

# **Learning without borders: Linking development of transnational leadership roles to international and cross-cultural teaching excellence**

## **Project Summary**

Based on challenges faced and expertise gained by academics when delivering programs with transnational partners, the outcomes of this project will identify, support and recognise leadership roles amongst academics at on and off-shore Australian campuses.

Working with subject convenors and program coordinators responsible for interacting with transnational partners for program delivery and QA, we will identify key issues for leadership and in particular, the nature of distributed leadership in these roles. Focusing on both the knowledge base and broader experiences of these staff members, we will explore and initiate support and development models for wider implementation. Trials of these development and support mechanisms will be evaluated in an action research cycle with a particular concern with effectiveness from the participant perspective.

The outcomes of these evaluations will be used to develop and disseminate guidelines and good practice examples that provide a framework for the development of academics in these roles. They will also provide the basis for ongoing implementation of programs and structures within the partner institutions. Outcomes will include sustainable approaches to achieving both 'two-way' internationalisation of the curriculum and improvements in cross-cultural learning.

## **Introduction**

International education is currently Australia's third highest export earner and a key component of the contemporary Australian Higher Education scene, and internationalisation of the student cohort is rapidly being embraced by all Australian universities. Further, as institutions operate more widely overseas through partner institutions and off-shore campuses, the makeup of the 'domestic and international' cohorts depends on the context. For example, Malaysian nationals may be classified as international students at Curtin and Swinburne's on-shore campuses, but as 'the locals' at our campuses located within Sarawak, Malaysia, while Australian students become 'international' students when they undertake student mobility programs at these off-shore locations.

Transnational education (hereafter referred to as TNE) and cross-cultural diversity issues are now key factors within the daily roles of Australian teaching academics, not only in terms of the local classroom experience but also their involvement in broader teaching, curriculum and quality assurance issues associated with off-shore program delivery. Local staff and students work and study with their international peers, and staff members with TNE responsibilities liaise with their opposite numbers at overseas campuses and partner institutions. Significant numbers of staff members regularly travel off-shore to conduct classes, carry out quality assurance (QA) responsibilities, or lead study tours. This can involve a two-way process, as off-shore staff members take on leadership roles in the development and implementation of TNE curricula and associated QA responsibilities. Academic visits are also carried out by members of off-shore campuses to their parent campuses, in order to discuss academic matters relating to teaching programs.

Teaching academics, both on-shore and off-shore, find their time increasingly divided between traditional teaching, research and administration responsibilities and new commitments to TNE liaison, QA and off-shore teaching stints. Curtin's AUQA Report (AUQA, 2009) noted that "some unit coordinator workloads may be too high, especially those working across multiple partners" (p. 33). There is increasing awareness of the need to support and develop the capacity of academic leaders located at on-shore and off-shore locations in managing the international aspects of their roles (Jones & Brown, 2007; Leask, 2009). However systematic, structured and sustainable support frameworks for this purpose are still not common, and the ways in which these roles can contribute to a successful career path are frequently unclear. As is the case more generally (Scott et al, 2008), academics are more likely to undertake leadership roles in TNE if they can be confident

that their efforts can be recognised as contributing to successful career paths, through workload and promotion policies and allocation of formal leadership roles.

### **Academic leadership in an international and cross-cultural context**

The many changes that have occurred in higher education over the past quarter of a century have required universities to place a much greater focus on the idea of leadership than was hitherto the case (Middlehurst, 1993; Marshall, 2006; Bryam, 2007). Pressures generated from decreased government funding, the need to generate new incomes, increased government reporting and scrutiny, the demands of larger and more diverse student cohorts, and greater accountability pressures from the community have all served, as Scott et al. (2009) suggest, “to test the extent to which institutions and their leaders are ‘change capable’” (p. xiii). These challenges are further compounded by the looming problem of succession, as a large cohort of senior academic leaders moves into retirement (Coates et al, 2008).

