

Global Impact Grants – Issue One: Academic Development



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Introduction

Advance HE made 17 awards of Global Impact Grants in July 2022 with the intention of sharing work conducted across our international membership that has had a demonstrable impact on staff or students. We received submissions from over 10 different countries across a range of areas of higher education practice.

This set of the Global Impact Grants brings together case studies that support academic development and covers work conducted across four continents.

It begins with a case study by **Collins Fleischner, Louise Lutze-Mann and Karin Watson** highlighting a suite of initiatives from the University of New South Wales in Australia that have supported teaching careers of those staff focussing on education.

Katerina Bograkou Tzanetakou et al's case study from European University Cyprus explores evaluation of learning delivery and assessment using a student partnership model, and is co-authored by student and staff contributors.

Professor Tashmin Khamis et al's case study highlights how their network of Quality, Teaching and Learning developed a lifecycle approach to faculty support across Aga Khan University's multi-national campuses in Pakistan, Africa and UK.

Dr Helen Yang explores support provided for curriculum development within accounting subjects at La Trobe University, using a collaborative approach to do this.

Our final case study in this group is from Atlantic Technological University in the Republic of Ireland, where **Dr Carina Ginty** explores the rollout of a digital platform to support effective learning and teaching across several campuses.

We hope you enjoy reading these case studies. We would like to thank all the authors for their time in sharing their inspirational work.

Ian Hall, Jenny Tester and Tonya Watts

Heads of Membership

Advance HE

The Education Focussed program at UNSW

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In 2015, the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia embarked on an ambitious strategy to uplift its education and research missions. In pursuit of academic excellence and a better learning experience for our students, the university wanted to provide academic staff with the opportunity to focus their time and energy on education through education focussed (EF) roles. The university also established a programme of support for EF academic staff to ensure the ongoing viability and success of this initiative.

“The Education Focussed community comprises our most passionate and innovative educators at UNSW. Their work, individually and as a community, ensures that our students have engaging and fulfilling learning experiences, which they can take forward into their future lives and careers.”

Professor Anne Simmons
Provost, UNSW

Introduced in 2017, UNSW’s [Education Focussed \(EF\) program](#) is a suite of professional development initiatives that support the teaching practice and careers of EF academic staff. This university-wide initiative was established to ensure we deliver a quality education for our students, support educational leadership across the university and develop ongoing generations of educational experts at UNSW.

Drawing on the ideas of Bronfenbrenner (1994), Woodward (1997) and Wenger (1998), the EF programme takes a holistic view of academic development. It is cognisant of the need to not only to enhance EF academics’ capabilities, but also the importance of their identity and sense of belonging to the wider academic community at UNSW and beyond.

The EF programme was designed with three dimensions in mind:

- + developing EF academics’ teaching practice
- + supporting their career progression
- + establishing a community that connects EF academic staff across UNSW’s faculties.

EF academics are supported through a range of initiatives, including:

- + an enhanced Academic Expectations Framework that recognises the educational work and leadership of EF academic staff, enabling promotion to Level E or professor (equal to teaching and research and research-focused academic staff)
- + a monthly EF Lunch and Learn series that showcases EF academics’ expertise and promotes cross-disciplinary networking and sharing of knowledge
- + an annual [EF Retreat](#) to build cross-faculty connections within the EF community
- + EF Fellowships that enable EF academic staff to work collaboratively on projects that reflect the university’s educational priorities

- + a course enhancement programme that draws on EF expertise to improve courses across UNSW
- + annual career development funding grants for professional development, conference participation and institutional visits aimed at developing their skills and professional networks.

A vibrant [Community of Practice \(CoP\) programme](#) is also supported to foster connections across disciplines and roles – with each CoP comprised of EF academics, teaching and research academics, and professional staff. Each CoP is centred around a topic (eg digital assessment, enhancing first year experience, world citizenship, student wellbeing) and supports the development of expertise and experience with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) through discussion, workshops and mentoring relationships. As they have matured, these EF CoPs have also welcomed members from institutions across Australia and internationally (New Zealand, India). They are also now integrated into formal decision-making processes on key educational concerns, consulted by university committees on issues such as assessment, academic integrity, equity and diversity, and student wellbeing.

A key aspect of the EF programme's work is influencing the culture around teaching and learning at the university. This is possible through senior leadership's commitment to education – signalling their support through recognition, financial investment, promotion processes and policies that enable good educational practice. Support is also provided for EF academic staff to gain external recognition of their educational expertise – including fellowship of Advance HE, along with other forms of recognition through national and international associations and networks.

“The education focussed community is growing and we are pleased to welcome educators across all faculties and academic levels, both internally and externally. Once you are a part of the EF community, you are supported to enhance your teaching practice and professional skills. It is wonderful to see our EF academics' achievement, resulting in their own career progression and improvement in our students' learning experiences.”

