

Memorandum of Understanding

Widening Tertiary Participation in Queensland: a coordinated approach

Review and re-endorsement 2012

Having reviewed the MOU of May 2011, eight universities in Queensland and the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment agree to continue their collaborative efforts to stimulate interest in tertiary study, and to widen the tertiary participation of low-income people and Indigenous people.

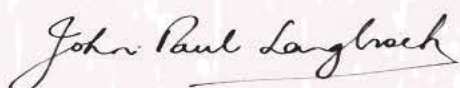
Review

The Parties have undertaken a review of the attached Memorandum of Understanding noting in particular:

- The commitment by Queensland public universities to work collaboratively and in cooperation with the State Department of Education Training and Employment to widen tertiary participation was formalised in the MOU signed off by the participating parties in May 2011.
- The Consortium of universities was successful in obtaining \$21,150,000 in Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP) competitive grant funds to undertake projects related to Schools Outreach (Project 1) and Indigenous Engagement (Project 2). Implementation of these projects is now underway across Queensland.
- The Consortium was unsuccessful in its application for funding for Joint Project Elements (Project 6), however intends applying for funding for this project and for an adult-focused career development project in an anticipated second round of HEPPP competitive grant funding.
- The review has recommended changes to Projects 3,4,5 and 6 which are contained in the attached Project Plan Revisions.
- The Consortium will continue to explore additional opportunities for collaboration in the interests of widening participation in tertiary study.

Endorsement

The participating universities, in collaboration with the Department of Education, Training and Employment, re-affirm the commitments made in the original MOU dated May 2011 and endorse changes to the project plans in the attached revisions.



The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education, Training
and Employment, Queensland



Professor Scott Bowman
Vice-Chancellor and President
Central Queensland University



Professor Peter Coaldrake
Vice-Chancellor and President
Queensland University of Technology



Professor Greg Craven
Vice-Chancellor
Australian Catholic University



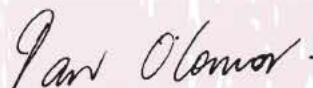
Professor Sandra Harding
Vice-Chancellor
James Cook University



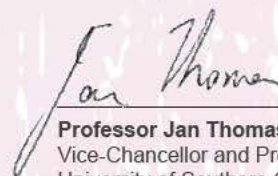
Professor Greg Hill
Vice-Chancellor and President
University of the Sunshine Coast



Professor Peter Høj
Vice-Chancellor and President
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Professor Ian O'Connor
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Griffith University



Professor Jan Thomas
Vice-Chancellor and President
University of Southern Queensland

Endorsed 12 November 2012

Widening Tertiary Participation Project Plan Revisions November 2012

Widening Participation Project Plans

PROJECT 3 and 5

Enhancing career development services in low SES communities

1. While universities and VET providers have developed a wide array of tertiary pathways including tertiary preparation and enabling programs, the ability to choose the most appropriate pathway is reliant on good quality information and advice. Post-school-aged people, especially those from low SES and Indigenous backgrounds are least able to access such advice.
2. Universities note that both the low-SES target and the degree-holding target require significant improvement to adult entry to tertiary study.
3. This project will establish a tertiary-focused career development service that provides free, impartial career and educational pathways advice to post school-aged clients in low SES communities including targeted services for Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse cohorts. Students and parents engaged in The Smith Family Learning for Life program will have access to the service.
4. Linkages between existing university and TAFE career services will be strengthened and their capacity to provide advice and transition support to existing and prospective students (as appropriate to each institution) enhanced.
5. Partnerships will be developed and protocols established with other organisations and service providers (such as Skilling Solutions Queensland, QTAC and The Smith Family), to facilitate client referral and ensure clients are matched to the most appropriate service.
6. Mapping of tertiary preparation and enabling programs and other tertiary pathways will be undertaken and resources developed to help inform prospective students.
7. A reference group consisting of university and TAFE representatives, professional career development bodies and partner organisations will be established to support and monitor the project.
8. Individual HEIs and VET providers will continue to pursue development of tertiary pathways and credit arrangements for the benefit of students from diverse backgrounds.
9. While not working primarily with school students this activity will maintain links with Projects 1 and 2 to ensure it is Indigenous inclusive and complements career development and tertiary awareness activities embedded in these Projects.

