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# Fellow Profile

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## Professor Trevor Cullen Edith Cowan University

Professor Trevor Cullen is currently Associate Dean – Design Media, and Communication and Director of CREATEC research Centre at Edith Cowan University. He is acknowledged as an expert in journalism curriculum design and health journalism.

**Fellowship title:** Journalism capstone units: Capstone units for journalism programs to facilitate the demonstration of graduate capabilities.

**Year completed:** 2017

**Expertise key words:** Journalism, Curriculum, Capstones

**What did you achieve?:** The ambitious aim of the Fellowship was to produce an agreed statement of outcomes and standards which might usefully inform the development of capstone units in various types of journalism studies (degrees and majors). The Fellowship involved interviews with 30 journalism academics at 18 universities across five States in Australia. The approach was to mine the knowledge and experiences of those actually teaching the discipline of journalism to formulate a set of statements about what a graduate in journalism must know and be able to do. The strength of this approach is that it engaged a wide group of invested parties, it was inclusive and it is likely to have a long-term impact because the outcomes of the project belonged to those teaching the subject, not the researcher.

For a research project to have an impact, people need to know the findings, be able to access the relevant supporting information and then use the information to make changes to their own practices. I strove for maximum impact by engaging the support of the peak journalism education body in Australia.

The final part of the validation process was the submission of the statement of agreed standards, principles, models and skills to the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA). Acceptance of such by this influential, peak journalism education body was critical to ensuring that the project has an impact on curriculum design and teaching practice in journalism education in Australia. The Executive members of the JERAA accepted the report and recommendations for the use of journalism capstone units in Australian universities. “The documents and guidance you provided to us about journalism capstone units have been extremely valuable and we endorse them.”

**What does the sector need now?:** There is more useful work to be done on the issue of whether a capstone experience should be primarily either a learning experience or an opportunity to demonstrate accomplishments.



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