



Language and Learning Skills Unit

2006 Faculty Usage Report

Melbourne Experience Support Programs
The University of Melbourne



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LLSU Faculty Usage Report 2006

Overview of LLSU Services in 2006

In 2006, the Language and Learning Skills Unit (LLSU) expanded on two major initiatives begun in 2005: providing targeted services to faculties through service level agreements and increasing its suite of online programs. In addition, the LLSU engaged in a benchmarking project with the Group of Eight and three of the University's Universitas 21 partners (University of Auckland, University of British Columbia and the University of Nottingham). Results of the benchmarking project will inform future directions, a full report to be tabled at the Melbourne Experience Committee in early 2007.

Service level agreements

In 2006, the service level agreements with the faculties of Architecture, Building and Planning (ABP) and Law were enhanced to meet additional needs of their unique cohorts, and a third service level agreement was arranged with the faculty of Education. All three arrangements expanded the degree of academic and language support beyond the core, or generic, business of the LLSU, in particular providing each of the faculties with discipline and subject-specific support in the form of workshops, print and online resources and adjunct tutorials in addition to on-site advisers.

Online programs

In collaboration with the Transition Program, Equity and Diversity Planning and faculties, the LLSU increased its suite of online offerings, with the addition of two faculty-specific programs targeting 1) first-year students in Law, with an introduction to the seminar style of teaching and learning unique to the Faculty, and 2) a series of activities designed for the specific tasks required of students in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Additional online resources for Education and Architecture, Building and Planning were developed in 2006 and implemented in early 2007. All of these programs are part of the more comprehensive Academic Interactive Resources Portal (*AIRport*) that was launched in March of 2005.

In addition, the LLSU, the Transition Program and the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) received funding through a Teaching and Learning Performance Fund Grant to develop online materials for Masters Coursework students. This resource, called *CourseWorks*, aims to supplement existing LLSU and Transition programs in an online forum, where students can work at their own pace on interactive tasks to strengthen existing academic and communication skills. Information and activities on *CourseWorks* will range from generalist to discipline-specific and intends to be an online guide to being a postgraduate scholar at the University of Melbourne. *CourseWorks* was launched in February 2007.

Finally, collaboration on further development of *Postgraduate Essentials* with the SGS continued in 2006. Three additional modules, *Writing to Finish*, the *Editing Clinic* and *Submission and Examination* were developed, and will be launched in June 2007.

Benchmarking project

In light of the University's commitment under the *Melbourne Model* to "make possible great student learning" and the resource implications highlighted in the Shared Services Review 2005, rethinking the provision of high quality academic and literacy support services was the impetus for the benchmarking project. With this in mind, the LLSU undertook a benchmarking process as a formal means of firstly assessing practices and processes, and secondly improving performance. Two key objectives of the project were to articulate the LLSU's core values in learning support, identifying methods of best practice to support those values, and to recommend ways to improve services to support both the aims of the Melbourne Model and the increasingly complex work of the Unit. It is expected that the results of the benchmarking project will significantly inform policy and practices, with many

initiatives to be piloted in 2007. A full report to the Melbourne Experience Committee will be provided in 2007; the executive summary is located in Appendix A.

LLSU service usage in 2006

As of 30 December 2006, the LLSU has provided undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Parkville campus as well as non-Parkville sites (teaching hospitals and remote/rural campuses) with 3551.5 hours of individual tutorials, 1206 hours of workshops, and 271.5 hours of on-line tuition as part of *AIRport*. These figures represent a 13% increase in individual tutorial hours, a 39% increase in workshop hours and a 24% increase in online support from 2005 statistics (3135, 867 and 219 respectively). In addition, students continue to access our suite of free electronic and print resources: there are 40 different academic skills pamphlets that can be downloaded from the website or collected in hard copy form from the Unit.

Individual tuition

The individual tuition service continues to be in high demand by both undergraduate and postgraduate students; however, it is worth noting that over the past four years, the hours requested by postgraduate students has increased from around 35% in 2003 to approximately 48% in 2006. International students make up 50% of the service and non-native English speakers (NNES) make up 58%.

The LLSU asks students to complete a profile form (Appendix B) so that reports can be made to DEST regarding equity cohorts. In 2006, mature-age students represented 43% of the individual tuition service; first-year students 18%; first in the family to attend university 27%; rural 14%; recipients of a government allowance 19%; and students with disabilities at 6%.

A breakdown of individual tutorial hours by faculty can be seen in Table 1.

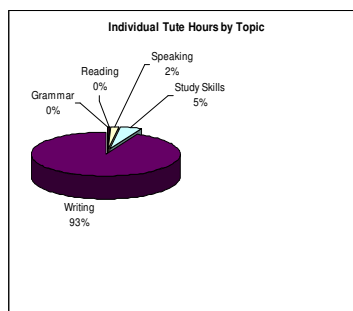
Table 1: Individual tutorial service hours by faculty and service

Faculty	Hours	Percent	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
ABP	315	8.87%	202.5	110.5	204	48.5	214
Arts	906.5	25.53	501	400.5	506.5	304	537.5
Eco/Com	125.5	3.53%	36	88.5	68.5	33.5	91.5
Education	633	17.82%	299	334	361.5	213.5	430.5
Engineering	160	4.51%	61	99	100	40	123.5
Law	528	14.87%	233.5	294.5	198	104.5	260
LFR	82	2.31%	32	50	55	18.5	64
MBS	2	0.06%	0	2	0	1	0
Music	38	1.07%	24	14	7.5	28.5	23
MDHS	337	9.51%	101.5	232	153.5	131	182.5
Science	181.5	5.11%	135.5	45	95.5	67.5	101
SGS	2	0.06%	1	1	2	0	2
Stud't Admin	9	0.25%	0	0	0	0	0
Vet Science	33	0.93%	15	18	27	2	27
VCA	2	0.06%	0	2	1	1	1
Other	197	5.55%	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	3551.5	100%	1642	1691	1779.5	993.5	2058

As per the past three years (2003, 2004, 2005) Arts' students represent the highest users of the individual tutorial service at 25.53%, followed by Education at 17.82% and Law at 14.87%. Evaluations, conducted regularly throughout the academic year, of the individual tutorial service indicate a very high satisfaction, with over 90% of students 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that the tutorial was useful and met expectations, and that the adviser identified ways to improve language and academic skills.