The need for universities to build leadership capability has seen a major research effort in recent times aimed at better understanding the nature of academic leadership, including what distinguishes it from leadership in other professional domains (Scott et al, 2009, Southwell et al, 2006). The consensus view is that effective leadership in the academy is at heart a “collaborative endeavour” founded on the collegial nature of academic work (Rost, 1993; Ramsden, 1998; Scott et al, 2009), and that this distinctive character necessarily implies a more “distributed” as opposed to “focused” approach to leading (Gronn, 2002). As Scott et al (2009) describe it:

“leadership in universities is not something that happens ‘at the top’ - it must be spread appropriately and operate in an explicitly understood and complementary way throughout the organization” (p. 68)

It is thought further that the qualities that go to make an effective academic leader are also tied to this specific educational domain. Thus, it is argued that an individual’s capacity to lead change is best indicated by their abilities as both teacher and learner within the academy. As Scott et al (2009) explain:

“The approach, attitude and interpersonal strategies found to be most effective in helping staff make a desired change [fit] closely with those used by the most successful higher educators with their students.” (p. xvi)

Whilst the idea of leadership has assumed far greater importance in institutions, it is generally held that this need has not really been matched by the development of effective processes to identify and nurture academic leaders. Criticism is made, for example, of an over-reliance on formal, generic programs of leadership training, ones that have their origins in contexts quite separate from the academy. Marshall (2006) argues that to be effective, such development processes must always relate to the basic educational endeavours of the university and “to ensure that explorations of leadership ... are grounded in discussions and efforts to improve teaching and learning” (p. 10).

Scott et al (2009) refer to a range of pressures that impinge on our universities, ones that call increasingly for “new approaches to academic leadership”. An additional pressure, not referred to in Scott et al (2009), relates to the particular challenges posed by the forces of globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education, described by Knight (2003) as an area of “unparalleled interest and debate” for the sector.

Conceptions of internationalisation have shown a progressive shift over the last decade away from a limited ‘infusion’ approach (van der Wende, 2000), involving mainly the “adding on” of international perspectives to pre-existing programs, towards a far more comprehensive and ‘holistic’ approach (de Vita, 2007) where the goal is to achieve “the integration of an international, intercultural and global dimension into the purpose, function and delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight 2004, p. 11). Moving to this “next generation” phase, requires, as Webb (2005) suggests, an organisation-wide approach so that the worthy, but

sometimes ad hoc efforts of enthusiasts, can be turned into the ‘normalised expectations and requirements’ of the institution. Significantly, Webb goes on to suggest that:

“Such culture change cannot be effected by university edict alone, but [can only happen] through the creative utilisation of the imagination and agency of those ... engaged in internationalisation processes.” (p. 117).

Increasingly important contexts for realising such cultural change are university transnational off-shore programs – once a ‘cottage industry’, but now very much ‘core business’ in international education (Leask, 2004). McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) go further and suggest that TNE is now “at the leading edge of the most fundamental changes taking place in higher education today” (p. 1).

Developments in the area of TNE parallel in many respects the changing conceptualisation of internationalisation in higher education as a whole. Thus, existing TNE models of pedagogy and delivery have been criticised in recent times for their tendency to rely on one-way, culturally-hegemonic forms of exchange, where curriculum is typically developed within the home institution, and then passed on to local staff at the off-shore site for delivery. Such an approach is thought to be flawed not only for its inherently ‘neo-colonial’ nature (Pennycook 1998; Brown & Jones, 2007), but also for its failure to take up significant opportunities for intercultural exchange and learning (Leask, 2004). The emerging alternative model is an “intercultural community of practice” approach (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Dunn & Wallace, 2005), where the active engaging of local expertise is seen as indispensable to the development of successful TNE programs (Leask, 2004; Dunn & Wallace, 2005; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; O’Donoghue et al, 2009). Moreover, transnationality in education increasingly involves the interactions of more than just a ‘home’ and a ‘host’ culture: internationalised student and staff communities bring a multitude of cultural experiences and perspectives to the transnational project at any one location.

While a number of recent empirical studies on the intercultural dimension of TNE partnerships point to the challenges in achieving such collaboration (Eldridge & Cranston, 2009; Walton & Guarisco, 2007), there is evidence of growing success on such programs, and also of an emergent intercultural expertise being developed among those who lead them (Leask, 2004). A number of important leadership capacities have been identified. Leask (2007), for example, sees the essential qualities as including not only being an “effective intercultural learner”, but also “an effective manager of an intercultural learning environment” (p. 87). For Adler (2002), the key to effective leadership in such an environment is knowing “when cultural diversity should be leveraged, and when it should be minimised”, so as to ensure a balance between creativity and agreement.

