

# Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Policy

## Section 1 - Background

(1) The [ACU Strategic Plan](#) identifies priority areas of research in which the University seeks to achieve research excellence. The University's performance in research excellence is measured through external assessments such as [Excellence in Research for Australia](#) (ERA) rankings. Maintaining and improving the University's success in the most recent ERA assessment remains the highest priority for ACU research. At the same time, it is important that the University meets the needs of its Catholic partners who wish to engage ACU's scholarly expertise to inform, evaluate and enhance the quality of their activities. The University will do this without compromising its research excellence agenda.

## Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This Policy establishes a University-wide approach to the planning, initiation, implementation and reporting of stakeholder-engaged scholarship projects. It outlines the role of the Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Unit (SESU) in providing governance and management of these projects across the University.

(3) The establishment of the SESU enables ACU to collaborate with its Catholic (and other) partners to provide expertise in areas that are central to the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#) and ethos as a Catholic university. It also provides the skills and resources to increase the University's research engagement with end-users without compromising the focus of ACU's high-quality researchers to produce high-ranking research publication outcomes.

## Section 3 - Scope / Application

(4) This Policy encompasses scholarship projects that have a direct link to the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#), on behalf of and in collaboration with ACU stakeholder partners and wider community groups, but do not meet the parameters for research projects.

(5) Projects to be undertaken will be identified from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. the Vice-Chancellor and President of ACU, and other Senior Executive staff from within ACU;
- b. direct responses to requests from key stakeholders; and
- c. through an Expression of Interest process.

(6) The projects to be undertaken will be diverse in their scope and scale, with a focus on activities with a strong link to the strategic priorities of the university. They will include:

- a. contract projects for ACU's partners;
- b. collaborative projects with ACU partners; and
- c. both short-term and long-term projects.

# Section 4 - Policy Statement and Principles

## Focus

(7) The principal focus of the SESU is to ensure that ACU has the capacity to engage in scholarship in key areas of need, and for those communities and organisations that are the most disadvantaged, and that are linked with the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#).

(8) These projects will be non-[HERDC](#) scholarly activities. The inclusion of contract and collaborative projects will facilitate opportunities for the development and growth of partnerships that will support the sustainability of the unit. The partnerships will also provide opportunities for future collaboration in competitive funding applications, such as ARC Linkage and NHMRC Partnership Grants.

## Core Funding

(9) The core operations of the SESU are funded by a levy imposed on the University's Faculties. This funding will commence at the level of \$600,000 per annum (indexed), and may be increased in future at the Vice-Chancellor and President's discretion.

## Project Funding

(10) Projects undertaken on behalf of, or in partnership with, external stakeholders will be co-funded by the requesting body and the University. It is expected that the partner will normally contribute a minimum of 50% of the actual cost of undertaking the project.

(11) In exceptional circumstances unfunded projects will be undertaken (i.e. fully funded by ACU) where the scholarship is strongly aligned with the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#), the need is urgent, and the stakeholder does not have the capacity to contribute to the project. Recommendations for the approval of unfunded projects can only be made by the Advisory Group, as per clauses (18) and (19), and approved by the Vice President and Director, Identity & Mission.

## Engaging With External Partners

(12) Given the high demand for ACU's expertise, and in anticipation of further growth in that demand, SESU calls for, and responds to, requests from partners in an equitable and strategic manner.

- a. Partner-initiated: Current and future partners are invited to submit requests/proposals for consideration. This may be in the form of clearly-defined projects or requests for exploratory work in areas of relevance. These are prioritised and assessed by the Advisory Group.
- b. ACU-initiated: Specific projects may be requested of the unit by the Vice-Chancellor and President, Pro-Chancellor or members of Senior Executive and these are prioritised accordingly. Some organisational units may also submit proposals for projects that are linked to existing and/or new external partnerships, and that are clearly aligned to the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#) and its ethos as a Catholic university.

## Outputs

(13) The outputs of this scholarship are published in report format, ACU-branded or co-branded with funders/partners, and/or in publications that are non-[HERDC](#), so not reportable in the context of ERA. Findings will not be submitted for publication in peer-reviewed outlets.

(14) In circumstances where the findings of a particular project are considered to be of sufficient significance to warrant a [HERDC](#) publication, a submission must be made to the Publication Advisory Committee, which will

determine if publication is appropriate and provide direction for any subsequent [HERDC](#) output. The decision of the Publication Advisory Committee is final.

- a. The membership of the Publication Advisory Committee is:
  - i. Director, Graduate Research School [Chair];
  - ii. Head, ACU Engagement; and
  - iii. Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or nominee.

(15) Staff who publish results in ERA-reportable outlets without the authorisation of the Advisory Group will not be eligible for future projects under this Policy.

## **Dissemination**

(16) The outcomes of this scholarship will be aligned with both the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#) and brand, as well as provide positive stories about the role of ACU, and our Catholic partners, in advancing the dignity of the human person and the common good.

(17) Media and event opportunities to promote dissemination of the outputs are supported by ACU Engagement, working closely with Marketing and External Relations (MER). Together, ACU Engagement and MER work to identify and maximise opportunities to promote key outputs in order to strengthen the ACU brand.

# **Section 5 - Roles and Responsibilities**

## **Governance**

(18) The SESU, and stakeholder engaged scholarship undertaken under this Policy, will be guided by an Advisory Group, consisting of internal and external stakeholders:

- a. Head, ACU Engagement (Chair);
- b. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) (PVCR);
- c. Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); and
- d. Three representatives of key partners (on a 3-year appointment cycle) to be nominated and invited by the internal members of the Advisory Group (Head, ACU Engagement, PVCR and Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or nominee).

(19) The role of the Advisory Group includes guidance on the overall direction of the unit, including selection of projects; identification of new potential directions for scholarship, including the integration of findings from related projects into large scale projects; and, advising on, and assisting with, the dissemination of findings and promotion of the work of the unit.

## **Management**

(20) The SESU will be located within ACU Engagement, under the leadership of the Head, ACU Engagement, with direct supervision of the core staff provided by the Research Engagement Manager.

## **ACU researchers**

(21) The primary goal of the unit is to involve ACU academics in meaningful and high-quality scholarship and engagement. This will make an important contribution to ACU's strategic goal to build and enhance its academic culture.

(22) When projects are selected, or proposed, the Advisory Group – along with the Manager of the SESU – will identify academics from Faculties / Schools with expertise in the relevant areas of scholarship.

(23) The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or nominee and the Head, ACU Engagement or PVCR will negotiate with the relevant Executive Dean (and, where applicable, Institute Director) for the inclusion of the project in the academics' workload. SESU funds will be used to buy out the academics' time. These academics will be invited to lead and undertake the project(s), with the support of the SESU staff.

## **Section 6 - Review**

(24) This Policy will be formally reviewed every 5 years.

(25) Unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date.

## **Section 7 - Associated Information**

(26) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	25th January 2024
<b>Review Date</b>	18th September 2024
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor and President
<b>Approval Date</b>	25th January 2024
<b>Expiry Date</b>	17th June 2024
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	David Hall Dean, La Salle Academy
<b>Responsible Manager</b>	Matthew Pink Head, ACU Engagement
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Vivien Cinque Manager, Community-engaged Research <hr/> Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Unit