

2014 Fellowships

Dr Chelsea Bond

The University of Queensland
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Subject of Inquiry and Mode of Instruction: Indigenous bodies, Indigenous studies and cultural safety in Australian universities

Abstract: Australian universities have expressed a strong commitment to enhancing Indigenous cultural competency so that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous graduates can contribute to 'closing the gap' in Indigenous disadvantage. This has led to a sustained push within the higher education sector to indigenise the curricula across a wide range of disciplines beyond specific Indigenous studies, courses and programs.

The fellowship seeks to enhance the cultural safety of Indigenous academics who teach Indigenous studies within Australian universities in order to strengthen the quantity and quality of Indigenous educators within the sector. It will involve the development of collaborative multi-institutional responses to the challenges facing Indigenous academics who are culturally isolated and often subjected to hostile and confronting learning environments. These strategies will be informed by the experiences of emerging Indigenous academics and the collective wisdom and expertise of established Indigenous academics and institutions. The program of activities will include; a symposium series, teaching exchange opportunities between institutions, and the development of an Indigenous academic network and formalised educator mentoring arrangements, as well as the development of a best practice toolkit for Indigenous academics.

Dr Claire Palermo

Monash University
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Transforming competency-based assessment in nutrition and dietetics

Abstract: A competent nutrition and dietetics workforce is essential to maintain and improve the health of Australians. Competency-based assessment of mandatory work-based learning is a challenge. Capacity for work-based placements and the need to maintain the quality of learning places pressures on competency based assessment. An effective competency based assessment system has the potential to produce graduates better equipped to deal with current nutrition issues. Recent work has demonstrated the need for robust competency-based assessment systems and to build the capacity of the dietetics profession to deliver best practice work-based assessment.

This program of work aims to reform competency-based assessment in dietetics. Specifically, it will work with one program to design revised or new competency-based assessment approaches across multiple workplace based settings. Through a national Community of Practice, assessors in the discipline will be supported to transform their methods of assessment and lead change. The work has potential to be translated to other health professions.

Professor Dennis McDermott

Flinders University
National Senior Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Having the hard conversations: Strengthening pedagogical effectiveness by working with student and institutional resistance to Indigenous health curriculum

Abstract: Many students and health professionals struggle to engage fully with Indigenous health curricula. North American medical education literature documents student resistance to the role of the social determinants of health in shaping patient presentations. In the Australian context, analysis of colonisation-related determinants can be sufficiently disquieting to lead to varying levels of student disengagement. Future efficacy in Indigenous health, through attainment of a comprehensively-informed, nuanced skill-set, along with the development of culturally-safe practice, is jeopardised. Additionally, without a critical mass of institutional support, Indigenous pedagogical perspectives can be discounted and core subject status dismantled.

This senior fellowship will collaboratively develop a program of activities that addresses the challenges of student and institutional engagement. Dissemination activities, involving national stakeholders, will embed strategies to increase the effectiveness of teaching in Indigenous health. Briefings will also be held with accreditation bodies, the key audience overseeing health professional curricula, to seek a targeted strengthening of institutional support for curriculum and staff.

Dr Elizabeth Beckmann

The Australian National University
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Professional recognition and self-efficacy in university teachers as tools to enhance teaching quality

Abstract: Self-efficacy determines an individual's relative effort, perseverance, emotional response and resilience and is generally considered a reliable predictor of performance. The interactions between beliefs and performance in teaching are clearly complex and multi-faceted, and influenced by workplace values and potentialities.

This fellowship will spotlight the keystone of quality university teaching, namely academics' own beliefs that they can teach well. The interactions between beliefs and performance in university teaching are complex, multi-faceted and influenced by workplace values. Through the lens of the psychological construct of self-efficacy, and in the context of the new ANU Educational Fellowship Scheme, accredited through the Higher Education Academy's Professional Standards Framework, this fellowship will explore the potential for a broad-based professional recognition strategy to foster reflective practice, peer engagement and innovation in university teaching.

