

Professional Development in Learning and Teaching Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) Western Sydney University's core objective is to be a distinctively student-centred university. Consistent with the principles of Partnership Pedagogy, the purpose of this policy is to ensure that the University supports staff, students and external partners to achieve this objective through institutional support mechanisms.

(2) This policy operates within the broader framework and definitions of the University's [Professional Development Policy](#) and focuses on the University's provision of professional development opportunities for all who contribute, or aspire to contribute, to teaching.

(3) In line with the University's strategic plan, professional development opportunities support a continuum of teaching development needs and aspirations across all career stages.

(4) This policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant Clauses of the current [Professional Staff Agreement](#) and current [Academic Staff Agreement](#) and with other strategy and policy documents related to learning and teaching activities.

Section 2 - Definitions

(5) For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- a. Staff who contribute to teaching includes:
 - i. all academic staff who may contribute to some aspect of teaching, regardless of their employment contract; and
 - ii. professional staff who contribute directly or indirectly to the student learning experience, or are seeking to develop skills for university learning and teaching.
- b. Partnership Pedagogy means a key concept shaping curriculum transformation at the University. It refers to curriculum that is co-created with a range of internal and external partners – community, industry, our commercial providers, our Research Institutes, and our students.
- c. Professional Development includes both formal and informal opportunities to learn.
- d. Creative, innovative teaching and curriculum design includes scholarly contributions to enhancing university teaching and curriculum. The scale or scope will vary with the level of responsibility, from contributing to developing a new learning activity or resource to leading a major curriculum project.
- e. Foundations of University Learning and Teaching Program (FULT) means a program designed by the University to particularly support newly appointed academic staff but open to all interested staff.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(6) Professional development is co-designed and co-delivered by University staff across the Portfolios, Schools and University Research Institutes.

(7) The provision of professional development:

- a. anticipates and responds to the development needs of staff in different roles and at different stages in their career;
- b. employs and models contemporary educational research, technologies and pedagogies in curricula; and
- c. supports the development of integrated academic practice consistent with the University's vision of research-led, student-centred academic practice.

(8) Professional development is supported by, and articulates with, appropriate University systems for individual and organisational recognition and reward (including promotion and quality assurance systems).

(9) It is an expectation that:

- a. all staff engage in professional development related to their academic practice; and
- b. more experienced and senior staff (particularly the Professoriate) will contribute expertise to support the professional development of their colleagues.

(10) The University will support staff engagement in creative, innovative teaching and curriculum design through:

- a. collegial peer support and teamwork involving all levels of seniority; recognising that teaching work takes place in disciplinary and in interdisciplinary communities;
- b. recognising that development and sharing of university teaching knowledge is a scholarly contribution;
- c. accessible professional development programs that integrate with, enhance and facilitate core teaching work; recognising that workload and time pressures can discourage participation in professional learning.

(11) The University will provide a range of informal professional development opportunities open to all interested staff, in addition to integrating the development of teaching capabilities in formal planning processes for contract and continuing staff. See the [Professional Development Policy](#) Section 3 Clause (9)e.

(12) The University will advise staff of the availability of professional development opportunities.

(13) University-wide provision of activities and resources will be evaluated on an ongoing basis in line with the [Professional Development Policy](#) Section 3 Clause (9)f. Criteria for evaluation will include participation, relevance, alignment with strategic objectives and outcomes (for staff and for students).

Casually Employed Teaching Staff

(14) The University will provide a professional development program for teaching staff employed on casual contracts. Staff will be entitled to appropriate remuneration for time spent on formal professional development activities, as outlined in the relevant current Enterprise Agreements.

(15) Schools will be responsible for providing discipline-specific aspects of induction, orientation and professional development for casually employed teaching staff.

New Fixed-Term and Ongoing Teaching Staff

(16) All new academic staff appointed to teaching positions at levels A-C for 12 months or more must successfully

complete a Foundations of University Learning and Teaching Program (FULT) as part of their probationary requirements.

(17) New staff may apply for exemption from the requirement to complete the Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT) if they have evidence of equivalent prior learning.

All Teaching Staff

(18) The University will provide a range of professional development resources and activities that staff can draw upon to support teaching, from basic practice through to curriculum leadership. Examples include:

- a. Online self-paced study modules on aspects of learning activity and curriculum design;
- b. Regular events where teaching teams can share good practice and new developments;
- c. Showcase events to promote current institutional initiatives and priorities; and
- d. Network events to support role-related professional development (e.g. Directors of Academic Program, First Year Coordinators).

(19) The University will support staff in documenting and evidencing their teaching achievements and professional development. While the University will maintain central records of staff participation in formal development activities, individuals and teams are responsible for recording their informal professional development activity.

(20) The University will provide an institution-wide collegial peer review process to assist staff who have introduced and evaluated a significant teaching innovation to have their work validated by peers.

(21) The University will encourage and support external peer review of teaching, for example with discipline colleagues from other universities.

Section 4 - Procedures

(22) Nil.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(23) The Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT) is delivered via the University's learning management system (LMS).

Status and Details

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Unit Head	Brian Stout Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching b.stout@westernsydney.edu.au
Author	Allyson McDonald 45701298
Enquiries Contact	Gina Saliba Lecturer, Learning Futures 96787340