



*The STAR Project: A
transition support project for
students with Autism
Spectrum Disorder, anxiety or
way finding needs.*

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Overview

- **Overview**
- **Rationale**
- **2015 - pilot project**
- **2016**
- **Outcomes**
- **Benefits/Challenges**
- **Future plans**
- **Questions**



STAR: Supporting Transition And Retention

- Transition support offered to commencing students with high anxiety, Autism Spectrum Disorder or way-finding needs.
- Transition Assistants are current 2nd, 3rd or 4th year students registered with Disability Services

Rationale

- Students seeking support
- Benefit of peer support
- Increase student connections and networks on campus
- Employment opportunities for current students

2015 – pilot project

- Identified first group of students to undergo training
- First training session held
- Developed workbook
- Students matched students with Transition Assistants
- Introductions
- Ongoing support as needed

Workbook

- Confidentiality and disclosure
- Self advocacy
- Study tips and routine
- Social transition
- Wellbeing
- Campus spaces
- Online learning

Supporting Transition and Retention

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2016

- Another group of 9 students trained
- 7 students matched with Transition Assistants
- Disability Advisers continue to identify potential Transition Assistants during the interaction with 2nd/3rd/4th year students



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Outcomes

2015 –

- 3 of the 4 students continued on with their studies
- 1 student unable to continue due to significant personal/issues

2016 –

- 5 of the 7 students successfully completed semester 1

Student A

- Commenced study in 2014 – withdrew from studies
- Recommenced in 2015 with support from Transition Assistant
- Successfully completed all enrolled courses and still enrolled currently
- Has undertaken the Transition Assistant training in 2016 and matched with 1 student in first semester.

Student B

- Commenced in 2016
- Initially hesitant to agree to Transition Assistant support
- Successfully completed all enrolled courses for semester 1 and currently enrolled in semester 2
- Requested additional support in second semester



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Benefits and Challenges

Benefits

- Student to student support – lived experience
- Flexible support option

https://youtu.be/VcuQNKd_DZo?t=224

- TA's gained experience and skills



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Benefits and Challenges

Challenges

- Need to be mindful of work/study balance for TAs
- Clarifying student expectations
- Difficulty with engaging students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

https://youtu.be/VcuQNKd_DZo?t=49



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Future plans

- Increased number of students and Transition Assistants
- Secure ongoing funding opportunity
- More formalised training program



Any questions?