Professor Louise Lutze-Mann

*Pro vice-chancellor education and student experience
and director, education focussed development*

The EF programme has succeeded in establishing a community of academic staff at UNSW with a passion for education. The community is growing, it is supported, and EF academic staff are achieving important milestones in uplifting the quality of education at the university. However, this is not to say that issues and challenges do not exist, including considerations related to role clarity and identity, workload and institutional culture. These are issues we continue to address as part of the EF program, including advocating for EF staff in faculty and university fora, partnering with faculty leadership in developing sustainable workload models, and providing EF academic staff with leadership opportunities, fostering an institutional culture that recognises the important contributions of EF academic staff.

The impact of this programme can be seen in:

- + the overall higher student satisfaction scores of EF academic staff
- + their promotion to educational leadership positions (including over 50 promotions from Levels B to E; as well as appointment to senior leadership positions such as directors of education, associate deans, and pro vice-chancellor)
- + the continued growth of the EF community from just over 100 academic staff in 2017 to over 400 appointed as of 2021
- + multiple [institutional](#) and [national](#) awards for teaching excellence
- + [recognition as Senior and Principal Fellows of Advance HE](#).

Most recently, a key achievement of the EF programme has been the development of this community of agile educational leaders at the university, whose work was central to the university's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to supporting our students' learning during this difficult time.

The EF programme has been recognised internationally as [a model of good practice](#), it has been selected as a finalist for the [2021 CAULLT Good Practice Awards](#), and its success underpinned the first [EF Summit](#) held in July 2021, bringing together more than 30 leaders (including vice chancellors and members of senior executive teams) from 26 different universities in Australia and New Zealand to coordinate and collaborate on cross-institutional initiatives that support education and EF academic staff across the sector.

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A student-faculty, co-produced evaluation of learning delivery and assessment methods: the impact of the process on the participants

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Summary

In May to June 2022 at the European University Cyprus, a student-faculty joint evaluation of learning delivery and assessment methods was conducted, using co-production methods, for the School of Medicine's medical psychology module. A co-production approach was chosen for its potential to advance pedagogy, apply participatory approaches to learning, enhance student-faculty skills and open new avenues in learning design and evaluation. Co-production research principles (Table 1), proposed by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (Hickey et al, 2018), were followed to foster equality, diversity, inclusivity and reciprocity. This case study includes the outcomes of the research and the impact this process had on participants in the explored domains (see Table 2), detailed below. A separate report, with bespoke suggestions for module delivery improvements, was addressed to the School of Medicine Board to invite further input and collaboration.

Introduction

Participatory methods have been previously used in various fields, and their use in higher education (HE) is of growing interest (Goff and Knorr, 2018; Bovill et al, 2021; Gregoire et al, 2021). In co-production and other participatory processes, students take an active role, in a productive, empowering and engaging way, in decisions that directly affect them. In addition, use of these methodologies can enhance student satisfaction (Ribes-Giner et al, 2016), offering opportunities for students to decompress from academic related stress, voice their opinions and feel heard and valued.

At the same time, faculty can benefit and develop by gaining insight into student experience and valuable support in brainstorming ways to adjust methods of assessment and teaching.

Co-production is also a method used in research and public health planning and decision-making (eg co-developing service provision, public involvement in service design etc) and, as such, offers relevant skills and competencies.

Table 1. NIHR, co-production research principles (source: Hickey et al, 2018)

Co-production research principles (NIHR)
Respecting and valuing the knowledge of all those working together on the research
Sharing of power
Building and maintaining relationships
Including all perspectives and skills
Reciprocity

Methodology

Participation was voluntary, with an invitation sent to all module-attending students and faculty to explain the process, goal and potential outcomes. Out of 160 students and three members of faculty, a total of eight participants (five students and three faculty members) agreed to participate.

Participating members of faculty included the module instructors and course leader, while the student participants were second year medical undergraduate students (including the student representative). Meetings were facilitated by a member of faculty trained in co-production, while all other faculty members had complementing competencies (active listening and counselling skills) and could act as co-facilitators. Two meetings took place, (30 minutes and 1.30 hour, respectively, where participants were encouraged to share their lived learning experience, focusing on module content delivery and assessment methods.

On process completion, two impact surveys (one each for students and faculty) were generated using specific dimensions of the domains explored (eg directiveness and effectiveness in communication), based on process and goal related outcomes, and included both Likert-type scale and open-ended questions.

Participants were informed that, although their contribution was eponymous, their input would remain anonymous. Impact surveys were completed online, and data was disseminated to participants for the purpose of co-authoring and editing.

Table 2. Impact survey domains explored in students and faculty

Domains	Students	Faculty
Communication	✓	✓
Leadership	✓	
Teaching skills		✓
Problem solving	✓	
Learning optimisation		✓
General experience	✓	✓

