/what type of social work would you like to do etc

Any other comments about your experience that you would like considered in the study

Demographic Information - to be collected at the end of the interview

1. What is your gender? Male/Female
2. What is your age? .....................
3. Were you born in Australia? Yes/No
4. If born overseas, where were you born? ........................................
5. Are you:
   a) a refugee?
   b) an international student?
   c) neither of the above?
6. What is the main language you speak at home? .................................
7. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage? Yes/No
8. What is your postcode? ...............................  
9. In which year did you enrol in the BSW? ..............
10. In which year are you currently enrolled? 2\textsuperscript{nd} year, 3\textsuperscript{rd} year, 4\textsuperscript{th} year, suspended, completed
11. Where did you obtain your TAFE qualification? ......................
12. Are you the first one in your family to attend university? Yes/No
13. In addition to attending university do you also have caring responsibilities? Yes/No
14. In addition to attending university do you also have paid work responsibilities? Yes/No
‘Coming in mid-stream’ – accelerated entry programs as a social inclusion initiative: the BSW exemplar

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is the study about?

You are invited to participate in a study of the student experience of the accelerated entry (TAFE pathway) program into the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree at the University of Sydney. Understanding and evaluating the experience will enable us to make improvements to the program for future students and ensure that it meets university and student needs.

Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being conducted by Dr Alexandra Young under the supervision of Dr Rosalie Pockett BSW Program Director and Dr Margot Rawsthorne at the University of Sydney as part of the ‘Widening Participation’ initiatives of the University of Sydney and the Compass Program.

(2) What does the study involve?

The study involves three types of participation by students. Students can choose to complete the first stage which is an anonymous on-line questionnaire or volunteer to participate in an interview or a focus group.

Stage 1.

The completion of an anonymous on-line questionnaire involves following a link to the survey that will be found in an email sent to all students who have
enrolled in the BSW from the TAFE sector under the accelerated entry program. If you complete the survey this will be considered as your consent to participate.

At the end of the email you receive inviting you to participate in the on-line questionnaire, will be another invitation asking if you would like to volunteer to be interviewed or to participate in a focus group with around six to eight other students. You will be invited to contact the Research Assistant by email or telephone to arrange a mutually convenient place and time to attend an interview or focus group discussion.

Stage 2.
If you agree to participate in the in-depth interview the interview will gather more detailed information about your experiences in the program. A consent form to participate in the in-depth interview will be completed. The in-depth interview will take about an hour and with the consent of the student will be audio recorded. The transcription will then be analysed as part of the data analysis for the research.

Stage 3.
If you agree to participate in the focus groups, this will involve being in a group with about six to eight students who will discuss their experiences of the program. A consent form to participate in the focus group will also be completed. The focus group will take about an hour and with the consent of students will be audio recorded. The transcription will then be analysed as part of the data analysis for the research.

The interviews and focus groups will be held on campus in a meeting room in the Faculty of Education building. The meeting room is located on a different floor to where Social Work and Policy Studies staff are located. All student contact on the project will be undertaken by a Research Assistant who is not involved in the management of the BSW program and has limited student contact. If students who are in the Research Assistant’s tutorial group should apply to participate in the research, they will not be invited to attend an interview or focus group.

(3) How much time will the study take?
Completion of the anonymous on-line questionnaire should take about 15 minutes. Individual in-depth interviews should take about an hour and the focus groups should also take about an hour. Students may participate in either an in-depth interview or focus group discussion.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with The University of Sydney, the Faculty of Education and Social Work or the Social Work and Policy Studies Program.
You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue. The audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

If you take part in a focus group and wish to withdraw, as this is a group discussion it will not be possible to exclude individual data once the session has commenced.

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you are not under any obligation to consent to complete the questionnaire/survey. Submitting a completed questionnaire/survey is an indication of your consent to participate in the study. You can withdraw any time prior to submitting your completed questionnaire/survey. Once you have submitted your questionnaire/survey anonymously, your responses cannot be withdrawn.

(4) Will anyone else know the results?

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Participant transcripts will be allocated a pseudonym and any identifying data will be kept separately by the Research Assistant.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

(5) Will the study benefit me?

