AUSTRALIAN
University Teaching Criteria
& Standards Framework

# Edith Cowan University
# Case Study Summary

### 1. Project focus

To contextualise the AUTCAS Framework to the ECU environment, with an emphasis on incorporating our core strategic priority of Engaging and Serving our Communities, as well as the principles and priorities of the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework.

### Institutional context

ECU is a "new generation" university of 23,000 students and approximately 2,500 academic staff, including sessional staff. ECU has had a five star rating for six years in a row for teaching quality, generic skills, and overall satisfaction. There is a political imperative to maintain this into the future.

Prior to the project, ECU had a number of disparate policies and frameworks related to teaching and learning. The relationship between institutional expectations with regard to the quality of teaching, and promotional opportunities for staff was broadly defined in curriculum policies related to planning, development, delivery and assessment and in the Academic Staff Performance Expectations and Outcomes (ASPEO) framework.

### 2. Teaching criteria

The ASPEO currently contains three Learning and Teaching Criteria:

1. **Teaching Performance:** broadly described across academic levels A to E as "Evidence of sustained achievement and/or improvement against ECU's teaching targets"
2. **Research-Informed Teaching:** described separately at each of levels A to E with increasing cross-disciplinary connections, greater mentoring and leadership roles, and success in securing teaching and learning research grants.
3. **Engaged Teaching:** described at three levels: building on existing industry and/or professional contacts; building new partnerships that include opportunities for internationalisation; and, providing leadership in developing sustained partnerships and networks.

We look forward to further refinement of our teaching criteria and standards in 2015, both within ASPEO and in a more detailed Teaching Criteria and Standards framework.

### 3. Approach to implementation

A draft criteria and standards framework was developed in July and August 2014 and has been used as a basis for initial consultation. Responses so far have been positive and some interest has been generated from individuals keen to be part of the ongoing development and refinement of the Framework.

In 2015 the Centre for Learning and Development plans to work collaboratively with Strategic Human Resources to engage academic staff in conversations about the ASPEO and the Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework.

Specifically, the 2015 consultation process will include:

- direct consultation between the Head of the Centre for Learning and Development (CLD) and Associate Deans;
- formation of a Teaching Criteria and Standards Reference group comprising Teaching and Learning champions from every school;
- agenda items for Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees;
- agenda items for School Teaching and Learning Committees ;
- workshop for all Centre for Learning and Development staff working on projects related to teaching and learning and/or in formal liaison roles with schools/faculties; and,
- semi-structured interviews with focus groups of
    - teaching academics,
    - students,
    - learning advisors, and
    - discipline librarians.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation process, it is envisaged that the implementation process will include:

- direct integration of the Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework with ASPEO;
- clear articulation of the connection between the Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework and the ECU Learning and Teaching Awards;
- clear articulation of the connection between the Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework, the Role Based Development Framework (RBDF) and professional development opportunities;
- collection of a broad range of evidence to exemplify achievement of criteria across all standards;
- inclusion of Teaching Criteria and Standards in the recruitment, probation and promotion processes for academic roles that include a teaching component, such as Teaching and Research Scholars or Teaching Scholars; and,
- direct conversations between Heads of School and the Head of CLD around the use of Teaching Criteria and Standards in the Management for Performance System (MPS).

### 4. Role of the AUTCAS framework

The AUTCAS framework formed the basis for the development of ECU's draft Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework. In order to facilitate integration of the proposed new teaching standards with the ASPEO, the RBDF, and eventually the recruitment, probation and promotion processes at ECU, a conscious decision was made to describe the ECU standards as minimum expectations, rather than aspirational goals.

The ECU Teaching Criteria and Standards is aligned to our Undergraduate Curriculum Framework and therefore facilitates implementation of the ECU Curriculum Planning and Development Policy and the Curriculum Delivery and Assessment Policy, both of which embed the principles and priorities of the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework.

5. **Achievements and emerging issues**

For ECU this project has resulted in the development of a draft Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework that describes minimum standards for each of five academic teaching levels A to E. The draft document has generated considerable positive interest in teaching criteria and standards. It also offers the opportunity for constructive alignment of human resource processes with teaching and learning policies and guidelines.

We anticipate that the good work started during this project will continue during 2015 as we embark on a consultative process across the university related to teaching and learning academic standards and performance expectations, driven jointly by Strategic HR and CLD.

We envisage that this will ultimately result in clearly articulated and integrated approaches to learning and teaching at ECU that leverage policies, systems and processes to deliver synergistic results that benefit academic staff, students and our broader community.