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***Design, Development and Delivery of a  
Pharmacist Tutor Training Program at James  
Cook University***

**Thesis submitted by**

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In January 2014

**For the degree of**

Master of Pharmacy (Research)  
School of Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences  
James Cook University

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## Abstract

**Background:** The worldwide increase in demand for academic staff in higher education over recent years has resulted in the employment of increasing numbers of sessional staff. This trend towards casual or sessional employment of academic staff has been of benefit to universities, providing both cost savings as well as increased diversity and flexibility of student education. For health professional programs, the use of practicing health professionals on a sessional basis has been invaluable in ensuring that student education is both current and relevant to their chosen profession. In terms of teaching workload, it has been estimated that internationally, a half of all teaching in tertiary institutions is undertaken by sessional staff.

Recent Australian statistics indicate that sessional staff are estimated to comprise approximately a quarter of the workforce in higher education institutions and are responsible for 50% of the teaching in universities. This high teaching load of sessional academics, in combination with a lack of attention being paid to their management and support, has potential implications for the quality of teaching and learning at universities. Sessional staff training and support programs have become well established in higher education institutions in both the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK), and are now being developed in the majority of universities around Australia. It is recognized that while general university wide policies are required for the support and management of sessional staff, training programs should be tailored to suit both the requirements of the particular institution and the specific school or discipline. For this reason, programs may vary widely in terms of structure and content, both within and between institutions. At the James Cook University (JCU), a general university-wide sessional staff orientation and training program has been in place since 2005 and attendance at this program is a requirement of ongoing employment for all JCU sessional staff. For tutors in the Discipline of Pharmacy, while this introductory session provides a good induction to the university environment and the process of student education, it is not pharmacy specific and in addition it does not address the ongoing needs of sessional staff.

**Aim:** The aim of this study was therefore to design, develop and evaluate a tutor training program specifically for pharmacist tutors in the Discipline of Pharmacy at James Cook University.

**Methodology:** In order to inform the design of the training program, a needs analysis study was conducted, which involved the development of a tutor questionnaire, which was sent to 40 past, present and potential pharmacist tutors at JCU. The questionnaire was used to inform a series of three focus groups involving pharmacist tutors, pharmacy academic staff and pharmacy students. Data from the tutor questionnaire was evaluated using mixed methods, integrating qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, with the data from the focus groups being analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis.

The pharmacist tutor training program was implemented for the 14 currently employed tutors in February 2013 and evaluated using two post training self-evaluation surveys. The first survey,

distributed immediately after the face-to-face training session, assessed the usefulness and relevance of the training program. The second survey, distributed after one full semester of tutoring, obtained general information on perceived program benefits, problems experienced and potential future program topics. The second survey also required that respondents self-rate their competence levels at three stages in their development as tutors: prior to the program, immediately after the program and then again after one full semester. Competence ratings were obtained for a range of tutoring skills and attributes, including confidence, marking and assessment and teaching knowledge and skills. Data from the two post-training surveys was analyzed, again by the use of mixed methods combining both quantitative data analysis and qualitative thematic analysis.

**Results and discussion:** The needs analysis study highlighted the importance of pharmacist tutor involvement in the practical areas of the pharmacy curriculum, which included clinical dispensing, extemporaneous dispensing and clinical counselling. The tutor's role in marking and assessment was identified as an area for concern. The most important perceived benefits of a training program were enhanced teaching consistency and student learning and increased tutor confidence. Four major content areas for a tutor training program were identified as the provision of effective student feedback, student assessment, teaching practical skills and teaching communication skills.

The results of the first post-training feedback survey were overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of the 12 tutor respondents (83%) indicating that the content of the program was relevant and that the program had met their current needs. Tutors felt that the main benefits of the program were an increase in general confidence levels, the opportunity for interaction with other tutors and staff, a better understanding of their roles and expectations and the acknowledgement of tutors as an integral part of the pharmacy teaching team. Importantly, tutors found that the topic of 'Assessing student learning' was one of the most useful sections of the training program, with 92% of tutors rating this section as either very useful or mostly useful. This indicated that the program had appropriately addressed the problem area of assessment and marking. The findings of the second evaluation survey showed that tutor self-competence had improved in all suggested areas of competence between just prior to the program and after one full semester of tutoring, with the most significant improvement occurring in the area of marking and assessment. Initial competence prior to training was rated as average to good in most areas, while competence after one full semester of tutoring was rated as good to very good.

**Conclusions:** This study clearly indicates that the JCU pharmacist tutor training program has been successfully designed, developed and delivered to meet the needs of pharmacist tutors, in addition to delivering other benefits, including an improvement in both tutor confidence and competence. This program has also contributed towards the integration of pharmacist tutors into the Discipline of Pharmacy teaching team, which in turn will play a role in supporting academic staff in delivering improved learning outcomes for pharmacy students in the program at JCU.

## Contents

<b>Statement of Access</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>List of Appendices</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Background .....	1
Aim .....	2
Hypotheses .....	2
Objectives .....	3
Outline of thesis .....	3
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	5
2.2 Definitions and roles – Sessional staff and tutors .....	6
2.2.1 Definitions.....	6
2.2.2 The role of the tutor .....	7
2.2.3 Specific tutor roles .....	8
2.2.4 Demographics of sessional staff .....	10
2.3. The need for tutor training and support .....	11
2.3.1 Sessional staff teaching loads.....	11
2.3.2 Teaching vs research.....	12
2.3.3 Professional degree accreditation requirements .....	13
2.4 Benefits of tutor training .....	13
2.4.1 Improved quality of teaching .....	14
2.4.2 Benefits for the first year experience.....	15
2.4.3 Training for the teacher-practitioner .....	16
2.4.4 Training for the problem based learning (PBL) tutor.....	17
2.4.5 Improved assessment and marking .....	17
2.5 Evidence for the benefits of tutor training .....	18
2.5.1 Evidence for tutor benefits .....	18
2.5.2 Evidence for student benefits.....	20

2.6	Management of tutors .....	21
2.6.1	Current management policies .....	21
2.6.2	Tutor concerns.....	24
2.7	Tutor training programs .....	29
2.7.1	Overview.....	29
2.7.2	Structure of training programs.....	31
2.7.3	Content of training programs.....	39
2.8	Literature review – Summary.....	42
	<b>Chapter 3 Tutor training program - Needs Analysis.....</b>	<b>44</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	44
3.2	Methodology .....	44
3.2.1	Pharmacist tutor questionnaire .....	45
3.2.2	Focus groups.....	47
3.2.3	Selection of focus group participants .....	48
3.2.4	Ethics approval .....	49
3.3	Results and discussion - Tutor questionnaire .....	49
3.3.1	Demographics.....	49
3.3.2	Role of the tutor .....	55
3.3.3	Training program .....	57
3.3.4	Additional support for tutors .....	61
3.4	Results and discussion - Focus groups.....	62
3.4.1	The role of the pharmacist tutor .....	63
3.4.2	Experiences with or as tutors.....	68
3.4.3	Perceived benefits of tutor training.....	73
3.4.4	Pharmacist tutor training requirements .....	75
3.4.5	Tutor Support.....	77
3.5	Pre-training - Summary .....	79
	<b>Chapter 4 Program design, development and delivery .....</b>	<b>82</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	82
4.2	Background.....	82
4.2.1	Current sessional staff training at JCU.....	82
4.2.2	School or Discipline-specific programs .....	83
4.2.3	JCU Policy requirements for sessional staff training.....	84
4.2.4	Pharmacist tutors at JCU.....	84
4.3	Program design and development.....	85
4.3.1	Structure.....	85

4.3.2	Format .....	86
4.3.3	Responsibility .....	87
4.3.4	Length and timing .....	87
4.3.5	Attendance requirements.....	88
4.3.6	Content.....	89
4.4	Program delivery .....	91
4.4.1	Pharmacist tutor website.....	91
4.4.2	Pharmacist tutor face to face program .....	94
4.5	Training Program - Summary .....	96
	<b>Chapter 5 Post-training program evaluation.....</b>	<b>97</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	97
5.2	Methodology .....	98
5.2.1	Ethics approval .....	98
5.2.2	Evaluation 1 – (Immediately post-training) .....	98
5.2.3	Evaluation 2 – (Five months post training) .....	99
5.3	Results and Discussion – Evaluation 1 .....	100
5.3.1	Tutor demographics.....	100
5.3.2	Length, relevance, usefulness .....	101
5.3.3	Best aspects of the program .....	103
5.3.4	Suggested improvements .....	106
5.4	Results and Discussion - Evaluation 2 .....	108
5.4.1	Tutor demographics and areas of participation .....	108
5.4.2	Ratings of benefits of tutor training program .....	109
5.4.3	Problems experienced by tutors.....	111
5.4.4	Benefits of training program.....	111
5.4.5	Additional topics for future programs.....	112
5.5	Post-training - Summary.....	113
	<b>Chapter 6 Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>115</b>
	Conclusions .....	115
	Project limitations .....	118
	Recommendations for future research.....	119

## List of Tables

<b>Table 2.1</b>	Roles and responsibilities of tutors.....	9
<b>Table 2.2</b>	Key findings of the review phase of the 2002 AUTC final report: <i>Training, Support and Management of Sessional Teaching Staff</i> .....	22
<b>Table 2.3</b>	Components of a school based tutor training program at the UQ School of Psychology in 2002.....	34
<b>Table 2.4</b>	Summary of selected tutor training programs at Australian Universities .	38
<b>Table 3.1</b>	Additional areas of practice experience .....	52
<b>Table 3.2</b>	Postgraduate qualifications and areas of specialization .....	53
<b>Table 3.3</b>	Other potential areas of involvement for pharmacist tutors .....	57
<b>Table 5.1</b>	Evaluation 1 - Demographics of tutor participants .....	100
<b>Table 5.2</b>	Tutor comments on suggested program improvements .....	106
<b>Table 5.3</b>	Evaluation 2 - Demographics and areas of participation .....	108
<b>Table 5.4</b>	Evaluation 2 - Tutor training program - Participant average ratings (and range) of competence .....	109

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 2.1</b>	Outline of the UQ Tutor Training Network .....	33
<b>Figure 3.1</b>	Distribution (in years) of tutor experience .....	50
<b>Figure 3.2</b>	Tutor years since graduation.....	51
<b>Figure 3.3</b>	Tutor types in respondent's degree.....	54
<b>Figure 3.4</b>	Tutor academic experience.....	55
<b>Figure 3.5</b>	Role of the pharmacist tutor - areas of importance.....	56
<b>Figure 3.6</b>	Rating of potential benefits of tutor training .....	58
<b>Figure 3.7</b>	Content of a pharmacist tutor training program .....	60
<b>Figure 3.8</b>	Current level of support for pharmacist tutors at JCU.....	61
<b>Figure 3.9</b>	Ratings of importance of additional support measures.....	62
<b>Figure 4.1</b>	JCU Pharmacist Tutor Support Community Website – Home Page .....	92
<b>Figure 4.2</b>	JCU Pharmacist Tutor Support Community Website – Information page	93
<b>Figure 4.3</b>	Outline of pharmacist tutor training program – February 2013 .....	95
<b>Figure 5.1</b>	Tutor ratings of usefulness of areas of tutor training program .....	102



## List of Abbreviations

ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council
AUTC	Australian Universities Teaching Committee
BLASST	Benchmarking Leadership and Advancement of Standards for Sessional Teaching
GTA	Graduate teaching assistant
JCU	James Cook University
NZ	New Zealand
PAPTA	Professional Association of Part Time Academics
PBL	Problem-based Learning
PPF	Preparing Future Faculty
PSA	Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RED	Recognition, Enhancement, Development
START	Streamlined Tutors Audio/visual Reflective Teaching
TEDI	Teaching and Educational Development Institute (University of Queensland)
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
TLD	Teaching and Learning Development Unit (JCU)
TTN	Tutor Training Network (University of Queensland)
TTP	Tutor training program
UK	United Kingdom
UQ	University of Queensland
USA	United States of America

## List of Appendices

<b>APPENDIX A:</b>	Sessional Staff @ JCU RED Executive Summary Stage One – Review December 2009.....	128
<b>APPENDIX B:</b>	Copy of tutor questionnaire .....	145
<b>APPENDIX C:</b>	Information sheet for tutor questionnaire .....	153
<b>APPENDIX D:</b>	Informed consent form for tutor questionnaire .....	154
<b>APPENDIX E:</b>	Reminder letter to tutors for return of tutor questionnaire .....	155
<b>APPENDIX F:</b>	Student focus group introduction and questions.....	156
<b>APPENDIX G:</b>	Academic staff focus group introduction and questions.....	158
<b>APPENDIX H:</b>	Pharmacist tutor focus group introduction and questions .....	160
<b>APPENDIX I:</b>	Student focus group information sheet.....	163
<b>APPENDIX J:</b>	Academic staff focus group information sheet.....	164
<b>APPENDIX K:</b>	Pharmacist tutor focus group information sheet .....	165
<b>APPENDIX L:</b>	Informed consent form for focus groups.....	166
<b>APPENDIX M:</b>	Ethics Approval H3959 – Tutor questionnaire .....	167
<b>APPENDIX N:</b>	Ethics Approval H4580 – Focus groups .....	168
<b>APPENDIX O:</b>	Discipline of Pharmacy – Pharmacist tutor training manual.....	169
<b>APPENDIX P:</b>	Tutor training program attendance certificate .....	222
<b>APPENDIX Q:</b>	Ethics Approval H4580 Amendment for Program Evaluations.....	223
<b>APPENDIX R:</b>	Tutor training program - Feedback evaluation survey 1.....	224
<b>APPENDIX S:</b>	Feedback evaluation survey 1 – Information sheet .....	226
<b>APPENDIX T:</b>	Feedback evaluation survey 1 – Informed consent form .....	227
<b>APPENDIX U:</b>	Tutor training program – Feedback evaluation survey 2.....	228
<b>APPENDIX V:</b>	Feedback evaluation survey 2 – Information sheet .....	230
<b>APPENDIX W:</b>	Feedback evaluation survey 2 – Informed consent form .....	231

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## *Background*

Sessional staff are becoming increasingly important in the university setting, particularly in the area of health education.<sup>1-4</sup> The rapid increase in numbers of sessional staff in Universities worldwide over recent years, together with significantly increased teaching loads has resulted in the level of training and professional development being offered to these sessional teachers to be considered inadequate. As a consequence, this training deficit poses a risk to the overall quality of tertiary education.<sup>3,5-7</sup> Although the release of the RED (Recognise, Enhance, Develop) Report in 2008 prompted Australia to address this issue, there remains a lack of appropriate policies and procedures for the management and support of sessional staff in many Australian universities.<sup>8,9</sup>

As with most Australian universities, the number of sessional staff at the James Cook University (JCU) has been increasing, especially in recent years. This trend towards increased casualization of the academic workforce has benefits from both an economical and educational perspective. However, with the increasing diversity of sessional staff and their lack of educational qualifications or experience, training is thought to be essential to provide for quality and consistency of teaching.<sup>9-12</sup>

For professional degree courses such as Pharmacy, the involvement of teacher-practitioners who are currently working in practice is important in order to maintain the currency and relevance of the program and to ensure that graduating students are 'work-ready'.<sup>13</sup> In addition to providing more opportunities for small group learning, the varying backgrounds and experience of teacher-practitioners also has the advantage of broadening the student knowledge base, while their link with the practice assists students in the development of professionalism.<sup>4</sup> For these purposes, the JCU Discipline of Pharmacy has been employing practising pharmacists as sessional tutors since the initiation of the course in 1999.

In terms of training and support, while all new pharmacist tutors are required to attend a general JCU orientation or induction prior to commencing their duties, this session has not been pharmacy specific. Feedback from JCU tutors has indicated that due to the wide variety of roles that sessional staff play within the institution, the generic induction session did not always meet their specific needs and the session content was

often irrelevant to their particular role. Many tutors were also of the opinion that additional follow up support from their individual school would be beneficial.<sup>9</sup> Based on this feedback as well as informal feedback from pharmacist tutors, it was felt that the generic tutor induction program falls short of addressing the current needs and the ongoing management of tutors in the Discipline of Pharmacy. Considering the requirements of the University as well as the Australian Pharmacy Council accreditation standards for the appropriate training of these staff, it was concluded that a Discipline-specific tutor training program was required in order to adequately prepare pharmacist tutors for their role in pharmacy student education, in addition to accommodating their ongoing management and support.<sup>9,14</sup>

With a distinct lack of literature being available on the design, development and delivery of sessional staff training programs in Australia, this project is expected to contribute to the body of research on sessional staff training in Australian universities. With the establishment of the JCU Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Sciences, which has rolled out seven other health professional programs since 1998, this project may in addition be of benefit for other Schools and Disciplines in this Faculty at JCU, as well as for pharmacy and health professional programs in other Universities around Australia. The post-training evaluation of this program is expected to inform and improve future sessional staff training programs in the Discipline of Pharmacy as well as in other health programs at JCU.

## ***Aim***

The aim of this project is to design, develop and deliver a training program for pharmacist tutors, who play an integral part in the delivery of the James Cook University Pharmacy Program.

## ***Hypotheses***

1. *Current training does not address the needs of pharmacist tutors at JCU.*
2. *The training program that is developed is appropriate to deliver the desired outcomes for pharmacist tutors at JCU.*

## Objectives

In order to prove or disprove the above hypotheses and to deliver the aim of the project, the objectives of this research are:

- *To determine the role and the training and support needs of pharmacist tutors in the JCU Pharmacy program.*
- *To design the pharmacist tutor training program in terms of structure and content.*
- *To develop and deliver the tutor training program for pharmacist tutors at JCU.*
- *To evaluate the tutor training program in terms of tutor satisfaction and tutor competence.*

## Outline of thesis

*The thesis will consist of six chapters as outlined in the table below:*

Chapter 1	<b>Introduction, Aims and Objectives</b>  This chapter provides a brief background and introduction to the topic of sessional staff training and the reasons why this study was undertaken. This will be followed by a statement of the Aims, the Hypotheses and Objectives of the study and an outline of the content of each chapter.
Chapter 2	<b>Literature review</b>  This chapter provides a broad summary of the literature on sessional staff and their training and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sessional staff definitions and roles</li><li>• Demographics of sessional staff</li><li>• The need for training, perceived benefits of training and evidence for benefits</li><li>• The issues surrounding the training, management and support of sessional staff</li><li>• A summary of existing sessional staff training programs, both in Australia and worldwide</li><li>• An overview of the structure and content of current training programs</li></ul>

Chapter 3	<p><b>Pre-training: Needs analysis</b></p> <p>This chapter includes the investigation of the role of the pharmacist tutor at JCU, the potential benefits of training and the ideal training and support requirements for a pharmacist tutor training program.</p> <p>This utilised a mixed methodology involving a self-completion pharmacist tutor questionnaire followed by a series of three focus groups involving pharmacist tutors, academic staff and students. The results will be analysed and used to inform the design of the tutor training program.</p>
Chapter 4	<p><b>Program design, development and delivery</b></p> <p>This chapter discusses the design of the tutor training program, based on the results of the needs analysis from Chapter 3. This is followed by the development of the program where consideration is given to the structure and content of the training program, responsibility for training, format, duration and attendance requirements. Development is also informed by the JCU standard policy requirements as well as the design of other School or Discipline-specific training programs available in the Faculty. Delivery of the program will also be discussed, along with the additional support measures to complement the program.</p>
Chapter 5	<p><b>Post-training: Program Evaluation</b></p> <p>This chapter describes the evaluation of the program, involving two post-training tutor self-completion questionnaires, the first being distributed immediately after the training program and the second after one full semester of tutoring. The aim of the post-training questionnaires will be to assess the training program and to inform the ongoing development of the program to ensure that the training needs of pharmacist tutors are appropriately addressed.</p>
Chapter 6	<p><b>Conclusions and recommendations</b></p> <p>In this chapter, the main outcomes of the project will be highlighted in order to address the aim and objectives of the study. Also discussed in this chapter will be the limitations of the project and opportunities for further research.</p>

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

Since the 1960s there has been an ever-increasing number of students attending University and this has resulted in an increased demand for academic staff, both in Australia and worldwide. Numerous factors including reduced University funding, increased research demands, changing employment conditions and a lack of appropriately qualified full time staff have led to a significant expansion in the number of sessional staff, particularly tutors.<sup>10,15-18</sup> This has been considered to be of benefit to the majority of University programs, being firstly cost saving, but also allowing for increased diversity and flexibility in student education.<sup>10,18,19</sup> In the area of health education, with today's emphasis on producing graduates who are 'work-ready', the sessional involvement of practising health professionals is considered essential to ensure that clinical education remains current and relevant.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the increased reliance on casual and sessional staff, there has been a growing demand from governments for accountability in the provision of quality student education in tertiary institutions. With the progressive increase in student monetary contribution to their university education, further pressure has also been placed on academia by the students who expect value for money in the form of a high quality education.<sup>19,20</sup> Given the significantly increased workforce casualization and the emphasis on appropriate standards of teaching, concerns have been raised over the quality of teaching provided by these sessional staff.<sup>8,9,19,20</sup>

The issue of management, training and support for sessional staff has been addressed quite extensively in the USA, where sessional staff are generally known as graduate teaching assistants (GTAs). GTA training programs are now quite well established in North American institutions with the majority of Universities having some form of training for GTAs.<sup>21,22</sup> According to a survey in 1993 in the USA, it was found that 71% of institutions surveyed had training programs in place, and in 46% of these institutions, training was mandatory.<sup>20</sup> There is a wealth of literature available on the training of GTAs in North America, including the design of various training programs,<sup>22-25</sup> the development of support materials,<sup>25-28</sup> as well as evaluations of the effectiveness of such programs.<sup>23,24,27-30</sup>

In the UK, GTA training programs began to develop in the 1980s as higher education institutes followed the worldwide trends of expanding numbers of GTAs and increased reliance on this teaching cohort. Researchers in the UK gained from the experiences of the USA in developing their own GTA training programs and many institutions were offering GTA training programs by the 1990s.<sup>21,31-34</sup>

Until the mid-1990s in Australia, the training and professional development of casual academic staff had not been considered important and they have almost routinely been excluded from training and staff development opportunities.<sup>19,35</sup> Since the publication of the 2002 Australian Universities Teaching Committee Project Report on Sessional Teaching Staff, there has been widespread interest in this area and Australian Universities are now recognising the need for formalised policies relating to the management, training, support and integration of this rapidly expanding group of academic staff.<sup>19,35,36</sup> Subsequent research has led to the development of training and support programs for sessional staff in many Universities around Australia, including the University of Sydney, the University of Adelaide, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, The University of Queensland (UQ) and Curtin University.<sup>8,19,35-39</sup> There is still however much debate about the ideal structure and content of these training programs, and existing programs can vary widely in terms of their location within the University, program length and format, academic responsibility and attendance requirements. While a central University-wide approach is generally recommended as a policy framework, it has been recognised that the actual implementation of staff development programs should be locally designed and driven within the individual disciplines or schools.<sup>19,37,40</sup>

## **2.2 Definitions and roles – Sessional staff and tutors**

### **2.2.1 Definitions**

A sessional teacher may be defined as *‘any higher education instructor not in a tenured or permanent position.’*<sup>19,38</sup> *This includes part-time tutors or demonstrators, postgraduate students or research fellows involved in part-time teaching, external people from industries or professions, clinical tutors, casually employed lecturers or any other teachers employed on a course by course basis.’*<sup>38</sup> Sessional teachers have been referred to as graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in the USA, UK and New Zealand. This term originated due to the fact that the majority of sessional teachers were drawn from the ranks of postgraduate students who are at the start of



their academic career, with their main role being as a research student, but who also engaged in some teaching (often for financial support).<sup>20,21</sup>

A tutor is often regarded as a specific type of sessional teacher. The term tutor means to give special or individual instruction in a subject.<sup>41</sup> Tutors are frequently involved in the organisation and conduction of tutorials, which are often held with small groups of students. This more informal environment may be more conducive for students to ask for clarifications on lectures and assignments which they may not feel as comfortable about asking in large classes. Tutors therefore 'supplement the activities of the faculty in research and teaching and help to engage students in individualised instructional opportunities.'<sup>42</sup> Tutors and demonstrators are also often involved in teaching practical classes, which engage the student in the more practical aspects of their chosen subject, such as demonstrating techniques and the use of laboratory and research equipment or medical devices. The problem-based Learning (PBL) tutor plays a more specific tutor role within a problem-based learning curriculum, whereby their role is more as a facilitator of learning rather than a provider of information.<sup>43</sup> Although by definition, a tutor is a particular type of sessional teacher, the term tutor nowadays seems to be used more broadly and there is considerable overlap between the roles and responsibilities of a tutor and other types of sessional teachers. Evaluation of the literature is limited by this lack of consistency in the definition of a tutor and their functions within the higher education system.<sup>7,18-20</sup>

*For the purposes of this review, the term 'sessional staff' will be used generically to encompass other similar or overlapping terms such as 'tutors', 'demonstrators', 'sessional teachers', 'casual academic staff' 'graduate teaching assistants' and 'teacher-practitioners'.*

### **2.2.2 The role of the tutor**

Tutors are frequently involved in tutorials and practical classes which are traditionally held with smaller groups of students. Smaller groups will allow for discussion and interaction between students and teachers, which provides support and encouragement and opportunities for one-to-one feedback. This more informal learning environment may help to bridge the communication gap between the lecturer and the student.

In a study of students perceptions of tutor effectiveness in a NZ University, 3 main roles of tutors were recognised<sup>42</sup>

1. To facilitate a learning environment that meets each student's learning needs
2. To provide positive and constructive feedback on student's progress and performance
3. To facilitate intellectual growth that results in high quality student learning

### **2.2.3 Specific tutor roles**

The roles and responsibilities of a tutor can vary significantly between institutions and within Faculties and Departments, and can encompass the full range of teaching-related duties. Common duties for a sessional teacher or tutor may include leading tutorial sessions, conducting laboratory sessions and marking student assignments, exams or other forms of assessment.<sup>27</sup> Table 2.1 below illustrates the variety of activities which have been undertaken by sessional teachers or tutors in some selected tertiary institutions.<sup>9,32,36,44</sup>

**Table 2.1** Roles and responsibilities of tutors

<b>A 1987 survey of 1400 graduate teaching assistants at 8 major research universities in the US noted the most common responsibilities of GTAs<sup>25</sup></b>			
Grading	(97%)	Leading class discussions	(71%)
Holding office hours	(94%)	Conducting review sessions	(69%)
Preparing tests	(72%)	Lecturing	(60%)
<b>At the University of Bradford, UK in 1994, a survey of postgraduate demonstrators and hourly paid lecturers indicated their teaching responsibilities<sup>32</sup></b>			
Laboratories/demonstrations	(31%)	Tutoring	(18%)
Marking	(29%)	Lecturing	(17%)
Seminars	(19%)		
<b>In a survey of all tutors at the University of Queensland in 1997, the following is a list of activities which a tutor may undertake<sup>37</sup></b>			
Small group tutoring	(70%)	Practicals - wet laboratory	
Marking	(64%)	Demonstrating	(22%)
Consulting with students	(50%)	Teaching	(26%)
Facilitating small group discussion/groupwork	(39%)	Supervising	(22%)
Fieldwork and excursion: organising/supervising	(7%/4%)	Practicals - dry laboratory	
Clinical training/mentoring in professional settings	(6%)	Demonstrating	(18%)
Clinical training at the University	(3%)	Teaching	(18%)
		Supervising	(11%)
<b>In a survey of 338 part-time limited term teaching staff at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand in 2001, their responsibilities were identified<sup>44</sup></b>			
<i>Most tutors –</i>		<i>Fewer tutors –</i>	
Leading discussions		Giving lectures	
Marking assignments		Developing paper outlines	
Consulting or meeting with students		Giving extensions on assignments	
		Other responsibilities –	
		Liaising with students, other tutors, lecturers	
		Leading study sessions	
		Marking and supervising exams	
		Leading field trips	
<b>At James Cook University, a survey of 511 sessional teaching staff identified the following teaching-related activities undertaken by sessional teachers in 2009<sup>9</sup></b>			
Tutorials/workshops		Examinations	
Practical demonstration		Professional Placement supervision	
Lectures		External/Online teaching	
Mentoring		Subject Co-ordination	
Group facilitation		Marking	
Field Trips			

## 2.2.4 Demographics of sessional staff

In order to devise appropriate teaching and learning development policy, it is important that we are aware of the profile of the sessional teacher, i.e. who are our casual teaching staff? Traditionally, sessional staff have been recruited from the many postgraduate students wishing to enter academia, with a smaller number being experts from the industry.<sup>10</sup> However, as numbers of sessional staff continue to rise, they are becoming an increasingly diverse group.<sup>10-12</sup> Sessional staff can be loosely categorised into four groups<sup>2,10,45</sup>

1. **The 'aspiring academic'** who has a desire to become a permanent staff member in the future. These people are most likely to be young women and are either completing or have recently completed a higher research degree and are interested in a gradual transition from a casual or sessional position to a full-time permanent position in academia/research.
2. **The 'industry expert' (teacher-practitioner)** who maintains employment in the industry and has a desire to teach future professionals. These academics may in some cases be motivated by their experiences in teaching students to enrol in postgraduate research and move into academia.<sup>12</sup>  
Teacher-practitioners (or lecturer-practitioners) are frequently employed in the vocationally focused schools (e.g. the health professions, law, engineering) and often see their main role as bridging the theory practice gap and helping to maintain clinical currency of the curriculum.<sup>2,13</sup> In some situations, a more official arrangement is in place, such as in nursing schools in the UK, where lecturer-practitioners play a dual role in both teaching and practice, and are jointly employed by a university and a hospital.<sup>2</sup>
3. **The 'career ender'** who is nearing the end of their career and is looking for a gradual progression into retirement. These may be former lecturers or researchers, more commonly male, who are retired or semi-retired but still wish to contribute to university teaching. The number of people in this category is predicted to rise due to the increasing number of full-time academics reaching retirement age.<sup>10,12</sup>
4. **The 'freelancer'** who will often have a number of part-time and casual positions in order to juggle work and family responsibilities. These people are more commonly female and are happy with the flexibility of casual work, but may like in the future to pursue an academic career.<sup>12</sup>

It has been estimated that 57% of casual academic staff in Australian Universities are female, with 52% of all staff being aged 35 years and under.<sup>12</sup> At JCU, a survey of 312 sessional staff in 2009 indicated that approximately 54% of sessional staff were under 41 years of age.<sup>9</sup>

A survey of 72 tutors at the University of Wellington, NZ in 2004 found that 60% of tutors did not have any form of prior teaching experience. JCU reported that 33% of their sessional staff had no teaching experience prior to starting at JCU, and only 15.7% were in the process of attaining a formal education qualification.<sup>9,46</sup>

Although there are limited data available on qualifications of sessional staff, an Australia wide survey involving 622 casual and sessional academics from a number of institutions indicated that approximately 77% of these sessional academics had postgraduate qualifications, with 23% at PhD level; 49% were currently studying towards a further degree with 72% of this group enrolled in a PhD.<sup>47</sup> This study also found that the most common forms of work undertaken by sessional academics were tutoring (80%) and lecturing (55%), with 19% also having a teaching co-ordination role. At the Sydney University of Technology, a survey of 305 casual academic staff indicated that the highest formal qualification was a Master's degree in 49% of respondents, a Bachelor's degree in 36%, while seven percent had a Doctoral degree. It was found that 24% of this group were intending to secure a full-time academic position in the future.<sup>48</sup>

Sessional staff will therefore vary widely with regard to age, qualifications, level of experience and motivation for teaching: their roles and responsibilities will also vary across the full range of teaching-related duties.

## ***2.3. The need for tutor training and support***

### **2.3.1 Sessional staff teaching loads**

Internationally, it has been estimated that a half of all teaching in higher education is undertaken by sessional staff.<sup>2</sup> A 1996 study reported that nearly 40% of Faculty in the USA were part-time and on short term contracts, and that they are responsible for most of the teaching.<sup>32</sup>

In Australia, tertiary education is regarded as one of the most casualised sectors of education. Between 1996 and 2011, it was found that the number of casually employed academic staff (based on full time equivalent calculations) had risen by 81%.<sup>49</sup> Data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations indicate that in the tertiary education sector in Australia, the proportion of sessional academics (based on full-time equivalent calculations) had risen from 13% in 1989 to 22% in 2007.<sup>50</sup> Based on university superannuation data, in terms of actual staff numbers, casual academic staff are estimated to make up 60% of all academic staff in Australia.<sup>12</sup> The Australian Teaching and Learning Council's RED Report in 2008 estimated that 'between 40 and 50% of the teaching in Australian higher education is currently being performed by sessional staff'.<sup>8</sup> For those involved in undergraduate teaching, it is estimated that this figure may be as high as 80%.<sup>50</sup>

This significant contribution of sessional staff to the teaching loads at universities has been until recently largely unrecognised.<sup>8</sup> Kift in 2002 suggested that casual academics play a pivotal role in the delivery of higher education and the lack of attention paid to their training and support is a risk to the quality of teaching and learning in Universities.<sup>6,7</sup> In order to improve the quality of teaching, it has been suggested that Universities require a shift in their policies and practices to recognise and value the contributions of sessional teachers and enhance their opportunities for professional development and integration into the teaching team.<sup>6,49</sup>

### **2.3.2 Teaching vs research**

Universities can be complex organisations with various functions, the two main functions being teaching and research. While the relationship between teaching and research is generally thought to be complementary, often one takes place at the expense of the other.<sup>46</sup> Given the increased focus on teaching quality in tertiary institutions, it is imperative that even the most research-orientated university is aware of the importance of academic staff teaching skills development. However, recent changes to University funding schemes have led to an increased emphasis on research performance and this has therefore created a dilemma for permanent academic staff, who have been under pressure to improve research output.<sup>3</sup> The rapidly expanding numbers of sessional staff engaged in teaching roles has allowed full-time and tenured academics to assign more of their energies to research, with teaching duties becoming more and more the responsibility of sessional staff. This shift in teaching roles, along with student expectations of a higher standard of teaching have led academic staff developers to seriously consider the need for

training and professional development of these 'new' academics, who have long been excluded from staff development opportunities.<sup>20</sup>

### **2.3.3 Professional degree accreditation requirements**

The process of external accreditation of professional degree courses aims to ensure a consistently high standard of graduates who have the required knowledge, skills and attributes to begin work in their chosen profession. As part of this process, for accreditation of an Australian Pharmacy School, the Australian Pharmacy Council has standard requirements for academic staff.

*The following are required by the Australian Pharmacy Council<sup>14</sup>*

- The School should have or have access to programs for development of teaching skills for full-time and part-time academic staff, adjunct staff and teacher-practitioners (whether in an honorary or paid capacity)
- The Australian Pharmacy Council encourages the use of teacher-practitioner appointments to provide expertise in specialised areas and to assist in maintenance of the nexus between teaching and practice.
- Academic staff numbers in the enabling basic sciences and the Pharmacy Disciplines should be sufficient to allow interaction with individual students and small groups, and for staff to maintain a necessary range of academic activity.

The employment of sessional staff such as tutors and specialist teacher-practitioners in a Pharmacy degree program is therefore encouraged and appropriate programs are required to be available for the development of teaching skills in this particular group of people. Similarly for other professional degrees such as law, engineering and medicine, accreditation requires that the development of teaching skills for all academic staff, including sessional staff, be addressed.<sup>51-53</sup>

## **2.4 Benefits of tutor training**

Given that the large majority of first time tutors have little or no teaching skills or teaching qualifications, it is expected that they may require some support and training in their transition to tertiary teaching. Prior to beginning their first teaching session, tutors will often report feeling nervous and anxious. They may also be unsure of their specific roles and responsibilities and may be concerned about their ability to engage

and manage the students<sup>54,55</sup> Although they may be more than adequately qualified in their field, these qualifications do not necessarily equip the tutor with the appropriate skills and knowledge necessary to provide effective teaching, manage classes, perform consistent assessment and deal with special needs students<sup>7</sup> and challenging student behaviour<sup>9</sup>. Without the benefit of training, tutors have described their initial experiences as ‘the sink or swim ethos’ or ‘being tossed into the deep end’<sup>9,44,45</sup>

Formal training of tutors in effective teaching practice has many perceived benefits. Overall, the aim of such training is to improve the quality of teaching and subsequently to improve the standard of student education in tertiary institutions. For the tutor, a training program can contribute in many ways to their professional development as a teacher and their job satisfaction.

*Some potential benefits of tutor training include*<sup>46</sup>

- Improved tutor confidence in their teaching ability
- Better clarification of tutor roles, responsibilities and expectations
- Improved tutor engagement and motivation of students
- More effective classroom management
- Better provision of student feedback
- Improved classroom participation
- More effective marking of essays and assignments
- Networking with other university tutors

#### **2.4.1 Improved quality of teaching**

It is a widely held belief amongst both tutors and academic staff that ‘to know one’s subject is to be able to teach it’.<sup>15</sup> This implies that formal training in educational methods is not necessary, as both tutors and academic staff should already have the ability to teach effectively. After interviewing the recipients of distinguished teaching awards at the University of New Zealand (NZ) in 1995 and 1996, Barrington found that there were divided opinions on whether training of lecturers for teaching was necessary. While some were of the opinion that training was essential, others believed that the best way to learn to teach is to do it.<sup>20</sup>

Traditionally, in the medical area, as with an apprenticeship to a trade, it has been assumed that teaching is part of being a doctor and there are no additional formal



qualifications required to undertake teaching of medical students, junior doctors and other health professionals.<sup>56</sup> Since the early 1990s there has been a shift in culture towards a more teaching-focused curriculum, whereby teaching is regarded as a 'skill which can be acquired, developed and refined' rather than an innate talent.<sup>57</sup> Similarly in other areas of tertiary education, it has historically been assumed that 'any PhD can teach' and that a good knowledge of subject matter is sufficient for effective teaching.<sup>58</sup> Professionally trained educators do not support this belief and argue that expert teachers require not only subject matter knowledge but also a grounding knowledge of pedagogy.