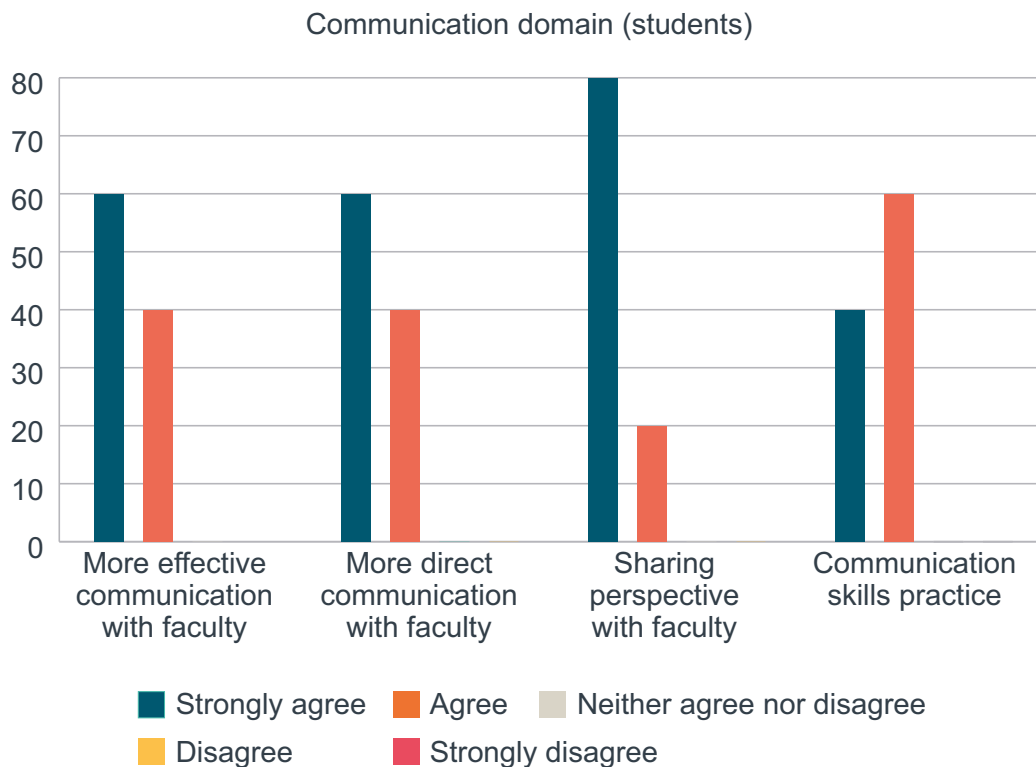
Results

Impact on domains

1. Communication

As presented in figure 3 below, all students agreed this process helped them in communicating more effectively and more directly with faculty, and in further developing their communication skills. Additionally, all students agreed (80% strongly agreed) that it helped them in sharing their perspective with faculty.

Figure 3. Impact on students of the co-production on the communication domain



The same patterns were observed in faculty, where all participating faculty agreed this process helped them communicate with students more effectively and directly, with the majority (67.67%) strongly agreeing it helped them in sharing their perspective with students.

2. Leadership

In terms of leadership skills, all students agreed (40% strongly agreed) this process helped them in taking the initiative in actively dealing with issues that affect them, and in standing up for their peers by representing their views. The majority (80%) strongly agreed while 20% neither agreed nor disagreed that this process helped them collaborate with others in finding a solution.

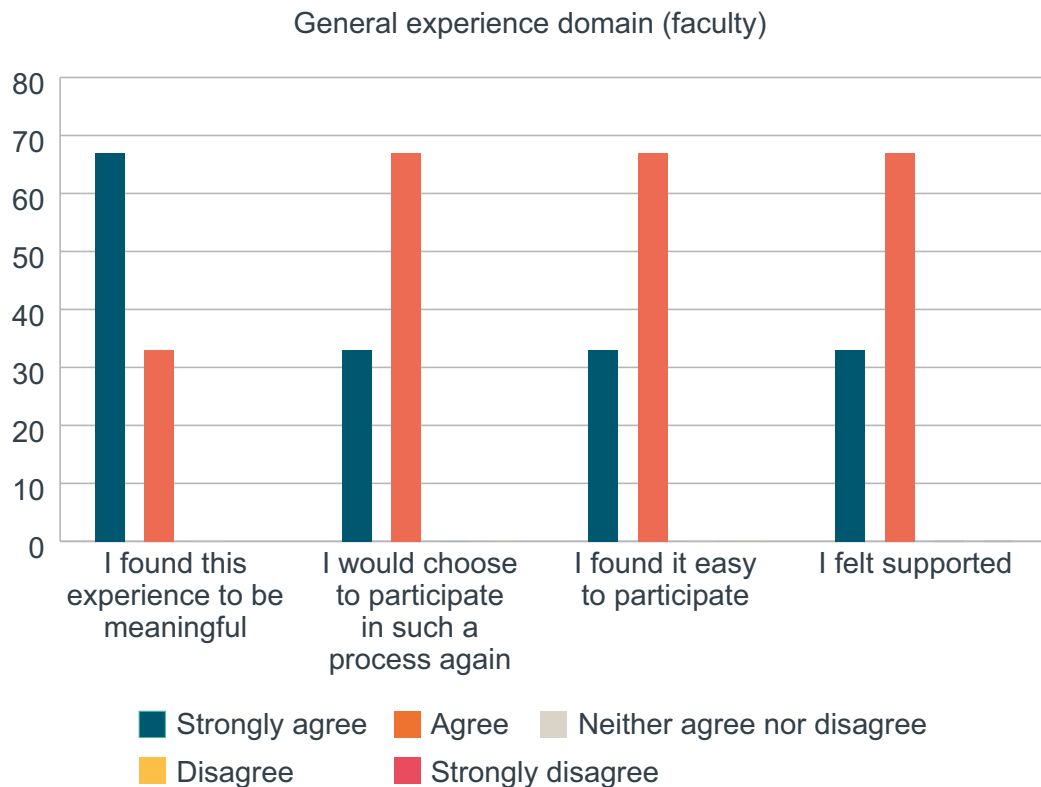
3. Problem solving

All students agreed (80% strongly agreed) this process helped them define challenges and gain insight in different perspectives and in brainstorming solutions. While some were unsure, (20% neither agreed nor disagreed), the rest agreed (60% strongly agreed) this process helped them generate productive solutions.

