

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding is made between:

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
ROYAL MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

## Preamble

Each institution within the Australian Technology Network (ATN) seeks to compete effectively in a globally-based education market, while also meeting the needs of the local and regional communities in which it operates. These objectives recognise that an international reputation and extended market reach is necessary for academic and financial success; but also that tailoring programs to meet the needs of local communities is important in ensuring continuing public support. The ATN's structure allows members to collaborate on Australia-wide and international issues and initiatives, while retaining the flexibility to adapt to their individual circumstances.

The members of the ATN believe that the shared resources brought together by their collaboration will assist in developing both the quality and the cost-effectiveness of their programs.

Each university, their educational community and partners will benefit from the enhanced educational opportunities and financial stimulation that increased cooperation brings.

The ATN's aim is to help secure Australia's academic reputation, and contribute to its social and economic wealth, while championing the principles of access and equity that have ensured its members are the universities of first choice for more students.

The ATN's objectives are:

### **General Objectives**

- To be a cohesive and authoritative voice in the tertiary sector to help influence government policy formation;
- To produce highly employable graduates;
- To position the members of the ATN as sector leaders in the area of staff and student equity;
- To establish a strong market presence to build greater market share domestically and to develop new markets internationally;
- To share costs for comparable developments in areas such as administration, student support, online delivery and courseware;
- To collaborate to enable greater market reach than can be achieved by individual institutions in areas such as educational programs, consultancies and grants and research and development;
- To optimise research opportunities and partnerships to consolidate research standing;
- To consider affiliations with similar institutions overseas;
- To share information and collaboration on the development of initiatives that benefit each member university.

### **Educational Program Objectives**

- Facilitate student mobility nationally by providing ease of credit transfer across programs of ATN members;
- Share developments in courseware, especially in flexible learning materials and course reviews;
- Facilitate cross teaching where numbers and specialisations warrant.

The implications of these principles include:

- Establishment of administrative arrangements which facilitate joint marketing and services to corporate clients;
- Development of joint courseware to improve quality/reduce costs of both domestic and overseas courses and initiatives;
- Provision of benchmarking to help ensure the ongoing quality and improvement of programs.

## **Research and Development Objectives**

The ATN partner universities have rapidly built a solid body of research, with a strong emphasis on applied research, and research conducted in partnership with the professions and industries. The ATN believes it has greater flexibility in the kind of research its members undertake, with many of our collaborations with research-*users* rather than research-*providers*. In this sense, the ATN distinguishes itself from other institutions, with a focused effort on measuring positive client satisfaction. We are focussed on research which has an impact and makes a difference in the communities within which we operate.

To this end our core objectives in this area are:

- To pursue a joint approach to developing research and development in newly emerging discipline areas;
- To investigate whether complementary research strengths can be identified with a view to pursuing collaborative research grants (government and industry);
- To provide benchmarking for the quality assurance of research within the ATN.
- To pursue joint approaches in improving the quality of research training and maximising the career outcomes of ATN research graduates.
- To focus research into areas that have measurably useful applications in industry and business.
- To develop education programs that increases both the learning capability and employability of graduates.

## **Consultancy Objectives**

The ATN endeavours to take a corporate approach to consultancies, not because it in itself is a business, but because it recognises the importance of assisting business to achieve its corporate goals. By drawing together five of the nation's most innovative and enterprising universities, the ATN can offer leading edge skills in the development and commercialisation of intellectual property. To this end, our core objectives are as follows:

- To pursue joint national and international consultancy activities which, as individual institutions, members' reputation or capacity might be insufficient to attract or to handle the necessary work (for example: World Bank, Asia Development Bank);

- To develop operational arrangements, through strong project management and client management methodologies. This will support service to clients by ensuring both consistent and high quality processes.

### **Resource Planning and Development Objectives**

- To address issues such as joint strategic planning for staff exchange.
- To benchmark activities and processes

### **Equity and Access Objectives**

To improve outcomes related to staff and student equity by way of:

- Exchanging information on policies and programs, and promoting best practice
- Annual benchmarking on key data such as student access, participation , success and retention
- Annual benchmarking on emerging issues such as support measures for low-SES students
- Timely and strategic projects on aspects of equity and access for staff and students

### **Implementation of Objectives**

Implementation of the above objectives will be agreed on a case-by-case basis by the Vice-Chancellors of the ATN.

The parties agree and acknowledge that, prior to the implementation of a specific objective under this MOU, they negotiate and formalise a written agreement which is mutually acceptable and provides for the obligations and responsibilities of each party, including but not limited to funding and resources, intellectual property, confidentiality, risk allocation and indemnities.

### **Role of the Director**

The Director is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the stated objectives of the ATN.

This will be achieved by:

- Identifying and capitalising on opportunities which will provide benefits to the ATN

- Expediting, facilitating and overseeing initiatives within ATN institutions in response to these opportunities
- Identifying, developing and nurturing relationships with business, industry and government
- Influencing decision makers in these areas to gain support for the ATN

The Director will also foster a sense of shared purpose in the ATN by:

- Developing and building upon the existing partnerships within and between the five universities
- Ensuring effective channels of communication among senior managers in the ATN universities
- Cultivating relationships with senior managers and staff across the network

### **ATN Working Groups**

In addition to the core membership of ATN Vice Chancellors, the ATN has several established working groups. These groups are required to operate within the intent of the Memorandum of Understanding. Working groups may be established on an 'as needs' basis to address specific issues. Each working group is required to report to the ATN Vice Chancellors via the Director, by way of regular reports of activities.

The ATN has a number of working groups, which will be reviewed on a regular basis (see Attachment 1)

### **Term**

- This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be effective for the period of five years and may be extended or varied by mutual agreement of the parties.
- If during this term of this MOU a party wishes to be no longer bound by its terms, that party may terminate its participation under the MOU by three months' notice in writing to the other parties.

### **Variation**

A provision of this MOU may not be varied or modified except by a separate written instrument which is signed by a duly authorised signatory of each Party.

### **Statement of understanding**

This MOU is being signed by the Parties to evidence their in principle non-binding intentions. The Parties acknowledge that no legally binding obligations are intended to arise between them as a result of the signing of this document. Binding obligations are only intended to arise upon signing by the parties of a formal written agreement. Any action taken by any party in anticipation of approvals will be at the sole risk of that Party.

The Parties agree and acknowledge that nothing contained in this MOU constitutes any of them as agent, partner or trustee of any other of them, or to have authority or power to act for, or create or assume any responsibility or obligation on behalf of any other Party.

