Australian Council of Deans of ICT

ACDICT Learning & Teaching Academy (ALTA) Learning and Teaching Grant Scheme

FINAL Project Report
May 2013

1. Project title

Shaping the future ICT professionals: Where novice meets expert and theory meets practice

2. Lead applicant details

Lead applicant's name: **Anne Venables**	
Position: **Lecturer**	
Faculty/Department: **School of Engineering and Science**	
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3. Project outcomes

The "Shaping the future ICT professionals" project developed and piloted a cross-institutional learning experience between students studying ICT at the Victoria University and the University of Ballarat. The learning experience provided a framework for students to gain an industry-informed understanding of the importance of professional ICT skills and, through working with students from their partner institution, opportunities to improve their interpersonal and communication skills. In devising and running the learning experience, academics from both Universities were able to benchmark the content and assessments of their professional development unit offerings.

The ALTA grant has enabled the establishment and running of a cross-institutional assessment (2 iterations) in which

- an authentic networking experience for over 150 IT students from Victoria University and the University of Ballarat was ensured by the adoption of a common, cross-institutional assessment task that required students to communicate and work in cross-institutional teams;
- over 30 interviews of ICT managers were conducted by student teams on the topic of professional behaviours and practice, particularly in response to security challenges, and threats to privacy, and the application of the ACS Code of Ethics in handling ethical dilemmas;

- 2 joint university events held at which over 30 cross-institutional teams made presentations on the lessons learnt from their interviews with ICT managers;
- over 30 team reports submitted that were jointly assessed by academics from Victoria University and the University of Ballarat;
- improved teaching resources in the IT professional development units of both institutions, being ECB2112: Security, Privacy & Ethics at Victoria University and ITECH3203/7203 Professional Development at the University of Ballarat;
- support of the ACS and IT industry members who have volunteered to be interviewed by student teams; and,
- stronger relationships between IT academics of Victoria University and the University of Ballarat that already have paved the way for collaboration on future joint projects.

4. Dissemination of Project outcomes

- The joint university events have become important academic and social occasions in the calendars of College of Engineering & Science (Victoria University) and the School of Science, IT & Engineering (University of Ballarat). These events have attracted much attention from staff and students of both institutions, and the ACS provided promotional material to student participants.

- A presentation on the Project was made at the recent ACDICT Forum held at the Victoria University on 5th April, 2013.

- Two academic publications around the Project are being planned, following the collection of survey data from project participants. The first will be a discussion paper describing the cross-institutional assessment, its place in the curriculum, and lessons learnt during the two successful iterations of the project. The second paper will relate to the analyses of student feedback surveys. The papers will be co-authored by academics from both institutions. Submissions will be made later in 2013; the first paper will target the WACE 10th International Symposium in June 2014, and the second will be a submission to the International Journal of Information Technology in Education.

- The electronic version of the April ACS newsletter has advertised a call for IT managers to volunteer to be interviewed by students as part of this Project. The response was very good, and a follow-up article on the Project is being written for a future version of this newsletter, and possible inclusion in the ACS Information Age.

5. Sustaining Project benefits

Plans are already afoot for sustaining the Project's benefits. Future iterations of the cross-institutional assessment task are planned for upcoming semesters. There are two proposals under consideration; the first is for each participating University to seek a new University partner in Victoria and establish a similar learning experience with them; this will have a multiplicative effect on the impact of the Project. The second proposal is an investigation into how the learning experience can be implemented using virtual technologies. This would be followed by prototyping and trialling of a virtual technology ensuring that the Project impact is more widespread.

6. Budget report

The ALTA grant funds of $14,900 have been fully expended, as per the approved budget. In-kind contributions have been provided and they have supplemented the grant funds throughout the implementation of the Project.

ALTA monies have been spent in the following manner.

$12, 800   teaching relief of academic staff to allow staff to identify relevant professional development units, establish communication protocols, set up a joint assessment framework, author cross-institutional assessments, organize cross-institutional teams, source industry participants, manage the day-to-day running of the assessment tasks, plan and run joint University event, complete joint marking of student work by academics at both institutions.

$ 500   3 trips made to University of Ballarat, Mt Helens campus by Victoria University staff and

5 trips to Victoria University, Footscray Park campus, Melbourne by University of Ballarat staff

$ 1,200   2 inter-campus trips for students to attend the joint cross-institutional presentation events at the end of the assessment period (Actual cost $1,800, short-fall met by in-kind contribution from Victoria University).

$ 400   Prizes for best cross-institutional team presentations (Actual cost $800, short-fall met by in-kind contributions from Victoria University and the University of Ballarat).

Further in-kind contributions by both Universities covered administrative costs, catering at the joint University event and meeting support.