

EDUC6000: Understanding Aspirations for Greater Equity

Online

Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

OVERVIEW

Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive account of the concept of aspirations, emphasising the role of teachers and school leaders in shaping and nurturing students' post-school aspirations. It explores current issues relating to access to higher education for traditionally under-represented groups, with a particular focus on Indigenous Australians, people from low socio-economic status backgrounds, women in non-traditional areas of study, people living in regional and remote areas of Australia, and first-in-family students. Participants will: engage with Australian and international research exploring the educational and occupational aspirations of school students; identify the various factors that influence aspirations including intersections among factors; and, develop a sound theoretical and empirical basis for translating the concept of aspirations into classroom and school practice.

Contact Hours

Online

Online Activity

Online

2 hour(s) per Week for Full Term starting Week 1

Unit Weighting

10

Workload

Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator **Online**
Dr Sally Patfield
V127, V Building (Teaching) and CT307, CT Building (Research)
sally.patfield@newcastle.edu.au
(02) 49215103
Consultation: Please email in the first instance to make an appointment.

Teaching Staff Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.

School Office **School of Education**
V Building
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SYLLABUS

Course Content

- An introduction to aspirations.
- Conceptual underpinnings of 'aspirations'.
- An overview of issues surrounding access to higher education.
- An exploration of the educational and occupational aspirations of Australian school students.
- The complexity of factors that are closely tied to aspiration formation.
- The broader socio-cultural context of aspiration formation.
- The fundamental role of teachers and schooling in influencing aspirations.
- Connecting theoretical concepts and empirical data to local contexts and teaching practice.

Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the concept of aspirations, taking into account the historical and contemporary policy context.
2. Develop a conceptual framework for theorising the concept of aspirations
3. Analyse and discuss current issues relating to the under-representation of particular groups of students in Australian higher education.
4. Identify factors that play a role in aspiration formation.
5. Recognise and explain the different ways that teachers and schools explicitly and implicitly influence post-school aspirations.
6. Translate the concept of aspirations into specific plans for classroom and school practice.

Course Materials Course readings and materials are provided on Canvas.

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	Module 1	Introduction to aspirations	
2	4 Mar	Module 1	Introduction to aspirations	
3	11 Mar	Module 2	Conceptualising aspirations	
4	18 Mar	Module 2	Conceptualising aspirations	
5	25 Mar	Module 3	Aspirations matter	
6	1 Apr	Module 3	Aspirations matter	Online test due end of Week 6
7	8 Apr	Module 4	Factors that matter	
Mid Term Break				
Mid Term Break				
8	29 Apr	Module 4	Factors that matter	
9	6 May	Module 5	Relationships and connections that matter	
10	13 May	Module 5	Relationships and connections that matter	
11	20 May	Module 6	Schooling and teachers matter	
12	27 May	Module 6	Schooling and teachers matter	Discussion board contribution due end of Week 12
13	3 Jun	n/a	n/a	n/a
Examination Period				Written assignment due - due date and time provided on Canvas
Examination Period				

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 2 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Online Test 25%	Due end of Week 6	Individual	25%	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Discussion Board 25%	Due end of Week 12	Individual	25%	2, 3
3	Case Study 50%	Due in exam period (date and time provided on Canvas)	Individual	50%	3, 4, 5, 6

Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Assessment 1 - Online Test 25%

Assessment Type

In Term Test

Purpose

To demonstrate your understanding of key course content.

Description

One online quiz to be attempted in a single setting. The quiz will include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer/text response, and matching questions. The quiz applies your understanding of key course concepts to classrooms and school settings.

Weighting

25%

Due Date

End of Week 6

Submission Method

Online

Assessment Criteria

The online quiz has 25 questions, worth 1 mark each (of similar complexity). Questions will focus on content and readings from Modules 1-3.

Return Method

Online

Feedback Provided Online - Answers for each quiz will be reviewed by the Course Coordinator prior to a final mark being available in Canvas.

Assessment 2 – Discussion Board 25%

Assessment Type Online Learning Activity

Purpose To identify and analyse current issues of equity in Australian education, with a specific focus on the under-representation of particular groups of students in higher education.

Description During the semester, students will make at least four (4) discussion board posts. One post must identify, discuss and link to a recent Australian media article (e.g., news article, blog, television interview) about an equity group featured in the course. Students will also need to comment on at least three other students' original posts.

Weighting 25%

Due Date End of Week 12

Submission Method Online

Assessment Criteria Four discussion board posts in total throughout the semester, comprising an original post and three additional posts commenting on other students' posts. The original post must identify, discuss and link to a recent Australian media article featuring an equity group from the course. The subsequent three posts should provide additional commentary and analysis of the articles identified by course peers. All posts must connect to key concepts and themes from the course and should be approximately 100-200 words in length.

