

## ACT ED-UC Affiliated Schools Research Program 2022

### Guidelines

#### Background

The Affiliated Schools program is a partnership between the University of Canberra (UC) and the ACT Government underpinned by a shared vision for Innovation, Research and Teacher Professional Development.

The partnership includes the following elements:

- School based teacher education clinics
- Professional learning
- Research programs
- School based co-ordinators
- ACT Education Directorate funded scholarships for Masters
- Professional experience placements

This document describes the Research Programs element, including its aims, scope, and target research themes. It also describes the types of research projects able to be supported, the approval criteria and process for new projects, and guidelines for applicants.

#### Aims and scope

The Affiliated Schools Research aims to foster research towards system and school improvement through development and evaluation of evidence-based enhancements to student learning and well-being, teaching practice and educational policy. It will be aligned to the ACT Government Future of Education strategy.

Projects will leverage the strengths and address the unique needs of ACT Government schools, will address the strategic priorities of the ACT Government, and will involve collaborations between UC Faculty of Education academic staff, ACT Government School teachers and school leaders, and other staff within the ACT Education Directorate.

Projects will range from school-based action-research and pilot projects to large-scale multi-school initiatives. Projects might be self-contained or part of a larger existing research program. In some cases, projects might be staged, with separate funding provided as the project grows from an initial pilot to a larger system wide initiative.

Some projects will build on existing partnerships between teachers and UC academic staff. Others might be led by teachers or school leaders, emerging from school and cluster-identified needs, potentially aligned with teachers' formal study or emerging from the Teacher as Researcher program, supported through collaboration, mentorship and/or professional learning involving UC

academics. Alternatively, some projects will be led by UC academics building on their prior research within identified priority themes, with teachers as partners and collaborators in the research. Support from Principals of all schools where initiatives will be implemented or data collection will be undertaken will be essential.

All projects will need to demonstrate alignment with broader Directorate programs and initiatives. Research should be established to maximise opportunities for external funding (e.g. Australian Research Council Linkage Grants). Although research will be housed within Affiliated Schools, dissemination strategies need to ensure impact across the whole system.

## **Research themes**

The following priority topics were agreed in 2019, for 2020 - 2022:

- Early Childhood Education
- Cultural Integrity
- Personalised Learning

In order to allow for additional priority topics to be added over the life of the program and in line with Ministerial and Directorate priorities, the Affiliated School Research Program panel plans to review the research themes and priority topics at six monthly intervals with refinements approved by the Affiliated Schools Steering Committee. In September 2022, as a result, the Steering Committee approved an additional research theme and several new research priority topics for 2022-2024. The updated topics are highlighted below:

### **Major Theme 1: Student Centred Learning**

- Cultural Integrity
- Personalised Learning
- **Student Voice**
- **Diversity and Equity**

### **Major Theme 2: Teachers and Communities**

- Early Childhood Partnerships
- **Work Life of Teachers and Principals**

### **Major Theme 3: Future School System**

- **New Model for Schools**
- **Effectiveness of Theories of Change**
- **50-year Anniversary of ACT Education**

As detailed below, these new research topics not just align with the broader themes within the Future of Education Strategy but also they are emerging areas that warrant extensive research in the ACT context. The Affiliated School Research Program (ASRP) panel will endeavour to establish the partnerships and collaborations needed to ensure that at least one project is funded for each priority topic. Proposals for research focussing on other topics within the major themes will also be eligible for funding but will require stronger arguments about their importance. All other

things being equal a higher funding priority will be assigned for research aligned with the priority topics.

