



# One University's Experience of Embedding the Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework

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## The *Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards (AUTCAS)* framework is a practical, flexible guide designed to assist universities to clarify quality teaching

The framework is underpinned by carefully researched definitions and principles of quality teaching that are expressed through seven criteria. The organising principle is alignment with promotional levels. For each criterion the framework suggests standards of achievement that might be applied to each promotional level, cross-referenced to examples of indicative evidence that could be used to demonstrate achievement. The framework was developed with the intention that these criteria, standards and indicative evidence be adapted by individual universities to suit their own context.

## Curtin University used the AUTCAS framework to guide the development of their own Teaching Excellence Framework

Curtin University established an ambitious teaching and learning plan in 2013 to enhance the student experience. This context provided a clear imperative for the development of teaching criteria and standards at Curtin. As part of that plan, Curtin University developed a *Teaching Excellence* framework to define the capabilities and skills of teaching academics and guide recruitment, development, recognition and retention processes. The **Curtin Teaching Excellence Framework** provides a single set of criteria that underpin all relevant reward and recognition processes, so that teaching excellence is clear and consistent with the University's strategic goals, and supported by a comprehensive framework which can be systemically and consistently implemented. Curtin's Teaching Excellence criteria mirror those developed in the *AUTCAS* project and are informed by the *AUTCAS* Framework.

## Curtin's case study can guide other universities developing their own teaching criteria

### The Process

1. The Curtin Teaching Excellence Framework was developed, including; 1) A clear aim, 2) Teaching excellence criteria, 3) Dimensions of teaching excellence for each academic level (A-D), 4) Evidence of achievement for each dimension
2. Key documents, policies, organisational structures and stakeholders were identified to align and contextualise the framework across the university
3. Consultation with Human Resources to embed the criteria into new position statements for the recruitment of teaching focused academics
4. Development of a Framework for Quality and Excellence in Teaching and Learning that details quality teaching and learning dimensions, indicators and measures aligned with Curtin's strategic vision
5. Development of new professional roles to provide administrative support for academics in coordination roles
6. Development of a university wide peer review of teaching program
7. Development of a new model of professional learning to support teaching academics in their achievement of Teaching Excellence at Curtin
8. The Teaching Performance Index (a teaching reward program) was remodelled as a development fund to support academics to achieve excellence

### Challenges

- The university's vision to be a leading research institute
- Low number of staff promoted on teaching performance

### Next Steps at Curtin

- Embedding of Teaching Excellence into the university's Work Performance Processes and Promotions Criteria
- Advance professional learning to develop academics through their career in all teaching excellence criteria

### Enabling Factors

- Timing coincided with the reshaping of Curtin's academic workforce e.g. recruitment of teaching focused academics and new professional roles
- A new strategic teaching and learning plan and quality framework for teaching and learning
- Parallel development of professional learning and peer review in support of teaching excellence
- Revision of reward schemes for teaching and research

## The *AUTCAS* framework provided timely and critical input that was contextualised to reflect Curtin University's context

Teaching Excellence at Curtin is now integral to evidencing good teaching and is aligned to role statements for teaching focused, clinical teaching, teaching-research and academic positions. The teaching criteria are designed to assist in clarifying expectations for individual academic staff, particularly new and early career staff. As well as to provide guidelines for supporting academics, promotion and awards. The criteria will be used by academic staff and their supervisors as a formative development tool to identify career objectives and developmental needs. The criteria will also inform promotion, recognition and reward schemes and professional learning.

For more information about the Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards project:

[www.uniteachingcriteria.edu.au](http://www.uniteachingcriteria.edu.au)



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