Changes in education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have supported this more pedagogical style of teaching with an increased emphasis on student-centred learning. With science being a discipline that is content rich and with the constant addition of new content, it is becoming more difficult to accommodate this extra subject material in the form of lectures into an already full curriculum. An alternative approach has been to teach students the skills required to make sense of this content, in particular the content that has not actually been covered within the lecture material. This has been thought by some to be a more sustainable method of teaching, but places more emphasis on a background knowledge in educational theory.<sup>59</sup>

Given the now significant role of sessional staff in tertiary education, these changes in educational methods have put further pressure on Universities to implement tutor training.<sup>58</sup>

#### **2.4.2 Benefits for the first year experience**

The role of the tutor in the first year experience can be significant. With the expansion of sessional staff in tertiary institutions, for many first year students casual academic staff will be their earliest point of personal contact as they begin their transition to tertiary education. With the smaller tutorial group numbers, tutors often form the 'academic front' or the 'first port of call' for these students, particularly in the larger classes where there is often little personal interaction between the student and the lecturer.<sup>7,15,20</sup> First year students are relatively vulnerable and often have trouble 'finding their feet' in the university setting. Tutors and demonstrators can help the student to build a sense of belonging to the university and adjust to their new academic and social experiences.<sup>60</sup> This is particularly relevant when considering the

increasing diversity of the first year student population with differing cultural backgrounds, educational expectations and learning styles.<sup>20</sup>

The first year experience has been found to have a significant impact on a student's future learning success. In support of this, a study conducted in 2006 in Australia found that good quality teaching was an important factor in improving first year retention rates<sup>60,61</sup> Given the trend towards larger class sizes and increased student/teacher ratios, it is considered crucial that first year students are exposed to good teaching and learning experiences. A survey of Australian first year undergraduate students in 1995 found that less than half of all first year students thought that their tutors were 'good at explaining things' and only 53% thought that academic staff were enthusiastic about what they were teaching.<sup>7</sup> McInnes, James and McNaught surveyed first year Australian undergraduate students in 1995 and were quoted as saying:

*'Tutorials and practical classes in first year subjects are frequently staffed by inexperienced part-time teachers with little preparation for their role - often working within a structure of minimal support. Students expressed concern with the variation in the quality and attitudes of their tutors. Some were very happy with their tutors and believed their tutorials to be useful, others were less happy, having a sense of injustice about the "lottery" of tutor quality'*<sup>7,20</sup>

It is therefore of importance for optimal student success that they are supported from the beginning by well qualified and educationally sound casual academic staff. According to the 'Sessional Staff @ JCU RED Executive Summary Stage One – Review December 2009' (JCU RED Report – Refer to Appendix A), over half of the sessional staff at JCU identified as teaching into the first year of a degree program. The JCU First Year Experience Project Report of April 2009 highlighted the contribution of sessional teachers to Teaching and Learning in the first year and stated that in many cases, their contribution was 'essential to the professional quality and relevance of the degree program'. The project identified a future focus on enhancing the quality of sessional teaching and specialist preparation of sessional teachers of first year students.<sup>62</sup>

### **2.4.3 Training for the teacher-practitioner**

The use of sessional teacher-practitioners in higher education has many advantages, particularly in the education of health professionals. They are thought to assist in

'bridging the gap' between theory and clinical practice by bringing their professional experiences to the classroom, thus guiding the students in understanding and handling of potential problems and situations which may arise in their relevant profession.<sup>2,13</sup> They are also said to play an invaluable role in maintaining currency of the curriculum due to their joint involvement in both the university and the workplace. A study of 12 sessional teacher-practitioners in a Bachelor of Nursing program in Sydney in 2008 revealed that while sessional teachers saw their main role as 'bringing reality into the classroom' and maintaining clinical currency of the course, they did not always appreciate the value of the theoretical knowledge taught in the degree. This lack of awareness and respect for the theoretical aspects of the course has the potential to widen the gap between theory and practice. This study concluded that it was important that sessional teachers be formally orientated to the individual University or School so that they can more closely identify with their academic colleagues and have a healthy respect for the both the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching.<sup>2</sup>

#### **2.4.4 Training for the problem based learning (PBL) tutor**

A specific area where tutor participation is crucial is with a problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum. The PBL system has been increasingly used in medical schools worldwide and provides a tutorial program, where a healthcare problem or 'case' is presented to the students in small groups: the students are required to raise questions about the case, propose hypotheses, present data from independent study and basically teach each other. The role of the PBL tutor is more as a facilitator of learning rather than a provider of information. The tutor becomes the guide, coach or facilitator of a student-centred rather than a teacher-centred curriculum.<sup>43,63</sup>

PBL teaching relies almost entirely on effective small group tutoring and requires the tutor to not only have some content knowledge but also be skilled as a facilitator of learning. Professional development programs which help with pedagogical skills such as guiding student learning, developing critical thinking, effective group discussion, and encouraging student participation, have been shown to be essential for tutors in this complex area of teaching.<sup>64-66</sup>

#### **2.4.5 Improved assessment and marking**

One of the common roles of casual or sessional staff is the marking of assessments. Marking is defined as the task of reading, commenting on and assigning grades to a student's assessable work.<sup>39</sup> While marking is considered to be of some importance,

being a measure of quality for a university, there appears to be little attention paid to the role of the marker and the need for marking training. Both tenured academic staff and sessional staff do not generally receive any formal training in assessment. However, tenured teachers will normally be more experienced in the process of marking and have a better knowledge of marking practices and policies. Concerns have therefore been raised about the quality of marking amongst sessional and casual university staff.<sup>1,39,45,67</sup>

*Studies in Australia have found that*<sup>39,67</sup>

- Sessional markers were rarely supervised.
- Sessional markers had minimal training, induction or ongoing staff development on the topic of marking.
- Sessional markers were often left to devise their own marking criteria
- Grade distributions were not considered important to sessional markers
- Sessional teachers were more likely to award higher assignment marks than tenured academics

The tendency for grade inflation by sessional staff, coupled with the growth in numbers of sessional staff may have future implications for the quality of assessment and student learning outcomes.<sup>45</sup> It was suggested that in order to ensure consistency and fairness in marking and assessment, consideration should be given to training in assessment and marking for both permanent and sessional staff.<sup>39,67</sup>

## **2.5 Evidence for the benefits of tutor training**

Although it is generally agreed that the training of sessional staff is of benefit to the sessional staff member as well as the student and the institution, there are limited data in the literature on the evaluation of training programs. Program evaluations have been performed in the USA, UK, NZ and more recently Australia, to assess the benefits of tutor training.<sup>9,15,20,23,24,27,34,35,59,68</sup>

### **2.5.1 Evidence for tutor benefits**

#### USA

In 1998 Savage and Sharpe (USA) performed a single subject analysis on a GTA who was experiencing difficulties in teaching undergraduate students in physical

education. They found that formal teacher training over a 16 week period helped significantly in improving the GTA's ability to teach into the program.<sup>24</sup> An evaluation of a structured GTA training program operating in the Division of Biological Sciences at the University of Missouri in the early 1990s compared student evaluations in the five year period prior to implementation of training compared to after training. It was found that student evaluations averaged 71% prior to training and 87% after training, and both GTAs and students expressed more satisfaction in their experience than prior to the implementation of training.<sup>23</sup>

A later study in the Psychology department at the California State University (USA) in 2008, involved forty graduate teaching assistants who participated in a questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of a newly developed GTA training program. Results indicated that the GTAs found the training program highly effective in improving their skills in classroom management, student involvement and instructional strategies. This effect was particularly significant for those GTAs in their first year of teaching. Participants also found a positive effect on their confidence levels in handling the challenges of their positions.<sup>27</sup>

### UK

In 1997, Goodlad conducted an evaluation of a 5 hour interactive workshop attended by 327 GTAs in the College of Science, Technology and Medicine at the University of London. Pre and post-training participant questionnaires used a rating scale for various sections of the program, with qualitative comments also collected. It was concluded from this evaluation, that subject knowledge alone is insufficient for effective tutoring and that training improves GTA confidence in their role.<sup>34</sup>

While there appear to be few reports in the literature on the evaluation of GTA training programs in the UK, some studies have been performed to investigate the benefits of University teacher training in general. A study in 2004 evaluating the effectiveness of university teachers from 22 Universities over 8 different countries found that training can significantly improve teaching effectiveness and increase the extent of student focus, as well as improving student learning.<sup>68</sup>

### New Zealand

A study conducted by Ernie Barrington in 1997 obtained tutor feedback on the benefits of a tutor training program which was in place at the University of Auckland. He found that tutors who had completed the training program felt that it made a

significant difference to their ability as a tutor and their feeling of fulfilment in their teaching.<sup>20</sup>

### Australia

Evaluation results have been documented for tutor training programs at several Universities around Australia. All studies have had positive results and have shown an increase in tutor confidence, improved communication with students and a shift towards a more student centred learning.

At the University of Queensland, Australia, a 2002 tutor feedback evaluation of a multi-component tutor training program conducted in the School of Psychology revealed overwhelmingly positive results in terms of relevance, benefits and effectiveness of the program.<sup>15</sup> A tutor feedback survey of eight cohorts of participants of a tutor training program since 2004 in the Faculty of Science at the University of New South Wales, Australia, indicated that training had improved confidence levels, improved tutor communication with students and had led to an increased student focus.<sup>59</sup> In 2002, a survey of participants of a training and orientation program for casual tutors and laboratory demonstrators in the Faculty of Science at the University of Sydney, Australia, resulted in participants remarking favourably on the experience, with new tutors finding the training much more helpful than experienced tutors.<sup>35</sup> The JCU RED report revealed that 57% of sessional staff felt that the 'Teaching at JCU: Sessionals' orientation and induction program had improved their teaching performance, specifically by the acquisition of useful teaching strategies and approaches, the building of teaching confidence and by confirming the value of their current practice.<sup>9</sup>

Current research findings therefore support the benefits of tutor training to improve teaching skills, enable more effective student communication and management, increase tutor confidence levels and improve job satisfaction.<sup>7,9,15,20,24,27,35,44,54,55,59,68,69</sup>

### **2.5.2 Evidence for student benefits**

Student learning is thought to be affected by the competency of tutors. A 2009 student survey of a large sample of management students at the University of Wellington (NZ), where introductory tutor training is mandatory, confirmed the belief that student satisfaction with learning involves not only teaching, but also the creation of a conducive learning environment, positive and constructive feedback and encouragement of tutorial participation.<sup>42</sup> This study supported the important role of

the tutor in University education and the value of tutor training to increase student learning satisfaction and improve student retention rates.

A study conducted in 1994 at Auburn University, USA, involving 628 GTAs across 38 University departments examined the effect of GTA training on undergraduate students as well as GTA self-perceptions of teaching effectiveness. The effect of three types of training were examined: University training, Departmental training and an undergraduate degree in education. Results indicated that students rated GTAs with the most comprehensive training (i.e. an undergraduate degree in education) as more effective than those without training. It was found that prior teaching experience was a significant factor, with those GTAs with prior teaching experience also being consistently rated by the students as more effective than those without teaching experience. The effect of GTA University training and Departmental training on student ratings of teaching effectiveness was overall considered to be not significant. This was thought to be due to the wide variety of training programs offered across the University, as well as the emphasis on provision of University and Departmental policy within the training program, leaving less time for the inclusion of training in pedagogical principles and skills.<sup>29</sup>

## **2.6 Management of tutors**

### **2.6.1 Current management policies**

The rapid growth in the number of casual and sessional staff in tertiary institutions has been evident in Australia since the 1990s but Universities are only now starting to recognise the significant contribution of this core academic group to university teaching loads.<sup>8,19,70</sup> In the continuously changing environment of tertiary education in Australia, there has not until relatively recently been any formal guidelines and policies in place for the management, support and training of this rapidly increasing group of academic staff, and there has been some criticism about how the issue of workforce casualisation has been handled. Due to the perceived lack of attention paid to the employment procedures, working conditions, integration and professional development of the sessional staff workforce, they have been described as ‘a neglected or invisible group’, ‘hidden careerists’ ‘the tenuous periphery’ or ‘the reserve army of adjuncts’.<sup>10,18,42,48</sup>

In 2002, the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC) submitted their final review report which addressed the issues of appointment, management and training of sessional teaching staff. The aim was to review the above issues and to provide general policy guidelines for Universities. The project had 2 phases, the first phase being a limited 'needs analysis' survey distributed to sessional staff and their supervisors from 10 Australian Universities, in conjunction with a review of current literature. The second phase of the AUTC project was the development of guidelines at both a University and organisational unit level for the management, support and training of sessional staff (AUTC guidelines)<sup>71</sup> Key findings of the review phase of this report are listed in Table 2.2 below.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 2.2** Key findings of the review phase of the 2002 AUTC final report: *Training, Support and Management of Sessional Teaching Staff* (Adapted)<sup>19</sup>

<i>There are great benefits provided by sessional teachers in terms of flexibility, diversity and financial savings.</i>
<i>Formal policies are lacking for the support, management or training of sessional teachers</i>
<i>Some basic support structures for sessional teachers are lacking, including access to facilities, supplies and communications technology</i>
<i>There are generally no formalized recruitment policies for sessional teachers, who are often being recruited on an 'ad hoc' basis.</i>
<i>The standard of induction and orientation programs seems to be mostly good.</i>
<i>Follow-up professional development and support for sessional teachers is generally lacking.</i>
<i>It was considered essential to provide payment for sessional staff to attend training and professional development activities.</i>
<i>There was a general lack of awareness by sessional staff of the policies that affect their work.</i>
<i>Sessional staff do not generally receive feedback on their performance and there is little recognition for good work.</i>

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council's (ALTC) RED Report in 2008 followed on from the AUTC Report and aimed to identify and analyse current national practices for sessional teachers in Australian Universities. This was a large scale study involving 16 Australian Universities, including JCU, and consisted of 3 phases



1. The collection of data regarding the current numbers of sessional staff and the types of teaching roles undertaken.
2. The analysis of current policies and practices within each participating university via individual interviews with various staff including directors of learning and teaching units, heads of school, subject co-ordinators and sessional staff. This analysis led to the development of the RED resource<sup>38</sup> which included a collection of case studies representing good practice at all levels of university.
3. As a result of the above analysis, the third phase involved the consideration of ways to improve and enhance the development of sessional teachers.

The following provides a sample of the findings of the RED report:

*'All universities depend heavily on sessional teachers'*

*'Sessional teachers perform the full range of teaching related duties, from casual marker to subject designer and coordinator'*

*'Sessional teachers' contribution to teaching and learning in higher education is substantial, and in many cases, vital to the professional quality and relevance of the degree program'*

*'The quality of the student learning environment is jeopardised by the lack of attention to the professional development of sessional teachers'*

As one of the Universities participating in the RED review, the JCU RED Report was released in December 2009.<sup>9</sup> This review involved a questionnaire sent to the 511 sessional teaching staff identified as working at JCU. The questionnaire was complemented by the conduction of 32 interviews with some key stakeholders at School or Discipline level and human resources personnel.

*Several issues were identified relating to management and support for tutors at JCU*

- Job security - work is casual and employment is often 'last minute' and not guaranteed from year to year.
- Lack of access to facilities – e.g. subject sites, office space, computers.
- The need for improved IT access, information and training was highlighted as essential to the sessional teaching role.
- Lack of school-based induction.
- Lack of professional development activities.

- Cultural divide between full-time and sessional teaching staff – being regarded as ‘lower class’ with no opportunity for input and feedback.

More recently, TEQSA (The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency) was established in 2011, with the aim of regulating higher education in Australia and providing nationally consistency standards for teaching and learning.<sup>72</sup> The need for quality assurance processes specifically for sessional staff was recognised and the BLASST (Benchmarking Leadership and Advancement of Standards for Sessional Teaching) Project of 2013 has resulted in the development of a Sessional Staff Standards Framework (The BLASST Framework). It is anticipated that with engagement and commitment from the university sector, this will lead to improved management and support of sessional staff in Australian universities and enhanced quality of teaching and learning for sessional staff.<sup>73,74</sup>

## 2.6.2 Tutor concerns

Issues arising from the AUTC Report and the RED Report may be categorised into four main areas<sup>8,19</sup>

- Recruitment and employment issues
- Training and professional development issues
- Evaluation and recognition
- Integration and communication

### 2.6.2.1 Recruitment and employment issues

The selection and recruitment process for sessional staff often lacks transparency and consistency. Casual academic staff are frequently employed via a much less stringent selection process in comparison to tenured academic staff.<sup>5,18,45,49</sup> Although there does not seem to be any clear policies in some institutions, the responsibility of employing sessional staff often rests with the subject co-ordinators, who may have limited time to spend on the selection of appropriate casual staff. They may often be selected on the minimum qualifications of availability and past experience, since there are very few employment guidelines in place for this particular group of academic staff.<sup>49</sup> In the 2009 JCU RED Report, the following were the most commonly reported circumstances of recruitment<sup>9</sup>

- 24.6% submitted/responded to an expression of interest
- 24.2% approached by a staff member

- 23.6% during postgraduate studies
- 18.9% through professional or personal networks

Sessional staff may receive little or no advance notice of engagement/non-engagement and payment levels may vary due to the lack of appropriate policies relating to their employment. Payment is usually based on an hourly rate and sessional staff do not enjoy the rights and privileges of tenured academic staff with regard to sick leave and holiday pay. It is frequently reported that sessional teachers perform more work than they are actually paid for, and that activities such as class preparation time, student consultation time, marking and ongoing training were not included in their hourly pay rate <sup>7,9,18,19</sup>

Many sessional and part-time staff in Australian Universities have difficulty in accessing resources which are basic to fulfilling their teaching duties. This may include the following items<sup>10,18,19,73</sup>

- Computers, email/internet access
- Printers and photocopiers
- Phone, fax
- Library facilities, textbooks
- Office space

In order to optimise their job performance, it is essential that the sessional staff have access to

- Relevant on-line unit materials such as lecture power points, student notices, subject outlines
- Relevant textbooks or on-line library
- A University email account for communication
- Assessment marking guides for those involved in marking and assessment

There are several identified challenges involved in addressing the above issues for universities, including budget restrictions, office space restrictions and the availability of resources.<sup>9</sup> The AUTC Report recommended that there should be policies and procedures in place to identify the minimum resources to be provided for sessional staff. <sup>19</sup>

### 2.6.2.2 Training and professional development issues

Once recruited or employed, most Australian Universities recognise the need for an induction and formal orientation program for sessional staff to the University. This is generally provided to a good standard, although there is wide variation in the way in which this session is offered, both within and between Universities.<sup>8,9,19,75</sup> Due to the broad range of sessional staff roles and responsibilities amongst the different Schools and Disciplines, it is considered important to ensure that induction and orientation are not over-regulated at an institutional level and that there are strong links between the institution and the individual Schools and Disciplines. This is thought to be particularly relevant for sessional academics involved in Disciplines leading to professional qualifications such as law, medicine and architecture.<sup>9,11,18</sup>

At JCU, although the University-wide teaching induction session is regarded as compulsory and a key support tool, the sessional staff report of 2009 found that a significant proportion of staff, for various reasons, had not attended an induction session, nor received any school based induction.<sup>9</sup> A number of staff felt that a generic induction session did not meet their specific needs, as there was a considerable amount of content which was not relevant to their particular tutoring role.

According to the RED Report, most induction sessions focus on policy requirements rather than the teaching and learning aspects of the sessional academic. Following induction and orientation, there appears to be a lack of subsequent training, academic support and professional development opportunities for sessional staff. Staff will often feel that they would like additional guidance on many aspects of their position, including their specific roles and duties, how to facilitate student learning, how to engage and motivate students, how to manage classrooms, assessment and marking and how to provide useful student feedback.<sup>46</sup> Without this training and support, many inexperienced teachers feeling ill-equipped and unsupported in their ongoing teaching role within the university.<sup>19</sup>

The following concerns were expressed by first time tutors in the Law Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) at the commencement of their Faculty training<sup>7</sup>

*'Keeping students focused – and attaching appropriate weight to the issues'*

*'Engaging students to discuss'*

*'How to handle students in their diverse backgrounds and career aims'*  
*'Dealing with special needs students'*  
*'Being able to answer all questions ... particularly those out of left field'*  
*'Being right – knowing the answers'*  
*'Assessment and allocation of marks and consistency across tutorials'*  
*'Student access to us- how to manage appropriately'*

In a review of casual staff academics in the Business Faculty of a Sydney University in 2009, it was found that most casuals believed that training and development opportunities in the Faculty were not totally adequate.<sup>48</sup> This is reflective of the experience of many casual academic staff around Australia and this belief has been well documented in Universities around Australia.<sup>6,10,15,18,45,50</sup> Similarly in the UK, sessional staff report a lack of professional development opportunities such as appraisal, mentoring, development courses and training.<sup>5</sup>

It is often thought that teaching development activities for sessional staff are cost prohibitive, therefore the responsibility for training and development of sessional staff is generally left to academic staff supervisors or subject co-ordinators, without consideration of the workload demands of these already busy academics.<sup>9,69,75</sup> The RED Report suggests that the role of the academic supervisor of sessional teachers is crucial in establishing quality teaching and learning processes.<sup>8</sup> Yet there appears to be no formalised or standardised practices for supervising academics, although some individualised examples of good practice exist among Australian Universities or a Discipline within the University. Funding for professional training and development is also an issue, as in the majority of instances, there is no payment to sessional staff for compulsory professional development.<sup>8,9</sup>

#### 2.6.2.3 Evaluation and recognition

While it is well known that more and more teaching in the University setting is being conducted by sessional staff, there is still concern that their contribution is being under-recognised and undervalued.<sup>5,73</sup> Reported data regarding the work of sessional teachers appear to be lacking and they are still almost routinely excluded from future subject planning and curriculum decision making. The RED Report highlights this problem and states that while some Universities have addressed the issue in an informal way with such initiatives as sessional staff teaching awards and invitations to social functions, there is a need for a more formal reward and

recognition system with improved collaboration between tenured and sessional staff.<sup>8,9,18</sup>

The AUTC Report identified the issue of performance feedback from supervisors, peers, and students as an area of concern for sessional staff.<sup>19</sup> The lack of regular performance evaluation for casual academic staff has been highlighted as a risk factor in the maintenance of educational quality in tertiary institutions.<sup>8</sup> Given that performance evaluation is a vital career development tool, it is not surprising that many part-time and temporary teachers are frustrated with their lack of career opportunities.<sup>48,76</sup>

#### 2.6.2.4 Integration and communication

The most cited area of concern for sessional staff is the lack of integration into the general teaching body and organizational culture of their department or institution.<sup>5,19,49,77</sup> Despite the relatively large numbers of sessional staff and the enormous practical value that they add to the University, they are often described as the 'invisible faculty' due to their perceived low status, lack of recognition and a general under-appreciation of their contribution to teaching and learning.<sup>48</sup> Kimber describes this phenomena as 'a two tiered academic workforce - the tenured core with security and good conditions and the tenuous periphery with insecurity and poor conditions'.<sup>10</sup> This cultural divide has the potential to reduce teaching quality as it has been observed that sessional employees are more motivated and perform better when they feel included and when their efforts are recognized.<sup>19</sup> It has been suggested that in order to enhance the integration of sessional staff into the university environment, education itself must be highly valued and embedded within the culture of the University. It is hoped that the recent trend towards improved student engagement in Universities may therefore create a more educationally focused environment and assist with integration.<sup>5</sup>

Casual academics will often not be included in planning and decision making processes and therefore are not able to contribute to the design and development of course curricula, despite the fact that the employment of sessional staff, particularly in the professional degree courses, has the potential to enrich the staffing profile of the Discipline and enhance the quality of the degree.<sup>19,45</sup> Sessional staff have indicated that they would like more opportunities to communicate and get to know other staff, both full-time and part-time, and to contribute to subject and curriculum planning.<sup>9,10,18</sup>

Effective interpersonal communication between tutors and course co-ordinators is important to the success of an educational program. Although many casual academics feel that their course or subject co-ordinators were supportive of their role, there appears to be significant individual variation in the level of support, with some supervisors being excellent and others providing little or no support. Tutors often feel that course co-ordinators do not adequately communicate with them: This has been attributed to the heavy workload of many co-ordinators, but will sometimes be due to a misguided belief that it is not necessary. An effective line of communication is essential in order to ensure that the tutor understands the overall objectives of tutoring into the particular course or module.<sup>46,48</sup> It is proposed that a management team where tutors and the course co-ordinators work as a cohesive team is the best approach for optimal success in student learning and engagement.<sup>7,46,75</sup>

## **2.7 Tutor training programs**

*‘Good tutor training is institutionally supported, pedagogically sound and locally comprehensive and relevant’*

**Smith and Bath 2004<sup>37</sup>**

### **2.7.1 Overview**

#### 2.7.1.1 Tutor training internationally

The training of tutors, or graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) as they are known in the USA is well established in most Northern American Universities. GTA training programs began to develop in North America in the late 1960s, in order to bring the GTA to ‘an agreed standard of proficiency by practice and instruction’. Even at that time, it was widely believed that teaching can be learned, practiced and continually improved.<sup>21</sup> However, GTA training programs did not become widespread until the 1980s with a variety of programs existing, both centrally and departmentally co-ordinated. Although the majority of Universities in the USA now have some form of training program for GTAs, many of these programs have not been formally evaluated.<sup>15,22,27</sup> In 1994 the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program was developed, which provided a nationally consistent framework between 43 selected North American institutions for GTAs to prepare for becoming Faculty members in the future.<sup>21,33</sup> While this is considered to be the most comprehensive GTA training program, covering research and service skills in addition to teaching, the PFF is not

linked to all institutions in the USA, many of which have a more traditional GTA program.<sup>11, 23</sup>

Many of the GTA training programs in North America are taught by full-time professional trainers, often with the assistance of experienced teachers and peer mentoring. Duration and format of training vary greatly, and may range from half-day university wide orientation sessions to multi-day University-wide training in conjunction with Department-specific training. Some Universities also offer full semester courses or seminars in conjunction with this training. In most cases, the GTA training programs have been orientated towards core generic teaching skills, and this is then complemented by a more Discipline-specific subject training. Additional skills taught in the programs included practical skills (e.g. academic advice, teaching study skills, dealing with conflict, feedback and effective communication). Assessment of the training programs has been carried out in a number of ways, including classroom evaluations, student feedback and self-evaluations.<sup>21,22</sup>

The lessons learnt from the North American experience have been used as the basis for training programs in the UK, NZ and Australia. In the UK, GTA training programs started to develop in the 1980s in response to demands by the GTAs, the students, the Universities and the public to improve the quality of student education and the student University experience. These programs were based on the well-established UK New Lecturer Courses which were modified to address the particular needs of GTAs. With UK also experiencing the worldwide explosion in numbers of GTAs, it was thought that training would avoid the problem of ill-prepared GTAs and also eliminate or supplement the need for on-the-job training for new lecturers in the future.<sup>31</sup> With the benefit of the USA experience, various studies investigated the specific GTA requirements in the UK, including studies at the University of Bradford, Lancaster University and the University of London.<sup>21,32,34</sup>

There is limited literature available on tutor training in NZ Universities. Tutor training began at the University of Auckland in the early 1980s and since the early 1990s, training programs have been offered both centrally and departmentally. In 1995 a more formalised centrally based tutor training program was established, which included a total of 15 hours of face-to-face training and a formal teaching assessment, culminating in the issue of a Tutor Training Certificate.<sup>20</sup> At the University of Wellington NZ, where in 2001, a significant proportion (40%) of part-



time limited term teaching staff were undergraduates<sup>44</sup>, introductory tutor training is mandatory. The training program at this University was developed with the aid of a tutor needs analysis study performed in 2004<sup>46</sup>, and an examination of student perceptions of the role of the tutor in 2009.<sup>42</sup> These studies provided useful information from which to develop an appropriate training program.

#### 2.7.1.2 Tutor training in Australia

The AUTC sessional staff report of 2003 led to a widespread interest in tutor training in Australian universities, and this was further enhanced by the release of the RED report in 2008.<sup>8,19</sup> Training and development programs for sessional staff are now becoming established in the majority of Australian tertiary institutions.<sup>7,15,35-37,59,78-81</sup> There is still a wide variation in the structure and content of these programs, both between Universities and within the various Schools and Departments.

### 2.7.2 Structure of training programs

In terms of structure, differences exist in the following areas:

#### **Location of training**

Training may be centrally or locally based. There may be a whole of university generic program or a Faculty, School or Discipline specific program - in many institutions, there is a two tiered structure involving both the University as a whole with links to the individual School or Department.<sup>7,9,15,35,59,69</sup>

#### **Format**

Training formats range from face to face workshops to online web-based instruction, written tutor training manuals or various combinations.<sup>7,9,15,35,59,69</sup>

#### **Attendance requirements**

For some programs, attendance is compulsory for ongoing employment.<sup>7,9,15,35</sup> Other programs may be recommended or strongly encouraged, but not compulsory. Attendance at a training program may or may not be subsidized by the institution.<sup>7,9,15,59</sup>

#### **Length and timing of training**

Face-to-face workshops may vary from two hours to 2.5 days.<sup>9,15,35,37,59</sup> The University of Queensland has specific requirements of at least six hours of initial training, with three hours of follow-up training later in the academic year.<sup>36</sup> In most

cases, training is strategically planned to coincide with start of the student year or semester, often with follow-up training later in the year.

### **Training responsibility**

Responsibility for training may vary depending on the structure. In a centrally based program, responsibility often rests with a central Teaching and Learning Department. In a locally-based program, often the subject or course co-ordinator takes responsibility, although in some cases there may be a designated tutor training co-ordinator for the particular Discipline or School.<sup>7,9,15,35</sup>

A selection of tutor training programs which have been developed and implemented in Australian Universities are discussed below. A summary of these programs is also outlined in Table 2.4.

#### **2.7.2.1 UQ - University wide Tutor Training Network**

In 1996, as part of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Plan at UQ, the conduction of tutor training in all academic departments became mandatory. The requirement specified that there must be a named individual responsible for each departmental program and that it must have at least six hours of training at the start of each year, with at least three hours follow-up later in the year.

In order to implement and support this policy requirement, a tutor training network (TTN) was set up which involved 60 academic staff who were appointed as the designated tutor trainers for their respective departments. There were two phases to the tutor training development strategy: The first phase was to develop the skills of departmental tutor trainers, a process which was overseen by the university's Teaching and Educational Development Institute (TEDI)<sup>82</sup> in a 'train-the-trainers' type of arrangement. This involved monthly meetings of tutor trainers, each of one to two hours duration to focus on the basic content and processes involved in the training of tutors. The meetings were supplemented by a website and resource materials, a monthly newsletter and a tutor evaluation tool. The second phase involved the development and delivery of a tutor training program (TTP) by the tutor trainers within their individual departments. An outline of the UQ Tutor Training Network is provided in Figure 2.1 below.

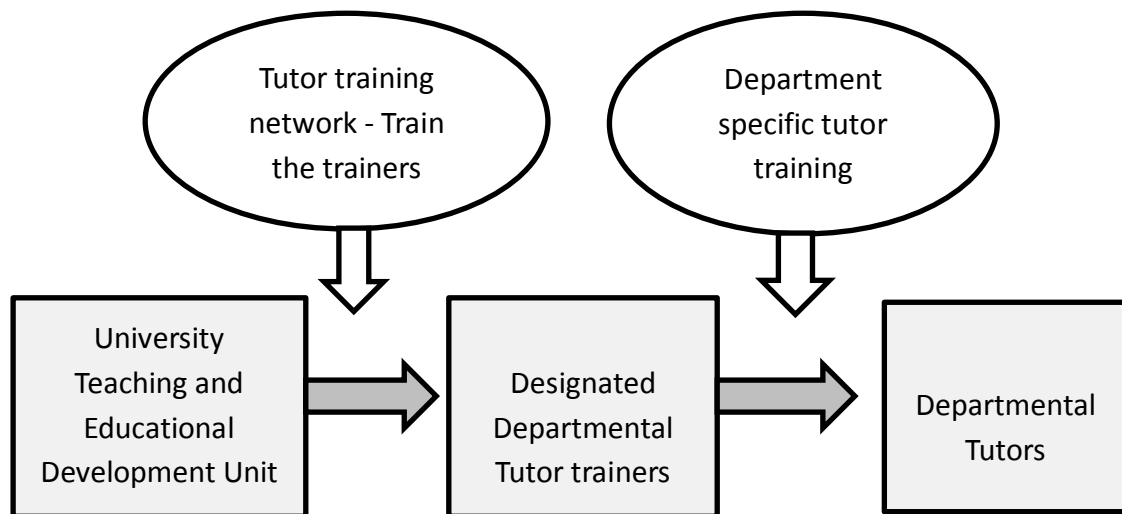


Figure 2.1 Outline of the UQ Tutor Training Network (adapted from Smith & Bath 2003)<sup>36</sup>

An evaluation of the tutor training network (Phase 1) in 2003 revealed a positive effect, with 60% of tutor trainers feeling that the process was mostly or highly effective, with one of the main benefits being the networking and sharing of training ideas with other tutor trainers. An evaluation of the TTPs delivered in Phase 2 was carried out in 2004. Although only 51% of tutor respondents actually attended the TTP in their department, of those who did attend, 77% of tutors rated the effectiveness of their tutor training program as mostly effective or very effective. By the year 2000, once the tutor training network had achieved its purpose in setting up departmental tutor training programs, it was abandoned, with the continuance of support for departmental tutor trainers on an as-needed basis, with one workshop at the start of each year for novice tutor trainers.<sup>36,37</sup>

#### 2.7.2.2 UQ – School-based Training Program<sup>15</sup>

In 2002, a new School-based tutor training program was developed and evaluated for the School of Psychology at UQ in Brisbane. This program included a substantial revision of an existing school program, which was relatively basic, providing an orientation at the beginning of the year and a follow-up session later in the semester. The program was run by a junior member of the school academic staff.

The new revised three-tiered program was again school based and was established with the help of the academic development unit at UQ. The School of Psychology employed over 100 tutors in 2002 with about half of these being new tutors. Table 2.3 below provides a summary of the components of the training program.

**Table 2.3** Components of a school based tutor training program at the UQ School of Psychology in 2002

An initial training meeting which included orientation and a Teaching and Learning session.
Three more Teaching and Learning sessions throughout the first semester. These teaching and learning sessions were developed and implemented by an academic staff developer from the University and were co-facilitated with the School tutor trainer co-ordinator.
Two 'Brown bag' lunches on teaching excellence hosted by School academics who had received Teaching and Learning excellence awards.
Weekly contact with the tutor training co-ordinator.
A mentoring program with either a lead tutor or a peer mentor with regular meetings throughout the semester.

Results of the program evaluation were overwhelmingly positive and supported a close connection between tutor training and the individual School or Department involved.<sup>15</sup>

#### 2.7.2.3 Queensland University of Technology (QUT)<sup>7</sup> - Faculty of Law

In the Faculty of Law at QUT, the Teaching and Learning Department has developed the ENTER induction program for new casual staff. To complement this Faculty-specific program, the University's Teaching and Learning Support Services also conduct two annual professional development seminars covering topics such as powerpoint, developing a teaching portfolio, developing and evaluating your teaching and working with international students. A suite of on-going staff development seminars on more specific topics are also offered to casual staff by the University. The Faculty workshop is supplemented by the provision of a resource booklet which provides additional information, including references to books and useful readings relevant to their role as a tutor.

Feedback from participants at this Faculty induction program has been extremely positive. Examples of comments by participants include the following

*"I left with a feeling of confidence and motivation"*

*"It was practical and allowed participation"*

*"Opportunities to ask questions and meet other staff" "Contact with other tutors"*

*"Detailed information and handouts"*

As part of the ENTER program, attention is paid to the development of networking opportunities for casual teaching staff via the provision of email contact details of participants and a casual tutor room within the School which is made available for casual staff to come and go from. The University also has an association for all part time and casual academic staff (the Professional Association of Part Time Academics or 'PAPTA').

#### 2.7.2.4 University of Sydney – Faculty of Science<sup>35</sup>

After an academic board review at the University of Sydney found inconsistencies in the training of tutors and laboratory demonstrators in the Faculty of Science, a tutor training program was designed in order to address this issue. The basic program was conducted over one University semester and consisted of a series of activities relating to the practice of teaching:

- An orientation workshop was conducted before the start of the teaching semester, which was run jointly by the Science Faculty and the Institute of Teaching and Learning.
- Specific Department-based training was run to familiarise the tutor with equipment, procedures and safety considerations relevant to their own department.
- A series of classroom 'trigger' scenarios were emailed to the new tutor during the semester. Participants were asked to respond to two scenarios over the semester: feedback was given on the tutor responses and the responses were displayed on a purpose built website.
- Ongoing tutor and demonstrator support was provided in several ways, including a resource folder supplied at the initial workshop, a website with further resource materials and relevant emails throughout the semester.
- A certificate of completion from the Head of School/Department or unit co-ordinator was issued to those participants who had completed all of the components of the training program satisfactorily.