Significantly, it is suggested that successful TNE episodes can serve as a capacity-building academic development activity across the institution as a whole (Connelly et al, 2006; Leask et al, 2005; Dunn & Wallace, 2005). As Leask (2004) explains:

the integration of experiences, practices and processes ‘there’ with experiences, practices and processes ‘here’ will assist us to improve teaching and learning outcomes in all students and, in particular, our stated goal of developing international perspectives (p. 4).

Leask goes on to suggest that the benefits of this emergent TNE expertise in institutions have only recently begun to be recognised and utilised.

At this point in the evolution of Australia’s international higher education programs, there is a need then to find out more about the processes and qualities that make for successful intercultural communication and collaboration - and also to find ways by which distributed models of academic leadership can be drawn on to strengthen and transform the international outlook and capacity of institutions.

## **Project Rationale**

This project focuses on program coordinators and unit convenors/coordinators involved in TNE roles (hereafter 'TNE academic leaders'). They represent a distributed group of leaders within Faculties who often have TNE coordination roles 'thrust upon them', when their institutional managers decide that their programs and units are to be delivered off-shore. As well as providing leadership to on-campus teaching teams, at short notice and with little preparation they can find themselves liaising at a distance with off-shore colleagues whom they may not have met, about curriculum, delivery and QA issues, all within unfamiliar cultural and social contexts.

The institutions involved in this proposal, Swinburne and Curtin, have established overseas campuses in Sarawak, Malaysia, where academic colleagues are involved in TNE liaison and QA activities with their Australia-based 'opposite numbers'. These off-shore academic leaders can also be called upon to oversee delivery of programs by other overseas partners. Off-shore based academics share many of the leadership challenges of their Australian based colleagues, but within different cultural and social contexts, and from the often challenging perspective of the 'branch campus'. They are required to contextualise the curriculum, manage the QA requirements and assume complementary leadership roles in what can be complex environments. Further, while career development opportunities for off-shore academics can be limited due to curriculum restrictions and limited research facilities, their experience in handling internationalisation and cross-cultural issues represent a particular area in which these academics can provide institutional leadership. For example, Swinburne's 2008 AUQA Report noted that "collaboration between the Melbourne and the Sarawak campuses has contributed to the international outlook of staff" (AUQA, 2008: 28). As a second example, Curtin Sarawak is exploring opportunities for more collaboration with Curtin Australia through Curtin's Curriculum 2010 initiatives, which involve integrating industry, internationalisation and interdisciplinary components into the programs being offered.

Curtin's AUQA Report noted that "A number of students, both on-shore and off-shore, thought that academic and general staff could do with more cross-cultural training" (AUQA, 2009, p.28). This proposed project aims to provide professional development to support the on-going development of bilateral understanding between on-shore and off-shore academic leaders.

Admittedly no single 'off the rack' induction and professional development package is likely to address all the varied challenges and cultural contexts that academics meet in transnational delivery roles. However well designed approaches that draw on the perspectives of expert TNE academic leaders could provide the space and framework for teaching staff to identify, reflect upon and discuss key issues, be mentored by experienced 'fellow travellers' (Scott, 2008), develop support networks, and be directed to useful resources. Swinburne's 2008 AUQA Report noted "staff's expression of the need for staff development to internationalise their outlook and incorporate internationalisation into their curricula and teaching" (AUQA, 2008, p.28). This project will review good practice examples of professional development for internationalisation, and recommend ways in which the expertise of TNE academic leaders can be tapped for continuous improvement of approaches to professional development.

Considerable expertise with transnational issues does exist amongst many experienced TNE academic leaders. However while these internationalisation roles maintain a low profile within day-to-day activities, opportunities are missed to capitalize on their ability to add international perspectives to leadership, curriculum design and teaching practice. Although TNE is now a key factor in the international reputation of Australian education, QA and improvement in TNE delivery are unlikely to be advanced in the absence of systematic ways to support and capitalize on the expertise of academic leaders.

We propose to review and enhance current institutional induction processes and professional development activities at Swinburne and Curtin in order to highlight internationalisation and cross-cultural issues more strongly. This will involve collaboration between TNE academic leaders at local and off-shore campuses in

order to avoid an Australia-centric view of internationalisation, and to give both groups the opportunity to contribute their perspectives to online discussions of internationalisation and cross-cultural aspects of their teaching practice.