Widening Tertiary Participation Project Plan Revisions November 2012

Widening Participation Project Plans

PROJECT 4

Going deeper in places of need

1. The Consortium remains interested in exploring involvement in an intensive place-based / problem-solving approach in selected geographical locations of high disadvantage in partnership with other education providers and relevant community, industry and government groups operating in those locations.
2. It recognises that any such work will need to be sustained over a long period (8 to 10 years) and requires shared commitment by government and non-government organisations and community groups.
3. The work of the Social Inclusion Board of Australia would inform such an approach.
4. Any place-based approaches would link to existing work being undertaken in other Widening Participation projects.
5. The Consortium will continue to actively explore ideas and sources of funds for place-based work.

PROJECT 6

State-wide joint activities

1. The Widening Tertiary Participation approach outlined in the Projects 1-5 will be made more effective and sustainable if there is ongoing coordination within and between projects, sharing of expertise and development of shared materials.
2. Joint activities will be managed by a state-wide steering committee which will coordinate and monitor project implementation.
3. Joint materials and resources will be developed to support existing projects and contribute to sustaining Widening Participation messages.
4. Professional developments activities will be developed and maintained to facilitate sharing of good practice and development of skills amongst Widening Participation staff
5. State-wide conferences will be held with partner organisations to enhance project delivery and build capacity to sustain Widening Participation initiatives.
6. A joint evaluation strategy which includes collation and analysis of existing data sets on tertiary choices and coordinated research into student aspirations and the impact of Widening Participation initiatives will provide evidence of project and program effectiveness.

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Memorandum of Understanding

Widening Tertiary Participation in Queensland: a coordinated approach

Eight universities in Queensland and the Queensland Department of Education and Training agree to collaborate in their efforts to stimulate interest in tertiary study, and to widen the tertiary participation of low-income people and Indigenous people.

Principles and Strategic Intent

The parties acknowledge:

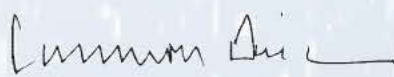
- The de-centralised nature of Queensland's population, and its large number of low-SES and Indigenous citizens – both school-age and adult – located in metropolitan, regional and remote locations;
- The large scale of activity required to raise participation rates, and the need to minimise gaps and duplication in the provision of Widening Participation activities;
- The desirability of maintaining a shared philosophy and approach, and an ongoing community of practice;
- That a collaborative approach to stimulating interest in tertiary participation is more likely to achieve economies of scale; a non-competitive, learner-centred approach; higher-quality, evidence-based activities; improved participation rates for all universities; and assist universities to meet their low-SES or growth targets.

Projects, Coordination and Funding

The participating universities agree to:

- pursue six bodies of activity as agreed and attached, giving initial priority to Project 1 (schooling) and Project 2 (Indigenous);
- establish a state-wide steering group to coordinate and support this work;
- seek additional HEPPP Partnership funds available through competitive grant to support the scale and depth of activity;
- review this MOU annually.

The Department of Education and Training endorses this agreement and offers its cooperation in implementing these projects in state schools and TAFE institutes.



The Honourable Cameron Dick MP
Minister for Education & Industrial Relations
Queensland



The Honourable Stirling Hinchcliffe MP
Minister for Employment, Skills & Mining
Queensland



Professor Scott Bowman
Vice-Chancellor and President
Central Queensland University



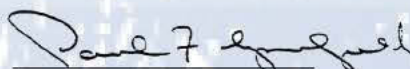
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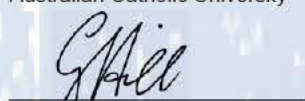
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University of the Sunshine Coast



Professor Sandra Harding
Vice-Chancellor and President
James Cook University



Professor Bill Lovegrove
Vice-Chancellor and President
University of Southern Queensland

May 2011

Widening Participation Project Plans

The Queensland approach to widening tertiary participation is based on the document *'Widening Participation – A Coordinated Queensland Approach'* endorsed in principle by Queensland Vice-Chancellors in December 2009. This approach is made operational through the MOU and Project Plans endorsed by the Higher Education Forum on 4 November 2010.

PROJECT 1

A coordinated approach to ensure that all students in low-SES schools have access to tertiary awareness and preparation.

