Recognising and rewarding teaching: Australian teaching criteria and standards and expert peer review

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http://recognisinguniteaching.edu.au/
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1 The OLT ceased on 30 June 2016. The Australian Government Department of Education and Training continued to support the fellowship through the Promotion of Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PELTHE) program.
List of acronyms used

ACDS  Australian Council of Deans of Science
ACODE  Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-Learning
ACPET  Australian Council for Private Education and Training
Ako Areatora  National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, NZ
ALTC  Australian Learning and Teaching Council
ALTF  Australian Learning and Teaching Fellows (OLT Fellows Network)
APTTTS  Australian Professional Tertiary Teaching Standards
ATTS  Australian Tertiary Teaching Standards
AUTCAS  Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards
BLASST  Benchmarking leadership and advancement of standards for sessional teachers
CADAD  Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development
CAULLT  Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching (Previously CADAD)
COPHE  Council of Private Higher Education
DVC  Deputy Vice-Chancellor
DVCA  Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic (also Education)
EC  European Commission
ExPeRT  Expert Peer Review of Teaching
HEA  Higher Education Academy (UK)
HECQN  Higher Education Compliance and Quality Network
HEDG  Heads of Educational Development Group (UK)
HEFCE  Higher Education Funding Council of England
HEFCW  Higher Education Funding Council of Wales
HEPP-QN  Higher Education Private Providers’ Quality Network
HERDSA  Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia
HES  Higher Education Services
HESAP  Higher Educational Standards Advisory Panel
ICED  International Consortium of Educational Development
ISSOTL  International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
OLT  Office for Learning and Teaching
PRAN  Peer Review of Assessment Network
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Executive summary

Despite decades of arguing for the importance of recognising and rewarding quality teaching and the provision of a quality learning experience for students, higher education institutions have not always made the critical link between the two. Consequently, they have made little headway towards building effective processes of rewarding and recognising quality teaching. It should therefore not be surprising that governments and major stakeholders in the sector continue to express concern about the quality of teaching in our higher education institutions. The commitment of tertiary institutions to reward and recognise teaching has been elusive, despite progress being made in the development of teaching criteria and the identification of appropriate evidence of teaching excellence.

The fellowship program focused on three complementary areas of activity under the unifying theme of rewarding and recognising teaching.

1. The first area of activity built on the outcomes of the Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards (AUTCAS) project with the goal to support universities to review and clarify their teaching criteria and expectations, policies and practices around appointment, performance review and promotion.

2. The second area of activity investigated the feasibility of a sector-developed and endorsed Australian Professional Tertiary Teacher Standards (APTTS). This was intended to provide an external standard against which individuals and institutions could benchmark teacher quality.

3. The third area of activity investigated and trialled a process of peer review that could be applied to institutional or external teaching criteria and standards and model how to assess teaching excellence and quality.

The fellowship program was targeted primarily at institutions and the Australian tertiary sector and to support individuals within the institutions to implement and embed criteria and standards in policy and practice. International interest in the framework and the fellowship program enabled the concepts to be trialled across several countries and cultural settings.

The fellowship program was able to demonstrate that university teaching could be enhanced, rewarded and recognised in a manner that sustains a focus on teaching that delivers quality student learning experiences.

The scope of this fellowship program was extensive. It built on the AUTCAS work which had engaged 21 universities and professional teaching associations such as Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD) and HERDSA. It engaged with sector organisations such as Universities Australia and TEQSA and international organisations such as the Higher Education Academy and Ako Aotearoa. The outcomes of the fellowship have contributed to the Australia tertiary sector’s engagement in an evidence- and standards-based approach to rewarding and recognising teaching and informed international initiatives.

It is estimated that over 3200 individuals were engaged with the work of the fellowship through direct participation and communication and attendance at presentations, workshops and meetings. No attempt has been made to estimate the number who might
have engaged through the publications and through accessing the website and other secondary sources.

In terms of number of institutions that have engaged in the fellowship activities, it is estimated that 60 Australian higher education institutions were involved, with the majority being universities. Internationally, more than 230 international institutions were involved through direct communication and/or participation in presentations and workshops through the fellowship program 2015–2018.

The fellowship program has been timely, judging by the interest in Australian and international higher education institutions to engage in conversations about their policies, processes and practices related to rewarding and recognising teaching. While the momentum has been building from the 1990s, triggered by Boyer’s *Scholarship Reconsidered*, there is now considerable evidence that higher education institutions—whether research intensive or teaching intensive, public or private—are actively engaging in root and branch changes to their recruitment, mentoring and development and particularly their promotion policies and practices to ensure that excellent teaching is fostered, developed, recognised and rewarded.

It is argued that teaching is the key pillar of all higher education institutions and that recognising and rewarding quality teaching must be embraced by university leaders at every level and demonstrated consistently throughout the institution and in all policies, processes and practices.
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Chapter 1: Rewarding and recognising excellent teaching

Despite decades of arguing for the importance of recognising and rewarding quality teaching in order to provide a quality learning experience for students, higher education institutions have made limited headway towards achieving this. It should therefore not be surprising that governments and major stakeholders in the sector continue to express concern about the quality of teaching in our higher education institutions.

Decades of neglect

The lack of appropriate mechanisms that systematically reward and recognise excellent teaching has been acknowledged for decades, yet little has changed over this time. Illustrative examples in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Europe and Australia are provided below.

In the United States, Boyer in his seminal paper ‘Scholarship Reconsidered’ (1990) argued that universities should recognise the richness of academic work and reward contributions in what he proposed were four different forms of scholarship—teaching, integration, application of knowledge and discovery. He also argued that academic reward systems should stress the forms of scholarship most closely aligned with the university mission. How disappointing then that in 2017, the Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education asserts that ‘... good teaching is generally undervalued. Faculty are rarely trained, selected and assessed as teachers and their effectiveness as instructors is rarely recognised or rewarded’ (2017, p. 13). The Commission argues for a national priority to strengthen the student educational experience through addressing the ‘widespread inattention to teaching quality’ (p. 22), including the reward and recognition of both tenure-track and fixed-terms teachers in higher education that includes providing stable professional working environments and careers.

In the United Kingdom, the highly influential Dearing report in 2003 stated that teaching was of low status in relation to research, promotion was awarded for disciplinary research performance, that little or no funding was available for research and development projects in learning and teaching and that there was no national policy on the quality of teaching (Department for Education & Skills [DfES], 2003; Gosling, 2004). Despite years of government and quality initiatives to enhance the status and quality of teaching (Chalmers, 2011), Cashmore and colleagues (2013) noted that while changes in promotion to reward teaching excellence in UK higher education institutions were evident, significant barriers remained. Unsurprisingly, ongoing concerns continue to be expressed by successive governments that institutions have failed to meaningfully engage with raising the status of teaching. The UK government white paper ‘Success as a Knowledge Economy’ (Crown, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016a) resulted in the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework, noting that ‘For too long, teaching has been the poor cousin of research. Skewed incentives have led to a progressive decline in the relative status of teaching as an activity’ (2016b, para. 23, p. 12).

A program of research carried out in UK universities 2008–2013 by Cashmore, Ramsden (2009) and Cashmore and colleagues (2013) documented the progress made on rewarding
and recognising teaching, including the development of teaching criteria and ways in which they are measured and presented. They found that while there had been a general progression with more universities developing teaching criteria and evidence across the sector generally, there remained substantial variation in different types of universities and within the disciplinary communities. Of greatest concern was that limited progress had been made on embedding the teaching criteria and establishing standards within the institutional systems and policies, and the persistent scepticism among academic teachers that their teaching contributions would be recognised and rewarded with career progression (Cashmore et al., 2013; Locke, 2014).

In Europe, the European Commission (EC) 2013 report stated that while ‘quality teaching should be a priority in the higher education institutions, their research indicated that a real commitment to quality teaching was not universal, sporadic at best and frequently reliant on the enlightened commitment of a few individuals’ (EC, 2014, p. 14). The report noted that while there were outstanding individual examples of practical support for up-skilling teachers, recognition and reward of effective teaching, these were rarely sustained over time. The EC high-level group for the modernisation of higher education has prioritised quality teaching and learning, noting that improvements to the quality of teaching and learning in higher education can bring about a ‘sea change’ for Europe’s future. The EC endorsed a set of Guiding Principles for Quality Teaching (2013, p. 15) identifying both institutional and individual responsibilities to ensure high quality of teaching is through setting standards, and developing, recognising and rewarding those that demonstrated those standards.

In Australia, the national government instituted several teaching quality initiatives, primarily targeted at the institutional level. For example, from the mid-1990s, the national government established national student surveys, reporting of student progression and institutional quality audits which focused on teaching quality and processes. The Learning and Teaching Performance Fund scheme, established in 2003, was a controversial initiative designed to differentially reward the higher education providers that best demonstrated excellence in learning and teaching, based on a limited number of quantitative indicators. The rationale for the fund was to promote teaching quality within the sector and to place excellence in learning and teaching alongside research excellence.

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) was established in 2004 to provide a national focus to enhance learning and teaching in Australian higher education institutions. The ALTC was preceded by a number of committees to promote and support teaching and learning in higher education, with the first established in 1990. These provided funding for competitive grants and projects, for example, funding for professional development, using technology to enhance teaching and learning, student learning, research and discipline-based projects (Chalmers, 2007). The focus for these initiatives was individuals and teams within and across universities to provide them with access to competitive funding to parallel research funding models, encourage academics to engage in teaching and learning issues in scholarly ways and to enhance the overall quality of teaching and learning in universities.

Another teaching quality initiative was the Australian Awards for University Teaching, established in 1997, to celebrate and reward excellence in university teaching. These national teaching awards have been expanded over the years to include teams, disciplines and institutional programs. While these federal government initiatives were well-received and led to many changes in teaching and support for students, only limited changes were
Recognising and rewarding teaching: Australian teaching criteria and standards and expert peer review

The teaching quality initiatives in Australia and the UK were designed, in large part, to address the perceived lack of change by institutions to recognise and reward teaching and to enhance the status of teaching relative to research. By establishing incentives, the governments wished to prompt universities to pay attention to the quality of their teaching and learning and to implement reward and recognition processes and practices that were comparable or equivalent to those in research. Yet, as Probert (2013) noted, the inclination to separate out academic roles as ‘teaching-focused’ or ‘teaching-intensive’ (as distinct from teaching–research academic roles or in US terms, tenure track academics) as a way to build an alternative career path has, to date, done little to raise the status or recognition of excellent teaching. Blackmore’s (2015) work on the prestige assigned to academic work contributes insight into the ways in which academic work is valued through the lens of a prestige economy and why teaching persistently retains its lower status in comparison to research in the eyes of both institutions and individuals.

While institutions in the UK and Australia have more recently taken steps to make significant advances in providing clear teaching criteria (Cashmore et al., 2013; Chalmers, 2011) and increasingly, elaboration of the evidence to be presented for performance review and promotion, the extent to which the expected performance standards were detailed, embedded and enacted in policy, processes and systems has remained highly variable (Chalmers et al., 2014)

The illustrative examples above from the US, UK, Europe and Australia lead to the same conclusion—good teaching remains largely undervalued, poorly recognised and unrewarded, despite significant investment and initiatives from government and funding bodies over three decades. More concerning is that institutions have failed to link the quality of teaching and the quality of student learning and engagement, despite the strong evidence that has consistently demonstrated the relationship (Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education, 2017; EC, 2013)—‘supporting staff by rewarding and recognising teaching activities is central to obtaining an excellent student experience’ (Cashmore et al., 2013, p. 5).