4. General experience

Feeling listened, heard, validated and supported, as well as ease in participation, was reported by all students (with 60% strongly agreeing). Additionally, all agreed (80% strongly agreed) they found this process to be meaningful, and they would choose to participate in such a process again.

Figure 4. Impact on faculty of co-production on the general experience domain



Likewise, as we show in figure 4, faculty agreed they felt supported, found it easy to participate and reported they would choose to participate in such a process again. All faculty also agreed (66.67% strongly agreed), they found this experience to be meaningful.

5. Learning optimisation

All faculty strongly agreed this process helped them gain a better insight into the challenges faced by students regarding assignments, exams and content delivery. Additionally, 66.67% strongly agreed that they gained a better insight into the element students enjoyed regarding assignments, exams and content delivery and on applicable ideas to enhance learning.

6. Teaching skills

While some were uncertain, most faculty (66.67%) agreed this process helped them further develop their teaching skills and methods. While the majority (66.67%) was unsure (neither agreed nor disagreed) on whether it helped them in further developing their assessment skills methods, the rest strongly agreed it did.

What participants enjoyed most about this process in their own words – some impact survey comments:

“Being heard, not judged, and trying to find a solution with my classmates for problems that affect us all.”

“The direct and honest feedback exchanged.”

“The respect of teachers towards students and vice versa. The fact that it was solution-based focused and not simply complaining.”

Conclusion

Faculty felt supported and gained a better insight into the student perspective. Students felt heard and validated and agreed they managed to share their perspective. Both students and faculty reported this process helped them in developing their skills, and found it had a positive impact on most dimensions in all explored domains.

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A lifecycle approach to sustainable educational development

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The Aga Khan University (AKU), established in 1983, has campuses across Pakistan, East Africa (EA) and the United Kingdom. AKU's commitment to providing quality teaching and learning and enhancing the student learning experience is evident in its establishing of the Network of Quality, Teaching and Learning (QTL_net) in 2014. Rather than a 'centre', AKU created this university-wide global distributed educational development 'network' to respond to the large geographic spread of AKU.

QTL_net aims to promote the highest quality of teaching, and support excellence of the student learning experience, within AKU's academic programmes. It does this by transforming teaching such that teaching must be learning-centred and research-led, with teaching excellence recognised and rewarded across the academy.

Faculty at AKU, like other higher education institutions around the world, are hired based on their content expertise. The majority have not been taught how to teach (Gibbs, 2010) and do not hold a teaching qualification. Needs assessment surveys in 2014 showed that faculty teach in the way they were taught, largely using lecture formats, and acknowledged the need to engage students more, which was reiterated by the learners themselves.

QTL_net adopted a three-step lifecycle approach to address our beneficiaries' teaching and learning needs and support them in embarking on a journey of teaching transformation. To avoid reinventing wheels as pioneers of educational development in East Africa and Pakistan, experienced volunteer educational development mentors were engaged from North America through Academics without Borders. QTL_net's work was also informed by the latest research-based educational development change frameworks, including Guskey (2002), Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2007) and MacCormack et al (2018).

A lifecycle approach to faculty support: from entry to excellence

Familiarising faculty with teaching and learning support services at AKU: at entry, QTL_net offers needs and experiential-based programmes to acclimatise faculty members to their roles and responsibilities at AKU, familiarise them with the resources and services that are available for their professionalisation in teaching and prepare them to engage confidently in scholarly practice.

Transforming teaching practices through peer-led continuous professional development programmes (CPD): AKU faculty members are continuously supported and incentivised for their professional development in teaching through a series (rather than one-off sessions) of internationally certified, peer and practice-led approaches such as the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) and Re-thinking Teaching Course Redesign workshop (RTT). Considering the geographical spread of the AKU, QTL_net intentionally carries out these activities using a 'networked approach' using face-to-face, blended and online mechanisms in a multidisciplinary environment, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and a safe space to experiment with new methods and gain an appreciation of critique from peers from other disciplines.