As can be seen from the graph below, the demand for writing skills development dominates the individual tutorial service, as it has in previous years, representing 93% of this service

Graph 1: Individual tutorial hours by topic



Baillieu Library drop-in service

In addition to providing the individual tutorial service to students at the central location (723 Swanston Street), the LLSU piloted a drop-in service at the Baillieu Library during swot-vac and the examination period in second semester in 2006. Comments from student surveys indicated that students found the library service convenient and useful, and hoped for an expansion of the service in the future. Information obtained from the evaluations also showed that over half of students (55%) who presented at the Baillieu had never used the LLSU service in the past – a statistic that indicates the need to investigate the provision of services at multiple sites in order to be more accessible to students. Due to the success of this pilot, the LLSU will expand the Baillieu Library drop-in service to support students commencing in week 3 through the examination period in 2007.

Teaching Program

The LLSU workshop program continues to expand its suite of offerings, embracing more flexible delivery modes as well as increasing discipline-specific programs (as opposed to generic). Over 60% of the teaching program was discipline or subject-specific in 2006. Examples of workshops and short courses include writing seminars for postgraduate students in Media and Communications, professional skills for Law students, presentation skills for later-year Engineering students, academic writing for postgraduate Nursing students, amongst many others.

In 2006, the LLSU also piloted an adjunct tutorial program targeting non-native English speaking (NNES) students in core first-year subjects in ABP, with a high rate of success (89% of students who regularly attended the program passed the subject as compared with previous years in which no support was offered). Another highly successful program, the Thesis Writers' Circle, piloted in Education in 2005, was re-developed for ABP research higher degree students in 2006. A pilot program targeting the needs of Engineering RHD students preparing for confirmation was also very popular, with a repeat request for the program to run in two departments in 2007.

The table below breaks down the hours of workshops delivered to each faculty in 2006.

Table 2: Workshop delivery hours by faculty

Clients	Hours	Percentage
Administrative Units	25	2.07%
Affiliated Institution	19.75	1.64%
ABP	233.75	19.38%
Arts	135	11.19%
Economics and Commerce	0	0%
Education	75	6.22%
Engineering	30.75	2.55%

External Clients	2	0.17%
LFR	5.5	0.46%
Law	134.25	11.13%
LLSU generic	124.5	10.32%
MDHS	30.25	2.51%
Music	0.25	0.02%
Science	110	9.12%
SGS	230	19.07%
Student Services Units	44	3.65%
Student Societies	4	0.33%
Vet Science	1	0.08%
Other	1	0.08%
TOTAL	1206	100%

ABP requested the most hours of workshops at 19.38%, closely followed by SGS at 19.07%, Arts at 11.19%, Law at 11.13% and Education at 6.22%. These statistics are not surprising in that most of these faculties, either through a service level agreement (ABP, Law, Education) or fee-for-service arrangements, have received an enhanced service at the disciplinary level, as compared to the generic services offered as core business. The exception is the service provided to the SGS, which represents a broad range of generic skills courses for postgraduate students and is considered core business for this reason.

Online services

In 2006, a total of 2786 students logged into *AIRport*, with a return visit of 2.4 times (for a total of 6788 logins). Undergraduate students represented 90% of the logins, which affirms that *AIRport* is meeting the needs of its target audience. Science students represented the greatest users of *AIRport* at 34%, followed by Law at 12%, Engineering at 11% and Arts at 10%. It is worth noting that both Science and Law collaborated with the LLSU to develop discipline-specific activities for first-year students as part of the Gate 3 suite, and for Science in particular, the activities were directly linked to assessments, so students benefited from taking up the support available through this online mode of delivery.

The postgraduate online resource for Masters Coursework students, *CourseWorks*, was developed in 2006 and launched in early 2007. A writing course will also be developed in 2007 to meet the needs of this cohort.

Table 3: Student log-ins (*AIRport*)

Faculty	Students
ABP	48
Arts	281
Economics and Commerce	217
Education	99
Engineering	299
LFR	158
Law	337
MDHS	87
Music	25
SGS	63
Science	952
VCA	1
Vet Science	74
Other	145
Total	2786

Online courses

The LLSU offers two tutor-moderated academic writing courses, one for native English speakers and the second for NNES students. Students can enrol in either of these courses at no cost, access and complete tasks at their own pace and time, and receive feedback from LLSU advisers designed to develop their writing skills. In 2006, these two courses replaced the face-to-face writing courses due to low participation rates. A total of 234 students enrolled in the tutor-moderated online academic writing courses, 58% of whom were undergraduate and 22% were postgraduate (repeat students were not counted as part of the cohort breakdown). A breakdown by faculty can be seen in Table 3.

Table 4: Enrolment in online courses (*AIRport*)

Faculty	Percentage
ABP	2
Arts	16
Economics and Commerce	24
Education	6
Engineering	13
LFR	1
Law	8
MDHS	8
Music	1
SGS	6
Science	15
Total	100%

Diagnostic English Language Assessment

The LLSU continues to jointly administer the Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA) with the Language Testing Research Centre (LTRC). In 2006, DELA was offered to all newly entering international students to the University of Melbourne during orientation, with provision made for a limited number of local NNES students¹ to sit the assessment, based on their VCE ESL English score.