As noted earlier, Marshall (2006) states that “little effort appears to be made to ... ensure that explorations of leadership and leadership development are grounded in discussions and efforts to improve learning and teaching” (p. 6). We will link support and development for academic leaders at both on-shore and off-shore campuses to promotion of ‘two-way internationalisation of the curriculum’. Swinburne’s AUQA Report (AUQA, 2008) observed that “embedding internationalisation in the curriculum appears patchy and hinges on the awareness and knowledge of the individual staff” (p. 27). Universities are in the early days of grappling with the impact of Australia’s role in international education on the taught curriculum and the student learning experience – ‘internationalisation of the curriculum’ is a much discussed but still rather poorly focused concept. We propose to explore the possibilities of linking the reflective component of professional development and support for academic leaders, to the integration of newly-gained internationalisation perspectives back into their teaching practice and program design. Further, the development of sustainable approaches to meet the needs of novices to these leadership roles could provide an opportunity to advance internationalisation of the curriculum issues past the usual audience of enthusiasts and early adopters.

Consistent with the perspectives of Scott et al (2008) on ‘leaders as learners’, we argue that the development of leadership skills potentially represents a transformational, experiential learning experience.

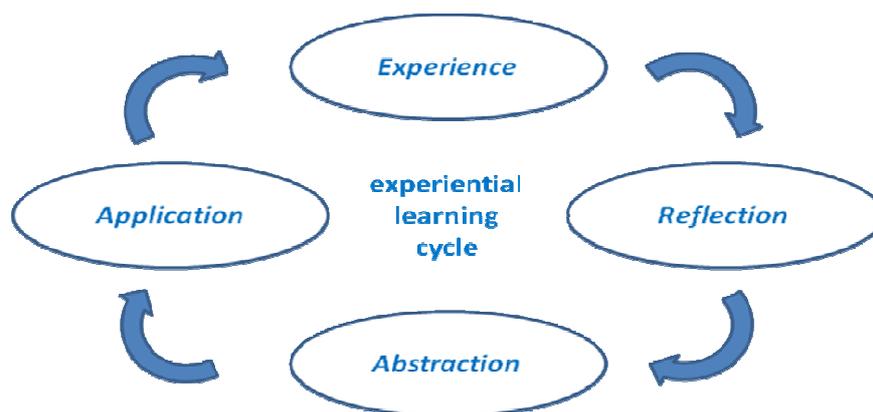


Figure 1

Scott et al (2008) concluded that “learning on-the-job is the most preferred strategy for acquiring and developing the capabilities required for effective leadership” (p. 97). Consistent with this observation, we characterise the development of TNE leadership abilities by on-shore or off-shore academic leaders in terms of a 4-step *experiential learning cycle* (Kolb, 1984), as summarised in Figure 1 above.

We conceptualise this learning cycle as containing the following premises, to be elaborated and tested within the Project:

### **Experience**

Teaching academics who have been ‘thrust into’ TNE leadership roles develop their leadership skills experientially, within the context of international and cross-cultural learning and teaching and quality assurance. An important aspect of the role of TNE academic leader is the development of international perspectives, together with effective cross-cultural communications with colleagues at international campuses and/or in international partner organisations.

### **Reflection**

For on-shore and off-shore TNE leaders who are new to their roles, appropriate induction, professional development and mentoring opportunities ‘on the job’ can provide support and time for personal reflection,

and the insights and practice of more experienced TNE academic leaders can be useful in supporting their development as academic leaders. TNE academic leaders typically need to work with their transnational colleagues to review and renew their curriculum on an ongoing basis, in order to ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' in more than one national and cultural context.

### **Abstraction**

Given effective support, scaffolding and recognition within their institution, the insights on internationalisation and cross cultural approaches that these academics obtain as they develop their TNE leadership roles can enhance their leadership style and profile, both for their TNE roles and more generally within their institution. These insights can also be integrated into their own learning and teaching philosophies.

### **Application**

TNE academic leaders who integrate these insights into their leadership styles and learning and teaching philosophies can influence the teaching practices of colleagues, especially those new to TNE roles, as one would expect for effective academic leaders, and impact positively on the learning experience of students through their own learning and teaching curriculum and practice, within both their home and partner institutions.