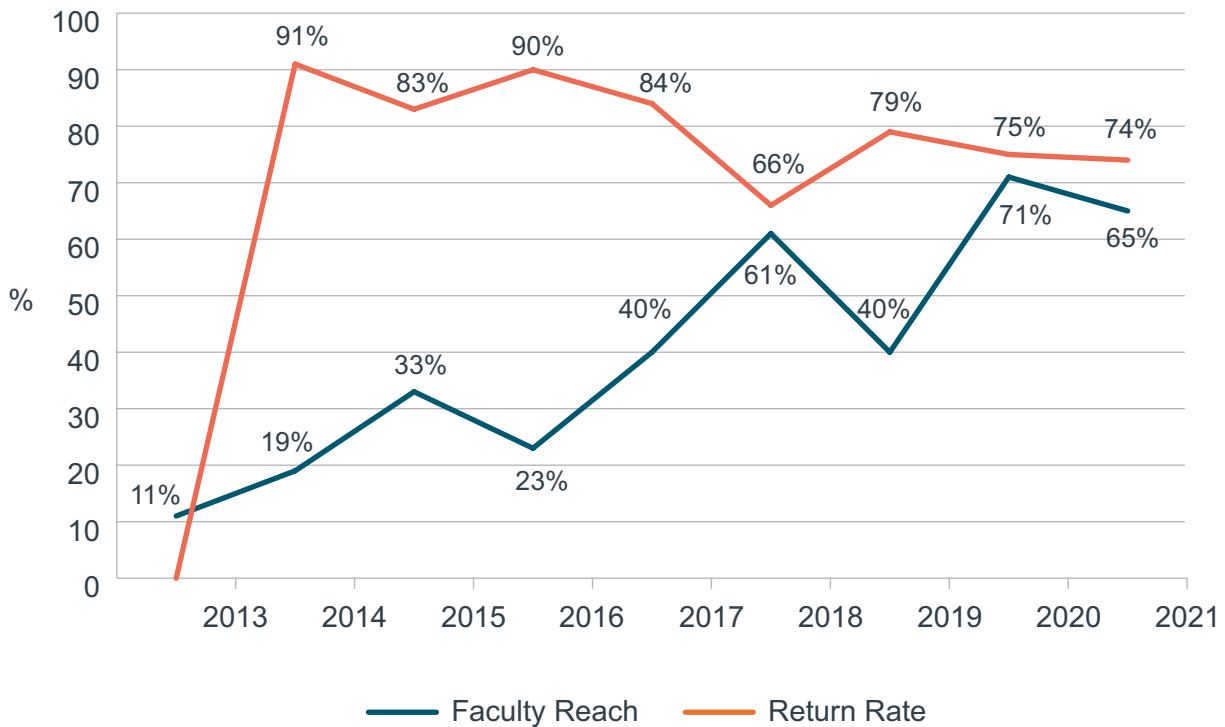
Professionalising teaching and rewarding excellence: consequently, opportunities are provided to faculty members to reward and recognise their teaching excellence (eg HEA fellowships; membership of the prestigious Haile T Debas Teachers Academy) that ensures voluntary but irresistible ownership of CPD, creating an institutional culture of good teaching. These faculty members become Teaching Champions who partner with QTL_net to develop communities of practice, act as mentors and contribute to the development of other faculty members in areas such as curriculum development, assessment for learning and SoTL, thereby creating models of sustainable educational development.

As a pioneer in educational development in Pakistan and EA, the work of QTL_net at AKU has an impact beyond its size as it provides mentorship to others in the sector in quality teaching and learning in the regions we serve.

Faculty reach and change in teaching practice/effectiveness:

Faculty reach was 65% in 2021 with a 74% return rate, demonstrating the perceived value-add and the safe, inclusive, interdisciplinary and global space in which faculty appreciate engaging with their peers.

QTL_net Faculty Reach and Return Rate 2013-2021



The findings from the Faculty Satisfaction Survey conducted in the last quarter of 2019 showed that **78-95%** of trained faculty were ‘highly satisfied’ that the programmes positively impacted their knowledge and conceptions about teaching and learning.

Spowart et al’s (2020) study of the institutional impact of accreditation by Advance HE showed the impact of the Teaching Enhancement Accredited Certification of the Higher Education Academy (TEACH) scheme. TEACH is aligned to the UK Professional Standard Framework (PSF) and Spowart et al confirmed its positive influence on the student experience.

“There is a lot of difference in the [lecturers] who are really trying, who are trying, who are upgraded, who are really working on their educational methods, going to conferences ... who knows what works better [compared to] those who are not upgraded. We can see a visible difference in their [teaching] styles”.

(SU representative)

The QTL_net external review (2019) also confirmed that faculty were highly satisfied with the QTL_net’s peer-led and practice-oriented workshops and digital support services in teaching and learning. Furthermore, these learning opportunities have led to changes in faculty’s conceptions around teaching and built confidence in them to a) lesson plan; b) experiment with innovative and engaging teaching methods; c) use more technology in their teaching, all of which have promoted changes in practice.

“The QTL_network has been remarkably successful in raising the profile of the importance of teaching and learning within AKU in a very short time. The number of faculty who have taken advantage of the programmes offered through QTL_net and who have very positive outcomes based on their experience is exceptional. They have exceeded the expectations of most educational development units in any country.”

(Quinney, Dawson and Welch, 2019)

Creating an institutional culture of teaching excellence

While Guskey’s educational change model states that institutionalising a teaching culture is the last stage reached in terms of impact, this is already evident after just five years at AKU, as noted by the QTL_net external unit review (Quinney et al, 2019). AKU became the first university in Pakistan and East Africa to receive accreditation by Advance HE. Through this accreditation, AKU enables faculty to gain a teaching qualification through the HEA fellowships and allows for the professionalisation of teaching to a best practice standard, the PSF. Teaching dossiers aligned to the PSF are now a part of academic promotion, ensuring teaching excellence is as valued as research.

