



ACSES

Australian Centre
for Student Equity
and Success



Curtin University

World Access to Higher Education Day 2025

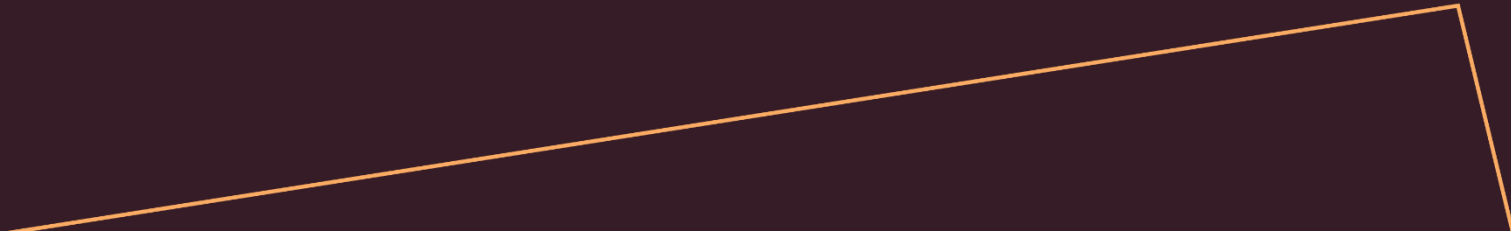
Local session: Understanding and amplifying your impact

Evidence through evaluation

28 October 2025

Universities For All

The Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success acknowledges Indigenous peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land. With 60,000 years of history as the original educators, their knowledge and culture play a vital role in our work and vision for a fairer nation. We respect Elders past, present, and future, and are honoured to learn from Indigenous colleagues, partners, and friends.



**Introduction by Associate
Professor Tim Pitman
Trials and Evaluations
Program Director**



**Lexi Rollins:
University Of Notre
Dame**



The Practicum Empowerment Project

Interrupting the impacts of 'placement poverty'

- ▶ Trials the impact of financial (\$500) and non-financial (empowerment module) interventions on Nursing students' experience of unpaid placements
 - ▶ Retention, success, student experience, and wellbeing
- ▶ Helps us understand what works best, for whom, and how well
 - so we can improve the placement experience
- ▶ Evaluation uses surveys (before and after prac) and uni data (academic and demographic)

**Robert Vanderburg:
Central Queensland
University**



Enhancing Academic Preparedness for ITE Students

Individualised Digital Pedagogy (IDP) Trial for LANTITE Readiness



Objective

Enhance literacy & numeracy skills for first-year ITE students

Target: Low SES & regional/remote students

Improve LANTITE performance & pass rates

Address equity gaps in teacher education



Study Design

Method: Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)

Intervention: IDP with adaptive learning tools

Control: Traditional ALC support

Duration: 12 weeks (Oct 2024 - Nov 2025)



IDP Features

Diagnostic pre-assessments

Personalised learning plans

Adaptive questioning & real-time feedback

Interactive forums & tutor support

Tailored remediation activities



Outcomes Measured

Primary: Literacy/numeracy improvements, LANTITE scores

Secondary: Confidence, self-efficacy, engagement

Methods: Pre/post-tests, surveys, focus groups, analytics



Lyndel Kennedy: La Trobe University



Improving Supervision for Neurodivergent Graduate Researchers

- ▶ Neurodiversity-affirming supervision practices
 - ▶ Supervisors not students
- ▶ Co-design with a neurodivergent team
 - ▶ Focus groups for pain points
- ▶ Compare outcomes - training group vs SAU
 - ▶ At baseline, post-training and follow-up
 - ▶ Knowledge, attitudes, confidence, and feasibility



**Elisa McGowan:
University of
Western Australia**



Money plus support: Evaluating the impact of packaged equity scholarships on students' short-term success & retention



THE INTERVENTION



Commencing students in UG studies, prioritising need with framework assessing cumulative disadvantage



UWA Connect Scholarship – packaged product with

- \$1500 bursary on enrolment
- \$5000 p/y for UG degree (4 yrs)
- Wrap-Around Support



Theory of Change:

- Reduced reliance on PT work
- Reduced cognitive load
- Lessens stress, allows focus on study
- Improved transition skills
- Increased social networks support belonging & retention



IMPACT POTENTIAL



Improvements in academic outcomes including:

- Success rate (units passed)
- GPA
- Retention



Evidence of effect size of the Scholarship Package on academic outcomes, and impact of relative engagement in wrap-around support



EVALUATION APPROACH



Scholarship awarded based on **ranking score** calculated from set of individual circumstances



Quasi-experimental - arbitrary threshold comparing students above & below cut-off



Detailed participation data for each engagement to develop **scale of relative engagement**.