A national strategy for supporting institutions to respond to the challenge

The AUTCAS framework project (Chalmers et al., 2014, 2015) developed an indicative or exemplar framework for institutions to use to develop their own teaching criteria and standards, setting expectations for each level of appointment and indicators to guide the collection of evidence used to substantiate claims for performance and promotion. The Australian federal government, through the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) and its predecessor bodies, invested in higher education through grants and teaching awards aimed at the enhancement of teaching and the student learning experience. The OLT commissioned two strategic priority projects on the Professionalisation of the Academic Workforce (Chalmers et al., 2014; Chalmers et al., 2015; James et al., 2015) and a discussion paper on teaching-focused academic appointments (Probert, 2013). Concurrently, a fellowship project titled ‘Transforming Practice Programme (TPP)—Reward and Recognition: Promotion Process and Policy’ was led by Patrick Crookes (Crookes, 2014). These initiatives supported universities in making significant progress towards clarifying their teaching
criteria and evidence expectations, as well as developing policy and processes related to recognising and rewarding teaching. However, embedding the policies and processes that are enacted to recognise and reward excellent teaching in cultures that remain dominated by research performance remained a major challenge (Locke, 2014; Probert, 2013, 2014).

The AUTCAS project was designed as a national strategy for creating a teaching excellence framework that drew on good practice principles and evidence-based measures of teaching performance that could be utilised and contextualised institutionally (Chalmers et al., 2014). The AUTCAS framework was conceived as a multidimensional resource for institutions to inform their recruitment, probation, promotions, professional development and policy development related to quality teaching. The AUTCAS framework was also designed to provide individual academics with clarity on expected levels of teaching performance for the purpose of career planning, preparation for performance development reviews and preparation for applying for promotion. The background and strategy for the AUTCAS project is described in ‘A national strategy for teaching excellence – One university at a time’ (Chalmers & Tucker, 2018).

The original AUTCAS project was conducted over an 18-month period commencing in September 2012 through to February 2014. The outcomes of this project included: a comprehensive literature review, the development of a teaching criteria and standards framework, the first stages of implementation in the partner universities and considerable consultation across the sector. The framework was well-received and supported, as communicated throughout an extensive range of engaged dissemination activities involving teaching and learning academic colleagues, the academic development community through the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD), Deputy Vice Chancellors (Academic) of Universities Australia (UA) and senior university management in Australia and overseas (Chalmers et al., 2014). The OLT subsequently funded an extension of the project to engage with more institutions to develop their policies and processes to embed their teaching criteria and expectations. (See http://uniteachingcriteria.edu.au/ for the project website, final and extension project report and case studies.)

The AUTCAS project was further extended in Australian and international universities as part of the first area of activity in the National Senior Teaching Fellowship program.

**National Senior Teaching Fellowship program**

The fellowship program of activities was designed to build on the work and outcomes of the AUTCAS and other OLT projects and explore the sector interest for an Australian Tertiary Teaching Standards framework and external peer review of teaching process. Through working consultatively with the formal and informal higher education communities the intention was to establish mechanisms that would further support universities and the higher education sector to recognise and reward their excellent teachers.

The Fellow Program was framed under the umbrella of recognising and rewarding teaching and was structured under three interrelated and concurrent activities.

1. Support institutions to utilise the AUTCAS resources and processes.
2. Establish a process of consultation and engagement with the higher education sector to investigate the feasibility of developing a sector-endorsed Australian Professional Tertiary Teacher Standards (APTTS) framework for tertiary academic teachers and professionals.
3. Investigate and propose a process of external peer review of teaching portfolios for promotion using institutional criteria and for recognition using external standard such as the AUTCAS or APTTS, and the feasibility of establishing a registry of peers comprised of endorsed and trained teaching and learning experts to carry out the reviews.
Chapter 2: Support institutions to utilise the Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards (AUTCAS) resources and processes (Activity 1)

The first activity in the fellowship program was to continue to support the universities originally involved in the AUTCAS project as they were at different stages of development and implementation. In addition, a number of universities and institutions not previously involved had expressed interest in utilising the AUTCAS tools and processes to work with their institutional teams. Individuals expressed their appreciation of the AUTCAS resources and tools in assisting them to build a robust evidence-based portfolio. Teaching and discipline teams, as well as administrative teams, also found that the resources were useful in developing processes, policies and systems to reward and recognise teaching in performance review and promotion, even when their institution had not yet implemented an institutional-wide strategy. The focus of this activity, therefore, was to continue to work with Australian higher education institutions (public and private), as well as international institutions to develop and enhance their institutional teaching criteria and expectations and the systems and processes to embed them into all career stages from appointment, probation, performance review and promotion. The website was updated with additional reports, case studies, resources and process tools.

While the original AUTCAS project had been highly influential, with over two-thirds of Australian universities and a number of private higher education institutions having considered the framework to inform their criteria, performance expectations, development and management processes, many had yet to move to establish policies and processes to embed them into institutional and individual practices. Over the course of the fellowship program, a large number of the original institutions’ policies and procedures were developed and approved through academic governance processes and embedded into formal documents and requirements. Furthermore, additional institutions not originally involved subsequently engaged with the resources and process to develop their criteria, expectations and policies.

Internationally, the framework and processes have been used by tertiary institutions in Europe, Africa, South and North America and Asia demonstrating its utility in different cultures and contexts (Chalmers & Tucker, 2018). One reason for the widespread appeal of the framework is that it was not a top-down, one-size-fits-all framework. It was designed from the outset to support institutions in their endeavours to better recognise and reward excellent teaching through clarifying their own performance expectations, reflecting their own values and priorities, and encouraging them to make these explicit for the different career levels. By devising them to be institutionally relevant and demonstrating how the expectations could be made explicit for individuals at all appointment levels, their supervisors, and the promotion panels and external reviewers, institutions welcomed the opportunity to engage with the clear intent to reward and recognise their excellent teachers.

While each institution devising their own criteria and expectations might be anticipated to lead to highly disparate outcomes, this has not been the case. Because so many institutions across Australia had engaged with the AUTCAS framework and reviewed and considered
their own criteria and expectations against it, there has been a growing consensus across the sector on teaching excellence and performance expectations at the different levels of appointment. (See Appendix B for the list of institutions that have engaged in the AUTCAS framework as part of the original AUTCAS project [2012–14] and/or the fellowship program [2015–18].) Over 45 institutions and organisations are specifically identified as institutions and organisations that were directly engaged in discussions, presentations and/or meetings regarding the use and application of the AUTCAS framework. It is conservatively estimated that an additional 15, primarily private provider institutions, were engaged through attendance at presentations and conversations with sector-based forums. The meetings and presentations typically took place at the institutions’ premises at the invitation of senior executive and administrators and included meetings with those in academic leadership roles including chairs of promotion committees, policy development, Human Resources, and professional development.

In summary, a major focus of activity for the fellowship program was to extend and embed the AUTCAS project outcomes and engagement by working with the 21 universities involved in the original project. In addition, all Australian tertiary institutions and representative organisations were invited to engage in the customisation and application of the processes and resources.
Chapter 3: Investigate the feasibility of a sector-endorsed Australian Tertiary Teacher Standards (ATTS) framework (Activity 2)

The focus of this activity was to engage in a process of consultation with the higher education sector to investigate the feasibility of developing a sector-endorsed Australian Professional Tertiary Teacher Standards (APTTS) framework for tertiary institutions, academic teachers and professionals (http://recognisingunteaching.edu.au/). Early feedback from the sector on the title strongly reacted to the inclusion of the word ‘Professional’, arguing that it was unnecessary and should be removed. Subsequently, all references to the title are now Australian Tertiary Teacher Standards (ATTS).

There have been two broad responses by the tertiary education sector to enhance the quality of teaching. One has been to establish national and institutional reward and recognition initiatives designed to raise the status of teaching in institutions. The other has been to establish national standards. While Activity 1, detailed in the previous section, was designed to contribute to the first response, Activity 2 was designed to investigate the feasibility of national tertiary teaching standards to address the second response. It should be noted that these responses should not be considered as an either/or option. In the case of school teachers for example, both responses are enacted.

National professional standards
National professional standards are seen by policy makers and educators as a way to professionalise the work of educators and as a lever for system-wide improvements in teaching and learning. They can be voluntarily developed and applied, or they can be compulsory and regulated by an external agency.

School teacher standards
There have been national teacher standards for school teachers for many years (Sinnema, Meyer & Aitken, 2016) and are an example of compulsory standards that are regulated by an external agency. Specific examples include the Australian National Teaching Standards, New Zealand’s Practicing Teacher Criteria, England’s Teachers’ Standards, Scotland’s Standards for Registration and the USA’s TASC Model core teaching standards.

School teacher standards may differ from the point of entry into the profession through to advanced or tiered levels of experience. For example, New Zealand’s Graduating Teacher Standards (2007) form the baseline for entry, which then leads into the Practicing Teacher Criteria. In contrast, the Australian National Professional Standards for Teachers (2013) identify different levels of proficiency depending on the experience and stage of career as (a) Graduate, (b) Proficient, (c) Highly Accomplished and (d) Lead. Teacher standards can serve as a threshold for certification or registration, for example, the USA’s National Board Certification (NBPTS). In summary, most countries have a system of teacher registration or certification that requires evidence of meeting threshold standards. Once established, teaching standards can subsequently be used to inform the design of teacher training courses and for performance review to guide career progression and professional development (AITSL, 2016). Sinnema et al. (2016) argue for a single or threshold level for
national teacher standards that are applicable to all teachers regardless of career stage, including graduates entering the profession. Their argument is that a progression of standards where the standards for a new graduate are less than experienced teacher standards is not defensible when students’ learning is at stake (p. 5).

Tertiary teacher standards

There are few examples of teacher standards in tertiary education, with the United Kingdom’s Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) (2011) the only identified example. The UKPSF was developed through a process of extensive consultation with the sector including the Higher Education Academy (HEA), Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE), Scottish Funding Council, Department for Employment and Learning, National Union of Students, Universities UK, Higher Education Funding Council of Wales (HEFCW), the Higher Education Guild, institutions, and individuals. Two versions have been endorsed by the sector, each informed with a discussion paper (Law, 2011; UUK, 2005).

The UKPSF use the term ‘standards’ to refer to nationally agreed statements of expectations for practice that encompass the wide variety of roles and responsibilities that contributes to and informs the learning experience of students. The ‘framework of standards’ describes the totality of the statements covering practice that supports student learning (UUK, 2004).

The UKPSF was intended to build on the existing program accreditation system of the HEA to provide an ‘agreed reference point to enable higher education institutions to develop criteria appropriate for their own priorities’ (UUK, 2005, p. 1). It was developed for institutions to apply to their professional development programs and activities to demonstrate that professional standards for teaching and supporting learning were being met (UUK, 2005). While the UKPSF took some time to gain influence beyond the HEA’s accreditation of professional development programs and the fellowship scheme, it has become more influential in institutional policy and practice and individuals’ understanding of teaching over time (Brooks et al., 2014; SEDA, 2013).

