

**UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND**

**Teaching and Learning Plan  
2007-2010**

*July 2007*

## CONTEXT

The *Teaching and Learning Plan 2007-2010* is one of a set of subsidiary plans supporting the *UNE Strategic Plan 2007-2010: Achieving Global and Regional Impact*. The *Strategic Plan* lays out a vision that UNE is to be 'a strong research-based teaching and learning university', with a regionality focus and a global reach, achieving a powerful performance. The *Strategic Plan* identifies five priorities for the period 2007-2010:

- A: Achieve distinction, leadership, advantage
- B: Create 'Regional to Global' impact
- C: Ensure student interests are paramount
- D: Focus and align all activities
- E: Empower staff, strengthen accountability

The *Teaching and Learning Plan* is designed to contribute to the achievement of UNE's vision and address the priorities identified in the *Strategic Plan*. It is framed in the context of the major external challenges and internal imperatives affecting UNE's teaching and learning.

Australian higher education is changing rapidly under a wide array of external forces. The most notable elements directly relevant to teaching and learning are:

- The policy thrust from successive Commonwealth Ministers of Education towards greater differentiation within the higher education system and the consequent pressure on institutions to achieve distinctive missions and identities
- Three decades of declining real Commonwealth funding per student, combined with an increasing deployment of contestable funding targeted to achieve Commonwealth policy objectives
- Rapid marketisation of higher education
- Deepening competition arising primarily from the effective ending of a deficit in the supply of places, increasing reliance of the public sector on the income from full-fee paying students, and the growing number of and strong government support for private higher education providers
- A growing public focus on teaching and learning and the student experience, reflected for example in the creation of the well-financed Teaching and Learning Performance Fund and the Carrick Institute
- Strengthening accountability obligations, reflected in a wide range of demands, not least the requirement to undergo periodic audits by the Australian Universities Quality Agency
- The internationalisation of higher education, particularly via the rapid growth in overseas students in many universities (now exceeding 25 per cent of enrolments in a number of cases)
- The impact of technology, particularly on administration, student expectations and course delivery options available to universities.

Like every other university, the University of New England is striving to address these external pressures. UNE already has a distinctive academic profile that differentiates it from most other universities in Australia. It is the most research-intensive of all regional universities, it is amongst the most reliant on distance education, with almost 80 per cent of its students studying in this mode; and it has the highest proportion of on-campus students living in University accommodation. These characteristics are important bases for strategic planning. As well, there are some important areas of strength in teaching and learning on which to build the university's future, reflected in UNE's history of achieving the maximum five-star ratings for teaching and student experience in the *Good Universities Guide*; and the award of the maximum ten Carrick Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning in 2006.

Despite such achievements, there are also many areas where UNE's performance can be improved, so that a range of issues confronts the University in framing its *Teaching and Learning Plan*. These were

grouped under five headings in the *Issues Paper* released to the UNE community in November 2006 as part of the planning process<sup>1</sup>:

1. **Inputs:** In many areas, UNE cannot claim to be a university of choice; it is a market-taker not a market-maker; as competition has increased, UNE has struggled to meet its Commonwealth-funded student load targets and it has never been particularly successful in attracting domestic or international fee-paying students.
2. **Product:** The range of courses, learning experiences and support services leaves UNE highly insecure in an increasingly competitive and fast-moving environment; too often, UNE fails the tests of 'excellence, relevance and viability'. In general, UNE's course profile is supply-oriented, not market-focused; once a world leader, UNE has fallen behind best practice as a distance education provider; UNE's use of technology to support teaching and learning is defective.
3. **Costs:** UNE's academic and administrative cost structures are too high, with too many units, possibly too many small-enrolment courses, cumbersome degree rules, poor integration of the different modes of teaching and inadequate use of IT.
4. **Institutional Agility:** UNE's response to changing circumstances has often been inadequate. Its internal processes are sometimes poor; an important example is the academic quality assurance system which has proved to be cumbersome, time-consuming and compliance-oriented.
5. **Outcomes:** Various outcome measures suggest a need for urgent and thoroughgoing action. Student progression/completion rates are below national norms; statistical and survey work show that our academic performance, teaching and learning profile and student responses require strenuous attention; and while overall student satisfaction ratings remain in the top quintile of Australian universities, they have fallen sharply since 2002 or 2003 at a time when national figures have improved.