Two significant changes to the DELA were implemented in 2006:

- The reduction of test time from three hours to two, an improvement addressing faculty concerns about testing during the busy orientation and enrolment period
- The change from a 9-point diagnostic scale to a 6-point scale, based on recommendations from the (LTRC)

DELA Uptake in 2006

In 2006, students undertaking the DELA increased from 654 in 2005 to 786. This is a 20% increase in usage over 2005 statistics, but is similar with the uptake in 2004. The following two tables provide a breakdown by year and by faculty:

¹ In response to faculty concern about the level of English language proficiency amongst local ESL students, the Vice-Principal and Academic Registrar agreed to open the assessment to this cohort, upon faculty referral and on condition that the current funding would not be affected.

Table 5: DELA uptake in the last 6 years

Year:	2006	2005	2004	2003²	2002	2001
Semester 1:	593	486	581	346	384	432
Semester 2:	193	168	178	208	199	83
Total:	786	654	768	554	583	515

Table 6: 2006 DELA uptake by faculty

Faculty	Semester 1	Semester 2	Total
ABP	38	9	47
Arts	63	41	104
Eco/Com	103	54	157
Education	6	3	9
Engineering	106	27	133
FLFR	20	3	23
Law	80	27	107
MDHS	97	7	104
Music	5	0	5
Science	70	20	90
SGS	4	1	5
Vet Science	1	1	2
Total	593	193	786

DELA results 2006

Of the 786 students who sat DELA, 526 scored 4 or less on Writing (Form), which is used as the default indicator of a student's overall academic language proficiency for success at the tertiary level. On the new 6-point scale, a 4 indicates "Academic English needs improvement. Additional language support is probably necessary." This statistic represents 67% of the cohort and demonstrates that the majority of students identified to sit DELA are indeed being appropriately targeted for language assessment and follow-up support.

² Statistics for 2003, 2002 and 2001 do not include students from Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences.

LLSU services in 2006 by faculty

Architecture, Building and Planning (ABP)

In 2006, ABP increased the academic support services under the service level agreement to include the following:

- an ESL Adjunct Tutorial Program for first year students in core subjects;
- an expansion of the Peer Mentor Program to include semester 1 students;
- review and maintenance of the suite of ABP Study Skills workshops;
- development of a thesis writing short course to support RHD students;
- review and delivery of the intensive postgraduate academic orientation;
- development of online activities as part of the *AIRport* Gate 3 suite;
- updating the Essay and Report Writing Guide to improve accessibility to NNES students; and
- enhanced collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Coordinator to deliver tutor training in working with international and NNES students.

Individual tuition

ABP students took up 315 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a 27% increase over 2005 (247 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (96%). A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 7: Hours of individual tuition in ABP

ABP	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	315	8.87%	202.5	110.5	204.0	48.5	214
2005	247	7.85%	155.0	92.0	176.5	39.0	175

Teaching program

The LLSU workshop program in ABP in 2006 reached approximately 4000 students, many of whom attended more than one workshop or tutorial. In addition to the first-year study skills sessions, the academic orientation program for postgraduates, tutor training workshops in working with NNES students and the one-off requests by lecturers, the LLSU introduced two new teaching programs.

The first was the ESL Adjunct Tutorial Program targeting the academic language needs of NNES in three core first year subjects. In particular, the program aimed to help students develop discipline-specific academic skills, cross-cultural ‘fluency’ and English language proficiency in all four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Of the students who attended seven or more ESL tutorials, 89% passed the subject, and 50% of these students achieved marks of H3 and above.

In order to identify students who would benefit from participating in this program, the LLSU developed a short diagnostic assessment. The LLSU assessed first-year students in the core first-year subjects, *City in History*, *Building and Construction* and *European Architecture B*, referring identified students to the Adjunct Tutorial Program.

The second was the Thesis Writers’ Circle (TWC) targeting the writing needs of RHD students in the writing-up stage of their thesis. This program explored selected discourse features and strategies in a supportive environment that fostered peer review and promoted networking opportunities. TWC was highly successful, averaging 4.7 (out of 5) for relevance, content, resources and well-informed instruction; in particular, the students valued the opportunity to discuss their specific problems. It will be repeated in 2007.

Table 8: Workshop hours delivered in ABP

ABP	Hours	% of total
2006	233.75	19.38%
2005	32.00	3.69%

Non-teaching programs

The LLSU also collaborated with academic staff to develop two resources for ABP students: the review of the Essay and Report Writing Guide and the development of interactive activities to develop ABP students' vocabulary as part of the *AIRport* Gate 3 suite.

Arts

Individual tuition

Arts students took up 906.5 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a slight decrease over 2005 (933.5 hours); nonetheless, Arts students remain the highest users of the individual tutorial service. The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (96%). A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 9: Hours of individual tuition in Arts

Arts	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	906.5	25.53%	501	400.5	506.5	304	537.5
2005	933.5	29.66%	664	255.5	548.0	312	590.0

Teaching program

The LLSU workshop program in Arts in 2006 increased significantly from 41.5 hours to 133.5 hours – more than tripling the teaching program to the Faculty. This enhanced support may explain the drop in the individual tuition hours in the same year, with many students' needs being supported by the workshops, as opposed to the one-to-one program.