These premises will form the basis of initial data gathering (interviews, focus groups, workshops, surveys) amongst a range of TNE academic leaders in both local and international partner organisations. As a result of that data gathering, an evidence-based approach will be used to analyse and also modify these premises where needed, for application within the project. In this way the project team can also be considered to be undertaking an experiential learning cycle during the course of this project.

To ensure sustainability, we will explore approaches to embed the outcomes of this proposed project into policies and procedures, including induction, workload allocations, performance appraisals and promotions, together with QA processes for transnational program delivery. Alignment of institutional policies for workloads, appraisals, promotions etc can empower staff to draw upon their internationalisation roles as evidence for leadership portfolios and as a basis for scholarship activities, spreading leadership potential within the institution, and resulting in beneficial outcomes for both teaching and learning. Our aim is to provide a framework for developing institutional policies to support, evidence and reward TNE leadership as a viable component of a successful career path, for both on-shore and off-shore academics.

### **Project Outcomes and Key Deliverables**

Within the partner institutions, this proposed project will result in improvements to relevant policy, practice and professional development at both on-shore and off-shore campuses.

More generally, this project will produce the following deliverables in support of sector-wide capacity building in academic leadership for transnational program delivery:

#### **Key deliverables**

1. **Models for linking TNE Leadership to teaching excellence:** Good practice examples of policy, practice and professional development approaches that
  - Achieve internationalisation of the taught curriculum and cross-cultural teaching approaches through initiatives by TNE academic leaders, and
  - Incorporate reflective reviews of internationalisation and cross-cultural curriculum and teaching issues systematically into transnational QA policies and practices.
- *Key stakeholders: DVCs/PVCs/Associate Deans (L&T) and Directors of Academic Development units.*

2. **Tools for building the capacity of new TNE Leaders:** A Resource Website and downloadable 'creative commons' Handbook to support TNE academic leaders, including
  - TNE related examples from learning & teaching, scholarship and leadership & service portfolios for promotions and performance reviews,
  - Adaptable online induction tool and process for developing future TNE leaders, both on-shore and off-shore,
  - Analysis of international perspectives of both on-shore and off-shore TNE academic leaders, and
  - Links to related resources.

➤ *Key stakeholders: new TNE leaders/Associate Deans (L&T) and Directors of Academic Development units.*
  
3. **Framework for institutional support and recognition for TNE Leaders:** Checklist of core issues and key questions to support institutional self-audits designed to determine whether policies, procedures and practices are 'fit for purpose' for the support, induction, development, and recognition of TNE academic leaders.
 

➤ *Key stakeholders: DVCs/PVCs/Deans and Heads of Schools.*

### **The method**

We will employ an action research approach in the implementation, action learning, reflection and evaluation components of the project, which in many ways parallels the experiential learning cycle illustrated in Figure 1 above. This process will involve academic leaders at on-shore and off-shore campuses, plus attendees at regional workshops held to gather data, test and refine interim findings and deliverables.

This project will build on the outcomes of ALTC Projects on relevant academic leadership roles and cross-cultural teaching considerations (including Freeman, 2006; Hort, 2008; Jones, 2006; Nagy, 2008; Sanderson, 2008; Scott, 2008; Scott, 2008A; Trivett, 2008, Vilkinas, 2009). Informed by Scott's analysis of academic leaders as learners (Scott, 2008) and mindful of the development of leadership capability as "a complex, multifaceted process that must focus on the development of individuals as well as the organisational contexts in which they are called to operate" (Marshall, 2006, p. 5), this project will investigate, review, trial and disseminate ways to develop academic leaders with responsibilities for aspects of TNE program delivery; provide support and recognition for TNE leadership roles within academic career paths; use knowledge gained to internationalise the taught curriculum and improve cross-cultural learning opportunities for students, and ensure sustainability by embedding outcomes within policies and transnational QA processes.

TNE academic leaders involved in a range of international program offerings by both universities will be invited to be involved to respond to surveys in the data gathering stage. In order to probe issues further that arise from the surveys and also to seek out other perspectives, focus groups will be undertaken with staff at on-shore and off-shore campuses of both universities.

As well as building on synergies between Swinburne and Curtin such as the existence of off-shore campuses in Sarawak, this project will also draw upon contrasting approaches to delivering TNE and supporting academic leaders by the two institutions. Further, two particular (and contrasting) academic areas have agreed to be part of the focus groups and subsequent trialling, feedback and evaluation stages: the engineering discipline at Curtin's Bentley and Miri (Sarawak) campuses, and the business discipline at Swinburne's Lilydale and Kuching (Sarawak) campuses.