The *Teaching and Learning Plan 2007-2010* addresses these issues. Performance measures are included for each strategy proposed, but at a global level successful implementation of the *Teaching and Learning Plan* will be identifiable at the end of the planning period via the effective addressing of key issues outlined above. In particular:

1. **Inputs:** UNE achieving or exceeding its targets for Commonwealth-supported and fee-paying domestic and international students.
2. **Product:** UNE's course profile demonstrably meeting market demand; UNE renowned as a leader in distance education; UNE ranked in the top quartile of users of IT to support teaching and learning.
3. **Costs:** Unit numbers reduced by 30 per cent from 2006 levels; degree rules simplified and standardised across the University.
4. **Institutional Agility:** Revised Academic Quality Management Policy in place and used to guide a successful AUQA Audit process in 2009.
5. **Outcomes:** Student completion rates exceeding the national average for comparable cohorts; student satisfaction survey results in the top quintile of Australian universities.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Teaching and Learning Plan 2007-2010 Issues Paper* Prepared by the Teaching and Learning Plan Working Party on Behalf of the Academic Board Teaching and Learning Committee, November 2006, VCD06/5652.

## PLANNING PROCESS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed to the *Teaching and Learning Plan 2007-2010*. It was prepared under the oversight of the Academic Board Teaching and Learning Committee. Much of the detailed work was undertaken by a Working Party whose membership included, at various times, Professor David Rich (Chair), Professor David Cottle, Associate Professor Lynda Garland, Dr John Kleeman, Professor Ian Macdonald, Dr Belinda Tynan and Dr Robin Smyth. The Working Party prepared an *Issues Paper* and used it to solicit input from the University community. Further input came from a series of focus groups. Later, the draft plan was made available for comment from the University community and a public meeting was held to discuss the draft. Mr Mike Nelson of Dialogue Consulting facilitated the focus groups, public meeting and many of the meetings of the Working Party and the Teaching and Learning Committee. Glenys Rich advised on the planning process, the structure of the plan and specific strategies. Deborah Martin modified the draft plan to take account of University-wide feedback and ensured the integration of the final plan with the *UNE Strategic Plan*.

## FORMAT

The *Teaching and Learning Plan 2007-2010* is organised around six components, as follows.

- 1) **MISSION:** What we do, for whom and how
- 2) **VISION:** What we aspire to – what we intend to do and be
- 3) **PRIORITIES:** Four broad areas we must address to carry out our Mission and achieve our Vision.
- 4) **GOALS:** What we want to achieve in each Priority to fulfil our Vision [decimal numbers]
- 5) **OUTCOME MEASURES:** How we will know that we have achieved each Goal.  
*To be expanded as accountabilities, timelines and budgets are prepared.*
- 6) **STRATEGIES:** What we will do to achieve our goals [double decimals]

The strategic statement represented by these six components will be extended into a detailed operational plan with the addition of a set of actions, accountabilities, timelines, costs, deliverables and review dates required to implement each of the strategies.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING PLAN 2007 - 2010**

### **MISSION: What we do, for whom and how**

UNE has a multi-award winning commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.

UNE provides a unique, residentially-based on-campus environment which offers an outstanding student experience.

UNE has a longstanding commitment to distance education for students in both metropolitan and regional areas.

UNE is more research-intensive than similarly placed regional universities; the research-based culture engenders a particular approach to teaching that is grounded in disciplinary excellence and world-class scholarship.

### **VISION: What we aspire to – what we intend to do and be**

UNE will be a University at which:

- student interests are paramount;
- students access world-class and innovative learning experiences, informed by scholarly practice and continual renewal and taught by highly committed and skilled staff who enjoy their teaching and who are supported by efficient systems and processes; and
- students are equipped with skills to live, work and succeed in a rapidly changing world.