The following, then, are the major themes and initial priority topics:

### **Major Theme 1: Student Centred Learning**

(aligned with the Students at the Centre foundation within the Future of Education Strategy see <https://www.education.act.gov.au/our-priorities/future-of-education/resources/The-Future-of-Education-An-ACT-Education-Strategy-for-the-Next-Ten-Years>)

The following extract from the Strategy illustrates the scope of this theme:

*Education enables people to participate effectively and respectfully in a diverse society. It prepares children for adult life by developing the full potential of their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities. The inherent humanity of children and their growing individual capacity requires an education system that appropriately gives students control over their learning. Every child has their own interests and needs, background and circumstances, which an education system must recognise and address.*

Priority topics within this theme:

- Cultural Integrity  
The ACT Education Directorate uses the term Cultural Integrity to refer to the environment a school creates to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to welcome and engage their families and communities, along with the ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded throughout teaching and learning, and into the physical school environment (see [https://www.education.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/1124210/CI-Fact-Sheet\\_Oct-2017.pdf](https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1124210/CI-Fact-Sheet_Oct-2017.pdf)).
- Personalised Learning  
Building on principles of *Equity, Student Agency, Access and Inclusion*, the Strategy aspires to: ensure students have a voice in their schooling and that their learning is personalised and flexible; Introduce technology platforms to deliver personalised learning across a variety of settings and measure; and evaluate student achievement and growth in the areas of personalised and project based learning.
- Student Voice  
In the process of school reforms, more often than not, the voice of students, arguably the most important stakeholder, is often overlooked. The ASRP seeks research exploring how we can tap into the potential of student voice for deeper changes in school. Beyond tokenistic or symbolic student participation in a school's core business, we need to know how students can become change agents in school and can bring authentic school changes (Lee, 2018).<sup>1</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, M. (2018). What American urban secondary schools could be: An international perspective. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 56(5), 463-472.

this regard, the ASRP pays special attention to research on student voice that is a hidden but critical resource to deepen school change.

- Diversity and Equity

In the context of the pandemic, educational equity for diverse groups of students matters more than ever, given the increasing gaps of learning opportunities and resources between and within schools. The ASRP calls for research exploring 1) how ACT schools operate to address different needs and support for various groups of students (by gender and sexual orientation, ethnicity, indigeneity, EALD, SES, etc.) in relation to their learning, 2) why inequity across different groups of students persists, and/or 3) what schools can do to reduce inequity in learning opportunities and resources.

## **Major Theme 2: Teachers and Communities**

(aligned with the Empowered Learning Professionals and Strong Communities for Learning foundations within the Future of Education Strategy)

The following extracts from the Strategy illustrate the scope of this theme:

*Teachers and school leaders, together with a team of people including other educators, allied learning professionals, and support staff, make education happen. Teachers are expert professionals highly skilled at working with students to lead them through their learning journey. A high quality education system enables teachers to achieve this in partnership with a range of other professionals and support staff meeting student needs and nurturing school communities.*

*While the core function of schools is to provide education, schools are also key community hubs providing more than access to learning. Through schools, children and their families connect with each other and form enduring relationships. Schools are an integral part of a broader human service system that builds relationships and brings services and people together to meet the diverse needs of children and their families.*

Priority topic within this theme:

- Early Childhood Partnerships

The Future of Education Strategy aims to *identify and develop models of partnerships between early childhood providers, community and government agencies, and primary schools to ensure that young children (3-8 year olds) have the strongest possible start to their education journey.* An Early Childhood Strategy is also under development, with themes focussing on *access, equity and affordability; workforce and qualifications; transitions from education and care to school; and maximising the benefit to children from money spent* (see <https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood>)

- Work Life of Teachers and Principals

A critical and recurring policy issue facing Australian schools is teacher recruitment and retention. A fundamental reason that explains the persistent challenges in teacher recruitment and retention stems from ever-increasing teachers' workload. In particular, the sudden and substantial disruption to teaching and learning activities caused by the COVID 19 has further changed the nature and volume of teacher workload. That is, the sudden switch to online learning and social distancing not just added significantly to teachers' workload,

but also complicated their work life, which seems to impact teaching quality and teacher wellbeing. Equally true is the workload and work intensity of school principals (Lee et al., 2022).<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, little is known what teachers' (and principals') work life looks like particularly during the pandemic, and how they spend their time at school, as well as the implications and impacts of the changing nature of workload on school improvement. Much is needed for these research aspects.