As the origins of the UKPSF were rooted in the accreditation of professional development programs and recognition of individual teacher achievements, the standards themselves have become conflated with the HEA recognition scheme that confers fellowship status. The distinction needs to be clarified, with the sector-developed and endorsed standards embodied in the UKPSF a separate, sector-endorsed artefact. Institutions are expected to demonstrate how they meet the UKPSF as an external reference point. The UKPSF is the reference used by the HEA to administer and manage its recognition scheme. While many institutions choose to seek HEA accreditation of their programs and recognition of their staff through the fellowship program to demonstrate how they are addressing the standards, they are not required to do so. Furthermore, HEA accreditation of an institution’s professional development programs and fellowship membership by staff is not sufficient to demonstrate it is meeting the standards.

It could be argued that the UKPSF has gone some way to achieve the purpose of standards, namely to professionalise the work of educators and to contribute to system-wide improvements in teaching and learning. The UKPSF is an example of voluntarily developed standards used by the institutions and individuals. Subsequently, their attainment is externally judged by quality assurance review and by HEA accreditation of professional development programs and peer review.
An Australian response to tertiary teaching standards

There have been several reports (e.g. Chalmers et al., 2014; Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; James et al., 2015), and general agreement within the Australian tertiary education sector on the need for a process and mechanism to promote the professionalisation and status of teaching in higher education through some form of recognition and accreditation. Indeed, the recent uptake of the HEA accreditation and recognition process by some Australian universities may be seen as a response to the absence of an Australian framework. New Zealand identified a similar gap in a report for Ako Aotearoa that investigated the establishment of a peer review and accreditation scheme for tertiary teachers in New Zealand (Suddaby & Holmes, 2012). To date, approximately 12 Australian universities have established an agreement with the HEA to accredit their professional development programs or to engage through an individual assessment process to achieve recognition as fellows of the HEA. A number of other institutions have funded individuals to access mentoring and assessment against the UKPSF via the ANU (efs.anu.edu.au).

Reports and initiatives that highlight the need for a more systematic approach to the reward and recognition of excellent teaching in higher education include:

- two OLT commissioned strategic priority projects (Chalmers et al., 2014; 2015) and James et al. (2015), both recommending the need for agreed external standards and reference points for greater recognition of tertiary teaching
- two OLT commissioned reports on teaching-focused roles and their implications in the importance of recognising and rewarding teaching by universities and the tertiary sector (Probert 2013, 2014). Probert subsequently noted the increasing interest across the tertiary sector in the adoption of ‘standards’ for teaching and supporting learning in higher education, just as there is increasing interest in standards more widely (Probert, 2015)
- several reports and articles arguing for the need for systematic reward and recognition of teachers and teaching more broadly in Australia (e.g. Chalmers, 2007; 2008, 2010; Chalmers & Hunt, 2016).

Professional recognition schemes in tertiary education include the Australasian Higher Education Research and Development Association (HERDSA) Fellowship which has approximately 80 registered fellows and associate fellows. To achieve recognition, applicants develop a teaching portfolio, which is reviewed in a similar process to that practiced by the HEA. In contrast, other associations recognise contributions and achievements through awarding fellowships by the elected members, for example, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia confers membership through nomination by peers for scholarly distinction in research or the advancement of social sciences.

In New Zealand, the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, Ako Aotearoa, considered a report in 2012 on, ‘An Accreditation Scheme for Tertiary Teachers in New Zealand: Key Information Draft Discussion Document’ (Suddaby & Holmes, 2012). The report’s objective was to promote discussion about the establishment of a voluntary accreditation scheme for tertiary teachers to better recognise excellent teaching. This comprehensive report considered the need to professionalise tertiary teaching, the nature of professionalism in the context of tertiary teaching, and different models of recognition and accreditation in the tertiary sector. The report concluded that Ako Aotearoa would be a
credible location for such a scheme (personal communication, Peter Coolbear, August, 2014). In 2016, Ako Aotearoa, tested the sector’s appetite for accrediting and recognising teaching against the UKHEA standards, in a year-long initiative in three tertiary institutions. The Auckland University of Technology (AUT, 2016) led an initiative to integrate the UKPSF with the Ako Aronui framework. The UKPSF key dimensions provided the basis, contextualised with Maori philosophies, worldviews and values. This speaks to the importance of establishing distinctive national standards that are relevant to local objectives and cultures. It also shows the need for considering synergies with international standards to facilitate benchmarking and transferability.

The importance for a national standards framework to reflect the national context is supported by James et al. who argued for the need for tertiary teacher standards that take ‘into consideration Australia’s unique cultural, institutional and policy context would better serve the needs of the Australian higher education sector’ (James et al., 2015, p. 23). Currently, Australia does not have a tertiary teacher standards framework, the question posed by this fellowship activity was: ‘Should we? and ‘If so, how might it encompass the distinctiveness of Australian tertiary education in an international context?’

Formal and informal conversations with university executives, executives of membership organisations such as HERDSA, and the OLT Fellowship Network and representative organisations such as Universities Australia (UA), CADAD and ACODE expressed interest in the concept of Australian Professional Tertiary Teacher Standards as a key step in establishing a national benchmark against which teaching quality can be assessed in an Australian context so that it is externally recognised and contributes to institutional rewards in institutions and across the sector.

A nationally-recognised framework of standards provides the opportunity for effective national and international benchmarking at both an institutional and individual level. At the individual level teaching staff will readily be able to evaluate their own teaching performance and goals against the standards. A standards framework allows individual staff to plan a career development pathway when these standards are integrated into promotion criteria. At the institutional level such a standards framework provides the basis of comparison with similar institutions and also the basis from which to improve quality and to recognise excellence. (James et al., 2015, p. 28)

In summary, there was a broad agreement on the need for, and the value of an Australian Tertiary Teaching Standards framework to facilitate the reward and recognition of excellent teachers, by building the capacity and capability of individuals and institutions.

However, standards in education are not universally accepted as desirable, with claims that they lead to reductionism that destroys professional autonomy and reflection (Sinnema et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is argued that they can lead to performativity, where teachers become compelled to demonstrate standards of practice that are observable and measurable but narrow and shallow in their interpretation of effectiveness. This can risk impeding teachers’ professional learning and practice and stifling the overall educational improvements intended by their use (Beck, 2009). Such critiques fail to distinguish between ‘process’ and ‘product’. The ‘product’ of standards can be applied in ways that facilitate or inhibit educational improvements and teacher creativity. In short, it is not standards that are the problem, it is the way that they are used that matters. The cautionary notes are
important, but they are not an argument against standards per se. Rather, the implication of such critiques is that standards should be developed with an understanding of the complexity of teaching. Further implications are that processes for the assessment of achievement against the standards should recognise complexity, diversity and local contexts.

**Designing Australian Tertiary Teaching Standards (ATTS)**

The UKPSF (2011) comprises three dimensions: (1) Areas of Activity, (2) Core Knowledge, and (3) Professional Values. There are five elements under Areas of Activity; six elements under Core Knowledge and four elements under Professional Values.

While not national standards, the AUTCAS framework has been used by over 25 Australian universities and several international universities to inform the development of their teaching criteria and standards to support the career development and progression of teachers. The criteria for the AUTCAS were informed by an extensive review of the literature, and institutional and teaching award criteria which drew out 27 principles of quality teaching. These were further distilled to a list of 10 and categorised under the domains of ‘Environment’, ‘Professional Practice’, and ‘Attributes and Capabilities’ (Chalmers et al., 2014). The project team adapted Henard and Roseveare’s definition of quality teaching as it succinctly encompassed the elements identified in the literature.

*Quality teaching is the informed use of pedagogical practices in a values-driven culture, resulting in appropriate learning outcomes for students. It requires elements of the following:*

- **Environment**—which supports teaching, provides services and support for students and staff, and engages in a wider cultural context.

- **Professional Practices**—which include the effective design of curriculum and course content, a variety of learning experiences based on evidence of how students learn, soliciting and using feedback and effective assessment of learning outcomes.

- **Attributes and Capabilities**—Inclusive of personal, relational and professional qualities.

  (Adapted from Henard & Roseveare, 2012, p.7)

It is proposed that these three domains serve as the structural organisers for the ATTS.

**Determining criteria for the Australian Tertiary Teacher Standards (ATTS)**

The criteria for an ATTS need to encompass the principles and findings of the well-researched evidence on effective teaching practice that contributes to student learning. ‘It is obvious that we must develop and use the Scholarship of Teaching and not let opinions (statements without evidence), fads, or favourite methods dominate the debates about what makes the difference to student learning’ (Hattie, 2015, p. 90).

Chickering and Gamson’s ‘Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education’ was first published in 1987 and elaborated in 1991. This seminal work drew from 50 years of research in undergraduate education and continues to be reaffirmed to the current day (e.g. Elton, 1998; Gibbs, 2010; Hattie, 2015; McKeachie 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Hattie’s (2015) meta-analysis of over a 1000 research studies demonstrates the significant
impact that teachers’ personal and professional qualities have on students’ learning, confirming the principles identified by Chickering and Gamson.

The seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) are:

- Encourage contact between students and faculty.
- Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students.
- Encourage active learning.
- Give prompt feedback.
- Emphasise time on task.
- Communicate high expectations.
- Respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

More recently, there has been attention on the critical role of a well-designed, coherent curriculum (Blackmore & Kandiko, 2012; Gibbs, 2010). While there are institutional practices and quality processes both within institutions and external to them to review and accredit the quality of curriculum, teachers need to have a sound understanding of curriculum design and course planning to contribute to the overall design of the curriculum, and to effectively plan for their students’ learning of the approved curriculum that is contextualised in real world environments.

The importance of connecting what is being taught in programs of study to real-world environments has long been recognised. When done well it ‘encourages high order thinking; facilitates the acquisition of a depth of knowledge in a field or a discipline; demonstrates connectedness to the world; requires substantive conversation and collaboration between students, and; provides social support for student achievement’ (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993, p. 10). There has been extensive engagement by the Australian higher education sector to promote real-world learning illustrated by the Joint Statement of Principles for Professional Accreditation (UA & Professions Australia, 2016) the National Strategy on Work Integrated Learning in University Education (2015) led by the Australian Collaborative Education Network as well as by individual institutions with commitments to integrate workplace learning with theory in a purposefully designed curriculum. The importance of connecting to real-world environments is further emphasised in the recent work of Geoff Scott’s (2016) National Senior Fellowship project on ‘Assuring the quality of achievement standards and their valid assessment in Australian higher education’. Teachers need to have the skills and capacity to situate their courses and plan for learning that engages in real-world environments.

An ATTS must reflect Australia’s unique environmental and cultural context because teaching and learning quality cannot be separated from the context or environment in which it takes place. Australia has one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world. The Australian population can now trace their origins from over 120 countries. Cultural, linguistic and religious diversity is an inevitable outcome of this history. Accordingly, teachers in Australian higher education need the disposition and capacity for culturally responsive teaching practices to develop students’ cultural competence, which includes the ability to critically reflect on one’s own culture and professional paradigms to understand its cultural limitations and effect positive change (Universities Australia, 2011). Other factors that influence tertiary teaching in Australia
include geographic and environmental diversity, which shape the Australian economy and capability to sustain and develop its population. Gender, socioeconomic diversity and geographical remoteness are powerful influences on opportunity and access to university. International education is yet another feature of Australian higher education with significant numbers of international students studying in Australian tertiary institutions.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia are the inheritors of the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world and remain the traditional owners and custodians of Australia. In particular, Australian higher educators have a responsibility to develop indigenous cultural competence for themselves and their students. This involves developing knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures, histories and contemporary realities and awareness of Indigenous protocols, combined with the proficiency to engage and work effectively in Indigenous contexts congruent to the expectations of Indigenous Australian peoples (Universities Australia, 2014). This uniquely Australian environment requires that the educational standards be responsive to the current and future challenges and opportunities that such diversity presents.