### **PRIORITIES: Broad areas we must address to carry out our Mission and achieve our Vision**

- A Aligning UNE's activities to meet the needs of the higher education market
- B Enabling our staff to meet student and market needs; promoting, enabling and supporting innovative and scholarly approaches to teaching and learning
- C Ensuring UNE has the capacity to efficiently and effectively support excellent teaching and learning and respond to wider market needs
- D Investing in teaching and learning goals, processes and outcomes

## TEACHING AND LEARNING PLAN 2007 - 2010

<p><b>PRIORITIES 2007 - 2010</b></p>	<p><b>A: Aligning UNE's activities to meet the needs of the higher education market</b></p>	<p><b>B: Enabling our staff to meet student and market needs; promoting, enabling and supporting innovative and scholarly approaches to teaching and learning</b></p>	<p><b>C: Ensuring UNE has the capacity to efficiently and effectively support excellent teaching and learning and respond to wider market needs</b></p>	<p><b>D: Investing in teaching and learning goals, processes and outcomes</b></p>
<p><b>GOALS 2007-2010</b></p>	<p>A.1 UNE knows market needs and ensures that the course and unit profile successfully addresses them</p>	<p>B.1 UNE attracts, retains, develops and enhances its high quality teaching staff</p>	<p>C.1 Through investment in innovative learning technologies UNE has a continually developing suite of systems and tools for teaching and learning support</p>	<p>D.1 UNE has budget strategies to ensure the continual renewal of courses and units, achieve and maintain teaching excellence, and sustain a high-quality teaching infrastructure</p>
	<p>A.2 UNE provides a high-quality educational experience aligned to student needs</p>	<p>B.2 UNE has effective mechanisms to create leadership capacity in teaching and learning</p>	<p>C.2 UNE's academic policy frameworks align with UNE's strategic directions, altered organisational structure and stakeholder requirements</p>	
	<p>A.3 UNE's course outcomes address workplace, career and professional needs</p>		<p>C.3 UNE fosters innovation in teaching and learning</p>	
	<p>A.4 UNE embraces new education markets, modes and opportunities</p>			

## **A Aligning UNE's activities to meet the needs of the higher education market**

### **A.1 UNE knows market needs and ensures that the course and unit profile successfully addresses them**

- A.1.1 Enhance capacity to undertake market research and course performance assessment
- A.1.2 Plan course offerings using an annual assessment of course profile against market research, cost-benefit analysis and course performance assessment
- A.1.3 Periodically review unit content against market requirements

*Outcome measures: UNE demonstrates knowledge of the market; the UNE course profile aligns with market needs; UNE competes successfully in fields it teaches*

### **A.2 UNE provides a high-quality educational experience aligned to student needs**

- A.2.1 Systematically monitor student academic, support and service quality needs as a basis for formulating strategies and determining their effectiveness
- A.2.2 Annually reassess the Distance Education Review against current strategic priorities and, in particular, continue implementation of recommendations which facilitate the development of learning communities and academic support environments which meet students' needs and expectations for meaningful engagement with the University
- A.2.3 Develop, implement, monitor and revise a 'UNE Experience' strategy for on-campus students
- A.2.4 Develop and implement a new Entry Pathways strategy
- A.2.5 Develop and implement a 'Successful Transitions' strategy, with strands for recent school leavers, those returning to study, new postgraduates
- A.2.6 Develop, implement, monitor and revise a Student Engagement strategy
- A.2.7 Develop, implement, monitor and revise an Integrated Student Support strategy (see Student Services Plan)
- A.2.8 Protect and enhance the University Library and ensures that its activities align with other developments
- A.2.9 Complete the review of residential school policy and implement a broader strategy for intensive learning experiences

*Outcome measures: Survey responses; attrition rates; external reputation (e.g. as represented in The Good Universities Guide).*

### **A.3 UNE's course outcomes address workplace, career and professional needs**

- A.3.1 Update the Graduate Attributes policy to provide a broader framework that addresses both generic and specific skills
- A.3.2 Review and expand work experience strategies, including WorkReady
- A.3.3 Embed workplace learning opportunities in key courses
- A.3.4 Implement a credit accumulation strategy to support and accredit professional learning at postgraduate level

*Outcome measures: CEQ/GDS data; internal survey data; employer surveys.*

### **A.4 UNE embraces new education markets, modes and opportunities**

- A.4.1 Investigate the potential of a UNE-electronic arm offering low-cost, high demand education for specific markets nationally and internationally
- A.4.2 Investigate the potential of providing high-skill career education at the interfaces of university and vocational offerings
- A.4.3 Investigate industry- or business-specific collaborations to provide education and training targeted to specific stakeholder needs
- A.4.4 Investigate teaching partnerships with commercial and not-for-profit partners to share costs, increase revenue and achieve viability
- A.4.5 Implement those strategies which are identified as having potential for success
- A.4.6 Strengthen opportunities in metropolitan markets through development of a more coherent strategy for teaching and student support in metropolitan areas

