

## 2015 First Year Experience (FYE) grants

### Embedding transition pedagogies in the curriculum

#### Application form

Project applications (expressions of interest) must be submitted on this form.  
Applications must be submitted by **10 am Thursday December 4th, 2014**.

Applications are to be submitted by email to Kathy Egea, UTS FYE coordinator at [Kathy.Egea@uts.edu.au](mailto:Kathy.Egea@uts.edu.au).

<b>Project applicant/team leader:</b>	
Name: Sue Dean	Position: Lecturer
Contact email: sue.dean@uts.edu.au	Contact phone no: 4812
Faculty: Health	
School/Department (if applicable):	
<b>Other applicants if team application:</b>	
Name:	Position:
Name:	Position:
Name:	Position:
<b>Title of project:</b> Supporting students as they transition to tertiary study through mindfulness in compassionate pedagogy.	
<b>First year subject /Transition subject involved:</b> Communication for the Complementary Therapist	
<b>Endorsement by Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning)</b>	
I, Joanne Gray endorse this project application and confirm that embedding of the project outcomes in the subject will be supported by the Faculty.	
Signed	
Date: 16 January 2015	
<b>Have you received one or more FYE Grants previously?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – please attach a progress summary (max 1 page) for any 2014 grant that is not yet completed. Reports from earlier grants will be taken into account.	
No	

## Project outline (max 1-2 pages) (See guidelines for detail)

### A brief description of the aims and rationale for the project

University students may experience three times the amount of stress compared with the general population. Stress and anxiety lead to reduced cognitive functioning, impaired concentration, and memory and reasoning, increased errors, substandard work and interpersonal problems (Ashcraft et al 2001, Austin et al 2010). Students may be more likely to experience feelings of hopelessness and sadness during transition periods if they are having difficulty coping with stress (Lauricella Empirical studies have demonstrated that mindfulness training improves functioning and well-being of tertiary students.

The project will provide students with skills to transition to higher education and beyond in relation to self-care and stress reduction. Mindfulness based practices, focussing on compassion and loving kindness – particularly apposite for health care practitioner students and the development of empathy - will be introduced weekly to students following an introductory two hour workshop on mindfulness. These exercises will be supplemented by locating online resources to enrich the in- class experience and enable students to continue the mindfulness practices outside of university time. Students will be asked to evaluate the mindfulness practices, both in-class exercises and online activities, and validated tools (MAAS and Empathy scales) will be used, in addition to SFS questions.

### First Year Curriculum principles for Transition Pedagogy addressed by the project (tick the appropriate box(es) Select the 1-2 strongest principles that you are addressing.

Kift (2009) First Year Curriculum principles for Transition Pedagogy - <http://fyhe.com.au/transition-pedagogy/fy-curriculum-principles/>

Transition

Diversity

Engagement

Assessment

Design (broader focus)

Evaluation and Monitoring (broader focus)

### Provide detail of how the selected principle(s) is (are) addressed in your project.

**Transition:** The project will provide students with skills to transition to higher education and beyond into their professional practice and career attainment in relation to self-care and stress reduction. (2013). Mindfulness training can increase the resilience of tertiary students particularly for first year transitioning students. An integral part of mindfulness training is cultivating skills for equanimity, openness to change, and generation of new knowledge. Mindfulness training therefore has the potential to improve skilful response to stressful situations and working with a group/teamwork (Shapiro et al 2008, Baer 2003, Brewer 2011).

**Diversity:** Mindfulness practice is accessible and inclusive of all students and focusses on an open and non-judgmental attitude. It is a platform from which diversity is valued and celebrated, in the context of knowing one's self, and the context from which students come to university study. We are particularly aware that students from low SES backgrounds and non-school leaving students come to university with diverse life stories, histories of strength and vulnerability, which we seek to support within this project. Assisting these students to understand how their stories relate to new knowledge, facilitating the therapeutic use of self and self-care and encouraging authentic reflection via diverse pathways to study, will assist in the development of capacity and resilience for

all students but particularly for those coming from non-traditional university pathways.

**Engagement:** Mindfulness based practices can be introduced as a foundation to assist learning and engage with the learning environment; engagement with mindfulness practices incorporated into curricula fosters engagement with peers and academics as it is active and collaborative. Project resources will contain overt encouragement for discussion, sharing and reflection between peers and within groups, both within the activities and as a strategy to embrace throughout their period of study.

**Other University/Faculty/Course/Subject priorities addressed (optional)**

**Key project activities and timeline, including appropriate activities that engage the overall teaching team (if applicable)**  
 First year students enrolled in Communication for The Complementary Therapist in the Bachelor of Science Traditional Chinese Medicine will be introduced to mindfulness during a two hour workshop in the first week of semester. Following this they will be facilitated through a 10 minute mindfulness practise, focussing on compassion and mindfulness at the commencement of each lecture period over the following 11 weeks. The exercises will be supported by the use of online resources which students will be directed to utilise outside of university time throughout the semester to support the in-class activities. Debriefing will take place each week to support and evaluate the integration of mindfulness practices and at the end of semester validated scales will be used to collect data and enable the findings to be evaluated.

**Your evaluation strategy ie how you will know that the project has been successful, with particular focus on the transition pedagogies that you have chosen, and how will you collect information to improve the outcomes?**

Two validated scales will be used pre and post intervention –MAAS Mindfulness Skills and The Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE, HP) to evaluate the project.

SFS: students will be asked 2-3 questions in the SFS’s re the effectiveness of the intervention in their transition to university study, their learning and their commitment to continue with the mindfulness based practice.

**Project Budget** (insert table or spreadsheet if appropriate) and budget justification (remember to add on-costs – approximately 17%) Salary rates: <http://www.hru.uts.edu.au/conditions/pay/rates.html>

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Activity Description</i>	<i>Rate and hours</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Locate on-line resources to support weekly in- class mindfulness exercises. Gain ethics approval for 2 validated scales to use pre and post intervention, collect and evaluate data.	Teaching release	10 hours at \$84.81/hr plus \$14.84/hr on-costs	\$1000

## References

- Ashcraft, M.H., & Kirk, E.P., The relationships among working memory, math anxiety, and performance, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, June 2001; 130 (2): 224-37.
- Baer, R.A., Smith, G.T., & Allen, K.B. Assessment of mindfulness by self-report: The Kentucky inventory of mindfulness skills, *Assessment*, 2004; 11 (3): 191 -206.
- Brewer, J.A., Worhunsky, P.D., Gray, J.R., Tang, Yi Yuan., Weber, J., Kober, H., Meditation experience is associated with differences in default mode network activity and connectivity. *PNAS*, December 13, 2011, Vol. 108, no 50. 20254-20259.
- Hassed, C. & Chambers, R. (2014). Mindful learning. Exsile Publishing Pty Ltd., Wollombi, NSW.
- Lauricella, S. (2014). Mind Meditation with Undergraduates in Face-to-Face and Digital Practice: a Formative Analysis. *Mindfulness*, 2014, December 2014, Vol 5 (6): 682-688
- Shapiro, S.L., Brown, K.W., & Astin, J. (2011). Toward the integration of meditation into higher education: a review of research evidence. *Teachers College Record* Volume 113, Number 3, March 2011, pp493-528.

## Web-based resources

- The Centre for Contemplative Mind in Society <http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree>
- UTS Models of learning: <http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/curriculum/utsmodel.html>
- The UTS Strategic Plan 2009 -2018.
- [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)
- <http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learn-teach/attributes.html>