Evaluation of the training program was carried out via an email survey. Results of the evaluation were overall extremely positive. 100% of tutors in the Physiology Department, 85% in Chemistry and 80% in Psychology said that they had found the workshop useful. Comments were particularly positive for the inexperienced tutors, who also found that mixing with tutors from their own and other Disciplines was

useful in preparation for their first classes. The program therefore was found to have met its aim of better preparing tutors and demonstrators for teaching in this Faculty.

#### 2.7.2.5 University of New South Wales – Science Faculty<sup>59</sup>

At the University of New South Wales, a science tutor/demonstrator training program has been in place since 2004. The program is offered every semester and consists of a series of four workshops in conjunction with associated assignments. The aims of the programs are firstly to enhance the tutor's personal development in terms of confidence levels, peer support and a sense of belonging and secondly to enhance their professional skills and encourage student-centred teaching.

The tutor training program was evaluated via a tutor survey for each of the eight cohorts who had attended the course between 2004 and 2008. Results indicate that tutor confidence levels have increased, tutors are communicating more clearly with students, and that tutor's attitudes have overall shifted towards a more student centred learning.

#### 2.7.2.6 James Cook University<sup>9</sup>

At JCU, attendance at a general University induction and orientation session has been considered a condition of ongoing employment since 2005. Participants in this workshop (Teaching at JCU: Sessionals) also receive an introductory manual and are supported by a sessional staff website with additional resource materials. The JCU sessional staff report found that 57.1% of survey respondents who had attended an induction session felt that induction had helped their teaching performance. They felt that they had gained useful information on teaching strategies, resources and teaching approaches and the experience had helped them to build confidence in their teaching.<sup>9</sup>

The School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences is one of five schools at JCU who also offer a unit specific tutor/demonstrator training program. [L. Crane, October 2010, written communication] The JCU department of Biochemistry has also been conducting a demonstrator induction and training program since 2009. [V. Graham, June 2010, written communication]

#### 2.7.2.7 University of Melbourne – Faculty of Economics and Commerce<sup>78</sup>

This Faculty employ approximately 300 tutors each semester over 4 departments. Since moving to a problem solving small-group activity tutorial structure for first and second year students in the late 1990s, they have recognised the pivotal role that a

tutor plays in the student learning experience and introduced an intensive tutor development program to accommodate this more student-centred approach to teaching. All new tutors attend a Discipline-specific orientation, which is then followed by a one hour observation of a tutorial conducted by a specialist teaching and learning Faculty member. The tutor is then given feedback along with an individual consultation. Later in the semester, a further two hour development session is conducted, focusing on assessment and giving feedback.

In conjunction with the face to face program, the Faculty has developed an interactive on-line tutor training program which contains further more detailed information. The START (Streamed Tutors Audio/Visual Reflective Teaching) program contains video and audio interviews with experienced tutors and Heads of Department, as well as video clips of actual tutorials. These video clips are short 10 minute teaching 'grabs' and cover such topics as questioning skills, strategies to promote student participation, time management and efficient feedback methods. They are available on-line for tutors and are also used in the regular tutor meetings.<sup>78</sup>

**Table 2.4** Summary of selected tutor training programs at Australian Universities

University	Location of training	Responsibility for the program	Format	Length and timing of program	Attendance requirements
University of Queensland (UQ) - School of Psychology <sup>15</sup>	Three tiered School-based	Joint responsibility - Academic staff developer and School tutor training co-ordinator	Initial orientation (face to face) Teaching and learning sessions (face to face) 'Brown bag lunches' Weekly contact – tutor training co-ordinator Tutor mentoring program	Three teaching and learning sessions over the semester  Weekly/fortnightly co-ordinator meetings – maximum 6 hours per semester	Compulsory for all new tutors  Paid attendance
Queensland University of Technology (QUT) - Law Faculty <sup>7</sup>	Two tiered University and Faculty-based	Joint responsibility - University Teaching and Learning Support Services and Faculty of Law Teaching and Learning Department	<u>Faculty</u> Orientation (face to face) Teaching and learning session (face to face) <u>University</u> Professional development seminars Advanced staff development seminars	Faculty orientation conducted in first week of Semester  University development seminars – twice a year	Faculty program - compulsory for all new casual staff Paid attendance University seminars - recommended
University of Sydney - Faculty of Science <sup>35</sup>	Two tiered Faculty and Department- based	Joint responsibility - Institute of Teaching and Learning and Science Faculty	Orientation - general workshop at start of semester (face to face) Specific department based training - orientation and meetings with co-ordinator (face to face) 'Trigger' scenarios emailed to tutors throughout semester	Faculty level - Two hour orientation workshop  Department based training – weekly meetings	Compulsory since 2003
University of NSW - Science Faculty <sup>59</sup>	Faculty-based	Not stated	Science tutor/demonstrator program Four face to face workshops over the Semester	Equivalent of 2.5 days of training	Non-compulsory attendance Unpaid
James Cook University (JCU) <sup>9</sup>	University- based	JCU Teaching and Learning Development Unit	Orientation and teaching practices (face to face)	Four hours	Compulsory for all new sessional staff Paid attendance
JCU - School of Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences [L. Crane, October 2010, written communication]	School-based	School academic staff educational officer	Orientation (face to face) demonstrator training workshop	Six hours Conducted yearly	Not stated
JCU School of Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences – Discipline of Biochemistry [V. Graham, June 2010, written communication]	Discipline- based	School Technical officer - Biochemistry	Orientation (face to face) demonstrator training workshop	Time not specified (around six hours) Conducted yearly	Not stated



### 2.7.3 Content of training programs

#### **Overview**

It has been suggested that, given the variation in both structure and content of tutor training programs being provided, there is no one way to effectively train tutors. A program should rather be relevant to the School or Department's specific needs and resources and to the requirements of the particular institution.<sup>15</sup>

In examining the content of a tutor training program, while there is some variation between different Departments, Schools and Institutions, several core elements seem to be common. The majority of programs will, in varying degrees, include the following basic content:

- *Orientation (or induction) to the University, School or Department*
  - Role clarification, responsibilities and expectations
  - Administrative Issues - Pay systems, Occupational Health and Safety
  
- *Educational Issues*
  - Teaching and learning skills
  - Classroom management
  - Marking and feedback
  - Interacting with students, dealing with problem students
  
- *Tutor facilities and support network*

#### 2.7.3.1 Orientation

It is important that tutors are aware of their roles and responsibilities within their Department and the expectations of staff and students. Orientation should therefore incorporate the following information

- An outline of the staffing structure within their University, School and Department
- The teaching and learning philosophy of their Department or School
- An outline of the current curriculum
- Relevant assessment and feedback policies.

Orientation also gives new tutors an opportunity to meet the staff in their particular Discipline as well as other sessional staff, which can help to allay any initial fears that they may have about tutoring.<sup>7,15,35,83</sup>

The orientation session will generally begin by introducing the tutor to the University environment, providing some demographics of the particular University and/or Department, giving an overview of their relevant policies and procedures and outlining tutor roles and responsibilities.<sup>84</sup> It may include information on administrative issues (e.g. payment methods, occupational health and safety requirements). Department-specific orientation may cover the use of specific equipment and safety issues within the department. General information on teaching skills may also be discussed, such as the principles of small-group teaching and student-centred learning, teaching preparation and planning, student assessment and general classroom management.

In addition to an induction program, many Universities also provide a School/Faculty orientation handbook, as well as links to support websites for sessional staff containing additional information which may address particular concerns of sessional teachers.<sup>54,82,83,85,86</sup>

### 2.7.3.2 Educational Issues

Considering that a significant number of new tutors have little or no educational qualifications or experience, a mandatory component of a tutor training program is the provision of some degree of educational theory.<sup>9,69,7,46</sup> While an orientation program will provide an over view of teaching principles and practice, a comprehensive tutor training program should include further more detailed information and training in the area of teaching and learning. Topics which have been included in current training programs in Australian and NZ Universities include the following<sup>20,54</sup>

- Understanding student learning
- Deep and surface learning
- How to plan and run an effective tutorial
- Communication and presentation skills
- Techniques for group facilitation
- Managing and motivating students

- Conflict and control issues in tutorials
- Marking essays and assignments
- Student feedback
- Working with International students
- eLearning
- Evaluating and improving your teaching

In order to stimulate engagement in the learning process, a variety of activities have been employed in training programs. This may include<sup>69</sup>

- Ice breakers
- Listening activities
- Problem solving and discussion activities
- Role-plays
- Microteaching

#### 2.7.3.3 Tutor facilities and support network

Resources and facilities available to sessional staff will vary from institution to institution. Generally, tutors will be provided with a University email address, access to the library and relevant tutorial materials. Some Departments also provide a sessional teacher resource handbook or manual, a tutor room for preparation and student consultation, pigeon holes for hard copy communication, name badges to wear when teaching, computer and photocopier access at the workplace and administrative assistance.<sup>7,38</sup>

Ongoing support for tutors will generally take the form of online resources and web-based discussion groups. Some course co-ordinators have regular tutor meetings, however, it can be difficult to find a time where all can attend.<sup>38</sup> The use of mentoring with either a more experienced tutor or a unit co-ordinator is also becoming more common.<sup>7,15,38</sup> Most Universities try to be inclusive and will have a staff social event at least once a year to which tutors are invited and many have instituted teaching recognition awards for sessional staff.<sup>7,35,83</sup>

Some Universities give tutors opportunities for formal or informal teaching evaluations, e.g. participation in peer reviews of teaching and student evaluations.<sup>7,20</sup> There is evidence for the benefits of tutor peer observation exercises in improving

teaching practices as this enables tutors to observe the teaching of a fellow tutor and on reflection, to make positive changes to their own teaching.<sup>87</sup>

## **2.8 Literature review – Summary**

The increase in casualization of sessional staff at Universities over recent years and the associated increase in teaching responsibility has implications for the quality of student education and therefore the need for training and support of sessional staff has been identified. The potential benefits of training for sessional staff include improved confidence in teaching, better clarification of roles and responsibilities, improved student engagement, more effective classroom management and improved assessment and marking. While there is evidence for the benefits of sessional staff training programs for participants, particularly in terms of improved confidence and teaching performance, the evidence for benefits to students is limited.

Sessional staff are becoming an increasingly diverse group, varying widely in terms of age, background, qualifications, level of teaching experience and career aspirations. There are several types of sessional staff, including tutors or demonstrators, postgraduate students and teacher-practitioners and while there is much overlap in their roles and responsibilities, they are all employed on a sessional basis. For health professional programs such as Pharmacy, teacher-practitioners, who maintain employment both in the industry as well as academia, are thought to be of particular value in assisting to bridge the gap between theory and practice and maintain the currency of the curriculum.

While tutor training has been widespread in the USA since the 1980s, Australia has only in the past 10 years begun to address this issue and training programs are only now becoming established in the majority of Australian higher education institutions. Until recently, there were no formal guidelines and policies for the management and support of sessional staff in terms of their recruitment and employment, training and professional development, recognition and evaluation and their integration into the organizational culture of the university. The release of the AUTC Report of 2003 and the RED Report of 2008 have resulted in initiatives to address this issue and the establishment of the BLASST Framework in 2013 is expected to lead to improved management and support of sessional staff in Australian Universities and an enhanced quality of teaching and learning.

Training programs vary widely in terms of structure and content, however, it has been recognised that while a whole-of-University policy framework is important, for best effect the program should ideally be tailored to suit the individual School or Discipline. In the design of a tutor training program, structural considerations would include the location of training, format, attendance requirements, length and timing and training responsibility. A summary of several documented training programs in Australian Universities has been included in this chapter. In terms of program content, while there is considerable variation, the majority of programs will include an orientation to the University, School or Discipline, a variety of educational topics and an outline of the available tutor facilities and support measures.

The background information outlined in this chapter was used to establish a general context for the project and specifically to inform the design, development and evaluation of the JCU pharmacist tutor training program.

## Chapter 3 Tutor training program - Needs Analysis

### 3.1 Introduction

Tutor training is relatively new in Australia and the programs currently in existence vary widely in terms of both structure and content.<sup>19,35,37</sup> This variation takes into account the individual requirements of the particular institution or department. It should be noted, however, that while there are numerous examples of tutor training programs in the literature, not all training programs have been officially documented. In addition, there appears to be limited examples of formal evaluations of tutor training programs in Australia. Therefore the evidence for the degree of success of many programs is unclear.

In order to determine the requirements for a pharmacist tutor training program at James Cook University, it was necessary to:

- Investigate the current and potential roles of pharmacist tutors in the JCU Pharmacy program
- Obtain opinions on the importance of tutor training and potential benefits
- Ascertain the optimum requirements for a pharmacist tutor training program

Prior to development, it was important to obtain input from all stakeholders in the program. This included JCU Pharmacy academic staff, JCU Pharmacist tutors and JCU Pharmacy students.

### 3.2 Methodology

A mixed methods approach was employed for this study, which involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The advantage of a mixed methodology is that it can provide both breadth and depth of information.<sup>88</sup> The design was sequential, with the main instrument being a self-completed tutor questionnaire aimed at obtaining largely quantitative information from the JCU pharmacist tutors. The results of the tutor questionnaire were used to inform a series of three semi-structured focus group interviews involving pharmacy academic staff, pharmacist tutors and pharmacy students, to provide more detailed qualitative information from all parties who were likely to benefit from the tutor training program. As outlined by Liamputtong,<sup>88</sup> interpretation of the results of this sequential mixed

methods study required a combined synthesis of the data from each of these two approaches.

### **3.2.1 Pharmacist tutor questionnaire**

A self-completed questionnaire was developed and administered to past, present and potential pharmacist tutors in the JCU Discipline of Pharmacy (Appendix B).

The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions, which were mainly closed or multi-choice questions and included several graded questions using a five-point Likert scale. Several open-ended questions were included to allow for participants to make additional comments.

The potential for bias with the questionnaire responses was considered, with the researcher being known to the majority of respondents and given the small number of participants. It was felt that this potential was minimal, as the respondents were all professional people and understood that their honest responses would enable the development of the most appropriate and effective training program. However, care was taken to ensure a high level of confidentiality with the questionnaire data. Given the small number of past, present and future tutors to which the questionnaire was to be sent (40 tutors in total), it was felt that distribution by mail would yield a higher response rate than an online survey.

#### *The questionnaire was presented in four main sections*

*Section 1* sought to obtain demographic information relating to pharmacist tutors at JCU, in order to determine background experience, skills and knowledge. This would ensure that the training program was relevant and delivered at the appropriate level for the tutors. Details obtained included their history of tutoring at a University level (particularly at JCU), any past participation in tutor training programs, years since graduation, practice experience, and post-graduate qualifications and/or specialisations.

*Section 2* included questions on the role of the pharmacist tutor and the importance of tutor involvement in several areas of pharmacy student education, including extemporaneous dispensing, clinical dispensing, clinical counselling and student assessment.

Section 3 sought to ascertain specific pharmacist tutor requirements for a training program at JCU, including the importance and perceived benefits of a training program and the optimum structure, delivery format (e.g. online, face-to-face, distance learning or various combinations) and content of a training program. The relative importance of content in relation to basic teaching principles, small and large-group teaching, providing effective student feedback, assessment of student performance and dealing with problem students was also sought.

Section 4 sought to determine the existing level of support received by tutors in their current role, in order to identify potential areas for improvement. Suggested support measures included subject-specific tutor meetings, web-based tutor discussion groups, peer mentoring and access to staff development sessions.

The final question (question 24), was an open-ended question inviting additional comments with regard to training and support of pharmacist tutors at JCU.

A full list of names and addresses of past and present pharmacist tutors was obtained from the JCU Discipline of Pharmacy tutor database. This list comprised of 33 pharmacists and included 16 past tutors and 17 present tutors. In addition, the addresses of seven Townsville pharmacists, who had expressed interest in tutoring in the future, were obtained from pharmacy workplaces in the Townsville area. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was pre-tested by three pharmacist tutors to establish an estimated completion time and to ensure clarity and understanding, with minimal risk of ambiguity. These three tutors were also included in the final number to receive the questionnaire. Following the pre-testing procedure, the questionnaire was posted in February 2011 to a total of 40 pharmacist tutors, requesting a return date of 2 weeks.

Each questionnaire was accompanied by:

- An information sheet providing details of the project, the voluntary nature of participation, a confidentiality statement, the estimated time for completion and contact details of the researcher (Appendix C).
- An informed consent form which all participants were asked to sign in order to participate in the study. Tutors were also asked to indicate on this form whether they would be willing to participate in a tutor focus group at a future date (Appendix D).



- In order to ensure confidentiality, a separate envelope was provided for the informed consent form, in addition to a larger postage-paid envelope for return of both the questionnaire and the informed consent form.

To improve the response rate, a reminder letter was sent to all tutors three weeks after the original questionnaire had been distributed (Appendix E).

On receipt of the completed questionnaires, each questionnaire and corresponding informed consent form were numbered consecutively. This numbering system allowed the researcher to more effectively analyse the data, whilst also protecting the anonymity of the respondent. The link between the questionnaires and informed consent forms also ensured that only those tutors that had agreed to participate in a focus group were able to be approached for this purpose.

### **3.2.2 Focus groups**

Results from the tutor questionnaire were used to inform a series of three focus groups involving those who are expected to benefit from a tutor training program: pharmacy students, pharmacist tutors and academic staff. Focus groups have the advantage of allowing for interaction between individual focus group members which can stimulate dynamic discussion of the issues, opinions and concerns of each member and may lead to the identification of additional issues which have not been previously considered by the researcher. The aim of these focus groups was therefore to provide in-depth information to further inform the design and development of a pharmacist tutor training program. It was felt that the selection of representative samples was the most appropriate way to obtain a balance of opinions on the topic of tutor training.

Focus group interviews were semi-structured and of approximately one hour in duration, with each focus group involving between five and seven participants. Similar questions were asked of all three groups to allow for more effective thematic analysis. Appendices F, G and H provide an outline of the proposed questions for each focus group.

*Five main areas for focus group discussion were identified:*

1. The role of pharmacist tutors
2. Past experiences with or as pharmacist tutors
3. Perceived benefits of tutor training

4. Pharmacist tutor training requirements
5. Support for pharmacist tutors

All focus group participants were invited to participate by email with a focus group information sheet attached to the email (Appendices I, J and K). The information sheet provided details of the project, the voluntary nature of participation, a confidentiality statement, an estimated time duration for the focus group and the contact details of the researcher. All three focus groups were audiotaped and a note-taker was also present to take written notes at each session. All focus group participants were required to sign an informed consent form prior to their group interview (Appendix L).

### **3.2.3 Selection of focus group participants**

#### Students

All JCU Pharmacy students enrolled in 2012 were invited to participate in the student focus group (approximately 270 students). A participation incentive was provided in the form of a double movie pass for each student chosen for the focus group. From the 14 students that responded to the invitation, a representative sample of five students was selected based on the criteria of year level, age and gender. Selection was also dependent on student availability for the proposed time and date of the focus group interview.

The potential for student bias with the researcher, as a current lecturer in the Discipline of Pharmacy, being involved in both teaching the selected students as well as conducting the student focus group was considered to be minimal due to the part-time nature of the researcher's position.

The five JCU pharmacy students chosen to participate in the student focus group consisted of four females and one male, which reasonably reflects the male to female ratio of students in the Pharmacy program. At least one student from each of the four years of the degree was chosen and agreed to participate. Unfortunately, the year one student failed to attend on the day, therefore the focus group was conducted with representatives from years two to four.

#### Staff

All pharmacy department academic staff who are responsible for workshops or practicals involving pharmacist tutors were invited to participate in the academic staff

focus group. The group selected consisted of two male and two female lecturers who were at the time involved with tutors in the areas of extemporaneous dispensing, clinical dispensing, clinical counselling, verbal and written assessment and placement marking.

### Tutors

Pharmacist tutors were chosen from the group of 24 pharmacists who responded to the original tutor questionnaire and had also indicated via the informed consent form that they were willing to be involved in a focus group. A representative sample of five pharmacist tutors was chosen, based on the selection criteria of years since graduation, past tutoring experience, qualifications and gender.

The tutor focus group consisted of one male and four female tutors, which also reflects the gender distribution of pharmacist tutors in the JCU Pharmacy program. Three tutors had been tutoring for less than 2 years, while the remaining two had been tutoring for more than five years. While all tutors had experience in community pharmacy, two tutors had also worked in hospital pharmacy and one tutor had broad experience in many areas of pharmacy practice in addition to having a post-graduate qualification. Four of the five tutors had been practising for more than five years, with two having practised for more than 20 years.

#### **3.2.4 Ethics approval**

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007. Therefore, prior to distributing the tutor questionnaire and conducting the three focus groups, human research ethics approval was obtained from the JCU Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Numbers H3959 and H4580 – Appendices M and N).

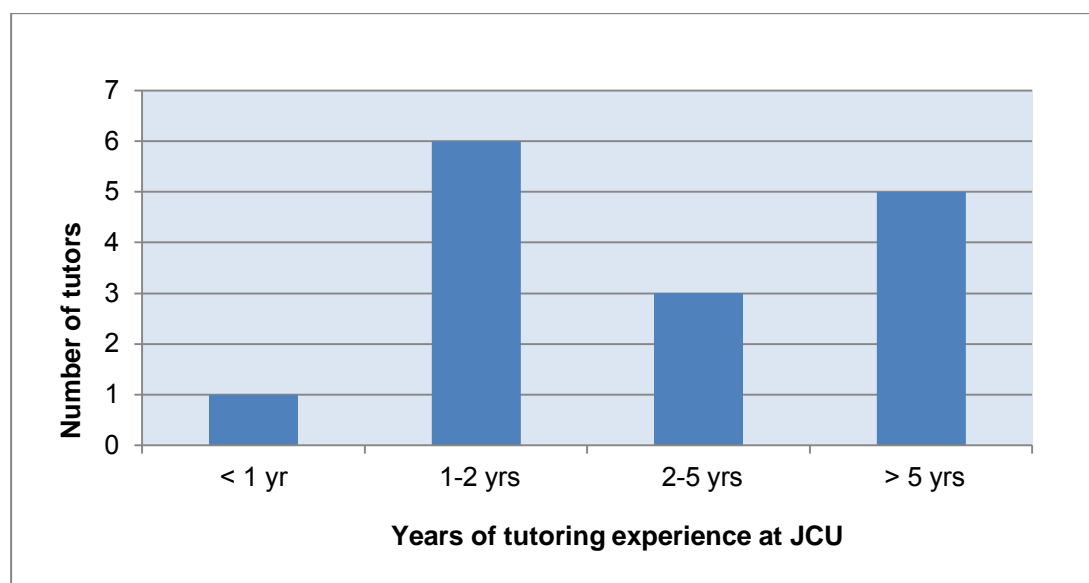
### **3.3 Results and discussion - Tutor questionnaire**

Of the 40 tutor questionnaires distributed, 27 questionnaires were returned, which gave a response rate of 68%, with 89% of these respondents indicating that they would be willing to participate in a tutor focus group at a later date.

#### **3.3.1 Demographics**

In terms of their tutor employment history, 52% of respondents were current JCU tutors, of which just over one third (19%) had been tutoring at JCU for more than five

years. This significant percentage indicates that they are enjoying their tutoring role and are happy with the casual and flexible nature of the position. Figure 3.1 shows the range (in years) of tutoring experience for current JCU tutors.

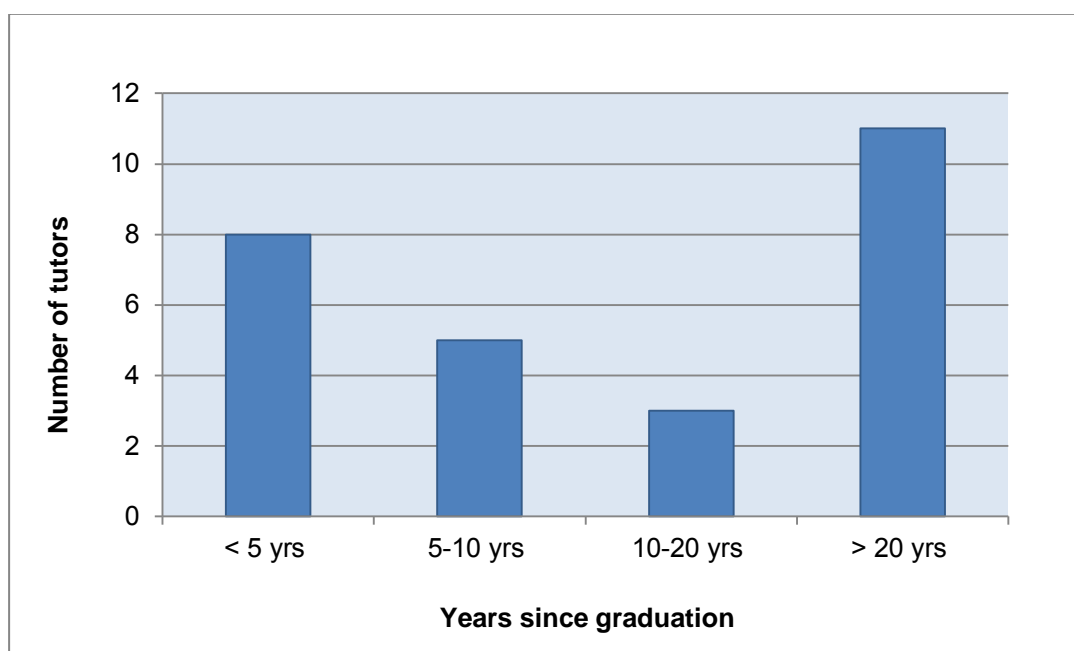


**Figure 3.1** Distribution (in years) of tutor experience (n=27)

Interestingly, of the 13 respondents who were not currently tutoring, 38% (5 respondents) had moved on to lecturing positions at JCU. This concurs with findings that sessional teachers are becoming an increasingly diverse group with varying career aspirations and intentions.<sup>10-12</sup> While some tutors are happy to be employed on a casual part-time basis, a proportion would be categorised as 'aspiring academics' and are thus motivated to progress from a role as a tutor to a full or part-time lecturer. A survey conducted in 2011 across 19 Australian universities and involving 3160 casual academics found that 56% of respondents were aspiring to an academic position, with 24% orientated towards work outside the university sector and 12% being 'casual by choice'.<sup>3</sup> Of the remaining eight questionnaire respondents who were not currently tutoring, seven indicated that they may consider tutoring in the future.

A large majority of tutors (81%) were female, with this percentage well above the estimated Australian average in 2010 of 57% of females in casual academic positions.<sup>12</sup> There may be several reasons for this result. Firstly, this predominance of female tutors may be linked to the part-time nature of the position and the flexible hours, which may be more suited to women who are married and have family responsibilities. In addition, it is well known that Pharmacy is currently a female orientated profession with Pharmacy Board of Australia data from 2013 indicating

that approximately 58% of registered pharmacists in Australia are women.<sup>89</sup> It has also been reported that women form almost two-thirds of the casual academic staff in Australia aged between 25 and 45yrs.<sup>12</sup> 41% of tutors had graduated more than 20 years ago, suggesting that either the tutoring position is more attractive to the experienced pharmacist or that the more experienced pharmacists are more suited to the teaching environment. The additional years in the profession may also have contributed to a greater degree of financial security, which may allow these tutors to comfortably work part-time. It was felt that some of the more experienced tutors were at the stage where they would like to 'give something back' to the profession and perhaps even assist in shaping future pharmacy practice. At the other end of the spectrum, it was also found that a significant proportion of tutors (30%) had graduated less than 5 years ago. It is unclear what has motivated these newer pharmacists to tutor, but perhaps being more recent graduates, they were not ready to sever their link with the university and this was a way of keeping in contact. They may be motivated by a lack of pharmacist positions available in the Townsville area, with the continued supply of new graduates from JCU since 2003 resulting in more pharmacists available in the area and increased competition for jobs. Also, it has been observed that the current generation of graduates often tend to prefer variety in their job and are more likely to have more than one position or work part-time. These more recent graduates may have the advantage of a fresh outlook on the future of the profession and an up-to-date knowledge base. Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of tutors according to the number of years since graduation.



**Figure 3.2** Tutor years since graduation (n=27)

Tutor practice experience showed some variation, with the majority of tutors (93%) having worked in community pharmacy and just under half (44%) having worked in hospital pharmacy. In comparison, 2012 data indicates that 66% of pharmacists in Australia are employed in community pharmacy and 18% in hospital pharmacy.<sup>90</sup> 22% (6 respondents) also had academic experience, whereas only one respondent had worked in the pharmaceutical industry.

In addition to community, hospital and industrial pharmacy, other areas of experience are shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1** Additional areas of practice experience

Experience
Alcohol and drug services
Accredited pharmacist undertaking medication reviews
Accredited pharmacist undertaking medication reviews in nursing homes
Military pharmacy (hospital), defence
Division of general practice role
National Prescribing Service (NPS)

While all respondents had a pharmacy degree, 26% of pharmacist tutors also had postgraduate qualifications and 37% had a particular area of specialisation. Table 3.2 provides further details with respect to the additional qualifications and/or specialisations of tutor respondents.

**Table 3.2** Postgraduate qualifications and areas of specialization

<b>Post graduate qualifications</b>
Australian Associate of Consultant Pharmacists (AACPA) Accreditation
Master of Clinical Pharmacy
Graduate Diploma of Librarianship
Teacher's Certificate
Master of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
Advanced Diploma in Nutritional Medicine
Advanced Diploma in Nutritional Pharmacy
Graduate Diploma of Nutritional Pharmacy
Post Graduate Diploma of Health Promotion
Fellow of Australian College of Pharmacy Practice and Management
Certificate IV workplace training and assessment

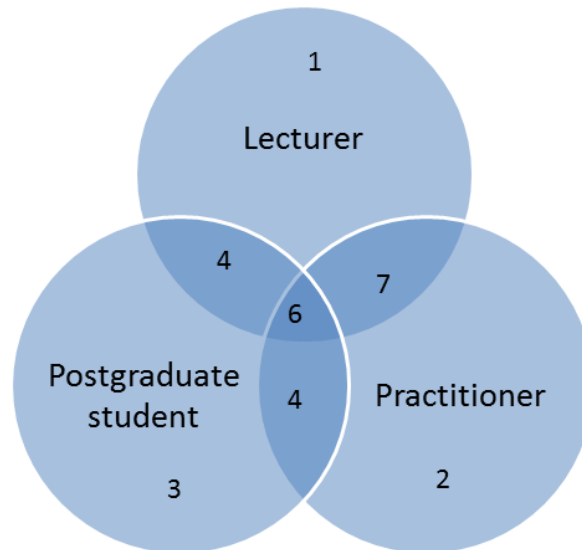
  

<b>Areas of specialization</b>
Alcohol and drug services
Medication reviews
Rural/Aboriginal health
Dermatology
Retail Pharmacy management/ownership
Clinical Pharmacy (surgical)
Community Pharmacy
Diabetes/Geriatric

The diverse range of experience, additional qualifications and specialisations of pharmacist tutors is an obvious advantage to the Discipline of Pharmacy, as it would certainly broaden the scope of teaching and allow pharmacists to tutor across a range of practice areas.

All tutors in the Discipline of Pharmacy at JCU are practicing pharmacists. When questioned on whether tutors in *their* degree were lecturers, postgraduate students or pharmacist tutors, the response was varied. This was expected, given the broad range in number of years since graduation for the respondent group. Variation may also be due to the fact that tutors studied at different universities, with one tutor indicating that they did not study in Australia. Figure 3.3 shows the tutor types

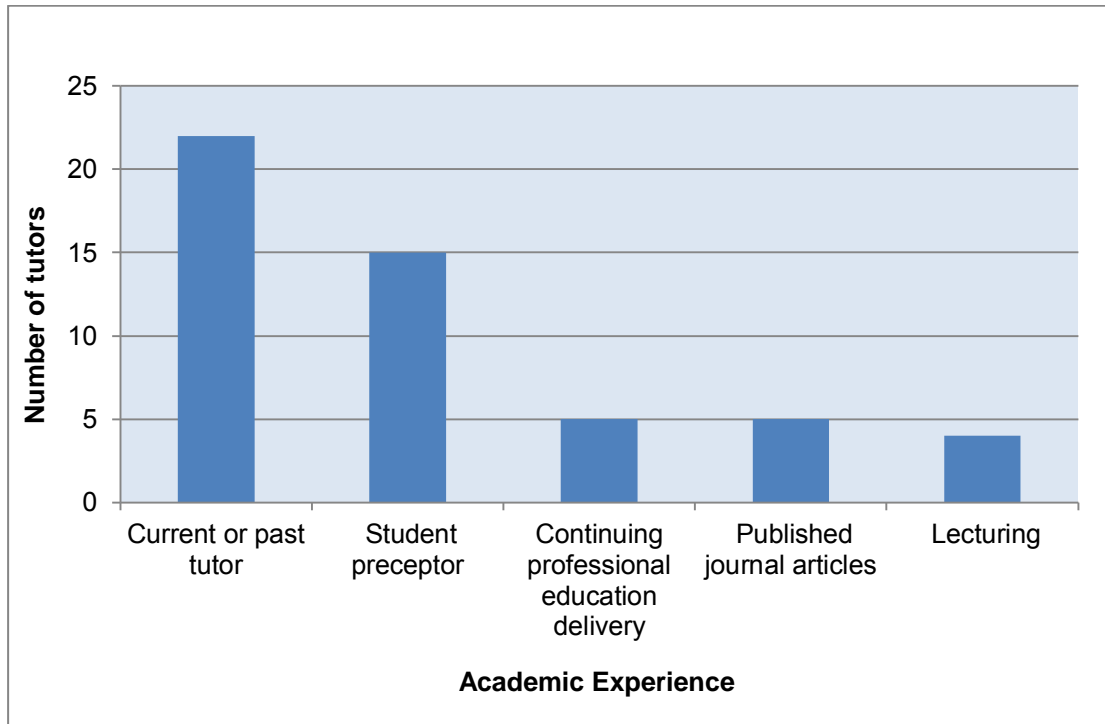
experienced by the respondents during their degree. It was noted that 22% of respondents (6 tutors) indicated that the tutors in their degree included a combination of all three types of tutors.



**Figure 3.3** Tutor types in respondent's degree (n = 27)

It was found that the majority of respondents had some academic experience, mainly as a current or past tutor (81%), or as a student preceptor in the practice (56%). Other academic experiences of respondents included journal publications, clinical educator roles, intern student mentoring and involvement as an assessor for the PSA (Pharmaceutical Society of Australia) intern pharmacy program. Figure 3.4 shows the breakdown of academic experience of the respondents.





**Figure 3.4** Tutor academic experience (n=27)

With regard to participation in previous tutor training, 56% of respondents had been involved in some form of tutor training, with just over half of this group having participated in the JCU general training program for sessional staff (*Teaching at JCU: Sessionals*).

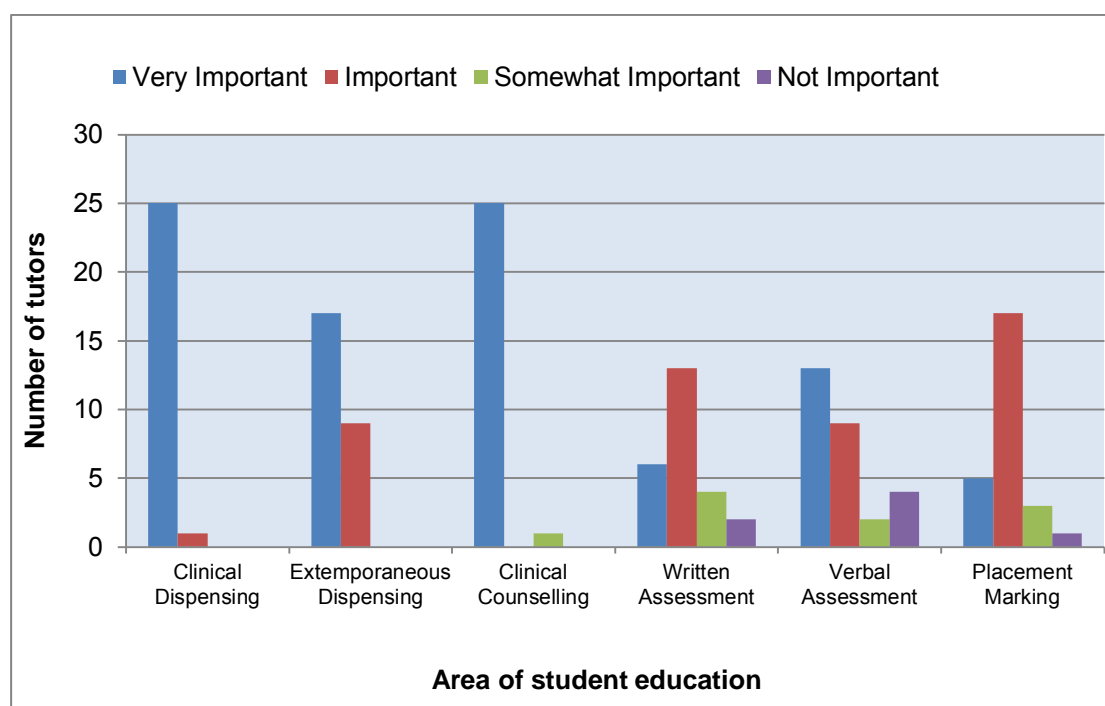
Although attendance at this program was regarded as a condition of ongoing employment, a significant number of past and current tutors (47%) had not attended to date. This finding is similar to that of the JCU RED report of 2009, which indicated that out of a group of 312 sessional staff members at JCU, 55% had not attended the Sessional staff training program. This lack of attendance may be attributed to the short notice of employment and an inability to attend on the allocated day due to other work commitments or child-minding responsibilities. Also to be considered is that some tutors commenced at JCU prior to 2005, before the sessional staff training program was first introduced.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.3.2 Role of the tutor

Questionnaire participants were asked to rate the importance of tutor involvement in six main areas of pharmacy student education at JCU. Results were overwhelmingly positive and indicated that most respondents considered all six areas of tutor involvement to be either very important or important (Figure 3.5).