Table 10: Workshop hours delivered in Arts

Arts	Hours	% of total
2006	133.50	11.07%
2005	41.75	4.82%

Arts Study Skills for Masters and Coursework Students was a joint initiative between Arts International and External Relations and the LLSU, with a target cohort of international postgraduate students. 100% of students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the course was relevant, interesting and the presenter well-prepared.

The LLSU also developed a series of workshops for both undergraduate and postgraduate *Media and Communications* students, the former to assist with language development, and the latter specifically for writing skills. Both courses were rated very highly (4.5 out of 5 for relevance, content and presentation) and will be repeated in 2007.

The LLSU also worked closely with the *Melbourne Arts Students Society* to provide a workshop on academic honesty and referencing conventions in Arts, receiving very positive feedback and an invitation to return in 2007.

A revised intensive academic orientation for first-year arts students, *Hit the ground running*, was promoted for the first time as part of students enrolment package. Enrolment in the course was high, with over 30 participants (and a waiting list) in the three-day course. Students rated it extremely well, "The course was brilliant, and I am VERY glad I attended it. It made me feel much more comfortable coming into the university setting."

In 2006, the LLSU revised and rebadged the Arts transition program to *Academic Skills for Arts Students*, four-week intensive, three-hour per week tailored program. Attendance was stable at 18 students, and feedback predominantly positive.

In addition, the LLSU continued to teach the *CAP Study Skills 100-001* subject, the aim of which has been to provide the most effective type of skills-based assistance to those equity groups who seek an alternative entrance pathway to the Bachelor of Arts. Study Skills 100-001 has consistently benefited students attempting to enter or re-enter the competitive environment of tertiary education, with feedback from students being overwhelmingly positive.

Economics and Commerce

Economics and Commerce (Eco/Com) have their own language and academic support unit, the Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU), which delivers the bulk of learning support to the Faculty, including professional development for academic staff.. For this reason, the LLSU plays a minor role in the support of students in Eco/Com, as the statistics demonstrate below.

Individual tutorial service

Eco/Com students took up 125.5 hours of individual tuition in 2006, a slight decline from 2005 (130.5 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (89%). A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 11: Hours of individual tuition in Economics and Commerce

Eco/Com	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	125.5	3.53%	36.0	88.5	68.5	33.5	91.5
2005	130.5	4.15%	49.5	68.0	79.0	31.0	99.0

Teaching program

All workshops and short courses, including orientation programs, are developed and delivered by the TLU. However, it is worth noting that Eco/Com students made up 24% of the enrolment in the online writing course as part of *AIRport Gate 2* (see Table 4, p 5).

Table 12: Workshop hours delivered in Economics and Commerce

Eco/Com	Hours	% of total
2006	0	0%
2005	2	.23%

Education

In 2006, Education entered a service level agreement with the LLSU to provide enhanced programs for international and NNES students in the Faculty. Under the agreement, the LLSU contracted to provide Education with 12 hours of individual tutorial service on site in the Faculty; the agreement also included workshops targeting these cohorts, specifically the language and cultural issues that they face.

Individual tuition

Education students took up 633 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a 24% increase over 2005 (511.5 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (94%). A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 13: Hours of individual tuition in Education

Education	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	633.0	17.82%	299.0	334	361.5	213.5	430.5
2005	511.5	16.25%	205.5	298	234.5	225.0	345.5

Teaching program

The LLSU workshop program in Education in 2006 increased significantly from 51.75 hours to 75 hours, representing a 45% increase over 2005 as seen in the table below.

Table 14: Workshop hours delivered in Education

Education	Hours	% of total
2006	75	6.22%
2005	51.75	5.97%

Undergraduate students

Programs to support undergraduate students included a range of topics, from study skills to writing for assessment and language development. They included

- revised series of study skills workshops for B Ed and BECE students;
- an academic writing short course for NNES undergraduate students;
- an intensive academic writing course for Pathways students; and
- workshops on writing research reports for final year students in B Ed and B Teach.

Postgraduate students

At the request of the International Student Support Officer, the LLSU developed, reviewed and revised a short course in academic writing targeting international Masters Coursework students. Evaluations were overwhelmingly positive with 100% of students ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ that the courses (one per semester) were relevant, interesting and of value. Based on student feedback, the course was extended from four weeks to five to include more activities.

The Thesis Writers’ Circle was taught for the third iteration in 2006 and has become a very popular and useful course. Targeting the writing needs of RHD students in the writing-up stage of their thesis, this program explored selected discourse features and strategies in a supportive environment that fostered peer review and promoted networking opportunities.

Teaching programs in 2006 were highly rated and will be repeated and extended in 2007.

Online programs

The LLSU collaborated with Education in 2006 to develop an online transition resource for new students on such topics as *Becoming a teacher*, *Surviving the course* and *Seminar basics*. The resource included scenarios, self tests, and students talking about their experiences. *AIRport* Education will be launched in March 2007.

Engineering

In 2006, the LLSU continued to work collaboratively with Engineering to develop programs targeting the specific needs of the cohort, in particular transition into first-year Engineering, report writing for later-year students, and oral presentation skills for postgraduates preparing for confirmation.

Individual tuition

Engineering students took up 160 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a 10% increase over 2005 (145 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (82%), but it is worth noting that 15% requested help with study skills – a not untypical request for students more likely to be assessed by examination as opposed to writing assessment tasks. A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 15: Hours of individual tuition in Engineering

Education	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	160	4.51%	61	99	100	40	123.5
2005	145	4.61%	62	83	96	24	99.0

Teaching program

Undergraduate

In 2006, the LLSU developed a short diagnostic assessment to identify students potentially in need of learning support in the first few weeks of semester. The LLSU assessed 512 students across all departments of the Faculty, referring identified students to teaching programs and individual tuition.

