

Final Report 2011

Beyond numbers: valuing quality teaching in business education

Volume 1

Lead Institution

Charles Sturt University

Partner Institutions

The University of Queensland; University of Southern Queensland,
University of Western Sydney, CQUniversity

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Contents

Contents.....	i
Executive summary.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	2
1.1 Background	2
1.2 Project motivation.....	2
1.3 Project team	3
1.4 Acknowledgements	3
Chapter 2: Project rationale, objectives and outcomes.....	5
2.1 Project rationale	5
2.2 Project objectives	6
2.3 Project outcomes	6
Chapter 3: A review of the scholarly literature	9
3.1 Background	9
3.2 Quality teaching in higher education	10
3.3 Valuing teaching in the university context	11
3.4 Measuring and managing teaching performance.....	12
3.5 Reflective Practice – Issues and Opportunities.....	13
3.6 Change management and enabling leadership within business faculties.....	15
Chapter 4: Project approach	17
Chapter 5: Perceptions of quality teaching	20
5.1 Introduction	20
5.2 University contexts	20
5.3 The importance of quality teaching	21
5.3.1 Staff focus groups	21
5.3.2 Student focus groups	22
5.3.3 Suggestions for Improvement	22
5.4 Indicators of quality teaching.....	22
5.4.1 Staff focus groups	22
5.4.2 Student focus groups	24
5.4.3 Suggestions for improvements.....	26
5.5 Measuring quality teaching	26
5.5.1 Staff focus groups	26
5.5.2 Student focus groups	27
5.5.3 Suggestions for Improvement	28
5.6 Recognising and valuing quality teaching	29
5.6.1 Staff focus groups	29
5.6.2 Student focus groups	31
5.6.3 Suggestions for Improvement	31
5.7 Summary	32
Chapter 6: Implementation of selected strategies.....	33
6.1 Chosen institutional strategies	33
6.2 Mid-session student feedback.....	33
6.2.1 Student surveys	33
6.2.2. Semi structured student focus groups.....	35
6.3 Peer observation and feedback	35
6.4 Teaching awards	36



6.5 Institutional Conditions for success	37
6.6 Major inhibitors or challenges for success	38
Chapter 7: Conclusion	39
7.1 Project summary	39
7.2 Key success factors	39
7.3 Factors critical to sustainability of the initiatives.....	40
7.4 Unintended outcomes	40
7.5 Lessons for other projects:.....	41
7.6 Dissemination.....	42
Chapter 8: Evaluation	44
8.1 An external evaluator	44
8.2 Formative evaluation.....	44
8.3 Summary evaluation statement written by Patrick Boyle	45
Appendices	47
Appendix 1: Preliminary focus group questions	48
Appendix 2: Mid-session survey	49
Appendix 3: Email to staff re reflection on student feedback	51
Appendix 4: Sample staff reflection on student feedback	52
Appendix 5: Questions for staff re the mid-session feedback process.....	53
Appendix 6: Questions for students re the mid-session feedback process.....	54
Appendix 7: Revised mid-session survey	56
Appendix 8: Questions for morning tea with the Dean.....	58
Appendix 9: Observer checklist for peer observation of teaching	59
Appendix 10: Questions for staff re the peer observation process.....	61
Appendix 11: Guidelines for conducting a peer observation	62
Appendix 12: Student survey to recognise quality teachers.....	63
References.....	65

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Executive summary

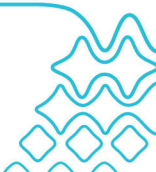
The *Beyond numbers: valuing quality teaching in business education* project addressed the issue of how to identify, assess, support, recognise and value quality teaching within business faculties in a manner that is educationally meaningful and professionally relevant. The rapidly changing business education environment contains an increasingly diverse student cohort, growing student:staff ratios, university funding models resulting in further cross-subsidisation to other disciplines, and industry pressure to produce 'work ready' graduates (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2002). These changes alone would create particular challenges for both an effective student learning experience and a satisfying teaching experience within business faculties. The recent focus, however, on a national research quality assessment framework has contributed to a further deterioration of the career aspirations of many teaching driven business academics, as the potential for recognition of teaching, and scholarship of teaching, appears to be less 'valued' than mainstream business discipline research (Freeman et al., 2008).

The intention of this project was to take a strategic approach to enhancing the value of teaching in business education by implementing systems and processes that support and value quality teaching in business faculties. An action research methodology was adopted in which participative processes, sharing reflective practice, and an orientation towards learning in action characterised the modus operandi of the project team.

Preliminary focus groups facilitated exploration of the importance of quality teaching and how it is perceived by staff and students as measured, recognised and valued in participating universities. While the student responses presented relatively consistent perspectives, the staff groups highlighted the need for staff experiences of valuing teaching to be contextualised within institutional cultures, policies and practices. These groups assisted in raising awareness at participating universities of quality teaching and the various issues and possibilities in terms of mechanisms for recognition.

The project provided an opportunity to begin to embed strategic, systemic approaches to enhancing the value of teaching in the participating business faculties; in particular to develop systems and processes that would support quality teaching and increase academic recognition of the need for and benefits from developing teaching capacity and leadership.

Outcomes of the project (aligned with the project objectives) included: indicators of quality teaching that go beyond the metrics; processes and procedures for greater recognition of quality teaching; seeding measures (key success factors including leadership approaches which foster success as well as enablers) that could be used to help gain momentum for the project outcomes beyond the teaching and learning enthusiasts; and 'tools' (including mid-session survey forms; student feedback focus group and peer observation guidelines and protocols; as well as awards criteria) which are available to other individuals and institutions to facilitate implementation of the successful strategies identified in this project.



Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

This project, which explored the importance of quality business teaching in higher education, evolved from the scoping study “Business as Usual? A collaborative and inclusive investigation of existing resources, strengths, gaps and challenges to be addressed for sustainability in learning and teaching in Australian university business faculties” (Freeman et al., 2008) conducted by the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Teaching and Learning (T&L) Network.

One of the leadership challenges in the area of learning and teaching in business education is in motivating teaching quality in an environment typified by restructuring; technological advances; flexible learning expectations; diversity in student cohorts; increasing student:staff ratios; and challenges in staff recruitment and retention which have resulted in increasing casualisation. Teaching is perceived by many staff to be less valued than research (evidenced by the implementation of promotion policies and research ‘rewards’ in workload allocations).

This project provided an opportunity to begin to embed strategic, systemic approaches to enhancing the value of teaching in the participating business faculties; in particular to develop systems and processes that would support quality teaching and increase academic recognition of the need for and benefits from developing teaching capacity and leadership. The project addressed the issue of how to identify, assess, support, recognise and value quality teaching within business faculties in a manner that is educationally meaningful and professionally relevant.

The project team adopted an action research methodology (see Chapter 4 for details), designed to provide a participative and reflective structure to the project. Thus, participative processes, sharing reflective practice, and an orientation towards learning in action characterised the modus operandi of the project team.

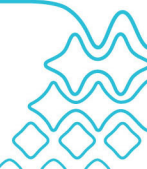
1.2 Project motivation

The ABDC was formed in 2002 following a recommendation from an Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC) report (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2002). It represents a national network of business faculties from universities throughout Australia (Freeman et al., 2008).

The ABDC T&L Network was formed by the ABDC in 2004. The network seeks to provide Associate Deans who have responsibility for learning and teaching in business higher education with opportunities for professional development as well as knowledge and resource sharing. Given its wide constituency, the network also has a critical leadership role in facilitating a strategic and national approach to change and development in Australian business faculties (Freeman et al., 2008)

A Carrick-funded Discipline Based Initiative scoping study was undertaken by the ABDC T&L Network in 2006-7. Three funding proposals for follow-on projects were developed as a result of the findings of the scoping study:

- Engaging industry: embedding professionally relevant learning in the business curriculum



- Embedding the development and grading of generic skills across the business curriculum
- Beyond numbers: valuing quality teaching in business education.

This project is one of the three follow-on projects arising from the Carrick-funded ABDC T&L Network scoping study and was funded under the ALTC Competitive Grants Program.

1.3 Project team

The project team members and their roles during the course of the project were as follows:

- Associate Professor Jenny Kent (Project Leader), Sub Dean Learning & Teaching in the Faculty of Business at Charles Sturt University.
- Associate Professor Fiona Rohde (Deputy Project Leader), Deputy Head and Director of Education of the Business School at The University of Queensland.
- Professor Marie Kavanagh, Associate Dean Faculty of Business at the Springfield Campus of the University of Southern Queensland.
- Graeme Mitchell, Academic Program Quality Coordinator, College of Business, University of Western Sydney.
- Beth Tennent, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) in the Faculty of Business and Informatics at CQUniversity.
- Chris Horton (Project Officer).

1.4 Acknowledgements

The team wishes to acknowledge the support and assistance of the Australian Business Deans Council, in particular the President, Professor Tim Brailsford, and the Deans or equivalent Head of Business of the five participating universities:

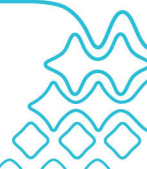
- Professor John Hicks, Dean, Faculty of Business, Charles Sturt University (until August 2009).
- Associate Professor Ken Dillon, Acting Dean, Faculty of Business, Charles Sturt University (from September 2009).
- Professor Iain Watson, Academic Dean and Head of School, The University of Queensland Business School (from January 2010).
- Professor Allan Layton, Dean, Faculty of Business, University of Southern Queensland.
- Associate Professor Robyn McGuiggan, Executive Dean, College of Business, University of Western Sydney (until December 2010).
- Associate Professor Craig Ellis, Associate Dean Academic, College of Business and Law, University of Western Sydney (from July 2010) and Executive Dean, Acting (from December 2010).
- Professor Kevin Tickle, PVC & Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts, Business, Informatics & Education, CQUniversity.



We also acknowledge the support provided to the project by Associate Professor Mark Freeman on behalf of the ABDC Teaching and Learning Network.

We thank all participants in the study, including students and academic staff for giving so generously of their time to be interviewed, to contribute to focus groups, participate in the trialling of faculty level initiatives, complete surveys, or reflect and feed back to the project team on the efficacy and value of the initiatives.

We also wish to thank the Australian Learning and Teaching Council for its generous financial support for this project. The project was funded from July 2008 for approximately \$200,000 for a period of two years which was extended to 30 months.



Chapter 2: Project rationale, objectives and outcomes

2.1 Project rationale

Gibbs et al. (2007) note that much of the research literature on leadership in higher education is either discipline-blind (because it focuses on senior and central management and not on departments), or only includes background discussion of disciplines. Disciplinary differences, however, are *“not simply about cultural differences, they describe differences in activity systems and the way work is organised that have profound implications for the way leadership does, or even could, operate”* (Gibbs et al., 2007, p.3). The purpose of this project was to promote and support change in advancing the importance and recognition of quality teaching (defined as possessing a high degree of excellence) within the discipline of business. This increased importance and recognition was to be achieved through the engagement of staff, students, faculty leaders and university administration.

More specifically, this project sought to address the widespread concerns identified within the sector about the perceived low quality of teaching in many business faculties and the low level of value currently attributed to many aspects of teaching Australia's future business leaders (Freeman et al., 2008). Indicators of university learning experiences, reported by business graduates through national surveys used within national teaching performance funding schemes (e.g. Course Experience Questionnaire), often reveal possible problems with the general quality of teaching within the field.

Business faculties and their teaching staff are particularly impacted by the rapidly changing business education environment (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2002; Freeman et al., 2008). This environment contains an increasingly diverse student cohort, increasingly larger class sizes, growing student:staff ratios, university funding models resulting in further cross-subsidisation to other disciplines, and industry pressure to produce ‘work ready’ graduates (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2002). To develop students with ‘employability skills’, teaching staff must have suitable skills, resources and awareness of current industry practice (BIHECC, 2007). Apart from facing the aforementioned environmental factors, the business discipline content has a rapidly expanding and evolving knowledge base. These changes alone would create particular challenges for both an effective student learning experience and a satisfying teaching experience within business faculties. The recent focus, however, on a national research quality assessment scheme has contributed to a further deterioration of the career aspirations of many teaching driven business academics, as the potential for recognition of teaching, and scholarship of teaching, appears to be less ‘valued’ than mainstream business discipline research (Freeman et al., 2008).

This project addressed the issue of how to identify, assess, support, and value quality teaching within business faculties, in a manner that is educationally meaningful, professionally relevant, and measurable. During the implementation of this project, academics, students and university stakeholders were given the opportunity to reflect on what is meant by, how to recognise, how to value, how to provide leadership in, and how to support quality teaching within business disciplines.

The intention of this project was to take a strategic approach to enhancing the value of teaching in business education by implementing systems and processes that



support and value quality teaching in business faculties.

2.2 Project objectives

In summary the project objectives were to:

- utilise prior research and existing resources to identify indicators of quality teaching which go beyond metric measures by also including qualitative quality indicators. This requires selecting the indicators most appropriate to the business higher education context
- identify related policies and procedures that will promote the awareness, pursuit and benchmarking of such quality indicators
- identify seeding measures that foster communities of practice which value teaching beyond enthusiasts and those with responsibilities for teaching quality; and policies, procedures, curriculum, resources and databases that promote the importance and recognition of quality teaching in business education
- develop a framework, specific to business higher education, for business faculty leaders to support learning and teaching.

To achieve these objectives the **guiding questions** for the project were:

- What indicators of quality teaching are appropriate to the business higher education context? Are the terms used within the indicators for measuring excellence interpreted by the various stakeholders in an equivalent manner?
- Are the indicators of quality teaching consistent across all modes of delivery (e.g. face to face, distance education, online) and in all contexts (e.g. compulsory versus elective subject; core versus non-core)?
- What policies and procedures will promote awareness, and pursuit and benchmarking of quality indicators in business faculties?
- Which strategies and leadership approaches promote communities of practice that embed the valuing of teaching in business faculties?

2.3 Project outcomes

The Project set out to achieve the following **outcomes**:

- identification of key leadership attributes for successful embedding of a culture of valuing quality teaching in the highly diverse departments in business faculties
- identification and embedding of a set of quality teaching indicators for recognising and valuing quality teaching in business education
- increased staff and student awareness of quality teaching and appropriate mechanisms of recognition thereof
- identification of an appropriate set of related processes for supporting the pursuit of quality teaching indicators appropriate to business faculties and possible benchmarking segments
- increased academic recognition of the need for and benefits of developing teaching capacity and leadership



- improvement of student learning and student experience through an appropriately designed teaching quality recognition process
- contribution to the development of a national, evidence-based framework that allows cross-university comparison of teaching performance.

