



UniSmart™: Australasian Universities  
Survey Research Report

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Christchurch  
New Zealand

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## 1 Introduction and Design

UniSmart is a presentation for first year tertiary education students, prepared and delivered by a New Zealand-based company, the Ideas Agency. The UniSmart presentation is described as a breakthrough, supporting first year tertiary students through transition.

First year students need to take on so much new information, some academic, some of a more personal nature. With its high energy blast of street theatre tactics, straight talking, music, comedy and visuals, the UniSmart presentation gives students the information they need to get through the first year and beyond; and empowering them to seek help if and when they need it. For many students struggling with a major life change, the presentation has been described as ‘a lifesaver’.

UniSmart is currently delivered on university campuses in New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada. Topics covered include:

- Diversity;
- Isolation and shyness;
- Making friends;
- Study habits;
- Culture shock;
- Sex, drugs and very loud music;
- Drink spiking; and
- Staying safe

This report provides the data from universities in Australasia gathered in the most recent enrolment period (Feb - Mar 2010). This report consolidates responses from universities involved in data collection and reporting<sup>1</sup>.

*The UniSmart presentation gives students information they need to get through the first year and beyond*

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<sup>1</sup> The self-completion nature of the data collection has resulted in some discrepancies in responses by various institutions.

## 2 Detailed Findings

### 2.1 Rating of UniSmart

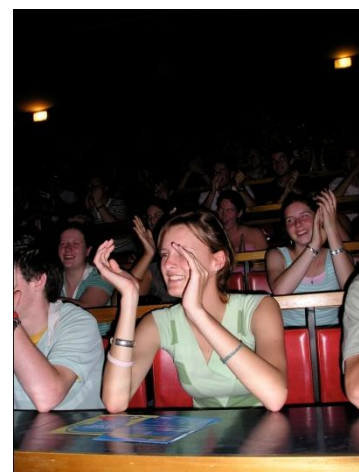
Having seen the UniSmart presentation, students were asked to rate it on a five point scale from 'poor' to 'awesome'. Almost three quarters of the participants rated the presentation as 'Awesome', or 'Very Good', (Table 2.1).

**Overall,  
seven in ten  
students  
thought  
UniSmart was  
'Awesome'  
or 'Very Good'**

**Table 2.1 Rating of UniSmart**

Option	Australasian Average
Awesome	45%
Very Good	29%
Good	21%
Fair	3%
Poor	2%

The survey participants were then asked the reasons for their rating scores. Among students, the primary reasons for this rating were (i) that the presentation was good; (ii) funny; (iii) informative; and (iv) entertaining, (Table 2.2).



**Students  
felt the  
presentation  
was good,  
funny,  
informative  
and  
entertaining**

**Table 2.2 Reason for Rating of UniSmart**

Option	Australasian Total (percent of responses)
Good	27.9%
Funny	21.4%
Informative	15.9%
Entertaining	10.5%
Interesting	9.4%
Helpful	6.9%
Interactive	4.7%
Relevant	3.3%
Other	19.1%

## 2.2 Living Circumstances

The next set of questions asked students about their living circumstances, including where they currently lived, if they were an 'international' student; and whether they had relocated within the country to study at their current university.

The response demonstrates that over three-quarters of all students have moved out of their 'home situations' when taking up studying. An average of two in ten students participating in the survey have migrated internationally to study, while a further six in ten have relocated within the Country.

**Over three-quarters of all students are living in university residences**

**Table 2.3 Current Living Situation**

Option	Australasia Average
University Residence	68%
With Parents	11%
Flatting	8%
Private Board	5%
Own Home	5%
Other	2%

**Table 2.4 International Students**

Option	Australasian Average
International Student	22%
Domestic Student	78%

**One in five students attending the seminars were international, while 65% of domestic students had relocated to study**

**Table 2.5 Relocated within the Country**

Option	Australasia Average
Relocated	65%
Did not move to study	35%



## 2.3 Intended Future Career

Students were asked to identify whether they knew what careers they would pursue after graduation. A total of 90% of students throughout Australasia knew or 'sort of knew' their intended career, (Table 2.6).

**Table 2.6 Know Intended Career**

Option	Australasia Average
Yes, know career	50%
Possibly, 'sort of know'	41%
No	9%

*Over 90% of students knew or 'sort of knew' their intended future career*

## 2.4 Funding Study

Across Australasian universities, nearly two thirds of students are funding their study either wholly, or in part, through either a student loan; with half also having family support, (Table 2.7).