**Proposed Australian Tertiary Teacher Standards (ATTS) framework**

The ATTS is presented as an Australian standards framework that represents the qualities and elements expected of a teacher in the Australian tertiary education context. Drawing on the definition, principles, literature and research on teaching that positively impact on student learning and engagement, the following framework is presented for critique and comment as a draft ATTS framework.

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**Australian Tertiary Teacher Standards Framework (May 2017)**

**Environment** (Inclusive of support for students and engagement in a wider cultural context)

1. Establish effective, inclusive learning environments that recognise, support and embrace student diversity.
2. Incorporate indigenous knowledges and perspectives into programs and practices according to a culturally competent pedagogical framework.
3. Design learning experiences related to real-world issues and environment.

**Professional Practice** (Inclusive of the effective design of curriculum and course content, a variety of learning experiences based on evidence of how students learn, soliciting and using feedback and effective assessment of learning outcomes)

4. Conceptualise, plan and implement an appropriate learning program that demonstrates relevant disciplinary knowledge and expertise.
5. Set and communicate expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge students.
6. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of learning and effective teaching practices.
7. Design effective assessment, providing timely and consequential feedback.
8. Systematically and critically evaluate practice and engage in continuing professional development.
Attributes and Capabilities (Inclusive of personal, relational and professional qualities)

9. Demonstrate professional qualities including the application of fair and ethical behaviours, preparation and prioritisation, contributing positively to membership and leadership roles.
10. Demonstrate personal qualities of enthusiasm, resilience, self-management, self-reflection and interest in students.
11. Establish and encourage collegial and respectful relationships with and between students and colleagues, working constructively with others.
12. Contribute to professional, industry and related fields of practice that enhance teaching.

Figure 1: Australian Tertiary Teacher Standards Framework (May 2017)

Process of consultation
Versions of the discussion document were circulated through a process of widening circles, seeking feedback and critique from individuals and key stakeholders in Australian tertiary education. The first version was circulated to individuals and organisations holding key institutional or national roles to test the argument and the draft framework, seeking feedback and critique. Following the initial feedback loop, changes were made the Draft APTTS Framework, including feedback that the inclusion of the word ‘Professional’ was unnecessary, and the updated draft of the ATTS Framework was circulated more widely, presented at conferences and sector forums and posted on the fellowship website, inviting further comments and critique across Australasia and internationally.

A key strategy for establishing national standards is a national body that would curate and support the standards’ wider adoption and implementation. However, with the demise of the Office for Learning and Teaching, which would have been a likely body to take on this role, and there being no similar body to the HEA in Australia, the likelihood of carriage of an ATTS into sector standards is significantly diminished.

Therefore, the ATTS as developed here is provided as a resource that might contribute to future discussions and be used as a draft or for informing the design of an entirely new version of an Australian Tertiary Teacher Standards Framework that the sector can endorse as an external point of reference. The discussion papers have been provided on the fellowship website now serve as a future resource. http://aptts.recognisinguniteaching.edu.au/

The following organisations have been identified as critical to providing further feedback, and potentially, endorsement to any consideration of a future Australian Tertiary Teaching Standards Framework.

- Institutional peak bodies (i.e. Universities Australia [UA] and DVC[A] group of Universities Australia)
- University networks (Go8, RUN, IRU etc.)
- Councils of Deans
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council
- Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching (CAULLT) (Previously CADAD)
- Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-Learning (ACODE)
- Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA).
- OLT Fellows Network
- OLT-supported networks including the PEI and disciplinary networks
- NUHEPs, Australian Council of Private Education and Training (ACEPT),
- Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE),
- Staff associations including the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)
- Student organisations including National Union of Students and Council of International Students Australia (CISA)
- Higher Education Quality Standards Panel and TEQSA
- Department of Education and Training
- Linking Australian Standards to international standards through International organisations such as Ako Aotearoa, the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence in New Zealand and the Higher Education Academy, UK.

**Note: The development and endorsement of an ATTS does not require the establishment of processes such as accreditation and recognition.**

The establishment of national standards should not be confused with the HEA Fellowships recognition program, which has its own processes and purposes primarily as a mechanism of recognition. While this distinction may be a concern to those considering the value and purpose of establishing a national standard, it is premature to progress any discussion of a particular model or process without initial agreement on an ATTS. Through a process of consultation, it is anticipated that opinions will be given on whether there should be a process of accreditation and review for individuals and or institutions and, if so, what these might be. An agreed and endorsed statement of standards does not require either accreditation or review of individuals or institutions.
Chapter 4: External Peer Review of Teaching (ExPeRT) (Activity 3)

The focus of this activity was to engage in a process of consultation with the higher education sector to investigate the feasibility of establishing a process for external peer review for promotion using institutional criteria and for recognition using external standards such as the AUTCAS or ATTS, and the feasibility of establishing a registry of a College of Peers (Locke, 2014; Ramsden, 2008) comprising endorsed and trained teaching and learning experts to carry out the reviews (http://recognisinguniteaching.edu.au/).

Institutions seeking external reviewers of teaching and learning portfolios have typically struggled to identify suitably experienced, expert reviewers of teaching portfolios for promotion purposes. This becomes even more critical in promotion to senior levels when the emphasis of contribution is on teaching excellence. This activity involved engaging with individuals, organisations and associations whose members have expertise in a range of different aspects of teaching and learning. The intended outcome was to propose and trial a strategy for eternal peer review of teaching by teaching and learning experts who are trained to review against institutional and external criteria. A discussion paper was circulated for comment (Chalmers & Partridge, 2017) and is largely reproduced below. The full paper can be found on the fellowship peer review website (http://peerreview.recognisinguniteaching.edu.au/reports/).

ExPeRT Discussion paper

The discussion paper focused on the role and purpose of external peer review of teaching, with a focus on reviewing portfolios for promotion using institutional criteria. It considered the feasibility of establishing a ‘College of Peers’ who are endorsed and trained teaching and learning experts to carry out the reviews. This is grounded in the recognition that higher education institutions typically struggle to identify suitably experienced, expert reviewers of teaching portfolios for promotion purposes.

The paper is organised in four parts. It:

1. provides an overview of peer review in Australia, including an examination of models of contextually appropriate peer review from the literature
2. identifies potential challenges including the recruiting of expert reviewers, engagement by the sector, and sustainability of the process
3. outlines the characteristics upon which the proposed ExPeRT model is based
4. concludes with a proposed trial of the training of experts for the model of external peer review of teaching (ExPeRT) for the purposes of promotion and recognition.

1 Peer review in Australian higher education

There has been strong advocacy and support for the use of peer review in the Australian higher education sector. For example, AUTC/ALTC/OLT-funded studies and projects (Booth et al., 2015; Crisp et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2008; Krause et al., 2013; McKenzie & Parker, 2011; Nash et al., 2014; Sachs et al., 2013; Wood et al., 2011) have long promoted its use for both developmental and performative purposes. This reflects over 50 years of international advocacy that peers and colleagues should be considered as legitimate and valuable sources...

The Australian studies have focused on different aspects of peer review of teaching including classroom observation, online teaching, and assessment to ensure standards. The purpose of the reviews has been predominantly for teacher development and are conducted within institutions. Two studies have looked at external peer review (Crisp et al., 2009; Krause et al., 2013). The project by Crisp and colleagues (2009) on Peer review of teaching for promotion purposes considered both within-institution teacher observation and external peer review of documented evidence for evaluative purpose and trialled it across four universities. They concluded that ‘summative peer review of teaching has the ability to improve both the status and the quality of teaching at tertiary level, by encouraging the promotion of exceptional teachers and academics engaged in the scholarship of teaching at all levels’ (2009, p. 5). They recommended that ‘for a summative peer review of teaching program to be successful, peer reviewers must be trained and experienced’ (2009, p. 5). However, to date there has been little progress made on establishing and training a pool of teaching and learning experts that can be called on by universities to review teaching portfolios against institutional or external criteria for promotion purposes.

1.1 Models of peer review

Models of peer review of teaching can simplistically be categorised as internal or external and for summative or formative purposes. The benefits of external peer review have long been accepted and practiced (Conley-Tyler, 2005) in academia especially for summative purposes where independence of judgement is valued for research but has been met with active resistance for teaching (Gosling, 2014; Shulman 1999). It has been argued that internal peer review is better suited for formative purposes where a degree of familiarity of the reviewees and their practice can be an advantage in the provision of constructive feedback for improvement (Bell & Cooper, 2013; Nash et al., 2014; Sachs et al., 2013).

Examples of peer review models evident in the Australian higher education sector have been categorised into the internal–external and summative–formative dimensions shown in Figure 2.

These models are utilised for a variety of purposes and at varying levels across the higher education sector. They may be undertaken at a faculty, institutional or sector level and may be conducted for purposes such as institutional quality assurance of courses, accreditation of degrees, assessment standards and quality of teaching for the purposes of recognition and/or promotion. The examples in Figure 2 are illustrative of Australian practices and are not intended to be a comprehensive map of the Australian higher education sector.
### Figure 2: Examples of peer review models in Australian higher education

While there is a natural alignment between external review for summative purposes and internal review for formative outcomes, there are exceptions to this trend as indicated in Figure 2. The internal–summative model is less common as it is contrary to the long-established academic tradition of external examiners’ provision of unbiased assessment (Gaunt, 1999). There are, however, examples of this in cases such as institutional fellowships (e.g. Curtin’s Academy and UWA’s FASE). There is an increasing number of examples of the external–formative model where external reviewers offer formative advice related to teaching, assessment and academic standards generally. In each of the examples of this type listed, a community of qualified assessors support the practice. Hybrid models also exist where both internal and external assessors work together for summative purposes, such as the HEA Fellowship, and for formative purposes such as the Peer Review Assessment Network (PRAN).

In reality, the dimensions and characteristics of a peer review model of teaching are more complex and include:

- whether the reviewers are internal or external (including whether the review is blind)
- the purpose of the review (summative or formative)
- the knowledge and experience of the reviewers (including whether training of the reviewers occurs)
• the reviewing process (including the standards against which the review is conducted).

Examples of the range of characteristics of various models in use in Australia are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Models of peer review of teaching in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Internal / external</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Blind?</th>
<th>Experience / knowledge of reviewers</th>
<th>Against standards?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review of Teaching (Nash et al., 2014)</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Scholarly reflection on practice and enhancement of student learning through observation of teaching—mostly formative but may also be summative</td>
<td>Chosen by reviewee</td>
<td>As determined by reviewee unless specified by institution for summative purposes</td>
<td>As chosen by reviewee or institutional process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEA fellowships—self-accrediting</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Awarding of HEA Fellowships—summative</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Existing senior/principal fellows</td>
<td>UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current academic promotion model</td>
<td>Internal and external</td>
<td>Academic promotion—summative</td>
<td>Purposeful selection—not blind</td>
<td>Higher level than the candidate</td>
<td>Institutional standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QVA</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Maintenance of academic standards—formative</td>
<td>Blind, randomly assigned</td>
<td>Demonstrated understanding of standards</td>
<td>Go8 benchmarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Matters</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Benchmarking of accounting learning outcomes across institutions—formative</td>
<td>Double-blind</td>
<td>Training (calibration) provided</td>
<td>National benchmark standards for accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TaLS</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Assure validity, reliability and comparability of assessment and learning standards in equivalent universities—Formative</td>
<td>Double-blind, randomly assigned</td>
<td>Experienced teaching same course in partner university</td>
<td>Home university criteria in the context of the national benchmark standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed ExPeRT model for academic promotion</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Academic promotion—Summative</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Trained, random selection</td>
<td>Institutional or Australian standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Booth et al. (2015) advocate the adoption of a multilevel approach to peer review to meet the particular requirements of the higher education sector. In the context of reviewing assessment, they propose a five-level approach, each level becoming more sophisticated and rigorous than the previous. Only the lowest level involves an internal review process within an institution. The next four levels incorporate external review with increasingly
recognized experienced reviewers. More recently, a number of scholars (Bloxham & Price, 2015; Medland, 2015) have questioned the assumption that external review alone is sufficient to ensure rigour of judgement. They stress the need for external reviewers to be not only qualified and experienced but also trained in the process of review. Consequently, the highest level of review noted by Booth et al. (2015) and exemplified by the ‘Achievement Matters’ model involves trained assessors to ensure both quality and calibrated reviews enhancing the reliability and validity of the process.

