

<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>Professional Learning for Academic Staff Policy</b>
<b>Description of Policy</b>	<i>This policy aims to assist in the development of academic staff to promote improved performance in support of the University and the work, career and personal goals of each individual member of the academic staff.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision	
<b>Description of Revision</b>	<i>Delete</i> <i>Please type brief description of the deletion and specify information to be deleted</i>
	<i>Insert</i> <i>Please type brief description of the insert and specify information to be inserted</i>

**Personnel Relations and Equal Opportunity Directorate**

<b>Policy and Revision Number</b>	
<b>Original Effective Date</b>	
<b>Review Due Date</b>	
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<b>Vice-Chancellor's Approval Date</b>	6 March 2007

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## **1. Background Information**

Australian Catholic University is committed to a working environment where professional learning is seen as a continuous process, which enables all members of academic staff to develop their skills and effectiveness in support of individual and institutional goals and priorities. It recognises the value of professional learning to achieving academic excellence, to the efficient and effective operation of the University, and to the work, career and personal goals of each individual member of the academic staff.

Professional learning for academic staff includes all that is done to maintain and extend their knowledge and skills so that they can contribute fully towards the achievement of goals of the University. Fundamental to this Policy is the premise that professional learning for academic staff should be considered from both the viewpoint of the needs of the individual and of the University. Professional learning thus supports the personal and professional needs of academic staff themselves, as well as the organisational development needs of the University. It is a vital investment from which staff, students, the University itself and the wider community will benefit. Of particular importance for academic staff are ongoing development of teaching and research skills, and maintaining currency in the disciplines on which the University's programs are based.

## **2. Policy Statement**

Academic staff will be provided with opportunities for professional learning, which are consistent with the Mission and Strategic Plan of the University and the provisions of the enterprise agreement. These opportunities will be compatible with this Policy and University policies on Academic Staff Probation, Academic Staff Study Support, Equal Employment Opportunity, Workloads for Academic Staff, Occupational Health and Safety, the Performance Review and Planning Program for Academic Staff, the Outside Studies Program, Professional Pursuits Accounts and Quality Management.

The following principles inform this Policy:

- access to appropriate professional learning should, in principle, be available to all academic staff;
- professional learning for academic staff should draw on the skills and knowledge of staff as much as possible;
- all academic staff are expected to participate in professional learning activities aimed at improving the University's academic excellence and the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations;
- academic supervisors are directly responsible, in consultation with each staff member, for the identification of professional learning needs of their staff, and for ensuring that identified needs are addressed, to the extent practicable;
- while involvement in professional learning is generally voluntary, academic supervisors ensure that their staff are regularly participating in programs related to achievement of the goals identified through the Performance Review and Planning Program for Academic Staff; and
- all academic staff are expected to undertake any training provided by the University in the requirements of legislation and in their responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to its implementation and ongoing management under the Compliance Training Policy.

### **3. Policy Purpose**

The overall purpose of professional learning for academic staff is to assist the development of each individual and thereby promote improved performance in support of the University's goals and priorities.

To this end, the objectives of the Policy on Professional Learning for Academic Staff and the University's Professional Learning Programs for Academic Staff are to:

- allow academic staff to take responsibility for their ongoing professional learning;
- link academic staff professional learning and training with the Mission, goals and Strategic Plan of the University;
- foster excellence in the University's teaching and learning, research and research training, and community engagement;
- develop the skills of staff so that they carry out their current and prospective roles more efficiently and effectively and gain greater job satisfaction;
- provide activities which further the professional and career development needs of academic staff identified through the Performance Planning and Review Program for Academic Staff;
- develop leadership skills and potential;
- maintain and improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency;
- promote evidence-based practice, strategic readiness and an enterprise culture;
- improve and develop the ability of academic staff to respond constructively to change;
- increase flexible delivery of quality programs;
- ensure that adequate provision is made to provide professional learning or training programs so that the University meets its statutory obligations; and
- develop a culture, which recognises that professional learning for academic staff is a continuous process, which requires commitment to improve performance by individual staff members, supervisors and the University's Executive Team.

### **4. Application of Policy**

This policy applies to all academic staff employed by the University.

### **5. Procedures**

#### **5.1 Responsibility for Professional Learning and Training of Academic Staff**

The ultimate responsibility for the development of work-related skills and knowledge rests with each academic staff member. The effectiveness of any professional learning activity depends on the active and purposeful participation of the individuals involved. All academic staff are expected to support professional learning activities so that the benefits they bring to both the University and individual staff members are maximised.

Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Heads of School and other supervisory staff are responsible for facilitating professional learning for academic staff in their areas of responsibility. Academic supervisors have an important role in identifying the professional learning needs of their staff. They are expected to support the overall staff development program by encouraging and facilitating participation in professional learning activities by their staff. They are also responsible for implementing the Performance Review and Planning Program for Academic Staff within their area of

responsibility. Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deans and Heads of School also have a responsibility for ensuring that staff undertake any training provided by the University in the requirements of legislation and in their responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to its implementation and ongoing management under the Compliance Training Policy.

The Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (IATL) is responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of the University's Professional Learning Programs for Academic Staff. Other areas of the University, for example, the Faculties, Research Services, the Academic Skills Unit, ACUonline and the Library, collaborate with the IATL in the facilitation and provision of professional learning for academic staff.

## **5.2 Professional Learning Opportunities for Academic Staff**

University-supported initiatives to develop academic staff skills and effectiveness include:

- professional learning and training activities organised by the IATL, Research Services and other organisational units;
- the Outside Studies Program [see the Academic Staff Outside Studies Program Policy];
- the University Teaching and Learning Evaluation Program offered each semester;
- secondment to the IATL and internal research secondments;
- secondment to other higher education institutions and professional placements related to the work of the University;
- support to attend conferences;
- financial assistance to full-time academic staff, who successfully complete accredited postgraduate university units/courses undertaken by coursework [see the Academic Staff Study Support Policy];
- the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Scheme (TALES), which supports initiatives leading to enhancement of quality teaching and learning;
- Teaching Development Grants;
- seminars by TALES, Teaching Development Grant, Excellence in Teaching Award and Carrick Citation recipients;
- support to attend professional learning programs and seminars offered by external bodies (for example, the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and Universities Australia);
- the Library's information literacy training;
- Faculty and School professional learning activities, such as conferences, seminars, presentations and workshops;
- encouragement for staff to join and participate actively in professional associations relevant to their specific discipline; and
- enabling staff to utilise Professional Pursuits Accounts to undertake externally offered professional learning and training, and to attend conferences and other scholarly activities.

## **6. Management Focus Group for Academic Staff Professional Learning**

The University has a Management Focus Group for Academic Staff Professional Learning (MFGASPL) comprising the Director, IATL (Chair), the Associate Deans and the Director, Flexible Teaching and Learning. The MFGASPL assists in promoting professional learning for academic staff across the University in teaching and learning, research and research training, and community engagement, by providing advice and recommendations on needs and priorities to the Pro- Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

## **7. Policy Review**

The University may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this Policy may forward their suggestions to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

## **8. Further Assistance**

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy should first consult their nominated supervisor. Should further advice be needed, they should contact the Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning or the Personnel Relations Consultant responsible for their campus.

## **9. Related Policies**

Compliance Training Policy;

Policies on Probation for Academic Staff;

Policies on Promotion for Academic Staff;

Policy on Academic Staff Study Support;

Policy on Evaluation of Teaching and Learning;

Policy on Performance Review and Planning for Academic Staff;

Policy on the Outside Studies Program;

Policy on the Performance Review and Planning Program for Academic Staff;

Policy on Workloads for Academic Staff.