Curtin's approach to supporting its engineering TNE programs in Australia and Sarawak is well established, and its engineering academic group contains a number of experienced TNE leaders. This project will explore

using professional development approaches to support the development of the next 'generation' of TNE engineering leaders at Curtin. In contrast, Swinburne business discipline staff at its Lilydale campus have only recently begun liaising with Swinburne's Sarawak campus, and a number of new staff have recently been appointed within the business discipline in Sarawak. Swinburne's focus within this project on supporting the development and career paths of TNE leaders will therefore focus particularly on these novice TNE leaders.

Informed by good practice and expert input, we will review and augment existing induction and professional development activities concerning internationalisation and cross-cultural issues for academic leaders new to TNE delivery. If appropriate, the project will also capitalize upon Swinburne's involvement in trialling a prototype online leadership learning tool and system being developed within a current ALTC project (Scott 2008A).

Existing support mechanisms will be extended, where appropriate, to include approaches designed to encourage networking and informal mentoring between novice and expert academic leaders. Recognition for transnational roles in workloads, appraisal and promotions policies and practices will be investigated at both on-shore and off-shore campuses. This will build on the outcomes of related ALTC projects where appropriate, including Swinburne's ALTC 'Promoting Excellence Initiative'.

This project will also build on two ALTC projects being undertaken by Curtin on leadership capability at course level and on moderation of assessment for transnational delivery (Jones, 2006; Sanderson, 2008). An online induction and professional development tool, *Frameworks for Internationalisation* (Yeo, 2007; FFI, 2008) recently developed by Curtin, will be trialled and refined firstly at Curtin and Curtin Sarawak, focussing on its use in aiding reflective practice and ways of embedding internationalisation into effective classroom practice. The tool will be reconfigured into a generic shell which can be customised by other institutions, utilising Swinburne as the initial target institution to trial and evaluate the reconfigured FFI.

Within induction and professional development activities, further reflective components will be trialled to assist participants in reviewing internationalisation and cross-cultural aspects of their taught curriculum and classroom practice. Participants will also be encouraged to undertake related and publishable scholarship activities. Where academics from both on-shore and off-shore campuses are involved, professional development activities will be structured so that participants collaboratively review curriculum and teaching practice and share viewpoints and perspectives from within their own national and cultural contexts.

Current policies and QA processes related to transnational delivery will be reviewed, informed by the findings of the surveys and focus groups conducted with TNE academic leaders, together with the outcomes of the ALTC transnational assessment project (Sanderson, 2008). Policy recommendations will also be developed for embedding requirements for induction and professional development for TNE academic leaders, and for requiring TNE leaders to reflect and report on internationalisation and cross-cultural aspects of curriculum and classroom practice within their institutional QA cycles.

### **Impact on Sector, Dissemination Strategy**

This project has the potential for high impact, with outcomes pertinent to all Australian universities undertaking or considering TNE delivery. The focus on the distributed leadership roles of program coordinators and subject convenors/coordinators involved in TNE delivery has the potential to influence a significant number of teaching staff, in particular because the assignment of academics to these roles typically changes quite often within institutions.

Project outcomes and its key deliverables will be disseminated in order to build leadership for excellence in international and cross-cultural teaching within the sector. Strategies used will include promoting awareness and discussion of the project's interim and final findings and resources via the ALTC Exchange and through

presentations to its key stakeholder groups (as indicated in the 'Project Outcomes and Key Deliverables' section above).

Interim findings will be presented for feedback at learning and teaching conferences in Eastern and Western States, at education policy conferences at off-shore locations such as Malaysia, and through activities and publications of the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) and its Internationalisation of the Curriculum sub-group. Participation in these conferences will also provide opportunities for face-to-face meetings by project team members, and produce budget savings by capitalising on internal sources of institutional support for conference attendance.

Target groups for dissemination of findings and deliverables will include, as appropriate, the DVC(A) sub-committee of Universities Australia and other senior management forums, the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD) and the Australian Universities Quality Forum (AUQF). Tangible deliverables (Models, Tools, Framework) will be made available through a dedicated site on the ALTC Exchange.