Based on feedback from 2005, LLSU reviewed and revised the Study Skills series for first-year students, *Foundations: Starting Out* and added a second series for later-year students, *Progressions: Moving On*, in order to better cater to the specific needs of these two cohorts. Feedback from students was very positive and included comments “that the content was very useful in writing skills, especially the lecture note taking skills,” ‘time to ask questions was best’ and ‘the best aspect was learning how to create exam/study notes.

Faculty requests were delivered to Chemical Engineering on Report Writing, and Civil/Environmental on Exam Preparation and Study Skills. Feedback included: “[The LLSU advisor] was fantastic. I think having [the advisor] talk on report writing will improve the quality of the reports in the class. The students were engaged and she had great examples. This was just what we were looking for!”

Postgraduate

In addition, the LLSU piloted *Postgraduate Presentation Program* for the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering. This was a six-week intensive, two-hour per week, tailored program aimed at Masters Students who were nearing their Conversion Report. Feedback was excellent and the program is being repeated in 2007 in both semester 1 and 2 on a fee-for-service arrangement.

Table 16: Workshop hours delivered in Engineering

Engineering	Hours	% of total
2006	30.75	2.55%
2005	32.50	3.75%

Land and Food Resources (LFR)

In 2006, the Faculty of Land and Food Resources restructured, relocating its TAFE courses to other providers and consolidating campuses to only four (out of seven). The restructure significantly impacted the LLSU service to the remote campuses; in previous years, the LLSU had maintained a network of contacts with the remote campuses, and visited these campuses at least twice a year to conduct workshops or meet with staff regarding student learning issues. This service was not required in 2006 due to the restructure.

Individual tuition

LFR students took up 82 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a 78% increase over 2005 (46 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (95%). A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 17: Hours of individual tuition in Land and Food Resources

Education	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	82	2.31%	32	50	55	18.5	64
2005	46	1.46%	13	32	25	12	29

AUSaid Thesis Support Program

In 2006, three LFR AUSaid students participated in the AUSaid Thesis Support Program, which aims to support RHD students in the writing-up phase of their thesis. A language adviser from LLSU is assigned to work with the student in one-to-one tutorials that are tailored to address the language errors and difficulties identified in the thesis draft. The student’s supervisor is also involved in the program, particularly in identifying areas of the

thesis that need improvement and the language issues that are likely to be of concern at examination. The current program is aimed at reducing the need for extensions to candidature due to writing-up difficulties, while ensuring that the quality and integrity of the thesis is maintained. All three students in the program successfully completed their thesis.

Teaching program

The LLSU workshop program in LFR decreased by about half in 2006 due to the restructure of the Faculty. However, the LLSU met with the Acting Dean and Associate Dean, Academic in 2006 to discuss ways in which the Unit could better support students in the Faculty, and in particular international and NNES students. A service level agreement was entered into for the 2007 academic year as a result of this collaboration, with a view to support first-year students, in particular NNES students, and at risk students (having gone through UPC).

Table 18: Workshop hours delivered in Land and Resources

LFR	Hours	% of total
2006	5.5	0.46%
2005	14.0	1.61%

Law

In 2006, the LLSU entered a new service level agreement with the faculty of Law which extended services to postgraduate students and increased the hours of on-site delivery during semester to five days, and in non-teaching periods to three days (only three days of on-site delivery during semester was requested in 2005).

Individual tuition

Law students took up 528 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a 52% increase over 2005 (347.5 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (97%). A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the tables below. With the service level agreement extended to work with postgraduate students, it is not surprising that the number of hours supporting this cohort more than tripled.

Table 19: Hours of individual tuition in Law

Law	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	528	14.87%	233.5	294.5	198	104.5	260
2005	347.5	11.04	257	88	170	140	210.5

Teaching program

LLB students

A range of workshops were offered to LLB students and included the following:

- *Study skills for Law*, a four-week seminar series covering independent study, legal vocabulary, reading legal texts, seminar participation and legal writing
- *Writing essentials for Law*, a three-week course covering effective introductions and conclusions, paragraph development, using sources, and analytical writing and editing techniques
- *English for Law*, a seven-week series for NNES students covering sentence structure, summarising texts, paragraph development and revision
- Essay writing workshop for PPL, a workshop supporting a critical first assessment
- *Writing practicum*, a course providing practical exercises and peer-review opportunities to enhance legal writing skills
- *Team work skills for Dispute Resolution*, a workshop focusing on developing awareness of team roles and strategies for managing successfully in teams

On the evaluations for all of these courses, over 90% of the students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the session was of value.

Postgraduate students

The LLSU also provided a suite of workshops to support the needs of the postgraduate cohort, in particular NNES students, including the following:

- *Language skills for postgraduate study in Law*, five-week series focussing on vocabulary, written expression, reading and listening skills
- *Essay writing clinic*, a five-week course focussing on structure, organisation and expression in legal essays
- *Teamwork skills for Syndicate Management*, a workshop focussing on working effectively as team members, including conflict resolution

Again, student feedback was very positive, with over 90% of students 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that the course was of value.

Table 18: Workshop hours delivered in Law

Law	Hours	% of total
2006	134.25	11.13%
2005	140.00	16.15%

Online programs

In semester 1, the LLSU, in collaboration with academic staff in the Faculty, delivered the final version of *Law@AIRport*, a resource for first-year Law students on 'Surviving Seminars.' *Law@AIRport* includes interactive materials on independent learning, reading and note-taking, participating in seminars and consolidating learning. This resource has been very positively received, with 149 students logging in to *Law@AIRport*, and over 2260 page requests made to the Law directory in the month of March alone.