The major achievements of the project were as follows:

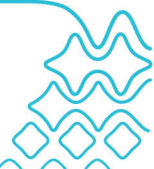
- The project has resulted in changes in practice at a number of the institutions involved. These changes vary with respect to the implementation level within each university; however, the evidence suggests that change has commenced. This occurred at the university level in one institution, the faculty level in a second, and the school level in a third.
- At each institution, academics have become more engaged with their own subjects and teaching. The level of engagement has again varied from institution to institution depending on the level of individual and institutional readiness, however, evidence suggests that the momentum gained during the piloting of initiatives has been and will be sustained.
- During the course of the project a number of simple 'tools' have been developed. These 'tools' (including mid-session survey forms; student feedback focus group protocols, peer observation and feedback protocols; as well as awards criteria) will be available to other individuals and institutions to facilitate implementation of the successful strategies identified in this project.
- This project has given the project team members, at each institution, the confidence and the stimulus to commence and engage in continued conversation regarding the importance of understanding, recognising, and encouraging quality teaching. At one institution, this has resulted in the project team member leading a university wide working group which is reviewing how teaching quality is measured within the institution.

The most significant outcomes of the project (aligned with the project objectives) were as follows:

- *Identify Indicators of Quality teaching that go beyond the metrics.* From the early focus groups it has become evident that there are numerous indicators of quality teaching. There is also significant synergy between staff and student perceptions of quality teaching.
- *Related policies and procedures that will promote awareness, pursuit and benchmarking of quality indicators.* From a desk audit and the focus groups, the project identified a number of policies and procedures that have been developed with the intent of promoting the awareness, pursuit and benchmarking of quality indicators. From the focus groups, however, it is evident that there is disagreement as to whether this intent is in line with reality, and groups proposed additional/alternative processes and procedures for recognising and valuing quality teaching.
- *Seeding measures that foster communities of practice that value teaching beyond enthusiasts, including leadership attributes.* As part of this project a number of key success factors and also enablers have been identified. These enablers and success factors (including leadership approaches which foster success) have been noted as the seeding measures that could be used to help gain momentum for the project outcomes beyond the teaching and learning enthusiasts.
- *Develop for business higher education a framework that assists business faculty leaders to support quality learning and teaching.* To help ensure successful



implementation within the broader business school community, an implementation framework needs to be established. This framework is being finalised at the time of preparing this evaluation document.



Chapter 3: A review of the scholarly literature

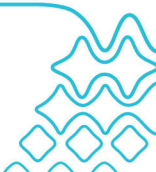
3.1 Background

The Carrick funded Discipline Based Initiative scoping study undertaken by the ABDC T&L Network (Freeman et al., 2008) acknowledged the diversity in business education in Australia, evidenced by different emphases in business faculties (a consequence of geography, demographics and available resources) and culturally diverse student cohorts studying through a range of delivery modes. Despite this diversity however, commonalities such as large student: staff ratios do exist.

Many business faculties include the sub-disciplines of accounting, economics, finance, business information systems, business management, hospitality management, human resource management, industrial relations, international business, law, marketing, and tourism. This breadth enables students to become grounded in a wide range of business-related professions but can present practical and theoretical challenges for academic staff in providing the right mix of knowledge and skills.

The ABDC scoping study (Freeman et al., 2008) presented a review of scholarly literature on learning and teaching related issues. Those of direct relevance to this project include:

- globalisation (Ahlawat & Ahlawat, 2006; Alon & McAllaster, 2006), increased exposure to market forces and changing government policy and accreditation requirements (BHERT, 2006) continue to drive changes in higher education
- societal changes, including diminished capacity of students to attend lectures and tutorials, have resulted in students managing their education in new ways (Universities Australia, 2007)
- the extensive and growing body of literature on learning and teaching in higher education (Ashwin, 2006; Biggs, 2003; Fry et al., 2008; Irons, 2007; Laurillard, 2002; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Ramsden, 2003; Trigwell & Prosser, 1997; Trigwell et al., 2000)
- the comprehensive study of Australian business education, undertaken for the Australian University Teaching Committee (AUTC) and led by Professor Dubravka Cecez-Kecmanovic (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2002) which highlights some major challenges for teachers in business education including a highly diverse student body, large class sizes, very high student: staff ratios and many staff facing significant workload pressure
- attractive salaries in industry combined with pressures for higher degrees in academe have reduced the incentives for potential staff to pursue an academic career
- an emphasis on 'efficiency' (large classes having resulted from perceived economic necessity) impacts on teaching methods and the level of student engagement (Biggs, 2003).



3.2 Quality teaching in higher education

Definitions of 'quality teaching' and 'excellent teaching' are abundant and wide-ranging (see e.g. Harvey & Green, 1993; Elton, 1998; Gibbs & Habeshaw, 2003). Some draw on institutional goals and specifications of improvement in outcomes such as student retention rates and graduate performance, while others focus on the character of the learning engagement, and the quality of this experience for the learner. This project report is conscious that definitions are context specific and purposive tools, and that the language of particular definitions needs to respond to the purpose intended. It is important that university policy and staff development strategies on quality teaching align, while using constructions that best suit the work at hand (Biggs & Tang, 2007). There is, however, evidence that this is not always the case, with definitional confusion and distortion evident (Goodlad, 1995).

Chalmers (2007) in her review of Australian and international quality systems identified a number of issues of relevance to this project:

- Empirical studies consistently report disenchantment in academic staff with formal notions of quality assurance. Reasons for disenchantment include: differences in understanding what constitutes quality; concerns about the effectiveness of formal quality assurance processes; doubts about the use of metrics; and the effort and time involved in complying with quality requirements with no obvious gain or benefit evident in their own work (McInnis et al., 1994; Newton, 2000, 2002; Anderson, 2006) (p. 12).
- While using league tables to present a university's 'rank' may be efficient in informing stakeholders about educational quality, it also raises questions regarding development of the ranking and the derivation of scores (IHEP, 2007; Usher & Savino, 2007) (p.67).
- Rankings discourage diversity as league tables are based on generic criteria which do not reflect institutional differences (Stella & Woodhouse, 2006). Rankings can also encourage universities to be more selective in enrolment (Tight, 2000; Clarke, 2007) (p.67).
- The functionality of rankings should be questioned in terms of its encouragement to improve teaching and learning (Dill & Soo, 2005) (p.68).
- Performance indicators most commonly used in higher education institutions are those most readily quantifiable and available (Bormans et al., 1987; Bruwer, 1998; Romainville, 1999) (p.71).
- Qualitative outcome and process measures are more informative and empirically sound, but are difficult to measure and therefore utilised less (p.71).
- Indicators can be most usefully employed, and are most likely to lead to an enhanced learning environment which benefits students, at an institutional rather than a national level (p.76).
- A large number of university staff do not believe quality teaching is rewarded by institutions and consequently express low levels of satisfaction (Ramsden & Martin, 1996; Kember et al., 2002) (p.81).
- Increased satisfaction as a result of institutional recognition of teaching contributions is likely to contribute to enhanced teaching behaviours and more satisfied students, resulting in a positive institutional climate (p.81).

Biggs (2001) makes an important distinction between tests for quality that are retrospective, to provide institutional quality assurance and 'value for money' against



agreed external standards, and 'prospective quality assurance', which seeks to maintain the quality of learning and teaching within the institution. He argues that a culture of informed, reflective practice provides the appropriate performance 'structure' to ensure effective teaching and learning, and is 'transformational' in the professional values it reflects.

"A quality institution is one that has high level aims that it intends to meet, that teaches accordingly, and that continually upgrades its practice in order to adapt to changing conditions, within resource limitations." (Biggs, 2001, p. 223)

3.3 Valuing teaching in the university context

Within universities, emphasis on research and the demands of administration often compete with teaching for both time and recognition (Freeman et al., 2008). Baker (1995) suggested that while staff felt both research and teaching to be important, they consistently rated teaching more important; however, they perceived the current institutional values and rewards were heavily weighted toward research to the detriment of teaching at the university. McInnis (1996) and Ramsden (1998) confirmed the widespread nature of the problem which is perceived to be a longstanding characteristic of universities caused in part by the reward structure of academe.

More recently these perceptions have been seen to persist. Anderson and Johnson (2006) noted that one of the problems reported to afflict many institutions is the lower status attributed by academics to teaching compared with research. Barrie et al. (2007) also noted the emphasis of reward structures in universities is on research rather than on the scholarship of learning and teaching, thus there is a lack of real incentive for staff to focus on teaching. 'Greater recognition of teaching' was the most frequent comment staff made about ways to improve the quality of teaching at their university (Baker, 1995).

Leslie (2002) reported that data from the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (USA 1993) suggested that while the explicit reward structure of academe favours research and publication, faculty members value teaching over research. Leslie highlights the implications of the disconnect between values and rewards for faculty careers, for policy, and for the practice of teaching (see also Adams et al., 1993). The work of Hattie and Marsh (1996; Marsh & Hattie, 2002) further highlights the key disconnect between research and teaching in universities. This analysis has become the focus of further examination (Reeves, 2002; Terpstra & Honoree, 2009) and 'reconciliation' initiatives such as those under way at The University of Sydney Institute for Teaching and Learning (2010).

Gibbs and Habershaw (2003, p.11) noted that academics are not motivated primarily by money. They *"often work tirelessly for things they believe in, and for recognition by their colleagues of their efforts. Mechanisms which involve public acknowledgement and status can be both effective and economical ways to recognise excellent teachers"*. The Cecez-Kecmanovic et al. (2002) study recommended recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching as a strategy in enhancing the quality of business education in Australia.



3.4 Measuring and managing teaching performance

Studies in Australia and overseas (Anderson, 2006; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007) highlight concerns that the tools used for measuring individual teaching performance within 'quality assurance' systems are limited in scope, and favoured for their ease of use rather than their theoretical basis or their validity (Chalmers & Thomson, 2008; Bedggood & Pollard, 1999). Academic staff are particularly concerned with the emphasis given to standardised student evaluations of teaching performance. These evaluations are seen as having inherent bias or in some cases design and application weaknesses (Barrie & Ginns, 2007), and may therefore not provide an adequate basis for assessing quality, appraising and rewarding individual performance, and managing improvements. Worse still, teacher behaviour aimed at maximising scores on student evaluations may be detrimental to student learning (Coates, 2005; Carrell & West, 2010)

While serious work continues to be done on assessing and improving the currency and reliability of data obtained from student course experience surveys, these tools are consistently reported as having greater formative than summative application, therefore requiring timely consideration and response, particularly as part of improvement processes at faculty level (Ginns et al., 2007, McKimm, 2009).

Extensive work has been carried out in recent years to inform and improve the tools and processes by which Australian universities measure and monitor teaching quality, particularly through and following the study undertaken by Chalmers (2007) to develop a framework identifying indicators and outcomes of teaching quality operating at different levels within universities. Specific follow-up work has provided both international (Chalmers, 2008; Chalmers et al., 2008) and institutional (Barrie et al., 2008) comparisons of measurement practice, and the debate around effective models and tools for feedback, evaluation and benchmarking is an active and progressive one (Chen & Hoshower, 2003; Ginns & Barrie, 2009; Barrow & McKimm, 2010).

There has been a recent strong call to re-open the debate on the suitability of the orthodox student evaluation model in use in most universities. In a paper delivered at the 2010 HERDSA Conference in July 2010, 'Exploring critical conceptions of student-led evaluation in Australian higher education', ANU's Stephen Darwin argues that

"... the assumptions and motives of conventional evaluation practice remain significantly underdebated in contemporary higher education research – a deficit that is ever more significant as the primacy of student evaluation outcomes is increasingly accepted in institutional and government conceptions of quality."
(Darwin, 2010, p 204.)

While these evaluation practices, tools and timings do vary, there is more than anecdotal evidence for challenging their effectiveness and their validity. An Australian study of eight years of Quality of Teaching (QOT) responses in a university economics department examined what factors, other than the instructor, had an impact on the raw student evaluation scores (Davies et al., 2007; 2008). Among the factors that significantly affected the average QOT score for this extensive sample were: cultural background, gender, year level, anticipated or previous results, and the perceived quality of course materials. These had a significant impact on the outcomes for individual teachers. Using a methodology that adjusted the raw scores for factors that were outside the teacher's control raised some teachers' scores from below the university's threshold for acceptable teaching



to above it, and in one case well above it.

US studies (Paulsen, 2002; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007) report similar concerns:

“Despite the mixed interpretability of TEFs, colleges and universities continue to use students’ ratings and interpret students’ responses as reliable and valid indices of teaching effectiveness (Seldin, 1999) even though ... these TEFs (a) are developed atheoretically and (b) omit what students deem to be the most important characteristics of effective college teachers” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007, p. 151). * Teaching Evaluation Forms*

Biggs (2001) suggested that the design and application of student feedback processes should be returned to department level, where the information gathered can be used formatively and quickly to benefit students while they are undertaking the courses being surveyed.

“Student Feedback Questionnaires [SFQs] ... emphasize the actor, not the script. They measure charisma, not teaching effectiveness in terms of improved student learning. Used formatively, however, SFQs make eminent sense where questions are tailored to specific courses on aspects [where] the teacher wants feedback, which is why the department should control SFQs.” (Biggs, 2001 p. 232)

Anderson (2006) also reported widespread staff concern about the use of student survey data and quantitative measures to guide and inform staff performance appraisal both for tenure or promotion decisions and for the identification of teaching award recipients. It has been suggested that evidence from a range of sources and perspectives will improve both the consistency and the acceptability of judgements about the quality of an individual teacher’s performance (Berk, 2005; Flowers, 2010).

Schuck et al. (2008, p.537) have challenged the “prevailing wisdoms in higher education regarding the value of measuring teacher quality, prescribing standards for professionalism and using student satisfaction as an indicator of teaching effectiveness”. Their findings align closely with those reported by the focus groups – both teacher and student – in this project, in particular

“ ... that there is a need for a broader understanding of teaching quality and better ways of ascertaining such quality than use of students surveys; that an internal accountability leads to professional responsibility far more than an externally driven environment.” (Schuck et al., 2008, p.545)

Peer review can provide highly relevant and useful information for both formative and summative purposes with regard to teaching and learning (Keig & Waggoner, 1994). Project personnel have carried out extensive work developing and implementing a peer review process that has utilized recent studies and current best practice in this field (Crisp et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2008a, 2008b). The tools, guidelines and initial outcomes of this initiative are included in this report.