*Outcome measures: Completed feasibility studies; New projects implemented; Students enrolled; Income generated.*

## **B. Enabling our staff to meet student and market needs; promoting, enabling and supporting innovative and scholarly approaches to teaching and learning**

### **B.1 UNE attracts, retains, develops and enhances its high quality teaching staff**

- B.1.1 Develop orientation, mentoring and professional development programs and activities which encourage staff to update and refresh their teaching knowledge and skills throughout their teaching careers
- B.1.2 Review and enhance the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education; provide articulation pathways into higher qualifications
- B.1.3 Facilitate communities of practice among teachers, inside and outside of UNE, and develop appropriate support mechanisms

- B.1.4 Maintain a viable Teaching Development Grants program to provide a framework for funding ongoing professional development in teaching and the development of strategies which enhance learning
- B.1.5 Encourage and support applications for external teaching development funding (e.g. Carrick Institute)

*Outcome measures: Better teachers and better teaching as demonstrated by evaluation results and CEQ responses*

## **B.2 UNE has effective mechanisms to create leadership capacity in teaching and learning**

- B.2.1 Prepare a strategy to develop and support academic leadership skills at all levels
- B.2.2 Ensure that academic staff with management responsibilities (e.g. Heads of School) have adequate skills and appropriate accountabilities with respect to leadership in teaching and learning
- B.2.3 Promote a culture of innovation and excellence in teaching as part of a vibrant scholarly community

*Outcome measures: beneficial changes in teaching, courses and units identifiable at the school level, via QA metrics and student surveys.*

## **C Ensuring UNE has the capacity to efficiently and effectively support excellent teaching and learning and respond to wider market needs**

### **C.1 Through investment in innovative learning technologies UNE has a continually developing suite of systems and tools for teaching and learning support**

- C.1.1 Optimise the learning management system and associated tools
- C.1.2 Implement a learning content management system
- C.1.3 Develop exemplars and templates to support effective teaching and learning
- C.1.4 Ensure that the IT Strategic Plan takes account of teaching and learning needs, particularly with respect to the efficiency and effectiveness of back-end systems
- C.1.5 Realign the respective service roles of faculties, schools and directorates after Academic Reorganisation to ensure optimum support for teaching and learning

*Outcome measures: staff recognise improvements in systems and infrastructure that allow them to do a better job, confirmed by survey data; staff and students recognise improvements in systems and infrastructure that facilitate the learning processes, confirmed by survey data; award of national grants and awards for innovation or collaboration in teaching.*

**C.2 UNE's academic policy frameworks align with UNE's revised strategic directions, altered organisational structure and stakeholder requirements**

- C.2.1 Review all teaching and learning policies for consistency and currency, especially in the context of the Academic Reorganisation and the proposed new academic quality assurance system
- C.2.2 Develop and implement a new academic quality assurance system, to address UNE's strategic priorities and AUQA's Round 2 audit requirements
- C.2.3 Implement a revised academic governance/course and unit approval process
- C.2.4 Implement a metrics-driven course monitoring system to guide improvement activities
- C.2.5 Develop and invest in coherent strategies to foster and manage effective collaboration and partnerships with other universities and commercial partners

*Outcome measures: documented and demonstrated academic policy frameworks.*

**C.3 UNE fosters innovation in teaching and learning**

- C.3.1 Develop a UNE framework for research and development in teaching and learning
- C.3.2 Develop a framework to evaluate and, where appropriate, implement innovations in teaching and learning

*Outcome measures: documented examples of innovation in teaching and learning; national awards and grants for innovative teaching and learning; student evaluation of systems and infrastructure.*

**D Investing in teaching and learning goals, processes and outcomes**

**D.1 UNE has budget strategies to ensure the continual renewal of courses and units, achieve and maintain teaching excellence, and sustain a high-quality teaching infrastructure**

- D.1.1 Ensure that Schools routinely allocate adequate resources to the ongoing renewal of courses and units
- D.1.2 Develop a strategic funding mechanism to support large-scale strategic initiatives in teaching and learning
- D.1.3 Investigate a revised Teaching Quantum funding mechanism responsive to School performance in, teaching and learning
- D.1.4 Systematically seek external funding to support teaching development

*Outcome measures: documented evidence of continual renewal in response to performance monitoring and identified opportunities; award of external grants to assist teaching development.*