### **Major Theme 3: Future School System**

(aligned with the Systems Supporting Learning foundation within the Future of Education Strategy see <https://www.education.act.gov.au/our-priorities/future-of-education/resources/The-Future-of-Education-An-ACT-Education-Strategy-for-the-Next-Ten-Years>)

The following extract from the Strategy illustrates the scope of this theme:

*Providing the education of the future requires systems that are harmonious with the directions set by this strategy... Learning and development begins from birth and the systems supporting education need to respond to this context. Children and young people access a range of services including health, education and community services as they grow and acquire the skills and attributes need for a healthy and productive adult life. Education provision occurs through early childhood education, school-aged education, tertiary education and vocational education and training. These services and settings must be personalised and well-coordinated, especially at points of change or transition. A range of flexible delivery approaches are required to meet diverse learning needs.*

- **New Model for Schools**

The standardized, traditional model of schools has been significantly challenged during the pandemic. In addition, the pandemic has, paradoxically, revealed the potentially important role of online/remote learning in the traditional model of schools. However, the structure and model of contemporary schools largely remain unchanged. At the same time, our students need to learn "new" skills, not just about how to know and how to do, but also how to maintain wellbeing and live together with others from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The ASRP calls for research that navigates and maps possible pathways towards new models (e.g., new models of delivery) of high schools and/or community schools that aim to cultivate new skills needed by students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- **Effectiveness of Theories of Change**

A theory of change is critical for school improvement and reform given that it informs educators and policy makers of planning, strategy, implementation, and evaluation. Given the important role of a theory of change in school improvement and reform, the ASRP values research projects that comprehensively review what theories of change in education have been developed and used, what strengths and flaws are embedded in existing theories of change, and what theories of change are urgently needed for ACT schools in the post-pandemic era.

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<sup>2</sup> Lee, M., Pollock, K., & Tulowitzki, P. (Eds.) (2022). *How School Principals Use their Time: Implications for School Improvement, Administration and Leadership*. U.K.: Routledge.

- 50-year Anniversary of ACT Education

From the inception of the ACT Schools Authority in 1973 the ACT has been an innovator in school models and in approaches to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. With the ACT Education Directorate celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2023, the ASRP seeks research projects that delineate the historical trajectory of the ACT Education over the last 50 years and its legacy and legitimacy.

## Criteria

Proposals for funding under the Affiliated Schools Research program will be judged against the following criteria:

- Alignment to the overall aims of the program and identified themes and priorities has been demonstrated, including:
  - Targeted at system and/or school improvement;
  - Involving development and evaluation of evidence-based enhancements to student learning, student well-being, teaching practice and/or educational policy;
  - Alignment to identified research themes has been demonstrated;
  - Alignment to specific priority topic has been demonstrated, or alternatively alignment to an identified school need or system priority has been demonstrated and the importance of this need has been argued;
- Collaboration and school and university support have been demonstrated, specifically:
  - Collaboration between ACT Public School teachers, school leaders, and/or ACT Education Directorate staff on the one hand and UC Faculty of Education academics on the other;
  - Support by Principals of all schools where initiatives will be implemented or data collection will be undertaken;
  - Involvement of Directorate team members (including the estimated time commitment) has been approved by the Directorate ;
  - Involvement of UC Faculty of Education staff (including the estimated time commitment and/or requested workload allocation) has been approved by Executive Dean;
- Proposed initiative is clearly described, can feasibly be carried out by the proposed research team in the proposed timeframe, has appropriate theoretical foundations and is grounded in prior research reported in the literature and/or in prior evaluated practice within ACT schools;
- Proposed evaluation and/or data collection and analysis strategies are methodologically and ethically sound;

- Timeline has been clearly described including specific milestones with outcomes (e.g., interim report) or deliverables (e.g., final report and other products);
- Dissemination strategies, including specific publication plans, towards system-wide impact and academic outputs have been described;
- Sustainability has been demonstrated, specifically:
  - Sustainability beyond the funding and timeframe of the proposed project; and/or
  - Feasibility/potential of the proposed project to lead to major follow up grant applications (e.g., ARC and/or other Category 1 grants); and
- Budget has been clearly explained and justified and represents value for money in terms of project scope and likely impact.

