

<b>Name of Guidelines</b>	<b>Guidelines for the Development of ACU National UniLink Programs</b>
<b>Description</b>	Unilink programs provide a framework within ACU National Schools and secondary schools to support secondary students in their educational development and/or to encourage or facilitate students to undertake tertiary study.
<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision	

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<b>Officer Responsible</b>	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Academic Registrar

Recommended revisions to

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACU NATIONAL UNILINK PROGRAMS**

### **1. Introduction**

Australian Catholic University aspires to making a strong and visible commitment to access and equity; it also acknowledges the value of joining with the community in teaching and research partnerships which are outcome-focussed, ethically informed and values-based<sup>1</sup>. The establishment of ACU National **UniLink** programs contributes to the achievement of these objectives.

### **2. Objectives and scope of UniLink programs**

**UniLink** programs provide a framework within which ACU National Schools and secondary schools can jointly develop strategies to support secondary students in their educational development and/or to encourage or facilitate students to undertake tertiary study.

**UniLink** programs specifically engage disadvantaged secondary school students and/or their parents or guardians in a variety of strategies to encourage such students to aspire to tertiary study as a career pathway and/or to support their transition from secondary to tertiary study.

The programs are particularly aimed at students and schools (or groups of schools) that are identified as experiencing educational disadvantage. These include those falling within the University's target equity groups, which currently include:

- People from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Australian Indigenous peoples
- Women, particularly in non-traditional fields
- People with disabilities
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- People from rural and isolated areas.

Other disadvantaged groups such as people who have been displaced and refugees may be identified by the University and may include holders of temporary protection visas or humanitarian visas.

It is anticipated that all **UniLink** programs will be developed through partnership arrangements – for example with secondary schools, Catholic Education Offices, diocesan or other agencies. The term 'partner' in this document refers to any one or more organizations which fit this context. Wherever possible, sponsorship for the

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<sup>1</sup> *Our Mission, Our Future* September 2003.

programs should be developed, and the term extends to relevant sponsoring organizations.

### 3. Principles

The development, implementation and review of further **UniLink** programs will be guided by the following principles. **UniLink** programs will:

- Demonstrate concern for justice and equity
- Attend to ACU National's priority equity groups
- Promote student educational aspirations and knowledge of educational pathways and qualifications
- Be jointly developed and delivered by community organisations in partnership with ACU National
- Be sustainable over a defined timeframe with respect to personnel and resources
- Be evidence-based in the form of regular evaluations and reviews of the program that explicitly include student views. Outcomes of the reviews will inform the priorities and strategies of the community organisation and the University.

### 4. Purpose of Guidelines

These Guidelines are designed to:

- (a) assist ACU National Schools that may be contemplating the development of **UniLink** programs by providing a framework for such development; and
- (b) establish a broad structure within which such programs should operate.

**(Note:** UniLink programs are distinct from UniStep-Up programs, which are specifically aimed at enabling year 11/12 secondary school students to study nominated ACU National introductory units. See *Guidelines for the Development of ACU National UniStep-Up Programs*.)

### 5. Initiation of discussions

A proposal for establishment of a **UniLink** program will normally result from a formal or informal initiative by a member of ACU National staff or by a representative from a partner organisation. Preliminary discussions/negotiations may proceed without formal notification, but any staff member involved in such discussions should keep their supervisor (e.g. Head of School, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students, Learning and Teaching) informed of their nature and scope.

Before any arrangement for an activity within the broad scope of the **UniLink** programs is formalised with the partner, approval of the Dean of the relevant Faculty and of the, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students, Learning and Teaching) as overseeing the student equity agenda of ACU National, is required.

## 6. Co-ordination of initiatives within ACU National

To provide a level of co-ordination and cohesion, information regarding initiatives for establishment of **UniLink** programs should be shared with the Faculty Dean and with colleagues on the relevant campus at the earliest opportunity. Reporting of such initiatives may usefully occur through the campus co-ordination/management meetings.

Where more than one School is likely to be involved, the proposal should normally be formulated as a joint initiative. It is advisable to seek comment from the Equity and Equal Opportunity Unit regarding the equity focus of the proposal.

Where necessary or appropriate, the relevant Dean(s), -Associate Vice-Chancellor or Campus Dean may facilitate the appropriate co-ordination.

Such a co-ordinated approach will maximise the use of resources and support the strategic intent of ACU National in pursuing its equity agenda.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students, Learning and Teaching) will also be informed of such developments.