Music

In 2006, the LLSU met with Dr Linda Kouvaras and Andrew Hall (Degree Programs Manager) to discuss how the LLSU might provide more support to Music students. The meeting resulted in an individual tuition program of support for at risk students, including a reporting function to the Degree Programs Manager, as well as the need to promote the LLSU services more effectively to both staff and students in the Faculty.

Individual tuition

Music students took up 38 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a 49% increase over 2005 (25.5 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (93%), and 6% requested help with study. Similar to students in LFR and Veterinary Science, the issue of distance from the LLSU may be one factor explaining the lack of uptake of the individual tutorial program. (Placing a learning skills adviser in the Baillieu Library in semester 2, however, did help to resolve this issue: over 55% of students attending an individual tutorial in the Baillieu had not used our service in the past.) A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 20: Hours of individual tuition in Music

Music	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	38.0	1.07%	24.0	14	7.5	28.5	23.0
2005	25.5	.81%	19.5	6	10.5	12.0	16.5

Teaching program

The LLSU is committed to continuing high-quality support to students in Music, and in particular to exploring models of delivery that will target discipline and cohort-specific needs.

Although the offer of workshops was not taken up in the Faculty, the LLSU continues to promote its services and explore models of delivery more tailored to the needs of Music students.

Table 21: Workshop hours delivered in Music

Music	Hours	% of total
2006	0.25	0.02%
2005	1.75	0.20%

Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

In 2006, the LLSU liaised regularly with the International Students Support Program (ISSP) to ensure that services were not duplicated, as outlined in the Academic Services Shared Services Review (2005). Workshops offered to international students were the only LLSU program affected by the Review. In addition, the Manager, LLSU, continued to represent central support services, including DELA uptake, on the ISSP Steering Committee, which met regularly in 2006.

Individual tuition

MDHS students took up 337 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a slight decrease over service hours in 2005 (356 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (93%). A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 22: Hours of individual tuition in Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

MDHS	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	337	9.51%	101.5	232.0	153.5	131	182.5
2005	356	11.31%	89	248.5	133.5	161	161.5

Teaching program

The LLSU delivered workshops at the Dental Hospital, the Royal Children's, Austin Health and Austin Repatriation, St Vincent's and Barwon Health in Geelong. The majority of these teaching programs supported later year and postgraduate students in their critical thinking, research and thesis writing development. The LLSU supported students in the following departments: Nursing, Dentistry, Biological Science, Population Health, Paediatrics, and Child, Adolescent and Family Therapies.

Nursing

Based on its success in previous years, the LLSU again delivered *Managing Postgraduate Study and Assignment Writing*, an intensive one-day workshop tailored to the needs of postgraduate Nursing students returning to study. Effective study strategies, reading and note taking, and research, writing and referencing were covered. In addition, a learning skills booklet was updated and reproduced specifically to support the teaching of the workshop and as an on-going resource for this cohort. Feedback was very positive, with students rating the course highly.

Dentistry

In order to cater to the needs of RHD students located at the Dental Hospital, the LLSU developed and delivered a seven-week course on critical thinking, scientific writing, and writing for publication. The course was very well received, with 100% of students 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that course was relevant, interesting, of value and that the presenter was well prepared.

Table 23: Workshop hours delivered in Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

MDHS	Hours	% of total
2006	30.25	2.51%
2005	34.75	4.01%

School of Graduate Studies (SGS)

The LLSU continued to work closely with the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) in 2006 in both the delivery of its UpSkills program and further development of online programs.

Teaching program

The LLSU delivered 230 hours of workshops and short courses to SGS in 2006. After ABP, the SGS is the highest user of the LLSU teaching services. The majority of workshops aim to develop postgraduate students' critical thinking and academic writing skills. Workshops target particular cohort needs: NNES, Coursework Masters, and RHD. In addition to academic skills, the LLSU also teaches two very successful programs on *Oral Presentation Skills* and *Understanding Australian Slang* for NNES students. LLSU workshops are consistently rated very highly by students, averaging above 4 on a scale of 5 (where 5 is the highest) in all areas, from content to delivery.

Table 24: Workshop hours delivered in School of Graduate Studies

SGS	Hours	% of total
2006	230	19.07%
2005	253.5	29.24%

Online Programs

Postgraduate Essentials

The SGS and the LLSU continued to collaborate in the development and moderation of *Postgraduate Essentials*, an award winning course for PhD students. Three new modules were developed in 2006, *Writing to Finish*, the *Editing Clinic* and *Submission and Examination*, which will be launched in June 2007, making this program a comprehensive resource for PhD students taking them through orientation through to completion of their candidature. In addition, the LLSU developed an online peer review tool to provide opportunities for students to give and receive feedback, in line with international research on effective learning strategies.

CourseWorks

In 2006, the LLSU, Transition Program and SGS were the joint recipients of funding from the Teaching and Learning Committee to develop an online resource for Coursework Masters students. *CourseWorks* was successfully launched in February 2007 as the 'online home' of postgraduate coursework students, and helps this cohort navigate from commencement through to graduation and beyond. 6337 unique students logged into *CourseWorks* in the first month of operation, with 1401 being repeat visitors.

Science

Individual tuition

Science students took up 181.5 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a 33% increase over 2005 (136.5 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (72%), followed by study skills (27%). A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 25: Hours of individual tuition in Science

Science	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	181.5	5.11%	135.5	45.0	95.5	67.5	101.0
2005	136.5	4.34%	93.0	43.5	49.5	67.0	75.5

Teaching program

Undergraduates

In 2006, the LLSU continued to support Science students through the *Science Study Skills* and *IS 101* programs, both tailored to the needs of first-year students. Similar to 2005, the

majority of teaching supported undergraduate students. In addition, the LLSU provides a number of one-off workshops tailored to specific needs, such a series on *Managing small group dynamics* for Experimental Animal Behaviour, *Preparing for exams* for Microbiology, *Report writing* for Mathematics and *Understanding learning styles* for Biomedical Sciences, amongst others.