3.5 Reflective Practice – Issues and Opportunities

Effective teaching is teaching that is referenced both to the scholarship of teaching and to the culture of the discipline in which it is applied; as well as drawing on the everyday lived experience of the learners. *“The scholarship of teaching involves engagement with research into teaching and learning, critical reflection of practice,*



and communication and dissemination about the practice of one's subject." (Healey, 2000, p.169). These three related activities: engagement with existing knowledge, reflection on its application in one's discipline, and the public sharing of issues about teaching and learning within the discipline; are well established in the literature on teaching scholarship (e.g. Trigwell et al., 2000).

Central to ensuring a strong teaching and learning culture within a faculty or school is the provision and enhancement of opportunities for academic staff to consider and share their knowledge, issues and approaches as teachers to become 'reflective practitioners'. There is an emerging convergence in the literature since the early work of Schön (1983, 1987) and Boud et al. (1985) on the value of structured reflection on experience in the work situation as providing meaningful insights that enhance skills, awareness and confidence. From its initial focus on the teaching profession, this concept has developed robust and broad acceptance across many professional and other fields of practice. (see e.g. Vince, 2002; Walsh, 2009a). Recent studies make a distinction between Schön's initial model of 'reflective practice', in which each individual professional is encouraged to reflect on their own practice to improve it; and 'productive reflection' in which the reflection occurs among groups in a workplace, with improved work effectiveness and a stronger 'collective awareness' among the goals (Boud et al., 2006).

Boud is cautious about over-organising such 'productive reflection' approaches, arguing that over-formalisation of reflection processes in the workplace "*provokes resistance and can inhibit learning*" (Boud et al., 2006, p.6). *'It is likely that he envisages a relatively informal process the product of which provides benefits to both organisation and individual'* (Walsh, 2009b, p.5). Thus, the appeal of models such as Wenger's 'communities of practice' (Wenger et al., 2002) needs to be weighed against the perceived level of organisation and time required to sustain them, and any resistance to the language and its cultural 'baggage'.

In the context of the need for organisations to find productive forms of workplace reflection, Vince (2002) provides a useful analysis of four collaborative forms, each with a different structure, locus of engagement, and purpose (Vince, Table 1, p. 70). These four models are: (1) peer consultancy groups; (2) role analysis groups; (3) communities of practice; and (4) groups relations conferences. While these descriptors and operating conditions arise from a particular organisational study, the argument to consider more than one mode or option to support reflective practice is compelling, both to deal with differences of organisational type and culture, and to address the nature of the decisions and practices to be focused on (Jordan et al., 2009).

There are, moreover, important issues around any decision to invest in, or more importantly, encourage staff to invest in (with their time, focus, goodwill and so on), 'quality teaching' initiatives. The message needs to be clear and consistent that this is not a 'second class activity' as Schön puts it (1987, p.171). Also, the significant managers, in this case Deans and Heads of School, for example, need to both sanction and encourage reflective initiatives. They need to be aware that outcomes of such initiatives will, from time to time, require their active consideration and engagement. Also, there needs to be appropriate leadership of these processes, at least to establish conditions in which they can be productive.

A further consideration arises from widespread staff concern about the use of student survey data and quantitative measures to guide and inform staff. It is likely that, dependent on the scale of the initiative, its location, and the media for meeting/communicating, that some blend or sequence of meeting types and professional



linkages would be productive, such as peer consultancy groups at a local level that might meet/ link into a larger system (such as a community of practice) from time to time. Of course, the language of such collaborative forms will itself need to be tuned to a faculty culture and expectations for it to be treated as beneficial and not alienating.

3.6 Change management and enabling leadership within business faculties

Literature relevant to this project falls into three areas, each expressing both a level of analysis and a focus of application:

- 1) organisational development theory and models of change
- 2) change management in educational environments
- 3) teacher-driven change management (individual and/or collaborative).

The scope of this project, to deliver outcomes across a range of higher education organisations, requires an understanding of the capacity of each system and staff at faculty level to respond to perceived gaps or weaknesses and to make positive adjustments. Each university structure and policy is different, as is the level of authority that is delegated to faculty heads. Change management requires a mix of wisdom, judgement, sensitivity, patience and flexibility on the part of managers (Mitchell, 2002).

Alongside differences in formal structure and hierarchical arrangements there are cultural differences – aspects of organisational behaviour that are significantly determined by the dominant culture and its effectiveness in motivating personnel (Alvesson, 2002; Barker & Coy, 2004). While the project establishes some clear directions for change that are generalisable and can impact positively in most higher education contexts, the capacity of each organisation to address issues and adopt selected responses will depend upon other internal variables (Bennis et al., 1985) most notably:

- organisational culture
- change-making capacity and readiness
- leadership.

To help in understanding this interplay of factors the project considered the concept of ‘adaptive’ organisational cultures (Dennison & Mishra, 1995; Kotter 1998a), in which employees are encouraged to develop and work with a shared view of change as being necessary to keep pace with a dynamic external environment, particularly the changing needs of customers (in this case, students) and other stakeholders. Adaptive cultures are successful over extended periods because staff understand and attend to organisational processes as well as to organisational goals, and have a strong collective sense of ownership of the organisation’s performance. Working within this construct is important if the benefits of the investment in change are to become embedded and acknowledged, rather than local and temporary (Bresnan et al., 2003).

Kotter’s foundation work (1995) provides a sensible and well trialled series of stages towards effective implementation of planned change within organisations. Applying this process to achieve sub-institutional level change management involves both some advantages and some difficulties. On the ‘plus’ side is the compact scale and localised intent of the change, which can be readily recognised and owned by the



key players, in this case academic staff within a specific faculty. On the 'down' side, it may be more difficult to embed the change as policy, and to anchor the changes within the corporate culture. Above all, Kotter warns against complacency, and 'declaring victory too soon'. Gibbs (2005) concludes that in research intensive universities, departments and programs are the key organisational units when it comes to understanding change and that is where leadership of teaching should be studied.

Both Kotter (1998a) and Bennis (1989) emphasise the importance of developing and supporting the right kind of leadership to maintain an adaptive organisational culture. In 'Winning at Change' (1998b) Kotter identifies three key tasks for change leaders: managing multiple timelines; building coalitions; and creating a vision. These tasks, unpacked and re-labelled, form a necessary part of the embedding and sustaining of the new practices.



Chapter 4: Project approach

The *Beyond Numbers* project took a strategic approach to enhancing the value of quality teaching in business education by implementing systems and processes that support and value quality teaching in business faculties. During the implementation of this project, academics, students and university stakeholders have been given the opportunity to reflect on what is meant by, how to recognise, how to provide leadership in, and how to support and value quality teaching within the business disciplines.

The action research method was adopted as a mechanism to provide a participative and reflective approach to the project (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Reason & Bradbury, 2003). Action research is traditionally represented in the action research spiral, involving planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2001; Altricher et al., 2002). It is an iterative process, in which a range of qualitative and quantitative methods are applied to secure foundation data and inform an action program, to test options and outcomes, to evaluate benefits and to review processes, before a revised action program is implemented. Included in the approach adopted is a layered set of investigative and evaluative processes that have allowed the research team to progressively build an understanding of the common problems and concerns to be addressed within business faculties to enable 'quality teaching' to be better understood and its practice supported and valued.

Within this project, data was gathered from representative stakeholders from academe including students and academic leaders. The institutions represented by the project team piloted the initiatives identified during the course of the project.

The project consisted of a number of phases. The first phase involved a desk audit of information on current university and faculty policies, systems and practices that referenced, or were seen as directed to recognising and enabling quality teaching. Specific information was sought from each institution on course development, approval and evaluation; position descriptions; promotion processes and professional development opportunities; and availability and types of awards/prizes, fellowships, teaching scholarship research funding, support for innovation in learning and teaching, and funding criteria (e.g. collaboration, evaluation, dissemination).

At the same time an extensive audit of current literature and research reports on quality teaching and its indicators was completed. From this research base a survey of Australian Business Dean Council (ABDC) T&L members was conducted at one of their bi-annual meetings. A quick examination of the survey responses indicated very mixed results as to the manner in which quality teaching was defined, measured, and recognised within the institutions surveyed. Preliminary discussion the following day revealed that many members of the ABDC T&L Network had different interpretations of the terms used in relation to teaching quality and were not always fully aware of policies within their own institutions. This led the project team to refocus the project and required a more institutionally specific focus be undertaken during the initial stages.

After the desk audit, the primary data on relevant features of the current practice environment was obtained from academic staff and students through a series of focus groups. The focus group protocols followed a semi-structured interview approach that addressed a set of questions that allowed participants to reflect on their current and recent experiences of engaging in structured learning. The key



areas covered were: what constituted 'quality teaching'; mechanisms for gathering feedback on teaching and their validity; how quality teaching was recognised and valued within their institution; and approaches their university could adopt to provide for and maintain high quality teaching in business areas.

Across the five universities, 63 staff and 55 students participated in 23 focus groups. These focus groups covered students studying on nine university campuses, plus a small sample of distance education students from one of the participating universities. In addition, at each of the partner universities, a sample of academics and faculty heads undertook semi-structured interviews around a parallel set of questions. Additional questions were also included to provide greater insight into the operating context of each university.

Focus group data was transcribed and each member of the research team analysed each transcript. Members looked for issues that emerged within the following three broad themes: (1) the importance of teaching and defining quality teaching, (2) how is quality teaching measured and valued? and (3) quality teaching recognition versus valuing.

The research team developed and conducted a multi-point cross-referencing process for considering, summarising and comparing information, observations and outcomes from focus group transcripts. Once each focus group transcript was analysed, the data was synthesised for each of the five institutions, where commonalities and differences between academic and student responses were isolated. After each institution was analysed, the data was again synthesised across each of the five institutions, and again commonalities and differences between academic and student responses for all five participant institutions were identified.

After the information obtained was analysed and evaluated at both an institutional level and cross-institutional level, a structured intervention process was designed and implemented for each university business faculty. From the evidence gathered during the focus groups a number of initiatives were discussed and the project team decided that each institution should focus on all or a subset of three main intervention strategies. The three intervention strategies were:

- peer observation and feedback – manageable and consistent processes through which staff may opt to participate in peer feedback. This initiative aims to build a stronger collaborative culture around teaching practice and development, and to provide a balance and control to more limited forms of observation and reporting
- mid-session student feedback – providing focused and respected mechanisms through which students can reflect, comment on and advise academics about the quality of the course and their teaching in a timely and formatively useful manner
- recognition and acknowledgement of quality performance in teaching – involving an examination at faculty level of current practices, and how these might be better aligned with information from more transparent and reliable forms of evaluation (through 1 and 2 above), and provide systematic public recognition and appropriate forms of acknowledgement to academics who are achieving high levels of teaching performance.

Each institution examined the feasibility of trialling or developing the three aforementioned strategies within their own institution. The project leader (in conjunction with the relevant project team member) met with the Dean or Acting Dean of each participating university to discuss the local implementation strategies and gain support for their implementation. Key issues and approaches to areas of



change were identified, the scope and timing of new interventions and processes were discussed, and arrangements for implementation negotiated and scheduled at each university for Semester 1, 2010.

The intervention (and improvement) approaches were adapted to the conditions reported in each institution. Other strategies were also trialled in one institution where the researcher saw a clear need in relation to the project and their institutional goals. The mix of processes applied within the project enabled the team to identify generic issues and features of practice (commonalities), while also ensuring that details of the divergence of context and practice (differences) are recognised and highlighted. While there was significant overlap in the strategies selected, the manner in which each strategy was operationalised within the institution varied. While the detailed information relating to each university is found in Volume 2 of the project report, a summary of the strategies actioned at each university can be found in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Selected strategies trialled at participating universities

Institution	Strategy Selected	Additional Strategies trialled
CQU	Peer Review Student survey to identify and recognise quality teachers	Semi-structured student groups Good practice database
CSU	Mid-session feedback	
UQ	Mid-session feedback Redesign of Teaching Award Structure	
USQ	Mid-session feedback Peer Review Redesign of Teaching Award Structure	
UWS	Mid-session feedback	

The process and the outcomes of each intervention were monitored and feedback obtained from both academic staff and students. This approach allowed for a critical review of the outcomes, tools and processes, and a formative re-alignment prior to consolidation and embedding of agreed new processes. The mix of processes applied within the project has enabled the team to identify generic issues and features of practice (commonalities), while also ensuring that details of the divergence of context and practice are captured. Furthermore, differences are recognised and highlighted and the manner in which the intervention and improvement approaches taken are adapted to the conditions reported in each institution are also included. The overall analysis of the outcomes, and key findings from the five institutions as a whole, follow in Chapters 5 and 6 of this report.



Chapter 5: Perceptions of quality teaching

5.1 Introduction

To explore perceptions of quality teaching in the project universities, staff and students were invited to participate in focus group discussions. Within the groups, participants discussed the importance of quality teaching and how it is measured, valued and recognised within their respective institutions (the focus group questions are provided in Appendix 1). The information collected from the groups is captured in the institutional case studies presented in Volume 2 of this report. This chapter presents a synthesis of that case study information.

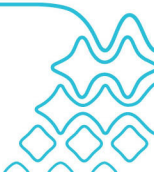
Each of the universities participating in this project is a provider of business education in the higher education sector and therefore, is subject to a number of common external challenges. However, institutional history and culture, funding levels and modes of delivery differ, and as such, each university has some unique contextual features which distinguish it from the other project participants. The summary below attempts to capture the majority opinion presented by the focus groups; however, Volume 2 should be consulted for specific institutional responses.

5.2 University contexts

This project was a partnership between five geographically dispersed universities delivering business education in Australia. The business programs within the five partner institutions included a mixture of degree, dual degree and combined degree programs in a variety of sub-disciplines. Each university faces challenges related to business education. Depending on the institution, these include a subset of: large class sizes; staff shortages in some disciplines; increasing reliance on casualisation; multiple campuses; diverse student backgrounds including school leaver, mature, low SES, and rural and remote students; a significant proportion of international students; multiple modes of offering including face to face and distance education; fulltime, part-time, and mixed mode students; onshore and offshore programs; and professional accreditation standards and business school compliance requirements. For some staff, engagement in teaching related activities now entails responsibility for preparation and distribution of teaching material for use by others, and coordination of other dispersed teaching staff during the session, rather than direct delivery.

Within the five universities involved in the project, the majority of staff work in full-time teaching/research positions (one participating university employs a small number of full-time staff as teaching focused positions). Each university has some form of online learning management system and requires staff to utilise a range of online technologies in the delivery of their subjects. Some staff are required to travel to another campus to teach, while others make extensive use of videoconferencing to reach geographically remote student groups.

