

# Academic professional development

## Tailored professional development opportunities

Each year the Learning and Teaching Support Unit (LTSU) provides a suite of up to eight workshops associated with learning and teaching. These are called Tailored Professional Development (TPD) workshops and faculties can choose to have LTSU offer a number of workshops from this suite in their faculty. Each workshop is designed to complement and provide additional resources for the eight Foundation courses being offered as ongoing professional development for academic staff at all levels. Each workshop is discipline-specific and tailored to meet the specific needs of each faculty or department. Current workshops include:

### Assessment as a tool for learning

This workshop is an overview of designing an assessment plan, types of assessment, using criterion-referenced assessment and the conditions for effective feedback.

### Effective Communities of Practice (CoP)

A workshop that looks at how CoPs provide a defined time and 'space' to create a learning community around certain themes or practices as a means of building personal and professional knowledge and expertise, and make effective use of a peer support network.

### Evaluation of learning and teaching

A workshop which informs academic staff of the internal process established for the regular monitoring and improvement of all key aspects of the University's course and program offerings, and how these processes can be used both as a means of improving learning and teaching, and as evidence for promotion or awards.

### Supporting graduate qualities and skills

A workshop to develop resources, recommended professional development support and implementation processes which support academic staff and program teams to customise, map and align graduate qualities at the program or discipline level.

### Crossing cultures

This workshop has been developed to assist with an understanding of the history of Indigenous Australia and the impact this has on contemporary Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

## Intercultural skills in teaching

This workshop provides practical strategies to deal with cross-cultural issues in your teaching practice. It will also enable the University to develop programs that are international in both course content and pedagogical approach, with links to the USQ graduate quality of global citizenship.

## Flexible learning

This workshop covers how learning can be improved and promoted with online tools and techniques.

## Experiential & problem based learning

This workshop aims to provide a sound grounding for using experiential learning, as well as how to use problem based learning to stimulate autonomous learning, which allows students to take control of their learning and take ownership of the material.

## Learning and teaching for diversity

A workshop that looks at alternative approaches that can be adopted when dealing with different types of classes, including learning in small groups, managing large groups, and introducing inclusive teaching for all levels of ability and diversities.

## Embedding academic skills

Students enter university from a range educational backgrounds and experiences. This workshop investigates what skills students need for success throughout their university study. Activities focus on to integrate academic skills into courses in a way that makes them relevant to students and provides a scaffolded pathway to the development of such skills with links to development of graduate qualities and skills.

## Communities of Practice (CoP)

CoP are groups of people who share a passion for something that they know how to do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better. CoPs provide an opportunity to create a learning community around an area of interest or practice, to share and develop practice and build personal and professional knowledge and expertise.

A CoP creates a defined 'space' to share knowledge about a specific area of interest or practice, which enables members to address the practical problems encountered in that practice. Other activities include:

- negotiating what it means to be part of that community

- developing resources and building a unique community identity.

These activities have tended to be sidelined as workplace demands increasingly impinge on academic time, hence the need for CoPs.

## Communities of practice at USQ

The USQ Communities of Practice website - <http://www.usq.edu.au/cops/default.htm>

Faculty of Arts website - <http://www.usq.edu.au/cops/usqproject/arts.htm>

Faculty of Business website - <http://www.usq.edu.au/cops/usqproject/business.htm>