Preparing Academics for Teaching in Higher Education (PATHE)

The PATHE project is focused on scoping different approaches currently adopted for the induction of academic staff as they commence their teaching practice in Australian higher education, as well as reviewing international best practice in the area of preparation of academic teachers in higher education. This project has a budget of $300,000 staged over 3 years.

Project Aims and Rationale

Currently induction programs are diverse in content, duration and process. They are also variable in quality and have no systematic sector-wide approach to their development, or the development of the staff who design and teach in them (Dearn, Ryan and Fraser, 2004).

The project aims to devise a framework for induction programs that will benefit the sector by promoting a set of shared expectations and understandings about the nature of university learning and teaching, and locating induction programs in that wider context. Under such a framework, when an academic is recruited from another university there will be some common understanding of core learning and teaching principles. This is not to impose homogeneity amongst induction programs, but rather, to encourage collaboratively-developed perspectives.

Project Approach

The project builds on and is informed by existing concepts developed in the annual Foundations Colloquium, a two-day meeting of academic developers and teachers who are actively involved in the development and teaching of induction programs. The first Foundations Colloquium was held in 2002. The aims and design of the project are collaborative and inclusive. It has a residential component which provides opportunities for collaborative scholarship and dissemination of current and new practices.

The project proposes a model of national collaboration using a distributed leadership approach to project design and implementation. The distributed leadership approach has been selected for its capacity to draw on varieties of expertise across a range of contexts, to cultivate and coordinate key relationships across a number of institutions, and to facilitate outcomes that are representative of the sector as a whole. In order to identify, examine and promote those features that support effective outcomes, this proposal will make use of, and develop further, the collaborative structures operating through the Foundations Colloquium network.

Project Stages

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<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1: Initial national and international scoping</td>
<td>Description of current programs and identified issues; sub-project</td>
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<td>topics and sub-project application processes.</td>
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<td>2: Sub-project research</td>
<td>Report on findings and outcomes of sub-projects.</td>
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<td>3 Sub-project resource generation</td>
<td>Resources to support framework.</td>
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<td>4: Framework for scholarship of higher education teaching development;</td>
<td>Framework and dissemination; final report including project</td>
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<td>report and evaluation</td>
<td>evaluation.</td>
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Project Design
The project design entails the establishment of sub-project teams drawn from the 32 institutions who have agreed to participate in the project. These teams will be monitored and supported by the Steering Committee. Each team will focus on an issue related to induction programs which has been identified by the steering committee as a key research question. This team-based approach will allow for potential involvement of all interested institutions thus facilitating sector-wide dissemination.

Key Individuals and Groups Involved in the Project

The model also provides for wide dissemination, monitoring and evaluation of outcomes through communication with a range of stakeholder groups, including the Deputy/Pro Vice-Chancellors (Academic), Deans (Teaching and Learning), discipline-based structures, professional associations and the Foundations of Teaching and Learning Colloquium.

Partner Institutions
Thirty-two institutions are partners in this project. Partner institutions are those that contributed $500 to support the development of the proposal by a small working party. They also provided input to the proposal and have the opportunity to participate fully in the project throughout its duration.

Australian National University
Bond University
Central Queensland University
Curtin University of Technology
Deakin University
Edith Cowan University
Flinders University
Griffith University
James Cook University
La Trobe University
Macquarie University
Monash University
Queensland University of Technology
RMIT University
Southern Cross University
University of New England
University of Newcastle
University of Adelaide
University of Ballarat
University of Canberra
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 Western Sydney
University of Wollongong
University of Western Australia
Victoria University

**Contact Details of Steering Committee**

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