Currently, the assessment of teaching quality by models such as those employed by the HEA Fellowship and academic promotional practices do not reach the highest level of training for calibration that will support reliability and validity of assessment (Booth et al., 2015). While reviewers in both cases are demonstrably expert teachers, by virtue of their institutional or association status, they are not specifically trained in reviewing, assessing or moderating other’s practice. This highlights an apparent gap in the sector’s mission to assure quality of teaching and learning.

The work Crisp and colleagues (2009) on Peer review of teaching for promotion purposes found that ‘summative peer review of teaching has the ability to improve both the status and quality of teaching at tertiary level, by encouraging the promotion of exceptional teachers and academics in the scholarship of teaching at all levels’ (p. 5). Furthermore, they suggested that ‘for peer review of teaching to be successful, peer reviewers must be trained and experienced’ (p. 5). To date, however, there has been little progress towards establishing a pool of external endorsed and trained experts in teaching and learning who can be accessed by universities to review portfolios against institutional or external criteria for promotion purposes.

This paper proposes a new model for the external peer review of teaching excellence against institutional or external standards for the purpose of promotion or recognition. The model will be referred to as the ExPeRT (External Peer Review of Teaching) model.

2 Challenges
A number of obvious challenges are present in developing the ExPeRT model of peer review for academic promotion and recognition. These include the recruitment of experts, engagement by institutions and the sustainability of the process. Each of these will addressed in turn.

2.1 Identifying and recruiting assessors and establishing a register of ExPeRTs
External peer review processes necessitate the establishment of a community of reviewers that can be accessed to undertake reviews as required. These groups mostly consist of scholars who have demonstrated qualifications and experience. The groups are variously known by names such as College of Peer Observers (The University of Queensland, 2015), Register of experts (TEQSA, 2012), and College of Peers (Peer Review of Assessment Networks, 2015).

The process of identifying potential assessors can be approached in a number of ways. A call for prospective assessors can be made across the sector, as is done by TEQSA, with applicants supplying their bona fides and demonstrating their expertise to undertake the process. Experienced individuals may be invited to join the network of assessors. Existing
groups, such as HERDSA, OLT Fellows or CADAD that already undertake teaching and learning assessment may be asked to nominate potential assessors. The register of ExPeRTs then could be integrated in established frameworks by drawing on existing communities of assessors as a base.

The motivations for individual academics to join the register of ExPeRTs are likely to include a variety of aspects. Included among these is the recognition it carries, which is valuable for their own career progression; the professional development and networking opportunities it provides; and the desire to promote quality teaching and learning in the Australian higher education sector.

Platforms such as Peer Review Portal or Spark Plus®, which is used by the Assessment Matters project, could be utilised to hone and manage the ExPeRT group and process.

2.2 Engagement by institutions
For the ExPeRT model to gain acceptance it needs to have buy-in either by individual institutions or by the sector as a whole. To consider why institutions might engage with this model it is useful to examine the value proposition being offered. Currently, institutions frequently struggle to find appropriate assessors for the teaching and learning components of academic portfolios for promotion. Assessors that are identified tend not to be trained through processes of calibration or moderation. It is not unreasonable in these circumstances to question the reliability and validity of judgement.

The ExPeRT model of peer review being proposed would provide a ready source of not only experienced but also trained reviewers. The current alternatives fall far short of the proposed model leaving considerable gaps in the sector’s quality assurance.

2.3 Sustainability of the process
The proposed ExPeRT model is most likely to be sustainable if adopted by an existing group such as HERDSA, CADAD or OLT Fellows to administer as core business for their association. The provision of this resource could be structured as a fee-for-service business model along the lines of the services offered by the HEA thereby enhancing its sustainability.

3 Characteristics of the model
The following characteristics underpin this proposed ExPeRT model of peer review of teaching.

- **Quality** is paramount in the operation of the ExPeRT model. As such reviewers must demonstrate their record in the area of teaching and learning excellence before they can join the register of ExPeRTs.

- **External review** is central to this model, helping support ethical considerations including the reduction of bias in assessments.

- **Training** of assessors is the key characteristic which sets this model apart from existing forms of peer review of teaching. Both initial (calibration) training and ongoing (moderation) processes will be employed to ensure the continued rigour of the model.

- **Sustainability** must be established and ensured to maintain the process as a key component of quality assurance in the Australian higher education sector.
• **Relevance**, such that the peer review process is flexible and fit-for-purpose is paramount. The ExPeRT model will provide reviewers that can rigorously assess teaching and learning quality against a range of criteria.

### 4 Proposed model for trialling and training assessors

A pilot training program for the ExPeRT model was conducted in June 2017 with an invited group of academics from across the Australian higher education sector. The process trialled was as follows.

1. Assessors were invited to attend a half-day workshop in Sydney on Tuesday June 27, 2017.
2. Participants were sent two de-identified teaching portfolios, from two different universities, submitted in support of academic promotion and the institutional criteria against which they should be assessed. Reviewers were asked to assess the portfolios and submit their assessment prior to the workshop meeting.
3. Participants were able to review others’ assessments and compare them with their own at the workshop. (Use of an online tool such as SPARKPLUS or the [Peer Review Portal](#) is recommended for ongoing assessments.)
4. At the workshop, the procedure undertaken by the ‘Assessment Matters’ calibration process was used to bring assessors to a common and agreed position on each portfolio.
5. The workshop took the opportunity to gather participants’ comments and suggestions for improving the process and supporting its ongoing sustainability.
6. Following the calibration workshop, participants were sent an additional portfolio to review and submit an assessment.
7. The variation in assessment following the training was compared to the spread prior to training.
8. Plans to expand the ExPeRT model for a second round of recruitment and training were considered.

### Conclusion of discussion paper

The discussion paper argued the rationale for the establishment of an ExPeRT (External Peer Review of Teaching) model in the Australian higher education context for the purposes of assessing academic promotion and recognition against either institutional criteria or external criteria. The key themes that were raised for consideration include that:

- the model be based on the principle of quality, which is achieved through the provision of external reviewers who have been trained to ensure a calibrated assessment
- the success of the model relies on the individual or collective buy-in of higher education institutions
- ownership of the model should be established to ensure its growth and sustainability into the future.
If quality teaching and learning in Australian higher education is important these themes must be further fostered.

The ExPeRT workshop
A total of 25 senior academics from across the sector were invited to participate in a shortened form of the proposed reviewer training process to seek their informed feedback. A total of 23 participants from 23 different institutions accepted the invitation to participate in the workshop. All participants were senior academics with recognised expertise in teaching and learning, the majority holding senior leadership roles in their institutions.

A month prior to the workshop, two de-identified promotion portfolios together with the candidates’ institutional criteria for promotion were provided with a ratings assessment form. One application was for promotion to professor and the other was for promotion to associate professor, from two different institutions. Participants individually assessed each of the applications against the institutional criteria on a four-point scale: Yes; Yes But; No But; No; and submitted these prior to the workshop meeting.

The participants attended a half-day workshop in Sydney on the 27 June, 2017, where they engaged in a calibration process of their assessments of the two applications, following the ‘Assessment Matters’ process developed by Professors Mark Freeman and Phil Hancock. This involved three stages:

1. assessing the applications and making judgements independently prior to the workshop
2. in the workshop, in small assigned groups, discussing their deliberations and coming to a group consensus
3. in the workshop, in a whole-group discussion, reporting the small group decisions and making a final determination.

Following the calibration process, the workshop concluded with a review of the process as they had experienced it, and discussion on the feasibility of extending the process into the future. A survey of the workshop and the process was sent to all participants seeking their anonymous feedback one month after the workshop.

Following the workshop, some of the reviewers agreed to be sent an additional portfolio to use the Peer Review Portal (https://peerreviewportal.com) under the leadership of Dr Sara Booth, initially developed under the Peer Review of Assessment Network (PRAN) project, and to consider the functionality of the web application for conducting promotion reviews into the future.

Evaluation of the workshop and proposed model
The workshop was evaluated, and a summary prepared by Dr Lee Partridge. The following is sourced from that report.

The participants were asked to undertake a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) analysis of the process and proposal for a college of (trained) experts to be created in support of external peer review of teaching for the purposes of promotion at the workshop. Approximately a month after the workshop, the participants were invited to
complete an online survey recording their reflection on the workshop process and the proposed model.

This summary draws on data from the SWOT analyses and the participants’ subsequent responses to the survey.

**SWOT analysis at conclusion of the workshop**

Groups were asked to perform the analysis from one of four viewpoints: the sector, the institutions, the assessors/reviewers and the promotion candidates.

The positive aspects of the training and the proposed process included:

- making explicit the tacit assumptions that assessors might hold
- the strengthening of reliability of cross-sector assessment as well as the validation of internal institutional processes
- its timeliness, in light of the increase in teaching-focused promotion applications.

The challenges identified were:

- availability of the necessary resources, including time, money and personnel required to establish and sustainably maintain such a process
- the absence of a sector-wide common standard may hamper a successful implementation of the proposal.

**Survey results one month after the workshop**

The survey drew on aspects that had been raised in the group-based SWOT analyses to gauge the degree to which the cited issues were universally relevant. Thirteen of the workshop participants undertook the survey.

The following themes emerged from the survey:

**Relevance of the assessor training and establishing a College of Experts**

Respondents were very positive with respect to elements and features of the training and the establishment of a College of Experts. **One hundred per cent (100%) agreed or strongly agreed** that these processes:

- would offer a valuable opportunity for the professional development of assessors
- would promote inter-rater reliability across the sector
- would provide a means of validating existing internal processes.

**Eighty-five per cent (85%) agreed or strongly agreed** that the training and College of Experts:

- offers a process that is relevant and adaptable to various institutions
- would promote a review of individual institutions’ standards and criteria.

With respect to the training, the need for the calibration process was seen as essential as indicated in comments.

*The moderation was most interesting and important to do this face-to-face to understand the thinking behind decisions.* (Respondent 8)
I found the workshop discussion and calibration exercise was invaluable, working within groups and as a whole room discussion. The portal was useful in calibrating the results of the discussion and would be beneficial in recalibrating a portfolio after the initial conversation. (Respondent 3)

Another comment related to the process involved the possibility of it being used formatively for candidates to access expert feedback prior to applying for promotion. A cautionary note was issued, suggesting that considering ‘the different missions of universities, the notion of inter-institutional reliability needs to be more nuanced’.

