

# International Student Success: An Academic Mentorship programme.

Suzanne Crews

Sarah Snell

School of Information Systems & Computing  
Universal College of Learning  
Palmerston North, NZ  
s.crews@ucol.ac.nz

In 2005 a mentorship programme was introduced for International Students studying the Introductory Certificate in Business Computing (level 3) and the Certificate for Advanced Computer Users (level 4) at UCOL. Its purpose was to enhance international student success on the student's chosen computing programme. It was designed to provide additional learning support at programme level, and complement the existing support offered by the UCOL International Student Office.

The students meet their mentor in orientation week and are encouraged to attend a weekly meeting throughout the semester. The mentor is a lecturer from the computing programmes. The mentoring programme monitors and supports the students learning and success, focusing on a variety of areas including:

- Study skills
- Classroom support
- Assessment progress
- Attendance
- Concerns and issues
- Use of UCOL support services
- Liaising with International Student Office
- Supporting International Student Office requirements (eg: visa, insurance etc)

This requires a time commitment from the mentor which is additional to current contact time. Individual weekly meetings with the students are 10-30 minutes in duration. The mentor also meets informally on a weekly basis with each lecturer that teaches the international students. The mentor asks for feedback

about student progress and attendance. To reduce time spent on this in the future a more formalised feedback process would be beneficial, with each lecturer providing weekly details automatically to the mentor.

Twelve students completed the mentorship programme in 2005. Eight of these students successfully completed their qualification. Of the twelve students that completed the programme last year, nine of the students continued on to other courses at UCOL. Eight of these students have staircased to higher level computing programmes.

There are both student and institutional advantages of the mentorship programme. Some of these include:

- Contributes to a student's sense of belonging and being valued at UCOL
- Supports and grows student success
- Provides one on one support regarding both academic and personal issues
- Provides support for the International Office, from programme level
- Contributes to enrolment numbers
- Encourages students to staircase to higher level programmes
- Contributes to meeting the Code of Practice guidelines for the Pastoral Care of International Students

Ideally in the future the mentorship programme will be used with all computing programmes in the School of Information Systems and Computing, and could be used as a model across all disciplines and faculties at UCOL and other tertiary institutions.