If you agree to participate in the interviews or focus groups and they are held at a time when you are not normally on campus the study will reimburse your usual travel expenses to the university as out-of-pocket expenses. If you agree to participate in the interview or focus group you will receive a complimentary book voucher to the value of $20 from the University Co-Op Bookshop. Apart from these stated benefits, we cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from the study.

(6) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes you can tell others about the study.

(7) What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?

When you have read this information, Dr Alexandra (Lexie) Young will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Dr Alexandra Young, Research Officer on 9351 6434 or alexandra.young@sydney.edu.au
Dr Rosalie Pockett, Chief Investigator on 9036 5371 or rosalie.pockett@sydney.edu.au or Margot Rawsthorne, Associate Researcher on 9036 9313 or margot.rawsthorne@sydney.edu.au.

(8) What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep
Appendix 5: Staff interview schedule

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

ABN 15 211 513 464

Social Work and Policy Studies
Faculty of Education and Social Work

ROSALIE POCKETT
Dr
Senior Lecturer,
BSW Programme Director

Room 727a
Education Building A35
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 9036 5371
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 3783
Email: rosalie.pockett@sydney.edu.au
Web: http://www.sydney.edu.au/

‘Coming in mid-stream’ – accelerated entry programs as a social inclusion initiative: the BSW exemplar

Interview Guide for semi-structured Interviews with Stakeholders

Introductions and information about the study

What is your role in the accelerated entry program into the BSW at Sydney University? How long have you been involved in the program? Are you involved with students across all years of the degree – from year 2 to year 4?

Why do you think students choose to complete a BSW at the University of Sydney? What do you think their hopes/expectations are of coming to the University of Sydney?

Can you tell me about your experiences of working with students enrolled in the BSW at the University of Sydney?
Prompts: Difficulties/challenges/positives/surprises

What do you see as the strengths of the program as it currently runs?
Prompts: What is positive/helpful/supportive about the program?

What do you see as the weaknesses of the program as it currently runs?
Prompts: What is negative/unhelpful/unsupportive about the program?

If you were the course coordinator of the accelerated entry into the BSW program what changes, if any, would you make to the current program?
Prompts: what is needed to improve the outcomes for students?
What advice would you give to new students coming into university studies in this course from TAFE?
Prompts: Tips/ Dos and don’ts

What feedback/advice/information would you give to TAFE for students about to commence the accelerated entry into the BSW program?
Prompts: student preparation/orientation/
How do you see your future role in relation to the accelerated entry into the BSW program?
Prompts: What are your hopes for the program?

Any other comments about the accelerated entry into the BSW program that you would like to make?

Thank you
‘Coming in mid-stream’ – accelerated entry programs as a social inclusion initiative: the BSW exemplar

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF

1. What is the study about?

You are invited to participate in a study of the student experience of the accelerated entry (TAFE pathway) program into the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree at the University of Sydney. Understanding and evaluating the experience will enable us to make improvements to the program for future students and ensure that it meets university and student needs.

2. Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being conducted by Dr Alexandra Young under the supervision of Dr Rosalie Pockett BSW Programme Director and Dr Margot Rawsthorne at the University of Sydney as part of the ‘Widening Participation’ initiatives of the University of Sydney and the Compass Program.

3. What does the study involve?

The study involves three types of participation by students. Students can choose to complete the first stage which is an anonymous on-line questionnaire or volunteer to participate in an interview or a focus group.

A number of teaching and support staff working with students who are enrolled in the BSW program and the University of Sydney will also be asked to participate in this study. You will be contacted by the Research Assistant by email or telephone to
arrange a mutually convenient place and time to attend an individual in-depth interview.

If you agree to participate in the in-depth interview, the interview will gather more detailed information about your experiences of working with students enrolled in the accelerated BSW entry program. A consent form to participate in the interview will be completed. The interviews will be held on campus in a meeting room in the Faculty of Education building. The meeting room is located on a different floor to where Social Work and Policy Studies staff are located. The in-depth interview will be audio recorded with the consent of the staff member and the transcription will then be analysed as part of the data analysis for the research.

4. How much time will the study take?

Individual in-depth interviews will take about an hour to complete.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with The University of Sydney, the Faculty of Education and Social Work or the Social Work and Policy Studies Program.

