Contents

Synopsis .......................................................................................................................... 1

Selection criteria ......................................................................................................... 2
1. Distinctiveness, coherence and clarity of purpose ............................................. 2
2. Influence on student learning and student engagement ............................. 5
3. Breadth of impact ................................................................................................. 7
4. Concern for equity and diversity ...................................................................... 9

Concluding statement .............................................................................................. 11

Supporting material ................................................................................................. 13
SM1: Core graduate capabilities (undergraduate degrees) .................................. 13
SM2: Core graduate capabilities (postgraduate degrees) .................................. 13
SM3: Core concepts/curriculum .......................................................................... 14
SM4: Twenty-six Health units in which the program has been implemented ....... 15
SM5: Yapunyah website examples ..................................................................... 15
SM6: Indigenous perspectives: Self-audit of knowledge and skills ................. 17
SM7: Indigenous Perspectives Tertiary Educator’s Awareness, Knowledge and
Skills (IPTEAKS) Scale .................................................................................. 18
SM8: Testimonials in support of the Yapunyah program .................................. 19
SM9: Supporting statements: Health students .................................................... 21

Website: http://blackboard.qut.edu.au/

Note: To access the website you will need to click on the 'QUT users login' button, then use
the following username and password:
Username: carrick1
Password: carr2008
Select 'Yapunyah'

Should there be any difficulties in accessing this site, please contact
Georgia Smeal (07) 3138 9668

2008 Carrick Awards for Australian University Teaching
Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning
Synopsis

The Yapunyah program was initiated in 2004 to bring about systematic embedding of Indigenous perspectives in the curricula of health courses at the Queensland University of Technology. As a result of this work, there is now significant incorporation of Indigenous content across all undergraduate, and many postgraduate, health courses. This program has involved a whole-of-course approach that meant first developing a set of graduate capabilities and core concepts to provide an appropriate framework for the incorporation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within the relevant courses.

With the graduate capabilities and core ‘curricula’ in place, the faculty then implemented staff development and collaborated with unit coordinators to redevelop 26 teaching units, so that Indigenous perspectives were embedded comprehensively throughout the courses. This also entailed the introduction of new competencies for assessment across clinical practicum and theory units. The Yapunyah program produced a range of media-based learning resources for use in specific units and, more broadly, created a purpose-built teaching website to house a large repository of teaching and learning resources and information relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and culture.

Evaluations of student learning regarding Indigenous knowledge and skills have been conducted since the embedding began to assess the impact of the program. Quantitative surveys have identified significant gains across all knowledge and skill items, and focus groups have shown that students are extremely positive about this learning and consider that what they take away will be useful to them in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in ways that are culturally safe.

The Yapunyah program is an important initiative by QUT’s Faculty of Health to ensure that faculty graduates are competent in working with Indigenous people and can respond effectively and sensitively to the healthcare needs of people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

The program has also succeeded in enhancing the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with respect to health courses and creating a positive impact on all graduates’ interest in, and opportunities for, employment in the area of Indigenous health. The continued and sustained work of the program prepares our graduates to be proactive in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve the health status of Indigenous Australians.

Introductory overview

Yapunyah: An innovative program for incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within health professional curricula

The Yapunyah program reflects an explicit strategy to systematically promote students’ understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and competence in providing culturally safe health care to health consumers of Indigenous backgrounds. The program aims to facilitate the development of professional competencies that are fundamental to the provision of care and promote optimal health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This program takes a ‘whole-of-course’ approach to the development of cultural competency in the health disciplines, and has been implemented across first, second and third year units within four major undergraduate courses in the Faculty of Health. The goal is to move beyond a ‘good citizenship’ model of Indigenous knowledge to one of professional competence in students. A crucial feature of the Yapunyah program is the embedding of learning activities, including assessment, within curricula.

Key elements of the program include:
- the explicit identification of expected learning outcomes and competencies
the incorporation of Indigenous content and learning activities within a large number of selected units

- integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within assessment in theory and practicum units

- the development of a purpose-built website and media-based learning resources for use across the faculty and in specific units

- tutorial and self-assessment activities for students to reflect on their learning.

Student learning has been impacted positively across 26 units at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with over 7700 enrolments each year in the units that have been redeveloped to include Indigenous perspectives. The self-awareness and personal development that students experience through their engagement in the learning activities of the program provide a basis for their learning outcomes beyond graduation and into their professional lives. This is facilitated by the integration of the clinical/practicum environment within the Yapunyah program, whereby cultural competency is built into clinical units and clinical assessments.

The program has had a positive impact in terms of inspiring health graduates to work in Indigenous communities and Indigenous healthcare, and aims to instill a proactive, positive attitude as well as practical approaches in the students. It has also been instrumental in augmenting the learning and cultural experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are participating in health courses at QUT. The approaches taken within this program go beyond educating future health professionals about Indigenous health to provide them with the skills and knowledge for contributing to improvements in the health care of first Australians.

Selection criteria

1. Distinctiveness, coherence and clarity of purpose

I would have to say that the inclusion of these cultural issues has been very strong. In every unit there has been some aspect of cultural issues, particularly those of Indigenous peoples...we had a whole lecture dedicated to cultural perspectives in PYB101 ... From that lecture alone, I had a lightbulb moment where I saw how blind I have been to the influence of culture in my life, specifically as a white female 'Australian' having negligible exposure to and appreciation of what the Indigenous peoples have faced since colonisation ... I can honestly say that I have learned more about Indigenous issues in the past 8 weeks at QUT than I have in my previous 34 years outside of QUT.

Julie Green, Psychology student, 2008

The goal of the Yapunyah program is to promote the development of professional competence amongst Faculty of Health students in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health consumers. Its key objectives are to facilitate:

- improved understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues by health students

- improved student capabilities with regard to the delivery of health care that facilitates optimal health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- the development of a central website and teaching/learning resources focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, with a health focus

- a higher level of understanding and appreciation among staff, including workplace clinical/practicum supervisors, about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and their impact on teaching and learning and health.