**Benefits of assessor training and being part of a College of Experts**

Eighty-five per cent (85%) of respondents saw significant benefit in:

- the process of training making explicit assumptions that assessors hold
- the process allowing access to different points of view from across the sector
- assessors [learning] from other institutions’ promotion processes and sharing within their own institution.

Eighty per cent (80%) rated the following as a significant benefit:

- the process offers a resource for assessors that they can take back to their own institution
- the process is good for the assessor’s own development.

Finally, 67 per cent saw significant benefit and 33 per cent saw some benefit in:

- being part of a College of Experts as a valuable addition to the assessor’s CV.

None of the respondents rated any of the items as being of no benefit at all.

**Barriers to establishing the ExPeRT process in Australia**

Respondents were asked to list what barriers might prevent the establishment of the ExPeRT process. A total of 35 responses were received, which fell into the following categories.

- Barriers related to institutional issues (16) including institutional buy-in, lack of executive support, existing and varying models of institutional peer review and related policies.
- Barriers related to resources (13) included the time to undertake the training and the assessing, the institutional cost in time, the financial cost of establishing and maintaining the process, the workload including institutional allocation in workload models.
- Barriers related to the process (4) including the dissemination of information across the sector, the relationship and distinction between research, and teaching and learning in portfolio assessment, timeliness of the reviews, and the recognition of experts.
- **Other** barriers (2) suggested included the existence of HEA champions and the presence of the HEA in the sector.
Solutions to the barriers identified

Twenty-seven solutions were proposed to the identified barriers which related to the following categories:

- **Partnerships** (8) were suggested with peak bodies (to act as brokers), Higher Education Services (to organise workshops and set of network of experts) and TEQSA (for guidance notes).

- **Process** (6) related suggestions included not setting the entry bar to the College of Experts too high, having developmental, collegial models of peer review as part of the materials of ExPeRT, and publications to support the program.

- **Motivation** (6) for individuals and institutions to participate were cited including sector recognition to motivate individuals, evidence to support anticipated benefits, a cost-effective model for institutions to participate on an ongoing basis, quantifying the potential benefits in dollar terms.

- **Endorsement** (5) from university executives including Universities Australia, VCs and DVCAs, sector groups and key universities.

- **Resources** (3) issues could be addressed by offering time/resource savings to institutions, discussing funding options with Universities Australia and/or several universities that might fund this work for their staff.

Engagement with ExPeRT

All respondents recorded high levels of support, engagement and advocacy for the ExPeRT program. One hundred (100%) per cent said they would advocate the ExPeRT process for their institution to engage with, as well as for colleagues applying for promotion. Ninety-two (92%) per cent (all but one respondent) said they would be prepared to be an assessor in the program.

The centrality of the ExPeRT approach was summarised by the final comments from two survey respondents:

*Benchmarking and peer review is essential in all aspects of university life.*

(Respondent 9)

*I think [ExPeRT] is valuable in that it gives insight into what is valued by each institution and it adds to our understanding of how L&T is being seen/changing in the sector. It’s a form of point in time mentoring for colleagues going for promotion and it’s a good benchmarking tool for institutions who participate.* (Respondent 10)

Next steps

The discussion paper and proposed model have been provided on the fellowship website for the information of the sector. Further discussions have been held with institutions that are keen to implement a similar calibration process as utilised in the workshop for use by their internal promotions panels and committees. There would seem to be significant scope for this development, particularly as the review and assessment of promotion applications from academics whose contributions largely focus on their contributions to teaching and learning and associated scholarly activities.
Chapter 5: Outcomes, impact and dissemination of the fellowship program

The central focus of the three activities detailed above was to engage in sector-wide strategies and processes that contribute to institutions’ capacity to recognise and reward teaching, as well as support teachers’ capacity to plan for career progression both within institutions and across the tertiary sector, nationally and internationally.

To achieve this, institutions need clear teaching criteria and expectations that draw on robust sources of evidence. These need to be embedded throughout the institution in policy, processes and practices, including evaluation and monitoring of outcomes.

Table 2 provides the intended Aims, Outputs and Outcomes that were envisioned when the program was first proposed in 2015:

Table 2: Planned outputs and outcomes for the three areas of fellowship activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with Australian tertiary institutions and teams to use the AUTCAS resources and processes to review their criteria, policies and processes related to recognising and rewarding teaching</td>
<td>Regional visits in each state to support institutional teams Working with regional universities e.g. JCU, USC, ACU and other institutions by invitation</td>
<td>21 universities involved with the AUTCAS project at different stages of implementation OLT TPP institutions not involved in the AUTCAS project Other tertiary institutions to engage with the AUTCAS framework and its application in their context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and further develop the AUTCAS framework, case studies and resources</td>
<td>Build the number of case studies on the AUTCAS website to share the different ways institutions have used the framework Develop and add resources to the website</td>
<td>Review and revise the AUTCAS framework and resources to reflect the experiences and feedback from the institutions and individuals using the framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disseminate and promote the uses of the AUTCAS framework, regional, national and international</td>
<td>Present and publish the outcomes and use of the framework at regional, national and international meetings, forums and conferences Journal, chapter articles, conference papers</td>
<td>Attending organisation meetings e.g. CADAD, ACODE, HERDSA, UA Visiting fellowship at the University of Windsor, Canada in 2015 Invitation to work with universities in Chile in 2016 Expressions of interest from institutions in South Africa, NZ, 2015–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop draft consultation ATTS papers outlining the rationale and national and international models, seek feedback</td>
<td>Series of draft consultation papers and responses from sector</td>
<td>Widely circulated consultation papers with multiple opportunities to provide input and comment Meeting with key stakeholders Establish reference group comprised of stakeholder nominated representatives National workshop with key stakeholders to review draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary document detailing process and proposing draft Australian ATTS statement, seek feedback and comment</td>
<td>Present final draft and seek endorsement from key stakeholders</td>
<td>Meet with key stakeholders, gather feedback Identify a national forum to workshop to review final draft ATTS and its uses (e.g. UA or OLT conference) involving key stakeholders in program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Output</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with national and international organisations on draft ATTS, throughout process</td>
<td>Meet with key stakeholders to seek formal tabling and endorsement through official resolutions</td>
<td>Map and/or benchmark against comparable Standards e.g. UKPSF, TEQSA/HES Meet with HEA and Ako Aotearoa to consider comparability and benchmarking of standards frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop draft consultation paper outlining the rationale, drawing on the various models of peer review and seek feedback and comment</td>
<td>Series of draft consultation papers and responses from sector</td>
<td>Widely circulated consultation papers with multiple opportunities to provide input and comment Meeting with key stakeholders and institutional leaders on their needs for peer review of teaching Establish a reference group comprised of stakeholder nominated representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary document detailing process and proposing draft peer review process, seek feedback and comment</td>
<td>Meet with key stakeholders to seek formal tabling and endorsement for trial</td>
<td>Meet regularly with HERDSA, OLT Fellows, CADAD, ACODE etc. Meet with key organisations representatives and members to discuss and endorse for trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a trial of peer review of teaching portfolios</td>
<td>Establish a pilot</td>
<td>Establish mechanisms for identifying and selecting peers, setting up a trial and registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial the peer review process and evaluate the applicants and intuitive experience</td>
<td>Conduct peer review training and moderation workshops on reviewing portfolios against specified criteria</td>
<td>Evaluate the process and experience for both applicants and committees Report on trial to organisations and institutions and propose a sustainable model for ongoing implementation and ownership by the sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with national and international organisations on draft peer review, throughout process</td>
<td>Meet with key stakeholders to seek formal tabling and endorsement through official resolutions</td>
<td>Meet with key organisations representatives and members to discuss trial, final model and endorse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three areas of activity, while described separately and with separate output and outcomes detailed, were carried out concurrently. For example, when attending the CADAD and HERDSA executive meetings, each of the activity areas were typically presented and discussed. When attending sector representative meetings, contact was made with the local institutions in the state or region to arrange visits to work with institutional teams, conduct workshops and hold discussions on the different activities of AUTCAS, ATTS and/or Peer review. Similar strategies were employed when attending conferences or meetings internationally. For example, when visiting the University of Witwatersrand (Witts), South Africa in 2016 to speak some workshops were run at their Teaching and Learning Forum, additional workshops were run with an invitation extended to all South African universities to send participants to attend. In this way, conversations about rewarding and recognising teaching in the local context could be extended and strategies and practices shared.

The scope of the fellowship program was extensive. It built on the AUTCAS work which had engaged 21 universities and professional teaching associations such as CADAD and HERDSA. It engaged with sector organisations such as Universities Australia and TEQSA and international organisations such as the HEA and Ako Aotearoa. The outcomes of the
fellowship have contributed to the Australia tertiary sector’s engagement in an evidence- and standards-based approach to rewarding and recognising teaching and informed international initiatives.

It is estimated that over 3200 individuals were engaged with the work of the fellowship, through direct participation and communication and attendance at presentations, workshops and meetings. No attempt has been made to estimate the number who might have engaged through the publications and through accessing the website and other secondary sources.

In terms of number of institutions that have engaged in the fellowship activities, it is estimated that 60 Australian higher education institutions were involved, with the majority of the Australian universities. Internationally, more than 230 international institutions were involved through direct communication and/or participation in presentations and workshops through the fellowship program 2015–2018. Appendix B details the publications, indicative presentations, visits and institutions involved in the fellowship as participants and as part of the dissemination and engagement activities.

External evaluation of the fellowship program

An external evaluation was undertaken by Dr Paul Chesterton. Dr Chesterton has significant expertise in evaluation and was co-author of the OLT evaluation guide. Dr Chesterton was the evaluator for the AUTCAS project (2012–13) and continued in this role for the extension of the AUTCAS project (2014). Given his expertise in evaluation and familiarity with and contribution to the AUTCAS project, the fellowship program benefited from his contribution as a critical friend and evaluator. Regular Skype review meetings were held throughout the program. He commented on draft papers, attended forums and workshops and provided two written reports (interim and final). His role as a critical friend throughout the fellowship program was invaluable to the success of the program.

It is considered vitally important that the evaluation process be transparent, so with the agreement of Dr Chesterton, the evaluation report is included as Appendix C. It is noted that Dr Chesterton has confirmed that the majority of the planned outputs and outcomes were achieved or exceeded. This was supported in large part through the agreement from the Office for Learning and Teaching to extend the timeline for the fellowship from the original one-year program planned for 2016, to May, 2018.

Overall, the Fellowship has produced significant outcomes and has laid the ground for ongoing impact in the sector. Further work is needed to consolidate and extend current achievements to achieve the Fellowship’s full potential. The ground for this has been laid through planned post-Fellowship events and commitments involving the Fellow, building on the momentum that has been created and the range of institutional development projects in place and in planning. (Chesterton, 2017, p. 9).
References


Coates, H., & Goedegebuure, L. (2012). Recasting the academic workforce: Why the attractiveness of the academic profession needs to be increased and eight possible strategies for how to go about this from an Australian perspective. Higher Education, 64(6), 875–889.


Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) 


Appendix A

Certification by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent)

I certify that all parts of the final report for this OLT fellowship provide an accurate representation of the implementation, impact and findings of the project, and that the report is of publishable quality.