A Project focus:

- 1 All school students, especially those of low-SES backgrounds, when making choices about in-school and post-school study, are entitled to an appropriate level of tertiary awareness and tertiary preparation, so that their choices are informed by an understanding of tertiary options and possibilities, and by a positive attitude towards their own capabilities.
- 2 Universities can contribute to the tertiary awareness and preparation of middle and senior school students (Years 6-12) by:
 - providing de-mystification experiences for first-in-the-family and other non-traditional students;
 - providing encouragement and inspiration through roles models and awards/prizes;
 - value-adding to learning and achievement especially with discipline-specific connections;
 - providing advice about alternative pathways for admissions and scholarships.
- 3 Given the large numbers, and geographical spread, of low-income schools, and the need to eliminate gaps and duplication in outreach efforts, each university should focus its WP efforts on a cluster of schools, as agreed.
- 4 The schools in these clusters have been selected by their low-SES status (mainly SES quartile 1 and quartile 2 state schools and low SES non-government schools), plus selected others with indicators of disadvantage such as location in DEEWR low SES postcodes where tertiary participation rates are low. All state schools in the Low-SES National Partnership are included. Campus proximity is the main allocative factor, as the proposed activities are likely to occur both in-school and on-campus. Education Queensland district boundaries were used for initial allocations, and universities have discussed and resolved any issues of overlapping interests. The result is 8 clusters of primary and secondary schools, each with a nominated university partner, within which there are small numbers of "shared" schools.

B Partnership arrangements with cluster schools:

Universities will:

- 1 Be led by the needs and priorities of each school/region and ensure that the university contribution fits with the school's program and priorities, as locally brokered.
- 2 Make connections as appropriate with National Partnerships (Low SES; Literacy and Numeracy; Youth Attainment and Transitions); VET providers; parent and community infrastructure; and industry/employer groups.
- 3 Rather than targeting individual students, contribute to the tertiary awareness of students from Year 6 to Year 12, in a phased approach consistent with each university's prioritisation plan.
- 4 Where schools have more than one university partner (shared schools), those universities will make arrangements between them to achieve operational coherence from a school perspective.

Widening Participation Project Plans

C Activities and experiences which universities provide to schools will:

- 1 Be Indigenous-aware, include Indigenous staff, and complement Indigenous-specific strategies.
- 2 Target other specific LSES cohorts (eg Pacific Island students, refugees) as appropriate to school/region.
- 3 Be focussed on widening participation, not recruitment, with implicit or explicit messages about post-school study in general, rather than the benefits of a single institution.
- 4 Be age-appropriate, experiential, and student-centred, and nest with the subject curriculum, career education or personal development programs of the school/region.
- 5 Be informed by good practice, local experience, and research about effective design and delivery such as undertaken by the National Centre for Student Equity for DEEWR (Gale, Sellar, Parker, Hattam, Comber, Tranter and Bills, *Intervention early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged students*, DEEWR, 2010).
- 6 Build on the Widening Participation work already being undertaken.

D Prioritisation, resources, and coordination:

- 1 Within each cluster, universities will prioritise their efforts primarily by the low-SES status of the school, but also taking into account other indicators of disadvantage such as low tertiary participation rates. Within each school, universities will consider, in consultation with the school, which year levels to focus on, and the balance of in-school and on-campus activity.
- 2 Universities can use some of their base amount Partnership funds to support the expansion of schools-related WP activities, and as much of their Participation funds as is deemed appropriate by each institution.
- 3 Universities with clusters characterised by large distances; large numbers of school sites; large populations of students; or high enrolments of Indigenous or other severely disadvantaged groups will need funds additional to base amount HEPPP allocations to fulfil their obligations.
- 4 Universities may need to strengthen their internal Widening Participation partnership arrangements and ensure there is a clear node and contact point for schools and other universities.
- 5 Queensland's eight universities will form a "community of practice" for Widening Participation activities; hold state-wide coordination meetings, with an Indigenous-specific element; hold regular seminars/symposia to share good practice; and track impact through a suite of state-wide, school-based, and cohort-specific indicators.

E WP activities and recruitment activities:

- 1 Agreeing to partner with a school cluster creates obligations for the university partner, not rights or territory.
- 2 Recruitment activities clearly targeted at school students who are ready to choose a course or institution are unaffected by this agreement.
- 3 Where one university's existing or emerging Widening Participation activity crosses into another cluster, that university will consult with the other cluster's university partner.