Each university has expectations regarding learning and teaching which are explicit in a range of recruitment, selection, probation and promotion policies. Each University has invested in specialist positions dedicated to directing or facilitating the enhancement of learning and teaching within their institution. Each university also utilises one or more survey formats to evaluate units of study and the teaching thereof. Although all of the participating universities had processes for recognition of



quality teaching through teaching excellence awards, there was also a cross-section of other approaches to recognising quality teaching and supporting it through professional development activities.

During the two years of this project, the majority of institutions involved underwent significant restructuring and all have been subject to some level of change as the respective university (and business disciplines) adapted to a shifting range of internal and external developments and priorities. Examples of the demands and levels of change which occurred in the various participating universities include: faculty restructuring; AUQA visits; the introduction of new technologies and learning management systems; curriculum design and renewal strategies and increasing expectations of academic staff to engage with students in a meaningful way to ensure a smooth transition to university. For some institutions this has resulted in staff and students who were experiencing change fatigue during the life of this project. The respective levels of institutional and staff readiness were markedly different between the institutions. This was reflected in comments made during the focus groups and in preparedness to engage in initiatives during the project.

The case studies presented in Volume 2 of this report describe the state of play in the respective universities when the initial staff and student focus groups were conducted. A university environment is not static, but in some cases the level of change within the organisations involved has been significant and therefore it could be expected that some of the elements described by staff could have evolved over the life of the project.

5.3 The importance of quality teaching

5.3.1 Staff focus groups

Staff across focus groups in all participating universities highlighted the importance of teaching. Some felt that teaching justified the existence of universities while others noted the significance in terms of funding. For others teaching also had important personal dimensions:

“It’s important to me ... very important part of my job”, “a critical part of what I do if not the most important”, “it’s why I’m here ... it’s my reason for being at university”, “For me it’s very pivotal, teaching, it’s very important and it always has been, and the rewards I get from it are very personal”.

A number of staff did not perceive that their personal views on the importance on teaching were reflected by their employing institutions. They suggested that this perceived lack of importance at the institutional level was reflected in combinations of: workload allocations; large teaching loads; higher administrative loads (impacting on time available for teaching preparation); three session academic calendars with compressed teaching periods; and also in the recruitment, selection and promotion policies which emphasised the importance of research and research qualifications. Some staff at relevant universities perceived variations in the levels of institutional support for teaching in face to face and distance education environments (the latter seen as more extensively supported).

This view of a research/teaching divide was not shared at all institutions. At one institution, a number of staff commented on the relationship between teaching and research and the nexus between the two:

“teaching gives me research contacts”; “the current research that’s been



published ... gets into practice ... through teaching students” and “research is the way that we advance the knowledge of the people that we’re teaching, so the two are hand in hand”.

5.3.2 Student focus groups

Students felt that quality teaching was “*vital, really important [and] imperative*”. It is important for them as they are “*looking for people who can guide [them] through what [they] need to know*”. They consider there to be a relationship between quality teaching and their enthusiasm for, and understanding of the subject or course they are studying.

[Teachers] “make things understandable” ... “It’s the most important because the books ... are already there, but the teaching, that’s a means to get us ... the more the teacher can explain to us, the more it’s going to be beneficial for us”.

“You tend to be more motivated when you study if you have more enthusiastic and passionate lecturer who interacts, asks questions, uses videos.”

Students also have expectations about teaching which relate to the cost of studying, and therefore they expect to learn and be prepared for the workplace:

“Well we’re paying for it, and we want to get the best outcome that we get for our money, and it’s our future that we’re here for.”

5.3.3 Suggestions for Improvement

A number of staff and students made suggestions in relation to enhancing perceptions of the importance of teaching through university recruitment, selection and promotion processes. In particular, students suggested that all applicants for teaching positions be required, as part of the interview process, to take a class in their area of expertise. While some universities have a requirement that applicants deliver a presentation (often research related) as part of their interview, this is not standard practice across all institutions and at all levels.

Some staff working in distance education environments suggested that one way of elevating the perceived importance of teaching would be by:

“Shifting the focus, more resources or time or effort to improving the external student experience ... allocations for re-writing courses and revising course and study materials are really poor ... take account of the value of teaching by giving teachers some time in this environment.”

Others commented on the need to call a halt to the level of change within institutions, with constantly changing tools and technology impacting negatively on perceptions of the importance of teaching. The creation of “*Teaching Only positions, and promotions policy and recognition processes for that role*” was also noted as a potential improvement in some universities which do not currently have that option available.

5.4 Indicators of quality teaching

5.4.1 Staff focus groups

No one clear definition of quality teaching emerged from the multiple focus groups conducted across the five participating universities. Some staff commented about



the challenges in benchmarking quality teaching compared with benchmarking quality research. They considered that defining quality research was easier, and also that it was easier to gain some consensus as to what criteria could be used to measure quality research.

“It’s easier to benchmark the research performance all based on publications, tiers of those publications and citation rates. Those [student] evaluations ... are higher or lower for different reasons...and if those things are controlled for then you’re ... probably measuring quality... but its very murky.”

Despite the lack of definition however, staff were able to articulate a number of **indicators of quality teachers and quality teaching** including:

- *“establishing a rapport with the students”;*
- a student focus - *“engages and inspires students to learn”, “the ability to motivate their students to ...self directed learning”;*
- relating concepts to the real world or contextualising the material using their experience - *“it’s a link between practice and teaching”;*
- adapting the teaching style to the needs of the class - *“understanding the level at which students operate”* - and being able to accommodate the range of student abilities and learning styles;
- being up to date with content and able to deliver that content with the technology at hand to create a learning environment that caters for the different dynamics of the student cohort (from the cultural diversity of students through English as a second language to varying levels of entry into the course).

In addition to these characteristics of quality teaching, some staff identified attributes of a quality teacher including:

“being experts in their discipline”, “being able to work collaboratively in a team teaching environment”; “passionate, enthusiastic, able to merge the entertainment factor with the content”, “able to do the ‘song and dance’ routine in the classroom”; and an “excellent communicator who recognises when students are not understanding, [and] uses questioning skills”.

For some staff, accessibility and availability for students were strong indicators of a quality teacher:

“I can see my colleagues sometimes after they finish their class still inside, outside on the corridor, they want to sit there trying to respond to questions. They have a great interest, concern for student problems”.

Several of the universities participating in this project offer distance education in addition to face to face classes in complex campus structures and delivery modes to very diverse student cohorts. Staff in those institutions acknowledged that there were some different dimensions to quality teaching in these contexts:

“What you might perceive to be quality in a face to face situation is different from how you’d measure quality in a distance situation. For distance, quality is in the package and the set of resources we provide; for day students it is how we actually perform in the lecture in front of them”.

A number of elements of quality teaching were deemed to be critical to the delivery of courses as well as effective teacher/learner interactions in the distance education/online environments. In addition to the need for quality and currency of course materials, a significant factor in quality teaching in the distance education/online environments relates to the ability to interact with students online:



“make an effort to build up a relationship and a rapport with [distance students]”, “making students feel someone’s interested in them as a learner ... interaction ... with distance students it’s a challenge”, “Engagement ... the more you engage students the more they participate”.

In addition to building relationships with students, responsiveness was also seen as important.

Two further issues were raised in focus groups. The first related to perceived attitudinal changes in staff following their own higher education study. Some staff commented that they had started to consider their roles and teaching and learning issues in more depth after having undertaken their own study via a graduate certificate in higher education – *“I was taught to teach as a discipline person, but now we’re being taught to teach as an educator”*. This view was consistent with the view of one participant who suggested that:

“I think a good teacher is someone who shows the signs of reflection and learning themselves – is open to learning and reflecting on their teaching trying to think of new ways.”

The second issue related to consideration of a time-lag effect. The outcomes of quality teaching are often not truly evident until after graduation.

[I] *“often get emails from students 5 years after the event saying I didn’t like your course at the time but now I can see it was a good course” and “input saying I’m really practicing what you told us”.*

One participant summarised the discussion on this issue as:

“the best test ultimately is your graduates, your product...Do people employ them and do they like what they are capable of doing? That’s where the real assessment should be done as to whether you’ve taught them properly”.

5.4.2 Student focus groups

As with staff, students could not clearly define what they consider quality teaching or a quality teacher to be, although they did suggest that:

“you can tell straight away. It’s their person, it’s the way that they carry themselves into the lecture. The way they deliver their lecture notes” and “they can get you to be completely absorbed in what they’re doing with you within 10 minutes and I have seen that happen time and time again with certain lecturers”.

Despite the lack of definition, students were also able to suggest a number of criteria they considered to be indicators of quality including the ability to: engage students and be engaging (*“if you aren’t engaged, you don’t want to be there”*); give clear explanations of content; be able to relate theory to practice especially at a level appropriate to the different levels of knowledge and experience of the student cohort; answer questions and provide explanations for different audiences with different levels of knowledge and experience (or students with different learning styles); and include relevant real life examples (*“good examples make you feel like he’s not teaching”*; *“good teachers prepare us for the real world because they actually pass on certain knowledge that we may not get in text books or [the] internet”*).

Students felt that a quality teacher should be motivated, passionate, enthusiastic and appearing to want to be there for the students:



"It is so blindingly obvious when you get someone whose energy isn't in the lecture";

"You tend to be more motivated when you study if you have a more enthusiastic and passionate lecturer who interacts, asks questions, uses videos";

"When you had the teachers that were excited, and, like they really get you involved and that, that's when I found that I understood what we're learning".

They should also be personable, approachable, responsive and organised. The importance of the accessibility and availability of staff outside class times was raised by a number of students:

"I think the teachers that put in the effort after class as well, like the ones we could email if we had any troubles with our tutor work ... that stuff was really good as well, because not everyone can understand in class, and you can't ask all the little questions in class because everyone would just get annoyed. So when they were willing to answer the questions afterwards as well."

Communication was thought to be a strong component of quality teaching in both face to face and distance education modes. Because the students present at varying levels of understanding, they look for *"someone who you're not afraid to ask questions of, or doesn't mind fielding questions, no matter how silly you think the question might be"*. They also perceive a quality teacher to be someone who can communicate clearly and beyond the materials presented:

"I really wanted input from the lecturer because sometimes I go through the text book and I don't understand because I haven't had the experience".

"A teacher that can make you understand words on a page ... is ... a good teacher, putting meaning behind just the stuff that you read and putting relevance behind everything. That's what I reckon is good."

In relation to the distance education/online environment, students commented on the extent of online support provided by staff and the impact of this on their understanding of a subject. The online support provides a sense of belonging and *"feeling part of the process"*. Some even suggested that the greater the online participation of the lecturer, *"the better you seem to go in that subject"*.

For distance education students, the quality, relevance and currency of the material, availability of additional resources such as CDs with video footage of working through problems, and also textbook selection (including the online resources accompanying the text), impacted on the perceived quality of teaching:

"I'm an external student studying so the quality of the information I can then access as an external student, so with the Blackboard discussions and the web-based learning that the academic actually provides, that's really important because I don't get that face to face contact."

While students felt that teaching staff should have an undergraduate degree, they were not particularly concerned about academic qualifications, but rather emphasised the ability to teach. They felt that a good teacher is someone with some industry experience who has a desire to teach, is confident in public speaking, is able to interact with students, is able to explain and present well, understands student problems, has good personality and communication skills, and uses past experience in their particular teaching area to illustrate a topic.



5.4.3 Suggestions for improvements

Staff made several suggestions in relation to how quality teaching might be encouraged. A number of these were relevant to recruitment and selection processes to ensure that staff appointments resulted in the employment of teaching staff who clearly demonstrated the previously identified attributes of a quality teacher: ability to communicate, and interact with and engage students; have practical knowledge, enthusiasm, passion, interpersonal skills and an understanding of the needs of the student (know *“what will push their buttons to learn something besides getting to pass the exam”*); and be able to link theory to the real world - *“I like a teacher who gives you wisdom beyond the book”*. They would be a person that can create a learning environment in the classroom that makes the student want to be there of their own accord and for the student to engage in learning and achieve to the best of his or her ability. Giving a brief lecture as part of the interview process was seen as a more reliable indicator of a person's current teaching ability than *“past teaching reviews”*.

5.5 Measuring quality teaching

5.5.1 Staff focus groups

Staff across all institutions reported that the primary mechanism for measuring the quality of teaching is some form of end of session evaluation instrument. At some of the participating institutions this takes the form of a single survey which evaluates both the unit of study (subject or course) as well as the teaching, while others utilise two separate instruments. Only two of the participating universities continue to use paper based evaluation systems. The remainder administer the surveys through the online environment. The administration of the evaluation surveys also varies across institutions in relation to the mandatory or voluntary nature and the frequency required.

Amongst focus group participants, there was a high level of reported dissatisfaction with the use of evaluation tools as a measure of teaching quality, particularly as staff suggested that survey results appear to be considered in decisions relating to probation, promotion, and performance appraisal.

“It’s got inherent flaws in it and often it’s used above its weight really because it would be fine if you used it for your own personal feedback but it’s used in promotion rounds very heavily.”

It was felt that the survey instruments generally measure perception of experiences as opposed to measuring quality teaching or quality courses:

“It gives you some indication of what the students think of you or your course” but “you’re not necessarily measuring the outcome, you’re measuring satisfaction”.

“Our current system ... very often it is an affective response on how good the person is at schmoozing the students. It is not necessarily reflective of content or even, teaching... good teachers get zero response from students”.

Staff felt that students were subject to survey fatigue and often do not take the completion of surveys seriously. The value of the student comments was seen to be limited and often biased. Furthermore, students with different learning styles respond differently to individual lecturers and this may be reflected in survey results. Concerns were also raised about the ability of staff to actually alter aspects of the unit they were teaching as some issues raised could be outside their control (long



lead times for unit changes was also raised in this context).

These concerns are exacerbated by problems (particularly where the survey instrument is online) with low response rates:

“Last year my course had 700 students, of which 250 odd were ones I was directly responsible for, and I got 13 responses in total from this online gadget.”

Effective individual evaluation in a team teaching environment which could include coordinators, lecturers and tutors was also an area of concern:

“it’s particularly problematic when you have a teaching team ... 2 lecturers in a subject, that really confuses the students ... we have a few international partners (where the lecturers are in house) so you’re not really quite sure who the students are actually evaluating”.

Others felt that the evaluation process currently in use tends to stifle innovation:

“if you’re an innovative person ... there’s a very limited capacity to formulate questions that are going to give you the feedback on that and if a significant number don’t see the value in it sets [of questions] can be dropped”.