Professor Geoff Scott

University of Western Sydney
National Senior Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Assuring the quality of achievement standards and their valid assessment in Australian higher education

Abstract: Australia benefits greatly from a national and international reputation for high academic standards and high quality universities, courses and graduates. When questions are raised in this area, they are often associated with assessment and how you are assessed defines the curriculum under which you study. Assessment has the potential to be used as a strategic tool by educators that can define the learning that will be achieved and guide students into effective approaches for study. Equally, poorly designed assessment has the potential to hinder learning and stifle curriculum innovation.

This senior fellowship will develop the capacity of the sector to ensure that the quality of graduates being produced by our universities is relevant to the rapidly changing needs of the 21st century. The fellow will consider how multiple reference points might best be used to ensure the graduate capabilities developed in different fields of education are both relevant and desirable. This work will begin with a user-tested design process at the University of Western Sydney and following this, learnings, enhanced through international benchmarking, will be used to deliver workshops across the country to be followed by a national conference on what has been learnt.

Professor Joe Shapter

Flinders University
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Developing tailored study plans for the new higher education environment

Abstract: The higher education sector is at a crossroads. Approaches used to engage students for the better part of the last thousand years are no longer working and the problem is likely to get worse. It is timely that the sector examines paths forward to address and indeed engage in the new environment in which it will work in the future.

This fellowship will catalyse and inform (by examination of best practice in Australia and elsewhere) a sector-wide discussion regarding the future of study pathways within Australian universities, private providers and TAFEs by engaging students, staff, professional associations, industry and other interested parties. The outcome of the fellowship will be options for institutions that promote high-level student engagement in the emerging environment but still guarantee that Australian higher education will provide the highest quality education possible.

Dr John Willison

The University of Adelaide
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Realising research modes of learning for Masters by coursework using state-based clusters

Abstract: Universities in Australia and internationally are adopting research modes of learning to cognitively and socially engage students and to demonstrate how their research environments genuinely influence programs of study. For Masters by coursework, this pedagogical shift is accentuated by the research requirements of Australian Qualifications Framework level 9 (Masters) and the expected through-traffic to PhD studies. However, pedagogies that facilitate effective learning in research mode are currently underdeveloped at Masters level.

This fellowship will facilitate the development of research pedagogies appropriate for Masters by coursework degree programs. Using the Research Skill Development framework as a language in common, the fellowship will foster collegial networks in four states that act as points of crystallisation and action for developing these pedagogies and draw widespread attention to the project. Such clusters and emerging research pedagogies will be of particular importance in enabling international students to satisfy the research requirements of Masters study and all students to develop appropriate cognitive skills for employment or PhD study.

Associate Professor Karen Martin

Griffith University
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Aboriginal Studies in Higher Education in the 21st Century: a framework for learning; teaching; leadership and change

Abstract: The participation and outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in higher education needs to increase through the provision of inclusive curriculum, and Aboriginal cultures and histories in the courses and subjects of higher education institutions. This is frequently referred to as 'Indigenising' higher education courses. Its significance has featured in policy since 1989 with the introduction of the National Aboriginal Education Policy (Department of Employment, Education and Training) and it remains a significant goal for Australian institutions.

This fellowship aims to increase participation outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by extending existing work at Griffith University to take a whole-of-university approach to leadership and partnerships regarding Aboriginal curriculum development. It will explore the role of Aboriginal studies in higher education in the 21st Century including its role in relation to Aboriginal student access, participation and outcomes. Through the fellowship activities, the structures, processes, content and contexts of Aboriginal studies in higher education will inform an Aboriginal studies framework and a handbook of guiding principles for policy and leadership as well as practice guides for curriculum and leadership and exemplars.

Dr Katelyn Barney

The University of Queensland
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Pathways to Postgraduate Study for Indigenous Australian Students: Enhancing the Transition to Research Higher Degrees

Abstract: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are still grossly under-represented in Higher Degrees by Research (HDRs) when compared to non-Indigenous students. There is a need to build pathways for undergraduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to consider HDRs as an option.