Widening Participation Project Plans

PROJECT 2

Indigenous-specific Widening Participation activity to improve access and participation and success for Indigenous people.

A Project focus and approach:

- 1 While all widening participation activities will be Indigenous-aware, some Indigenous-specific outreach and support activities are required, and should be led by Indigenous staff of the universities.
- 2 For Indigenous people, whether school-age or adult, the most effective approach is that of community engagement and development. Improving participation can not rely solely on outreach to educational institutions (schools and VET).

B Community engagement and activities:

- 1 A community engagement and development approach ensures all relevant members of the Indigenous community are included in widening participation activities. For example, encouraging adult entry into tertiary study can be based around specific needs of local communities, with pathways in, study modes, and course design tailored to those needs, and building on the strengths and leadership with those communities. Similarly awareness-raising with Indigenous school students about tertiary education should involve activities that not only target students but also engage the students' parents, elders, school staff (particularly Community Education Counsellors), and community representatives.
- 2 High-profile events (eg camps) are supported and made effective by ongoing community and school engagement and relationship-building. Such work, although low-profile and sometimes invisible, is the key to widening participation for Indigenous people.

C Capacity-building:

- 1 With regard to outreach/engagement, each university will give consideration to strengthening its capacity for Indigenous leadership in this area, sufficient to anchor and sustain the necessary human and other resources to undertake a larger scale of activities, and to undertake partnerships, both inside and outside the university.
- 2 In each university, responsibility for outreach and support will be located in one or more work areas. However, the activities in this project recognise that all Indigenous staff, regardless of their work titles and location, contribute to outreach and support through their community connections and community service roles, and well as through personal networks.

D Prioritisation, resources, and coordination:

- 1 Indigenous-specific activities are currently undertaken by all universities and any new effort will build on existing work. A Queensland Indigenous network already meets.
- 2 There is a need to strengthen and support this network, for the sharing of ideas; the coordination of any joint activity; and to provide input and personnel to the state-wide steering group. Further state-wide consultations may be necessary.
- 3 In addition to whatever HEPPP funds universities are already allocating to growing their Indigenous-specific outreach, new funds are needed for capacity-building and implementing new initiatives.

Widening Participation Project Plans

PROJECT 3

Focussing on adult learners and VET connections

- 1 In Queensland, both the low-SES target and the degree-holding target require significant improvement to adult entry to tertiary study.
- 2 Individual HEIs will continue to pursue pathway and credit arrangements with VET providers.
- 3 Universities note that in the context of Project 1 relating to schools, large numbers of senior students are already engaged in VET studies.
- 4 Resources will be needed to further explore collaborative work in this area including implications of the IACT project; ways and means of encouraging low-income learners to move from Certificate to Diploma/tertiary studies; and the role of careers development and advice for low-income adults.

PROJECT 4

Going deeper in places of need

- 1 To engage in an intensive place-based / problem-solving approach in 2 or 3 selected geographical locations of high disadvantage in partnership with other education providers and relevant community, industry and government groups operating in those locations.
- 2 To be informed by the work of the Social Inclusion Board of Australia in undertaking this project.
- 3 Place-based approaches to be embedded in Project 1 as appropriate.
- 4 Areas under consideration include Logan, Cape York, and Wide Bay.

PROJECT 5

Careers education and advice for cluster schools and high-disadvantage areas

- 1 To actively explore and develop in 2010/11 an approach, either state-wide, or in selected areas, which focuses on the need for low-SES adults and schools-age people to have access to independent, free, careers counselling, including culturally-appropriate counselling for Indigenous people.
- 2 To strongly embed the "careers" element within Project 1 in 2011, including the key idea of working in partnership with schools and relevant authorities to strengthen the careers education scaffold for middle and senior school students.

PROJECT 6

State-wide "signature" activities which are jointly designed, implemented, and funded

- 1 That for 2010/11, to undertake one or two relatively simple all-state activities such as the distribution of some joint material to parents.
- 2 Any such "signature" activities will be embedded in existing projects, especially 1 and 2, and managed by the state-wide steering group, along with other joint activities.
- 3 Additional HEPPP Partnership funds to be sought to support state-wide joint activity.