

Environmental Scan

1. **Institution** Curtin University
2. **Contact Person (and contact details)** Jim Elliott, Associate Director, Student Transition (j.elliott@curtin.edu.au)
3. **Name of Program/Initiative** KickSTART
- 3.1 **URL:** Nil
- 3.2 **Start Date/Duration:** 2011, continuing
4. **Brief outline of program** Students entering the university from low SES backgrounds are identified at entry on the basis of several demographic indicators. The leader of the START Student Advisors liaised with Admissions Office staff at the February and July entry points to obtain names and contact details of these students. START then facilitates individual contact by faculty Student Equity Officers to provide outreach support as early as possible. Further contact is made at occasional points during the students' first year at the university. Support and intervention is provided on a needs basis.
5. **Purpose/Aims** The program was developed on the assumption that students from low SES backgrounds may have higher vulnerability to attrition risk variables. Rather than wait until students may experience difficulty, the purpose of the program is to establish a working relationship with incoming students to facilitate the provision of advice and support in a timely manner.
6. **Breadth of program** Operates across all faculties at 1s year undergraduate level.
7. **Category (please select all that apply and provide explanation where necessary)**

Category	Y?	Explanation
Policy		
Curriculum		
Program	Y	
Other (please specify)		

8. **Resources** It is difficult to provide a budget estimate for this program as it is absorbed within a range of other duties undertaken by the staff involved.
 - 8.1 **Start up budget:**
 - 8.2 **Ongoing budget:**

9. Outcomes

- 9.1 **Uptake:** Seeking to contact beginning students individually has proven to be very time consuming. However, students respond by expressing appreciation even in those cases where they do not believe that they need any particular help. There are a small minority who have high needs and these individuals can consume substantial resources in the form of advisor time.
- 9.2 **Evaluation(s) conducted to date - and details of findings:** The major measure used so far in this program has been academic outcomes of the target group.
- 9.3 **Evidence of success:** Interestingly, the results have shown very little difference between academic results of the target group compared with other students. However, in looking at retention measures a year later, it appears that their retention rate is worse than the university average, despite academic results being comparable.
- 9.4 **Evaluation(s) planned (and dates for this/these):** Academic outcomes will continue to be gathered at the end of each semester.
- 9.5 **Major challenges:** The major challenge for this program has been finding appropriate demographic indicators in enrolment data which allow us to identify the students to include in the program. It is believed that the program would be significantly more effective if the “right” students were targeted. Further, the findings with respect to retention indicate that the major risk point is the decision to re-enrol at the end of 1st year rather than during the transition semester. This indicates that additional contact and intervention may best be focussed towards the end of the academic year.
- 9.6 **Other (Please specify):**

10. Publications/Reports (including links to those publically available)