Regression Discontinuity Design (RD) to estimate effects of Scholarship Package

Rebecca Walker: Curtin University



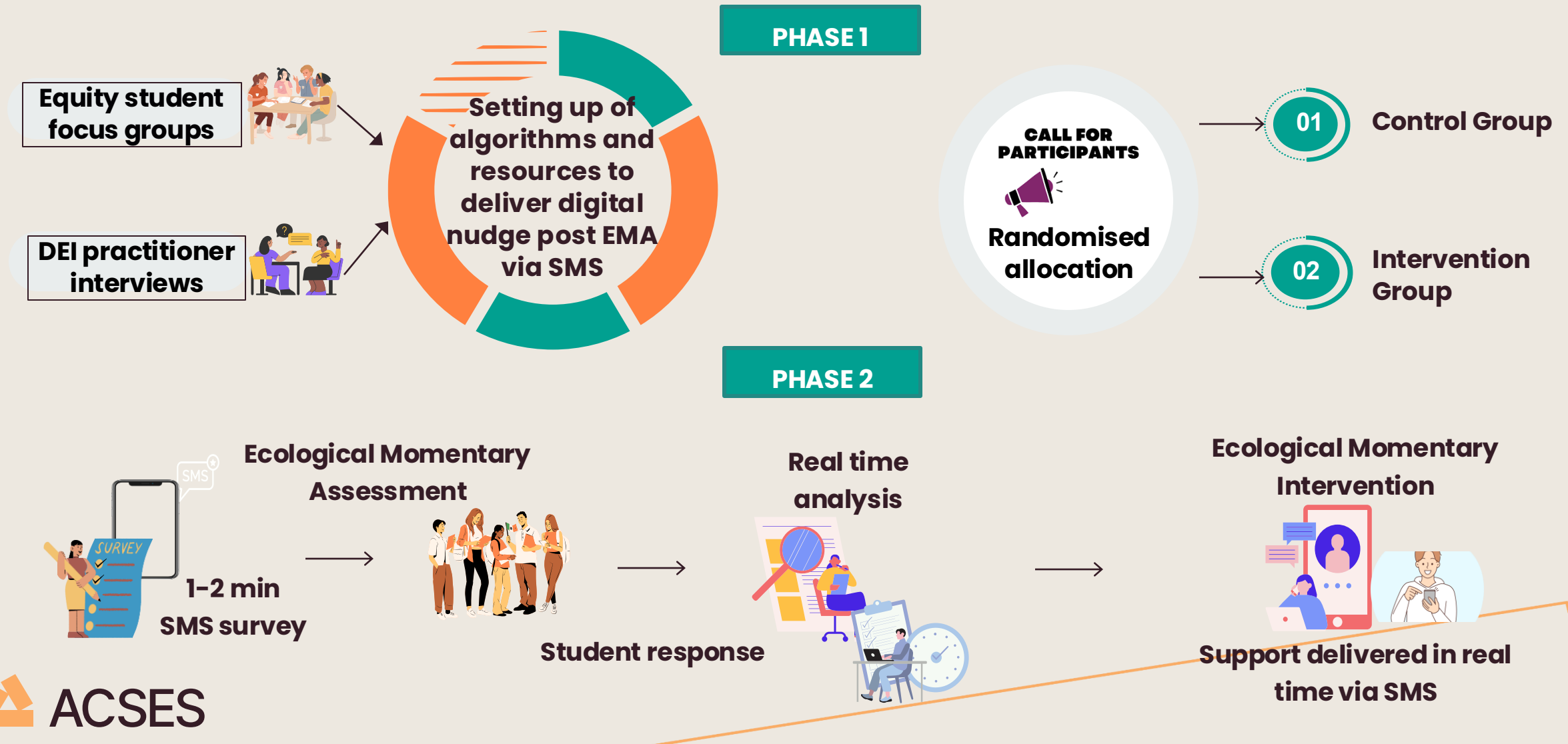
A Universal Design for Learning intervention for first-year students with a disability

- Critical accessibility gaps impacting outcomes for students with a disability:
 - Higher fail and withdrawal rates among students with a disability compared to the broader student cohort
 - Low rates of disability disclosure through university access plans
 - Significant overlap between assessment extension applications and students registered with a disability
- Aim: Improve outcomes for 1st year students with disabilities, including those experiencing intersecting forms of disadvantage.
- Intervention: Embed UDL principles into the learning management system and assessments in 8 1st-year Humanities higher education units.
- Quantitative: Quasi-experimental pre-post research design with sample size ~7000 students.
- Qualitative: Focus groups and semi-structured interviews.
- Potential impact: Meet students learning needs and improve outcomes for those with a disability but also inclusivity in higher education learning can lead to equitable learning opportunities and a diverse workforce.

**Dimitria Groutsis:
University of
Sydney**



Amplified Equity: Digitally- Enabled Personalised Nudge Interventions to Support Equity Students



**Chris Carter:
University of
Technology Sydney**



The First Year Success Program: Do Bridging Courses Improve Success and Retention at University for Equity Students?

- ▶ **Existing Equity Program (UTS):**

- ▶ Implemented pre-commencement
- ▶ Designed to help students from alternate pathways transition to university

- ▶ **Program Components:**

- ▶ Bridging courses in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology
- ▶ Introductory workshops, peer mentoring, wraparound support and advice

- ▶ **Study Population:** Domestic Equity Undergraduates:

- ▶ Low SES, First Nations, First-in-Family, Regional/Remote, Women in STEM

- ▶ **Outcomes:** First year student grades and retention

- ▶ **Trial design:** Randomised Offering/Encouragement

- ▶ Treatment group: receive an offer, participation is financially incentivised
- ▶ Control group: don't receive an offer, can still access bridging course for a fee

Ella Ewart & Emma Pellicione



Identifying Academically At-Risk Students at Curtin

2024 Trial Snapshot

Identify AARS in Semester 1 & 2 in 2024, to provide customised unit-level support and refer those requiring additional help to relevant areas for all first-year students in NINE common core units across all faculties.

Outcome	Primary Findings	Interpretations
Withdrawals	- Intervention increased withdrawals in medium risk group only - High risk withdrew more often than medium risk	- Medium risk may be more engaged with treatment, more likely to listen to advice surrounding withdrawal - High risk may be planning on withdrawing anyway
Engagement	No effect of treatment on engagement	- Week of semester seems to have strong influence on course engagement - Likely due to key dates such as submission deadlines
Submission and Grades	- No overall effect of treatment - High risk groups submitted less and received worse grades	- Intervention may not cover enough course specific content - Baseline engagement a strong predictor of academic performance

Thank you!

Connect with us:

- ▶ **Web:** acses.edu.au
- ▶ **Socials:** [@acsessedu](#)
- ▶ **Email:** acses@curtin.edu.au