You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue. The audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

5. Will anyone else know the results?

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Participant transcripts will be allocated a pseudonym and any identifying data will be kept separately by the Research Assistant.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

6. Will the study benefit me?

No, the study will not benefit you directly, but may impact on the experience of the students you teach.

7. Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes you can tell others about the study.

8. What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?

When you have read this information, Dr Alexandra (Lexie) Young will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Dr Alexandra Young, Research Officer on 9351 6434 or alexandra.young@sydney.edu.au Dr Rosalie Pockett, Chief Investigator
on 9036 5371 or rosalie.pockett@sydney.edu.au or Margot Rawsthorne, Associate Researcher on 9036 9313 or margot.rawsthorne@sydney.edu.au.

9. What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF

I, ...............................................................[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

TITLE: ‘Coming in mid-stream’ – accelerated entry programs as a social inclusion initiative; the BSW exemplar.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.

4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential. I understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about me will be used in any way that is identifiable.
5. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney or the Faculty of Education and Social Work now or in the future.

6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

I understand that I can stop my participation in the focus group at any time if I do not wish to continue; however as it is a group discussion it will not be possible to exclude individual data to that point.

7. I consent to:

   - Audio-recording of interviews and focus groups  YES ☐  NO ☐

   - Receiving Feedback  YES ☐  NO ☐

   If you answered YES to the “Receiving Feedback” question, please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

**Feedback Option**

**Address:** __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Email:** __________________________________________________________

.................................................................................................................
Signature

.................................................................................................................
Please PRINT name

.................................................................................................................
Date
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, [PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

TITLE: ‘Coming in mid-stream’ – accelerated entry programs as a social inclusion initiative; the BSW exemplar.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

8. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

9. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher(s).

10. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.

11. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential. I understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about me will be used in any way that is identifiable.

12. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney or the Faculty of Education and Social Work now or in the future.
13. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

14. I consent to:

- Audio-recording of interview YES □ NO □
- Receiving Feedback YES □ NO □

If you answered YES to the “Receiving Feedback” question, please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

**Feedback Option**

**Address:** ____________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

**Email:** ____________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

.................................................................................................
Signature

.................................................................................................
Please PRINT name

.................................................................................................
Date
Appendix 9: Student resource sheet

Resource Sheet

After talking about your experiences of entering the Bachelor of Social Work via the accelerated entry program, you might want to discuss further some of the issues raised. Please find below the details for some resources you may wish to use on and off campus.

Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

**Address:** Level 5 of the Jane Foss Russell Building G02, City Road (beside the Wentworth Building), Camperdown Campus.
Open 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday.
**Telephone:** (02) 8627 8433 or 8627 8437
**Email:** caps.admin@sydney.edu.au

The Learning Centre

**Address:** Level 7 of the Education Building A35 (beside Manning House), Camperdown Campus
**Telephone:** (02) 9351 3853
**Email:** learning.centre@sydney.edu.au

Lifeline
**Telephone:** 13 11 14

Salvos Care Line
**Telephone:** 02 8736 3292

Mission Australia Helpline
**Telephone:** 1300 886 999
Appendix 10: Demographic details from online student survey

Q10: What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q 11 and 12: Were you born in Australia? If you were born overseas, where were you born?

Out of 26 students who answered this question, around 54% students were born in Australia and 12 students (46%) were born elsewhere as shown in the diagram below.
Q 14: What is the main language you speak at home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Spoken at home</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creole</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulla and Krio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmese &amp; Karen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dari</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above pie chart shows the language spoken at home by the students. Inner circle show the number of students speaking particular language at home. The out circle shows the same information in terms of percentage.
Q16: What is your postcode?

Q17: In which year did you enrol in the BSW?
Q19: Where did you obtain your TAFE qualification?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Year of Enrolment</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Year 2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Year 2011</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Year 2010</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Year 2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Year 2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Year 2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Year 2003</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Northern Beaches/Brookvale**
- **Sydney Institute**
- **Western Sydney Institute**
- **South Sydney Institute**
- **Unspecified**
Q20: What was the name of your TAFE qualification?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAFE qualification</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Community Services</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Children Services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q23/24: In addition to attending university do you also have paid work responsibilities? If so, how many hours a week do you work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you work?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work pattern of students</th>
<th>Under 15 hrs</th>
<th>15-25</th>
<th>26-35</th>
<th>35+ hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 15 hrs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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