The most important areas of tutor involvement were considered to be in Clinical Dispensing, Extemporaneous Dispensing and Clinical Counselling. These areas are core components in the Pharmacy curriculum and, importantly, involve the integration and practical application of information across the degree. The involvement of pharmacist tutors in these areas is important to ensure that the JCU Pharmacy degree course remains up-to-date and relevant to current pharmacy practice.

The least important roles for pharmacist tutors were considered to be in assessment. For example, only 19% of respondents considered the marking of placement workbooks to be a very important role for tutors, 65% considered it to be important, while 15% regarded it as somewhat important or not important. This result may be attributed to the concerns raised regarding the quality of marking and the difficulties associated with marking amongst sessional and casual university staff.<sup>39,45,67</sup> The topic of assessment, therefore, was highlighted for discussion in the focus groups.



**Figure 3.5** Role of the pharmacist tutor - areas of importance (n=26)

In addition to the areas in Figure 3.5, participants were also invited to suggest other potential areas for pharmacist tutor involvement. Their responses are listed in Table 3.3 below.

**Table 3.3** Other potential areas of involvement for pharmacist tutors

Areas	Number of respondents
Student placements <i>'Attending student placements'</i> <i>'Preparation for placement'</i> <i>'Community pharmacy tour guide for 1st/2nd year students'</i>	3
<i>'Student mentoring'</i>	2
<i>'All practicals and tutorials for any integrated* subjects where possible'</i>	1
<i>'Pharmacy practice'</i>	1
<i>'Pharmacy management if the course allows it - try to prepare the students for the challenges they will face in their intern year'</i>	1
<i>'Most areas of the course where there is a facility for this e.g. workshops, tutorials'</i>	1
<i>'Assisting student with exam preparation/revision'</i>	1

\* *Integrated subject - a subject where traditionally separate subjects are brought together to provide a co-ordinated understanding of learning material and allow for a more meaningful learning experience. In the JCU Pharmacy curriculum, subjects are taught on the basis of body systems e.g. Respiratory, Cardiovascular, with the aim of linking the diseases, conditions and treatments to the particular body system.*

### 3.3.3 Training program

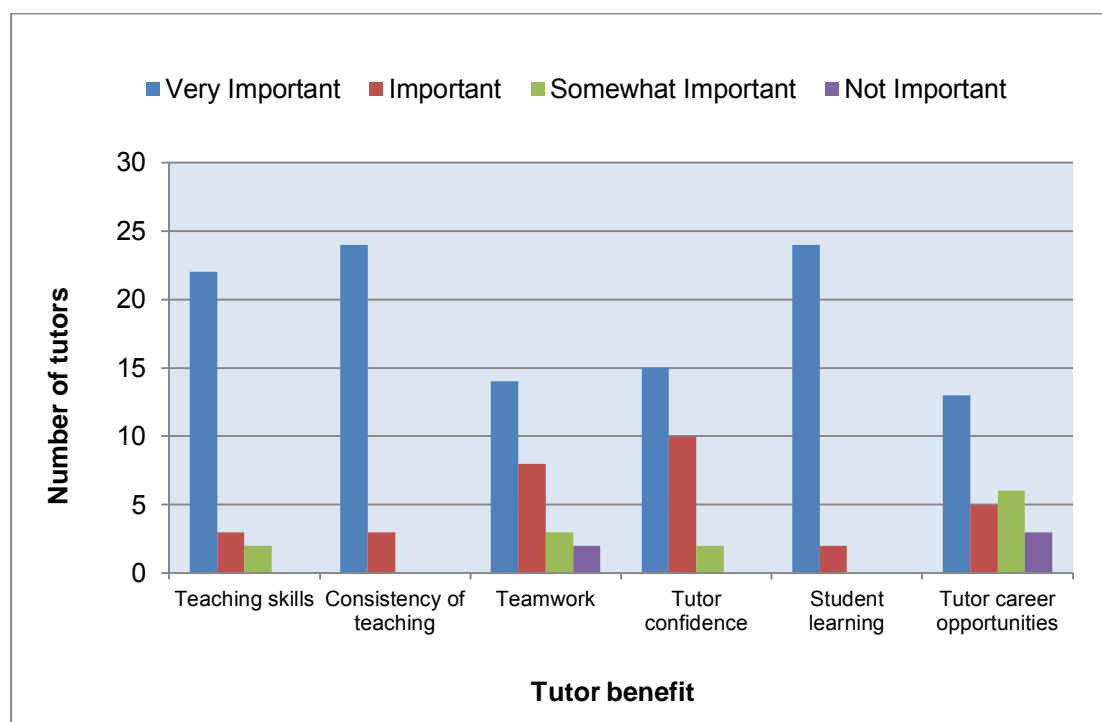
#### *Importance*

The majority of respondents (89%) felt that a tutor training program for the JCU Discipline of Pharmacy was either very important or important, with 78% advocating compulsory attendance for all new tutors. Even if not compulsory, 89% of respondents indicated that they would participate, highlighting the perceived benefits of such a program, even for the experienced tutors.

#### *Benefits*

When considering the potential benefits of a tutor training program, it was felt by the tutors that most important was the enhanced consistency of teaching and enhanced

student learning, with all of respondents indicating that these two benefits were either very important or important. This is consistent with literature reports where the increasing diversity of backgrounds and experiences of sessional staff is making consistency of teaching more difficult to achieve, particularly in the area of assessment and marking.<sup>39</sup> Improvement in teaching skills and improved tutor confidence were also regarded by the majority of respondents (93%) as either very important or important. It should be noted that the positive effects of training on tutor confidence have been well documented.<sup>15,35,59</sup> The least important potential benefit was enhancement of tutor career opportunities (67% very important or important). This is understandable given that this training is related to the process of teaching (or pedagogy) rather than the practice of pharmacy, therefore, the training is more relevant to those tutors who are keen to pursue an academic career. However, the benefits for those tutors who are involved as preceptors for experiential placement students or preregistration pharmacists should be considered. This result also may reflect a degree of marginalisation of sessional staff, as recent literature affirms that while there are pockets of good practice, the process of integration of sessional staff into the culture of universities remains a problem.<sup>5,49</sup> Figure 3.6 represents the respondent's ratings of the benefits of a training program.



**Figure 3.6** Rating of potential benefits of tutor training (n=27)

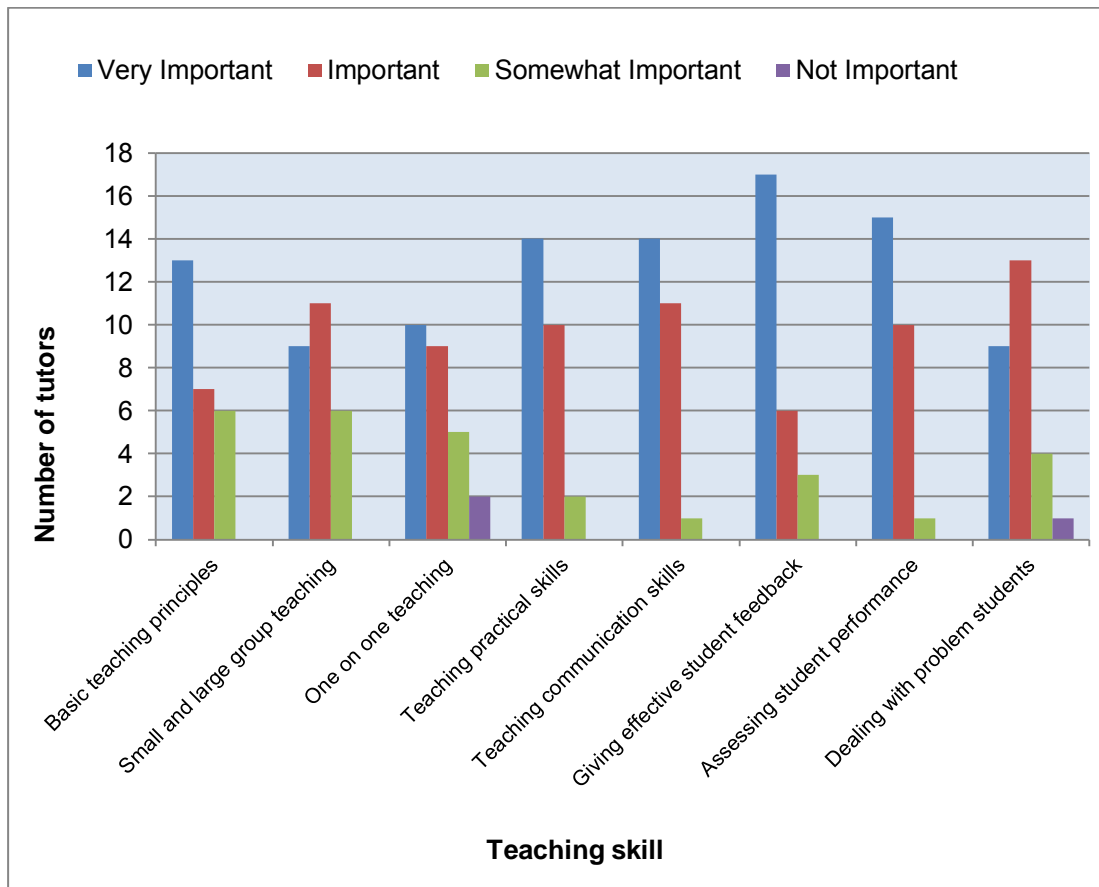
## *Structure*

Respondents were questioned about the ideal structure and format for the tutor training program. In terms of format, most respondents preferred a mixed delivery approach with 85% of respondents opting for a combination of online and face-to-face training, while 11% of respondents preferred face-to-face training alone and 15% chose a distance learning package together with online training. This preference for a combination program is consistent with the findings of several documented training programs.<sup>7,35,69</sup> Regarding frequency of training, the majority of respondents indicated that training should be conducted either once every year or once every semester.

66% of respondents indicated that they would prefer a Discipline-specific orientation and training, as opposed to a general University orientation program. Additionally, 30% of respondents preferred to have both a University-wide and a Discipline-based orientation program. This concurs with findings that while there should be a central university-wide approach to tutor training, the actual design and implementation of tutor training programs should be locally managed and individually tailored to suit the particular Discipline or School.<sup>19,37</sup>

## *Content*

Respondents were asked about the ideal content for a pharmacist tutor training program. Figure 3.7 shows their ratings of the importance of inclusion of a variety of teaching skills.



**Figure 3.7** Content of a pharmacist tutor training program (n = 27)

While all of the eight suggested content areas for a training program achieved high ratings of importance, more than 85% of respondents rated the following four areas as either very important or important

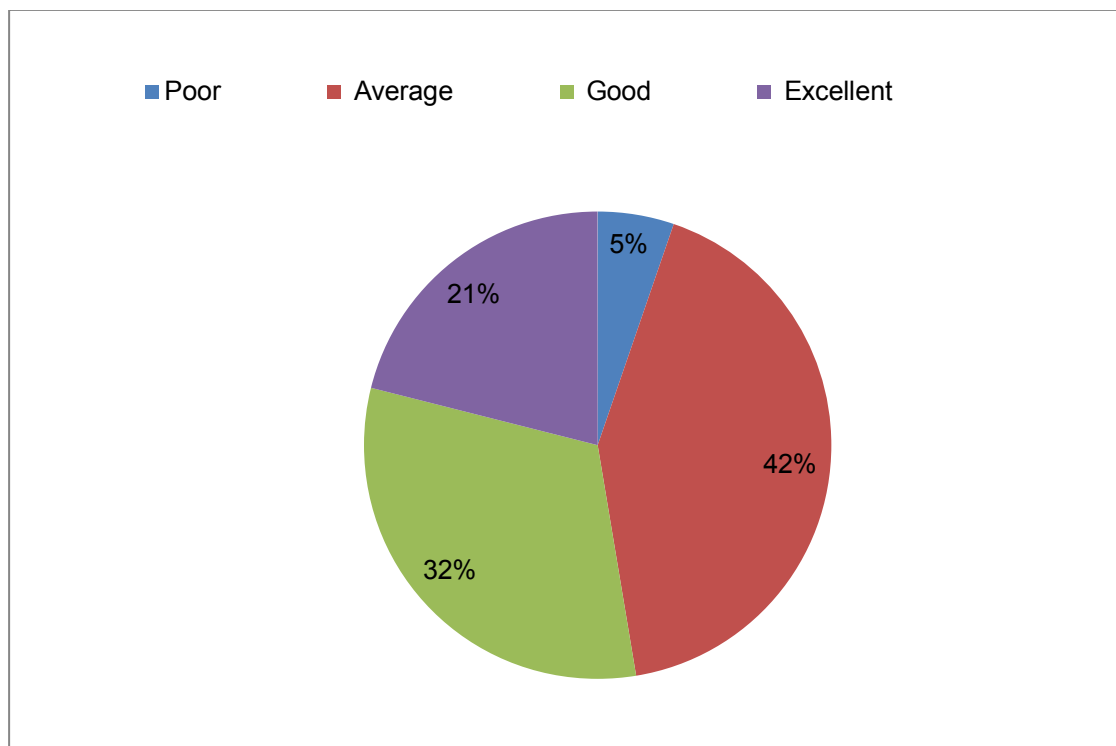
- Assessing student performance
- Teaching communication skills.
- Teaching practical skills
- Giving effective student feedback

Considering the significant role of tutors in the practice areas of the pharmacy program, it is not surprising that the teaching of practical and communication skills has been highlighted as an area for training. Given the concern raised previously with the quality of sessional staff marking and assessment,<sup>39,67</sup> it is encouraging to see that the topic of marking and assessment has been recognised as an area for further training. In addition to the basic teaching skills outlined in figure 3.7, respondents were asked to nominate any additional topics which they would like to cover in the training program. Additional topics requested by respondents included an outline of

the resources available at JCU and their location, as well as the provision of information on referencing styles.

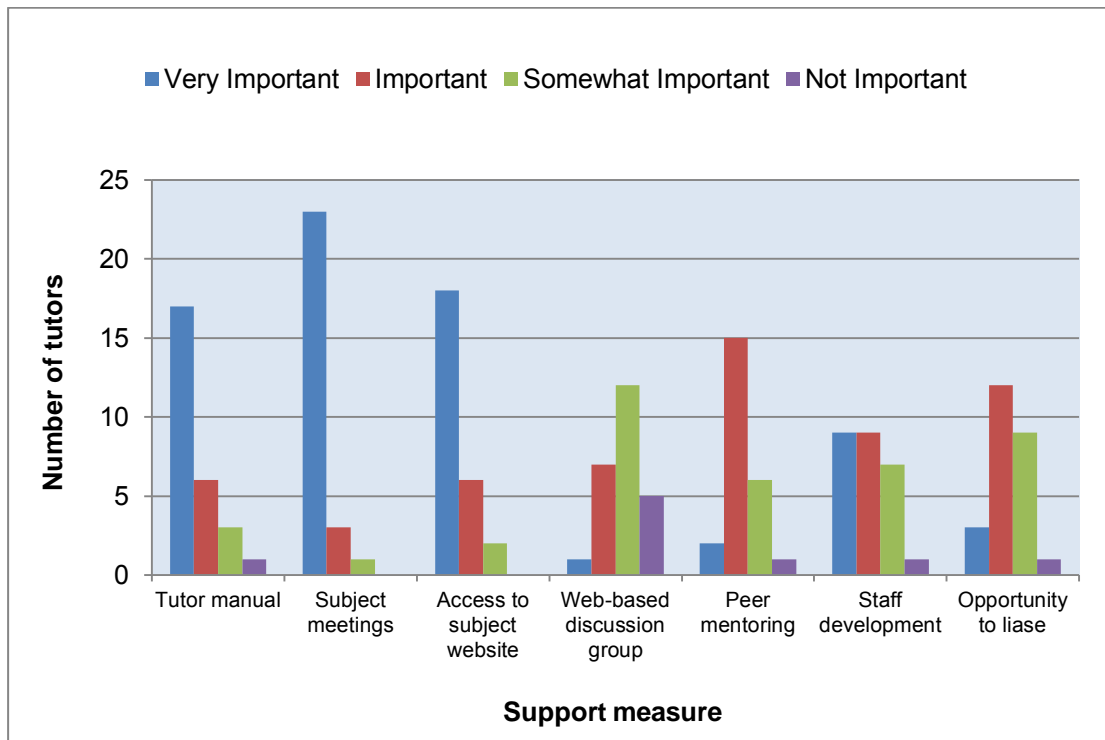
### 3.3.4 Additional support for tutors

As a benchmark, the current level of tutor satisfaction was obtained from the 20 respondents, who were either current or past pharmacist tutors. The range of responses are depicted below in Figure 3.8, with over 50% of respondents rating current support as good or excellent. With 42% of respondents rating current tutor support as average, there is certainly an opportunity to improve this perception.



**Figure 3.8** Current level of support for pharmacist tutors at JCU (n=19)

Respondents were asked to consider and rate the importance of various support measures in order to determine the value of their incorporation into the JCU tutor training program.



**Figure 3.9** Ratings of importance of additional support measures (n = 25)

As evidenced in Figure 3.9, by far the most important means of support was felt to be subject specific meetings with the relevant practical co-ordinator prior to the commencement of the semester, with 96% of tutors agreeing that this was either very important or important. Access to the particular subject website was either very important or important to 92% of tutors. This allows the tutors to access lecture and workshop notes for the particular subject, which informs tutors, enabling them to provide information which is consistent with what students are currently being taught. The least important potential support measure was a web-based community discussion group for tutors with only 32% of tutors rating this as either very important or important.

### **3.4 Results and discussion - Focus groups**

A thematic analysis was performed on the data from each of the five focus group areas for discussion (Refer to Section 3.2.2) based on the thematic analysis methods outlined by Liamputtong<sup>91</sup> and Braun and Clarke.<sup>92</sup> Recordings from all three focus groups were transcribed verbatim. The information from each of the focus group transcriptions was then coded for each of the five discussion areas according to emergent themes. The identified themes for each focus group were then collated for each of the five discussion areas and the results are presented and discussed below.



### 3.4.1 The role of the pharmacist tutor

The role of the tutor was investigated in depth in all three focus groups. This included the current role of tutors at JCU and potential roles in the future. The role of tutors in the first year of university and the potential role as a student mentor were highlighted. All focus groups appeared happy with the current level of involvement of tutors, although several tutors and students admitted that they were unaware of the full extent of involvement of pharmacist tutors in the pharmacy program. With regard to future roles for tutors, it was suggested by two students (years 2 and 3) that tutors could be more involved in workshops and tutorials that were more practice relevant, particularly in the earlier years of the course. Five themes emerged from the focus group discussions as key roles of pharmacist tutors:

#### **Theme 1: Support**

All three focus groups highlighted the role of the tutor as support for not only the student, but also for the academic staff. While the presence of tutors was thought to be important in all practical sessions, it was felt that there should still be a member of academic staff supervising each session. Academic staff suggested that they saw the tutor's role as assisting students to understand, as well as expanding on material covered in the lectures and relating it to the practice. Tutors may also assist in the supervision of workshops, practicals and placement activities in addition to potentially identifying problem students. The use of tutors as supervisors for the first year community pharmacy placement was thought to be particularly useful when visiting a busy pharmacy.

*'So to provide assistance to the lecturer running the practical classes and then ..... help out when needed for questions from the students to keep them on track' [Tutor - Male 1]*

*'Primarily, as a support to the academic who's running the session' [Staff - Female 1]*

*'Just to provide that support because there is only a certain number of lecturers that can do something at once and in the lecture they can, you know, deliver to a whole class at once, but when you need to get on that individual basis and talk to people, you just need to expand on that stuff.' [Student - Male Year 3]*

## **Theme 2: Individual or small group contact**

It was felt that the presence of tutors increased the 'teacher to student' ratio thus allowing for more opportunities for individual or small-group contact and a more personal learning experience. One student (*Female – Year 3*) commented that in the practicals, the environment was more informal and it was easier to ask questions. Another student (*Female – Year 2*) enjoyed the opportunity to have immediate feedback from tutors as it consolidated their learning. One tutor (*Female 1*) suggested that many students preferred to ask questions of someone who was not assessing them.

*'.....having the amount of tutors that we do is very important because there's some people that need more help than others and I think people could get a bit left behind if they didn't have that support from the tutors'[Tutor – Female 3]*

*I reckon it's more you can have a more personal ....like learning experience ..... there's less people around you and you feel more comfortable to be able to ask and to learn that way.'* [*Student - Female Year 3*]

Research has indicated that students in their first year may find it easier to relate to a tutor rather than a lecturer.<sup>7,20</sup> While two students (*Male Year 3 and Female Year 2*) agreed, another student (*Female Year 4*) contradicted this statement, saying that they found it easier to speak to the lecturer due to the increased contact time spent with the lecturer. This can be explained by both the age of the lecturer concerned (being a younger staff member of similar generation to the student) and the fact that the particular lecturer, in their role as the first year coordinator, spends time establishing a relationship with this year cohort. Another staff member mentioned that some first year students might be intimidated by certain tutors and that this may be addressed by tailoring tutors to suit the needs of the first year class. Unfortunately, this could not be corroborated as the first year student did not attend the focus group.

*'I think you have to tailor your tutors to the year groups that you've got ....., so you've got to have those tutors in the first and second year to be really quite accessible to them so that they don't feel like 'Oh well, this person's sort of – I'm scared of them'* [*Staff - Male 2*]

## **Theme 3: Link to the practice**

Students, staff and tutors all agreed that a crucial role of pharmacist tutors was in linking the information provided at university to the practice. The involvement of pharmacist tutors was therefore thought to be important particularly in areas relating to pharmacy practice. Whereas many of the lecturing staff had not practised for a number of years, all tutors were also practising pharmacists and their involvement

has helped to bring current knowledge and practice to the students, while also providing supplementary information to non-practising academic staff.

*'...it's like a link between what we're learning and actual pharmacy practice, so like, 'cos' they are practising pharmacists, it's sort of like, it's what they do every day, day in and day out....'* [Student - Female Year 2]

*'And as a non-practising academic now, I think it is useful to have that input of what is currently happening sort of day to day in, say, community pharmacy or hospital pharmacy because I'm just not there, um, anymore, so it's nice to have that sort of input so that you are not just purely teaching them theoretical stuff, you are able to give them some sort of background into the practice as well.'* [Staff - Male 2]

*'...being able to pass on experience to the students is very important....'* [Tutor – Female 3]

*'...and to provide practical knowledge about what actually happens in practice as well.'* [Tutor - Female 1]

Tutors have also assisted by providing and reinforcing practice relevance to the students, which may make them think 'outside the box' about the materials provided by the lecturers. One academic staff member (Staff - Male 2) felt that 'older' pharmacists were particularly useful in extemporaneous dispensing as they tended to have more training in this area in their degree course than more recently graduated pharmacists. Another academic staff member (Staff – Female 1) also commented on the fact that pharmacist tutors assist the students in building a sense of professionalism. Literature has supported this view that practising pharmacists as teacher-practitioners are often seen by students as a role-model for the profession and can assist in the development of professionalism.<sup>4</sup> As students do not undertake clinical placement until the later years of the course, it was felt by some staff members that this tutor input was particularly important in the first year of the program.

*'I think the students sometimes like to see the relevance of what they're doing and where they're going and .... So I think, particularly having pharmacists working in the community coming in reinforces that'* [Tutor – Female 4]

*'... I think in the younger years definitely tutors should be more involved because you only see them for that 3 hour prac or something like that. And then I think in the actual tutorials it would be good to have a few other tutors go round to the tables and to speak to the students about what they are doing and the relevance of it, especially in the practice – that would be good. In my first year, I sort of didn't understand how this was relevant to what I'm actually going to do as a pharmacist later on.'* [Student - Female Year 3]

*I suspect that the pharmacist tutors that come in actually don't realise what they are bringing by bringing the profession into the lab and to communicate to them that they're part of the student's professional development, that they are picking up on how to ultimately behave and function as a professional by watching them. And they don't realise how much that happens. [Staff – Female 1]*

According to the academic staff focus group, the unique value of pharmacist tutors is that because of their link with the practice, they bring something different to the student experience that cannot be obtained from the academic staff alone.

*'Yeh, so if they're validating the fact that they're coming in and we've got a budget for tutors and if that's not happening, then that budget can be spent .....if they're not getting something different out of it – so consistency is really important but you've also got to be getting something .....*' [Staff - Male 2]

*'.....a little bit different out of them that ..... you wouldn't get from just putting academics in there.'* [Staff – Male 2]

*'But I think that little bit of difference is merely inherent in them being pharmacists.'* [Staff - Female 1]

#### **Theme 4: Different ways of teaching**

The fact that the pharmacist tutors bring their varied experiences and backgrounds, including their educational background, to the program, has been of great benefit. This is thought to assist in broadening the practice-based content of the JCU Pharmacy program, particularly in the clinical dispensing and extemporaneous dispensing practicals and lead to the development of well-rounded graduates.

*Well, I think it's a supplement. I think it's not meant to replace the person who's running it. I think it's just meant to .....bring in some new ideas and some fresh ways of looking at things for the students, so that they're not simply getting one opinion. They might through the course of, say, the prac, say, with two tutors, say, get three different ways of looking at a particular problem or issue.'* [Staff – Male 2]

*'..... having varied tutors you get varied experiences coming into that, as consequently students see all different aspects, that varied experience from the tutor's past experience'* [Staff – Male 1]

*'As a graduate of this program, as a tutor in the program and now a lecturer in the program, I got a lot out of having the tutors when I was a student, I got a lot out of tutoring and then you appreciate more the role that the tutors do play, because you've seen it and .....it was nice having three or four different opinions sometimes because when I got to practice, it was like there's no black and white, it's all grey.'* [Staff – Male 2]

## Theme 5: Tutors as student mentors

By definition, a mentor does not actually teach but is there to advise or guide the student.<sup>41</sup> While there was some initial confusion as to the exact role of pharmacist tutors as mentors, the concept of tutor-student mentoring was considered, particularly by the students, to be potentially useful. A 2007 Australian study suggested that mentoring may assist in bridging the gap between the university and the profession and promote enthusiasm for the profession. The study involved the development of a pilot mentoring program between young pharmacists and pharmacy students. While evaluation response rates were low, it was found that the program was anecdotally effective in terms of providing psychosocial support and career guidance.<sup>93</sup>

The student focus group discussed the current use of peer mentoring in the residential colleges with higher year students mentoring lower years, a process which two of the students have found very beneficial. One student suggested that pharmacist tutors as mentors may have the advantage of being more approachable, as higher year students often had their own study to do and did not always have as much time for lower year students. It was felt that group mentoring may be more useful than individual, particularly in allowing first year students to touch base with other first year students which in turn enabled them to better adjust to the university environment and keep up with their studies. Pharmacist-mentors may also assist by provide some indication of the relevance of first year subjects to later years of study and to the practice.

*'The idea of mentors is good, especially for 1<sup>st</sup> year – I remember in first year I didn't know anyone else so I didn't know how everyone was progressing academically, so would be a good way to touch base on what sort of level that you're at and to do that progressive study ..... I know that in first year, you just left everything until swot week to study and it can get a bit overwhelming. This way, you can meet once a week and see how you are progressing and stay up to date with study. "' [Student – Female Year 3]*

*'..... my Uni (Note: student did not do year 1 at JCU) had peer mentors assigned in the first week - could meet up with your mentor, but found that because they were a student, although it made them more approachable, in some ways they were less approachable as they had their own study to do and wanted to hang around with their own friends – so if the mentor were a professional, would probably be more likely to approach them and it's, like, their job – however, they would have to be chosen very carefully.' [Student – Female Year 2]*

Academic staff felt that while mentoring may be useful, it was important for it to have a specific purpose and be controlled by a standard set of guidelines.

*'I think it might be good - I think though, it would need to have a particular aim. So that idea of perhaps professionalism, where they have a bit of a role in developing their sense of professionalism so if there was an actual aim ..... I think that could be beneficial.....'* [Staff - Female 1]

*I think as long as there's very set guidelines, ... I think you'd have to have a fairly even playing field in so far as the amount that the tutor's prepared to put in and then the ability then to deliver it to the students because I think if you've got them spending that one on one time with the students, you're going to need it to be sort of fairly standard across all the different groups....* [Staff – Male 2]

Pharmacist tutors were of the opinion that mentoring may particularly benefit those students who do not work part-time in a pharmacy by improving their confidence levels. If mentoring was to be developed, both staff and tutors agreed that remuneration would be necessary for pharmacists willing to undertake the role, and regular meetings would be essential.

*[Re. student assistance from pharmacist mentors] 'It's a big confidence issue – it's not so much what they know, it's just their confidence, they think they're losing out because they don't work in a pharmacy .... But if they had that assistance ....'* [Tutor - Female1]

*'There would have to be some regularity to it...'* [Tutor – Male 1]

*'I think maybe to get a workforce to do that you'd have to look at remuneration for that in some way..... I don't think there's enough retired pharmacists that'd do it'* [Tutor – Female 2]

### **3.4.2 Experiences with or as tutors**

The majority of members of the student and academic staff focus groups had very positive experiences with tutors, although it was noted that there was a variety of experiences and interactions due to the range of tutor backgrounds and attitudes. From the perspective of the tutors, although working with students was enjoyable and rewarding, training may assist in improving confidence in teaching and managing students.

#### **Theme 1: A wide range of tutor experiences**

While students' overall impression of pharmacist tutors was good, it was noted that experiences varied depending on the different tutor attributes such as enthusiasm, confidence, communication skills, ability to motivate students and pedagogical style. Tutors in general were found to be enthusiastic and helpful in motivating students.

They seemed to enjoy their job and be good at offering appropriate explanations. It was found that some tutors were more enthusiastic than others and that because of this students would often establish a relationship with a particular tutor. Tutors were found by the students to be particularly helpful in the Year 3 practicals and workshops, being described as confident and interactive, with good communication skills. They were thought to help motivate students by relating the University experience back to the practice.

*'I had a really good experience with my tutors in the Extemp. Pracs [Extemporaneous Practical] – they want to be there and want to help and don't just give you the answer but ask you questions to help you figure it out for yourself and that's how you learn better.'* [Student – Female Year 2]

*'It is the personality of the tutors that can make them a good tutor or not a good tutor. A tutor being a lot more friendly does go a long way rather than someone being really intelligent and not being able to communicate well.'*[Student - Female Year 3]

On the negative side, while students regarded the tutors in counselling practicals as quite confident, some tutors were thought to be not as confident in the area of extemporaneous dispensing. One student (Female Year 3) noted that there can be problems with communication if the tutor does not speak good English i.e. if they are not from an English speaking background.

*'..... in the Extemp Pracs, there were a few tutors who did not speak much – found it difficult to ask them 'Is this OK ? 'Is there something wrong with this?' 'How can I improve?' When coming round to mark, they would just look at it and sign off and no feedback or anything.'* [Student – Female Year 3]

*'Some [tutors] are more helpful than others'* [Student – Female Year 4]

*'.....sometimes you get the tutor who is really 'out there', they're really enthusiastic and they want to help you learn as much as possible, but some have been there and they don't want to be there and you feel like you don't want to go to them because they'll yell at you or something because you don't know how to do it because you haven't learnt that and that's why you're here.'* [Student – Female Year 4]

*'The main issue with tutors is when they don't speak English very well – they'll understand what you say but there's that gap you have to bridge in trying to understand what they say.'* [Student – Female Year 3]

Personal experiences of academic staff members with tutors varied amongst focus group participants, with a range of interactions observed between tutors and students in practical classes. Some tutors tended to provide the students with information or answers without discussion, while others tended to take a more pedagogical

approach and talk the students through their questions or problems. The need for tutor training in this area was identified. In general, tutors were found by the staff to be enthusiastic and able to motivate students. It was noted, however, that some students are very difficult to motivate, with their main object being to go through the process of the practical, with or without tutor input.

*'..... I tend to see a range of [tutor] interactions with the students, so if they have a problem and they're asking them (tutors) a question, so a range of approaches to that – so there will be tutors who will, I guess, do it for them on their write-up sheet and then there will be the tutors who say 'go away, do that by yourself' 'go and find out by yourself'. So there can be a real range in the level of assistance that is given, ah, and I think either way sometimes is appropriate but it's sort of like 'the golden average' isn't it, we're looking for something, you know, a happy medium in the middle, so I see a real range.'* [Staff – Female 1]

From the academic staff perspective, it was found that some tutors did not always adhere to the standard practical procedures and tried to include their own ideas into the practical session. This tended to create confusion for the students and undermine the authority of some of the academic staff members. On the other hand, some tutors were too submissive and lacked initiative, which did not bring any added value to the sessions.

*'I've found sometimes that some of the tutors that have got significantly more experience than I have, from a practice standpoint, so more years of doing it, are sort of saying 'this is the way we should do things' and I'm always happy to take advice on these sort of things, but at the end of the day, it's still my call as the person running the program.* [Staff – Male 2]

*'I've experienced, as (Male 2) was saying, the tutor type who does want to run the show ..... but I've actually also had the other extreme which is the submissive tutor who doesn't show any initiative whatsoever and, sort of, is very ..... I'm here almost as an automaton, whatever X says 'goes', um, without bringing in anything extra to the experience of the tutors, which, I think is just as detrimental, in terms of not what we want. Um, so I don't know how we would go about getting that 'golden average' in terms of, you know, interaction but not 'taking over'* [Staff – Female 2]

*[Re tutor confidence]: '..... I think it's an experience issue – the more they do it, the more confident, the more comfortable they feel. So initially I guess, for some of them, it's a foreign experience.....and I think that some of them get a little intimidated because the students will question them, will make them think as much as they're making the students think. I think that can be a little draining on someone's confidence when you're initially doing it.....but as you get more confidence in doing it, it becomes more of an easy process.'* [Staff – Male 2]



## **Theme 2: A rewarding role that may improve with training**

Tutor focus group participants described some very positive experiences as pharmacist tutors. They seemed to enjoy working with the students and found that most students were easy to motivate and wanted to listen and learn. Tutors found it rewarding to see the end result, when students go on placement or commence their intern year. Tutors also commented that, in terms of support, the lecturers were good at making them feel part of the teaching team. This positive feedback is encouraging as, while the literature supports a team approach for optimal student learning and engagement, it is evident that this does not always occur.<sup>6,46,49</sup>

*'I like being a tutor, I like talking to students, so I like teaching.....'* [Tutor Female 1]

*'I found it difficult, initially, because of my lack of teaching experience, I think, and probably lack of confidence as well, when I first started.....but I loved it, I loved working with the students, I've really really enjoyed working with the young students ..... and I've seen lots of them go through now and, um, seen the end result and I think it's, you know, it's been great to be part of that.'* [Tutor – Female 4]

*'I really enjoy it – I love teaching..... yeh, really positives' ... 'it's great to be able to teach what you know, so, and people actually want to listen'* [Tutor – Male 1]

*'I think the lecturers are very good in making you part of the teaching team, you know, they support you, they help you with preparation'* [Tutor – Female 4]

Those tutors who were ex-JCU students, as may be expected, found the transition to tutoring quite easy, however, this was not the case for non-JCU graduates who did not know what to expect when they first started in their role. This certainly justifies the need for a training program to improve teaching skills and confidence levels. Tutors mentioned very few negative experiences in their interaction with students, apart from the occasional argumentative student.

*'I found it difficult, initially, because of my lack of teaching experience, I think, and probably lack of confidence as well, when I first started, um, so perhaps this is where I see what you're doing as really beneficial, because if I'd had a little bit more training at the beginning, I think I ....would have felt more comfortable.....'* [Tutor – Female 4]

*'The only thing I've had problems with, which was one time this semester, was a few students that were quite argumentative and difficult (laughs), quite difficult and – just one little group that we all had turns with but, um, I think I was confronted that day as to exactly how to deal with that - I wasn't quite sure and did the best I could, but, yeh, I didn't have the experience probably'* [Tutor – Female 2]

### Theme 3: Problems with assessment and marking

Assessment was thought to be a problem area for both tutors and academic staff. This concurs with the literature on this topic which suggests that achieving consistency in marking and assessment may be difficult and that both permanent and sessional staff may benefit from training.<sup>39,67</sup> As it was not thought to be appropriate to question students in depth on this topic, they were not included in this area of discussion. However, the involvement of tutors in assessment and marking was briefly touched on by the student focus group. Although it was found that students were often unaware of the extent of involvement of tutors in marking and assessment, they noted that in general, they had not experienced any inconsistencies in tutor marking for the pharmacy-based subjects, unlike their experience with assessment and marking in several service-taught subjects (e.g. chemistry and biochemistry) in the program.

*'Sometimes there probably could be variations in how a tutor marks, but there would most likely be slight variations but there has never been any unfairness at all.'* [Student – Female Year 3]

Academic staff in general considered the area of assessment and marking to be problematic for tutors, as it was felt that tutors lacked the necessary experience and training in this area. It was suggested that they may require additional training and experience to appropriately perform this task. This became apparent in tutor marking, especially in the lower years, where it was found that tutor expectations were often unrealistic in relation to the year-level of study. It was felt that tutor marking in a pass or fail assessment such as the marking of placement workbooks was a more acceptable role than actual grading of written or verbal assessment.