## 7. Proposal to offer a UniLink program

7.1 A formal written proposal is required for any **UniLink** program. The proposal will address such of the following as are relevant:

- (a) The purpose of the program
- (b) For whom the program is to be offered, rationale for its introduction/continuation, the nature of the disadvantage which the program seeks to address
- (c) The key stakeholders, particularly partners in the proposed program
- (d) The components of the program (eg programs for students, training for parents, mentors for students, campus visits etc)
- (e) The relationship of the University with the nominated partners in terms of conduct of the program
- (f) Relationship of the program to the Mission and to the strategic priorities of the University, especially with regard to equity
- (g) The anticipated educational benefit to students, partner organizations and their communities
- (h) Financial plan, including
  - Anticipated costs
  - Anticipated income, including sponsorships or other manner of ameliorating costs
- (i) How the program will be sustained for at least three years, and its sustainability and independence from association with one or more staff members who initially establish the program, particularly if the proposer should no longer be able to support it
- (j) Co-ordination and management arrangements
- (k) Strategies to promote awareness and uptake of the program
- (l) Review and evaluation methodologies.

7.2 Where a proposal arises from an academic staff member, the proposal should be endorsed by the Head of School and submitted to the Dean for approval before formalization of any arrangement with a partner. The Dean will provide the proposal to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Students, Learning and Teaching) and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) for endorsement.

7.3 Approval will normally be given for a maximum of three years in the first instance, with the possibility of further extension after a formal review.

## 8. Roles and responsibilities

The respective roles and responsibilities of the parties and sponsoring organizations should be clearly defined before commencement of the program. They may be drawn from the following or include additional items not listed below:

### *ACU National:*

- Negotiates with the school and/or other partners regarding details of the program and the roles and responsibilities of all parties, including funding and resourcing
- Nominates the co-ordinator for the particular **UniLink** program with whom any partner organisation will liaise
- Works with the partner to determine the content of and ensure the appropriateness of any promotional or program materials, and strategies for their dissemination
- Provides agreed levels of input to the program
- Undertakes a review of the program, in conjunction with the partner and provides a copy of the review report to the Dean, the partner and any sponsor.

### *Secondary school or other partner:*

- Negotiates with ACU National and/or other partners regarding details of the program and the roles and responsibilities of all parties, including funding and resourcing
- Nominates a contact person(s) to undertake liaison with ACU National
- Publicises/promotes the program within the school or other organisation and obtains parental approval of student participation, as appropriate
- Co-ordinates the program within the school/institution and assists with the facilitation of organisational aspects of the program (eg facilitates scheduling of activities to enable student participation in the program, gains parent/guardian approval for participation, organises any travel associated with the program, arranges student completion of feedback surveys and their compilation)
- Provides feedback/updates to participants and, where relevant, to their parents/guardians
- Participates in a review of the program.

### *Other partner with a sponsorship/funding role:*

- Liaises with ACU National and/or other partners regarding the proposed **UniLink** program and funding issues

- Liaises with the school/institution regarding policy and organisational issues from their respective perspectives
- Where appropriate, assists in promoting the program
- Participates in a review of the program.

*Student:*

- Participates in the program and adheres to any requirements of the particular program
- Contributes to a review of the program.

*Parent/guardian:*

- If necessary, endorses student's participation in the program, before their participation commences
- Supports the student and monitors their progress
- Communicates with the school on any issues related to the student's participation in the program
- May be active participants in components of the program (eg parent education component).

## **9. Formal agreement**

A formal agreement must be signed by the relevant Dean on behalf of the University and the school Principal or equivalent on behalf of the school or any other partner before any **UniLink** program commences. Where staff of more than one Faculty contribute to the program, it will normally suffice if the agreement is signed by the Dean of the Faculty from which the program has been initiated.

The agreement should clearly specify the commitments and responsibilities of the respective parties and the duration of the agreement.

## **10. Evaluation and Review**

10.1 There will be an annual evaluation of each program which will evaluate the operation of the program and identify opportunities for improvement for future offerings.

10.2 The ACU National co-ordinator, together with representatives of any partner organisations, will undertake a formal review, during the third year of operation. The review will include information such as:

- Level of participation
- Outcome of previous evaluations and review of the program
- Costs incurred and offsetting sponsorship or other income/support
- Benefits gained by the University, students, parents/guardians, representatives of partner organizations and other relevant personnel
- Impacts on staff workloads
- Recommendations regarding future offering of the program.

10.3 The report on the formal review will be provided to the relevant Dean, the Head of School, the School Principal and equivalent officer of any other partner organisation.