Honours and Coursework Masters students

In order to meet the needs of Honours and Masters by Coursework students in the sciences, the LLSU developed and taught a two-part short course series: *Preparing the Minor Thesis for Science Students* in semester 1 and *Writing the Minor Thesis for Science Students* in semester 2. The aim of the series was to provide students with a sense of direction for working on a thesis and a common venue for discussing issues and difficulties. The sessions were well received and will be offered in 2007.

Table 26: Workshop hours delivered in Science

Science	Hours	% of total
2006	110	9.12%
2005	102	11.76%

Online programs

In 2006, the LLSU delivered four modules to support Science-specific needs for first-year students as part of the AIRport Gate 3 suite of resources. These modules included *Scientific terms* and *Exam Essays* (Biology), *Exam Essays* (Earth Sciences), and *Lab Reports* (Physics) and were launched in March 2006. A further module, *Synthesising Learning* (Chemistry) was delivered in February 2007. Statistics demonstrate that students in Biology who took up support through AIRport achieved higher marks on their final assessment than those who did not (an average mark of 67.88% for the former as compared to 56.57% for the latter).

Veterinary Science

Individual tuition

Veterinary Science students took up 33 hours of individual tuition in 2006, which represents a significant increase over 2005 (13 hours). The majority of students requested assistance with writing assessments (70%), followed by study skills (30%). In 2006, Veterinary Science and the LLSU worked closely to support NNES students at risk of failing by assigning a single adviser to work individually and at length with these students in order to develop the academic and language skills needed to continue in the course. A breakdown by cohort can be seen in the table below.

Table 27: Hours of individual tuition in Veterinary Science

Vet Sci	Hours	% of total	UG	PG	Int	Local	ESL
2006	33	0.93%	15	18	27.0	2	27
2005	13	0.41%	9	4	2.5	5	10

Teaching program

The LLSU is committed to continuing high-quality support to students in Veterinary Science, and in particular to exploring models of delivery that will target discipline and cohort-specific needs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some students in the Faculty, in particular NNES and international students, may benefit from a program of support located at the faculty level. Liaison with Faculty staff over the past few years has shown that areas such as vocabulary development, study techniques, exam preparation and language development would be relevant and useful and it is important that the LLSU improve links with the Faculty in order to support the learning needs of these students. Of particular importance with respect to Veterinary Science is the issue of distance: the Faculty's location in relationship to the LLSU

may be one factor explaining both the low take-up rate in the individual tutorial service, and also the lack of take-up in the teaching program.

Table 28: Workshop hours delivered in Veterinary Science

Vet Sci	Hours	% of total
2006	1	.08%
2005	1	.12%

Future Issues

In light of the introduction of the Melbourne Model in 2008, it will be important for the LLSU to continue to review and reflect on the provision of services in order to best support students in both the New Generation and current degree programs. The shift over the past four years from a primarily generic academic skills service to a more tailored one that targets cohort needs at the disciplinary level has laid a solid foundation on which the LLSU can continue to develop its services under the Melbourne Model. Clearly, supporting students at the local level, as has been pioneered with faculty service level agreements, and targeting delivery to those most in need makes sense, both in terms of providing the most relevant and useful support and also of optimising limited resources and allocating them where they will most beneficial.

It is also important for the LLSU to investigate an improved service delivery model, ensuring greater equity and access across faculties. Clearly, the current structure and of the LLSU does not favour some groups of students, in particular those located at some distance from the central support service, as noted in this report. Although the provision of a drop-in service in the Baillieu in 2006 did increase access for students who might not normally take up support, further initiatives locating support at the local level, such as in the proposed student service centres, need to be explored. The move toward online services, in particular, needs to grow if the LLSU is going to be able to provide accessible support to all students. There is further need to reconsider the a more equitable service across the faculties

Finally, the LLSU needs to continue to investigate ways to promote its services so that both teaching staff and students are better informed of the support available to them. Whilst some faculties understand and use our services regularly, others appear unaware and thus under-supported. Avenues for networking and information sharing need to be better established, and in light of the implementation of the Board of Undergraduate Studies and the six Standing Committees, it will be important for the LLSU to have some form of representation or link to these bodies regarding the provision of and policy for university-wide academic and language skills services in this new structure.

Future directions

The LLSU is keen to explore new ways of supporting students as well as to build on the success of existing programs. In 2007, the LLSU will implement the recommendations of the Benchmarking Report (see Appendix A), as well as expand on its online capabilities and faculty-level programs in order to meet student needs. Some key programs are highlighted below:

The Writing Space

In semester 2 2007, the LLSU will implement a peer-assisted writing program, to be called the *Writing Space*. Over 90% of the LLSU's current individual tutorial program works with students to develop their academic writing skills, and this initiative will result in more writing support and increased accessibility for all students. The peer assisted model for writing centres, developed and widely used in Europe and North America, facilitates learning by encouraging students to discuss their ideas and discover different approaches and strategies to apply to their writing. Postgraduate students with excellent writing skills will be trained as 'writing assistants' to help both undergraduate and postgraduate students to improve their academic writing skills over a period of time. A writing assistant acts as a friendly critic, who responds to the student's ideas and provides alternative ways to develop writing skills. It is a student-centred approach, which research supports as an excellent way to enhance student learning.