AKU faculty champions have been recognised nationally and internationally for their excellence in teaching (eg [Pakistan Higher Education Commission’s Best University Teacher Award, United National Associations of Pakistan](#)) and QTL_net has been recognised globally in the field (<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20220720133836848>).

Impact beyond the institution/university

The reach and impact of QTL_net are being felt beyond the institution as AKU is called on to support and share lessons with other HE institutions (eg Karakoram International University in the remote mountainous areas of Northern Pakistan), HE regulators (eg on outcome-based education with CUE, Kenya; online learning with Tanzania Commission for Universities; and HE practitioners (eg University of Central Asia, East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network). This success has been achieved by sustained initiatives, offering staff a wide range of appealing opportunities for developing their teaching and recognising their achievements.

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Improving teaching and learning in accounting through collaborative action research

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Context

University professional education is operating in a fast-changing environment internationally. The advance of digital technologies is transforming societies and business practices at an unprecedented scale, challenging the relevance of accounting education (Jackson et al, 2022). The wide global harmonisation of international accounting standards (IFRS) challenges accounting educators to internationalise the curriculum and stay current with the international developments in accounting standards. The surge of fee-paying international students in English-speaking countries exerts mounting pressures on educators to develop intercultural teaching competence to solve the growing teaching and learning problems in western English-medium accounting courses (Yang and Farley, 2019). Adding to the complexity is the intermittent change to accreditation requirements from national and international accounting professional bodies.

Given these increasing influences, accounting curriculum review at the whole course level¹ is both inevitable and essential. This case study is about a strategic quality enhancement project to review and subsequently redesign a suite of accounting courses. The project was led by a project leader with expertise in accounting and education, with the support of a working party. The working party acted as a reference group for the analysis of proposals put forward by the project leader. The project was conducted between October 2019 and May 2021 at Department of Accounting and Data Analytics of La Trobe Business School (LBS), in response to the fast-changing context of accounting education. It was aimed at supporting the university's strategic goal of “*future-relevant, contemporary, and flexible learning experience*” of students.

Curriculum development through collaborative action research

Problems in accounting education have long been recognised as being “too narrow and often outdated or irrelevant”, driven by the interests of discipline academics rather than the changing situational context of accounting education (Albrecht and Sack, 2000, 43). To solve those problems requires major curriculum revisions. However, undertaking major curriculum development at the whole programme level is very time consuming. It requires significant collaboration and collegiality between academics. However, traditional university culture of academic autonomy and individualism, coupled with research-dominated institutional practices, presents barriers for teaching quality enhancement. In response, the project leader adopted a collaborative action research approach (Kember, 2000), using integrated course design (Fink, 2013) and constructive alignment (Biggs and Tang, 2011) as an explicit teaching framework, to drive the project process. Such an approach bridges the gap between education theory and methodologies and discipline-specific education. It also builds the capacity of discipline experts through collaborative action learning and research in curriculum development.

1 Course here refers to a degree programme that contains a set of subjects/units.

The ‘plan-act-reflect’ action process of this project was dynamic, multi-directional and iterative in practice. It involved extensive data collection, analysis, and internal and external stakeholder consultations. Course review findings were regularly shared and discussed with key stakeholders. Such a purposeful, data driven, two-way communication approach to engaging with discipline experts effectively created the ownership of change. As the project progressed to the redesign stage, collaboration between academics and beyond reached a new level. For example, participants, such as an industry advisory group, professional accreditation bodies, teams of discipline experts, an education developer, and a team of course administrators, were involved in the process.

Positive impact on staff and students

The project’s collaborative action research approach has transformed the formerly individualist teaching practice to a more collaborative and collegial practice. Engagement with the institution’s Education Service has enhanced the capacity of discipline academics to apply the constructive alignment framework to systematically reflect on teaching practice and take coordinated actions for curriculum development. A community of practice has been established to promote accounting discipline-specific teaching innovation. Since 2020, accounting academics have achieved the school’s best record of six honourable (institutional and national) teaching awards, and three prestigious international Advance HE Fellowships (including the first Senior Fellowship of LBS).

The impact on student learning is evident in the continued improvement of students’ overall satisfaction with teaching in core accounting subjects over the last three years, measured by both absolute and relative improvement compared with 2018 (see table below).

Course level	Improvement*	2019	2020	2021	Maximum potential for improvement
Undergraduate	Absolute improvement	2%	2%	4%	18%
	Relative improvement	12%	10%	22%	100%
Postgraduate	Absolute improvement	4%	10%	10%	30%
	Relative improvement	12%	33%	33%	100%

*Absolute improvement (AI) measures the absolute change in the teaching evaluation by using 2018 as the base year and compares the improvement in teaching evaluation in the subsequent years to 2018.