Professor David Sadler, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)  
The University of Western Australia  
Date: 18/05/2018
Appendix B

Indicative fellowship outcomes and dissemination

Publications


Website
Australian university teaching criteria and standards http://uniteachingcriteria.edu.au/

Discussion Papers


Invited Presentations
Is there a future in professionalising higher education teaching? HERDSA Pre-kindled. Curtin University, Perth, September, 2018


Why recognizing and rewarding teaching is critical to achieving an excellent student experience. Invited speaker. WAND Sharing day, Murdoch University. November, 2016.


Australian Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework: An adaptable tool for institutions and individuals to develop and apply teaching criteria and standards, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. May. 2015.


Conference Presentations

Is there a future in professionalising higher education teaching? TERNZ Conference, Wellington, NZ, November, 2018

If we care about the quality of students’ learning, then we must care about quality of teachers’ teaching. HERDSA, Adelaide. July, 2018.


Challenges to building capacity for curriculum transformation through standards and performance criteria. HERDSA Conference, Sydney. June. 2017


Recognising and rewarding teaching in higher education. Charles Sturt University. May, 2016.

Recognising and rewarding teaching. Universities Australia DVCA meeting, Canberra. May 2016.


An adaptable tool for institutions and individuals to develop and apply teaching criteria and standards. ISSOTL Conference. Melbourne Symposium presentation. October, 2015.

Indicative invited international visits with meetings and presentations
Invited by the University of Iceland, meeting with university representatives and giving several presentations to regional university audiences on teaching quality and standards. 9-13 October, 2017.
Invited 2017 Educator-in-Residence by the National University of Singapore. Presented the Memorial lecture and gave several workshops and presentations attended by participants from other Singaporean universities. 21-30 August, 2017.

Invited by the Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius. To present workshops and attend meetings on teaching quality and standards. Workshops included over 7 institutions and 185 participants attending. 3-4 August, 2017.

Invited by the University of Social Science and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to present a series of workshop on active teaching and constructive alignment of the curriculum. 108 January, 2017.

Invited by the University Technica Santa Maria, Valparaiso, Chile. Meetings and presentations on teaching quality, criteria and standards. 4-12 June, 2016.

Invited by the University Catholica, Temuco, Chile. Meetings and presentations on evaluation of teaching, teaching quality. A public presentation on teaching quality included 5 universities and over 85 participants. 13 - 24 June, 2016.

Invited by Ako Aotearoa, to visit New Zealand, meeting with university representatives and giving several presentations to university audiences and Quality agencies on teaching quality and standards. Eg. University of Auckland, MIT, University of Waikato, Auckland University of Technology, UniTech, Massey University, Victoria University, NZQA, Productivity Commission, Academic Quality Agency. 13-19 March 2016.

Invited by the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Workshops in Johannesburg involving local institutions. 21-22 November, 2016.

Invited by the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, to be Visiting Scholar in Residence. I gave several presentations and workshops. eg Teaching Criteria and standards; Indicators of quality teaching, Measuring impact of professional development; University of Windsor, Queens University, McMaster University, Ontario, Canada and contributed to meetings on teaching quality and evaluation attended by Southern Ontario Education Universities. 29 July - 20 October, 2015.

Invited by the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Several presentations and workshops in Johannesburg and Cape Town involving 19 institutions and over 135 participants. 19-29 May, 2015.

Reference to AUTCAS resources by TEQSA

Institutions and organisations engaged in Fellowship activities*  

**Australian Higher Education Institutions**  
Avondale College  
Australian Catholic University  
Australian National University  
Bond University  
Charles Darwin University  
Charles Sturt University
Deakin University
Federation University Australia
Flinders University
Griffith University
James Cook University
La Trobe University
Macquarie University
Monash University
Murdoch University
Notre Dame University
Queensland University of Technology
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)
Southern Cross University
The University of Adelaide
University of Canberra
University of New England
University of New South Wales
University of Queensland
University of South Australia
University of Southern Queensland
University of Sydney
University of Tasmania
University of Technology, Sydney
University of the Sunshine Coast
University of Wollongong
Victoria University

*Includes institutions involved in the AUTCAS project (2012-14)

Organisations
Higher Education Research Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA)
Australasian Council of Directors of Distance and Open Education (ACODE)
Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD) now Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching (CAULLT)
Western Australian Network for Dissemination (WAND)
Australian Council of Deans of Science
Universities Australia, DVCA Group
Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), Department of Education and Training
Higher Education Compliance and Quality Network (HECQN)
Higher Education Private Provider’ Quality Network (HEPP-QN)
Peer Review of Assessment Network (PRAN)
International Consortium of Educational Development (ICED)
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)

International Institutions engaged in Fellowship activities
Umea University, Sweden
University of Iceland, Iceland
Ako Aotearoa, National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, New Zealand
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada
McMaster University, Ontario, Canada
Queens University, Ontario, Canada
Prince of Songkla University, Thailand
Higher Education Academy, United Kingdom
Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand
University of Auckland, New Zealand
Massey University, New Zealand
Victoria University, New Zealand
University Technica, Santa Maria, Valparaiso, Chile
Universidad Católica de Temuco, Chile
University of Social Science and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
National University of Singapore, Singapore
Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius
Appendix C

Evaluation report


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2.0 Intentions of the project
3.0 Functions of the evaluation
4.0 Evaluation approach and procedures
   4.1 Approach
   4.2 Procedures
5.0 Evaluation results and findings
   5.1 Extend and embed the outcomes of the AUTCAS project
   5.2 Investigate the feasibility of a sector-developed and endorsed Australian Professional Tertiary Teachers Standards (APTTs)
   5.3 Investigate and trial a process of peer review
6.0 Conclusions
1.0 Introduction
This report outlines details and findings of an external evaluation of a National Senior Teaching Fellowship, entitled Recognising and rewarding teaching: Australian teaching criteria and standards and expert peer review, undertaken by Professor Denise Chalmers in 2016 - 2017. The project was funded by the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) and the external evaluation was conducted by Dr Paul Chesterton, an independent evaluation consultant.

The following sections outline the intentions of the project, the functions, approach and procedures of the evaluation, key evaluation findings and overall conclusions.

2.0 Intention of the project
The intention of the Fellowship, as outlined in the nomination form, was to focus on three complementary areas of activity under the unifying theme of rewarding and recognising teaching, namely:

i. Extend and embed the outcomes of the Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards (AUTCAS) project;

ii. Investigate the feasibility of a sector-developed and endorsed Australian Professional Tertiary Teachers Standards (APTTTS) that would provide an external standard against which individuals and institutions could benchmark teacher quality; and

iii. Investigate and trial a process of peer review that will apply teaching criteria and standards and model how to assess teaching excellence and quality.

Specific aims and intended outputs and outcomes were outlined for each of these areas of activity. In general, the Fellowship was intended to ‘deliver outcomes for individuals, institutions and the Australian tertiary sector’ by investigating and demonstrating ‘how to enhance and reward university teaching that sustains a focus on teaching that delivers quality student learning experiences’.

3.0 Functions of the evaluation
The evaluation was designed to provide:

i. ongoing formative feedback on the processes, outcomes and impact of the Fellowship activities; and

ii. a summative evaluation of the Fellowship’s processes, outcomes and impact by means of an interim report and a final report.

4.0 Evaluation approach and procedures
4.1 Approach
A responsive evaluation approach, incorporating both process and outcome dimensions, was adopted for the evaluation. In this approach, processes and indicators of likely impact were identified, analysed and evaluated, taking into account perspectives of key stakeholders. The evaluator acted as a critical friend, having access to details of the Fellowship activities, monitoring progress, raising questions and providing regular feedback to the Fellow.
The evaluation was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the intended processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts of the Fellowship?
2. How is the Fellowship being implemented?
3. What outputs and outcomes is the Fellowship producing?
4. What are the likely impacts of the Fellowship’s implementation?
5. In what ways, if any, can the Fellowship processes and outputs be enhanced to promote the appropriateness and effectiveness of its outcomes and impacts?

4.2 Procedures

A range of information sources and information gathering techniques were used to address the evaluation questions. The information sources comprised:

- the Fellowship nomination form;
- documents, including Fellowship activity reports, progress reports, records of presentations, publications, consultation papers, stakeholder responses, statements and proposed models;
- a pilot peer review training program workshop and participant feedback;
- the Fellowship website; and
- the Fellow.

The information gathering techniques comprised a review of the Fellowship nomination form, reviews of documents relating to the Fellowship as they were generated and of the Fellowship website as it was progressively developed, observation of the pilot peer review training program workshop and analysis of participant feedback, and ongoing discussions with the Fellow.

5.0 Evaluation results and findings

As noted in section 3.0, this report is designed to provide a summative evaluation of the Fellowship’s processes, outcomes and impact. The following results and findings address these elements within a framework of the Fellowship’s three areas of activity.

5.1 Extend and embed the outcomes of the AUTCAS project

The Fellowship aims relating to the first area focused on working with tertiary institutions and teams to use the AUTCAS resources and processes, reviewing and developing the AUTCAS framework and resources, and disseminating and promoting use of the framework at regional, national and international levels.

The preceding AUTCAS project (2012 – 2015) attracted widespread engagement of Australian tertiary institutions, culminating in teams from 21 universities participating in workshops designed to assist them to make use of the AUTCAS framework in pursuing quality teaching in their own institutional settings. The workshops were accompanied by a series of dissemination processes, including conference and event presentations and panel discussions and development of resources on the project website.

Fellowship activity reports and progress reports reveal an ongoing pattern of visits and other means of contact with tertiary institutions and higher education regulatory and representative bodies over the last 24 months. This included contact with institutions that had not been directly engaged in the AUTCAS project as well as with those that had. Apart from institutional visits across the country, contact occurred via presentations at conferences conducted, for example, by Universities Australia, the Office for Learning and
Recognising and rewarding teaching: Australian teaching criteria and standards and expert peer review

Teaching, HERDSA, and the Australian Council of Deans of Science; meetings with higher education bodies or their executive members, for example, with the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development, the Council of Australasian Directors of Open and Distance Education, HERDSA, Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Academic), and the OLT Fellows Forum; provision of materials for discussion and feedback; and contact with individuals and teams via telephone, email and face-to-face meetings.

The focus of these contacts varied. For some it was developing awareness of the AUTCAS framework and ways in which it could be utilized. For others, it involved advising on existing or planned uses and adaptations and how these might be further developed. Accordingly, the dissemination process produced some new adoptees as well as promoting renewed or extended involvement by others. A presentation and discussion on AUTCAS with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) led to the AUTCAS website being included in the TEQSA Guidance notes for implementation of the Higher Education Standards for demonstrating teaching quality.

Further extension of the outcomes of the AUTCAS project was also noted in overseas institutional engagement. This was evidenced, for example, in a week-long visit by the Fellow to New Zealand in March 2016, involving meetings, discussions and seminars with personnel from Auckland University of Technology, the University of Auckland, Massey University and Victoria University and system authorities such as NZ Qualifications Authority, Productivity Commission, Tertiary Education Commission, and Academic Quality Agency for NZ Universities. A three-week visit to Chile was undertaken by the Fellow in June 2016, working with personnel at the University Technica Santa Maria and Catholic University Temuco on strategies and processes to recognize, evaluate and reward excellent teaching. In November 2016, work was undertaken in South Africa on teaching criteria and standards. A further instance was noted in the Prince of Songkla University, Thailand using AUTCAS to frame their teaching criteria and associated required evidence.