*'I think that's [marking] probably the most problematic area for me because I think that their [the tutors] expertise is in the professional aspect and I think that to do marking, ah, takes a bit more experience and training and I think that's a difficult area to get them into, um, because I think that they might mark, say, a first year piece of work thinking that they should be a practising pharmacist.'* [Staff – Female 1]

*'Probably too high an expectation of the students in the marking'* [Staff - Male1]

*'But I also see it the other way in that some of the tutors are not discerning enough and I've seen it from level 1 all the way to level 4 where obviously there is that difference in terms of what you'd be looking for, but sometimes, its, they're just not willing to give them a 'not really well done', not willing to be discerning between good, really good, not so great and bad !'* [Staff – Female 2]

*'The problematic part of the placement marking is that it varies from tutor to tutor – what they're marking, their perception. But then, I always like to look at the whole average of the marking to see if it's consistent across the board.'* [Staff - Male 1]

*'.....giving feedback is sometimes hard for the tutors, probably something that you would want to talk about [in a training program]– marking and then providing feedback, so not just pats on the back but then also the ability to say 'you really need to work on this area' [Staff – Male 2]*

From the point of view of the pharmacist tutor, participants discussed several problem areas of assessment and marking, including a lack of confidence in their ability to mark appropriately and consistently, particularly in verbal communication assessment, and the need for further guidance as to what was expected of them in the area of assessment. Although marking by tutors allows for more comprehensive class assessment, it was considered important to provide marking training and guidelines to ensure consistency. One tutor suggested that having academic staff available for support was helpful if the tutor was unsure or in borderline cases.

*'I found it difficult in the OTC subject (PC3102 – Health Care for Pharmacists - refer to Appendix N) .....because there was quite a few tutors, you didn't know how the other tutor was assessing ... so 'is everyone marking the same?' or are we not ?'* [Tutor – Female 1]

*'I think you need a lot of guidance [with marking] .... Because we're all very different in how we view something and ....there have to be guidelines that we have to adhere to and ..... I mean, I certainly, it's such a long time since I've done an exam that I wouldn't really quite know what's expected ....'* [Tutor – Female 4]

*'But the marking's still important ... there's no way everyone can get as many assessments as they do in, particularly the counselling pracs if just the lecturer in charge does it.'* [Tutor – Male 1]

### **3.4.3 Perceived benefits of tutor training**

#### **Theme 1: Confidence and teaching consistency**

Both the tutor and academic staff focus groups were of the opinion that the main benefits of tutor training would be improved consistency of teaching and improved tutor confidence, which would subsequently allow for more effective interaction with students. As previously mentioned, there is much literature to support the benefits of tutor training programs in improving confidence levels.<sup>7,15,35,59</sup> On the subject of teaching consistency, it is logical to conclude that the increasing diversity of sessional staff may have an effect on consistency of teaching and that training may be a way of addressing this.

*'I just think it's also a confidence issue for the tutor. I think if you give them the opportunity to give them a bit of training, they might feel more confident than in interacting with students' [Staff – Male 2]*

*Because I think that sometimes a concern is you hope.... You know you're teaching them the way you think they should be taught, but then at the back of your mind, it's like 'Well, is this how everyone else does it or ..... am I on another page here?' [Tutor – Female 3]*

*'You'd have consistent results then, if they do a training, 'cause' then they should all be on the same page basically, so the students would then get, you know, consistent information.'* [Staff – Male 1]

## **Theme 2: Enhanced teaching skills**

Whereas in the past, teaching was considered to be an innate skill, both tutor and academic staff focus group participants agreed that training in areas of educational theory may improve tutor teaching skills. While their practice experience may provide the tutors with a good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, it was felt that training may further refine and develop pedagogical skills and enhance tutor teaching effectiveness.

*'...I would imagine that there would be those who are good with interns who will be very good with students because they have the ability to teach, but I think teaching is something that you still need to be taught ....' [Staff – Male 2]*

*'To be able to break things down for a learner and sometimes, if you have been working in an area for a long time, it's quite difficult to do, but it's dissecting that back down, I think that's another skill.'* [Staff – Female 1]

*'...and I think the students know good teaching and don't like to be told it's a 'sink or swim' attitude.....' [Staff – Female 2]*

## **Theme 3: Recognition, Enhancement, Development**

Tutors also thought that training would lead to improved recognition of their role and enhance their credibility as academic staff members. It was also felt that official recognition of training may provide tutors with more opportunities for future employment. While the enhancement of career opportunities was regarded by the tutor questionnaire respondents as the least important benefit of a tutor training program, it should be noted that more than 50% of tutors regarded it as very important or important.

*'If there was official training, it would probably be more recognised as a skill' [Tutor – Male 1]*

*'I think it's also really good for the school itself that ..... the fact that the tutors are almost ..... 'qualified'.... I guess, to teach and to have that behind them, um, yeh, I just think, it's just that little bit extra - it gives the tutors more confidence but it's also, I guess, you know, it's not just someone walking off the street and straight into a room.'* [Tutor - Female 3]

#### **3.4.4 Pharmacist tutor training requirements**

Again, the above topic was not considered appropriate to discuss with students, therefore the opinions of only academic staff and pharmacist tutors were obtained. The structure and content areas for an ideal tutor training program were discussed.

##### **Theme 1: Program Structure and format**

The structure and format of the tutor training program was discussed with the tutor focus group only. The majority of participants favoured a School rather than a whole-of-University based program, due to the specific skills set required for their particular role in the pharmacy degree program. All tutor respondents agreed that attendance at the training program should be a condition of ongoing employment. The program should be delivered to all new tutors at the beginning of every year as one face to face session of approximately four hours duration. The JCU general induction, which tutors are currently required to attend, was felt overall to be not applicable and unrelated to their role as tutors, but may be useful for such information as pay claims. In addition to face to face training, the development of an online website was thought to be a useful tool, mainly for the process driven tutor information.

*[Location of training] 'Definitely school based.....with the very specific skill set required to tutor these groups effectively .... I remember doing the required induction [university based] to tutoring and it was completely unrelated to what we were going to be doing here.....'* [Tutor – Male 1] **[ALL AGREE]**

*[Program length] 'I was thinking about 4 [hours], I'm thinking about half a day'* [Tutor - Female 2]

*[On-line training] 'I sort of see it just for the very process driven things that you have to do .....*' [Tutor – Female 2]

*[On-line training] 'It would probably be, you know, background information that we could learn ourselves or look at ourselves before coming to the face to face training, so that you've got the background already there, we're not having to necessarily repeat all of it'* [Tutor – Female 3]

## Theme 2: Induction

For the tutors, an important part of induction was thought to be an overview of the pharmacy degree program, in order to put their tutoring role into perspective. An orientation to the particular subject and relevant preparatory training was also considered to be useful.

*'...it's really important to get an idea of the course and so, and to know where the subject that you're teaching fits into the over.....'* [Tutor – Female 2]

*'And when they learn different things because you might ask them a question and they haven't covered that subject yet.'* [Tutor – Female 1]

*'Yeh, and what expectation, like, 3<sup>rd</sup> year OTC, you can't expect them to know everything.'* [Tutor – Male 1]

*'.....before anybody starts anything .....then I'd really like, if you're doing a specific subject, to have a bit of an orientation to that subject and training around what you actually need for that subject as well'* [Tutor – Female 2]

## Theme 3: Teaching and communication skills

Both staff and tutor focus group participants believed that basic teaching skills, particularly communication skills, would be an important component of a training program. Information on marking and assessment was also considered by both groups to be essential to a tutor training program, particularly the inclusion of information on how to achieve consistency in marking.

*'.....we probably need to know how you teach communication because that's not in the, sort of, lesson preparation that we get but, you know, how do you teach that counselling skill, how do you teach that communication – sort of similar, or how do you teach that calculation to the student?'* [Tutor – Female 2]

*'.....questioning techniques definitely and, um, we talked earlier about motivating the students - there are certain interactive styles which draw out and motivate students and encourage students to learn, um, I think that would be essential.'* [Staff – Female 1]

*'Um, I suppose I remember when I was first involved in assessment and marking, you know, I suppose I did have a lack of confidence about how you .... I mean, I think that's one where, if tutors are going to be involved, they do need a lot of training around, you know, there needs to be support about .....for them do be able to do that'* [Tutor – Female 2].

*'I think assessment's got to be in there – talking to other people, that seems to be the biggest bugbear, is that they're either not marking to the criteria....'* [Staff – Male 2]

Academic staff considered that a refresher on the background to extemporaneous dispensing would be beneficial for the tutors. Extemporaneous dispensing is in many ways a specialization for pharmacists, as it is not routinely performed in practice, resulting in all pharmacists not necessarily being up-to-date with current compounding practice.

Information on appropriate provision of student feedback and on the management of problem students would also be considered a useful component of a training program. Academic staff discussed the specific role of tutors in dealing with problem students (e.g. students with language problems). It was felt that the tutor's role in this area is more in the identification of these students, followed by referral to the academic staff member for further action.

*'.....that ability to offer critical feedback to people is something that has to develop with time – You don't just have it when you..... Even marking, you don't just have the ability to put something in front of you and mark it – it's something that needs to be taught.'* [Staff – Male 2]

*[Problem students] '.....sometimes, like, I've had people that have really taken up a lot of your time – You're there, you're supposed to be helping, say 10 people or something but, sort of, stuck with one, and I always feel that I want to help this person get across the line, but, um, you know, so how do you handle that?'* [Tutor – Female 2]

*'.....who to report to, you know, you've got someone we can see that's struggling so then who should we tell about that or should we tell, or can we talk to them about it, how to handle that.'* [Tutor – Female 3]

*'I think the tutors can be a really good surveillance tool in so far as they can identify students who may be having issues with English – so that when they're doing the marking, they might be able to identify them and they can get pushed up the chain then to maybe the lecturer who's co-ordinating the subject and then if need be it goes to the academic advisor'* [Staff – Male 2]

### **3.4.5 Tutor Support**

#### **Theme 1: Facilities**

Availability of a range of facilities and support material are considered to be important to pharmacist tutors. This includes access to resources such as library materials, email access, use of resources such as photocopier and computer and the availability of office space for practical preparation. These issues have been discussed at length in the literature.<sup>9,10,18,19</sup> Academic staff considered that the provision of a general tutor manual at the commencement of employment was also

important. It was noted that academic staff have already developed subject manuals for practical sessions, which contain pre-prepared answers and this has been found to improve consistency of tutor feedback to students. Also discussed by the focus groups was the tutors' need to access lecture notes for the relevant subjects. Problems associated with tutor access to LearnJCU were noted and considered to be an area to address in the future.

*'.....accessibility to the lectures that the students are actually learning in relation to that subject would be beneficial'* [Tutor – Female 1]

*'That would be really .... well, I think particularly just having, not necessarily anywhere big, but just a small desk space, maybe, just to prepare before the tutorial if we .....you know, parking, as we know, is not always easy so sometimes I like to get here early, so I get a park and then do my preparation while I'm here ..... So some kind of little nook would be handy .....but .....'* [Tutor – Female 3]

## **Theme 2: Teamwork and inclusive culture**

The inclusion of the tutor as a member of the teaching team was considered to be important by both tutors and academic staff and was thought to lead to better learning outcomes. The benefits of working together as a team to enhance student learning are supported by the literature.<sup>6,46</sup> It was suggested that allowing the tutors to become more involved in presenting and demonstrating in the practical sessions may be useful. As additional support for tutors, it was felt by pharmacist tutor focus group participants that a tutor meeting once per semester prior to the start of the subject was important, as well as regular meetings to discuss any tutoring problems.

*'.....you might have noticed, or the academic staff might have noticed, sort of, a couple of problems throughout the year or, you know, things that tutors are asking or, um, wondering about or maybe you could have a sort of program where you do go through a couple of those things and have an opportunity for a sort of social segment as well.'* [Tutor – Female 2]

*'In saying that, we were talking about the discussion page before and I think we all kind of thought that it would be better to just have the webpage but maybe it would be good to have a discussion page for tutors, not necessarily for formal learning or training but just if something has come up with all of the departments, to keep more in the loop with what is going on within the pharmacy department - it might only be a two liner 'this has happened' and it might just help the tutors to keep ...'* [Tutor - Female 3] [ALL AGREE]



### **Theme 3: Feedback**

Teaching feedback was felt to be important, with tutors commenting that they would also like the opportunity to participate in both student review and peer review of teaching, as well as to be given some feedback from the supervising lecturer on their performance. Currently, tutors at JCU do not have access to student feedback on their teaching and this was thought to be a way of assisting tutors to see the potential for job progression, or for those who simply want to improve their teaching skills. The literature suggests that the current performance feedback provided to sessional academic staff in Australian universities is infrequent and often inadequate.<sup>9,49</sup>

*'.....maybe feedback from the lecturer that they're getting what they actually want from you – um, if you're assessing someone, are you giving them the right assessment for them, um, yeh....that sort of thing' [Tutor – Female 1]*

*'.....we get SFTs done - is there any scope there for a tutor who wants to do this job, um, seriously, or wants to continue to improve at it? Is there any scope for them to have SFTs done, or is there any scope for student feedback .....because I think that might be beneficial to them as well' [Staff – Male 2]*

### **Theme 4: Recognition**

The provision of a tutor training certificate after completion of the tutor training program was also felt to be important, as this would not only provide recognition of their competency, but may be an advantage for the career prospects of the tutor. In addition, inclusion on the university mailing list for relevant teaching and learning activities may provide ongoing development opportunities for tutors to progress in the area of education.

## **3.5 Pre-training - Summary**

As expected, the tutor questionnaire revealed a variation in tutor demographics, in terms of both tutoring and practice experience, and in addition, a range of specializations and postgraduate qualifications. A predominance of female tutors was attributed to a combination of an Australia wide trend towards feminization of the pharmacy workforce as well as the attractiveness of flexible-hour part-time work for females with family responsibilities. Almost all tutors had experience in community pharmacy and 44% had worked in hospital pharmacy, with these two areas being the main sources of future employment for pharmacy graduates. The diversity of demographics and experience was felt to be an advantage to the Discipline of

Pharmacy, as it provided an additional dimension to the student learning experience, while also allowing tutors to be tailored to areas that suit their particular experiences and expertise.

In terms of past tutor training, it was found that although attendance at a JCU Sessional staff training session was considered to be a requirement for ongoing sessional staff employment, almost half of the current or past tutors had not attended this session. The tutor focus group revealed that the current University-wide orientation session was not thought to be of great relevance to their particular role, therefore a program tailored specifically to the Discipline of Pharmacy was considered to be more appropriate. Despite this lack of attendance at the university sessional staff training program, over 50% of tutors regarded their current level of support as either good or excellent.

Various roles of tutors were discussed, including support for academic staff, the provision of increased opportunities for individual or small-group contact, maintaining the link between theory and practice and assisting to broaden the practice-based content of the pharmacy curriculum. Pharmacist tutors were felt to play an important role particularly in the practice-based areas of clinical dispensing, extemporaneous dispensing and clinical counselling. The involvement of pharmacist tutors in assessment and marking was felt to be problematic as this skill was thought to require significant training to reach an appropriate standard. A role for pharmacist tutors as student mentors was considered to be potentially beneficial, especially for the first year students, however, if this were introduced, strict guidelines and policies would be required as well as adequate remuneration.

Experiences with or as pharmacist tutors were mixed, but the majority of feedback was positive. Most tutors were found to be enthusiastic, helpful and good communicators, although there were a small number of tutors who on occasions attempted to undermine the authority of the academic in charge of the practical, or alternatively tutors who lacked initiative in the practicals. The tutors themselves found it enjoyable and rewarding working with students, with most students being easy to motivate and eager to learn. However, those tutors who had not studied at JCU often found it more difficult to adjust initially to their new role.

In terms of benefits, a pharmacist tutor training program was thought to be a means of enhancing consistency of teaching, enhancing student learning and improving

teaching skills. Tutor training was also thought to be important to improve tutor confidence levels and enhance tutor recognition and consequently career opportunities.

When considering the design of a tutor training program for Pharmacy at JCU, the majority of tutors preferred a combination of an online and face-to-face format, with the face-to-face component containing the practice-based information and the online component providing the more process driven information. The content of the face to face component ideally would include an overview of the course, basic teaching skills (particularly in the teaching of practical and communication skills) and information on assessment and marking. Tutors would also like a brief orientation to their particular subject prior to commencement of their duties. In terms of additional support, it was felt that access to resources and facilities such as the JCU library and a JCU email address were important, as well as the development of a culture of inclusiveness, access to student feedback opportunities and appropriate recognition of the tutor's role within the Pharmacy Discipline as well as the University.

The data obtained from this pre-training needs analysis provided a sound base from which to design an appropriate Pharmacy-specific tutor training program. The diversity of tutor backgrounds and experiences highlights the importance of training to ensure consistency of teaching. The program should consider that those tutors who had not studied at JCU may have more difficulties in adjusting to their new role and ensure that the orientation to the University and the Discipline environment is of appropriate depth. A wide range of roles for tutors were discussed and it would be important in the training program to ensure that tutors were aware of their specific roles and responsibilities in relation to their position in the discipline of Pharmacy. Regarding the design of the program, a combination of face-to-face and online instruction is the preferred format, with the content specifically including basic teaching skills and assessment and marking. Regarding the support requirements of tutors, consideration must be given not only to the most appropriate resources and facilities but also recognition of the important role of the tutor and a culture of inclusiveness.

## Chapter 4            Program design, development and delivery

### 4.1    *Introduction*

As outlined in Chapter 2 section 2.7, a wide variety of training and support programs have been documented for sessional staff both in Australia and worldwide, ranging from large scale university-wide programs to small School or Discipline specific programs.<sup>7,15,20,22-24,26,27,32,34,35</sup> University-wide programs may be two or three tiered involving Faculties, Schools and Disciplines, or may simply be a single generic program. School or Discipline-specific programs may be stand-alone sessions or may have links with the higher levels of the University. There is little consistency between programs, which vary greatly in terms of overall structure, format, duration and content. It has been found that the extent of sessional staff training and support within higher education institutions is inconsistent and often localised, often relying heavily on individuals such as heads of schools, course co-ordinators or supervising lecturers.<sup>35,49</sup> To improve training consistency, a whole-of-university policy framework is a recommended requirement. However, to add value to the program, it has also been suggested that individual programs be tailored to suit the particular School or Discipline.<sup>11,19,37</sup>

The information obtained from the pharmacist tutor questionnaire and focus groups has been used to inform the design of a tutor training program to suit the specific requirements of the JCU Discipline of Pharmacy. Factors to consider in the design of this program included the current JCU management and support policies for sessional staff and the sessional staff training programs already in place at the university. The program design also took into account the number of pharmacist tutors expected to be attending each session, as well as budgetary and time constraints.

### 4.2    *Background*

#### 4.2.1    **Current sessional staff training at JCU**

The AUTC Report of 2003 followed by the RED Report of 2008 led the way in recommending that all Australian Universities have policies and procedures to enhance and support sessional staff. At JCU, sessional staff training programs have been in place since 2005. The current JCU requirements for sessional staff include attendance at a 4.5 hour face-to-face sessional staff training program entitled '*Learning and*

*Teaching@JCU: Sessionals*. This training program is offered by the JCU Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLD), and attendance at one session is a requirement for ongoing employment of all newly appointed sessional staff, including those on short term contracts, tutors, adjuncts and demonstrators. These training sessions are conducted twice a year, at the start of both Semester 1 and Semester 2. In terms of content, this program includes a general orientation to teaching and learning at JCU, basic principles of teaching, an introduction to the JCU web-based communication system (LearnJCU) and information about support measures available for both sessional staff and students.<sup>83</sup>

In addition to the face-to-face training, a variety of sessional staff resources are available on the JCU website, including an 'Introduction to school' checklist, session plan outlines, professional development links and opportunities, curriculum resources, as well as information on JCU Learning and Teaching Policies and National Educational Frameworks.<sup>83</sup>

While attendance at the general university-wide training session is considered a compulsory requirement, it was noted in the JCU RED Report of 2009<sup>9</sup> that over half of current JCU sessional staff had not attended this session. This lack of attendance can be attributed to several factors, including the commencement of duties prior to initiation of the program in 2005, a lack of awareness that this session was available and the often 'last minute' nature of sessional staff appointments. It was also found that some sessional staff members felt that their specific needs were unable to be met in a generic induction session with some material not considered to be relevant to their role in their particular School.<sup>9</sup>

#### **4.2.2 School or Discipline-specific programs**

In addition to the university wide induction, it was reported that, at this stage, five Schools at JCU conducted their own local School or Discipline-based induction program.<sup>9</sup> In the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Molecular Sciences, several School or Discipline-based training programs for sessional staff currently exist.

These programs include

- The School of Medicine and Dentistry Clinical Skills Induction [F. Croker, November 2012, written communication]
- The School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences Demonstrator Training Session [L. Crane, October 2010, written communication]

- The Discipline of Biochemistry (School of Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences) Demonstrator Training Program. [V. Graham, June 2010, written communication]

These programs range from 4.5 to seven hours in length and are conducted by either by the School's TLD representative or a designated staff co-ordinator with input from the TLD. Although there are significant differences in each program, several common content areas were noted: this included an orientation to the particular School or Department, an overview of the course, an outline of the particular role of the sessional staff member and a range of educational information. The educational content included in these programs varied depending on the specific role of the attendee, although it was noted that the topic of assessment and feedback was included in all three programs.

#### **4.2.3 JCU Policy requirements for sessional staff training**

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) has recently been established as an independent regulator of educational quality in higher education institutions in Australia. In 2013, JCU established a Standards directorate to coordinate JCU's compliance with TEQSA requirements and this has resulted in more rigid educational policy requirements for JCU, which need to be considered in the context of sessional staff training. The TLD at JCU are required by TEQSA to ensure that all staff have an understanding of the teaching and learning policies relevant to their work and that they are introduced to the key principles of teaching and learning which are relevant to their role.<sup>72</sup>

#### **4.2.4 Pharmacist tutors at JCU**

Pharmacist tutors have been involved in the Pharmacy program at JCU since its inception in 1999. The majority of past and current tutors are practising pharmacists, although on some occasions, third or fourth year pharmacy students or postgraduate students have assisted where appropriate. Pharmacist tutors are involved in practical and workshop sessions and while they do not generally co-ordinate and supervise the classes in the absence of an academic staff member, they tutor independently and play an important support role for the lecturer in charge of each session. In 2012, 28 pharmacists in the Townsville area were available to undertake tutoring and of those pharmacists, 21 were involved in tutoring across the four year degree. Of the pharmacist tutors employed by the Discipline of Pharmacy in 2012, 17 were female and four were male. Areas of participation included extemporaneous dispensing, practical

demonstrating, clinical dispensing, clinical and over-the-counter (OTC) counselling and placement marking and supervision. Other miscellaneous areas of pharmacist tutor participation included participation in oral examinations, examination supervision and medication review training.

Along with all new JCU sessional academic staff, prior to 2013, all pharmacist tutors have been required to attend the general sessional staff training program (Learning and Teaching@JCU: Sessionals) as a condition of ongoing employment. Results from the pharmacist tutor questionnaire concurred with the findings of the JCU RED Report (55.3% non-attendance), that 47% of past and current pharmacist tutors surveyed had not attended this session.

### **4.3 Program design and development**

The design of the program involved the following considerations

- Structure
- Format
- Responsibility
- Length and timing
- Attendance requirements
- Content

These considerations were informed by the tutor questionnaire and focus group interviews, with additional guidance from example programs documented in the literature and the design of other local programs that had already been implemented at JCU. Another consideration with regard to program content was to ensure the provision of the mandatory TEQSA teaching and learning material which was relevant for sessional teaching staff at JCU.

#### **4.3.1 Structure**

The results of the tutor questionnaire and focus group indicate that pharmacist tutors at JCU would overwhelmingly prefer a more Discipline-specific over a general University-based program, with approximately two-thirds of questionnaire respondents indicating this preference only and 30% opting for both a University-wide and a Discipline-based program. Those tutors in the focus group who had already completed the JCU general induction session felt that it was 'completely unrelated' to their role as a pharmacist tutor and that given the specific skill set required to tutor pharmacy students effectively,

a Discipline-based program was more appropriate. This is consistent with the findings of the JCU RED report with regard to the lack of relevance of a generic induction session.

Given the small number of pharmacist tutors employed each year and the casual and part-time nature of their employment (some pharmacist tutors being employed for as little as 15 hours per semester), rather than have a two tiered approach, it was considered to be more practical to incorporate the general JCU sessional staff training into the pharmacy-specific program. This was also the approach taken by the JCU School of Medicine and Dentistry Induction and the School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences Training Session. For this purpose, liaison with the Director of the TLD was undertaken in order to develop a combined program, which not only incorporated the standard TEQSA content requirements but also the more Discipline-specific information relating to the JCU Pharmacy program. Collaboration with the TLD in the development of this program was also important to avoid any duplication of content material.

#### **4.3.2 Format**

Various formats have been proposed for training, including face-to-face, online, distance modules or various combinations. Results from the tutor questionnaire indicated that the majority of tutors (85%) would prefer a combination of online and face-to-face training. The tutor focus group also confirmed the view that the training program should include a face-to-face session in conjunction with an online component for provision of background information and additional resources. This is a popular combination for programs in the literature.<sup>7,9,15,69</sup> As a result of the findings, it was decided that this combination approach was the most appropriate method of delivery for the program.

The majority of tutor training programs do in fact include a face-to-face component.<sup>7,9,15,35,59</sup> For pharmacist tutors, face-to-face training within the Pharmacy Discipline has the advantage in that the tutors can be exposed to both the Discipline facilities and the university environment prior to commencing their tutoring role. This format lends itself to the incorporation of interactive activities such as role-plays, discussion of case studies, teamwork activities and micro-teaching. Face-to-face training also allows for immediate feedback on any questions or concerns that tutors may have about tutoring and provides the opportunity to meet with other tutors as well as their supervising lecturer prior to participating in their allocated sessions. With all



program participants living in the Townsville area, the chosen venue of the Pharmacy Practice Unit at JCU was also convenient and easily accessible for this method of training.

The online component of the program was planned to be an add-on to the face-to-face training, with this format being well suited to the delivery of process-driven material, thus allowing for a reduced length of the face-to-face session. Online information delivery has many advantages, including flexibility of use, ease of tutor accessibility (e.g. accessible from home), reduced paperwork and time savings. It is an increasingly popular method of providing or obtaining information and the majority of universities in Australia use this format to varying extents for the provision of sessional staff information.<sup>54,72,82,85,86,94-97</sup>

In addition to the face-to-face and online components of the training program, it was also decided to provide a printed tutor manual, as this was rated as a very important support tool by more than 50% of tutor questionnaire respondents. The literature indicates that a tutor manual or resource booklet is commonly provided in conjunction with sessional staff training programs.<sup>7,9,15,35</sup>

### **4.3.3 Responsibility**

Responsibility for a tutor training program is reported to depend on whether the program is locally-based, where often a course co-ordinator or a specifically allocated tutor training co-ordinator is responsible, or centrally-based, where the program is run by a central teaching and learning educational unit. As the JCU pharmacist tutor training program was to be a combination of the general university-wide program with a pharmacy-specific component, it was felt that the program would best be co-ordinated within the Pharmacy Discipline. Collaboration with the JCU Director of TLD aimed to ensure that the training program was designed to fulfil the requirements of the University, whilst also meeting the needs of both the Discipline of Pharmacy and particularly the pharmacist tutors.

### **4.3.4 Length and timing**

The length and timing of training programs varies significantly between institutions. In reported Australian training programs, the face-to-face component may be anywhere between two hours and 2.5 days in duration and may be supplemented by regular meetings with a tutor training co-ordinator, professional development seminars and the use of tutor peer mentors.<sup>7,9,15,35,59</sup> The tutor questionnaire and focus group results

indicated that an appropriate length for the JCU program would be between two hours and half a day and that the program should be offered either once each year or each semester, depending on demand. Based on these findings, a half-day program was chosen.

In order to align the program with the appointment of tutors at the commencement of each semester, it was decided to deliver the program at the start of Semester 1 of each year, with a further program offered at the start of Semester 2 if required. Based on past experience, in 2012, 87% of tutors who began in Semester 1 continued tutoring into Semester 2 of that year. On this basis, it is likely that only one training program per year would be offered in the future. For those tutors who commenced in Semester 2 of the academic year, additional support and information would be provided individually by the tutor co-ordinator at the commencement of the Semester. They would also be provided with a tutor manual, access to the community website and would be required to attend the next available tutor training program. Care would be taken to ensure that these new tutors were rostered on with an experienced pharmacist tutor.

#### **4.3.5 Attendance requirements**

As it is a JCU requirement that all new sessional staff attend a sessional staff training program as a condition of ongoing employment, it was considered that pharmacist participation in the combined pharmacy-specific program should be compulsory. This was also in line with feedback from the pharmacist tutor questionnaire which indicated that the majority of respondents (78%) felt that participation in this pharmacy specific tutor training program should be compulsory. In accordance with the previous policy of the Discipline of Pharmacy, it was agreed that participants would be paid by the Discipline for their attendance at the training program. It was also agreed that although more than half of the tutors who were signed on to tutor in Semester 1 2013 were experienced tutors, some of whom had previously attended the general University induction session, all currently employed tutors should participate in the new combined program, in order to ensure consistency of training. It was noted that although only 78% of tutor questionnaire respondents would like compulsory attendance for all tutors, 89% indicated that even if not compulsory, they would still participate in the tutor training program. This suggests that even the experienced tutors felt that there was value in attending a tutor training program. Attendance at the training program would also be offered to those tutors who felt that they required an update on their previous training, however, at this stage, the subject of payment for attendance at repeat training has not been clarified.

#### 4.3.6 Content

As illustrated in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.7), areas of content identified by the tutor questionnaire respondents as either very important or important for the tutor training program included

- Assessing student performance (93%).
- Teaching communication skills (93%)
- Teaching practical skills (89%)
- Giving effective student feedback (85%)

Several of the tutor focus group participants also felt that an overview of the Pharmacy program would be useful to understand not only the content of the degree program but also the level of knowledge and competence expected of the students at different stages in the course.

With both the tutors and the academic staff identifying marking and assessment as a problem area, it was considered essential to cover this topic in the training. Given the involvement of pharmacist tutors in the practical aspects of the pharmacy program, the teaching of communication and practical skills was also an important inclusion. It was decided that a group analysis of the marking of a counselling role-play between a 'student' and a 'patient' would not only provide a practical activity, but would also cover the topics of communication and assessment. The literature supports the benefits of activities such as group work, role-plays and simulations in improving tutor confidence and self-efficacy.<sup>7,27,34</sup>

Upon liason with the director of the JCU TLD, it was decided that TLD would provide the first half of the face-to-face program and would ensure that all the TEQSA requirements were adequately covered. Three major topics to be covered here were an 'Introduction to JCU', 'Ways of supporting student learning' and 'Ways of assessing students'. A distinct advantage of the involvement of the TLD is that their staff are educationally qualified and therefore were able to use their pedagogical background to provide tutors with a better understanding of educational techniques. With the increasing focus on student centred learning in higher education, several studies have shown that training in pedagogical techniques for higher education teachers can lead to a more student focused approach to learning and an improvement in teaching skills.

68,98

The general JCU section of the program would be followed by the pharmacy specific component which would include the following

- A welcome to Pharmacy at JCU from the Head of the Discipline of Pharmacy, who would then provide an overview of the Pharmacy program.
- A brief overview of each of the areas of tutor involvement presented by appropriate academic staff, which would include a background and some practical applications in the areas of extemporaneous dispensing, clinical dispensing, clinical counselling and student experiential placement. To ensure that the information provided was relevant and focused, all subject specific sessions would be presented by a staff member who was actively involved in that particular area of teaching. In this way, it was felt that tutors would better understand their roles and expectations
- An assessment and marking activity would be included in the clinical dispensing and counselling section of the program. This would involve analysing a counselling roleplay between a 'student' and a 'patient'. With two academic staff members playing the roles of student and patient, tutors would then be asked to discuss the assessment of this performance and the feedback that they might provide to the 'student'. The presenter would act as a facilitator and generate tutor discussion on the particular scenario and the general principles of assessment and marking
- The program would then conclude with some discussion regarding the facilities and support measures available for tutors within the Discipline of Pharmacy, as well as a reference to the pharmacist tutor online web community.

The tutor manual to be provided in conjunction with the face-to-face program would include the following information

- A general introduction to tutoring in Pharmacy at JCU
- A brief history and outline of the Pharmacy degree program
- General administrative information for new tutors
- Methods of communication at JCU
- An overview of tutor support measures

The manual would also include an outline of the training program procedures as well as copies of the powerpoint presentation slides provided by the training program presenters.

The role of the pharmacist tutor web community was seen to be mainly in the provision of general and administrative information regarding sign-on procedures, processes for pay claims, tutor rosters, parking information and lecturer contacts. As has been the procedure in past years, following confirmation of employment for each semester, tutors are provided with access to the JCU learning platform (LearnJCU) which then allows them to view more subject specific information such as subject outlines, lecture notes, assignment outlines and additional information relevant to their allocated teaching sessions. This background information may assist in providing the tutors with a sense of perspective in relation to the subject and the Pharmacy Program and also ensure consistency of teaching between academic staff members and tutors.

The provision of networking opportunities for sessional staff was believed to be important to promote and support sessional staff integration and allow for reflective practice in teaching.<sup>7,48,69</sup> Opportunities for social interaction amongst tutors and with academic staff would be facilitated by the provision of lunch as well as a refreshment break mid-program and immediately after the conclusion of the program. These additional social events will be made optional, as it was recognised that time constraints of both work and family may need to be considered for some tutors.

## **4.4 Program delivery**

### **4.4.1 Pharmacist tutor website**

A community website was set up specifically for pharmacist tutors within *LearnJCU*, with the Pharmacy tutor co-ordinator being the leader of the community. The website is entitled '*JCU Pharmacist Tutor Support Community*', and contains background information and resources for tutors. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 provide a web view of the home page and information page of the community support website. The website is made accessible to the tutor once they have signed on and received their University email address and password for each semester. Lecturers involved in sessions with pharmacist tutors are also given access to the web community. It is anticipated that the tutor co-ordinator will update the website information on a regular basis as well as lead and monitor the tutor discussion forum, which was established within the community website. It should be noted that there was mixed feedback regarding the importance of a discussion forum, with only 32% of tutor questionnaire respondents feeling that this was either very important or important. On the other hand, the tutor focus group felt that this may be a useful means of informal communication between tutors and staff.

