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Supporting Student Success through  
Peer Assisted Study Sessions  
(PASS)

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# University of Wollongong, Australia



- 30,516 students
- Ranked in the top 2% of universities in the world
- Globally ranked (33) as one of the world's best modern universities (THE 100 under 50)
- 5 star ratings
- Top 100 in the world for global graduates



# PASS @ UOW



- Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) commenced at UOW in 2002
- Most awarded peer learning program in the world!
- Mainstream and voluntary
- Over 100 PASS Leaders
- Flagship FYE program - running on multiple entry points

# Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

- Academic peer learning / mentoring program for students - think “super group” learning!
- Aims to help students master subject content while integrating discipline specific learning skills
- Attached to difficult subjects or used in some disciplines to promote development of learning communities
- Not a remedial program – open to all enrolled students

# What is PASS?

- Voluntary sessions facilitated by PASS Peer Leaders – high achieving senior students
- Not the Leaders' role to give direct answers
- Peer Leaders are recruited based on academic competency and high level interpersonal skills
- Training, teambuilding and on-going observation, support and professional development. Multiple levels of mentoring / collaboration
- Extremely cost effective!

# Strategic Goals of PASS

- Improving retention & reducing failure rates in targeted subjects
- Enhancing the student experience & satisfaction
- Assisting transition at multiple entry points
- Development of transferable study skills & independent learning
- Provides seamless integration of academic & social support for students

# Potential Applications

- Large compulsory subjects, particularly ones which many students have no previous background in
- Subjects which have a high failure rate and/or are perceived by the students as difficult
- Transition points where students come in with advanced standing (including PG subjects)
- Where promoting the development of a discipline specific learning community

# Benefits of PASS

- PASS Peer Leaders: enhances leadership, communication & teamwork skills. Looks great on resume!
- In 2013, 100% of PASS Leaders agreed that PASS had assisted in developing their personal and professional skills
- Provides a forum for students to consolidate lecture material and explore / unpack challenges
- Institution: enhanced student experience, fewer transition problems & improved retention



# Participant Feedback

## What I like most about PASS...

*“Challenged to think rather than just being spoon fed”*

*“The hours of study that I don’t have to do at home”*

*“Opportunity for everyone to contribute”*

*“No pressure collaboration”*

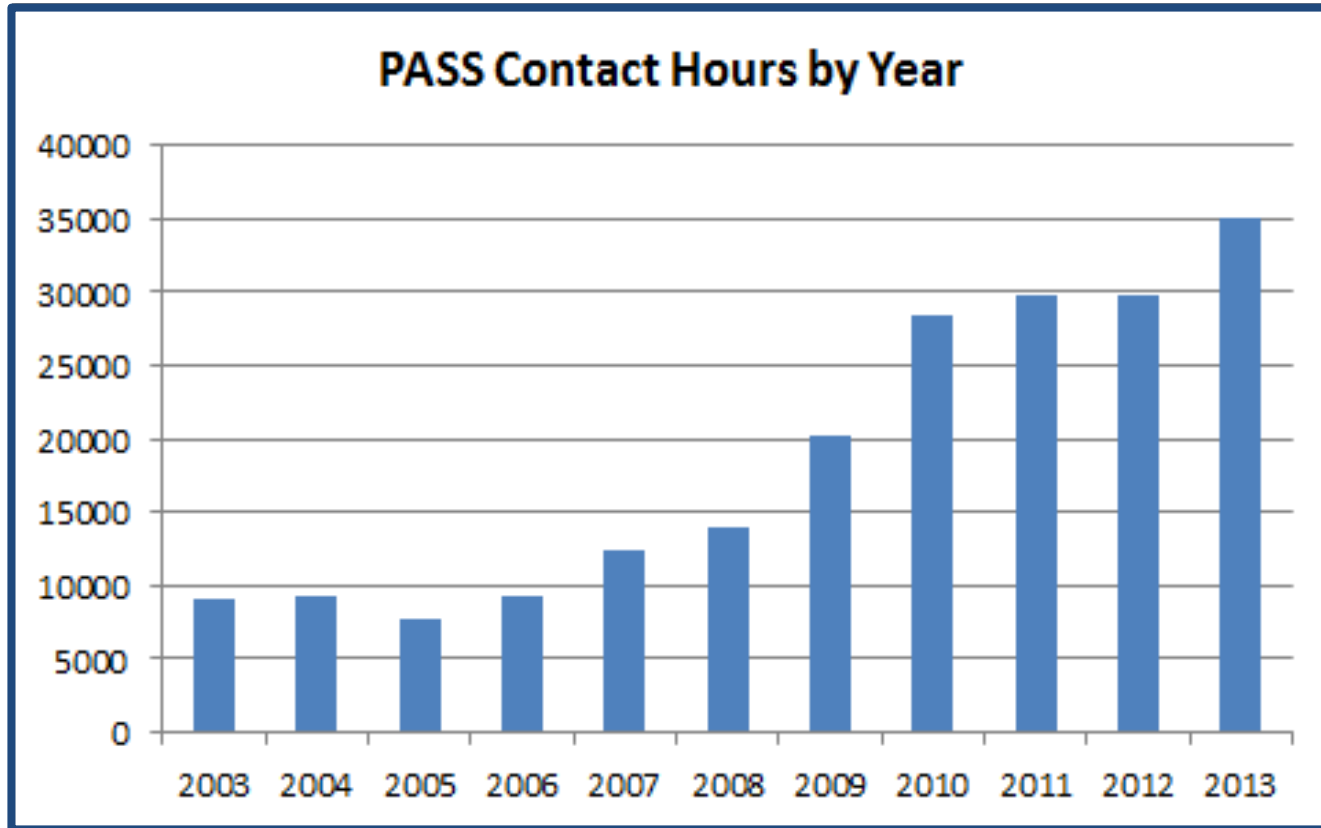
*“It actually works – I come and I end up getting marks!”*



