

A course developed by ...



RANGELANDS
AUSTRALIA

Getting into Further Study: Insights, practices and tips for success in distance education

Short Course

INTRODUCTION

More and more people are becoming interested in further education. However, for people with little or no recent experience of tertiary education the idea of further study, and formal university-level study in particular, can be quite daunting. To assist people working and living in rural and remote Australia, Rangelands Australia has designed this short course to develop the necessary skills for successful completion of postgraduate-level coursework programs offered by distance mode.

While the course is geared to formal (ie. university level) study, many of the skills will also be of direct, practical value in a managerial workplace or community roles, making the course an important professional development exercise for you. Importantly, the course workbook will also be a valuable reference when you are undertaking any postgraduate assignments.

The course consists of a 3-day, face-to-face workshop program and an optional research-based assignment to be completed following the workshop. The workshop introduces participants to university expectations, requirements and culture; develops the learning, thinking and technology skills used in formal study and gives participants the opportunity to develop, enhance and practice these skills. Participants are guided through the steps, strategies and skills involved in completing a small postgraduate-level, research-based assignment.

The optional assignment provides an excellent opportunity for people to practice and reinforce the skills developed in the workshop. The Course Facilitator will provide detailed feedback on any 'practice' assignment submitted.

By the end of this course, participants should feel much more confident, skilled and ready to undertake postgraduate study by distance (see the Course evaluations below).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand how they learn in a formal context, and use this knowledge to develop effective learning processes for a distance learning environment such as a postgraduate coursework program
- Identify and retrieve relevant information for reports or assignments from online and print resources
- Understand and critically evaluate information, and develop informed views on the value of the information, especially for the rangelands context
- Communicate their ideas in a clear, coherent and concise manner, as appropriate to the task and audience
- Understand the requirements of a range of assessments at the postgraduate level, and the general expectations of people who may be marking your assessment items.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The workshop program consists of 6 half-day workshops made up of teaching, application and practice, reflection and discussion of new skills. Modules include:

1. Effective Learning Practices and Management of Study
2. Planning and Research for Assignments and Reports
3. Evaluating and using Information in Assignments and Reports
4. Structuring your Understanding and Thinking

5. Writing for Easy Reading (and Marking !)
6. Effective Oral Presentations

There is no exam or formal assessment, but you may choose to do the optional assignment to practice and receive feedback what you've learnt. Participants will receive a Certificate of Achievement at the conclusion of the course.

COURSE FACILITATOR

Mrs Elizabeth Wallis has more than 25 years experience in teaching and learning within the University sector, working with both students and teaching staff. She has provided student learning assistance at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, developed and taught learning preparation courses in various fields, and provided learning support and educational counselling for students.

TIME

Three full days, with some follow-up work at home if you choose to do the 'practice' assignment.

SUGGESTED PARTICIPANTS

This course is strongly recommended for participants who have no recent tertiary study experience and/or who wish to enter a coursework postgraduate program using recognition of prior learning (RPL) and post-secondary qualifications together with managerial experience.

The course is specifically designed for people who are thinking of further study on a part-time basis and through distance education, such as the new University of Queensland coursework programs in Rangeland Management. The short course covers the sort of assessments used in this program. However, it would also be relevant for anyone thinking of doing a postgraduate degree in natural resource management, environmental studies or agriculture, whatever the institution.

DELIVERY

The course will be delivered at convenient locations and times as a face-to-face workshop. Minimum numbers apply. Register now and list your preferences for locations and times.

Each workshop involves teaching of skills, application and practice, feedback and discussion. Workshops are interactive and responsive to the needs of the participants. If required, feedback would be provided on an optional assignment, designed to help consolidate the learning from this course.

COST

Only \$150 plus GST, thanks to support from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR).



COURSE EVALUATIONS

People who have completed the course have been asked to rate the value of the course (on a 1-5 scale, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The following average values (and range) were received:

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----------|
| • I gained new knowledge & skills | 4.9 | (4.0-5.0) |
| • I feel more confident to undertake postgraduate study now | 4.9 | (4.0-5.0) |
| • Overall, this course has been of benefit to me | 4.8 | (4.0-5.0) |

The things people like most about this course were:

- *"Content and presentation"*
- *"Clear concise instructions from the presenter and positive feedback"*
- *"That there are other people out there with as many concerns and lack of confidence as me"*
- *"Sections about critical thinking and writing for easy reading"*
- *"New skills (critical reading), interaction with EW and course participants"*

Participants have also provided the following general comments on this course:

- *"This course is essential to anyone unfamiliar with postgraduate requirement"*
- *"I found this course very helpful and it will help me immensely in my work and community groups"*
- *"Excellent value"*
- *"Things don't seem so daunting now"*
- *"Definitely increased my awareness and confidence"*
- *"Confident now to embark on Uni study"*
- *"Extremely valuable – focused me on the proper layout for paragraphs and overall assignments"*
- *"The course has given me a lot of confidence to present papers"*
- *"It will save me a lot of time in future study"*
- *"Essential for someone who hasn't been a student for a long time, taking on a new challenge"*
- *"Still don't know what I don't know, but am now well prepared to find out"*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Rangelands Australia by telephone on 07 5460 1660 or by email at: rangelands@uqg.uq.edu.au .