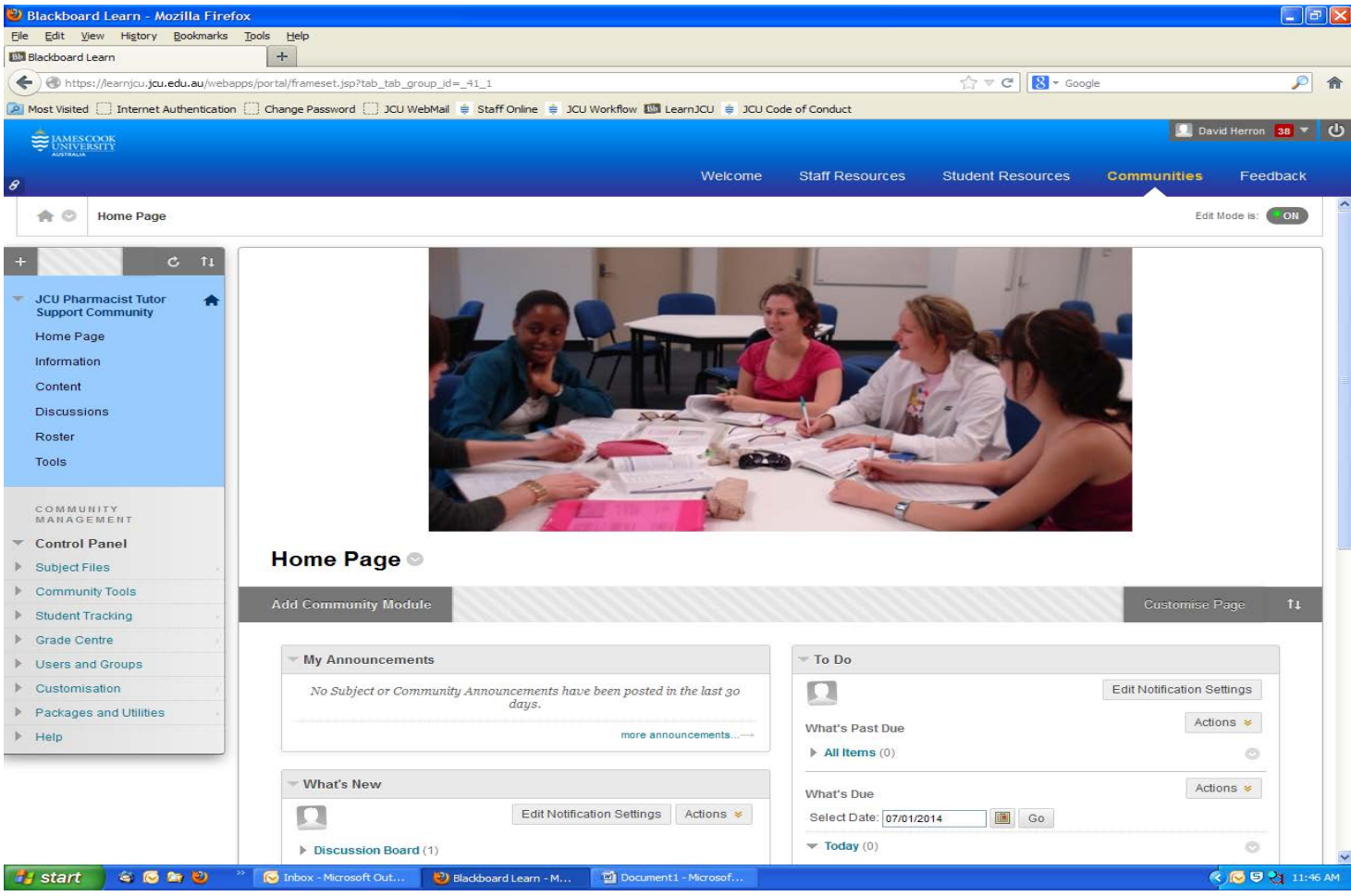


Figure 4.1 JCU Pharmacist Tutor Support Community Website – Home Page

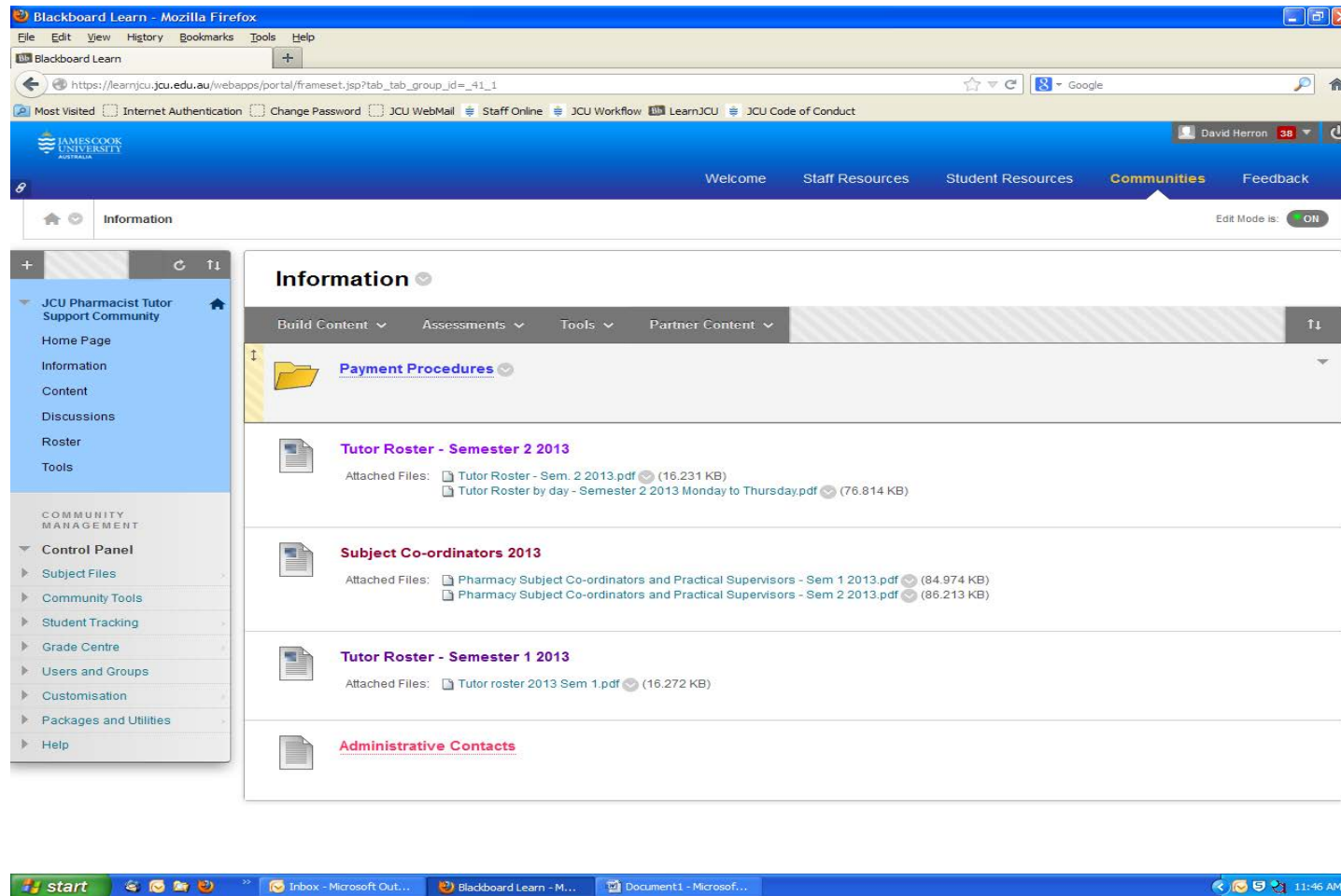


Figure 4.2 JCU Pharmacist Tutor Support Community Website – Information page

#### **4.4.2 Pharmacist tutor face to face program**

The first training program was delivered in February 2013, at the commencement of the university year to 14 pharmacist tutors who had been engaged to assist in the Pharmacy program in Semester 1 of 2013. Tutors were invited to attend by email, with 100% acceptance achieved. The session ran over approximately a five hour period and was held in the practice unit of the JCU Pharmacy department, with the Pharmacy tutor co-ordinator assuming the role of facilitator. An optional lunch was provided prior to the start of the session after which tutors were invited to register for the program. Name badges were distributed to participants, in order to promote social engagement and encourage tutors to meet with other tutors and lecturers. The tutor manual (Appendix O) was distributed at this time to allow tutors to follow each speaker's powerpoint notes and make additional notes during the session. An outline of the training program procedures is provided in Figure 3.1.

Immediately after the conclusion of the program, the first of two training program feedback evaluation surveys was distributed for completion by the participants.

Tutor attendance at the training program was recognised with the awarding of a certificate of attendance (Appendix P) and an invitation was extended to all tutors to partake in wine and cheese in the Pharmacy Tea-room.



## Pharmacist Tutor Training Program – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013

### Session 1

1. 12.00 - 12.30pm Registration  
Tea/coffee/lunch provided
2. 12.30 - 12.40pm (*Tutor co-ordinator*)  
Welcome from tutor co-ordinator
3. 12.40 - 1.10pm (*Director of Teaching and Learning, JCU*)  
Introduction to JCU
4. 1.10 - 1.40pm (*Director of Teaching and Learning, JCU*)  
Supporting student learning
5. 1.40 - 2.10pm (*Director of Teaching and Learning, JCU*)  
Assessing students
- 2.10 - 2.30pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

### Session 2

1. 2.30 - 3.00pm (*Pharmacy Head of Discipline*)  
Welcome to Pharmacy, Overview of Pharmacy program
2. 3.00 - 3.40pm (*Lecturer in Extemporaneous Dispensing*)  
Overview of Extemporaneous Dispensing Practicals
3. 3.40 - 4.20pm (*Lecturer in Clinical Dispensing/Counselling*)  
Overview of Clinical Dispensing and Counselling  
Practicals
4. 4.20 - 4.40pm (*Academic Placement Co-ordinator*)  
Overview of Experiential Placement
5. 4.40 - 5.00pm Conclusion (*Tutor co-ordinator*)
  - Tutor resources
  - LearnJCU Pharmacy Tutor Web-community
  - Completion of evaluation survey
  - Distribution of certificates
6. 5.00 - 6.00pm **WINE AND CHEESE** (Venue - Pharmacy Tea-room)

**Figure 4.3** Outline of pharmacist tutor training program – February 2013

## **4.5 Training Program - Summary**

The design of the first Discipline of Pharmacy tutor training program took into account a variety of factors, including the current JCU policies for the management of sessional staff, other School or Discipline-specific programs currently in place and the results of the needs analysis study discussed in Chapter 3. Consideration was given to the most appropriate structure, format, duration and content for the program.

As supported by the outcomes of the pharmacist tutor questionnaire and focus groups, the resulting program incorporated the general JCU sessional staff induction program into a pharmacy-specific program to produce one combined program. Care was taken to include the compulsory TEQSA-required material. The program consisted of a 4.5 hour face-to face program, with the additional support of a tutor manual and an online tutor community support website. The content of the face-to-face program was designed with consideration of the results of the pharmacist tutor questionnaire and focus groups and in liason with the JCU TLD. It included information on assessment and marking, teaching communication and practical skills, a Pharmacy course overview and various subject specific overviews. To promote integration, opportunities were provided for interaction with other tutors and lecturers, and the tutor support measures available in the discipline of pharmacy were outlined.

The delivery of the first training program in February 2013 proceeded smoothly as planned, with the first post-training feedback survey being distributed immediately after program completion. The development, distribution and analysis of the two post-training evaluation surveys will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5 Post-training program evaluation

### 5.1 Introduction

Evaluation of sessional staff training programs can be undertaken in a number of ways, including participant self-evaluation, peer tutor evaluations, student feedback and classroom evaluations<sup>21,22</sup>. The benefits of sessional staff training programs may be determined by considering Kirkpatrick's four level model of training criteria as a framework for evaluation of their educational effectiveness. This well-known model looks at the four criteria of *reaction, learning, behaviour and results*, with *reaction and learning* focusing on the training program itself and *behaviour and results* considering the changes which occur as a result of training.<sup>99</sup> There is, however, currently little evidence to support a relationship between the *reaction* criteria and the *learning, behaviour and results* criteria. The majority of evaluation studies have focused on the effect of the training program on participants (i.e. the *reaction and learning* levels of the Kirkpatrick model), with few studies investigating the effect of the programs on work performance, student engagement and student outcomes (*behaviour and results*).<sup>99</sup> There may be several reasons why participant self-evaluations are the most widely used assessment criteria. Firstly, they are simple to design and undertake and in the case of a face-to-face program, can be easily conducted immediately after the training program. The collection and analysis of survey data is straightforward and can provide both qualitative and quantitative information, requiring little additional time and effort from participants, with minimal ethical requirements. However, the limitation to this type of evaluation is that it only provides feedback from the perspective of the participants.

The evaluation of the JCU tutor training program involved conducting two participant self-evaluation feedback surveys. The first survey (Evaluation 1) was distributed immediately after the training program, with the aim of determining the initial impressions of tutors on the program and establishing whether the program had met their current needs. In order to determine whether the training program had continued to make a difference to the participants in their role as a tutor and to establish any potential longer term effects, a further survey was administered after one full semester of tutoring. This allowed the tutors time to reflect on the information provided in the program and to determine whether it had impacted on their practice as tutors throughout the semester. Therefore, the second survey (Evaluation 2) was distributed five months after the first survey, in June 2013, after the end of Semester

1. This second survey aimed to identify any issues which may have arisen during the semester which could be addressed in future training programs.

## **5.2 Methodology**

### **5.2.1 Ethics approval**

As with the tutor questionnaire and focus groups in Chapter 3 (Section 3.2.4), prior to the distribution of Evaluation surveys 1 and 2, ethics approval was obtained from the JCU Human Research Ethics Committee. This approval was an extension of Ethics Approval H4580 (Appendix Q) to allow for time to distribute and collect both surveys.

### **5.2.2 Evaluation 1 – (Immediately post-training)**

Evaluation 1 (Appendix R) was a written self-completion feedback survey, which was designed to provide initial feedback from the participants of the tutor training program. Questions 1, 2 and 3 of the survey related to the design of the program and aimed to establish tutor opinions on the length, relevance and usefulness of the program. In question 3, tutor participants were asked to grade the usefulness of the various content areas of the program, using a four-point Likert scale. Questions 4 and 5 were open ended, inviting participants to comment on what they felt were the best aspects of the program and any suggested improvements. In question 6, relevant participant demographic information was collected and this included previous tutoring experience at JCU and previous attendance at a JCU sessional staff training program. As it was indicated in the tutor focus group that past graduates of JCU may find it easier to adjust to their tutoring role, participants were also asked in question 6 whether they were a past graduate of JCU.

Evaluation 1 was distributed immediately after the completion of the tutor training program to the 14 program participants. Although the participants were given up to a week to return this survey, due to the fact that the survey was relatively short with an estimated time for completion of approximately 10 minutes, the majority of participants opted to complete the form on the day. The survey was accompanied by an information sheet (Appendix S), which provided details of the associated project, the voluntary nature of participation and a confidentiality statement. All participants in the survey were also asked to complete an informed consent form (Appendix T) to allow for the publication of non-identifiable survey results. The surveys and informed consent forms were collected and consecutively numbered.

### 5.2.3 Evaluation 2 – (Five months post training)

Evaluation 2, also a self-completion feedback survey, was distributed by mail in June 2013 to all participants of the first tutor training program who had completed the full program. (Appendix U) With two of the 14 original participants being unable to attend the full program, the second survey was sent to the remaining 12 program participants. Included in the mailed documents were a postage paid envelope for return of the survey questionnaire, an information sheet (Appendix V) and an informed consent form (Appendix W) with instructions to complete and return the survey within 15 days.

Evaluation 2 was designed to obtain participant information regarding the longer term usefulness of the training program and whether it had in fact impacted on and informed their role as a tutor. This survey asked participants to rate their level of competence at three stages during their development as a tutor

- Prior to the training program
- Immediately after the program
- After one full semester

The desired tutor competencies rated were derived from the original pre-training tutor survey questionnaire (Section 3.3.3) where tutors were questioned on the potential benefits of a tutor training program.

*The following competencies were rated*

- General confidence levels
- Confidence in marking and assessment
- Teaching consistency
- Teaching knowledge and skills
- Ability to work effectively in a team
- Ability to enhance student learning
- Ability to deal with problem students
- Enhancement of career opportunities

Ratings of competency were based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Unsure (1) to Poor (2), Average (3), Good (4) or Very Good (5). Tutors were also asked to provide feedback regarding any problems that they experienced in their first

semester of tutoring following the training program and any personal benefits that they had seen since completing the training. Furthermore, tutors were asked to list any additional topics, which they felt should be included in future tutor training programs. Demographic information on participants was also collected, including their area(s) of tutor participation in semester 1 of 2013, past tutoring experience, previous attendance at a general JCU sessional staff induction program and once again, whether they were a past graduate of JCU.

On receipt of the participant response forms for Evaluation 2, the forms were numbered to match up with the Evaluation 1 survey, in order to be able to compare the responses between both evaluation surveys. The numbering process was performed by an independent person to ensure anonymity of the results and to maintain confidentiality.

### **5.3 Results and Discussion – Evaluation 1**

Although the voluntary nature of participating in the feedback evaluation survey was clearly stated, all participants in the tutor training program agreed to complete the survey. Since two of the 14 participants had not attended the full program, their feedback was not included in the results, with the response rate to evaluation survey 1 calculated to be 86%.

#### **5.3.1 Tutor demographics**

**Table 5.1** Evaluation 1 - Demographics of tutor participants (n=12)

Total Participants (12)		Number of tutors
Past tutors (9)	Tutored for > 5 years	2
	Tutored for 2-5 years	6
	Tutored for 1-2 years	1
	Attended past JCU tutor induction	7
	JCU Graduates	3
	Not JCU Graduates	6
New tutors (3)	JCU Graduates	2
	Not JCU Graduates	1

As indicated by the demographic information in Table 5.1 above, in terms of background, attendees of the training program were found to be mainly experienced tutors with only 3 out of the 12 being new tutors. Six (50%) of the 12 tutors have been tutored for between two and five years and two tutors (22%) have been tutoring for more than 5 years. Although attendance at the JCU general sessional staff induction session was considered to be a requirement of ongoing employment, it was found that two out of the nine experienced tutors had not attended this session. This concurs with the findings of the 2009 JCU RED Report, in terms of attendance.<sup>9</sup> It was noted that five of the 12 respondents (42%) were past JCU graduates, with two of these tutors being new tutors.

### **5.3.2 Length, relevance, usefulness**

#### *Length*

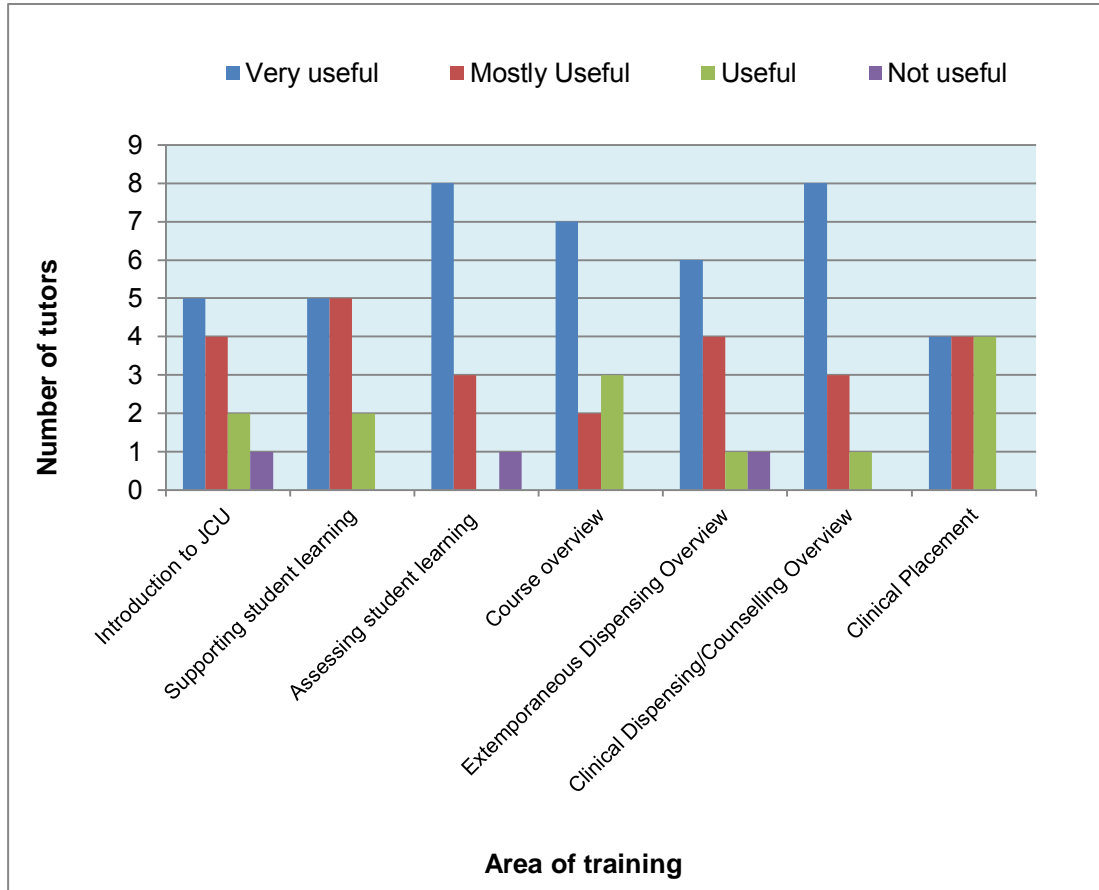
When questioned on the appropriateness of the program length, 11 of the 12 tutors (92% of respondents) agreed that the length of the program was adequate, while one tutor (T5) felt that the session was a bit too long and contained information which was not necessary. Although this participant only tutored into extemporaneous dispensing, they felt that it was still important to accommodate all of the training information into the session for those who tutored into other areas. One tutor (T2) commented that the *'time was well managed'* and that *'no section was too long'*.

#### *Relevance*

Regarding the relevance of the information provided in the training program, 10 out of the 12 tutors felt that the information was relevant to their current needs, while the remaining two tutors (T3 and T5) felt that it was partly relevant. Of the two tutors who regarded the program as partly relevant, while acknowledging that the information provided was informative, helpful and important to cover, they stated that as they did not tutor in all areas, some parts of the program were not relevant to them. The results showed that tutors 3 and 5 were both only involved in one area of tutoring (Clinical Dispensing for tutor 3 and Extemporaneous Dispensing for tutor 5). On the topic of relevance, one tutor (T4), who was a first time tutor at JCU and NOT a JCU graduate, stated that *'the session provided a good platform for standardized teaching and learning at JCU'* and also commented that *'the in-depth presentations and explanations were very helpful'*. Another (T11) said that there were *'very good presentations from all'*.

## Usefulness

Question 3 asked participants to rate the usefulness of the various areas of the training program. The results for this question are illustrated below in Figure 5.1.



**Figure 5.1** Tutor ratings of usefulness of areas of tutor training program (n=12)

Participants found that the two most useful sections of the training program were 'Assessing student learning' and 'Clinical Dispensing and Counselling', both of which were rated as either very useful or mostly useful by 11 out of the 12 tutors (96%). The 'Extemporaneous Dispensing' section and the 'Pharmacy Course Overview' were also rated by the majority of tutors as very useful or mostly useful (83% and 75% of tutors respectively).

With assessment and marking being highlighted as an area for concern in the literature,<sup>1,39,45,67</sup> as well as in both the tutor questionnaire and focus groups, it was encouraging to see that the 'Assessing student learning' session was found to be one of the most useful section of the program, as this indicates that the information provided was felt to be relevant and that the program had succeeded to some degree in addressing the problem. With at least 75% of respondents being involved in either



clinical dispensing or counselling, it was expected that the 'Clinical Dispensing and Counselling section of the program would be regarded as one of the most useful areas of the program. These areas are also an everyday part of pharmacy practice and as such, it is not surprising that tutors are interested in teaching 'what they do'. The inclusion of a counselling assessment activity in this section also added to the interest in this area, allowing for interaction and discussion among program participants and presenters, which was well received. As mentioned in Chapter 4, results from program evaluations in the literature<sup>7,27,34</sup> report positive feedback on tutor participation and interaction within training programs in activities such as role-plays and simulations.

It was noted that those tutors who were new to JCU (Tutors 4, 7 and 9) appeared to rate all sections of the program overall more highly than past tutors. This was expected, given that they have never tutored before and studies in the literature support this belief that new tutors would find a training program more helpful than those with teaching experience.<sup>27,35</sup> There were no noticeable differences in the ratings of usefulness of JCU graduates compared to non-JCU graduates, although this result may be related to the small number of tutor respondents. As you would also expect, there was a tendency for tutors to rate more highly those sections which related more to their allocated tutoring sessions. For example, one tutor (tutor 8), who was involved only in OTC Counselling rated this section of the program as very useful and the extemporaneous section as not useful.

### **5.3.3 Best aspects of the program**

The results of question 4 regarding the best aspects of the training program were evaluated using thematic analysis. Several themes were identified within the data and these themes are discussed below.

#### **Theme 1: Interaction**

Several tutors commented on the benefit of meeting and interacting with not only other tutors, but also staff from the Discipline of Pharmacy. This interaction is thought to be a contributing factor to the integration of tutors into their new role. Being able to talk to other tutors, both new and experienced, can help to allay any initial concerns they may have about tutoring and the sharing of experiences can make them feel that they are not alone and enable a smoother transition into their tutoring role, and this is supported by evidence in the literature.<sup>7,15,20,35</sup> Meeting and interacting with

staff, particularly those who they will be working with in the future, may also put the tutor more at ease and provide some insight into their future role within the Discipline.

*'Meeting and interacting with other tutors.....'* [Tutor 1]

*'.....meeting all the tutors/staff.'* [Tutor 3]

*'The introduction to the staff and school was very useful for a first time JCU tutor'*  
[Tutor 4]

*'Interaction'* [Tutor 12]

## **Theme 2: Roles and expectations**

Tutors found that the training program had assisted in clarifying their roles and what is expected of them by the Discipline.

*'It gave a good idea of what you will be doing and what is expected of you'* [Tutor 2]

*'Having a standardised teaching and learning protocol is very helpful'* [Tutor 4]

*'We know what is expected from us .....*' [Tutor 5]

*'Areas that were directly appropriate to my expected position as a tutor e.g. how to mark students on their performance and give feedback .....*' [Tutor 9]

## **Theme 3: Acknowledgement of tutors**

Several tutors who had previously tutored into the pharmacy program commented on the benefit of the training program in acknowledging tutors as an important part of both the Discipline of Pharmacy as well as the whole university. The contribution of sessional staff in universities has long been thought of as under recognised and undervalued with sessional staff often feeling marginalised and not included in the organizational culture of the university.<sup>10,48,49,77</sup> The Pharmacy tutor training program therefore has addressed this issue and played an important role in recognising the tutors and facilitating their integration into both the Discipline and the University.

*'.....having tutors acknowledged as important part of pharmacy program'* [Tutor 3]

*'The information about JCU requirements for sessional staff was important as I have never felt part of JCU, only the pharmacy department'* [Tutor 6]

*'Intro from [Director of TLD] made me feel like I am a staff member of JCU, not a helper .....*' [Tutor 10]

#### **Theme 4: Information**

Numerous comments were made regarding the various content areas of the program. There was considerable variation in participant opinions about the best content areas of the program, with each of the content areas being highlighted as important by at least one participant. This result may reflect the different backgrounds and experiences of the individual tutors. The overview of the pharmacy program was considered to be particularly useful in enabling the tutors to understand how the relevant course information is integrated and progressively taught within the degree program.

*'The overview of the course was also important as again I felt more part of the actual course and not just my subjects. It helped to tie things together' [Tutor 6]*

*'The introduction to the values of JCU and the student assessment sections were very useful to know. The overviews delivered by [all the pharmacy staff] were very useful regarding preparation and the roles tutors have to play' [Tutor 7]*

*'The section from [director of TLD] was interesting, also the clinical and counselling practicals session' [Tutor 8]*

*'.....Quick overview by [extemporaneous dispensing supervisor] was also good as it will prompt some 'at home' prep work' [Tutor 9]*

*'Assessing students in clinical roleplay, placement activity marking and process' [Tutor 10]*

*'Course information was interesting as I now know when students learn what' [Tutor 11]*

*'Placement activity marking and process' [Tutor 10 - NOT involved in placement marking]*

#### **Theme 5: Support**

Various support measures available were highlighted by the training program participants as being useful.

*'..... printed support material' [Tutor 1]*

*'Highlighting issues/problems likely to be encountered by tutors .....' [Tutor 3]*

*'Peer review possibilities' [Tutor 10]*

In addition to the above themes, one tutor (Tutor 8) who had been tutoring for 2 to 5 years, and was a graduate of JCU, commented on the usefulness of the training program and that it would have been good to have had this program previously (i.e. when they first commenced as a tutor). It was noted that this tutor had previously attended the general JCU sessional staff induction. This comment from Tutor 8 suggests that this previous session had not met their tutor training needs and proves hypothesis 1 of this study. Another experienced tutor (Tutor 12), who had also previously attended the general JCU sessional staff induction, mentioned that it was good to have the information in one training session, rather than have both a general JCU session as well as a pharmacy-specific session.

### 5.3.4 Suggested improvements

While all training program participants made comments on the best aspects of the program, only 6 of the 12 tutors provided feedback on any suggested improvements to the program. These comments are listed in table 5.2 below. Most comments related to the length of the program or to suggested additional information to be provided in future programs.

**Table 5.2** Tutor comments on suggested program improvements

Program length	Information
<p><i>Perhaps a little shorter .....’ [Tutor 4]</i></p> <p><i>The first part was too long, because we don’t really teach and mark students much’ [Tutor 5]</i></p> <p><i>‘Can’t think of any! Thanks’ [Tutor 1)</i></p>	<p><i>‘For some sections there may have been insufficient information to go straight into a class e.g. extemp. If you had never done it before you may need more information about process, batch sheets, calculation etc. ‘ [Tutor 2]</i></p> <p><i>‘More opportunities for interaction/discussion’ [Tutor 3]</i></p> <p><i>‘.....and more involvement of tutors with feedback on our performance’ [Tutor 4]</i></p> <p><i>‘I thought it was all really well done’ [Tutor 11]</i></p>

Although the extemporaneous dispensing session was rated highly in terms of usefulness, the need for further information in the area of extemporaneous

dispensing was highlighted. It was identified by the academic staff focus group that not all pharmacists are up to date with current compounding knowledge. This may be partly due to the fact that with extemporaneous dispensing becoming a less common role for pharmacists, the more recent graduates have had less training, whereas the less recent graduates have more experience and a broader knowledge base in this area of pharmacy practice. However, for the older graduates, it was also important to have a knowledge of the newer dosage forms and compounding techniques, that had been implemented over recent years. While the session focused on an update of extemporaneous methods and techniques, the provision of more process related information such as how to complete a batch sheet and various examples of calculations may be warranted.

It was also noted that two tutors suggested that there should be more involvement from tutors in the program and more opportunities for interaction and discussion. As discussed above (section 5.3.2) these opportunities are well received by tutors. While this increased participation may be beneficial, this may be difficult to incorporate within the five hour period for the training program and may limit the amount of information able to be provided. With the current information provided being regarded as useful and the length of the program adequate, other training formats such as the use of online information delivery may need to be explored to allow for interaction and discussion, whilst also ensuring that all essential tutor information was provided. With the community website already in place, the development of additional online materials such as learning modules, case studies, tips and techniques and links to educational resources would be possible and would assist in optimizing the use of the website. While a degree of face-to-face training is important, online delivery may allow tutors to access additional more focused information relating to their particular area of tutoring. As noted in Chapter 4, the majority of Australian universities use the online format to varying degrees in the training and support of sessional staff.<sup>54,69,72,82,85,86,94-96</sup>

## 5.4 Results and Discussion - Evaluation 2

Of the 12 feedback evaluation surveys posted to the participants of the training program, 10 were completed and returned, which gave a response rate of 83 %.

### 5.4.1 Tutor demographics and areas of participation

Table 5.3 illustrates the demographics of tutor respondents of Evaluation 2 and their areas of participation in the JCU Pharmacy program in Semester 1 2013.

**Table 5.3** Evaluation 2 - Demographics and areas of participation (n = 10)

Tutor	Areas of participation				Demographics		
	Extemporaneous Dispensing	Clinical Dispensing	OTC Counselling	Placement marking	Previous Tutor Induction	Past Tutor	JCU Graduate
1	1	1	1	1		1	
2		1			1	1	1
3		1			1	1	
4	1	1					
5	1				1	1	
6	1				1	1	
7			1				1
8			1		1	1	1
9		1					1
10	1	1			1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

Of the tutor respondents to Evaluation 2, more than half were past tutors. The largest area for participation in the Pharmacy degree course was in Clinical Dispensing followed closely by Extemporaneous Dispensing, with only one tutor being involved in Placement Marking. Three tutors (30%) were involved in more than one area of the pharmacy course, with one tutor being involved in all of the four areas.

As may be expected, six out of the seven experienced tutors had previously attended the required JCU sessional staff induction. Two out of three new tutors were past

JCU graduates while of the experienced tutors, only two of the seven were JCU graduates.

#### 5.4.2 Ratings of benefits of tutor training program

In order to assess the impact of the tutor training program, eight areas of their competency were self-rated by tutor participants prior to the program, immediately after the program and after one full semester. The results were collated and an average rating was calculated at each of the three stages for each of the eight areas of competence. The results are provided in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4** Evaluation 2 - Tutor training program - Participant average ratings (and range) of competence (n=10)

Ratings 1. Unsure; 2. Poor; 3. Average; 4. Good; 5. Very Good

Tutor competence	Prior to training		Immediately after training		After one full semester	
	Rating	Range	Rating	Range	Rating	Range
General confidence level	3.6	(1→5)	4.2	(3→5)	4.2	(4→5)
Confidence in marking and assessment	3.1	(2→4)	3.9	(3→4)	4.3	(4→5)
Teaching consistency	3.1	(1→4)	3.8	(3→5)	4.0	(3→5)
Teaching knowledge and skills	3.6	(3→4)	4.0	(3→5)	4.0	(3→5)
Ability to work effectively in a team	4.1	(3→5)	4.4	(4→5)	4.4	(4→5)
Ability to enhance student learning	3.3	(1→4)	3.6	(1→5)	4.0	(3→5)
Ability to deal with problem students	2.7	(1→4)	3.2	(1→4)	3.7	(3→5)

Initial competence prior to training was between average and good (3 to 4) in most areas, while competency ratings after one full semester of tutoring were between good and very good (4 to 5). Prior to training, the area in which tutors felt least competent was in their ability to deal with problem students, with overall tutor competence in this area being poor to average (2.7). In the areas of 'marking and assessment' and 'teaching consistency', overall tutor ratings were between average and good (both 3.1). The area in which tutors felt most competent prior to training

was in their ability to work as a team, which was rated overall as good to very good (4.1).

Table 5.4 indicates that ratings of competence in all areas were improved immediately after the training program, with the most significant improvement being in the area of confidence in marking and assessment, followed by teaching consistency. Marking and assessment was identified by both tutors and academic staff as an area for potential improvement and the results indicate that the training program has played a role in addressing tutor competence in this important educational skill. While tutors rated the management of problem students initially as a low to average competence area (2.7), the rating of their competence increased quite significantly both immediately after the training program as well as after one full semester (now 3.7 - average to good). The least significant overall change was in the tutor's ability to work effectively in a team, which was the area that tutors initially felt most competent. Conversely, in addition to being the most improved competence immediately after the program, the area of marking and assessment also showed the most significant *overall* improvement in ratings of tutor competence.

Tutors also found that the potential for enhancement of career opportunities was significantly improved by the training program, changing from 2.8 (poor to average) prior to the program to 3.8 (average to good) after one full semester of tutoring. This finding correlates with the opinions of tutors in the needs analysis study, that participation in a tutor training program may lead to increased recognition of their role in the university teaching team and improve prospects for future employment.

The difference in competence levels immediately after training was much more pronounced than after one full semester. For example, Table 5.4 illustrates that while tutor ratings of competence in teaching knowledge and skills increased immediately after the training (from 3.6 to 4), there was no further change to this rating at the end of the semester, after the tutors had experienced 5 months of tutoring. This result supports the belief of professionally trained educators, that although many believe that the best way to learn to teach is to do it, a grounding knowledge of pedagogy is also required to improve teaching ability, particularly for new tutors.<sup>20,58,59,69</sup> In the area of tutor confidence levels, again it was noted that competence increased significantly immediately after the training program, but did not change after five months of tutoring. These results suggest that following the initial training program, there is a need for ongoing training and support for tutors in order to maintain and improve teaching skills. This concurs with the literature, which identifies the lack of



availability of ongoing training and development opportunities for sessional staff and the need to address this issue.<sup>7,40,50,69</sup>

Ongoing training may be facilitated firstly, as discussed in section 5.3.4, by the further use of the online delivery format to provide additional information throughout the academic year via the tutor community website. Subject-specific in-class training for tutors may also be provided on an ongoing basis by the relevant subject co-ordinators. The introduction of in-class training would need to consider the current workload of subject co-ordinators, which is often quite substantial and additional support may be necessary to make this possible.

### **5.4.3 Problems experienced by tutors**

Six of the 10 tutor respondents reported that they had experienced no problems during the semester. Three tutors raised the issue of dealing with problem students.

*'I had no major issues during semester 1. There were some small issues with the odd student's motivation levels and getting a little distracted. Keeping them on task was a little challenging at times'* [Tutor 2- Experienced tutor, past JCU graduate]

*'Getting students to happily participate and feel comfortable with pretend counselling scenarios and not sitting around wasting time and talking'* [Tutor 9 – New tutor, past JCU graduate]

*'Subject material was OK as long as I prepared. One 2nd year student didn't respect our role as tutor at first, thought we got paid heaps for not doing much! I became her scary/demanding tutor and we changed her mind to our value'*  
[Tutor 10- Experienced tutor, Not a JCU graduate]

### **5.4.4 Benefits of training program**

After one full semester of tutoring, a variety of benefits of the tutor training program were listed by the tutor participants. Several tutors felt that the training program had provided a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the expectations required of them as tutors, with respect to both the staff and the students. The program also led to the tutors feeling more valued as part of the teaching staff in the discipline of pharmacy, with one tutor saying that they now felt more connected to JCU staff rather than feeling like a visitor to the university. The lack of assimilation of sessional staff into the organizational culture of universities is well recognized,<sup>5,10,49,77</sup> and this result indicates that the program has assisted in developing a sense of inclusivity for pharmacist tutors. Tutors highlighted an increase in their confidence levels. There is strong evidence in evaluation studies to support the benefit of training programs to improve tutor confidence levels.<sup>9,15,27,35,59</sup> One tutor

mentioned that not only had the program increased their confidence as a tutor, but it had also assisted them in the teaching of placement students. This suggests that the training program has the potential to improve the competence of practicing pharmacists in their role as student preceptors and therefore may enhance their career opportunities in pharmacy practice. Considering that pharmacy preceptors are also involved in the education of pharmacy students, and that current preceptor training programs will include elements of educational instruction,<sup>100</sup> it seems likely that pharmacist tutors will benefit in this way. In terms of teaching ability, some tutors felt that the focused training had improved their teaching ability and updated their knowledge of '*current teachings within the Discipline of Pharmacy*' as well as how the University operates.

A further benefit of the program was the opportunity for networking, with one tutor (who had not tutored at JCU before) describing the program as a '*good ice-breaker for newbies*'. The benefits of networking are supported by the literature, as a means of addressing the concerns of tutors and promoting a sense of community, whilst also facilitating tutor reflection on their teaching practice and on student learning.<sup>7,48,69</sup> One tutor also commented that they are now more familiar with the support available to tutors, although at this stage, they have not required any extra support.

*'The program benefitted me by clarifying the style and aims of the pharmacy program at JCU. As a QUT graduate I was unfamiliar with the JCU program, the focused training improved my understanding of what was required and this increased my confidence and teaching ability' [Tutor 4]*

*'I feel that my confidence as a tutor in several areas improved and as a result I feel I became more effective. I also felt more valued as part of the teaching staff' [Tutor 6]*

#### **5.4.5 Additional topics for future programs**

Respondents identified several potential topics for future training programs, including further training on the handling of problem students, tutor presentation skills and additional information on communication skills. In the area of extemporaneous dispensing, it was felt that more detail on the preparation of extemporaneous products and preparing batch sheets would be useful. Another area to cover in more detail in future programs was the use of online materials such as online resources, LearnJCU and obtaining WiFi access at JCU. One tutor commented that while the tutor web community and forum was available to all tutors, prompting from the community facilitator (the current Pharmacy tutor co-ordinator) may assist in promoting active use of this facility and ensure that it is a valuable tool for tutors.