## **Eligibility**

- Project leaders must be either continuing or contract academic staff of UC Faculty of Education or continuing or contract Education Directorate staff members. If the project leader is a contract rather than continuing staff member this should be factored into arguments about the long term impact and sustainability of the initiative.
- Other team members may be continuing, contract or sessional UC Faculty of Education academic or professional staff members, or continuing, contract or casual Education Directorate staff members.
- Affiliated researchers from other Faculties at the University of Canberra or other Universities may be named on the grant, but funds from the scheme cannot be expended within other Universities.
- The project leader may not lead more than one active research grant at a time from the Affiliated Schools Research program. But the project leader can participate in other UC Faculty of Education academic's affiliated schools research project as a co-investigator while she/he holds one active research project as a leader.

## **Funding**

There are three categories of projects for which funding can be requested:

- **Small projects:** pilot or seed funded projects, or single school action-research projects, undertaken in under 12 months, for which funding up to \$20,000 can be requested;
- **Medium projects:** projects which involve a major school-wide initiative at a single school or initiatives across a number of schools, undertaken in under 18 months, for which funding up to \$100,000 can be requested; and
- **Large projects:** projects or programs with system wide impact, normally which build on an earlier Small or Medium project or a large body of prior research, undertaken in under 3 years, for which funding up to \$300,000 can be requested.

Funding is provided for the purpose of achieving the aims, deliverables and impact of the initiative and consequently a clear rational must be provided for all proposed expenditure. Funds not expended by the scheduled conclusion of the project will be reallocated to other projects.

Projects may draw on funding from other sources such as other existing grant funded programs, or specific grant funded projects closely aligned to this Affiliated Schools project. In these cases it is important that the full project budget is presented including the sources used for each item of expenditure and any obligations set by third party organisations are known and agreed to.

The budget can contain provision for a wide range of expenditure aligned with the initiative, including for example:

- The cost of employing professional development, technical, research or administrative assistants and/or consultants;
- Teaching relief (with approval from Executive Dean or School Principal);
- Travel within the ACT;
- Travel beyond the ACT where a very clear rationale aligned to the project aims and deliverables has been provided; and
- Purchase of minor equipment, peripherals, software and consumables.

The following will not be funded:

- The cost of computers, equipment, telephony or stationery that could reasonably be expected to be provided by the University or School such as computers for team members;
- The purchase of major equipment which will continue to be used well beyond the life of the project;
- Time relief or employment costs of partners based at other Universities (except where they are employed as consultants because of specific expertise);
- Conference travel (unless a very clear argument can be made that attendance is essential to the initiative and it would not be reasonable for it to be funded by the University or School).

## **How to Apply**

Applicants should complete the attached application form and checklist for submission. There will be a call for proposals every six months over the life of the program, generally in June and November. In exceptional circumstances a proposal aligned to a priority topic may be reviewed outside of the normal proposal review timelines. Applications will be submitted via email to [Education-research@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Education-research@canberra.edu.au).

If applicants have reviewed the Affiliated School Research program statement and application guidelines and still have queries about research proposals (e.g., whether applicants' idea for a research project falls within this program), email Prof. Lee ([MooSung.Lee@canberra.edu.au](mailto:MooSung.Lee@canberra.edu.au)). Other administrative queries (e.g., budget, IP), contact the Faculty ([Education-research@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Education-research@canberra.edu.au)).

## **Ethics approval**

It is important that ethics approval from the University of Canberra and the ACT Education Directorate are obtained before the project commences. Funding will be contingent on these approvals being granted.

## **Intellectual Property**

The Affiliated Schools agreement, signed in December 2019, includes the following clause relating to Intellectual Property.