Relative improvement (RI) measures AI relative to the maximum potential for improvement, to avoid distorting the analysis. For example, using 2018 as a base year, the maximum potential (MP, %) for improvement in teaching in 2019 is calculated as $MP = (\text{Maximum possible rating} - \text{Year 2018}) / \text{Year 2018} * 100$, then $RI (2019) = AI (2019) / MP * 100$.

This is an excellent outcome in the context of the challenging times of the global Covid-19 pandemic where the national and international survey findings (Neves and Brown, 2022) revealed declining student satisfaction with the online learning experience in this period.

The outcomes achieved during the project process demonstrate implementing constructive alignment through collaborative action research in curriculum development is an effective means to enhance teaching in the ever-changing context of accounting education.

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Building digital teaching and learning capabilities at the Atlantic Technological University in Ireland with DigitalEd.ie

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Who we are

Atlantic Technological University (ATU) is one of the largest multi-campus universities in Ireland, serving a diverse group of learners (20,000+), staff (2,000+), communities, employers and organisations from the west and north-west region and further afield. ATU offers a rich combination of academic and research excellence, quality of life and opportunity, all of which can be experienced in the most beautiful part of Ireland.

ATU places the student at the centre of everything we do. Digitalisation and the use of technology are a key strategic priority for ATU. In response to the global pandemic, ATU invested considerable resources in developing rapid response digital intervention initiatives to support the learning, teaching and assessment transition for staff and students. This was made possible due to several initiatives, including the development of the www.DigitalEd.ie knowledge platform. This was supported by the iNOTE project, funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Ireland (2019-2022) with 2.9 million euro.

What we did/how we did it

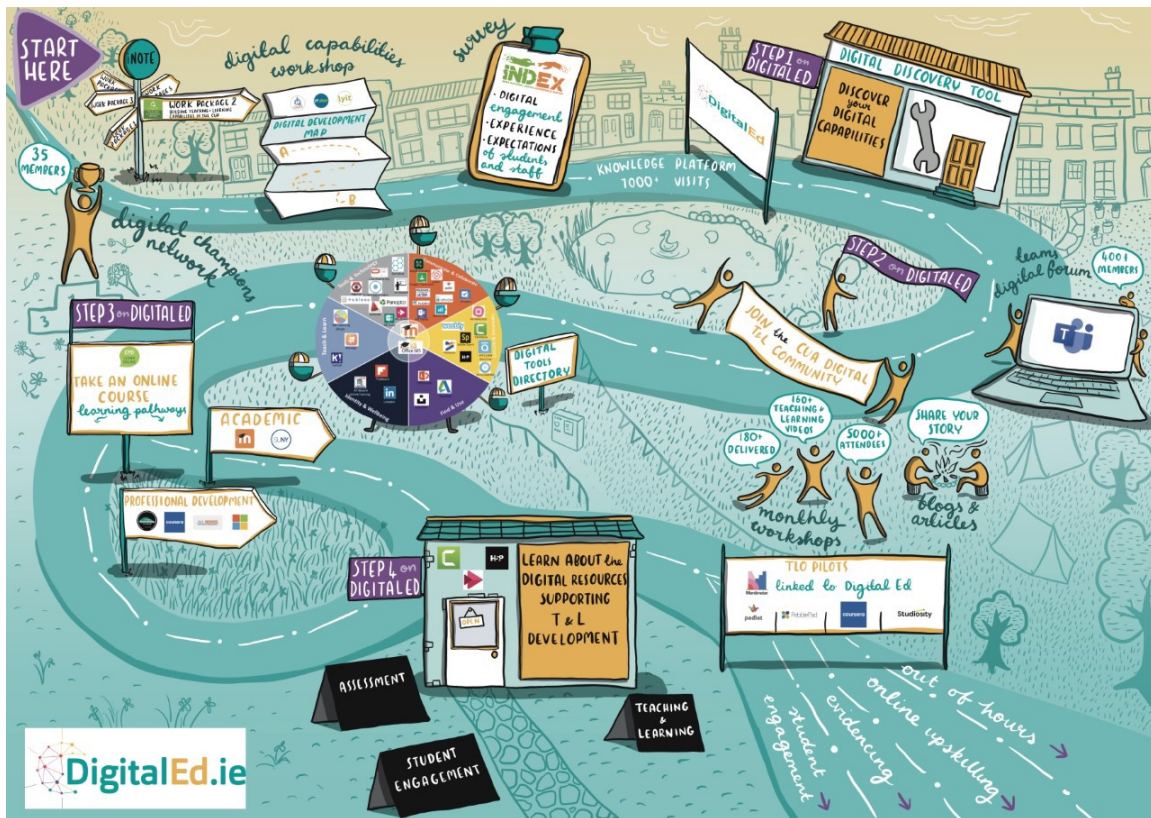
ATU Teaching and Learning Office (Galway-Mayo) led the development of DigitalEd.ie, which began in January 2019. During 2019, the project planning process got underway, a digital capabilities review took place across six sites, key resources were recruited, there was a review of 100+ digital tools, and consultations with New York State University (SUNY) on online and flexible learning faculty training strategies were held.

