2014

STRATEGIC PRIORITY COMMISSIONED PROJECTS

Projects are grouped by Strategic Priority topic.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT

The University of Melbourne

Title: What works best: Strengthening the evidence base for English language practices in higher education

Lead institution: The University of Melbourne

Partner institutions: James Cook University, Edith Cowan University, University of Technology, Sydney

Project Leaders: Associate Professor Sophie Arkoudis, Dr Anne Harris

Abstract: Since the introduction of the Higher Education Standards Framework in late 2011, many higher education institutions have developed strategic plans for addressing the English language learning needs of all students. However, practices can be fragmented and not considered as core business within learning and teaching. The challenge for institutions is in identifying, monitoring and evaluating best practices for English language approaches. There is little publicly available information that can guide institutions towards best practice approaches and effective strategies for monitoring and evaluating those approaches. This project will produce resources to strengthen the evidence base for English language practices in Australian higher education. It will engage with the sector and produce a framework, case studies and practical resources that will guide institutions in strengthening their English language practices.

Funding: $324 000
21ST CENTURY STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Bond University

Priority Area: The 21st Century Student Experience

Title: Engaging postgraduate students and supporting higher education to enhance the 21st century student experience

Lead institution: Bond University

Partner institutions: University of Southern Queensland, Victoria University, Australian Council for Educational Research, Council of Australian Postgraduate Association

Project Leaders: Associate Professor Shelley Kinash, Professor Linda Crane

Abstract: Postgraduate student enrolment in coursework masters programmes is growing rapidly. The diversity of this 21st century student profile is amplified not just by advancing technology and cultural change, but by the exponential rise in numbers in a demographic that was previously sparsely populated and research-focussed. The changes generate the need for closer inspection of the student experience at this level. This project will (1) undertake a comprehensive analysis of the broad experiences of Australian coursework postgraduate students, and the relationship these broad experiences have to learning, and (2) establish evidence-based recommendations, including best practice guidelines, that can be used to impact and enhance Australia's postgraduate students' experiences.

Funding: $260 000

University of the Sunshine Coast

Title: Shaping the 21st century student experience at regional universities

Lead institution: University of the Sunshine Coast

Partner institutions: Central Queensland University, Charles Sturt University, James Cook University, Southern Cross University, University of New England, University of Southern Queensland, Federation University Australia

Project Leaders: Professor Karen Nelson, Ms Kylie Readman

Abstract: The contribution of regionally-located universities to their communities and to Australia’s future prosperity is well recognised. However, national data indicates that students enrolled at regional universities have less positive outcomes than those of their peers enrolled in capital city universities. Measures such as lower participation, progression and completion rates, higher levels of attrition and poorer graduate destination outcomes are often juxtaposed with positive scores in other measures such as sector-wide surveys. This project will seek to understand the 21st century experiences of the diverse undergraduate student populations of regional universities to identify how equitable outcomes for these students can be achieved. New information and key practices will be discovered and a rich suite of resources will be made available to the sector for take-up and use. As a result, regional universities will be able to strengthen their contributions to their regions and the nation by ensuring more students have a successful university experience.

Funding: $284 000
The University of Melbourne

**Title:** Innovative perspectives and approaches for enhancing the student experience

**Lead institution:** The University of Melbourne

**Partner institutions:** Macquarie University, The University of Queensland, The University of Western Australia, Indiana University (USA), Navitas

**Project Leader:** Professor Hamish Coates

**Abstract:** To effectively manage the undergraduate student experience, institutions must understand who students are and what they expect from higher education. Students have changed in the 21st century and institutions need to understand and do things differently to enhance their experience. This project will build the capacity of higher education institutions to enhance the student experience. Through literature/context reviews and fieldwork it will build new conceptualisations of Australia’s undergraduate students that go beyond stereotypes, generalities and dated assumptions. Through a scan of institutional practices, the project will identify new and under-utilised empirical options for understanding and enhancing the 21st century student experience. It will expand approaches to measuring student experience and develop an enhancement framework that will support institutions to use new data and technologies to understand and improve students’ experience.

**Funding:** $326 000

University of Technology, Sydney

**Title:** Student engagement in university decision-making and governance – towards a more systemically inclusive student voice

**Lead institution:** University of Technology, Sydney

**Project Leader:** Professor Sally Varnham

**Abstract:** As the higher education sector looks towards a period of change, it is imperative that universities are able to accurately identify and quickly address the needs of students. It is timely to develop, trial and refine systemic processes that enable Australian universities to include the student voice in decision making and governance. This project will investigate how the student voice may be engaged at different levels to define student expectations in an evolving higher education environment. It will (1) undertake and synthesise international research, particularly in the UK, (2) undertake a research-informed review within the Australian context, and (3) engage in a wide ranging pilot project across a number of diverse universities to demonstrate how higher education processes may embrace a more systemic inclusiveness of the student voice at all levels of institutional decision making.