Online programs

The LLSU, in collaboration with Faculties, Transition and Orientation and Melbourne Experience Instructional Design (MEID), will continue to expand its online programs through *AIRport*. A significant number of postgraduate students (22%) enrolled in the online, tutor-moderated, academic writing course in 2006, demonstrating a gap in service provision to this cohort. International students in particular are high users of this course, which was designed for undergraduates. In 2007 a tutor-moderated academic writing course for Masters Coursework students will be developed, further adding to the suite of programs available as part of *AIRport*. There will be two modules, one designed for native speakers and the second for NNES students. Students enrolling in the course will be able to engage in their own time and pace, greatly enhancing accessibility and increasing services. This initiative will also contribute to the vision of the Melbourne Model in which online experience will be critical.

Local Delivery

Finally, the LLSU intends to continue the trend of allocating advisers to work at the local level (eg in faculties and student hubs), ensuring more targeted support programs and enhanced opportunities for collaboration across the University. This is particularly relevant for the New Generation degrees, but also for current degree programs, including postgraduate. Currently, only four LLSU advisers work within a faculty, but the quality of the support they are able to provide means that academic support programs are more tailored, communication channels are improved and the service embedded within the learning context, thus making it more relevant and more attractive to students. Clearly a more tailored and student-centred approach to academic and language skills development will be the hallmark of student support services in the Melbourne Model.

Laurie Ransom

Manager, LLSU

Appendix A

Benchmarking Report Executive Summary

In 2006, the Language and Learning Skills Unit (LLSU) conducted a benchmarking exercise with the Group of Eight and three international Universities 21 partner institutions. Common themes identified were:

- managing service demand, including expectations and perceptions;
- the importance of strong university relationships and a recognised service profile; and
- managing staff workload and responsibilities.

The benchmarking project reinforced the fundamental principle underlying all language and academic skills (LAS) centres: that of assisting students to develop independent academic skills appropriate to a tertiary environment. It also demonstrated that all centres provide assistance in predominantly the same way: through a combination of individual consultations, workshops and self-access resources.

In general, the language and academic support services of the LLSU compare favourably with our benchmarking partners, and there are many examples where there is an affirming similarity of practices. However, it became clear that all LAS centres experienced problems managing the heavy demand on and unrealistic expectations of services, and the project helped identify practices and innovative strategies that could help guide the LLSU's approach to a more effective and student-centred support service in line with the *Melbourne Model*.

The project also identified the need for greater representation within the university's committee structure and a stronger alignment with the vision and direction of the DVC (Academic). The former was acknowledged by the majority of LAS centres as critical to networking and informing stakeholders, and the latter was discussed in terms of a 'champion' to support the aims and initiatives of the service within the wider university context.

Finally, a comparison of workload responsibilities with classification across LAS centres has highlighted the need for a career pathway within the LLSU that recognises and values the evolving complexity and increased responsibility of the learning skills adviser's role.

In light of the above findings, the benchmarking project enabled the articulation of eight recommendations for improvement:

1. Develop a more effective strategy for promoting the role and services of the LLSU to the wider university.
2. In consultation with the Standing Committees and faculties, review the LLSU's individual tutorial program with a view to providing more targeted delivery to students.
3. In consultation with the Standing Committees and faculties, review and increase the LLSU's workshop program to better meet student needs at the discipline level.
4. Identify opportunities for more collaborative relationships with other parts of the University in the development and delivery of academic support programs.
5. Seek greater representation on committees involved with teaching and learning at both the faculty and University levels.
6. Establish a stronger alignment with the vision and direction of the DVC (Academic), including a more direct line of reporting, on matters related to student learning and the Melbourne Experience.
7. Review the LLSU's workload formula to reflect more accurately the changing nature of the work within the Unit, and to ensure equity and understanding about roles and responsibilities.
8. In consultation with HR, develop a career pathway for advisers that recognises their enhanced skills and responsibilities, enabling those that meet the essential criteria and work at a higher capacity, to link advance to HEW 8.

Appendix B

Language & Learning Skills Unit Student Profile Form

Welcome to the *Language & Learning Skills Unit*. We ask all students to complete the following survey, which helps us to better know your needs and how to support you at university. All information collected is kept strictly confidential (see Privacy Policy, below).

In providing this information, I consent to the collection of information under the Information Privacy Act (Vic) 2002 and the Health Records Act (Vic) 2000.

..... (Student Signature)

Student ID

Home Phone

Family name

Mobile Phone

Given names

Email address

Is English your first language? Yes No

Are you an international student? Yes No

Are you over 25 years of age? Yes No

Are you in your first year of undergraduate tertiary study? Yes No

Are you the first in your family (mother, father, brothers and sisters) to undertake university study? Yes No

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent? Yes No

Was most of your secondary schooling undertaken in a rural area (town with population under 120,000)? Yes No

Do you receive a government allowance (eg. Austudy/ Abstudy, Youth Allowance)? Yes No

Do you have a disability, impairment or long-term medical condition, which may affect your studies? Yes No

Privacy Policy

The University of Melbourne complies with the Information Privacy Act (VIC) 2000 and the Health Records Act (VIC) 2001 in its treatment of personal and health information regarding students. The University's Privacy Policy can be accessed at <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/unisec/privacy.htm>.

What we collect and why

Information is collected about a student to enable proper administration of an individual's course of study and to assist the University to organise programs for the health and welfare of students. Information may also be collected to facilitate internal planning and for annual reporting to the Department of Education, Science and Technology, under Commonwealth and State legislation.

Disclosure of information

Information collected will not be disclosed without your permission or unless permitted or required by law. Individuals have the right to gain access to their personal information held at the Language and Learning Skills Unit. Privacy enquiries may be emailed to privacy-officer@unimelb.edu.au.