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School of Arts and Humanities



Current trends in youth work disability an social gerontology undergraduate degrees


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This presentation

- Outlines **trends in undergraduate enrolment** in youth work, social gerontology and disability in Australia
- OLT Fellowship: *Achieving economic sustainability for niche social profession courses in the Australian higher education sector - a nationwide collaborative strategy*




Australian Government
Department of Education and Training

- Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training

Courses examined

HUMAN WELFARE STUDIES AND SERVICES 0905


- Youth Work (ASCED FoE 090505)
- Social Gerontology (ASCED FoE 090507)
- Disability (ASCED FoE 090509)



Method




1. Manual search of university websites and handbooks
2. Automated search on courses by ASCED code 2011-2015 (currently being updated to 2017)
3. Interviews with course leaders


Multiple methods used independently to check for consistency. For more see:
<http://www.herdsa.org.au/publications/conference-proceedings/research-and-development-higher-education-re-valuing-higher-2>



Snapshot: Course enrolments (unique individuals)

• Changes in enrolments in Courses 2011 to 2016

- Youth work 394  561
- Disability 293  150
- Social gerontology 32  0?



Snapshot: Unit enrolments (EFTSL)

Row Labels	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Youth	190	284	377	430	464	518	534
Aging	38	29	114	248	253	300	299
Disability	313	320	366	394	414	356	350
Total	542	634	859	1074	1131	1174	1183



What is happening? Courses

Undergraduate courses

- More students are studying youth work -but in public universities only available in Victoria and WA, plus ECU, online
- Disability is **disappearing** as a specialism -UNE course double with primary education (also Flinders Developmental Disability and integration -this appears to be under a different ASCED code)
- Social gerontology appears to have **disappeared** as an undergraduate specialism



What is happening? Units

Undergraduate units

- Increase in both youth work course and unit numbers - more students doing **youth work** as a **specialism**.
- Increase in social gerontology unit numbers (eightfold) **non-specialist students in other courses** (e.g. nursing, social work) picking up single units.
- Disability unit numbers are steady -more **non-specialist students picking up single units**, as specialist student numbers fall.



Consequences

- **Youth Work:** No national coverage for courses, but discipline is growing in Victoria and WA.
- **Disability:** Very few specialist courses remain. Students in disability units less likely to be taught by disability specialists.
- **Social gerontology:** Possible almost total loss of social gerontology as an undergraduate discipline in Australia, despite strong growth in unit enrolments. Students unlikely to be taught by social gerontology specialists.



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Why important?

- **Future loss for research, policy and practice innovation:** if students cannot enrol in courses taught by specialists that have with depth
- **Social policy failure:** because of inability of Australian Government to implement government social policy effectively where this requires specialist graduates to lead change

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