

## **National Union of Students** **Student Experience University Rankings**

**Note: These rankings are subject to change pending decisions of university administrations as to how much support they will give their student organisations. These rankings represent the state of affairs as of August 2006, and regular updates will be released publicly and through the NUS website [www.unistudent.com.au](http://www.unistudent.com.au).**

These rankings are based on research conducted by the National Union of Students (NUS) amongst its member campuses as to how each of their university administrations is responding to the introduction of voluntary student unionism. It ranks universities in relation to their support for the student experience on campus.

Almost all students believe that a quality university experience is about more than what is learnt in the lectures and laboratories. All students value not only the academic components of university study, but the extra-curricular experiences that differentiate university from school and make it a place of life learning,

The purpose of these categories is to give students and prospective students an insight into what the university they elect to attend is *really* going to be like. All of the official write-ups and rankings ignore the vital student experience and campus culture parts of universities that student's value. NUS is publishing these rankings to make sure students know how much fun they are going to have at different universities, how many opportunities there will be to excel in sport, debating and student leadership, how much support they will have in they get in trouble and whether their voice will be heard and valued. Parents may also be interested to know the real deal about universities, and whether their children will be getting not only a quality academic experience, but a quality student experience too.

### **Category 1: NUS Approved** **Supporting the Student Experience**

*The universities in this category are the most advanced in addressing the impact of VSU, and have made adequate financial commitments to ensure that most services and support will continue, at least in the short term.*

*Students and parents can be confident that attending these universities will mean access to essential support and advocacy if necessary, clubs and societies, orientation programs, sporting programs, student representation and more.*

- Australian National University
- University of Melbourne
- University of Sydney

**Category 2: NUS Cautious**  
**Inconclusive Support for the Student Experience**

*Universities in this category, whilst in some cases saying the right things, have not made any major commitment to supporting students at present. Some universities are in this category because the commitments they are making to student organisations have too many strings attached, and they undermine the democratic right of students to independent representation. Most universities in this category are moving in the right direction, have made some commitments and have engaged in consultation, but they still need to look at the bigger picture.*

*The universities in this category can move into the NUS Approved category by engaging student organisations and committing real support for student services, however at this point NUS remains uncertain as to what these campuses plan to do to really see their student organisations survive. Students need to be wary of the advertising of some of these universities, because at the moment they have not committed to fully funding the unique student experience they are promising.*

- Curtin University of Technology
- Flinders University
- La Trobe University
- Monash University
- Queensland University of Technology
- University of Adelaide
- University of New South Wales
- University of Queensland
- University of South Australia
- University of Western Australia

**Category 3: NUS Concerned**  
**Inadequate support for the Student Experience**

*The universities in this category have not made any meaningful commitment to the student organisations on their campus, however they have made some effort. If nothing else is done there will be high level services loss, and many of the student organisations on these campuses have made numerous staff redundancies. These universities have not done enough to put them in the top two categories, however their efforts to date have distinguished them from those universities in category 4.*

*In some cases universities in this categories have made moves on student organisation governance and services. In other circumstances they have failed to engage the student*

*organisation in any restructuring plans and left them unsure if any future support will be forthcoming, others are stalling the process for an unacceptably long time. NUS believes that these universities will slip backwards if they do not make a serious commitment in the near future, however they could easily move into the top categories by giving their students an assurance that the student organisation will be supported.*

- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)
- Southern Cross University (Lismore campus)
- University of Newcastle
- University of Tasmania
- University of Technology, Sydney
- University of Western Sydney
- Victoria University

#### **Category 4: NUS Condemned Undermining the Student Experience**

*The universities in this category are NUS condemned because they have been behaving in an unacceptable manner and setting out to actively undermine or destroy student organisations on their campuses. Some of these administrations have been withholding student fees collected compulsorily in 2006 from student organisations, others have been threatening to evict student organisations from their buildings, aggressively taking over their services or insisting on university control of governance structures. Some of the universities on this list are here because they have completely failed to engage at all with the student organisations on their campus, they have excluded them from discussions about restructuring and not responded to formal correspondence from the student organisation.*

*Students should, at present, be very wary about attending these universities, as they are unlikely to receive the same level of quality service provision and effective support as at other universities. Until and unless a change is made in the way these universities are dealing with VSU and their student organisations, NUS suggests that students and parents consider alternatives if they value the student experience.*

- Charles Darwin University
- Griffith University
- James Cook University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- University of Canberra

*NB: Not all Australian universities are listed in these categories. Those not listed include non-NUS member universities and universities from whom we could not gather adequate and conclusive information. NUS was not prepared to place universities in categories if we could not confidently defend our decision to do so.*

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