**Australian Catholic University  
 Case Study Summary**

**June 2016**

1. **Project focus**

The project aim and output is implementation of a University Teaching Standards Framework to clarify key criteria in teaching excellence at ACU. It is envisaged that the Framework will be used in multiple contexts including promotion, performance review and recruitment.

1. **Institutional context**

ACU is a multi-campus, medium sized university (about 30,000 students) providing national curricula. ACU has four Faculties: Theology and Philosophy, Arts and Education, Health Sciences and Law and Business. Our teaching and research practice is fundamentally guided by our Mission. Providing clarity on University teaching standards is in-line with the Mission in providing ethical service respecting the dignity of the human person.

In 2014 ACU completed a major restructure and early implementation of research intensification strategies including identification of many staff on teaching only pathways. Early in 2014 the Provost provided funding to the Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre for the development of a University Teaching Standards Framework to be implemented at ACU to address any confusion about what criteria constitutes excellence in University teaching including the Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (SoLT).

1. **Teaching criteria**

The criteria for University teaching at ACU are:

1. Design and planning of learning activities
2. Teaching and supporting student learning
3. Assessment and giving feedback to students on their learning
4. Developing effective learning environments, student support and guidance
5. Integration of scholarship, research and professional activities with teaching and in support of student learning
6. Evaluation of practice and continuing professional development
7. Professional and personal effectiveness

After extensive ACU community consultation it was decided that the criteria developed by the OLT project would be retained but that emboldening of minimum standards would be removed.

1. **Approach to implementation**

A project manager was appointed to provide administrative support for the development and implementation of the Framework as an LTC project. A reference group including the LTC Director, Chair of Academic Board, Executive Deans and Human Resources was established for

development of the Framework. Comparative research with other possible University teaching standards frameworks was undertaken and it was decided that the OLT example was the most fit for purpose model for ACU.

After the Framework had been endorsed by the reference group senior leaders (Executive Dean to Heads of School levels) in Learning and Teaching at ACU were invited by the LTC Director to workshops in Melbourne and Brisbane. The workshops involved ‘hands on’ use of the framework in 5 different contexts (promotion, performance review, awards and grants, recruitment, personal reflection on professional practice) in groups. This process resulted in discussion and feedback in the practicalities of using the Framework and informed its further development for use at ACU.

The Framework then went through a University administrative implementation process which included feedback and endorsement from Faculty learning and teaching committees.

The Framework was endorsed by Academic Board in December 2015 and is being rolled out using information sessions, a recorded FAQ presentation and workshops. Data has been collected at all face-to-face sessions regarding how the Framework is being received, used and how it might be developed over time.

In semester 2, 2016 the next phase of a formal research project will take place. Focus groups and in-depth interviews will be conducted to collect data on how the Framework is being used and how it is being received at all levels of the University.

**5. Role of the AUTCAS framework**

It is anticipated that aspects of the Framework will be utilised as appropriate at various levels of the University as a useful resource for identifying teaching standards.

**6. Achievements and emerging issues**

The major outcomes of the project so far include having achieved universal consensus on the need for such a resource. It has also generated collegial discussion on the finer points of what constitutes evidence of standards in the criteria. This has extended beyond the project in opening up opportunities for professional development in all of the areas covered by the criteria as well as in practical matters such as ePortfolio.

After formal implementation of the Framework our work will include providing professional development for staff at all levels of the University in using it; embedding it in our own practice in the LTC; embedding it as appropriate in policies; seeking feedback from those using it on how it is being used and its impact (ethics approval has been granted for making this a formal research project) and writing up the project as a journal article.

Workshops and information sessions have highlighted the great potential for the Framework to act as a catalyst for excellence in University teaching practice. Staff are enthusiastic about using it to trigger critical reflection on their practice and as a tool to provide structure and vocabulary for writing their own narratives of excellence in teaching.

**7. List of key words:** Multi campus; national; Mission; ethical