

Priority Projects Program Guidelines - 2006

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An initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training

Priority Projects Program

Introduction

The *Priority Projects Program* is one of three programs included within the Carrick Institute's Grants Scheme. Details of the overarching Grants Scheme may be found at <http://www.carrickinstitute.edu.au/carrick/go/grants>. Details of the *Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program* and *Competitive Grants Program*, may also be found at <http://www.carrickinstitute.edu.au/>. Prospective applicants for funding under the *Priority Projects Program* are advised to familiarise themselves with the wider context provided by these other program guidelines and the Grants Scheme Guidelines.

The *Priority Projects Program* responds to priorities emanating from the Institute's designated responsibilities. These are:

- Liaison with the sector about options for articulating and monitoring academic standards
- Improvement of assessment practices throughout the sector, including investigation of the feasibility of a national portfolio assessment scheme, and
- Facilitation of benchmarking of effective learning and teaching at national and international levels.

In meeting these designated responsibilities, the Program focuses on the following objectives of the Carrick Institute to:

- a. promote and support strategic change in higher education institutions for the enhancement of learning and teaching, including curriculum development and assessment
- b. raise the profile and encourage recognition of the fundamental importance of teaching in higher education institutions and in the general community
- d. develop effective mechanisms for the identification, development, dissemination and embedding of good individual and institutional practice in learning and teaching in Australian higher education (a particular focus for this program is institutional practice)
- e. develop and support reciprocal national and international arrangements for the purpose of sharing and benchmarking learning and teaching processes.

The Institute encourages submissions that are designed to extend the scope of successful work already undertaken, or to assist in the further implementation of demonstrated good practice.

Funding Priorities 2006 - 2008

The funding priorities for 2006-2008 are:

- academic standards, assessment practices and reporting
- teaching and learning spaces
- peer review

Details for expressions of interest and project proposals for 2006 are provided in these guidelines and some information for 2007.

While the funding priorities will be maintained for the three years 2006-2008 there may be some revision of the types of projects within these funding priorities during the three years and not all priorities will necessarily be funded each year.

Priority 1. Academic Standards, Assessment Practices and Reporting.

Expected Outcome: To improve higher education assessment practices and student outcomes within a number of disciplines/ fields of study.

In order to manage the level of funding available for projects in this Program the following groups of disciplines/ fields of study will be eligible for funding in 2006 and 2007 under this priority.

Disciplines/ Fields of Studies eligible in 2006:

- *Health and Related Studies (includes Medicine, Nursing etc)*
- *Physical Sciences and Related Studies (includes Architecture, Building and Planning, Engineering, Computing and Information Science)*
- *Humanities and the Arts*

Disciplines/ Fields of Studies eligible in 2007:

- *Law, Economics, Business and Related Studies*
- *Biological Science and Agriculture*
- *Social Sciences (includes Education)*

Projects should be designed to address one or more of Academic Standards (Topic A), Assessment Practices (Topic B) and/or Reporting (Topic C).

Topic A:

Academic Standards involving an examination of the basis of grading decisions and decisions about student performance and/or the development and description of a shared understanding of 'standards' within a discipline/ field of study at either the undergraduate or post-graduate level.

This should be a collaborative project engaging a number of higher education institutions.

Topic B:

Assessment Practices: relating to one or more of the following:

- on-line assessment
- assessing large classes
- assessing post-graduate students
- minimising plagiarism
- developmental, diagnostic and summative assessment and feedback to students
- assessing students unfamiliar with assessment practices in Australian higher education
- accounting for diversity including students with disabilities

Topic C:

Reporting focussing on the recording of student achievement in the electronic environment as it relates to one or both of the following:

- Piloting creative models

- Examining Australian institutional and international developments and assessing the value and viability of the models examined

Priority 2. Teaching and Learning Spaces

Expected Outcome: To provide designs/evaluations of leading edge, creative solutions and models for new and modified learning spaces to enhance learning and teaching in higher education.

Projects: Proposals should aim to produce models for creative and effective design for the use of teaching and learning spaces which take into account leading national and international developments and students' needs and patterns of use in the modern higher education environment.

Priority 3. Peer Review

Expected Outcome: To develop and model systems of peer review of learning and teaching in a number of Australian higher education institutions.

Projects: Collaborative, cross-institutional projects which examine and develop models designed to embed external peer review of learning and teaching in the higher education promotion process.

Project Criteria

Projects to be funded under the *Priority Projects Program* in 2006-2007 should demonstrate the following:

- Clearly articulated outcomes and a clear argument demonstrating how the project will address one of the program priorities and contribute to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education
- A set of strategies which is considered, coherent and appropriate to the outcomes the project is designed to achieve
- Potential usefulness of the project and its outcomes to any of the following:
 - the sector as a whole
 - particular kinds of organisations within the sector,
 - to the development of national approaches or to policy development related to learning and teaching in higher education
- If appropriate to the project proposed, strategies for the dissemination/embedding of the successful strategies and outcomes that are integrated within the project design
- Ways in which the project both utilises and advances existing national and international knowledge relevant to the program priority or priorities
- A thorough approach to project management; and
- Budget justification appropriate to the project outcomes and importance.

Program Deliverables and Timelines for the Program

Deliverables

In addition to the deliverables that arise from the project design, a comprehensive report for publication should document the ways in which the program outcome has been met through the project.

The report should include:

- a description of the approach
- information on how it uses and advances existing knowledge in relation to the topic of the project
- an analysis of the factors that were critical to the success of the approach and of the factors that impeded its success
- an analysis of the extent to which the approach is amenable to implementation in other institutions
- a description of the ways in which the project outcomes have been or will be (using project funding) shared across the higher education sector, both nationally and internationally
- recommendations for further action
- appendices with any proformas or other material produced for or used in the project

Funding and Project Duration

Approximately \$2 million will be available in 2006 for distribution under this Program. Project funding will be available in the range from \$80,000 to \$200,000. Projects may be designed to take between 1 and 2 years. However, those designed to extend beyond one year specify stages of one year duration with defined deliverables associated with each stage. It is expected that smaller projects will be completed in one year.

Expressions of Interest / Full Proposals

Only one general call for expressions of interest/ project proposals will occur in 2006.

Institutions may elect to submit either an expression of interest or a full project proposal (see Grants Scheme Guidelines). If a full proposal is submitted, it will be assessed and a decision as to whether it will be funded will be made in the first funding round in 2006. The Carrick Institute will assess the expressions of interest submitted and from these will seek full proposals to go forward to the second round of funding in 2006. At least \$1 million will be reserved for the projects short-listed from the expressions of interest submitted.

The Carrick Institute reserves the right to ask for a full proposal to be modified and re-submitted for decision at the second funding round.

Time-lines

<i>Funding Rounds</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>Close</i>
Calls for expression of interest/full proposals 2006	March 27, 2006	May 10, 2006
Second funding round (full proposals arising from short-listed projects only)		July 31, 2006
Calls for expression of interest/full proposals 2007	March 2, 2007	May 11, 2007

Guidelines Review: November 2006.