Overseas interest and engagement in the AUTCAS project continued in 2017, with Professor Chalmers being involved in presentations and discussions at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in January, and in workshops, presentations and meetings with Department of Education, Quality Agency and universities and colleges in Mauritius in August, followed by a two-week Visiting Fellowship on Teaching Excellence at National University Singapore. In October 2017, Professor Chambers visited the University of Iceland as invited speaker at their Inaugural Teaching and Learning Conference, along with other meetings and presentations focusing on AUTCAS, followed by a meeting later that month at the University of Leicester, England.

The dissemination process also involved further development of the AUTCAS website. At the time of writing this evaluation report, the number of uploaded case studies of AUTCAS implementation had been expanded to seven. The site was in turn incorporated into a broader website entitled Recognising & rewarding teaching, bringing together the three areas of Fellowship activity.

Publications have also been used by the Fellow to disseminate and promote use of the AUTCAS framework. As well as conference papers mentioned earlier, examples include a paper published in the HERDSA Review of Higher Education, Vol. 3, July 2016, entitled Evaluation of Teaching (co-authored with Lynne Hunt) and a book chapter entitled A national strategy for teaching excellence – one university at a time (co-authored with
Beatrice Tucker) accepted for publication by Routledge in an edited book *Global perspectives on Excellence: a new era for higher education teaching*.

Overall, this first area of activity in the Fellowship has progressed well. The key underlying factor has been the extensive pattern of contacts initiated by the Fellow, through institutional visits, conference presentations, meetings and interaction with individuals, supported by materials and the website case studies. These contacts have enabled the Fellow to discuss key concepts and concerns and to provide information and insights on ways forward, emphasising flexibility in focus and design in order to meet the particular needs and interests of the varying institutional contexts. A focus on networking and working together to generate ways forward has been well received by participants, as their positive feedback attests.

The ways in which the AUTCAS framework and resources are being used varies across institutions. Some examples are evidenced in the expanded body of case study material on the website. The indicators are that the outcomes of the AUTCAS project will continue to be extended and embedded beyond the end of the Fellowship, both nationally and internationally, given the ongoing schedule of contacts and currently reported instances of institutional development projects in place or in planning. It is intended that examples of AUTCAS implementation will continue to be added to the website to serve as a source of ideas and resource material for the sector. It should be noted that this will require institutional commitment and resourcing to maintain and develop the website beyond the Fellowship period.

**5.2 Investigate the feasibility of a sector-developed and endorsed Australian Professional Tertiary Teachers Standards (APTTSt)**

The Fellowship aims relating to this second area focused on developing papers outlining the rationale for an APTTS and national and international models for tertiary teacher standards, with responses to the papers to be sought from the sector. A draft APTTS statement would then be developed, to be reviewed and work-shopped as a means of developing a final statement for endorsement by key stakeholders, involving a national summit/forum in the latter half of 2016. The APTTS in turn would be mapped and/or benchmarked against comparable standards such as the UK Professional Standards Framework and the TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework.

As noted in the Fellow’s Progress report to the OLT in May 2016, there was a planned change of strategy in the initial stage with a decision not to develop the rationale and models papers without first consulting widely. This in turn meant a change of timeline for the national work-shopping, moving it into 2017.

The extensive rounds of visits and other contacts with tertiary institutions and higher education regulatory and representative bodies conducted for the first area of Fellowship activity were also used to discuss the need and possible nature of an APTTS statement. In light of these discussions, a first draft of an APTTS paper was circulated to a small group of sector representatives for comment. A revised draft document entitled *A case for the use of standards in recognising, evaluating and rewarding university teaching: A discussion paper* was subsequently written and circulated in October 2016 to a wider sample of people holding key institutional or national roles in the sector, seeking their feedback and critique. The document covered aspects such as the Australian and international higher education
contexts, the development and defining of standards, determining criteria for APTTS and a
draft APTTS framework. It then listed a number of questions for readers to consider in their
feedback. The document was subsequently posted to the Fellowship website, again seeking
responses.

The continuing consultation and dissemination process appears to have yielded a range of
useful feedback and advice. The draft APTTS framework was positively received, with
suggestions in some quarters for minor adjustments or fine tuning.

One issue raised by a number of responding stakeholders was that of the role and place in
Australia of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and its linked four-tiered
Fellowship program operated by the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA). The HEA has
been extending its presence and outreach in Australasia over the past two to three years,
holding a set of meetings around the region to promote its Fellowship program. At least
seven universities in Australia have subscribed to the program. A HEA Australasian Strategic
Advisory Board (ASAB) has now been established, with members drawn from subscribing
institutions in Australia and New Zealand.

Professor Chalmers’ work has highlighted the fundamental need to consider the
development of standards that are appropriate to the contexts in which they are applied,
independently of the variety of ways in which they may be subsequently used. The ongoing
consultative processes by which the draft APTTS has been developed and refined to this
point have tapped directly into local contexts to ensure its appropriateness to Australian
higher education settings.

The focus of this second area of activity of the Fellowship was to investigate the feasibility of
a sector-developed and endorsed APTTS. The first aspect of this has been achieved, with the
draft APTTS having been developed through a process of wide-ranging consultation and
engagement with the sector and positive response to the resultant draft. The second aspect,
investigating the feasibility of sectoral endorsement, may be seen as a work-in-progress,
with continuing discussion occurring with key stakeholders and decision-makers in the
sector, focusing on key issues underpinning endorsement that the Fellowship has identified.
Such discussion may well include the notion of the APTTS framework serving as a
benchmark for examining the appropriateness and transferability of externally developed
standards to Australian higher education teaching contexts, along with options for
modifications, where needed, to fit Australian contexts.

5.3 Investigate and trial a process of peer review

The Fellowship aims relating to this third area focused on developing a draft peer review
process in the light of consultation papers outlining its rationale and a range of peer review
models, and trialling and evaluating a pilot peer review of teaching portfolios with a view to
proposing a sustainable model.

The pattern of consultative visits and other contacts across the sector built into the
Fellowship’s design yielded a range of comments and input from stakeholders on using peer
review to apply teaching criteria and standards in assessing teaching excellence and quality.
Contacts included presentations, such as at the HERDSA Conference in 2016 and at Witts
University, South Africa in the same year, and informal discussions with Deputy Vice-
Chancellors across the sector. The article published in the HERDSA Review entitled
Evaluating Teaching, mentioned earlier in section 5.1, included a rationale and advocacy for
Recognising and rewarding teaching: Australian teaching criteria and standards and expert peer review

peer review of teaching. Interest in the use of peer review in assessing teaching emerging from these interactions was reported by the Fellow to be strong.

In the light of feedback and input received during the consultation process, a draft discussion paper was prepared, outlining a proposed model of external peer review of teaching (ExPeRT) for the purposes of promotion and recognition. The paper was circulated among a number of higher education sector senior personnel for comment. In turn, a pilot training program for the proposed model was trialled in a pre-conference workshop for invited participants in conjunction with the 2017 HERDSA Conference in Sydney. The workshop was designed, first, to test the process outlined in the draft consultation paper using de-identified promotion portfolios and related institutional promotion criteria, and secondly, to explore the possibility of establishing a College of Peers, a register of endorsed and trained teaching and learning experts to carry out reviews.

As part of the trialling, consideration was given to use of an online tool that has been adopted and well accepted across the sector for other purposes in recent years. Professor Chalmers was also in continuing contact with the leader of the Peer Review of Assessment Network (PRAN) to monitor progress on that project’s prototype Assessment web tool and to examine any possibilities for its application to peer review of teaching, particularly in relation to teaching portfolios.

The workshop provided a useful means of trialling the process of peer review in the proposed model. A total of 23 experienced academics from a wide range of universities participated and gave feedback, both during and in the weeks following the workshop. The feedback ratings and comments were gathered and collated by the Fellowship’s Project Officer, with the data and findings being shared with the Evaluation Consultant.

The process trialled in the workshop was generally well received by participants, who highlighted matters such as its capacity for making tacit assumptions held by assessors more explicit, its provision of a means of validating internal institutional processes, and its potential for strengthening inter-rater reliability across the sector. It was also seen as offering a valuable opportunity for professional development of assessors. Some barriers to its adoption were identified, largely focusing on institutional willingness to change existing processes, policies and structures, and associated resourcing issues. In turn, a number of ways of addressing the barriers were suggested, including seeking endorsement and support from peak bodies, sector groups and university executives.

The trialling and feedback revealed the model as having clear and distinct advantage for institutions and for the sector, given its focus on access to a trained and experienced pool of reviewers. A key challenge now lies in promoting institutional motivation to adopt and implement its operation.

The details outlined above point to significant progress in this area of activity. The consultative processes that were adopted provided a sound basis for developing the paper and model, as well as promoting interest among the potential invitees to the trialling workshop. The model and its processes have received a positive initial response from the range of experienced academics involved in the trial. For the model to become sustainable, ongoing attention will be needed to promote its acceptance at the institutional level, along with the confirmation of an online tool to provide a readily accessible means to guide and support its operation.
6.0 Conclusions
The Fellowship comprised three areas, namely extending and embedding the outcomes of the AUTCAS project, investigating the feasibility of a sector-developed and endorsed APTTS, and investigating and trialling a process of peer review of teaching, particularly in relation to teaching portfolios.

The first of these has progressed very well, with clear evidence of extended and embedded use of the AUTCAS framework and resources, both within Australian and overseas higher education sectors. Use and embedding of the AUTCAS materials is expected to continue beyond the end of the Fellowship, given the ongoing schedule of contacts for the Fellow and the range of institutional development projects in place or in planning.

For the second area, the feasibility of a sector-developed APTTS has been clearly established, as evidenced by the draft APTTS produced through extensive consultation and engagement with the sector. The feasibility of sectoral endorsement needs continuing investigation through ongoing discussion with key stakeholders and decision-makers in the sector, as detailed in section 5.2 earlier. The Fellowship activities have served to delineate clearly the underlying issues for discussion.

The third area has seen significant progress, with the development and trialling of a peer review model and processes, leading to a positive initial response. For the model to become sustainable, ongoing attention to promoting acceptance of the model at the institutional level will be needed.

A key factor underpinning the Fellowship’s progress and achievements has been the highly consultative processes used to inform development of drafts and models. The processes have included systematic gathering and use of feedback and advice, enabling progressive modification and fine tuning of drafts. Sources have been extensive, drawing on key stakeholders from across the sector, nationally and beyond. The processes have provided comprehensive insights into key issues, needs and concerns as well as generating stakeholder interest and engagement in the outputs and outcomes.

The consultative processes have been aided by Professor Chalmers’ extensive experience and strong academic standing in the field. Her credibility and networking links, nationally and internationally, have facilitated access to key stakeholders and their critical and constructive engagement with the issues at hand. Her emphasis on working together to find ways of meeting a variety of contextual needs and her skills in maintaining focus and direction across disparate interactions and discussions have been key contributing factors to the effectiveness of the Fellowship processes.

The processes adopted in the Fellowship have promoted a sharpening, deepening and extending of the academic conversation around standards and their roles in recognizing and rewarding quality teaching. This in turn has led to changes in perspectives, policies and practices at a number of universities, a sample of which is evidenced in the published case study material.

Overall, the Fellowship has produced significant outcomes and has laid the ground for ongoing impact in the sector. Further work is needed to consolidate and extend current achievements to achieve the Fellowship’s full potential. The ground for this has been laid through planned post-Fellowship events and commitments involving the Fellow, building on the momentum that has been created and the range of institutional development projects in place and in planning.