



Research-Enhanced Learning and Teaching

Approved by: Academic Board, 13 December 2006
Date of Effect: 1 January 2007

1. Policy outline

1.1 The University of Sydney is an institution of higher education at which links between research and teaching are of the highest priority. The University has a responsibility to ensure that students work in an intellectual environment that focuses on research in a number of ways: (1) in the content of programs of study, (2) in the development of inquiry based learning, and (3) in proactive engagement of staff and students in research into university learning and teaching.

2. Background

2.1 In April 2004 the University agreed a draft policy of what was understood in the University by research-led teaching and the scholarship of teaching. In 2005, the term 'research enhanced learning and teaching' seemed more applicable. The current policy builds on this statement to clarify and extend terminology, definitions, intentions, directions and responsibilities.

2.2 In April 2004, Academic Board also agreed to monitor progress in the development of the integration of research and teaching on an ongoing basis and to monitor through its Undergraduate Studies and Postgraduate Coursework Committees that research and scholarship on teaching and learning is demonstrably used in designing new curricula. This policy integrates these responsibilities.

3. Coverage

3.1 The University's strong research record and large number of active researchers is the foundation for research-enhanced learning and teaching. The University of Sydney expects all students to be aware that they are taught by active researchers and considers that they are entitled to expect that they will be so. As far as possible, students are also expected to engage in research activity of some kind. The nature of such activities varies at different levels.

3.2 Research-enhanced teaching and learning emphasises the partnership of academics and students as they engage in the critical challenge of open

exploratory inquiry. It points to learning and teaching that encourages active learning, critical creative thinking and develops the skills and attributes necessary for lifelong learning. The design of teaching and curricula should be based on the best available evidence of effectiveness for learning. Since research-enhanced teaching is likely to vary in different disciplinary contexts, discussions at the faculty, school and departmental level are encouraged. Research-enhanced teaching is fostered in institutional strategies. Benchmarking with other research-intensive universities worldwide is recommended.

4. Definitions

In the University of Sydney, research-enhanced teaching covers three key areas of activity.

4.1 Research-enhanced teaching: Teaching is informed by staff research. This includes the integration of disciplinary research findings into courses and curricula at all levels such that students are both an audience for research and engaged in research activity

4.2 Research-based learning: Opportunities are provided for students at all levels to experience and conduct research, learn about research throughout their courses, develop the skills of research and inquiry and contribute to the University's research effort.

4.3 Scholarship of learning and teaching: Staff and students engage in scholarship and/or research in relation to understanding learning and teaching. Evidence-based approaches are used to establish the effects and effectiveness of student learning, teaching effectiveness and academic practice.

5. Policy and procedures

5.1 The role of the University

The University, pursuant to its Strategic Directions which emphasise leadership in research and excellence in learning experiences and outcomes, and which insist upon research-enhanced teaching, both in content and delivery, has a responsibility to encourage the integration of research and teaching wherever possible. It does this through:

- 5.1.1 opportunities, resources and facilities provided for staff to engage in research;
- 5.1.2 initiatives designed to encourage and develop staff capacity to engage in research-enhanced teaching and the scholarship of learning and teaching, such as: funding mechanisms; requirements for faculties to demonstrate how research-enhanced learning and teaching is being developed; through a strategic working group; and through management and operational plans.
- 5.1.3 monitoring progress through performance indicators on a regular basis;
- 5.1.4 including reference to the integration of research and teaching in areas such as appointments, promotions, applications for Special Studies Program leave and as a topic to be discussed in Performance Management and Development;

- 5.1.5 staff training, for example, through the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Higher Education) and Masters in Education (Higher Education) programs;
- 5.1.6 recognition of achievements through teaching awards;
- 5.1.7 benchmarking activities;
- 5.1.8 ensuring that ethical practice in relation to the conduct of research by both students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and staff is maintained;
- 5.1.9 monitoring progress in integrating research and teaching in coursework through the Undergraduate Studies and Postgraduate Coursework Committees.

5.2 Responsibilities of faculties

Faculties have a responsibility to encourage the integration of research and teaching wherever possible. They do this through:

- 5.2.1 opportunities, resources and facilities provided for staff to engage in research;
- 5.2.2 ensuring that teaching and research policies take cognizance of the University's strategic aim to develop research-enhanced learning and teaching at all levels;
- 5.2.3 including strategies for the development of research-enhanced teaching, research-based learning and the scholarship of learning and teaching in Faculty Plans;
- 5.2.4 monitoring progress on a regular basis;
- 5.2.5 appointing the best quality staff who are capable of integrating research and teaching;
- 5.2.6 rewarding staff achievement in integrating teaching and research
- 5.2.7 acting ethically in relation to the conduct of research by students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and staff through the development of appropriate protocols and/or in collaboration with the Ethics Administration within the University's Research Office;
- 5.2.8 reporting on progress to Academic Board as required;
- 5.2.9 ensuring that new course proposals demonstrate how research is to be integrated into teaching;
- 5.2.10 maximizing opportunities for staff to integrate research and teaching.

6. Quality Assurance

6.1 The development of curricula and courses to integrate research and teaching is assured through the Annual Quality Assurance processes outlined in the following policies:

- 6.1.1 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Policy (VCAC July 2005);
- 6.1.2 The Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching (Academic Board May 2001);
- 6.1.3 Guidelines for Academic Board Faculty Reviews (Academic Board March 2004)

6.2 Such processes include:

- 6.2.1 monitoring of students' experiences of research through the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) and through the Sydney Research Students' Experiences Questionnaire (SREQ) and Postgraduate Research Students Questionnaire (PREQ) processes;

6.2.2 monitoring of the Academic Board requirement that new units of study proposals include information about the integration of research and teaching.

6.3 These processes are audited through Academic Board Reviews of faculties.

7. Authority

7.1 Management responsibility
Director, Teaching and Learning

7.2 Implementation and monitoring
Director, Teaching and Learning

7.3 Review
For review 2009 – Director, Teaching and Learning

7.4 Communication
Director, Teaching and Learning

8. Related information

8.1 Related University legislation, resolutions, policies and procedures include:

Generic Attributes of Graduates of the University of Sydney

AVCC Guidelines for Responsible practice in research

Code of Conduct for Responsible Research Practice and Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct

8.2 University policies superseded or replaced by this policy: What the University of Sydney means by “research-led teaching” and the “scholarship of Teaching (Academic Board April 2004).