Return Method Online

Feedback Provided Online – The Course Coordinator will review discussion board posts and provide a final mark via Canvas.

Assessment 3 - Case Study 50%

Assessment Type Case Study / Problem Based Learning

Purpose To demonstrate your understanding of current issues surrounding access to higher education in Australia and how these issues are relevant to classroom and school practice.

Description Case study on an equity group of your choice.

Weighting 50%

Due Date Due in exam period (date and time provided on Canvas)

Submission Method Online

Assessment Criteria

Equity group and background

- Correctly identifies an Australian equity group and provides a clear definition of this group.
- Provides a rationale for why this particular equity group is targeted in policy and practice, drawing on relevant data.

Access to higher education

- Presents quality discussion on the main issues that influence participation in Australian higher education for the named equity group.
- Draws on relevant and timely literature and connects discussion to: (1) the concept of aspiration, and (2) the widening participation policy agenda

Aspirations and school practice

- Identifies how teachers and schools can explicitly and implicitly influence the aspirations of young people from the identified equity group.
- Draws on relevant and timely literature.
- Provides suggestions for pedagogical strategies and classroom resources to support aspiration-formation and pathways to higher education for the identified equity group.

Structure and referencing

- Written in well-formed academic English (grammar, punctuation, paragraphs, spelling).
- Referencing applies APA 6th or 7th conventions.

Please refer to the assignment rubric for elaborations.

Return Method Online

Feedback Provided Online - Written feedback using the rubric will be returned within 3 weeks of the submission of your assignment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme

This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Canvas Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

Oral Interviews (Vivas)

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination \(viva\) Procedure](#). In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

Academic Misconduct

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

Adverse Circumstances

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:

1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or
2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
3. you are requesting a change of placement; or

4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.
Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items
Procedure available at:
<https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>

**Important Policy
Information**

The 'HELP for Students' tab in UoNline contains important information that all students should
be familiar with, including various systems, policies and procedures.

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.

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Case study

2,000 words – 50%

Part 1: Equity and access to higher education in Australia (1,000 words)

Develop a case study that examines current issues surrounding access to higher education for an equity group of your choice. The equity group may either be one of the official equity target groups of Australian higher education policy, or an emerging equity group such as first-in-family students, or students from refugee backgrounds (for example).

Use the following headings to develop and organise your case study:

Equity group: (name the equity group)

Background: (describe how the equity group is commonly defined and/or understood, and provide relevant data to make a case for looking at this equity group, such in terms of university enrolment patterns – you may use graphs or tables here)

Access to higher education: (drawing on relevant literature, identify and examine the issues that influence and shape participation in higher education for this equity group; connect your discussion to the concept of aspiration and the policy context of widening participation)

Part 2: Aspirations and school practice (1,000 words)

Continuing to use the same equity group, consider how teachers and schools explicitly and implicitly influence the post-school aspirations of students from this group, drawing on relevant literature. Provide suggestions for pedagogical strategies and classroom resources that could be implemented in classrooms and schools to support aspiration-formation and pathways to higher education for this equity group.

Please consider the following points when developing your case study:

- Use the headings above to organise your case study.
- If you use any data (e.g. university enrolment data) in your case study, please ensure the source is acknowledged correctly.
- Referencing must be consistent with APA 6th edition or later.
- Refer to the rubric on the next page for marking information. You should consider the allocation of marks as you think about your word limit for each section.

