UNSW Built Environment

International Students @ BE:
Experience, Performance and Satisfaction

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Context: Student Numbers

July 2015 = 29% of all our students are international

February 2017 = 37% of all our students are international (Many classes / programmes it is over 50%)

Over 60 countries represented;

Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bhutan, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Columbia, Denmark, Egypt, Fiji, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Lebanon, Macau, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique….
Headlines from Built Environment – out of 188 respondents:

1. Overall satisfaction has continued to improve over the last three years, from 84% in 2014 to 88% in 2015 and 92% in 2016, and is now above the UNSW average.

2. Respondents have maintained steady levels of Learning satisfaction (85%), although this still remains 3% lower than the UNSW average. Students expressed high levels of satisfaction with Good teachers (94%), Academics’ English (94%), and Quality lectures (92%). And while satisfaction with Laboratories was much lower at 82%, this represents a big increase since 2015 when it was only 68%.

3. Support satisfaction jumped from 85% in 2015 to 89% in 2016, and is now very close to the UNSW average

4. Main area for improvement suggested as additional careers support (UNSW-wide)
Context: ISB

Headlines from Built Environment – out of 188 respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Built Environment</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions

Project of the International Engagement Sub-Committee, supported by a grant from SOLT

1. What is the current academic performance of international students at UNSW Built Environment as compared to domestic students? If there is a performance gap?

2. What is the current academic experience of our international students? How satisfied are they with the learning environment, teaching strategies, etc. What strategies can improve this?
International Student Performance

What is the current academic performance of international students at UNSW Built Environment as compared to local students?

15 courses were sampled from years 1 and 3 across all seven BE undergraduate programs.

Results and student origin (local or international and, if international, did pathway include UNSW Foundation Studies?) were analysed for each course – a total of 1,305 student results.
International Student Performance

Headlines:

1. In every course international students received lower average marks than local students. The total range was between 1% and 13% lower for international students. Of the 12 courses with significant numbers, eight were found to have an average local student mark 5% or greater above the average international student mark.

2. A higher percentage of local students received distinctions and high distinctions than international students in 11 of the 12 courses reviewed.

3. The average marks of international students who had completed a foundation year did not seem to demonstrate any benefit over those students who had not.

4. In ARCH7111/12 (MArch Year 1 studio) the average mark of students who had completed their UG degree at UNSW BE was 12% higher than those who had completed their degree elsewhere.
International Student Performance

Example Year 1 Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Mark</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>74.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (Total)</td>
<td>66.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (Foundation)</td>
<td>65.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (No Foundation)</td>
<td>68.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Bar chart showing performance by local and international students for different categories: FL, PS, CR, DN, HD. The bars are color-coded with blue for local students and red for international students, with local n=53 and international n=79.](chart.jpg)
International Student Performance

Example Year 3 Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Mark</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>73.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (Total)</td>
<td>68.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (Foundation)</td>
<td>68.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (No Foundation)</td>
<td>68.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bar chart showing performance by local and international students, with detailed marks for FL, PS, CR, DN, and HD.
International Student Performance

Implications:

1. Not to say some of our best academic achievements are not by international students – they are. But *in general*, academic performance in international students is lower than domestic students

2. International students have a different learning experience than local students, and we need to understand this better
Ongoing Activities

1. Identification and dissemination of best-practice initiatives – i.e. international student ambassadors
Ongoing Activities

2. International student specific activities / workshops / sessions – i.e. an international student careers clinic / portfolio workshop run here in 2016 – to be repeated shortly…
Future Activities

1. Guidance for academics and sessional staff who teach mixed classes
2. Enhanced BESA international student mentorship
3. Giving international students a ‘voice’ – consultation sessions, splitting MyExperience results to identify International student feedback?