



UNIQUELY WOLLONGONG

Nestled south of Sydney, and within walking distance of beautiful East Australian beaches it's hard to imagine a better place to study.

To say the **University of Wollongong** is a diverse campus, is an understatement. For international students the water is a major draw card, and they rate it highly, across campuses Wollongong hosts 33 different nationalities. Wollongong is also a destination for exchange students with their widely popular Study Abroad programme.



|Rob Fembock | Deputy Residence Manager |
|University of Wollongong |

“**Short and sharp**, that’s what UniSmart is good at because it doesn’t lecture students or harp on, it just does it in a fun and exciting way that keeps them entertained but also educates.”

Rob Fembock, Deputy Accommodation Manager for Weerona College and International House has over 400 students to orientate and look after every year and the bar is high for delivering on Orientation. He says, ‘Our KPIs are about how our community is going. When we do our orientation well, there aren’t people at the front counter asking the same questions over and over again.’ Striking the right balance for Orientation is critically important, and Rob says that it’s a fine line between wanting them to feel that the university is their home, and to have fun, but understand they also have some responsibilities. In the past, Rob would get student leaders to take on Orientation, but he said it doesn’t work very well to rely on students to deliver such an important message. When asked if his students were taking the information on board after the previous Orientation, Rob said that the ones who did take it on board weren’t the ones who needed it most. ‘We were having trouble reaching those students who needed the help, so a combined and condensed version appeals to them. You can’t just have two days of lectures, because you’ll lose them,’ Rob says. ‘You’ve got to have high energy, and some fun stuff in there to keep them engaged.’

Enter UniSmart.

Induction at Wollongong now begins with Res. Fest, a two day festival that kicks off with UniSmart.

US: Why did you choose to work with UniSmart?

Rob: For me it was the experience coming from Bendigo, where I used to work, to a much bigger situation here, with not as much of a programme. UniSmart is a great way to kick things off and for people to see the whole roller-coaster ride, and to normalise topics. If you put something in students' welcome packs, they're not necessarily going to read it. Whereas, if you do something in a way that's engaging and entertaining, they're more likely to remember the information. Students still refer to something from the presentation, and it always gets a really good response in our surveys.

US: What impact did UniSmart have on your students?

Rob: UniSmart lets people know that there are services here, and people feel more comfortable going up and telling someone that they're homesick, or not doing well. Students are more proactive now and we find that they're more likely to utilise services. That's one of the things [UniSmart] talks about; there are people here to help. This generation doesn't tend to ask for help, they just think, "I should be okay", but having something like [UniSmart] can make someone decide to go and talk to a student leader.



US: Does UniSmart help with your KPIs?

Rob: It means that I don't need to be the one out there delivering the message. It's nice to out-source. Have people been safer since UniSmart? We've had fewer people getting in trouble with the police, and fewer incidents. It gets people thinking about those things. My bosses definitely see the value, they love it, and we decided we were going to take all our first years to a lecture theatre and do an introduction.

US: Does UniSmart make your job easier?

Rob: Absolutely. I don't need to get up there and do it myself, it would be diluted if I said it! It's more memorable when it comes from UniSmart. It's all very well to say the students can sit there and read all the documents on our website, but they just don't, and they won't. UniSmart gives them all the information that they need in a format that they're going to be able to take in. Giving them all that to read, is not the right way to do it. Short and sharp, that's what UniSmart is good at.

It doesn't lecture them or harp on, it just does it in a fun and exciting way that keeps them entertained, but also educates.

US: Would you recommend UniSmart to someone in your position at other universities?

Rob: I definitely would. UniSmart is great for someone in my position. It's a good way to kick things off. It gets people talking, and out of that, "Too cool for school" attitude, as I call it. When they come in with their arms folded and they're just sitting there on their phones. There's none of that with UniSmart. If our residents didn't understand and acknowledge our information, then we'd be wasting our time, wouldn't we?

The University of Wollongong have been a UniSmart client for six years and counting. Our thanks to the staff and students of the University of Wollongong, it's a great pleasure to work with you to create an induction that is Uniquely You.