# Growth and Consolidation

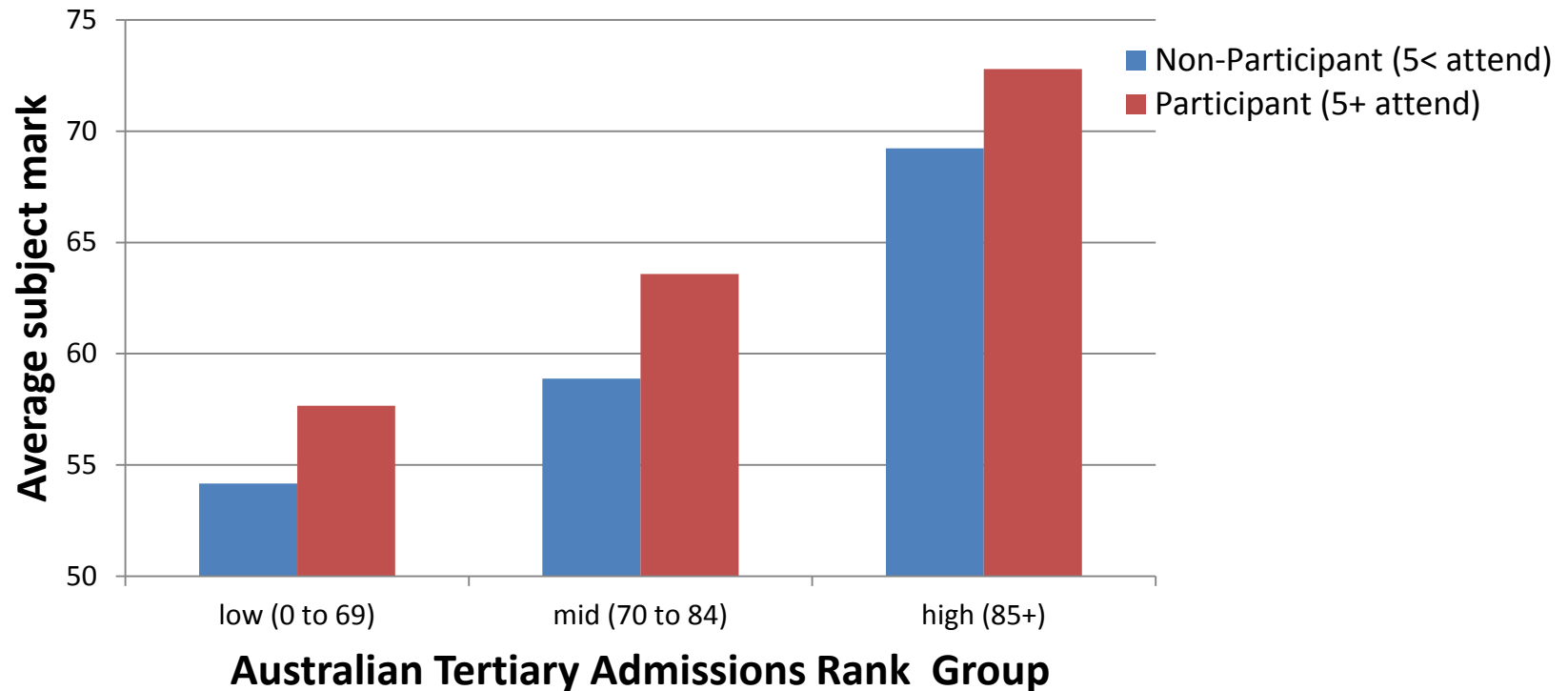
- Commenced in 2002 in two subjects – now over 100 subjects per year!
- Currently supports students in all 5 Faculties and Graduate Schools – team of 100 PASS Leaders
- In 2013 delivered 35,000 contact hours to 6,000 participants
- In First Semester, 2014 delivered 25,000 contact hours (increase of 20% on same period last year)

# Snapshot of Growth



# Everyone benefits

Average student mark by ATAR rank and PASS participation, 2003 to 2013  
(no unique student = 31864)



# National Centre for PASS

- Since 2005 UOW has been The National Centre for PASS for the Australasia region
- Trained PASS staff for 37 of the 39 Australian universities
- Over 500 trained staff from some 70 institutions across Australia, NZ, Fiji, Malaysia, HK, Singapore and PR of China making for a vibrant community of practice

# National Centre for PASS

- Part of an international community of National Centres
- Annual National PASS Forum for 150 – 200 staff and student attendees & National Leader Awards
- 10th National PASS Forum, 30th Sept – 1st Oct 2014
- Publishes Journal of Peer Learning
- PASS Supervisor Training & resources



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*Questions or Comments?*

*Thank you for attending!*

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