The general consensus in relation to unit evaluations seemed to be that the tools *“were not flexible enough”* to cope with the diversity of offerings and cohorts and the timing of surveys was too late.

“The actual timing ... is problematic because they tend to be done at the end of the semester ... should be in the middle to be able to remediate or to change focus...do something with that cohort rather than treating it as historical information”.

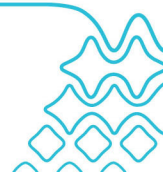
It was thought by some that informal feedback and emails from students and peers teaching in the same unit probably had greater formative impact so that staff could see where changes needed to be made.

5.5.2 Student focus groups

Student focus group participants also cited end of session student surveys as the primary measure of quality teaching in their university. Although some suggested that they didn’t know how these were subsequently used (*“with surveys, we have no idea whether our evaluations and comments are taken seriously – we don’t hear anything back”*), others reported that at the *“beginning of semester [some] lecturers do give a breakdown of what students like in the past ... and how they aim to change whatever wasn’t good enough”*.

Students identified a number of shortcomings associated with the current end of session evaluation process including: it is generally poorly timed (the end of session seen as too late); it does not provide good feedback to students; and the students who complete the evaluations generally do not see any resulting changes or improvements in subjects even where a student repeats a subject. (*“Teaching hasn’t improved”* and *“I honestly feel like the lectures which I have repeated over the years have not changed”*). Students questioned whether poorer teachers are assisted in improving their teaching as they were aware of circumstances where feedback had been given but there was no obvious change:

“Next we are seeing him walk around with the exact same text books for the exact same course ...and we went ‘oh god not again’.”



Although some students valued the opportunity to provide comments about teaching, many noted a lack of motivation to complete the surveys:

"Yeah, it just feels like a waste of time, like, no one's really going to evaluate it properly and even if you do feel strongly, like this teacher is like a really bad teacher, it's not like anyone's going to email you and go 'What's wrong with this teacher, can you go into more depth?' I reckon if they sent an email out to people who just strongly disliked a teacher, ask them why."

"I haven't responded to any and I don't know what's included in them".

"I never filled one in, like my whole undergraduate degree, I never filled one out".

Some students queried the prevalence of peer reviews (where lecturers or staff from learning and teaching support services come in to watch a lecturer) as a potential measure of quality teaching, *"not to monitor them, but perhaps just to get a feel of what their actual style is in the classroom"*.

5.5.3 Suggestions for Improvement

There were several suggestions for improvement that were consistent across a number of focus groups. Firstly, both staff and student groups suggested that the opportunity to provide feedback other than at the end of semester would be valuable. Staff suggested that seeking student feedback in Week 5 or 6 would be more useful than the current evaluation timing from both staff and student perspectives.

"Every cohort is different and you need to be able to have the flexibility to make adjustments for each different cohort each year. So, getting the feedback in different stages from students ... is a much better way of doing it; much more versatile and it's for the students benefit, as well as teaching practice."

Students suggested providing opportunities for feedback for immediate action during the course, using anonymous feedback *"so that staff might actually go 'Wow, I need to change a few things!'"*

"It would help if you get [evaluations] in the middle of the semester so that the lecturer has the opportunity to work on constructive feedback that has been generated as a result of the survey. Here ... we give our feedback at the end of the semester and then we're gone to another course. We're not benefiting ... it's the next person who comes along."

Although issues were raised regarding the use of class time for completion of teaching surveys, a preference for a paper based system for evaluating face to face teaching was also noted by a number of staff and student groups. Some students, particularly on campus students, suggested that *"paper is better as students complete it in class - I don't use the internet unless I have to"*.

Staff highlighted the need to ensure that the subject or teaching evaluation system was not viewed as punitive. It *"needs to be a developmental system that enables us to grow and develop as teachers rather than being used in a punitive sense"*. This view was reinforced by students who suggested that *"poor lecturers [be] given an incentive to improve"*. Students also suggested that supervisory staff could get an indication of the extent to which staff had engaged with students by asking them if they know the student names and where they come from; and by measuring lecturer participation in online forums.



Staff and student groups also mentioned the notion of peer review as an alternative or complement to teaching evaluations. One staff member described their experience of peer assessment:

"I had a couple of classes where a peer came and evaluated my class" and "it's pretty nerve racking but it's really, really valuable ... should be more widely implemented as a criteria for promotion ... not your buddy ... someone who does understand what is best practice or with a teaching qualification ... incorporate peer review and link to build process".

Students and staff also suggested that the use of focus groups both during and at the end of the semester would be an effective method of getting feedback on teaching (*"focus groups like this where they talked about their courses...you would get more meaningful and relevant information"*).

Students discussed a number of other possible measures of quality teaching. One suggested including reviewing pass rates across the range of subjects taught by an individual teacher (to gauge consistency and remove any bias around responses in a particular subject). Another student suggested that, to get a sense of the overall quality of teaching, it would be useful to survey employers who have placed a new graduate in the last six months. This would give a sense of the *"relevance of what the student learned"* and *"what they understand as a new graduate"* through asking *"Well, they've finished their degree. They've done six months with you. Do they know what they need to know?"* Another suggested inviting external industry people or other academics to sit in on class and give feedback on the teaching.

5.6 Recognising and valuing quality teaching

5.6.1 Staff focus groups

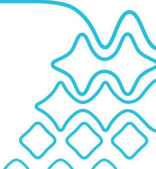
Staff in most focus groups acknowledged the existence of institutional level teaching excellence awards (which largely mirrored ALTC awards); however, they were generally sceptical about them, describing them for example as *"pretty meaningless"* and tokenistic. *"It's not a reward for teaching excellence, it's a reward for how well I can market myself. ... It's not an award"*. There was a feeling among some staff that the awards are all about innovation in teaching indicating that if someone does things in a traditional manner and does it very well then they are not recognised.

For some universities a self-nomination process prevails, while others require student nomination or a combination of self and student nomination. Each process came under criticism:

[The awards are] *"self nominated... the only people who appear to get any recognition are those who have time to apply for awards.. the rest of the teaching team, those who for whatever reason don't put themselves forward or who come second, they don't get any recognition at all"*.

[When students began to nominate staff] *"the award became more about popularity than about quality teaching"*.

"The only one that I remember here was where a lecturer nominated themselves, and then, that person actually approached a number of students for references and in one instance actually wrote the references for the students; all the students had to do was sign them and send them in. Now, that's just a joke, if that's how you recognise quality teaching".



“Any self promotion is not ... a true measure of excellence ... because a lot of people can talk very well about what a good job they do and it’s not measured in any way other than their own.”

Some staff suggested that it was not necessarily those that they (or students) perceived to be good teachers who received awards:

“Some people who are writing their self promotions are not people who are active in doing and reflecting on real good teaching, because in my experience some of the people who have received some of these things, they’re not the ones you traditionally see across the board, sharing their experiences, actively participating in some of the learning and teaching activities.”

“I guess that’s another thing, we hear what the students say about the other staff. And I would have my own ideas about who I would nominate as being a good teacher. ... You look at who gets those awards and you think, well the students really don’t have a good experience with those particular staff members, so therefore, they’re really not excellent teachers.”

It was also noted that not everyone is motivated by an award. *“Not only is the process open to question but, maybe the people that you would most like to see recognised wouldn’t value that as a way of going anyway.”*

Staff also commented on the time it takes to prepare an application (due to the volume and complexity of information required or the expectation that the applicant will use relatively unfamiliar *“teaching pedagogy terms”*) and saw this as a disincentive to most in applying for an award. *“I just don’t have the time to go through the process of filling in applications”* and *“onerous process ... [it’s a] barrier to a busy person”*.

“Yeah, you write it up yourself if you think you want to go in to it and the better teachers are so busy teaching often will say well why should I spend so many hours writing up all of this?... You can sit in your office and do lousy teaching and put out lots of papers and that’ll get you a promotion quicker”

One staff member spoke about their personal experience of applying for an award:

“I found it very time consuming and a very emotionally draining experience to do that, and I mean, I don’t know how other people have found it where they’re self nominated, but to me the big thing was what the students said, my peers, and if that’s any indication of quality, then that should be where the focus is, and it’s not at the moment.”

There was a perception amongst some focus group participants that quality teaching is not recognised by their institution particularly in the promotion process. *“Because at the end of the day, and I mean I’ve had people – senior staff – say this to me, teaching is not the priority. Teaching is not what gets you promoted”*. These staff suggested that they would be better off spending time on conducting research than taking time out to accept nomination and prepare a case for a teaching award. Other staff noted the irony of buying themselves out of teaching through a grant from a learning and teaching committee even though they *“love to teach”*.

Of concern to staff was the perception that if a person was poor at teaching they were ‘rewarded’ by being given smaller classes so they are not exposed to many students: *“rewarding incompetence by giving them an easier time”*. Such a staff member then has more time for their research and thus a greater chance of promotion. Staff felt that good teachers were covering for bad ones resulting in good teachers having less time to research and reduced likelihood of promotion. Others



suggested that the university should be more proactive in dealing with low performance:

“People that are acknowledged as bad teachers by everyone get rolled out on the same units semester after semester – it’s ludicrous, if you know do something about it, do not subject the students to it, they are entitled to better treatment than that”.

Staff also perceived relationships between the value that the university places on quality teaching and the levels of workload and casualisation. While the quality of some casual staff was noted (*“we have some excellent casual staff and we have casual staff [who] are really good with the students”*), the extent of casualisation was interpreted as the university not seeing quality teaching as important. This was because casualisation was perceived as resulting in less help being available for students and more demands on existing full-time staff. This further increased workload pressures on staff who were already experiencing high workloads and were conscious that this was impacting negatively on their teaching.

5.6.2 Student focus groups

Students generally were not aware of the processes for recognising quality teaching in their universities but felt that recognising and acknowledging quality teaching was important to keep staff motivated *“Yes, that way they will be encouraged to keep teaching us the way they have otherwise they might not put the effort in which means we suffer”*. Students also expressed a desire to be part of any award nomination process: *“I do have lecturers I would like to nominate”*.

Those students who did acknowledge some awareness of the awards were a little unsure of how a staff member would be nominated and unclear as to the process after a nomination had been placed. They commented that an awards process could create a competition-like environment between lecturers.

5.6.3 Suggestions for Improvement

Staff suggested there needed to be a cultural shift if teaching was to be perceived as truly valued. Some did comment that they felt this cultural shift appeared to be occurring at their institution,

“there’s a different attitude towards teaching from people”. “Look we’re sitting in a focus group and I’m looking at a professor of [discipline] ... here’s an associate professor [different discipline]. I mean that’s wonderful to see people in these higher level leadership positions ... being role models for interest in teaching practice”.

Others still felt that *“people tend to sacrifice the time they put into teaching in order to dedicate it to research”*. Some staff suggested that it was *“all about leadership...there is no direct feedback from someone who has the knowledge, the theory ... the know how to give us direct feedback ... there is no one”* and often people are not willing to share.

It also requires more training opportunities *“to improve you need to do things like pod casts ... exploit the technology, and that requires development ... and a new set of skills”* and this should apply throughout an academic’s career *“not just when you start teaching, the problem is to keep on learning, especially with technology, like*



iPod and b.pod and all that stuff...forever learning”.

In relation to formal recognition of teaching through awards, staff in focus groups suggested that recognition and reward should be based less on a lengthy application from the staff member, and more on peer or student nomination with a panel or independent individual seeking further information and evidence if required:

“If you’re nominated and then someone went through the process of actually investigating what you do, by making some sort of independent assessment, then it would be valued.”

It was also suggested that if the winners of teaching awards could become more involved in disseminating their skills and talking about why they had received the award, the quality of teaching overall could improve:

“I would suggest in terms of alternatives for recognising teaching, it doesn’t always have to be [an] award but perhaps even just teaching workshops ... where people can talk about teaching. ... Through hearing what people say you recognise good teaching and I think it’d be tremendously motivating.”

Other related suggestions for mentoring and sharing of good practice included: a buddy system or more formal team teaching which links an experienced teacher with one who is seeking professional development; formal staff networks facilitating assistance for inexperienced staff with teaching matters; and a process whereby the *“top ten, or even twenty, teachers [are] publicly announced both sessional and full-time based on student evaluations”*.

Further suggestions for greater recognition of teaching included: teacher exchanges (with other universities); more professional development where staff could learn strategies to assist with students who dominate or will not contribute; more training in teaching and teaching cross-culturally; and peer review by a trusted colleague.

Although students had little or no knowledge of awards, they did believe that it was important that they be involved in the nomination process. They suggested, however, that it needs to be a simple process which would encourage people to want to participate. Some suggested improving the recognition of teaching through a *“round table conference between professors and student representatives”* to discuss what good quality teaching means without necessarily discussing individual teachers. In addition, students felt that:

“there needs to be a public recognition of the results of our evaluations (e.g. publish the top 30 per cent of quality teachers) - encourage them to keep up the good work and challenge the lesser performers”.

5.7 Summary

This chapter has provided a synthesis of the views of the focus group participants from the five project universities (focus group responses are articulated more fully in the institutional case studies in Volume 2 of this report). The feedback received from focus groups guided the subsequent activities of the project, particularly the strategies implemented at each university. Details of each strategy, the challenges encountered and a set of conditions for success of the initiatives are presented in Chapter 6.



Chapter 6: Implementation of selected strategies

This chapter provides a summary of the strategies implemented at the participating universities during the course of the project. Implementation issues vary depending on the university context and therefore, to appreciate the challenges in a specific delivery mode or campus environment, readers are referred to the individual case studies in Volume 2 of the report.

6.1 Chosen institutional strategies

The initiatives for enhancing the measurement and recognition of quality teaching suggested by the staff and student focus groups were discussed by the project team. Some of the suggestions required institutional commitment (e.g. changes to recruitment, selection or promotion policies) and indeed longer term cultural change more broadly within the respective universities, and were therefore not included in the initiatives trial.

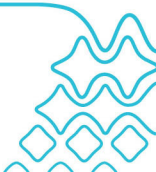
Other suggestions were within the potential scope and timeline of the work of the project within business faculties. Consideration was given to the feasibility of implementation, and as a result a small suite of key initiatives (mid-semester feedback, peer observation and feedback for academics, and broader recognition for staff engaged in quality teaching in faculties and schools) was identified for potential trial in the participating universities. Each individual team member then selected, from the list, the initiative/s which were most relevant and achievable for trial within their institution. Each of these initiatives (previously identified in Chapter 4) is presented below with a reflection on the implementation, including areas that could be improved.