### ***Ownership and use of material***

#### **11.1 *Intellectual property***

- (1) *The Intellectual Property associated with the Project will comply with the National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research and the Intellectual Property policy of the University.*
- (2) *The University and the Territory recognise the contribution of each party, including Intellectual Property Rights, in developing Material for the purposes of this Agreement.*
- (3) *Ownership of a party's Background IP is not affected by this Agreement and remains the property of that party.*
- (4) *Each party will maintain and supply to the other party a register of its Background IP.*
- (5) *The University will maintain a register of Program Material and convene a group to manage the register if required.*
- (6) *Subject to clause 11.1(7) and unless otherwise agreed by the parties in writing, ownership of Program Material, including Intellectual Property Rights in that Program Material created for the purposes of this Agreement vests in the party that created it from its inception.*
- (7) *If Program Material is developed jointly by the parties, that Program Material will be owned by the parties as tenants in common in the same proportions in which the Parties developed it and as specified and agreed by the parties in a Work Order.*
- (8) *Ownership of Program Material, including ownership of Background IP will not be altered or transferred merely by virtue of its use for the purposes of this Agreement.*

#### **11.2 *Licence to use Background IP***

*Each party grants to the other party a royalty-free, irrevocable, non-exclusive, non-transferable licence to use and exercise its Background IP during the Term to the extent necessary to carry out the Program or an individual Project. Each party agrees to comply with any reasonable directions of the other party regarding the use of that other party's Background IP.*

#### **11.3 *Prohibitions***

*Each party must not, without the prior written consent of the other party:*

- (1) *modify or alter;*

- (2) do anything, or allow anything to be done, which does or may prejudice the other party's rights in; or
- (3) grant any third party a sub-licence to use or exercise, the Intellectual Property Rights in the Program Material or the other party's Background IP.

#### **11.4 Infringement of a party's Intellectual Property Rights**

*Each party will use reasonable endeavours to notify the other party of any suspected, actual or anticipated infringement by a third party of the other party's Intellectual Property Rights and will provide reasonable assistance to that other party if requested, in relation to any infringement proceedings that the other party may take against that third party.*

#### **11.5 Commercialisation**

- (1) Each party acknowledges the commitment of the other to co-develop and collaborate on a program of research, aligned to the ACT Government's Future of Education Strategy pursuant to clauses 3.1(1)(f), 3.1.(2)(b) and 3.1(3)(e) and agrees that if it becomes aware of any commercially valuable Intellectual Property Rights being developed as Program Material during the Term, it will immediately notify the other party in writing.
- (2) The party that owns the commercially valuable Intellectual Property Rights must, acting reasonably, reach an agreement with the other party on protecting, publishing, Commercialising or otherwise exploiting the Intellectual Property Rights in the Program Material in a manner that is consistent with this Agreement prior to any such acts taking place.
- (3) Prior to any agreed publication, exploitation or Commercialisation of commercially valuable Intellectual Property Rights in the Program Material, the Parties must keep those Intellectual Property Rights and Program Material confidential.
- (4) Each party (First Party) must obtain all necessary consents to enable the other party to use, reproduce and adapt the First Party's Background Material (including any incorporated third party material) and/or Program Material created or provided by that party, for the purposes of this Agreement.

*For the purpose of this clause 11, "use" includes supply, reproduce, publish, perform, communicate, broadcast, adapt and copy, unless otherwise agreed.*

#### **11.6 Safekeeping and preservation of material**

*A party (First Party) must ensure the safe-keeping and proper preservation of Material owned by the other party in the First Party's possession or control in a manner which protects the commercial value of the Material.*

Consistent with the clauses above, the application must include a description of any relevant Background Intellectual Property (IP) brought into the project by the team members, by the University or by the Directorate, so that these items of Background IP can be added to the register.

Intellectual Property Rights are defined in the agreement as follows:

- (1) *all copyright and analogous rights;*
- (2) *all rights in relation to inventions (including patent rights), plant varieties, registered and unregistered trademarks (including service marks), designs (whether or not registerable), confidential information (including trade secrets and know-how), circuit layouts and all other rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific or artistic fields; and*
- (3) *all rights to register, rights in applications for the registration of and rights to extend or renew the registration of any of the foregoing,*

*whether created or in existence before, on or after the date of this Agreement and whether existing in Australia or otherwise, but excludes Moral Rights.*

Background Intellectual Property is defined in the agreement as follows:

*Intellectual Property Rights owned or contracted by a Party prior to the commencement of this Agreement and which a Party contributes to the Program, in accordance with this Agreement.*

University of Canberra applicants should also refer to the University's Intellectual Property Policy to determine whether the University or the individual researcher owns any background IP brought into the project, and in determining ownership of IP generated within the project. The policy is accessible at <https://www.canberra.edu.au/Policies/PolicyProcedure/Index/109> and includes the following key clause relating to ownership of IP:

**1. Ownership of Intellectual Property produced by Staff**

*1.1 As a matter of law, the University owns the IP produced by staff in the course of their employment but, subject to principle 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 below, the University assigns this IP to the creator by virtue of this policy.*

*1.2 The University retains ownership of IP in Course Materials created by staff in the course of their employment with the University.*

*1.3 The University retains ownership of IP in any patentable invention produced by staff in the course of their employment with the University.*

*1.4 Where the terms of a contract require the University to own or assign IP rights, the University retains ownership of the IP produced by staff in the course of their employment with the University to the extent required by the contract.*

## **Application format and instructions**

Applications should use the Microsoft Word template to be provided and should include the following sections:

- Part 1. Overview and team (maximum 2 pages)

- Title
  - Abstract (maximum 150 words)
  - Project team members (name, affiliation, qualifications, research experiences)
  - List of schools involved for data collection
  - Category of funding (Small Project, Medium Project or Large Project)
- Part 2. Project Details (maximum 6 pages for Small Projects, 8 pages for Medium Projects and 10 pages for Large Projects, 12pt font, single spaced, 2.54cm margins)
  - Aims (the overall aims of the initiative including the key deliverables)
  - Background (description of the initiative including the grounding in the wider literature to demonstrate the knowledge gap and likelihood of success of the proposed approach along with demonstration of the alignment of the project with the themes and priorities of the Affiliated Schools Research program and/or the need for the research in the ACT context)
  - Approach (details of the research design/approach including project stages and timeline, evaluation/analytical methods, ethical issues and how addressed, dissemination strategies, timelines and specific deliverables)
  - Impact and sustainability (arguments about the way in which the proposed initiative will impact on student learning, student well-being, teaching practice and/or educational policy, estimates of the numbers of students, staff, schools impacted by the project; plans for dissemination and follow up scholarship including external grants and publications)
  - Team and collaboration (elaboration on the way in which collaboration between university, school and Directorate staff will occur in the project, along with responsibilities of each team member and overview of skills and prior experience which demonstrate their ability to fulfil these responsibilities)
  - Budget (itemised budget in the provided format, and explanation and rationale for each proposed item of expenditure)
  - Background Intellectual Property (description of any existing intellectual property brought into the project by project team members, the University or the Directorate)
  - References (any reference cited in Part 2 ideally in APA format, not included within the page limit)
- Part 3: Appendices
  - Written confirmation from Principals, Directors and Executive Dean (within a letter of support or as an email extract) supporting the involvement of each team member

in the project and stating that the team members' time on the project is within their teaching, research and/or other workload, or committing additional workload or time allocation, and supporting the involvement of the named Affiliated Schools in the project.

- Key relevant prior publications by the research team (maximum one page)

## **Management and reporting**

Successful applicants will be expected to report on progress and outcomes in various forums, including the UC Faculty of Education Research Seminar, during and at the completion of the project. A final report that highlights key results and findings will be required and will be made available online to the ACT School and University community.

## **Assessment process**

Applications will be assessed by a grant assessment committee consisting of the following people/roles:

- Barney Dalgarno, Executive Dean Faculty of Education, University of Canberra
- Kylie Scholten, Acting Executive Group Manager, Service Delivery and Design, ACT Education Directorate
- Mandy Kalyvas, Executive Branch Manager, Learning and Wellbeing Policy and Design, ACT Education Directorate
- Moosung Lee, Educational Research Professor, University of Canberra (Chair)

Additional people may be invited to assessment meetings in an advisory capacity, including for example, the University of Canberra Affiliated Schools leadership, and selected Affiliated Schools principals.

The assessment committee may request changes to aspects of the project or budget as a condition of approval.