*'Notes or demonstration (with notes) on how to access on-line resources such as LearnJCU' [Tutor 1]*

*'Conflict resolution skills as we are likely to come across troublesome students and some problems may not require the lecturer's involvement. Public speaking/presentation skills -certain classes may benefit from the tutors making presentations or leading the class' [Tutor 2]*

*'IT stuff e.g. how to use My HR Online/payroll/L-JCU, when P/W's [passwords] would be available to new staff, how to access JCU WiFi using a tablet etc.' [Tutor 9]*

## **5.5 Post-training - Summary**

Demographically, 75% of training program participants were experienced tutors with the majority of this cohort having tutored for more than two years. 42% of respondents were past JCU graduates and therefore it was expected that these tutors may find it less difficult to adjust to their tutoring role at JCU. In terms of past sessional staff training, 42% of the participants had not attended a previous training program. Of the four areas of tutor participation in the pharmacy program, the largest area was in Clinical Dispensing, followed closely by Extemporaneous Dispensing.

The program evaluation results overall seem highly positive, with the majority of tutor participants finding that the length of the program was adequate and the information was relevant to their current needs. The most useful areas of the program were thought to be the sections on 'Assessing Student Learning' and 'Clinical Dispensing and Counselling', which was not surprising given the concern highlighted by the needs analysis in the area of assessment and marking and the fact that 'Clinical Dispensing and Counselling' was the largest area of tutor participation. 'Extemporaneous Dispensing' and the 'Pharmacy Course Overview' were also thought to be either very useful or mostly useful by the majority of tutors. As you would expect, the three new tutors rated all sections overall more highly in terms of usefulness than the experienced tutors.

Tutors found that the best aspects of the program were the clarification of roles and expectations, the opportunity for interaction with other tutors and staff, recognition of the role of the tutor in the teaching team and the availability of support for tutors. Various content areas were also highlighted by different tutors as particularly beneficial to them. As suggested improvements, it was felt that the area of extemporaneous dispensing may be further developed and expanded and additional

topics such as presentation skills may be included. Additionally, tutors were of the opinion that more opportunities for interaction and discussion within the training program would be beneficial. One tutor mentioned that they would like to see a better use of the online website and discussion forum. These suggestions may need to be addressed in future training programs.

Evaluation 2 revealed that the self-rated competencies of tutors in all areas of potential benefit showing significant increases from pre-training to post training. The most significant improvement in tutor competence was in the problem area of assessment and marking, however, it was noted that there is still room for further improvement. The increase in competence ratings was much greater immediately after the program compared to after one semester. Also significant was the fact that in some areas of competence, while competence improved immediately after the program, it did not continue to improve over the following semester. This indicates that while the program itself was effective, there was a need for ongoing training and support.

There were minimal problems experienced by tutors during the first semester post-training, although several tutors had small issues with difficult or unmotivated students. Benefits of the training program highlighted by tutors after the first semester included increased confidence levels, improved teaching ability, updated knowledge and improved networking opportunities. Finally, as topics for future programs, tutors made several suggestions, including further information on dealing with problem students, more extemporaneous dispensing process information and further instruction in the use of online materials.

## Chapter 6      Conclusions and Recommendations

### *Conclusions*

The training and ongoing management of the ever-increasing numbers of sessional staff at Universities is clearly an important issue, with a lack of training being considered a risk to the quality of tertiary education. For the JCU Discipline of Pharmacy, it has been the opinion of both the academic staff and informal feedback from tutors that the current JCU University-wide program has not adequately addressed the particular needs of pharmacist tutors in terms of training and ongoing support. Consequently, the aim of this research project was to design and develop a Pharmacy-specific training program for delivery to JCU pharmacist tutors.

The first objective of this research project was to establish the role of the pharmacist tutor at JCU and to determine their current training and support needs. This was achieved by undertaking a pre-training needs analysis study which involved a sequential mixed method design in order to gather a range of information from pharmacist tutors, academic staff and pharmacy students regarding the role of the pharmacist tutor, the importance of training, the benefits of training and ideal training and support requirements.

The pre-training tutor questionnaire revealed that, as was the trend in the literature, pharmacist tutors at JCU are becoming increasingly diverse, with a predominance of female tutors, with a wide range of qualifications and specializations, along with varying career aspirations.<sup>3,10-12</sup> Many roles of the pharmacist tutors were identified but their most important role was believed to be the provision of the link between the theory and pharmacy practice, with academic staff identifying this as a unique contribution of tutors. This importantly provides additional value to the course in terms of a broadening of the knowledge base, maintaining the currency of the curriculum and in the development of professionalism. The literature findings support the value of these roles for teacher-practitioners.<sup>4,13</sup> JCU pharmacist tutors also play an important support role for the lecturer-in-charge of the teaching sessions and allow for more individualized teaching and learning for the students.

Regarding the need for training and training requirements, it was determined that while the majority of pharmacist tutors found working with students enjoyable and

rewarding, in order to improve teaching performance there was a need for additional training, particularly in teaching communication skills and providing student feedback. The process of assessment and marking has been highlighted in the literature as a complex skill, which requires significant training and experience.<sup>1,39,45,67</sup> Pharmacy tutors and academic staff unanimously agreed that this element of teaching and learning was a major problem area which should be addressed in the tutor training program, in order to improve consistency in marking and assessment.

It is evident from the results of the pre-training survey that prior to this study, the JCU university-wide training program for pharmacist tutors had not adequately addressed their current needs, with pharmacist tutors overwhelmingly preferring a discipline-based or a combination program. The tutor focus group also commented on the lack of relevance of the current university-wide sessional staff orientation program to their particular roles. This is in line with the literature findings, which suggests that while university-wide framework policies are required, a training program should ideally be locally relevant to the individual School or Discipline.<sup>15,36,37,69</sup> This result supports hypothesis 1, that the training and support needs of pharmacist tutors had not been adequately addressed in the past, and this finding has provided impetus for the development of a pharmacy-specific tutor training program.

The results of the needs analysis study provided data to inform the second objective, the design and development of the tutor training program. Important design considerations were not only to ensure compliance with the overarching university policy requirements of TEQSA, but also to deliver information in the ideal structure and format and include the most appropriate content. The decision to combine the university-based induction with the pharmacy-specific program was based on the needs analysis tutor feedback and this was felt to be a practical approach. With a combination of online and face-to-face training preferred by 85% of tutors, this was the chosen format. In terms of program content, both tutor and academic staff feedback was considered, and this resulted in the inclusion of a course overview, a series of specific subject overviews, information on assessment and marking and advice on the provision of student feedback. As literature findings support the benefits of interactive participation and discussion in training programs,<sup>7,48,69</sup> this provided justification for the inclusion of an assessment activity.

The first tutor training program was successfully delivered in February 2013 at the commencement of the University year, thus meeting the third objective. The 4.5 hour

face-to-face training session, along with a JCU online community website specifically for pharmacist tutors and a tutor manual, met the requirements of the tutors for a combination of face-to-face and online delivery, together with the provision of written material in the form of the tutor manual. Because the facilitation of networking opportunities has been found to have a significant effect on the integration of sessional staff into higher education institutions,<sup>7</sup> opportunities for interaction and discussion with fellow tutors and pharmacy staff were provided, in order to promote integration and allow for self-reflection.

Finally, to address objective four, the training program was evaluated using two post-training feedback surveys. The results of the two feedback surveys were overwhelmingly positive, with Evaluation 1 indicating that the program had met the current needs of pharmacist tutors in terms of program length, relevance and usefulness. Based on tutor self-ratings, of particular use were the sessions on *'Assessment of student learning'*, *'Clinical Dispensing and Counselling, Extemporaneous Dispensing* and the *'Pharmacy course overview'*. Other important benefits of the training program were an increase in general confidence levels, the opportunity for interaction with other tutors and staff, and a better understanding of tutor roles and expectations. The benefits of sessional staff training for improvement in confidence levels are well established and the results of this study support these findings.<sup>15,35,59</sup> Importantly, the issue of integration of sessional staff has been addressed by the training program, with the pharmacist tutors being appropriately acknowledged as a part of both the Discipline and the University teaching team. While the marginalization of sessional staff has been extensively discussed in the literature over recent years, it is evident to date that many universities have not adequately addressed this problem,<sup>3,5,8,10,48,77</sup> therefore, with this project indicating that tutors no longer feel marginalized, this is a positive outcome.

Evaluation 2, distributed after one full semester of tutoring, found that training had improved overall tutor competence, most notably in the problem area of assessment and marking, but also in the area of teaching consistency and the ability to deal with problem students. The improvement in competence ratings was much more significant immediately after training than after one full semester, with ratings of competence in some areas not continuing to improve over the course of the first semester post-training. This result indicates that in addition to the initial training program, ongoing training and support was necessary to maintain and improve tutor competence. Both the AUTC Sessional Staff Report of 2003 and the RED Report of

2008 identified that while many Australian Universities consider that induction of sessional staff is important, the ongoing academic management of sessional staff is not well understood or articulated.<sup>8,19</sup> Several studies have highlighted the need for not only initial training for sessional staff, but also for ongoing training and development.<sup>7,40,50,69</sup> As discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 5.3.4), with the limited opportunities for face-to-face training, the use of the online route is becoming increasingly common in Australian Universities and the already established pharmacist tutor community website at JCU could provide the platform for the provision of ongoing training, education and support for pharmacist tutors. Clearly, this is a focus area for the future.

The pharmacist tutor training program has therefore been proven to be successful and this supports hypothesis 2, that the developed program was appropriate to deliver the desired outcomes for pharmacist tutors at JCU.

An in-depth review of the literature has highlighted the paucity of information pertaining to the development of sessional staff training programs, particularly in the health sciences, with no examples of pharmacy-specific training programs being found. The findings of this project will therefore contribute to the development of additional School or Discipline-based sessional staff training programs at JCU and potentially throughout other Australian Universities. Importantly, it is expected that ongoing research into the design and evaluation of sessional staff training programs will result in them being refined and improved, particularly in terms of delivering outcomes for both sessional staff and students, and ultimately the University.

### ***Project limitations***

The lack of consistency in the definition of 'sessional staff' in relation to 'pharmacist tutor' may have led to difficulty in interpretation of the literature with regard to their roles and responsibilities and may limit comparisons with other studies. The small sample size of 27 pharmacist tutors participating in the pharmacist tutor questionnaire was also a limitation, although a good response rate of 68% was achieved. Similarly the post-training evaluation surveys also involved small sample sizes, however, response rates were 86% and 83 % respectively for evaluations 1 and 2. This project also had a potential for the introduction of bias in both the questionnaire and the focus groups due to the fact that the researcher is known to



the large majority of respondents, however, this effect was thought to be minimal. With the project aiming to provide benefits for all participants, it was felt that it was in the participant's best interest to provide accurate and honest information and it is believed that this occurred.

### ***Recommendations for future research***

In the future, it may be beneficial to obtain the opinions of a wider range of stakeholders in the JCU tutor training program. This may involve the development of a questionnaire for not only the tutors, but also pharmacy academic staff and students. Additional focus group interviews may also broaden and strengthen the current data and result in a more thorough evaluation.

Being, to the researcher's knowledge, the first documented training program specifically designed for pharmacist tutors, this research may also be of assistance in the development of tutor training programs in other Pharmacy Schools, particularly in the Australian context. With the limited number of participants available resulting in a small sample size in the JCU Discipline of Pharmacy, collaboration with Pharmacy Schools or Disciplines in other Australian Universities may facilitate the expansion of the project. The larger data set would permit the use of statistical analysis of the results and provide further valuable information on the design and development of sessional staff training programs around Australia, particularly in the area of Pharmacy education.

Specifically, there are several areas of pharmacist tutor training that warrant further investigation. The role of pharmacists as teacher-practitioners in the development of professionalism remains unclear and further studies may be conducted to determine the training needs of pharmacist tutors in this area.<sup>4</sup> The development of mentoring activities between pharmacists tutors and pharmacy students may also benefit from further research to assist in bridging the gap between the University and the workforce.<sup>93</sup>

Given that many of the pedagogical methods and techniques relating to this research are common across all university disciplines, there may be opportunities for inter-professional collaboration with other schools and disciplines at JCU, particularly in the health professional degrees, specifically in the areas of student feedback,

assessment and communication skills. The involvement of the Teaching and Learning Development Unit at JCU may be of benefit for research in this area.

As this project was designed to fulfil the requirements of a Masters degree, the additional research discussed above would not have been within the scope of this project. However, these studies may be considered in the future.

Current research supports the benefits of tutor training to improve tutor teaching skills, enable more effective student communication and management, increase tutor confidence levels and improve job satisfaction.<sup>7,15,20,24,27,35,44,54,59,68</sup> While the analysis of the JCU tutor training program provided significantly positive results in terms of improved tutor confidence, improved teaching skills and enhanced recognition of the role of the tutor, these results were obtained from the perspective of the pharmacist tutor participants. Considering Kirkpatrick's model of educational effectiveness<sup>99</sup>, it is unclear whether the positive effects for pharmacist tutors result in ongoing benefits for the pharmacy students, that they are engaged to teach. Therefore, further evidence may be required to establish the beneficial effects of tutor training on student learning and learning outcomes.

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**APPENDIX A: Sessional Staff @ JCU RED Executive Summary Stage One – Review December 2009 (JCU RED Report)**



# **Executive Summary**

## **Stage One – Review**

**December 2009**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Management and employment issues.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Teaching and learning support.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Training and Information Issues.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Policies and/or guidelines.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Developing an inclusive culture.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Evaluation of sessional teachers.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Issues specific to industry based staff.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
SESSIONAL STAFF PROFILE .....	7
1. MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT .....	9
2. TEACHING AND LEARNING .....	11
3. TRAINING AND INFORMATION.....	12
4. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES .....	13
5. DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE .....	14
6. EVALUATION OF SESSIONAL STAFF .....	15
7. ISSUES SPECIFIC TO INDUSTRY-BASED STAFF.....	16

## Recommended Strategies

### Management and employment issues

1. That the Charter of Responsibilities for Academic Quality clearly outlines responsibilities for the management and employment of sessional staff.

#### Heads of School

- Profile and monitor sessional staff usage across the school, with the objective of identifying sustainable ratios of permanent to sessional staff and appropriate allocation of teaching responsibilities.
- Ensure attendance at JCU Teaching induction, school-based induction and allocate mentor.

#### Subject Co-ordinator

- Support, monitor and mentor sessional staff to maintain and promote teaching quality within the subject.

2. That the Deputy Director Human Resources in collaboration with all faculties identifies opportunities for sessional staff to develop sustainable career paths within the institution, including offering fractional appointments to sessional staff employed on a continuing basis.

3. That an employment strategy be established to guide reform of internal processes and administrative support provided to sessional staff.

- The adoption of minimum employment practice standards outlining consistent and equitable practices for the recruitment, management and development of sessional staff.

#### Suggested outcomes may include:

- All sessional employees to receive details of conditions of employment on appointment.
- An institutional record of curriculum vitae outlining qualifications, experience and professional references required for all sessional teaching staff
- Submission of regular workflow claims for all sessional staff
- Schools to adopt a financial model that allows long range forecasting to provide sessional teaching staff with reasonable notice of employment.
- Clear induction requirements and responsibilities
- Development of a casual staff professional development fund to support sessional staff participating in teaching and learning professional development or undertaking Graduate Certificate Education (Tertiary Teaching).
- Review allocation of pay levels (e.g. consistent interpretation of rates of payment, block mode and online teaching delivery, recognition of industry professionals, distinct allocation of marking hours.)
- Reform internal processes to ensure improved access and continuity of access to information, IT systems and resources.
- Development of high profile, centralised web resource to support employers.

## Teaching and learning support

4. That informed by the Sessional Staff at JCU Project findings, current induction processes be reformed to:
- align resources to support the diverse range of teaching roles
  - provide professional development activities that target the context and needs identified by Sessional Staff
  - align with school-based induction processes
  - support the evaluation of sessional staff members teaching practice (see recommendation 18)
  - supplement accessibility via modes of flexible delivery
  - encourage sessional staff to acquire formal qualification in tertiary teaching via the Graduate Certificate Education (Tertiary Teaching)
6. That Early Career Development Fellowships be established to support sessional staff to undertake teaching and learning professional development or undertake Graduate Certificate Education (Tertiary Teaching).
7. That training and resources be developed to support the needs of permanent staff responsible for supervising the teaching performance of sessional staff and performance monitored via standard PMP processes.
8. That a strategy is developed for the use of web and/or LearnJCU to support the flexible delivery of professional development activities and teaching resources for sessional staff.

## Training and Information Issues

9. That a Sessional Staff Access Working Group be established to guide reform of the internal processes providing sessional staff access to essential information systems.
- Suggested terms of reference for the group would include:
- Review of access protocols to JCU Webmail, LearnJCU, eAcademic and Library and Computing resources for sessional teaching staff.
  - Review internal communication methods to ensure inclusion of sessional teaching staff.
  - Review and enhance training and support provided to sessional staff.
- Membership to include representatives from:
- LearnJCU (Teaching and Learning Development)
  - Information Technology and Resources
  - Student Systems
    - Library and Information Services
  - Faculties (Academic representatives)

<b>10.</b>	That resources be developed for sessional staff and employing staff including starter packs and checklists to ensure new staff receive adequate workplace orientation.
<b>11.</b>	That tutorials/guides be developed to support sessional staff to complete workflow claims.
<b>Policies and/or guidelines</b>	
<b>12.</b>	That associated policies and guidelines be developed as required to support the recommendations of the Sessional Staff at JCU Project.
<b>13.</b>	That an accessible, central repository of policies and guidelines relating to sessional staff be developed.
<b>Developing an inclusive culture</b>	
<b>14.</b>	That Human Resources maintain a record of contributions made by sessional staff and a process for providing statements of recognition for continued service.
<b>15.</b>	That the minimum employment standards (see recommendation 3) include provision of basic facilities and resources such as office space, comprehensive course materials and clear workload allocations.
<b>16.</b>	That Heads of School establish regular social and celebratory events to recognise and reward the contribution of sessional teaching staff.
<b>17.</b>	That a Faculty JCU Sessional Teaching Award be established to recognise and reward the contribution of sessional teaching staff.
<b>18.</b>	That established minimum employment standards (see recommendation 3) include clear resolution processes for sessional staff and formal opportunities to provide feedback on both employment and teaching experiences.
<b>Evaluation of sessional teachers</b>	
<b>19.</b>	That guidelines (see recommendation 4) are developed to support informal and formal means of evaluating sessional staff members teaching practice, including peer review and mentoring.
<b>Issues specific to industry based staff</b>	
<b>20.</b>	That Heads of School enhance communication with industry-based professionals and monitor performance to promote curriculum alignment.
<b>21.</b>	That Heads of School investigate opportunities to formalise memorandums of understanding with the employing agencies of industry based staff to create service agreements to recognise and reward the contributions of all parties.

## Executive Summary

The James Cook University (JCU) Sessional Staff<sup>1</sup> Project aims to identify current institutional practice and improve internal processes and communication to enhance the quality of sessional teaching. The project builds upon Australian Universities Teaching Report (2003a) *Training, Support and Management of Sessional Teaching Staff* and the RED Report commissioned by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC).

A multi- method approach was employed to gain a comprehensive picture of the contribution made by sessional staff to teaching and learning at JCU. The review draws upon results of an online questionnaire<sup>2</sup>, which included open-ended response options for a number of items. Sessional workforce reports were generated at key periods<sup>3</sup> and compiled with information gained from subject co-ordinators to identify 511 sessional teaching staff. 312 (61%) sessional staff responded to the questionnaire.

In addition, 15 (4%) staff in research or lab technician/manger roles self identified as sessional teaching staff and completed the questionnaire. Responses received from this group were generally consistent with responses received from the general sessional teaching staff population.

The questionnaire was complemented by thirty two (32) interviews conducted with key stakeholders at a school and/or discipline level and Human Resources personnel.

Interviews with stakeholders were conducted within the context of seven broad areas identified the Australian Universities Teaching Report (2003a). The prioritisation of these areas by key stakeholders suggested the future direction of the Sessional Staff Project focus on the following, in order of priority.

1. Management and Employment
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Training and Information
4. Policies and Guidelines
5. Developing an Inclusive Culture
6. Evaluation of Sessional Staff
7. Issues Specific to Industry-Based Staff

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this project the ALTC's RED report<sup>1</sup> definition of sessional staff was used: 'sessional teachers including any higher education instructors not in tenured or permanent positions, and employed on an hourly or honorary basis'.

<sup>2</sup> Sessional Staff Survey created by The University of Western Australia, Centre for the advancement of Teaching. [http://www.cati.uwa.edu.au/CATLystNetwork/sessional\\_staff\\_survey](http://www.cati.uwa.edu.au/CATLystNetwork/sessional_staff_survey) (Adapted by JCU with permission)

<sup>3</sup> Reports of Current Casual Teaching Staff were generated by the JCU Human Resource Management System on: 01/03/2009, 01/05/2009, 01/06/2009, 31/07/2009 and 14/08/2009.



## ***Sessional Staff Profile***

With an average time of employment reported as 3.62 years it appears that James Cook University has fortuitously maintained a relatively stable sessional staff workforce. The majority (67.5%) of sessional staff reported between one to five years of employment at JCU.

The bulk of the respondents indicated they were 41 year or older (46.4%). This age distribution appears indicative of wider casual workforce patterns rather than aligning with historical perceptions of a sessional teaching workforce dominated by post-graduate students. Comments made by respondents in open-ended questions suggest a variety of reasons for this age distribution including the employment market, personal circumstances and a demand for professional/industry experience.

The majority of sessional staff 62.6% reported an interest in teaching as their primary motivation for undertaking sessional teaching. Working with students was overwhelmingly considered the best aspect of their sessional teaching experience. The opportunities for personal and professional development, to work with academic staff, improve own knowledge base and contribute or "give back" to their chosen profession were also identified as positive aspects of sessional teaching.

***“My work is sessional because that is what the jobs are.”***

21.6% (60) indicated a desire to further their academic career perceiving casual teaching as forming part of a future career path. However, the open-ended responses suggest sessional staff perceive limited opportunities exist at JCU to gain more permanent teaching roles.

The Australian Teaching and Learning Council (ALTC), RED Report<sup>4</sup> identified that sessional teachers perform the full range of teaching-related duties. The James Cook University experience appears to reflect this national trend with teaching activities including:

- Tutorials/Workshops
- Practical Demonstration
- Lectures
- Mentoring
- Group Facilitation
- Field Trips
- Examinations
- Professional placement supervision
- External/Online Teaching
- Subject Co-ordination
- Marking

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<sup>4</sup> The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) (2008) *The RED Report* Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CACAD)



66.34% (207) respondents reported that they worked across multiple year levels within their academic programs. Over half of the sessional staff identified as teaching into the first year of the degree program. The majority of teaching hours were spent on activities involving direct student contact such as face to face teaching, student consultation and monitoring student progress. Therefore, it is important to recognise the role sessional staff play in the first year experience and ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and support required for this specialist teaching area.

The Sessional Staff at JCU Questionnaire invited sessional staff to reflect upon their workplace experiences at JCU. The majority (55.1% - 83.8%) of responses indicated positive workplace experiences.

## Key Findings

### 1. *Management and Employment*

Subject co-ordinators were generally considered responsible for the employment and management of sessional teaching staff. Responsibility for the recruitment of sessional staff was commonly held by the individual subject co-ordinators with final approval required by the relevant head of school. The absence of clear detailed employment guidelines to support this broadly distributed responsibility can be seen as contributing to the differing interpretation of policy and guidelines particularly regarding pay levels, inconsistencies in information and induction/training provided to sessional staff and administrative errors in the completion of casual appointment forms.

Stakeholder interviews highlighted the many responsibilities subject co-ordinators must address as part of their managerial role. Subject co-ordinators are generally considered responsible for the recruitment, training, communication, inclusion, evaluation and professional development of sessional staff in addition to providing resources and teaching materials. However, little consideration appears to be given to these responsibilities within workload allocations. It would appear that subject co-ordinators are expected to assume managerial responsibilities for sessional staff with little or no acknowledgement of the time or skills required to perform these duties well.

Management and employment issues such as, the ability to attract and retain quality staff, lack of succession planning and poor performance management featured highly in stakeholder interviews. Similar management and employment concerns were reiterated within open ended responses received from sessional staff. However, it is important to note that when invited to comment upon how the University could better support staff, 19.9% (52) of the comments suggested no improvement was required.

Schools reported being unable to guarantee sessional staff employment until immediately prior to, or some cases, after the commencement of teaching. This is when student numbers were finalised and budgets officially allocated. The loss of valued, experienced staff was commonly reported due to the inability to provide job security. In addition, participation in induction training, forward planning and preparation for teaching was also reported as compromised due to this style of recruitment.

*“Often, it falls on me to pick up the pieces and jump in at the last minute.”*

The “last minute” nature of employment was perceived as having negative financial implications for staff as well as detrimental impacts upon the quality of teaching. Staff comments also included concerns about job security, insufficient payment for preparation, student consultation and marking, poor access to suitable workspaces and difficulties navigating workflow processes.

The most commonly reported circumstances in which staff were first recruited to JCU were:

- 24.6% (73) Submitted/Responded to an Expression of Interest
- 24.2% (72) Approached by a Staff Member

- 23.6% (70) During Post-Graduate Studies
- 18.9% (56) Through Professional or Personal Networks

A considerable number of respondents did not or were unable to identify their normal paid hours. Additional comments made by the respondents suggest the inconsistent nature of casual employment, a lack of employment documentation, and/or pro rata fortnightly payments made it difficult to track paid hours across a range of subjects, schools and teaching periods.

**Table 1: On average how many hours per week do you spend?**

	<b>0 Hours</b>	<b>1-2 Hours</b>	<b>3-5 Hours</b>	<b>6-10 hours</b>	<b>11-16 Hours</b>	<b>More</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Preparing for teaching	3.7% (11)	49.2% (147)	27.4% (82)	13.0% (39)	5.4% (16)	1.3% (4)	299
Face-to-face teaching	1.4% (4)	22.4% (66)	41.5% (122)	27.6% (81)	5.4% (16)	1.7% (5)	294
Marking	20.2% (52)	38.9% (100)	26.1% (67)	8.6% (22)	2.3% (6)	3.9% (10)	257
Student consultation (incl. email)	19.9% (54)	57.4% (156)	19.1% (52)	2.9% (8)	0.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	272
Monitoring student progress	36.3% (89)	54.7% (134)	6.5% (16)	2.4% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	245
Working collaboratively with other teaching staff	27.3% (70)	61.7% (158)	8.6% (22)	2.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	256
Research activities	34.7% (82)	25.4% (60)	8.1% (19)	5.5% (13)	3.4% (8)	22.9% (54)	236
Other	64.1% (50)	12.8% (10)	12.8% (10)	2.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	7.7% (6)	78
<b>Total</b>							305
<b>No Response</b>							7

A conservative estimate of weekly workload was calculated for each questionnaire respondent, using the lower limit reported for each teaching activity, in Table 1. The average weekly workload for respondents was calculated at 15.9 hours (standard deviation of weekly hours 10.8).

*“Hours spent marking are unpaid.”*

A comparison of reported paid hours and the calculated estimate of actual work hours would suggest that 40% of work undertaken by sessional staff (6.4 hours per week) may be unpaid. Comments made by respondents to open ended questions within the questionnaire suggest these inequities in remuneration predominately relate to preparation and marking time. It is not surprising therefore that staff reported the most challenging aspect of their teaching role was 9.8% (27) workload, 9.8% (27) financial remuneration and 7.6% (21) marking.

## **2. Teaching and Learning**

33% (95) respondents indicated they had nil teaching experience before undertaking a teaching role at JCU. Only 15.7% (45) respondents held, or were in the process of attaining a formal education qualification. Of this group 8% (23) were teaching within the School of Education and are therefore required to hold current teacher registration.

The Teaching at JCU: Sessionals session conducted by Teaching and Learning Development is considered a key tool in providing teaching and learning support for sessional staff. Attendance at this session is considered a condition of ongoing employment. In addition, five schools reported conducting school-based induction programs.

*“I have had no induction or training offered to me at any time.”*

Despite the intrinsic value of these sessions, 55.3% (166) respondents indicated had not attended the Teaching and Learning Development session and 68.6% (205) had not received school-based induction/training. It is anticipated that non-attendance may be related to a number of factors including, appointment to a sessional teaching role prior to the

introduction of this session in 2005, lack of information about the session and/or inability to attend the session at the allocated time. The “last minute” appointment of sessional staff may also serve to hinder attendance.

57.1% (84) of respondents who had attended a session felt the induction had helped their teaching performance. Respondents identified specific skills, teaching strategies, resources and approaches that they had gained from the induction/training sessions and reported it helped build confidence, refresh skills and confirm the value of their current practice. 9.5% (14) of respondents indicated induction/training had provided them with workplace information such as policies, processes and reporting relationships to support their teaching role.

The impact of the induction on teaching was limited by the highly varied roles sessional staff have within the institution. A number of staff felt their specific needs were unable to be met in a generic induction session and as a result a considerable amount of content was not considered relevant to their role. The value of additional follow up support within the school was highlighted. Sessional staff requested

*“The training gave me many useful strategies to cope with the workload and student needs”*

additional opportunities to work closely with more experienced colleagues.

School stakeholders identified sessional teaching staff required additional teaching support regarding, lesson planning, classroom management, marking/providing feedback, teaching technologies, small group teaching and strategies to support reflective practice. These areas are consistent with teaching development needs identified by sessional staff in the Sessional Staff @ JCU Questionnaire. The majority of respondents found managing the teaching environment to be the most challenging aspect of their teaching experience. Generally over 60% of responses indicated additional teaching support would be useful. 15.1% (41) responses identified dealing with challenging student behaviours as the most challenging aspect of sessional teaching. Staff reported feeling unprepared to deal with students, who were loud and disruptive, had lower literacy/numeracy skills, did not adequately prepare for class, did not engage in classroom discussion or were disrespectful/rude to staff and fellow students.

*“Buying out teaching does not save you time.”*

Further teaching development activities for sessional staff were normally considered cost prohibitive by schools. Therefore, the supervisors of sessional teachers were generally considered responsible for assuring the quality of sessional teaching within their programs through the close supervision of staff.

Adequate consideration must be given to the workload demands of supervising sessional staff. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate that the comparison of permanent to sessional teaching staff using FTE figures disguises the supervisory workload on permanent staff. Figure 1 suggests a minimal supervisory load on permanent staff. In comparison Figure 2, which illustrates the same data as a head count provides a more detailed picture of the supervisory burden.

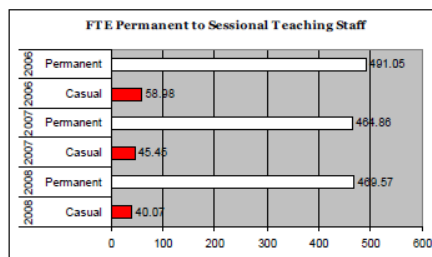


Figure 1

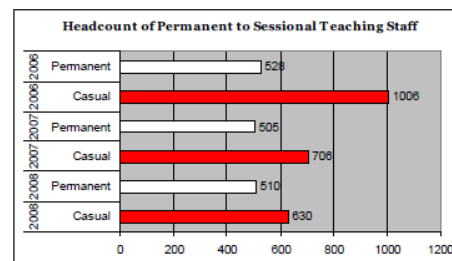


Figure 2

### 3. Training and Information

*“Having to ‘sink or swim’ when I started.”*

75.1% (223) sessional staff responses indicated that staff felt they had enough information to do their job well. Comments from stakeholders supported this reporting that the bulk of their sessional staff were currently post graduates students and/or had been employed at JCU before so they "knew how the place operated" or "knew who to ask if they need anything". In direct contrast, sessional staff responses to open ended questions often relayed the frustrations of not knowing where to go for information and/or resources.

Navigation through University administrative systems was reported as posing a significant challenge. Cited examples included, difficulties



completing workflow and spendvision claims and no access to student information, photocopiers and/or stationery. It was suggested that sessional staff not receiving a school-based induction generally gathered workplace specific information incidentally from other sessionals, administrative staff or the relevant subject co-ordinator.

The need for improved access to university information systems and training was highlighted as essential to the sessional teaching role. 17.3% (45) respondents identified improved access and support in the use of LearnJCU, 15.7% (41) improved access to email and library access and 14.9% (39) additional teaching support.

Timely access to the email network and online learning management system (LearnJCU) is required by sessional staff to maintain effective lines of communication with the University, staff and students. The majority of staff (75.4%) identified JCU webmail as the primary method of communication with students outside of face-to-face teaching. Lack of communication about how to access these information systems and the constant re-issuing of passwords was reported as a source of frustration for both sessional staff and the school.

In an effort to minimise the disruption, employing staff have tended to overstate the period of employment by two weeks either side. Not only does this provide an inaccurate record of the employment period it also serves to reduce the fortnightly payment when wage entitlement is paid pro rata across the entire reported pay period. This serves to add to the existing confusion about pay rates and creates a series of administrative challenges if the sessional employee is for any reason unable to fulfil their entire contract.

It was generally considered the responsibility of the subject co-ordinator to provide sessional staff with access to the relevant LearnJCU subject site and provide necessary training and support. This distributed responsibility could be seen as contributing to delays in access and the lack of LearnJCU support and training. Therefore, it is not surprising that sessional staff also tend to rely heavily upon professional staff to respond to employment and administration enquiries. Subject co-ordinators have many competing workload priorities and may not be aware that facilitating IT access is considered their responsibility. Additionally, not all staff may have the time or skills required to provide this level of support to sessional staff.

*“The quality of the information/resources provided is more dependent upon communications with and the quality of the individual course of subject co-ordinator”*

#### **4. Policies and Guidelines**

Employment at JCU is governed by the current Union Collective Agreement<sup>5</sup>. In addition, JCU has a number of policies and guidelines that make reference to sessional staff. These policies include:

- Employment and Recruitment of Casuals

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<sup>5</sup> James Cook University, Union Collective Agreement 2006.  
<http://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/hr/awards/index.htm>

- Students Employed as Casual Teaching Staff
- Guidelines for Schools and Appointees – Casual Teaching Employees
- Adjunct Appointments

These policies are intended to provide broad guidelines to University managers in the employment of casual staff and honorary teaching arrangements. However, knowledge of University policies appeared patchy across the schools with each stakeholder commenting on various elements of policy but few able to report a comprehensive knowledge of JCU policies and guidelines.

*“The amount of time it takes to do a good job is not commensurate with pay I receive.”*

Concerns were raised about the existence and interpretation of policies particularly application of pay levels, lack of clarity regarding workload formulas, allocation of marking hours, recognition of different teaching roles (e.g. Online teaching), weekend pay rates and induction requirements. This confusion is evidenced by the incorrect completion of casual appointment forms resulting in unnecessary delays in processing.

Concerns about the discretionary allocation of pay levels both across and within schools were highlighted as cause of inequitable pay rates resulting in inharmonious work climates. Conversely, concerns were also raised about the inflexibility of pay levels to accommodate school budget restrictions and the recruitment of highly qualified industry professionals.

## **5. Developing an Inclusive Culture**

The Sessional Staff at JCU Questionnaire invited sessional staff to reflect upon their workplace experiences at JCU. Several questions in this section were aligned to questions from the 2007 JCU Staff Climate (opinion) Survey. The majority (55.1% - 83.8%) of responses indicated positive workplace experiences. Knowing what was expected in role (83.8%), satisfaction with the support received from the subject co-ordinators (80.8%) and having enough information to do the job well (75.1%) received the highest number of agree and strongly responses.

*“I love my jobs at JCU.”*

Feeling that ideas for improvement were seriously considered (55.7%) and receiving recognition for doing a good job (55.3%) had the lowest number of agree and strongly agree responses. Contributing factors to polarised workplace experiences are likely to include, the diversity of teaching roles, nature of recruitment and the skills and resources available to the associated subject co-ordinator.

It was identified that the limited work hours of sessional staff made it difficult to build a sense of community. Industry professionals were often juggling teaching responsibilities with full time work commitments.

Budget restrictions generally prevented payment for sessional staff to attend professional development activities, examiner’s meetings, school planning

meetings and retreats. The inclusion of sessional staff in these activities was generally limited to staff on full-time equivalent contracts or staff with a long-standing commitment to the school who volunteered their time to be actively involved.

Space restrictions also presented a challenge for schools to provide sessional staff with an assigned office. Priority was given to sessional staff with considerable teaching responsibilities. In most instances sessional staff were assigned a shared space, which could be considered unsuitable for private student consultations.

*“I do miss out on a lot of information that is circulated to full time staff.”*

Communication with school staff was generally via automated email lists. However, it was identified that these lists may not include all sessional staff. It was considered the responsibility of the subject co-ordinator to “pass on” relevant information to sessional staff.

Eight schools indicated the development of inclusive cultures via planned social/celebratory activities. It was reported that sessional staff were actively involved in these activities and also regularly attended the shared staff room facilities whilst on campus.

Conversely, it was also reported that within some schools a strong cultural divide existed between full-time and sessional teaching staff. These workplaces were characterised by highly politicised workplaces in which an informal hierarchy saw sessional staff as the “lower class”. Examples cited included, sessional staff being allocated poorly regarded jobs, receiving no acknowledgement in the tearoom or school corridors, no opportunity to provide feedback on subject content and/or no access to school office space. 14% (38) of sessional staff responses identified workplace issues as the worst aspect of their teaching experiences. Cited examples included workplace politics, unfamiliar processes and inadequate resources. It was suggested that the quality of the sessional staff members’ experience was often dependent upon their relationship with the subject’s co-ordinator.