6.2 Mid-session student feedback

6.2.1 Student surveys

Staff teaching business subjects at four of the project universities were invited to participate in seeking student feedback mid-way through the teaching session. The survey instrument (Appendix 2) was generally administered in week 5, 6 or 7 of the session (although the earlier weeks were generally preferred to allow time for reflection on the feedback received and potential action during the remainder of the session, it was recognised that students needed time to have some understanding of the unit). Surveys were administered in paper based or online formats to face to face students; and online to distance education students. Response rates for paper based surveys were generally strong. Surveys made available in the online environment for face to face students did not have the same level of response as achieved through administration of the paper based instrument; however, these rates were still much better than those for distance education students. (This was consistent with feedback received from the student focus groups about the lack of engagement with online surveys).

Participating staff were encouraged to reflect on the ratings and comments received in the surveys, and to compile a brief summary of the results and potential actions which could be fed back to students. A sample of an email encouraging reflection on the student feedback is included as Appendix 3. A template which could be utilised



by staff to summarise the responses and the proposed actions is included as Appendix 4.

Where possible, staff and students were invited to participate in focus groups towards the end of the session to discuss the mid-session survey and reflect on its usefulness (see Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 for the focus group questions). The timing of the survey was generally thought to be appropriate and some of the feedback received from students found to be useful. The opportunity for quantitative and qualitative responses was valued by staff and students. Some questions in the survey were found to be confusing and suggestions were made regarding possible deletions. Utilising the feedback received, a revised version of the survey was subsequently developed (see Appendix 7) and administered in one institution.

Challenges with this initiative

- A poor response rate was evident in the distance education environment.
- The collation and analysis of the information is time-consuming, particularly where there is a large student cohort.
- Not all questions in the survey were actionable if staff received a negative response (some staff addressed this by discussing with students what they could and could not change).
- Some students provided very negative or rude responses which could be confronting for the staff member given they have to face the students in the next class or online session (staff perceived a particularly negative tone in online responses relative to face to face respondents).

Conditions for success and sustainability:

The experience of the project team in implementing this strategy resulted in identification of a number of actions to enhance the likelihood of success of the initiative:

- The initiative should be voluntary and developmental or formative.
- Make staff aware of the opportunity to utilise mid-session surveys prior to the beginning of the session so that the process can be incorporated into their session planning.
- Reassure staff about the confidentiality of the process.
- Explain the rationale and process to students before seeking their participation.
- Facilitate collation of the feedback received from students.
- Provide a template for staff to complete when reflecting on the student feedback. The template would guide the staff member through a structure for summarising the responses and proposed actions (see Appendix 4 for a sample reflection).
- Provide the opportunity for the staff member to meet with a trusted colleague to discuss the results in detail in a non-threatening way, and to plan responses to the feedback provided (for multi-campus institutions, this may require a distributed leadership and support model to be initiated on remote campuses).
- Encourage the staff member to report back to students promptly on issues that they could change but also issues that they couldn't change (and why).



- After the staff member has reported back to the class, encourage a follow up meeting with a trusted colleague if further support is required.

6.2.2. Semi structured student focus groups

One of the suggested initiatives emanating from the staff and student focus groups was the possibility of using a similar forum to elicit student feedback mid-session. This initiative was trialled by one of the participating institutions in the form of mid-session student meetings with the Dean. The meeting provided an opportunity for students to talk about their learning experience and discuss quality teaching. Questions used in the mid-session survey formed the basis of questions utilised in the student meetings (see Appendix 8).

The students who participated in the meetings were happy with this mechanism for providing feedback and suggested that further opportunities be created. The Dean was also very positive about the exercise and found that the students had raised some issues that he was unaware of, but which were easily remedied and therefore validated the student voice in this forum. Feedback regarding changes which were a direct consequence of the meetings with students was provided through a faculty newsletter.

Challenges with this initiative

- The biggest challenge in implementing this initiative is finding a timeslot in the Dean's diary which can remain committed to the meeting with students.
- Despite personal invitations and student acceptances, some students did not advise that they could not attend. This made it difficult to optimise the size of the group.

Conditions for success and sustainability

- Dates for meetings should be confirmed in the Dean's diary prior to the start of the session.
- Consider the student groups most likely to engage meaningfully with the Dean.
- Students should be individually invited to attend (via email) with a follow up email or phone call to confirm their availability if they fail to respond.
- Select food that is appropriate for the student guests.
- Feedback should be provided to students regarding changes made or not made as a consequence of the meetings with the Dean.

6.3 Peer observation and feedback

This initiative was trialled at two of the participating universities. A checklist (Appendix 9) based on questions used in the mid-session surveys was developed and utilised for the peer feedback sessions. The peer feedback was provided by two trusted colleagues, one a discipline expert and one a learning and teaching expert. After the scheduling of the peer feedback session had been resolved, each reviewer was provided with a copy of the peer feedback instrument. Although the reviewers



attended the same teaching session (students were advised of their presence and the purpose), the feedback was developed independently. Each reviewer subsequently met with the staff member to discuss the review and provide feedback and possible strategies to assist the staff member.

Reviewees reported favourably on their experience of the peer feedback initiative, so much so that several requests for peer feedback were received in the subsequent teaching session (see Appendix 10 for questions regarding the peer observation process). The request was also extended beyond the classroom environment to a review of online teaching resources. A peer observer suggested that a more targeted feedback session could be provided if the prospective reviewee gave advice to the observers (prior to the teaching session) regarding what they perceive that they currently do well and what they would like to improve. Guidelines to facilitate the conduct of peer observation and feedback sessions are included as Appendix 11).

Challenges with this initiative

- The availability of appropriate and willing observers (learning and teaching and discipline) prepared to make the time commitment to conduct the reviews.
- Being able to reassure academic staff that the peer observation and feedback was for their own personal development and would not be used for any other purpose.

Conditions for success and sustainability

- Confirm that the outcome of the process is confidential to the reviewee and reviewers.
- Compile a list of potential reviewers to facilitate scheduling of peer feedback sessions as required.
- Provide the peer feedback checklist (see Appendix 9) to all participants prior to the scheduled teaching session.
- Invite the reviewee to flag particular areas for attention by the reviewers.
- Facilitate feedback sessions with the reviewee to discuss the outcomes of the review and strategies which could be implemented to bring about desired improvement or build on underlying strengths.

6.4 Teaching awards

The issue of recognition and rewards associated with quality teaching was discussed extensively in staff and student focus groups. Each of the participating universities has a teaching excellence award scheme that is aligned with the ALTC awards.

Several of the universities involved in this project considered the possibility of instituting some form of faculty award aligned with the indicators identified by the staff and student focus groups. One university progressed this to the stage of establishing a working party to consider how to increase the breadth and depth of nominations received; and change the selection process to facilitate conversion from



nomination to participation in the initial awards, and conversion from faculty to university level awards. Changes to be implemented in 2011 include: the gathering of nominations from students, staff and discipline leaders; an application process requiring responses to three to five questions with an interview for shortlisted nominees; and support for preparation of documentation for any faculty nominees progressed to university level awards.

Another university initiated a faculty teaching award based on a survey which asked students to identify quality teachers (the survey, which was again based on the mid-session feedback instrument developed by the project team, is included as Appendix 12). The nominated academic staff member is not required to complete any supporting documentation. Rather the faculty award is based on student responses to the circulated survey. A celebratory function is held to acknowledge those staff recognised by students for their quality teaching.

Challenges with this initiative

- Providing incentives for the students to encourage them to respond to the survey.
- Changing the culture to ensure changes are embraced.
- Ensuring the process is clearly communicated to staff.

Conditions for success and sustainability

- Multi-format communication when requesting student participation in the process.
- For associated student surveys, ensure the results are in a form that can be analysed quickly.
- Ensure any associated celebratory function can be organised in a timely manner.
- Report back to the students regarding the award recipients.

6.5 Institutional Conditions for success

The experience of trialling the suite of initiatives at the participating universities resulted in the identification of a number of key enablers and conditions for success in the implementation of strategies for recognising and valuing quality teaching including:

- Institutional, faculty, and staff readiness to become engaged.
- Political will to support the initiatives.
- Believability of, and trust in, the process.
- A readily identifiable champion with a style of leadership which encourages reflection and development rather than performance measurement.
- The support of a senior member of staff in the work unit concerned i.e, school or faculty.
- Adequate resources to facilitate seamless integration into the academic's role.



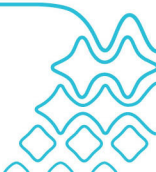
- The ability to maintain confidentiality in relation to the outcome of the process. The process needed to be undertaken voluntarily and the outcomes remain personal to the reviewee and shared only with those whom they saw fit.

6.6 Major inhibitors or challenges for success

Each initiative took time to develop and trial, and then to gather and analyse the relevant data. A number of the initiatives trialled in the course of the project involved engagement with students during their session of study and any changes could not be retested until the following teaching period. Thus, having to work within the semester timeframe for gathering data from the students and incorporating initiatives into courses was a major inhibitor to the achievement of the project outcomes.

A number of challenges for the sustainability of the trialled initiatives included:

- Ensuring that the initiative is conducted at the most appropriate time during the session in terms of staff and student workloads to enable prompt and constructive feedback.
- Ensuring the process remains as a professional development initiative and not part of performance measurement. That is, it must be voluntary and non-threatening from the perspectives of both staff and students.
- Ensuring that there is appropriate recognition of teaching and learning activities as well as the scholarship of learning and teaching.
- Ensuring there is adequate resourcing and support (including guidelines) to maintain the momentum for change even if the initial project champions are no longer in place.



Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Project summary

This project commenced in July 2008 with a challenging set of goals to be achieved within the two year project timeline. This timeline had to be extended as the project relied on engagement with academic staff and students at critical points in the academic teaching calendar to maximise opportunities for utilising the initiatives effectively.

One of the leadership challenges in business education is in motivating teaching quality in an environment which has been typified by restructuring; technological advances; flexible learning expectations; diversity in student cohorts; increasing student: staff ratios; and challenges in staff recruitment and retention which have resulted in increasing casualisation. Within this environment, teaching is perceived by many staff to be less valued than research.

This project initially explored, through focus groups of staff and students at the participating universities, the importance of quality teaching and how it is perceived to be measured, recognised and valued. In selecting the potential focus group participants, consideration was given to selecting staff and students who provided a range of experiences including face to face and distance education modes of study, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and learning experiences, teaching focused and teaching/research appointments, and domestic and international students. The next stage of the project involved trials of initiatives (proposed during the focus group discussions as ways of improving recognition and perceived value of teaching) including: gathering and responding to mid-session feedback, utilising peer observation and feedback processes, and recognition of teaching through awards.

The project has resulted in changes in practice at a number of the universities involved in the project. The extent and level of change (university, faculty or school) and the degree of engagement of academic staff varied across the institutions, and appeared to be related to the level of individual and institutional readiness for change.

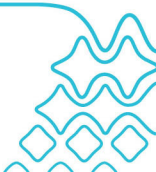
A number of simple 'tools' developed during the course of the project (including mid-session survey forms, student feedback focus group and peer review protocols; as well as award criteria) are available in the appendices to this report to facilitate implementation of the successful strategies identified in this project.

7.2 Key success factors

Each initiative trialled within the project took time to develop, trial, and gather the relevant data. A number of the initiatives trialled in the course of the project involved engagement with students during their session of study and any changes could not be retested until the following teaching period. Thus, having to work within the semester timeframe for gathering data from the students and incorporating initiatives into courses was a major inhibitor to the timely achievement of the project outcomes.

There were a number of success factors and key enablers identified as part of the project including:

- Institution, faculty, and staff readiness to become engaged.



- Political will to support the initiatives.
- Trust in the process as well as believability of the process.
- A readily identifiable champion with appropriate style of leadership.
- Support of a senior member of staff in the unit concerned i.e, school or faculty.
- Adequate resources to facilitate seamless integration into the academic's role.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality in relation to the outcome of the process. The process needed to be undertaken voluntarily and the outcomes remain personal to the reviewee and shared only with those whom they saw fit.

7.3 Factors critical to sustainability of the initiatives

To facilitate the sustainability of the initiatives trialled during the project, guidelines were developed to illustrate the process in relation to the implementation of each of the initiatives. These guidelines briefly include lessons that have been learned by the project team in overcoming the challenges of implementing the initiative. Examples of the pro forma documents ('tools') that were developed are included in the Appendices to this report. Without these guidelines the momentum that has been achieved may not be maintained if the current team members or initiative 'champions' change roles within their institutions.

To ensure sustainability of the outcomes of the project, the processes must remain as professional development initiatives and not as part of performance measurement. Thus, the initiatives involving staff engagement for their own professional development should remain voluntary and must be non-threatening from both the staff member and student perspectives. If the non-compulsory aspect of the process is removed then the staff members' trust in the process and the persons involved may not be maintained or sustained.

There are also a number of other issues to consider as the project initiatives are embedded more broadly including:

- Ensure there are appropriate champion/s.
- Ensure there is adequate resourcing and support (including guidelines) to maintain the momentum for change even if the champions are no longer in place.
- Ensure that the process is managed in an empowering manner within the distributed campus model.
- Ensure that the tight timelines in relation to the teaching periods are planned for and considered so as to maximise opportunities for utilising the initiatives effectively.
- Ensure that once a change has been identified, that the most appropriate enablers for change are in place.

7.4 Unintended outcomes

A number of unexpected or unintended outcomes were identified as having emerged from this project. The key ones are briefly discussed below:

- There was a high degree of synergy between staff and student perceptions on many issues discussed within the project.



- The project team members gained an increased awareness of:
 - learning and teaching issues within their own institutional environment particularly in terms of measurement, management, opportunities and awards
 - the potential of a student focus group as a mechanism for reflecting on and improving teaching
 - the need for support for individual academics interested in developing or reflecting on their teaching (seeking feedback may result in individual academics focusing on the negative rather than the positive aspects of feedback received and therefore experiencing a feeling of disempowerment as a result of the process)
 - the need for a collaborative leadership approach when implementing initiatives aimed at improving teaching
 - the need for distributed leadership to facilitate staff participation in teaching initiatives in a multi-campus environment
 - how some very small changes within both courses and institutions can lead to increased confidence and impetus to discuss things more openly, and facilitate openness to participate in initiatives proposed by the project
 - the importance of finding a common language to navigate through institutional differences
 - the importance of a stable team membership for personal growth and the project's success.

7.5 Lessons for other projects:

A number of insights were gained in the course of this project which may be helpful for others considering embarking on similar or related projects.