**Table 2.7 Source of Funding for Studies**

Option	Australasia Average
Student Loan	63%
Family support	51%
Own Savings	42%
Part Time Job	25%
Scholarship	6%
Not sure	4%
Credit Card	3%
Other	8%

*Nearly two thirds of students are funding their study through a student loan; while over half have some form of family support*

Money was some level of concern for 75% of students completing the survey nationally, (Table 2.8).

**Table 2.8 Money a Concern**

Option	Australasia Average
Big Concern	26%
Some Concern	49%
Not sure yet	17%
No	8%

*Money was 'a big concern' or 'some concern' for over three-quarters of students*

## 2.5 Mental Health Background

A range of issues face students at tertiary institutions, some of which may potentially stress students. To understand how students may adjust to this stress, they were asked whether they had any history of mental health problems. Table 2.9 demonstrates that on average, one in ten students reported experiencing anxiety and / or depression prior to study.

**Table 2.9 History of Mental Health**

Option	Australasia Average
Anxiety	13%
Depression	9%

*Around 1 in every ten students nationally identified anxiety and/ or depression*

## 2.6 Concerns about Starting University

The survey participants were asked to reflect on their concerns about starting university. Among students the four most highly rated were (1) Passing Exams; (2) Money while studying; (3) Studying; and (4) Making new friends. The factors of least significance were Child care, English as a second language and Age. Details are shown in Table 2.10.

**Table 2.10 Factors Concerning Students regarding Starting University**

Factor	Australasian Average
Passing exams	1
Money while studying	2
Studying	3
Making new friends	4
Moving away from family	5
Paying back student loan	6
Moving away from friends	7
Loneliness	8
Course choices	9
Finding way around Uni	10
Settling into a new culture	11
Physical health	12
Having support	13
Mental health	14
Living in halls	15
Age	16
English as a second language	17
Childcare	18

*The biggest concerns about starting university were 'Passing Exams', 'Money while studying', 'studying', and 'Making new friends'*

## 2.7 Life style Factors

A number of questions were asked about the students' lifestyles, including the use of alcohol, smoking and recreational drugs (recall that the survey was completed anonymously, and students were encouraged to be frank about these lifestyle factors). Nationally, 82% of students noted that they drank alcohol. Key factors from the student population were:

- 82% consumed alcohol;
- 8% smoked cigarettes;
- 33% had tried marijuana

Of the 33% of students who had tried marijuana:

- 34% (i.e. 11% of all students) did not currently use ; while
- 10% (i.e. 3% of all students) were using daily.

87% of students had not tried other drugs. The most common drug trialled was Ecstasy; followed by LSD, Speed, Cocaine and Intravenous drugs.

**Table 2.11 Use of Drugs and Alcohol**

Percentage of Respondents		Australasia Average
<b>Drink Alcohol</b>	Never	18%
<b>Of those who drink alcohol:</b>	Only occasionally	40%
	Weekends only	40%
	Three or more days per week	15%
	Daily	5%
<b>Smoke Cigarettes</b>		8%
<b>If smoke how many per day</b>		28.1
<b>Tried Marijuana</b>	Never	67%
<b>Of those who have tried Marijuana</b>	Don't use now	34%
	Rarely	39%
	Monthly	10%
	Weekly	7%
	Daily	10%
	<b>Tried Other Drugs</b>	None
	Ecstasy	9%
	LSD	6%
	Speed	4%
	Cocaine	3%
	Intravenous drugs	3%
	Other	1%

**More than four out of five students drank alcohol**

**Of these, 5% drank daily**

**One third had tried marijuana. Of these, 10% were using daily**

**Only 13% had tried 'other' drugs**

## Appendix: Demographic Details

The UniSmart presentation was delivered to students at a range of Australasian institutions during the February- March intake of 2010. Data has been analysed from all universities. Data averages are provided in Tables A.1 and A.2.

*The students at UniSmart presentations were generally under 20 years old.*

**Table A.1 Age of Respondents**

Age Band	Australasian Average
17-20	77%
21-25	13%
25-30	5%
Over 30	6%

**Table A.2 Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Australasian Average
Male	34%
Female	66%

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Research First Ltd