**Funding:** $239 000
Title: Student experiences of threshold capability development with Intensive Mode Teaching

Lead institution: The University of Western Australia

Partner institutions: RMIT University, University of Tasmania

Project Leader: Associate Professor Sally Male

Abstract: A growing mode of teaching experienced by students in the 21st century is Intensive Mode Teaching (IMT). Flexibility is becoming increasingly important for students and IMT is a way of providing this flexibility. IMT also has appeal for educators and institutions, both onshore and offshore, where the possibilities have expanded due to advances in technology. With the rapid interest and adoption of IMT, it is important to ensure that the student experience is not put at risk. This project will promote and support improved student experiences for threshold capability development in units that involve IMT. A Good Practice Guide on supporting the student experience will be developed using an approach designed to establish sector-wide relevance and impact.

Funding: $296 000
DEVELOPING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Macquarie University

Title: Classroom of many cultures: co-creating support curriculum with international community partners and students.

Lead institution: Macquarie University

Partner institutions: PACOS Trust, Restless Development, Bahay Tuluyan

Project Leader: Professor Greg Downey

Abstract: Feedback from institutions overseas suggests the ‘partner voice’ within current Australian curriculum could be strengthened to better prepare students to undertake international activities. Partners are often best-placed to contribute to pre-departure orientation, assisting students to overcome misconceptions and to prepare adequately. This project will co-create curriculum materials to support international Work Integrated Learning and community-based service learning with host partners in students’ destination countries. It will partner with Non-Government Organisations from Malaysia, India and the Philippines and link with entities from other destination countries. By including partner perspectives and concerns in pre-departure, in-country and re-entry educational programming, the project will model intercultural collaboration and inclusion of diverse intercultural perspectives in the curriculum design. The co-creation process will be documented to provide methods for curriculum adopters who wish to tailor the materials to their own international partnerships.

Funding: $348 000

RMIT University

Title: The global canopy: linking international inbound students with domestic outbound students for improved learning and global connections

Lead institution: RMIT University

Partner institutions: Central Queensland University, Deakin University, The University of Newcastle, The University of Sydney and University of Western Sydney

Project Leader: Dr Patricia McLaughlin

Abstract: While Australian universities welcome significant numbers of inbound international students and also increasingly encourage outbound student mobility, the two 'strands' of international activity rarely engage in deliberately organised learning and teaching activities. The recruitment, placement and ongoing learning and teaching activities of these two cohorts is handled in an entirely separate mode. The cultural advantages and abilities of either cohort is rarely capitalised upon in any deliberate or cohesive way at the learning level. The two groups, are 'as ships in the night', with opportunities for long-term relationships, improved global connectedness, cross-cultural understandings and fertile learning interactions unrealised or operating coincidently. This project will investigate coherent approaches of integrated teaching and learning between these two cohorts at six universities. It will create a Global Canopy, showcasing diverse disciplinary case studies, an enduring website, podcasts, videos, a symposium and best practice guide. It will cross-fertilise learning and teaching global perspectives for the benefit of all students.

Funding: $278 000
James Cook University

**Title:** Educating diverse learners: curriculum and pedagogical frameworks that bring global perspectives from the periphery to the core.

**Lead institution:** James Cook University

**Partner institutions:** University of Western Sydney

**Project Leaders:** Dr Kelsey Halbert, Dr Peta Salter, Professor Michael Singh

**Abstract:** Just as the New Colombo Plan refers to a 'Third Wave' required for genuine cultural exchange, so too programmes across higher education need a 'Third Wave' of curriculum refreshment that foregrounds local/global interrelatedness through developing and enhancing student capacities to live, work and contribute to local/global communities. 'Global perspectives' in Australian higher education, to date, have focused on bringing perspectives in or on taking students out. However, a Third Wave approach aims to make the 'global' an integrated everyday experience for students. This project will investigate students’ dispositions towards global perspectives and identify factors which act as inhibitors and enablers of cultural exchange. It will draw upon cultural theory, service learning and best practice to theorise and develop curriculum and pedagogical frameworks suited to diverse higher education contexts. These frameworks will inform the development of learning and teaching strategies which centralise global perspectives, bringing them from the periphery to the core for Australian graduates.

**Funding:** $229,000

University of Western Sydney

**Title:** Enhancing programmes to integrate tertiary outbound mobility experiences

**Lead institution:** University of Western Sydney

**Partner institutions:** Macquarie University

**Project Leaders:** Dr Tim Hall, Associate Professor Tonia Gray

**Abstract:** Across the Australian university landscape, educators are striving to internationalise the curriculum and develop students as culturally competent 'global citizens'. There is a desire to design, implement and embed Outbound Mobility Programmes (OMPs) into the curriculum to create a more globally aware Australian workforce for the future. This project will deploy experience-based educational theory within itinerary development and seek a deeper understanding of the decision making processes of students presented with OMP opportunities. It will develop curriculum resources which maximise the probability of positive transformative experiences for participants. A mixed-methods research design incorporating case studies, interviews and surveys will produce an evidence base to enable the project to re-tool tertiary globalisation curriculum and produce technology-enriched educational resources. These materials, co-created by students and staff, will assist in leveraging students' positive experiences to enhance recruitment, preparation and re-entry phases of OMPs.

**Funding:** $246,000