- The approach of the ABDC Network to invite self selection of network members to project teams presented some challenges in terms of getting to know team members and establishing a 'protocol' for working together. A portion of the first face to face meeting was devoted to identifying personal as well as project goals and articulating a set of 'values' for working together. These values encompassed the importance of enjoying the project, remaining engaged and committed, and being supportive of each other; and also addressed issues relating to authorship and seminar presentations. It was decided that regular teleconferences (fortnightly) between face to face meetings would facilitate connectivity of the team members to the project.
- The planning and preparation stages of a project can consume more time than initially anticipated.
- Skilled and experienced project officers are in relatively short supply and therefore recruitment of an appropriately qualified person may take longer than anticipated.
- Rather than employ a project officer on a casual contract, it was decided to advertise the position as a fractional appointment for the life of the project. This approach (although providing greater security for the project team and the project officer) required adhering to the formal recruitment processes of the lead institution and delayed the starting date for the project officer.



- Despite the use of the National Ethics Application Form (NEAF) by the lead institution, achieving ethics approval for all participating universities can take some considerable time at the beginning of a project.
- Face to face meetings of the project team are invaluable in progressing the work of the project.
- At the commencement of the project, all project team members were in positions of leadership in relation to learning and teaching activities within their institutions. This position of influence was critical to implementing the initiatives in each of the participating universities.
- To maximise the value of a project it is important to remain conversant with emerging work from other projects to avoid the possibility of duplication e.g. the Teaching Quality Indicators Project had several releases of documents after the project commenced.
- Although there are a number of commonalities between the Business Faculties in Australian universities, there are also significant differences in terms of work descriptions, expectations of staff, and teaching workloads. A common language is necessary amongst the project team members to ensure meaningful discourse.
- Focus group transcription (particularly where groups involve international students) can be significantly slower than transcription of individual interviews (1.25 hour focus groups required 5-6 hours for transcription through a professional transcription service).
- Focus group responses need to be contextualised i.e. the experiences need to be reported in the context of the academic environment presenting at the time a focus group was conducted. Examples of contextual issues which impacted in this study include faculty restructuring, workload changes and staff shortages.
- To avoid any possibility of response bias in staff focus groups, the groups were facilitated by the project officer (the reading of transcripts provided significant institutional insights in terms of staff perspectives for the respective project team members).
- In implementing changes in specific institutional contexts, industrial relations issues may impact on the ability to progress particular approaches.

7.6 Dissemination

There have been some opportunities for dissemination of the progress and outcomes of the project, however, the majority of the dissemination opportunities will occur on completion of the project when the associated 'tools' and guidelines are available for distribution. Dissemination to date has occurred internally (within project members' institutions) and also externally (to the ABDC, the ABDC T&L Network and academics attending the Accounting Special Interest Group of the annual conference of the Accounting and Finance Association of Australia and New Zealand (AFAANZ)).

Presentations to groups of academics within the participating universities, the ABDC T&L Network, and the Accounting Education Special Interest Group of AFAANZ raised awareness of the project in its early stages and encouraged contributions and feedback from the various audience participants.

Preliminary focus group feedback was also disseminated through internal conferences and seminars (for example at the 2009 CSUED Conference and at the



2010 CQU Research Expo); reports to senior faculty and university learning & teaching and other committee meetings; and through the ABDC T&L network (reports were presented, or workshops conducted, at the Network meetings in February and July of 2009 and 2010).

The project was also presented to the ABDC Business Education Symposium held in October 2009. This one-day symposium explored the complexity of issues confronting business educators ranging from industry interaction to pedagogic delivery models to international student learning cultures.

Further dissemination is anticipated through in house conference and seminar presentations at the participating universities. A range of academic papers (conference and journal) have been proposed to facilitate broader dissemination. Focus areas for the papers identified to date include: a model for engaging staff in quality teaching; staff and student perceptions of quality teaching; the effects of the research /teaching divide on quality teaching; measuring quality teaching; a comparison of teaching evaluation methods; recognising and rewarding quality teachers; institutional readiness for quality teaching; and the impact of the T&L environment on the quality of teaching.



Chapter 8: Evaluation

8.1 An external evaluator

Initially the three projects (identified in Chapter 1 of this report) which emerged from the Freeman et al. (2008) *Business Scoping Study* were working closely together in an attempt to maximise the potential resources available through the ABDC T&L Network. An external project evaluator, Mr Patrick Boyle of Q Associates, was engaged to assist with evaluation of the three ABDC T&L Network projects. Preliminary meetings of the three project leaders, the ABDC T&L Network Executive, the embedding manager (employed to work across the three projects) and the project evaluator included discussion of critical success factors; formative and summative evaluation; and general principles guiding leadership and management. In the course of these meetings a project logic was developed and disseminated for feedback from this group.

Despite this initial collaboration, it became apparent that the projects were engaged in different project activities with different lead times, and the efforts to try and align them created delays and conflict rather than enhancing the overall research activity. In addition, changes in T&L Network personnel associated with the three projects resulted in some changes to process around the projects (establishment of common reference groups; project evaluation). In particular the resignation of the Embedding Manager removed potential opportunities generated through that position. The consequence of these various events was a need for more individual approaches to project evaluation.

The project leader met with the project evaluator just prior to the trialling of initiatives at the participating universities. Information about the progress of the project was provided at this time and opinion sought regarding formative and summative evaluation. Mr Boyle advised at this time that there was no opportunity for formative evaluation, rather his role would be focused on the final summative evaluation. He subsequently attended the final face to face meeting of the project team at which time team members presented an internal evaluation of the project. A summary of the evaluator's report is included at section 8.3 below.

8.2 Formative evaluation

At the early review meetings with the ABDC T&L Network Executive and the project evaluator, each project leader presented information on the intended direction of the project and on progress to date, thus providing the opportunity for formative evaluation of the project. The meetings were also an opportunity for project leaders to share insights from their individual project experiences which may have been of relevance to other projects. The feedback received suggested that the focus and approach of this project were consistent with those proposed in the Business Scoping Study (Freeman et al., 2008) from which this project was derived.

Presentations at ABDC T&L Network meetings facilitated the opportunity for network members to provide input on project objectives and progress. At the February 2009 meeting a survey of colleagues confirmed identified business indicators, while the presentation to the July meeting resulted in very positive comments regarding expectations from focus groups and preliminary outcomes. In February 2010, colleagues contributed to discussion of the proposed strategies being implemented at project universities and offered sample resources such as peer review and survey instruments, and teaching award criteria which will be considered for possible



adaptation and implementation at the project universities. A presentation to Australian Business Deans Council members at the Business Education Symposium in October 2009 also resulted in constructive feedback and suggestions for completing the project.

8.3 Summary evaluation statement written by Patrick Boyle

Like some other ALTC sponsored learning and teaching enhancement projects in BE over the last few years, the VQT Project was a challenging initiative. There are competing priorities and demands in business faculties, particularly on academics and academic leaders, and there are long-held and ongoing differences in beliefs and attitudes surrounding the valuing of teaching relative to research. These two general conditional factors alone made the admirable mission of this 2-year project quite a challenging one, particularly in terms of being able to deliver a validated (demonstrably effective) framework and a set of policies, processes and resources having strong buy-in from relevant stakeholders.

The project team clearly worked hard on the project and as a result it has added significant momentum to the work going on to enhance VQT policies and practices in BE environments, particularly in the Project Team members' universities. Depending on the magnitude of this effect, which isn't clear to me, such an outcome is potentially very important.

The project achieved other valuable outcomes. The data generated, learning, policy changes effected and resources developed should have value for advancing the Project's mission in the future. The project did not achieve all of its intended outcomes and it appears to me that part of the reason for this is that the overall Project strategy and aspects of its implementation could have been better. The setting of realistic sub-objectives and associated concrete outcomes for fixed time periods, and concentrating efforts on achieving these and then moving on, is likely to have enhanced efficiency and levels of achievement.

In general ALTC projects are expected to achieve evidence-based improvement effects in learning/teaching, along with effective dissemination of outcomes, including learning and resources. While the VQT Project has added value in this respect, it appears to me that it could have achieved greater effects if less time had been spent on research and conceptualization activities and more time focusing on the achievement of more concrete outcomes. Higher priorities could have been assigned to achieving outcomes related to, for example:

- the earlier derivation, organization and dissemination of ideas and guidance
- ongoing learning and evaluation (concerning the emerging body of knowledge, tools, etc)
- the mobilization of action on the ground to work with some resources and ideas in a few more BE faculties.

Below, I list some linked implementation activities, with implied priorities and outcomes, to provide an *indication* of the difference in emphasis I am referring to. Variations of the indicative example below would likely have been just as productive. The main point I am emphasizing is that the project is likely to have achieved more if there had been a greater strategic and operational emphasis on setting and achieving more concrete outcomes (with related evidence), even if these were less sophisticated than envisaged at earlier times.

- 1) Focus early, with maximum effort and a firm timeline on identifying and presenting some key elements with good potential to catalyse or accelerate



activity on the VQT front (e.g. success factors; existing effective practices; good examples of policies in action);

- 2) Establish a basic website, designed to serve the project's objectives, and develop and populate the site continually with project materials and other stage outcomes, two-way communication processes, etc;
- 3) Use a clear and efficient stakeholder consultation process to sharpen and validate a set of VQT enabling elements, and in doing so achieve more on the dissemination and engagement fronts;
- 4) Develop a concrete interim framework utilizing ongoing input from key stakeholders, particularly the Network's membership; and then
- 5) Mobilize preliminary use of the framework (by 6 months before the end of the project) in a larger number of universities, with a built-in process to enable evaluative feedback and refinement to sustain efforts beyond the project.

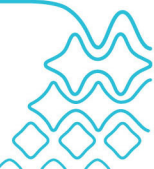
Notwithstanding my view that aspects of strategy and implementation could have been better, I want to stress that the members of the VQT project team deserve much credit for facing up to the challenges of the project and working so hard on them. Effective and sustainable change on this front is known to be difficult and slow. More stimulus for action, increased momentum in some universities, and added learning about the 'how to do it' are all important stage outcomes in a long process which the project has achieved.

In my view it's the *real* institutional values in each university (evident in explicit policies, priorities, expectations, decisions and support levels concerning good teaching) that is the most important determining factor in whether or not expectations and valuing of good teaching will become explicit and systemic in faculties. After this factor, the deans of business faculties continue to have a critical role if clear change on the VQT front is to occur. Without the strong and evident support of the dean, others in academic leadership roles (e.g. associate deans; committee chairs) will struggle in their efforts to facilitate substantial changes in academics' perceptions, motivation and practices that ultimately are necessary if good teaching is to be valued more highly.

Having stressed the importance of evident institutional values and faculty deans for effecting substantial change on the VQT front, it's also clear that the ABDC's Teaching and Learning Network has an important role to play. As leaders in learning and teaching at faculty level and through their faculty executive roles, Network members are often in a good position to advocate, foster and achieve gradual changes in policies and practices. Importantly, the potential of the collective influence of the Network as an advocacy, innovation and educational practice improvement body in Australian university business education remains high.



Appendices



Appendix 1: Preliminary focus group questions

Questions for staff focus groups

1. How important do you feel teaching is in your job?
2. What is quality teaching?
3. How would you recognize a quality teacher?
4. Are you aware of how your Institution measures quality teaching? How?
5. How do you feel about that as a measurement approach?
6. What other suggestions for measurement of teaching quality do you have?
7. How is quality teaching recognized in your institution?
8. How do you feel about that as a recognition approach?
9. What other suggestions for recognition of teaching quality do you have?
10. In your experience, is quality teaching valued in your institution?
11. How do you feel about that as a valuing approach?
12. What other suggestions for valuing of teaching quality do you have?
13. How does your Institution's approach to valuing your teaching make you feel?

Questions for student focus groups

Questions 1 – 9, amended for sense and grammar, also appear in the student focus group questions. These are followed by:

- S10 Do you feel that your institution gives you enough opportunity to comment on the quality of teaching?
- S11 Do you take advantage of these opportunities?
- S12 Do you feel that your institution takes your comments seriously and acts upon them?



Appendix 2: Mid-session survey

Mid session survey for [SUBJECT CODE]

Please complete the following questions in relation to [SUBJECT CODE].

Your responses are confidential. To ensure your confidentiality do not add any information on this form that might identify who you are.

In response to each statement, select one option only, and mark the preferred box with an X.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No opinion
1. My lecturer has extensive subject knowledge and expertise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My lecturer is enthusiastic about the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. My lecturer is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My lecturer makes good use of the lecture time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The content of this subject is well planned and sequenced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. This subject is delivered in a way that fits the way I like to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Opportunities are provided for me to ask questions and explore content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Opportunities are provided for me to interact and learn with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. My lecturer uses 'real world' examples to stimulate interest in the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. My lecturer is responsive to students' questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The technology used in this subject helps me to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. My lecturer is able to explain and clarify things in different ways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. My lecturer adds value to the materials provided in this subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

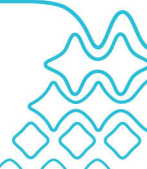


Open Ended Questions – Please give your responses in brief sentences

1. What do you think is working well in this subject?

2. What would you like to see changed in this subject?

3. Anything else you would like to add about this subject?



Appendix 3: Email to staff re reflection on student feedback

Hi all,

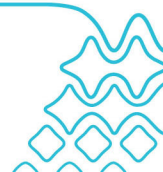
Thank you for participating in the recent mid-session survey.

At this time I indicated that I needed a brief summary of your results for your subject and potential actions that would be fed back to the students.

I have attached an example of one that has prepared for a sample course. If you can prepared something similar from your subject for this semester then you have the starting point to reflect on the issues raised by the students. Remember to focus on both what they are thinking is working well as well as the items that are not going so well.

Remember if you have any questions or wish to discuss the responses that you have received from the students please contact me.

Thanks



Appendix 4: Sample staff reflection on student feedback

The mid-session survey provides a good opportunity to collect student feedback and then to improve the teaching and the subject in the second half of the semester. The summary from the survey for [SUBJECT CODE] is addressed below:

1. Response rate: 18%- [SUBJECT CODE]
2. The students in the subject indicate that
 - a) the subject is very interesting and very useful;
 - b) the subject materials are well defined, structured, and integrated;
 - c) students indicate that the general atmosphere within the classes made the subject enjoyable.
3. There are two negative points, which are
 - a) It's hard to understand the lecturer because of the lecturer accent; and
 - b) some of the practical exercises seem too simple.

In regard to improving the quality of teaching and learning, the lecturer will take the following three actions that correspond to the students feedback:

- (i) provide extra consultation hours for students;
- (ii) record lectures;
- (iii) provide some more difficult practical exercises for the more advanced students.



