1. Introduction

Australian Catholic University shares with other higher education institutions a strong commitment to high quality teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The University is aware that its reputation is based on its ability to excel in teaching and to produce quality graduates. The Academic Board has endorsed a Policy on Quality Teaching and Learning that includes a range of strategies available to academic staff to encourage the development of more effective teaching and learning.

The literature on effective teaching in higher education stresses that there is no straightforward formula, no single way of helping people to learn. Students testify that they have learned well in various contexts, from a variety of teaching styles, ranging from the charismatic brilliant lecturer to the non-interventionist, supportive facilitator. The complexity of change challenges universities to address the individual needs of their students while providing diverse approaches to teaching and learning, which reflect the talents of the academic staff.

In order to encourage the exploration of innovative teaching and learning initiatives, the University offers each year a number of Teaching Development Grants. Applications are invited from individuals or groups of staff for projects which will foster and facilitate improved practice in teaching and learning. Each group should nominate a Project Leader who must be a member of the academic staff, or Joint Leaders, at least one of whom must be a member of the academic staff. A Project Leader can fulfil that role for only one Teaching Development Grant in any given year. Project teams may include members other than academic staff, such as Academic Skills Advisers or Library staff, etc, subject to prior approval from their supervisor(s). Applications which address priorities of the Strategic Plan, including from cross-disciplinary teams, are encouraged.

2. The Project

A Teaching Development Grant project eligible for funding is designed to improve student learning. The proposed approach in the project will be either new in itself or a new application of an existing approach (eg transferred from a different discipline) or will seek to address a problem or enhancement in teaching and/or learning. Teaching Development Grants encourage practical innovations in teaching and experimental developments which support student learning. They do not support projects in which research into teaching is a major component. They can include research/evaluation of the intervention proposed in the grant application.

The project will be expected to:

- have a demonstrated relationship to the promotion of student learning as outlined in the University’s Strategic Plan;
- lead to practical improvements in teaching, learning and/or assessment either within a discipline or more generally;
- integrate successfully into the total learning process for the relevant course of study;
- address possible obstacles to implementation; and
- avoid the exact replication of other innovative work undertaken within ACU.
3. Projects Ineligible for Grants

Grants are not available for:

- projects whose major focus is staff development;
- teaching, course development and evaluation projects that are part of a lecturer’s normal duties.

4. Selection Criteria

The criteria used in recommending proposals for funding are:

- distinctiveness, coherence and clarity of purpose;
- influence on student learning and student engagement;
- breadth of impact;
- concern for equity and diversity; and
- demonstrated awareness of other innovations related to the area of the proposal and avoidance of exact replication of other innovations within ACU.

5. Application Process

- Applicants for Teaching Development Grants should use the application pro-forma.
- All details should be provided within a total of five (5) A4 pages (excluding space for the signature of each applicant and his/her supervisor).
- Applications should be presented in 12 point Times New Roman font.
- Applications should include a detailed budget with justification for each item.
- Applications should include an explanation of the project’s stages and costs.
- The application needs to be signed by each person named in the application and their supervisor.

*It is the responsibility of the applicant(s) to ensure that the requirements in relation to the application process are followed correctly. Applications which do not conform with the requirements of the application process will not be considered.*

6. Project Budget and Justification

Teaching Development Grants are only intended to meet the direct operating expenses of an approved project. Costs associated with general-purpose equipment will normally be excluded.

The grants will not normally meet the cost of:

- equipment which can reasonably be expected to be available within Schools/campuses;
- overseas travel;
- extensive interstate travel;
- conference attendance;
- preparation of journal articles and conference presentations;
- external evaluations; or
- secretarial or consumable items (stationery, fax etc), unless clearly integral to the project.
A close match is expected between the proposed and actual expenditure patterns. Formal approval from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) is needed in advance for any significant variation from the approved budget. Grants for projects will normally be of the order of $5,000. In exceptional circumstances a case may be made for higher funding.

7. Successful Applications

The Teaching Development Grants and Awards Committee, through the Chair, makes recommendations to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) in relation to the funding of applications. Advice will be given to all applicants late in 2008, enabling successful applicants to begin their projects from the beginning of 2009.

A report of not more than five (5) A4 pages will be required on the completion of each project. The report should include three (3) parts:

i. an outline of project processes and outcomes;
ii. an outline of any variations from the initial proposal plus reasons for these;
iii. a copy of the project account financial statement issued by the ACU Directorate of Finance.

Any manuals, computer programs or other resources produced as part of the project should accompany the report.

Part i. of the report may be made publicly available within the University by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs). Parts ii. and iii. will be available to Committee members only. The report will be due by 27 November 2009.

Grant recipients will be expected to:

- present the results of their project in a seminar for staff arranged by the Teaching and Learning Committee of the University;

OR

- conduct a workshop for staff on the development of a successful project application and act as mentors to staff working on applications. The workshop will be arranged by the Teaching and Learning Committee of the University. The workshop may be conducted by videoconference.

Any enquiries regarding Teaching Development Grants should be addressed to:

Director, Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning
OR
Chair, Teaching Development Grants and Awards Committee

8. 2008 Membership of the Teaching Development Grants and Awards Committee

Professor Peta Goldburg rsm, Chair (Deputy Chair of Academic Board)
Director, Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning
Professor Philip Clarkson
Dr Annette Cunliffe rsm
Professor Barry Fallon
Professor Paul Fulbrook
Dr Wayne Maschette
Dr Cecelia Winkelman
Ms Sarah Rose, Student Senate Representative