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	Fail	Pass	Credit	Distinction	High Distinction	
PART A – EQUITY GROUP AND BACKGROUND	0-4	5-6	6.5-7	7.5-8	8.5-10	Mark /10
<p>Correctly identifies an Australian equity group and provides a clear definition of this group.</p> <p>Provides a rationale for why this particular equity group is targeted in policy and practice, drawing on relevant data.</p>	<p>You have not identified an Australian equity group, and/or have not demonstrated an accurate understanding of how this group is commonly defined and understood in Australian higher education policy and practice.</p> <p>Either no supporting data, or incorrect data, is used to show why this equity group is important, and no clear rationale is provided that shows why this equity group is important.</p>	<p>You have correctly identified an Australian equity group, and have illustrated a limited understanding of how this group is commonly defined and understood in Australian higher education policy and practice.</p> <p>Relevant data is provided on this equity group, but no clear rationale is provided that shows why this equity groups is important.</p>	<p>You have correctly identified an Australian equity group, and have illustrated a sound understanding of how this group is commonly defined and understood in Australian higher education policy and practice.</p> <p>Sound synthesis of relevant data to provide a rationale for the importance of this equity group.</p>	<p>You have correctly identified an Australian equity group, and have illustrated a good understanding of how this group is commonly defined and understood in Australian higher education policy and practice.</p> <p>Coherent synthesis of relevant data to provide a rationale for the importance of this equity group.</p>	<p>You have correctly identified an Australian equity group, and have illustrated a detailed understanding of how this group is commonly defined and understood in Australian higher education policy and practice.</p> <p>Excellent synthesis of relevant data to provide a rationale for the importance of this equity group.</p>	
PART A – ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION	0-7	7.5-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	Mark /15
<p>Presents quality discussion on the main issues that influence participation in Australian higher education for the named equity group.</p> <p>Draws on relevant and timely literature and connects discussion to: (1) the concept of aspiration, and (2) the widening participation policy agenda.</p>	<p>You have not demonstrated an understanding of issues shaping access to higher education for the identified equity group. Information is inaccurate or irrelevant to the equity group in question. There is little or no supporting evidence drawn from the literature.</p>	<p>You have demonstrated a limited understanding of issues shaping access to higher education for the identified equity group. Minimal references are made to literature.</p>	<p>You have demonstrated a sound understanding of historical and contemporary issues shaping access to higher education for the identified equity group. A discussion is provided drawing on Australian literature, which includes some mention of the concept of aspiration and the widening participation agenda.</p>	<p>You have demonstrated a good understanding of historical and contemporary issues shaping access to higher education for the identified equity group. A coherent discussion is provided drawing on contemporary Australian literature, including links to the concept of aspiration and the widening participation agenda.</p>	<p>You have demonstrated an excellent understanding of historical and contemporary issues shaping access to higher education for the identified equity group. A sophisticated discussion is provided drawing on contemporary Australian literature, which includes strong links to the concept of aspiration and the widening participation agenda.</p>	

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PART B – ASPIRATIONS AND SCHOOL PRACTICE	0-9	10-12	13-14	15-16	17-20	Mark /20
<p>Identifies how teachers and schools can explicitly and implicitly influence the aspirations of young people from the identified equity group.</p> <p>Draws on relevant and timely literature.</p> <p>Provides suggestions for pedagogical strategies and classroom resources to support aspiration-formation and pathways to higher education for the identified equity group.</p>	<p>You have not clearly shown how teachers and schools influence young people’s post-school aspirations. There is little or no supporting evidence drawn from the literature.</p> <p>Limited or no ideas are provided for supporting and nurturing aspirations within practice.</p>	<p>You have shown a limited understanding of how teachers and schools influence young people’s post-school aspirations. Minimal references are made to literature.</p> <p>Some ideas are provided for supporting and nurturing aspirations within practice, but these ideas are largely unclear or irrelevant to aspiration-formation.</p>	<p>You have shown a sound understanding of how teachers and schools influence young people’s post-school aspirations. Referencing is used to connect your discussion to Australian literature.</p> <p>Sound ideas are provided for supporting and nurturing aspirations within practice, describing at least three different pedagogical strategies or resources that might be used in the classroom.</p>	<p>You have shown a good understanding of how teachers and schools explicitly and implicitly influence young people’s post-school aspirations. Coherent referencing is used to connect your discussion to contemporary Australian literature.</p> <p>Good ideas are provided for supporting and nurturing aspirations within practice, describing at least four different pedagogical strategies or resources that might be used in the classroom.</p>	<p>You have shown an excellent understanding of how teachers and schools explicitly and implicitly influence young people’s post-school aspirations. Sophisticated referencing is used to connect your discussion to contemporary Australian literature.</p> <p>Exceptional ideas are provided for supporting and nurturing aspirations within practice, describing at least five different pedagogical strategies or resources that might be used in the classroom.</p>	
STRUCTURE AND REFERENCING	0-2	2.5	3	4	5	Mark /5
<p>Written in well-formed academic English (grammar, punctuation, paragraphs, spelling).</p> <p>Referencing applies APA 6th or 7th conventions.</p>	<p>Poor use of grammar, structure or spelling throughout.</p> <p>Referencing is incorrect or missing.</p>	<p>Weakly presented in structure, grammar or spelling. Relies heavily on quotes.</p> <p>There are a few referencing errors in-text or throughout the referencing list.</p>	<p>Sound presentation, clearly structured, with minimal spelling or grammatical errors.</p> <p>Referencing has minor errors only.</p>	<p>Clearly structured with good use of grammar and little or no spelling or referencing mistakes.</p> <p>Referencing is correct.</p>	<p>Excellent structure, with no grammatical errors or spelling mistakes.</p> <p>Referencing is correct.</p>	