Appendix 5: Questions for staff re the mid-session feedback process

Staff focus groups – Consideration of the mid-session student feedback process

Brief intro: A mid-semester student feedback process was trialled across several Business Faculty courses in April this year. Each of you participated in this process, with students responding to a set of questions addressing the quality of teaching and of their learning experience. The mode of response was either to a survey questionnaire (print or online) or through a focus group. (Have copies of the survey form/ focus group questions available for them to look at).

1. Do you think that offering students the opportunity to provide teaching staff with feedback mid-semester adds value to the course? If so, in what ways? If you can see negative aspects to this approach, what are these?
2. With regard to the timing of this survey (Weeks 5/6 or wherever it fitted): Is this the most effective time to get feedback from students? If not, what timing would you suggest?
3. To what extent do you think students value opportunities to provide feedback in this way?
4. Can you tell me how this feedback process occurred for your classes?
5. Please have a look at the first page of survey questions, which asked students to provide quantitative feedback on aspects of their lecturer's teaching. With regard to these 13 statements:
 - a) Are there some which you regard as more important and useful as aspects of your practice on which to receive feedback at this point in the semester? If so, which ones? Why?
 - b) Are there aspects in this list that you consider to be of low relevance or importance to your teaching practice and to the students' success? If so, which ones? Why?
6. With regard to the open-ended questions (Q2, Q3, Q4) do you think these provide sufficient scope for students to provide staff with information that could assist their preparation and presentation in lectures and tutorials? Do you have any suggestions for improving this part of the survey?
7. Arising from this feedback process, what changes have you made, or plan to make, to improve the learning outcomes for students?
8. Are there any outcomes you would like to see that are not within your capacity to implement or respond to?
9. Are there any teaching aspects that you think should be added to/ removed from the survey? Why?
10. If this feedback process is maintained, would you prefer the questionnaire to be completed: (a) in class or out-of-class? (b) print-based or online?
11. Do you have any other ideas or observations about this process that you would like the staff involved to consider for the future?



Appendix 6: Questions for students re the mid-session feedback process

Student focus group follow-up and review of the mid-session course feedback process

Earlier this semester, as part of a national project looking at ways to improve the quality of teaching in Business Education, and its recognition and acknowledgement by the Universities involved, a process of mid-semester data gathering was introduced. This initiative drew strongly on views and recommendations gathered by the project team during an extensive focus group program carried out across the five University partners in 2009.

The mid-semester course feedback process, conducted in various forms by the participating universities, used a standard set of questions which were presented either: a) in print/ online form, with provision for written responses, or b) via a focus group/ discussion process.

Results have been collected at this university, and consolidated feedback provided to each of the teachers who agreed to participate. (Here you might mention how many teachers/ subjects/ groups were involved.)

Because this process forms part of initiatives being taken by this University, along with others involved in this project, we would like to take some time to consider the process and the outcomes of this initiative from your point of view as one of the students involved in the courses which we surveyed.

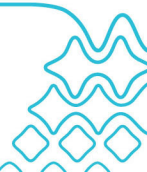
Questions (should allow about 30 – 40 minutes for this process - it would assist this discussion for participants to have a sample of the survey questionnaire to consider).

1. Did you have the opportunity to complete the survey for one of your courses (subjects)? If so, was this conducted in class/ out of class? Print-based/ online?
2. Do you think that offering students the opportunity to provide teaching staff with feedback mid-semester adds value to the course? If so, in what ways? If you can see negative aspects to this approach, what are these?
3. Are you aware of any outcomes from this survey? For example, has anything changed in your course that you think may be a result of the survey?
4. Please have a look at the first survey question, which asked students to provide quantitative feedback on aspects of their lecturer's teaching. With regard to these 13 statements:
a) Which do you regard as the 3 most important? Why?
b) Are there aspects in this list that you consider to be of low relevance or importance to your learning? If so, which ones?
5. Are there any teaching aspects that you think should be added to the survey?
6. With regard to the open-ended questions (Q2, Q3, Q4) do you think these provide sufficient scope for students to provide staff with information that could assist their preparation and presentation in lectures and tutorials? Do you have any suggestions for improving this part of the survey?
7. Issues identified by students through this survey process in various courses/



subjects have included (Give up to 3 examples). Staff have been able to consider these issues/ suggestions and make changes where they think that learning outcomes would be better. Do you think that the survey as presented: (a) is useful? (b) is a good use of your time? (c) should be continued in some form?

8. With regard to the timing of this survey (Weeks 5/6 or wherever it fitted): Is this the most effective time to get feedback from students? If not, what timing would you suggest?
9. To what extent do you think students value opportunities to provide feedback in this way?
10. If this feedback process is maintained, would you prefer to complete the questionnaire (a) in class or out-of-class? (b) print-based or online?
11. Do you have any other ideas or observations about this process that you would like the staff involved to consider for the future?



Appendix 7: Revised mid-session survey

Mid session survey for [SUBJECT CODE]

Please complete the following questions in relation to [SUBJECT CODE].

Your responses are confidential. To ensure your confidentiality do not add any information on this form that might identify who you are.

In response to each statement, select one option only, and mark the preferred box with an X.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No opinion
1. My lecturer has extensive subject knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My lecturer is enthusiastic about the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content of each session is well planned and sequenced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. There are opportunities provided for me to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 There are opportunities provided for me to interact with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My lecturer uses 'real world' examples to stimulate interest in the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. My lecturer is able to explain and clarify things in different ways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The lectures integrate the resource materials provided in the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Open Ended Questions – Please give your responses in brief sentences or point form

1. What do you think is working well in this subject?

2. What would you like to see changed in this subject?

3. What would you like to see changed in this course?



Appendix 8: Questions for morning tea with the Dean

Can you tell me about your experiences with your courses? (I would appreciate you telling me which course you are referring to).

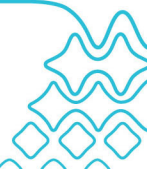
Examples

- Lecturer has extensive knowledge
- Lecture is well planned
- Enthusiasm
- Good use of time
- Covers learning style that I prefer
- Plenty of opportunity to ask questions
- Plenty of interaction
- Lecturer responds well to questions in clear way
- Real world examples
- Technology

What works well?

What needs improvement?

What qualities are you looking for in your teachers? (What is a quality teacher?)



Appendix 9: Observer checklist for peer observation of teaching

Mid-semester Peer Review process – Observer Checklist

Ratings proceed from negative (left) to positive (right), from 'strongly disagree -> strongly agree' (N=neutral)

Aspect of teaching performance	Observer response: Place 'x' on scale	Observer comments/ examples
1. Subject knowledge/expertise		
1.1 Lecturer shows knowledge in the subject area	<div> <div></div> <div>SDA</div> <div></div> <div>DA</div> <div></div> <div>N</div> <div></div> <div>A</div> <div></div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
1.2 Aims/ learning outcomes of the lecture are made clear	<div> <div></div> <div>SDA</div> <div></div> <div>DA</div> <div></div> <div>N</div> <div></div> <div>A</div> <div></div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
1.3 Content is well planned and sequenced	<div> <div></div> <div>SDA</div> <div></div> <div>DA</div> <div></div> <div>N</div> <div></div> <div>A</div> <div></div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
1.4 'Real world' examples are used to clarify concepts and ideas	<div> <div></div> <div>SDA</div> <div></div> <div>DA</div> <div></div> <div>N</div> <div></div> <div>A</div> <div></div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
1.5 Material is linked to students' previous learning	<div> <div></div> <div>SDA</div> <div></div> <div>DA</div> <div></div> <div>N</div> <div></div> <div>A</div> <div></div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
2. Organisation and delivery		
2.1 Communicates content clearly	<div> <div></div> <div>SDA</div> <div></div> <div>DA</div> <div></div> <div>N</div> <div></div> <div>A</div> <div></div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
2.2 Makes good use of time	<div> <div></div> <div>SDA</div> <div></div> <div>DA</div> <div></div> <div>N</div> <div></div> <div>A</div> <div></div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
2.3 Uses technology and/or learning aids appropriately	<div> <div></div> <div>SDA</div> <div></div> <div>DA</div> <div></div> <div>N</div> <div></div> <div>A</div> <div></div> <div>SA</div> </div>	

2.4 Uses language appropriate to audience	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>SDA</div> <div>DA</div> <div>N</div> <div>A</div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
2.5 Caters for a variety of learning styles	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>SDA</div> <div>DA</div> <div>N</div> <div>A</div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
2.6 Encourages students to interact and work collaboratively (when appropriate)	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>SDA</div> <div>DA</div> <div>N</div> <div>A</div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
2.7 'Value adds' to the materials provided	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>SDA</div> <div>DA</div> <div>N</div> <div>A</div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
3. Lecturer's attitude		
3.1 Shows enthusiasm for the subject	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>SDA</div> <div>DA</div> <div>N</div> <div>A</div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
3.2 Is responsive and interacts with students	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>SDA</div> <div>DA</div> <div>N</div> <div>A</div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
3.3 Treats students with respect	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>SDA</div> <div>DA</div> <div>N</div> <div>A</div> <div>SA</div> </div>	
3.4 Offers process/ ideas for follow-up	<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>SDA</div> <div>DA</div> <div>N</div> <div>A</div> <div>SA</div> </div>	

Other comments/ observations:

Appendix 10: Questions for staff re the peer observation process

Questions to discuss with staff who have been observed within the peer observation and feedback process

You recently participated in a Peer Observation and Feedback process that was conducted by senior staff member from the Faculty of (Name) and (University). This Peer Observation formed part of a series of initiatives that the University is undertaking to increase its awareness of and responsiveness to Quality Teaching.

I am delighted that you have agreed to be interviewed about the value, strengths and weaknesses of this process of Peer Observation and Feedback.

- Q1. When you were approached to consider the option of a peer review, what factors encouraged you to participate?
- Q2. Do you feel that the process and its purpose was clearly explained to you?
- Q3. Have you been offered opportunities for Peer Review previously in your employment with the University? Did you participate in these? Did you feel satisfied with the process? With the outcomes?
- Q4. Were you provided with the material to be used in the Peer review, in particular, the Observer Checklist? If so, were you made aware of this tool before or after the Peer review process was carried out?
- Q5. Do you have a copy of the form available, because I would like to discuss it with you? With regard to the factors identified by this observation instrument, do you feel it covers the key areas adequately?
- Q6. Are there questions that do not seem important to you? If so, why?
- Q7. Are there additional areas that you think should be covered in the Observation Checklist?
- Q8. Did the Peer Review process meet your expectations? If not, in what respects?
- Q9. Have you had a follow-up discussion with your supervisor or a senior academic since completing the Peer Review? Do you feel that the process has been productive so far?
- Q10. How do you think the Peer Review process could be improved?
- Q11. Would you encourage other staff to participate in this process?



Appendix 11: Guidelines for conducting a peer observation

Guidelines for conducting a peer observation

Adapt the Peer Observation Instrument to suit the institutional environment e.g. face to face or online environments.

1. Attend school meetings or similar to discuss peer observation and feedback (or review of online teaching). It is very important to stress that peer review is not for control purposes but may be used for whatever the staff member has identified, eg, personal improvement, promotion, or performance review. Emphasis must also be placed on this being an informal process and not mandatory. Do not be disheartened if you do not have immediate engagement from the staff.
2. The process is more effective if you can have both a learning and teaching expert and a discipline expert.
3. Assist the academic staff member to identify a reviewer for their particular discipline and a suitable learning and teaching expert.
4. Modify the instrument to suit the review to be undertaken i.e. online or face to face.
5. Once times are scheduled (or the online course is identified and access is given to the peer reviewers), provide all stakeholders with a copy of peer observation instrument. Ensure that both the reviewee and the reviewers are happy with the instrument and the process.
6. In the case of face to face classes, the reviewers can both attend the same session to be reviewed or separate sessions but it is important that the instrument is completed independently by each reviewer.
7. If the review is to be undertaken in a face to face session, the students must be advised of the process that is being undertaken.
8. Following the review, each reviewer should discuss the outcomes with the reviewee to ensure they are comfortable with the outcomes.
9. A completed and signed copy of the instrument should then be forwarded to the reviewee for their personal use. Reiterate that the completed peer review document provided is for the personal use only of the academic staff member who requested the review.

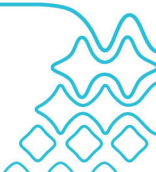


Appendix 12: Student survey to recognise quality teachers

Student Survey of Teaching

[SURVEY PREVIEW MODE] Teaching and Learning Survey

Teaching and Learning Survey	Exit this survey
1. Default Section	
1. The Faculty wants to recognise and reward the academic staff that you have found to be outstanding teachers! For your outstanding teachers can you please answer the following: (Please fill out one for each course)	
Have you found any of your lecturers/tutors to be outstanding?	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	
Lecturer/Tutor Name & Course Name	
<input type="text"/>	
2. If Yes, please select why you think they are outstanding? (Select any that are relevant)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher has extensive knowledge	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching session is well planned (face-to-face or online)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher is enthusiastic	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher uses class time well (or online contact time)	
<input type="checkbox"/> The teacher varies style of teaching in a way that suits me (eg. visual, audio, hands on, practical)	
<input type="checkbox"/> I have plenty of opportunity to ask questions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Interaction is encouraged (face-to-face or online)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher responds well to questions in a clear way	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher uses real world examples	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher uses and encourages use of technology (where appropriate)	
Please provide further comments as this information will be valuable in our Faculty rewards and recognition scheme:	
<input type="text"/>	
3. We like to keep in contact with our students. What is the most effective way for the Faculty to communicate with you?	
(Are your details up to date? If not please update in CQUCentral)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	



- ☐ SMS
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Letter in post
- ☐ Newsletter in post
- ☐ Flyer in post
- ☐ Flyer displayed on campus
- ☐ Announcement on Moodle
- ☐ Social Networking (eg. Twitter, Facebook, Flickr)

Are there are other ways you would like us to communicate with you?

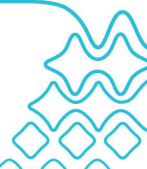
4. We would like to know how you think your Faculty is performing overall. Please rate your satisfaction level.

	Not Satisfied at all									Very Satisfied
Please select	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

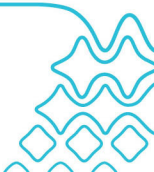
5. Your learning experience is important to us. What can we do to improve your learning experience?

Done



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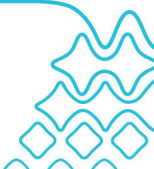
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