The aims of this fellowship are to facilitate an approach to address the issue of low participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in HDR programs and to promote a national dialogue in the higher education sector to support successful pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into HDR programs across disciplines. Outcomes from the fellowship have significant potential to increase Indigenous HDR enrolments across Australia by stimulating change in universities to implement stronger research pathways from undergraduate to postgraduate study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Dr Marina Harvey

Macquarie University
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Quality learning and teaching with sessional staff: systematising national standards

Abstract: The majority of teaching in Australian universities is undertaken by sessional staff yet these staff they have been at the periphery of learning and teaching plans. This fellowship will address the issue of systematising good practice for learning and teaching with sessional staff through the implementation and embedding of national standards. It builds upon and extends the outcomes of an existing OLT project, Benchmarking Leadership and Advancement of Standards for Sessional Teaching. The diverse program of activities aims to stimulate strategic change in higher education institutions and includes: state benchmarking fora; inter-institutional benchmarking; pilots with private providers; action research projects; and scholarly dissemination of research, innovation and good practice case studies. The fellowship activities will be used as a conduit to build national and international partnerships.

Professor Pauline Ross

University of Western Sydney
National Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Reconceptualising the academic role in the sciences

Abstract: Higher education and academics are under an onslaught of pressures. To create the student and academic success desired to reconfigure the higher education landscape, the academic role needs to differentiate.

This fellowship will reconceptualise the academic role and create a framework to evaluate academic teaching in the sciences. The lack of differentiation in the academic role is being felt acutely by the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines where the pervasive emphasis has been on research. Declining enrolments and perceived falling standards of STEM graduates, both nationally and internationally, raises concerns about the future pipeline of STEM graduates and a public that is well disposed towards science.

The fellowship will involve work with higher education institutions, peak bodies, senior leaders in disciplinary research and teaching and early-mid career academics. It will reconceptualise the academic role in the sciences and create an evaluation framework to ensure Australia has excellent academics in STEM into the future.

Professor Roy Tasker

University of Western Sydney
National Senior Teaching Fellowship

Program Title: Research into practice: evidence-informed best practice visualisation for a deeper understanding of science

Abstract: Learning science involves imagination and modelling of imperceptible phenomena, such as molecular events, force fields and energy changes, to explain observable phenomena (for example, smells) and to create new insights. Visualisation of these imperceptible phenomena is the key to making meaning from the symbolism and mathematics in science that too often alienates novice students.

This senior fellowship will lead a national conversation on visualisation in university science, informed by cognitive science research on the factors determining how the brain perceives, processes, stores and receives audiovisual information. In a series of workshops, participants will experience best practice as they learn good design principles for visualisations and strategies for how to use them in their teaching. In follow-up workshops, students will apply what they have learnt to design their own visualisations of challenging threshold concepts.

2014 Higher Education Standards Panel Research Fellow

Professor Christine Ewan

University of Wollongong

Program Title: National consensus on higher education standards in a disaggregated learning environment

Abstract: The present international and national higher education landscape is characterised by a drive towards flexibility, diversity, accessibility, transportability, quality assurance and improvement, consistency and comparability. On the face of it some of these drivers could appear to be mutually contradictory. However, the common theme uniting all of them is the identification and operationalisation of standards and the development of ways to verify that those standards have been achieved as learning outcomes. The definition of standards is itself a fraught task, largely because the term has many potential meanings and the dialogue is therefore often hampered by ambiguity.

The focus of this fellowship will be the development of a national consensus, informed by existing national and international practice, on the ways in which institutions can demonstrate to themselves and the regulator that their engagement in alternative disaggregated and distributed delivery methods for award courses is compliant with the Higher Education Standards Framework. Incorporating a review of the literature, site visits, interviews, consultations and workshops, it will provide a focus for sharing the considerable expertise that already exists in Australia and in established international networks. It will synthesise the various national and international as well as disciplinary and institutional perspectives, incorporating the views of private and non-self-accrediting higher education providers as well as universities, students, teachers and employers. An issues and possibilities paper will be iteratively refined and shared at a national forum, resulting in a report that will inform the application of some of the Threshold Standards, particularly relating to course accreditation and qualification standards.