### **Project Management**

This project will be carried out as a close collaboration between Curtin University of Technology (Australia), Swinburne University of Technology (SUT, Melbourne campuses), Curtin Sarawak and SUT Sarawak. The project is co-lead by Professors Margaret Mazzolini (SUT) and Shelley Yeo (Curtin), with Swinburne as the lead institution.

The 0.5EFT project officer will be based at Swinburne's Hawthorn campus in Melbourne, within Swinburne Professional Learning, a 20 member support unit at Swinburne for learning, teaching and curriculum development, including several current project officer appointees. Essential selection criteria for the appointment of the project officer at Academic Level A/B will include project management skills including resourcefulness, initiative and the ability to meet tight deadlines; demonstrable communication and organisational skills; clear and persuasive writing techniques, and excellent liaison and diplomatic skills. Professor Mazzolini is highly experienced in leading academic projects and will have overall line management responsibilities for the project officer.

The project officer will be in regular contact with the project team, undertaking visits to the collaborating institutions when required but also organising regular teleconferences and establishing and maintaining electronic communications and document management. The project budget (including institutional in-kind contributions) allows for an appropriate mix of both face to face and teleconference meetings between the project team members, together with a Project Symposium in Kuching, Sarawak, bringing together representatives of the Malaysian branch campuses as well as Curtin and SUT campuses in Australia.

Given the distances between the collaborating organisations, one of the first tasks for the project officer will be to review methods for electronic communications and document management between the collaborating institutions and advise the project team on the most suitable approaches. In particular the project officer will investigate the privately authored wiki and its public ALTC counterpart currently being utilised in Curtin's collaboration with three other universities, one offshore, for the ALTC project 'Moderation for Fair Assessment in Transnational Learning and Teaching' (Sanderson, 2008).

Working closely with the project leaders, the project officer will have responsibility for developing, conducting and analysing project surveys and focus groups, but will be assisted in these tasks as needed by the provision of casual support (psychology postgraduate students) and administrative support within Swinburne Professional Learning, and also with support in conducting surveys and focus groups at CUT campuses by research personnel within the Office for Teaching and Learning and the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Curtin (Perth).

To refine the FFI professional development program, an instructional designer/web-developer will be sought from within a pool of part-time web-developers currently working on Curtin projects. The University also has an e-resource development section which can provide quality input. The instructional designer/web-developer will work closely with Veronica Goerke, who works within the same area of the university.

As well as providing progress reports to the ALTC as required, the project team will report regularly to the Project Reference Group.

### **Evaluation Framework**

An independent project evaluator will be appointed at the start of the project in consultation with the ALTC. While the evaluator will determine the exact methodology to be used, the evaluation will include both formative and summative components as indicated in the timeline. The evaluation brief will address agreed evaluation questions focusing on:

- project processes, including adequacy of the identification of stakeholders, the consultation processes, project management, and data analysis;
- project outcomes, including extent to which key deliverables and other resources meet the stated objectives of the project; and
- project impact, in terms of visibility, dissemination, initial take-up and feedback on usability within the sector.

The project team will consult regularly with the evaluator in order to receive expert feedback on the direction of the project.

### **Project Reference Group**

The Project Reference Group will be consulted on a regular basis so that its on-going advice and feedback can guide the Project's direction and progress.

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## Summary details of project consortium institutions and team members

The collaborating institutions are

Swinburne University of Technology (SUT) – SUT Melbourne campuses together with the Kuching campus of SUT Sarawak

Curtin University of Technology (Curtin) – Curtin Australia campuses together with the Miri campus of Curtin Sarawak

INSTITUTION	TEAM MEMBERS	DAYS/MONTH
Swinburne University of Technology (lead agency)	<p><b>Professor Margaret Mazzolini</b> (project co-leader) Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)</p> <p><b>Jeffrey Smart</b> Pro Vice Chancellor (International and Recruitment)</p> <p><b>Gillian Lueckenhausen</b> Head, Education Quality Unit Swinburne University of Technology (Sarawak Campus)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
Curtin University of Technology	<p><b>Professor Shelley Yeo</b> (project co-leader) Dean, Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Science and Engineering</p> <p><b>Veronica Goerke</b> Manager, Teaching Development, Office of Teaching and Learning</p> <p><b>Jeya Chandra Malar Jayaprakash</b> Dean of the Learning Centre Curtin University of Technology (Sarawak Campus)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>