Between January 2020 and June 2022, a range of initiatives were piloted and then established, building digital teaching and learning capabilities in ATU. They include: the development of a postgraduate Certificate in Digital Teaching and Learning; a [digital champion team](#) representing each academic department; Ask Me Anything (AMA) clinics; a digital teaching and learning book of case studies (www.digitaled.ie/book), digital teaching and learning small group workshops; adaption of the [OSCQR scorecard](#) to support course design; a digital education webinar series; alternative assessment strategies workshops; show and tell insight sessions on digital technologies; curated digital teaching resources; digital tools directory; recruitment of graduate student mentors; online PASS student leadership sessions (peer assisted study support sessions to support the first year experience – see <https://peerlearninggames.gmit.ie>); the digital education development pathway at DigitalEd.ie for academic and professional services staff; digital professional practice alternatives; and investment in a remote teaching technology toolkit, for all staff working remotely.

DigitalEd.ie is a digital teaching and learning knowledge platform that provides access to professional development pathways and a suite of digital resources to build digital teaching and learning communities, digital capabilities and pedagogic expertise, so that educators in higher education can design, deliver and support flexible and online learning programmes effectively.

The ATU DigitalEd.ie development journey is presented in an illustration (see Figure 1) and it outlines the milestones reached from steps one to four between 2019 and 2022. This journey included a range of discovery and evaluation phases, piloting of initiatives, a digital resources audit and directory, programme design and digital badges development.

Figure 1. DigitalEd.ie step 1-4 development journey



Source: Maia Thomas, Graphic Harvester (commissioned illustration for DigitalEd.ie)

DigitalEd.ie is an online home for the ATU digital teaching and learning resources and learning pathways for educators (see Figure 2 and <https://DigitalEd.ie>). The platform provides access to:

- + a digital education tools directory
- + digital teaching and learning research directory and resources
- + an assessment directory and resources
- + a suite of online courses and learning pathways for academics and professional services staff
- + digital teaching and learning workshop/events monthly training programme
- + a digital self-assessment discovery tool

- + a digital champions development programme and networking opportunities
- + a digital blog/articles knowledge sharing space
- + ATU digital education community forum.

Figure 2. DigitalEd.ie knowledge platform



Effectiveness and impact

The scale of what was achieved in ATU from 2020-2022 across the multi-campus structure is wide ranging. Through staff dedication, collaboration and innovation, significant achievements were made in developing digitally enhanced teaching, learning and assessment strategies across all faculties.

In summary, the impact to date on faculty engagement and the development of digital capabilities from 2020-22 includes:

- + 750+ Ask Me Anything (AMA) Clinics (one to one 15-minute faculty development sessions) delivered to academic staff covering digital learning and teaching skills
- + 500+ webinars/workshops delivered online on digital T&L development strategies

- + 7,000+ ATU staff registrations for online DigitalEd monthly webinars/workshop series and conferences
- + 200+ curated teaching and learning video demonstration video resources produced and available on the ATU TLO channel
- + 50+ learning, teaching and assessment resources/special guides developed.
- + 60+ ATU staff completed an accredited level 9 learning pathway in Technology Enhanced Learning or Digital Teaching and Learning
- + 50+ ATU staff have achieved Digital Champion status and have provided one to one and small group mentoring sessions with departments
- + 18,000+ unique users visits have engaged with the DigitalEd.ie knowledge platform, which has provided self-directed learning opportunities and a range of digital education resources
- + 20+ specialist student remote learning support resources and services have been established to help students' engagement with online learning
- + A one-stop shop (online portal) was set up for students called the 'ATU Student Hub'. The more popular areas of the hub include *My IT* and the *Exams/Online Assessment Guides developed by the DigitalEd team*
- + Top digital T&L topics where faculty sought support and guidance from T&L rapid response clinics and workshops include: *Alternative Assessment Strategies; Assessment Design and Set-up; Moodle; H5P; MS Lens; Breakout Rooms; MS Stream; OneNote; Learning Design Strategies; Class Management; Structuring and Online Lecture; Creating Video; TEL tools; Gradebook; online whiteboard; student engagement strategies.*

What did we learn?

A cycle of continuous improvement in digital education is ongoing in ATU, through action research studies underway on the initiatives outlined in this case study, and from reflective evidence generated from a wide range of stakeholders. During the pandemic, extraordinary goodwill was demonstrated by those who teach, learn, support and lead in ATU, and much was learned for the future in our digital transformation development journey.

The development journey of DigitalEd.ie knowledge platform uncovered several resources and learnings, including a discovery tool, digital tools to support online student engagement, meaningful and robust assessment strategies, digital badges and learning pathways, and teaching and learning techniques moving from online to hybrid delivery. In addition, 20 digital teaching and learning impact case studies (www.digitaled.ie/book) were developed across eight themes, outlining how and why educators transformed their teaching and learning practice and the impact on student engagement.

The scale of what was achieved in developing faculty and its alignment to digital transformation strategic objectives has the potential for transfer of learnings to other higher education institutes in Ireland and internationally.

Learn more about DigitalEd.ie:

- + **Introduction to the DigitalEd Programme** <https://youtu.be/thdzqFzJocE>
- + **What is DigitalEd? (animation)** <https://youtu.be/5o--8aSS2As>
- + **The DigitalEd book of case studies and video impact stories** www.digitaled.ie/book



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