## **6. Evaluation of Sessional Staff**

46% (136) of questionnaire responses indicated that sessional staff did not receive regular review of their work performance. Performance feedback was usually collected incidentally. Subject co-ordinators and Heads of School gained incidental glimpses into sessional teaching quality via the open-ended responses to Student Feedback about Subjects (SFS). Information was also gained while monitoring student progress or via informal student feedback. However, this feedback was not consistently passed on to sessional staff.

A number of isolated examples of good practice were identified in which subject co-ordinators and/or principal tutors took a lead role in monitoring and developing sessional staff teaching performance. These staff regularly reviewed

*“Trying to do the best possible job without upsetting fellow staff by suggesting innovation.”*



teaching performance and met with sessional staff to discuss teaching strategies.

Generally only those staff wishing to pursue an academic career path sought participation in formal evaluation processes such as Student Feedback about Teaching (SFT). However, it was reported small teaching groups and poor response rates made it difficult for sessional staff to obtain usable results.

With limited resources and time available for professional development, a poor evaluation generally resulted in non-renewal of contract. This form of quality control fails to acknowledge the impact of last minute recruitment and the inconsistent nature of ongoing support and training. As a result, opportunities to retain and develop existing staff are lost and the challenges of ongoing recruitment remain.

## ***7. Issues Specific to Industry-Based Staff***

For the purposes of this report, industry-based staff are defined as professional staff substantially employed by an external organisation teaching within their field, at JCU, on a sessional basis. It was identified that these staff performed a variety of teaching roles including, guest lectures, lectures, tutorials/workshops, examinations and professional placement supervision.

Stakeholders identified recruitment difficulties as the biggest challenge for schools wishing to employ industry based sessional staff. The availability of suitably qualified specialists within the local area and a lack of competitive wages were identified as barriers to the involvement of industry professionals.

*“Employed??  
This implies being  
paid –  
2 years working,  
don’t get paid.”*

Schools reported fostering a culture of “volunteerism” through personal, professional and industry networks in order secure the involvement of industry professionals. This strategy enables the school to access highly qualified, experienced staff at minimal cost. However, considerable time and effort is required on behalf of the school to develop and nurture these partnership arrangements, the availability of staff is subject to their other commitments and a breakdown in partnership arrangements can have a devastating impact upon the University’s professional reputation.

Full-time work responsibilities also impacted upon the ability for industry-based staff to consult with students outside formal teaching times. Student consultation was generally restricted to email contact.

It was also identified that there was a risk of industry professionals presenting their own professional interests or experiences of “how things are/should be done” which may be perceived as incongruent with to other material presented during the course. The subject co-ordinator was identified as having an important role in identifying appropriate staff and linking the skills of the industry-based staff into the overall design and delivery of the subject.

## **In Conclusion**

As summarised within this report, the initial review stage of the project has provided a wide-ranging picture of the contribution made by sessional staff to teaching and learning at James Cook University. The review has also gathered information about the number of sessional staff, the types of roles undertaken and the level of support they are provided to perform these teaching roles. Extensive consultation with schools and other stakeholders has identified current employment and training and development practices, discipline specific needs, accreditation demands and issues related to current legislative and policy frameworks.

Drawing on the themes identified by the Australian Universities Teaching Report (203a) Training, Support and Management of Sessional Teaching Staff and the RED Report commissioned by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) a number of recommendations have been identified. These themes have been prioritised to represent the common concerns raised by sessional staff, schools and other stakeholders. The Develop and Sustain phase of the project will endeavour to implement sustainable strategies to effectively recognise, enhance and develop sessional teaching staff at JCU.

**APPENDIX B: Copy of tutor questionnaire**

**TRAINING AND SUPPORT OF SESSIONAL STAFF: A PROGRAM FOR PHARMACIST  
TUTORS AT JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE - TUTOR ROLES, TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR CLINICAL TUTORS**

**Participant General Information**      *Please tick (√) the relevant box*

**1. Are you a current tutor in pharmacy at James Cook University (JCU)?**

Yes       No

**2. If so - for how long have you been a tutor?**

< 1 yr       1-2 yrs       2-5 yrs       > 5 yrs

Not applicable

**3. If not - are you considering tutoring at JCU in the future?**

Yes       Maybe       No       Not Applicable

**4. Number of years since graduation**

< 5 yrs       5-10 yrs       10-20 yrs       20 yrs

**5. Sex**

Male       Female

**6. Practice Experience**      *Please tick all that apply*

Community Pharmacy       Hospital Pharmacy

Academia       Industry

Other (please state)       .....

**7. Post graduate qualifications? Please provide details**

.....

**8. Any areas of specialisation? Please provide details**

.....

**9. Academic experience (teaching, tutoring etc). Please tick all that apply**

- Pharmacy student preceptor .....
- Current or past tutor at this University .....
- Current or past tutor at other Australian University .....
- Continuing professional education delivery .....
- Published Journal articles .....
- Other (please state) .....

.....

**10. Have you previously participated in any teacher/tutor training?**

- Yes  No

If so, please provide details .....

.....

**11. Looking back to your undergraduate pharmacy degree, what was the academic level of tutors involved in your degree?**

**\* Note - more than ONE answer may be given here.**

- Lecturer .....
- Post-graduate student .....
- Practising pharmacist .....
- Other .....
- (please state) .....

**THE ROLE OF THE TUTOR**

**12. Please indicate how important you consider tutor involvement in the following areas of student education:**

- 1. Very important
- 2. Important
- 3. Somewhat important
- 4. Not important
- 5. Unsure

*Please number each box*

Clinical Dispensing .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extemporaneous Dispensing .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clinical Counselling .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student assessment – written .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student assessment – verbal .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marking of placement workbooks .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

**13. In which additional areas of student education would you like to see pharmacist tutors involved?**

.....

.....

.....

**TRAINING NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS**

**14. How important do you consider a tutor training program for pharmacist tutors in the JCU pharmacy program?**

Very important	<input type="checkbox"/>	Important	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat Important	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not important	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**15. How important would you rate the following potential benefits of tutor training**

1. Very important
2. Important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not important
5. Unsure

*Please number each box*

Improved teaching skills .....	<input type="text"/>
Enhanced consistency of teaching .....	<input type="text"/>
Improved teamwork .....	<input type="text"/>
Enhanced tutor confidence .....	<input type="text"/>
Enhanced student learning .....	<input type="text"/>
Enhanced tutor career opportunities.....	<input type="text"/>

**16. Do you think that tutor training should be a compulsory requirement for all new tutors at JCU?**

Yes  Maybe  No

**17. If a tutor training program was NOT compulsory, would you be likely to participate?**

Yes  Maybe  No



**18. Listed below are some basic teaching skills that could be covered in a tutor training program. Please indicate how important each topic would be for you.**

1. Very important
2. Important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not important
5. Unsure

*Please number each box*

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| a) Basic teaching principles .....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Small and large group teaching .....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) One on one teaching .....               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Teaching practical skills .....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Teaching communication skills .....     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Giving effective student feedback ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Assessing student performance .....     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Dealing with problem students .....     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Are there any additional topics which you would like to be covered in a tutor training program?**

.....

.....

.....

**19. In what format would you like tutor training to be provided?**

\* Note - more than ONE answer may be given here

- a) Distance learning package – written materials .....
- b) On-line training modules .....
- c) Face to Face .....
- d) Combination of on-line and face to face .....
- e) Other (please state) .....

**20. How frequently should tutor training be offered?**

- a) Once each year .....
  - b) Once each Semester .....
  - c) Once every 2 years .....
  - d) Other (please state) .....
- .....

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR TUTORS**

**21. How would you rate the current support that you receive in the performance of your role as a tutor?**

- 1 Poor .....
- 2 Average .....
- 3 Good .....
- 4 Excellent .....
- 5 I have not tutored before .....



**22. How important would you consider the following measures as additional support for effective tutoring?**

- 1. Very important
- 2. Important
- 3. Somewhat important
- 4. Not important
- 5. Unsure

*Please number each box*

A tutor manual/handbook covering polices/procedures for sessional staff as well as general tutor information and essential knowledge/skills required .....

Subject specific small group meetings with subject/practical co-ordinator prior to the start of each semester .....

Access to the subject website to obtain background information for the particular subject being taught. ....

A web-based community discussion group for tutors .....

Peer mentoring procedures .....

Access to staff development sessions.....

Opportunities for sessional teachers to meet and liase .....

Other .....

(please state) .....

**Combining general university sessional staff orientation with Pharmacy orientation?**

**23. Would you prefer to have a general university-based orientation session or a school specific orientation?**

University based .....

School based .....

Both University and school based sessions .....

Other .....

(please state) .....

**24. Please add any additional comments that you may have with regard to training and support of pharmacist tutors at James Cook University.**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

*Thank you for your time. Your input is appreciated  
Gillian Knott*

## APPENDIX C: Information sheet for tutor questionnaire



### INFORMATION SHEET

#### Training and support program for pharmacist tutors at James Cook University

As a current, past or potential tutor into the James Cook University (JCU) Pharmacy degree, you are invited to take part in a research project which is aiming to develop a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at JCU. The study is being conducted by Gillian Knott and will contribute to a Master of Pharmacy degree at James Cook University.

If you agree to be involved in this study, you will be asked to complete the enclosed questionnaire which will help us to determine the requirements for training and support of pharmacist tutors. The questionnaire should only take 15 minutes to complete.

If you agree to complete the questionnaire, you may also be asked if you would be willing to participate in a tutor focus group at a later date. The aim of the focus group will be to further refine training and support requirements for tutors. This focus group will take place at the School of Pharmacy at JCU, and will be audio-taped. It will take approximately 1 hour of your time.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

Your responses and contact details will be strictly confidential. All questionnaires will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for the next 5 years. Any electronic data generated will be stored on a secure password protected server. The data from the study may be used in research publications and reports for health education and pharmacy practice journals. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

It would be appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire and return it in the reply-paid envelope provided by MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011

All participants will also be required to provide written informed consent. Therefore, please also complete the enclosed informed consent form and return it with your questionnaire in the supplied envelope.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact **Mrs Gillian Knott or Professor Beverley Glass**

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*If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:  
Sophie Thompson, Human Ethics and Grants Administrator, Research Office,  
James Cook University,  
Townsville, Qld, 4811. Phone: 4781 6575, [Sophie.Thompson@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Sophie.Thompson@jcu.edu.au)*

Cairns - Townsville - Brisbane - Singapore  
CRICOS Provider Code 00117J

## APPENDIX D: Informed consent form for tutor questionnaire



### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	Gillian Knott
PROJECT TITLE:	Training and support for sessional staff: a program for pharmacist tutors at James Cook University
SCHOOL	Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences

I understand the aim of this research study is to develop a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at James Cook University. I consent to participate in this project and I have been provided with a written information sheet to keep, which has satisfactorily explained the details of the project.

I understand that my participation will involve a questionnaire and possible participation in a focus group and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the information sheet.

I acknowledge that:

- taking part in this study is voluntary and I am aware that I can stop taking part in it at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
- that any information I give will be kept strictly confidential and that no names will be used to identify me with this study without my approval;
- confidentiality cannot be assured in focus groups.

*(Please tick to indicate consent)*

I consent to complete a questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
I consent to be contacted at a later date to participate in a focus group relating to this study	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
I consent to provide my contact details for the purposes of participation in a focus group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Contact details

Address .....

Email address .....

Telephone .....

Name: <i>(printed)</i>	
Signature:	Date:

## APPENDIX E: Reminder letter to tutors for return of tutor questionnaire



25<sup>th</sup> January 2011

### **Reminder**

#### **Training and support program for pharmacist tutors at James Cook University**

Dear Pharmacists,

A few weeks ago, you would have received a letter asking if you would be able to assist in a research project which aims to develop a training and support program for pharmacist tutors at James Cook University. You were asked to complete a questionnaire to aid in determining the requirements for training and support of pharmacist tutors.

Response has been good - however, there are still a few pharmacists who have not returned the completed questionnaire. If you wish to be involved in this study and have not yet returned your questionnaire, I would urge you to do so by **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011.**

Many thanks for your time,

Kind regards

Gillian Knott

#### **Principal Investigator:**

**Gillian Knott**

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Lecturer and Tutor Co-ordinator  
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#### **Supervisor:**

**Professor Beverley Glass**

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## APPENDIX F: Student focus group introduction and questions

Focus group - STUDENT

Good afternoon everyone.

Thank-you for coming today and agreeing to be involved in this focus group.

My name is Gillian Knott - Principal researcher  
Lecturer in the Discipline of Pharmacy at JCU  
Also the tutor co-ordinator for the department.

- Purpose of this project is to develop a training program for pharmacist tutors who are involved in the Pharmacy program at JCU. This focus group aims to look at the role of the tutor and how we can enhance tutor effectiveness.
- Information collected will be used in the project – responses will be kept in strict confidence by the research team. You will not be identified in any way
- This group interview will be audiotaped so that we can review your answers and to avoid missing any details or responses. Beverley will also be taking notes.
- Reminder to respect other people's opinions and beliefs and consider the confidentiality of others outside of this focus group.
- We have 5 main questions to discuss and we anticipate that this group interview will take about one hour of your time.
- Participation is entirely voluntary and there is no obligation for you to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable with. If you are not comfortable with the questions, you are free to leave at any time and we will not be offended.

Are there any questions or comments before we begin?

### Question ONE

#### **What do you see as the main role of pharmacist tutors?**

*Tutors – more small group teaching or one-on-one?*

*- bridging the gap between practical and theory?*

*(from questionnaire)*

*Assisting in practicals - Extemporaneous*

*- Clinical dispensing*

*- Clinical counselling*

*Student assessment - Written eg. placement manuals, practical worksheets*

*Verbal eg. oral exams, counselling*

*Placement supervision*

Question TWO

**What has your experience been with pharmacists tutors in the pharmacy program.**

*Prompts - These can be good or bad experiences*

*Do you find your tutors helpful? Supportive? Confident?*

*Do you find that they explain things well?*

*Are your tutors enthusiastic? Do they motivate you?*

Question THREE

**Do you think that your pharmacist tutors make (or have made) a difference especially to your first year experience?**

*Eg. have they helped you to adjust to University life, to adjust to JCU?*

Question FOUR

**Should pharmacist tutors be more involved in the pharmacy program?**

*ie. do you feel that we should use tutors in other areas of the course*

**If so, in what areas of the course?**

Question FIVE

**Would you like to have tutor-student mentoring in the pharmacy program?**

*Prompt - (explain tutor-student mentoring)*

*Mentoring programs are becoming more common, especially in the area of health education*

*This would mean having a specifically allocated pharmacist tutor to support and guide you through your studies (this tutor may be responsible for a group of students with both group and individual interaction)*

*They do not necessarily give you extra knowledge, but may help by guiding you to better understand your work and study more effectively.*

**Is there anything additional which you would like to add to the discussion?**

## APPENDIX G Academic staff focus group introduction and questions

Focus Group - ACADEMIC STAFF - Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2012 9am

Venue - JCU Pharmacy Department

Good morning everyone

- Thank- you for coming today and agreeing to be involved in this focus group. As per the information sheet, this project is aiming to develop a training program for pharmacist tutors who are involved in the Pharmacy program at JCU.
- This focus group aims to look at the role of the tutors in the program, to discuss training requirements for tutors and to consider how we can improve the support and ongoing development of tutors.
- We have 6 main questions which we wish to discuss with you and we anticipate that this group interview will take up to one hour of your time.
- The information collected today will be audiotaped so that we can review your answers and avoid missing any details or responses. Beverley will also be taking notes.
- Information collected today will be used in the project – responses will be kept in strict confidence by the research team and you will not be identified in any way in the project.

Participation is voluntary and there is no obligation to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable with – If you are not comfortable, you are free to leave at any time.

Are there any questions before we start?

### Question 1

**What do you see as the main role of pharmacist tutors?**

*Small group or one-on-one teaching? Bridging the gap between practice and theory?*

*Discuss current areas of involvement - extemp, clin. disp., counselling, medication reviews*

*Discuss tutor marking (eg placement workbooks, counselling)*

**Do you think that tutors make a difference particularly in the first year of university?**

*(first year experience)*

### Question 2

**What has your experience been with pharmacist tutors in the pharmacy program?**



*Prompts - These can be good or bad experiences*

*Do you find the tutors confident? Enthusiastic? Helpful and supportive towards the students?  
Do they motivate students? Do they explain things well?*

Question 3

**Should pharmacist tutors be more involved in the pharmacy program?**

*If so, in what areas?*

*Would you like to see a pharmacist **tutor student mentoring** program in place?*

Question 4

**How do you feel that tutors will benefit from training?**

*Improved consistency (better teamwork), improved confidence,*

*Improved teaching quality and teaching skills, better understanding of teaching*

Question 5

**What do you think should be covered in a tutor training program?**

*Communication skills, practical skills, effective student feedback, student assessment*

*Basic teaching principles, managing problem students*

Question 6

**What additional ongoing support do you think that tutors require to effectively perform their job?**

*Subject meetings, access to resources, staff development opportunities, recruitment info*

*Tutor peer mentoring (new tutor with current experienced tutor), peer review of teaching*

*Tutor manual, access to subject website*

## **APPENDIX H: Pharmacist tutor focus group introduction and questions**

Focus Group - PHARMACIST TUTORS - Monday 25-6-12 6pm

Venue - JCU Pharmacy Focus group participants

Good evening everyone

- Thank- you for coming today and agreeing to be involved in this focus group. As per the information sheet, this project is aiming to develop a training program for pharmacist tutors who are involved in the Pharmacy program at JCU.
- This focus group aims to look at the role of the tutors in the program, to discuss training requirements for tutors and to consider how we can improve the support and ongoing development of tutors.
- We have 5 main questions which we wish to discuss with you and we anticipate that this group interview will take approximately one hour of your time.
- The information collected today will be audiotaped so that we can review your answers and avoid missing any details or responses. Beverley will also be taking notes.
- Information collected today will be used in the project – responses will be kept in strict confidence by the research team and you will not be identified in any way in the project. We would also like you to consider the confidentiality of focus group members outside of this focus group.

Participation is voluntary and there is no obligation to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable with – If you are not comfortable, you are free to leave at any time.

As my role is to keep this group focused on the discussion topic, I may need to move the conversation along at times in order to cover all items today.

Are there any questions before we start?

### Question 1

#### **What do you see as your main role as pharmacist tutors?**

*Assisting academic staff - particularly with Small group or one-on-one teaching*

*Bridging the gap between practice & theory*

*Discuss current areas of involvement*

- *From questionnaire - most imp. role is in clinical and extemporaneous dispensing and clinical counselling*
- *Assessment and marking also found to be important – Verbal (1) and written (2), student placement workbook*
- *Placement supervision*

#### **Do you think that pharmacist tutors make a difference especially to the first year experience?**

*eg. helping the student to adjust to University life, seeing the relevance of what they are learning*

#### **Do you feel that there should be more tutor involvement ? If so, in what areas of the course?**

*eg. more involvement in placements, other practicals, workshops or tutorials?*

#### **Would you like to have tutor-student mentoring in the pharmacy program?**

*Explain tutor-student mentoring - now becoming more common in the health area, tutors specifically allocated to a group of students to support and guide them through their studies, not necessarily for extra knowledge but to help the student to work and study more effectively*

*Would mentoring help with student understanding of professionalism?*

*How would you see a mentoring program being run? Remunerated or relying on volunteers/retired pharmacists*

### Question 2

#### **Can you describe your experiences as a pharmacist tutor in the pharmacy program?**

- *Prompt - these can be good or bad experiences*
- *Do you enjoy tutoring? Do you feel comfortable in your work? Confident?*
- *Do you find it easy to motivate students? Do you find some students difficult to manage?*
- *Do you feel adequately equipped to perform your job?*
- *Do you feel part of the teaching team? Respected by the students?*

### Question 3

#### **What do you think should be covered in a tutor training program?**

- *From questionnaire - Most importantly - teaching communication skills,, student assessment*
- *Followed by - teaching practical skills, effective feedback to students, managing problem students , basic teaching principles*
- *Other mentioned by tutors - JCU resources available, peer review*
- *Other from literature - video clips of actual tutorials, microteaching*

#### **How do you think you would benefit from tutor training?**

- *From questionnaire - most importantly - consistency of teaching, improved student learning*
- *Followed by - Improved quality of teaching, improved confidence*
- *Less importantly - Improved teamwork, enhanced career opportunities*

### Question 4

**In terms of delivery of a tutor training program, questionnaire results indicate that most tutors favour a school based program (as opposed to a University based program) and a combination of on-line and face-to-face delivery.**

- *How long should the program be? Who should be involved in conducting the training?*
- *What type of on-line training should be provided?*
- *Should the JCU general sessional staff induction session be combined with the discipline based tutor training program?*

### Question 5

#### **What additional ongoing support do you think that tutors require in order to effectively perform their job?**

- *From questionnaire - Most important - Tutor manual, subject meeting*
- *Followed by - Access to resources (subject site, references, photocopier, computer, tutor office space)*
- *Staff development opportunities*
- *Opportunities to meet and liase with staff and other tutors*
- *Web-based discussion group?*
- *Recruitment information*
  
- *Other - tutor peer mentoring (new tutor with current experienced tutor), peer review of teaching*



## APPENDIX I: Student focus group information sheet



### STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

#### Design and evaluation of a pharmacist tutor training program at James Cook University

As current pharmacy students in the James Cook University (JCU) Pharmacy degree, you are invited to take part in a research project which is aiming to develop a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at JCU. The study is being conducted by Gillian Knott and will contribute to a Master of Pharmacy degree at James Cook University.

As part of this project, a questionnaire has been distributed to current, past and potential pharmacist tutors to determine the requirements for a tutor training program.

To further refine tutor training requirements, a student focus group will be conducted in order to obtain student perceptions of the role of the tutor and how tutor effectiveness may be enhanced. A representative sample of five to seven students will be chosen from those students who have indicated that they are willing to be involved. This focus group will take place at the School of Pharmacy at JCU and will be audiotaped. It is anticipated that it will involve approximately one hour of your time.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

Your responses and contact details will be kept strictly confidential by the research team. However, confidentiality cannot be assured in focus groups. All information collected during the focus group interview will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for the next 5 years. Any electronic data generated will be stored on a secure password protected server. The data from this study may be used in research publications and reports for health education and pharmacy practice journals. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

It would be appreciated if you could respond to this invitation via email before 12 noon on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012

All students chosen to participate in the focus group will also be required to provide written informed consent prior to the interview.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Mrs Gillian Knott or Professor Beverley Glass

**Principal Investigator:**  
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*If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:  
Human Ethics, Research Office  
James Cook University, Townsville, Qld, 4811  
Phone: 4781 5011 ([ethics@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@jcu.edu.au))*

## APPENDIX J: Academic staff focus group information sheet



### ACADEMIC STAFF INFORMATION SHEET

#### Design and evaluation of a pharmacist tutor training program at James Cook University

As current staff involved in the James Cook University (JCU) Pharmacy degree who also work with pharmacist tutors, you are invited to take part in a research project which is aiming to develop a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at JCU. The study is being conducted by Gillian Knott and will contribute to a Master of Pharmacy degree at James Cook University.

As part of this project, a questionnaire has been distributed to current, past and potential pharmacist tutors to determine the requirements for a tutor training program. To further refine tutor training requirements, a staff focus group will be conducted in order to obtain staff input into the role of the tutor and the requirements for training and support. This focus group will take place at the School of Pharmacy at JCU and will be audiotaped. It is anticipated that it will involve approximately one hour of your time.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

Your responses and contact details will be kept strictly confidential by the research team. However, confidentiality cannot be assured in focus groups. All information collected during the focus group interview will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for the next 5 years. Any electronic data generated will be stored on a secure password protected server. The data from this study may be used in research publications and reports for health education and pharmacy practice journals. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

This focus group will take place on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2012 at 9am in the JCU Pharmacy Department Meeting Room.

All participants in the focus group will also be required to provide written informed consent prior to the focus group interview.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Mrs Gillian Knott or Professor Beverley Glass

**Principal Investigator:**  
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B. Pharm.  
B. Science - Chemistry (Hons1)  
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CRICOS Provider Code 00117J

## APPENDIX K: Pharmacist tutor focus group information sheet



### TUTOR INFORMATION SHEET

#### Design and evaluation of a pharmacist tutor training program at James Cook University

In February 2011, you participated in a questionnaire as part of a research project which was aiming to develop a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at JCU. This study is being conducted by Gillian Knott and will contribute to a Master of Pharmacy degree at James Cook University.

As an ongoing part of this project, you are now invited to participate in a tutor focus group, the purpose of which will be to further refine tutor training requirements and discuss the issues that have emerged from the tutor questionnaire.

This focus group will take place at the School of Pharmacy at JCU and will be audiotaped. It is anticipated that it will involve approximately one hour of your time.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

Your responses and contact details will be kept strictly confidential by the research team. However, confidentiality cannot be assured in focus groups. All information collected during the focus group interview will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for the next 5 years. Any electronic data generated will be stored on a secure password protected server. The data from this study may be used in research publications and reports for health education and pharmacy practice journals. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

**It would be appreciated if you could respond to this invitation via email by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

**All participants in the focus group will also be required to provide written informed consent prior to the focus group interview.**

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Mrs Gillian Knott or Professor Beverley Glass

**Principal Investigator:**  
**Gillian Knott**  
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**Supervisor:**  
**Professor Beverley Glass**  
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*If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:*  
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## APPENDIX L: Informed consent form for focus groups



### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	Gillian Knott
PROJECT TITLE:	Design and evaluation of a pharmacist tutor training program at James Cook University
SCHOOL	Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences

I understand that the aim of this research study is to develop a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at James Cook University. I consent to participate in this project and I have been provided with a written information sheet to keep, which has satisfactorily explained the details of the project.

I understand that my participation will involve a **focus group interview** and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the information sheet.

I acknowledge that:

- taking part in this study is voluntary and I am aware that I can stop taking part in it at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
- any information I give to the research team will be kept strictly confidential and that no names will be used to identify me with this study without my approval;
- confidentiality cannot be assured in focus groups.

*(Please tick to indicate consent)*

I consent to participate in a focus group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
I consent for the interview to be audio taped	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Name: <i>(printed)</i>	
Signature:	Date:



**APPENDIX M:** Ethics Approval H3959 – Tutor questionnaire

This administrative form  
has been removed

**APPENDIX N:** Ethics Approval H4580 – Focus groups

This administrative form  
has been removed

# School of Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences PHARMACY



## 2013 PHARMACISTS TUTOR MANUAL



**Tutor Co-ordinator**

Mrs Gillian Knott

**Head of Discipline**

Dr Michelle Bellingan

Dear Tutor,

On behalf of the Discipline of Pharmacy, I would like to warmly welcome you to the James Cook University Pharmacy program.

The James Cook University BPharm program is recognised both nationally and internationally for producing high quality graduates with the knowledge and skills required to be effective practitioners in all areas of pharmacy practice. The course is administered and taught by a team of dedicated pharmacists and other academic and professional staff who are committed to excellence in teaching and research. Our aim is to provide high quality education for our students and to prepare students for all areas of pharmacy practice.

An integral part of our program is the involvement of practising pharmacists, who not only bring their professional experiences into the classroom, but also assist in maintaining the clinical currency of the Pharmacy course. As a pharmacist tutor in this program and a practising health professional, your contribution will be invaluable to the professional development of our students and consequently to the overall success of our program.

We are pleased that you have made the decision to join our teaching team. We hope that you will enjoy your time as a tutor and we look forward to working with you,

*Gillian Knott* B.Pharm

Tutor co-ordinator  
JCU Discipline of Pharmacy

20<sup>th</sup> February 2013

## Contents

1.	Introduction .....	2
1.1	Outline of training program – Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2013 .....	2
1.2	Program Goals .....	3
1.3	Areas of tutor involvement .....	3
1.4	Roles and responsibilities of the Pharmacy Tutor .....	4
1.5	Induction requirement .....	5
2.	Outline of the Pharmacy degree at JCU .....	6
2.1	History of Pharmacy at JCU .....	6
2.2	JCU Pharmacy degree - Course Overview .....	7
3.	Getting Started.....	9
3.1	Workplace sign-on and orientation.....	9
3.2	Payment procedures – My HR Online .....	9
3.3	Staff Parking.....	10
4.	Communication.....	11
4.1	Tutor email address.....	11
4.2	LearnJCU .....	11
4.3	Tutor absences from practical classes.....	11
5.	Presenter Notes .....	12
5.1	Professor Angela Hill – Director, Teaching and Learning .....	12
5.2	Professor Beverley Glass – Pharmacy Lecturer and Chair of Pharmacy. Extemporaneous Dispensing Practicals .....	25
5.3	Mr David Herron – Pharmacy Lecturer. Clinical Dispensing and Counselling Practicals.....	37
5.4	Mr Joseph Grasso – Pharmacy Lecturer and Placements Co-ordinator, Clinical Placements .....	43
6.	Tutor Support.....	51
6.1	Pharmacist Tutor Web Community - LearnJCU .....	51
6.2	Library Resources.....	51

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 *Outline of training program – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013*

#### Session 1

1. 12.00 to 12.30pm Registration - tea/coffee/lunch provided
  2. 12.30pm Welcome from tutor co-ordinator (Ms Gillian Knott)
  3. 12.40-1.10pm Introduction to JCU  
JCU Director of Teaching and Learning (TLD)
  4. 1.10pm – 1.40pm Supporting student learning (TLD)
  5. 1.40pm – 2.10pm Assessing students (TLD)
- 2.10pm – 2.30pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

#### Session 2

1. 2.30pm – 3pm Welcome from Pharmacy Head of Discipline  
Overview of Pharmacy course.  
(Pharmacy Head of Discipline)
  2. 3pm – 3.40pm Overview of Extemporaneous Dispensing Practicals  
(Lecturer in Extemporaneous Dispensing)
  3. 3.40pm – 4.20pm Overview of Clinical Dispensing and Counselling  
Practicals  
(Lecturer in Clinical Dispensing and Counselling)
  4. 4.20pm – 4.40pm Overview of Clinical Placement  
(Academic Placement Co-ordinator)
  5. 4.40pm – 5pm Conclusion  
Tutor Resources  
LearnJCU Tutor Support Web community.  
Completion of evaluation survey, distribution of  
certificates
- 5pm to 6pm **WINE AND CHEESE** - (Venue - Pharmacy staff tearoom)

## **1.2 Program Goals**

This training program has been specifically designed for pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff on a sessional basis in the education of pharmacy students at James Cook University. Tutors are often the first point of personal contact for our students, particularly in the first year subjects where students are often still adjusting to the University environment. Therefore, it is of great importance that you are informed and confident in your role as a tutor. For this reason, an orientation to the JCU teaching environment is essential, particularly for those who are new to tutoring.

The aims of our tutor training program are:

- To introduce you to the policies and principles of teaching at JCU.
- To provide an understanding of the JCU student population.
- To expand your skills in facilitating student learning, particularly with regard to teaching small groups.
- To enhance your skills in the provision of appropriate student feedback.
- To enhance your skills in the area of student assessment and marking.
- To develop strategies for dealing with difficult situations in the course of your work.
- To provide an overview of the structure of the JCU Pharmacy degree program
- To expand on your skills in the delivery of pharmacy specific content information within practical classes
- To establish both formal and informal networks of support and exchange about teaching in both Pharmacy and the wider JCU teaching community.

## **1.3 Areas of tutor involvement**

- Extemporaneous Dispensing
- Pharmaceutical Technology
- Clinical Dispensing
- Clinical Counselling
- Clinical Placement workbook marking
- Clinical Placement supervision
- Other - Oral exams, exam supervision, medication review training (accredited pharmacists)

## **1.4 Roles and responsibilities of the Pharmacy Tutor**

The main role of the tutor in Pharmacy classes is to support the lecturer-in-charge in the education of Pharmacy students. Their specific role will vary depending on the structure and content of the particular subject. An emphasis is placed on their unique role in establishing a link between the theory and the practice and passing on their practical experience.

### **Tutor roles may include:**

- Supervision of pharmacy students in practical classes
- Conducting individual or small group tutorials or leading discussions within a practical class
- Research and preparation of teaching material prior to practical classes
- Providing guidance or answers to student questions regarding the subject material
- Demonstrating compounding techniques and operation of pharmaceutical equipment
- Providing feedback on student work
- Identification of problem students
- Conducting consistent and appropriate written and verbal assessments of student work in practical classes
- Appropriate assessment of student placement workbook activities
- Supervision of students on clinical placement

### **Attributes of a good pharmacy tutor**

- Enthusiastic
- Approachable
- Confident
- Good communicator
- Organised
- Prepared
- Supportive
- Professional



## **1.5 Induction requirement**

Since January 2004, JCU have required attendance at a Teaching and Learning induction session as a condition of ongoing employment for all teaching staff, including sessional appointees. This tutor training session incorporates the principles of the Teaching and Learning induction session, but with a more Pharmacy specific focus. It therefore meets the required criteria for ongoing employment in the Discipline of Pharmacy.

At the end of this session, you will receive a Certificate of Attendance from the JCU discipline of Pharmacy.

## **2. Outline of the Pharmacy degree at JCU**

### **2.1 History of Pharmacy at JCU**

Since its inception in 1997, the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Sciences, James Cook University (JCU) has had a strong commitment to expanding educational opportunities within north Queensland and northern Australia, particularly in relation to the health professions. With a particular focus on rural and remote, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and tropical health issues, the Faculty has directly assisted in increasing the quality of healthcare to the region by aiding in the recruitment and retention of high quality health professionals.

In response to a critical pharmacy workforce shortage in the north and as a consequence of considerable lobbying from the pharmacy profession in northern Queensland, James Cook University developed a Bachelor of Pharmacy program in close consultation with local pharmacists.

Local community and hospital-based pharmacists have provided much input since the inception of the program through lecturing, tutoring and supervision of laboratory sessions. These pharmacists have played a critical role in the development and delivery of the professional areas of the program, such as pharmacy practice, professional conduct, ethics, formulation and dispensing skills, and other aspects of pharmacy practice

The first intake of students into the four-year Bachelor of Pharmacy course commenced their studies in February 1999, graduating at the end of 2002. With the opening of new pharmacy schools within Australia, Pharmacy at JCU has strived to maintain student numbers, and build a reputation in North Queensland and nationally for the program based on the quality of its graduates.

Following much planning, Pharmacy moved into a new purpose built facility in February 2009. The building houses two state-of-the-art facilities (each capable of holding 100 students) for teaching into the pharmaceutical sciences, including Pharmaceutical Technology, Extemporaneous Dispensing and Aseptic Dispensing and Pharmacy Practice, including Clinical Dispensing, Pharmacy Practice Workshops and Clinical Pharmacy. The facility provides the option to divide the room to allow for small group teaching in addition to the availability of videoconferencing. Research facilities for both Pharmacy Practice/Clinical Pharmacy and the Pharmaceutical Sciences are also available in the building and this will allow the Pharmacy Discipline to grow its number of Postgraduate students.

The success of the JCU Pharmacy program is evidenced by both the State and National recognition that has been achieved by both students and staff over the past 10 years. Awards include the 2005 and 2010 Australian Pharmacy Student of the Year, 2009 and 2010 Intern of the Year and the Bowl of Hygeia awarded to Professor Beverley Glass in 2009.

To date, James Cook University has graduated over 650 pharmacists.

## 2.2 JCU Pharmacy degree - Course Overview

### First Year

#### **Study Period 1**

- [BM1000:03](#) Introductory Biochemistry and Microbiology
- [CH1001:03](#) Chemistry: A Central Science
- [PC1001:03](#) Human Anatomy and Physiology 1
- [PC1004:03](#) Introduction to Pharmacy Practice and Pharmaceutical Sciences 1

#### **Study Period 2**

- [HS1401:03](#) Health and Health Care in Australia
- [PC1002:03](#) Human Anatomy and Physiology 2
- [PC1003:03](#) Introduction to Pharmacy Practice and Pharmaceutical Sciences 2
- [PC1005:03](#) Molecular Basis of Therapeutics 1

### Second Year

#### **Study Period 1**

- [BC2014:03](#) Principles of Biochemistry for Pharmacy
- [PC2002:03](#) Molecular Basis of Therapeutics 3
- [PC2004:03](#) Professional Pharmacy Practice 1
- [PC2006:03](#) Dermatology for Pharmacists

#### **Study Period 2**

- [HS2401:03](#) Rural and Remote Primary and Public Health Care
- [PC2001:03](#) Molecular Basis of Therapeutics 2
- [PC2003:03](#) Integrated Metabolism and Nutrition for Pharmacists
- [PC2201:03](#) Infectious Diseases and Immunology for Pharmacists

### Third Year

#### **Study Period 1**

- [PC3002:03](#) Cardiovascular and Renal Therapeutics for Pharmacists
- [PC3204:03](#) Professional Pharmacy Practice 2 Part 1 of 2
- [PC3201:03](#) Musculoskeletal Pharmacy
- [PC3102:03](#) Health Care for Pharmacists

#### **Study Period 2**

- [CH3100:03](#) Molecular Basis of Therapeutics 4
- [PC3205:03](#) Professional Pharmacy Practice 2 Part 2 of 2
- [PC3001:03](#) ENT, Eyes and Respiratory Pharmacy
- [PC3005:03](#) Nervous System and Mental Health for Pharmacists

## Fourth Year

### **Study Period 1**

[PC4101:03](#) Endocrine and Reproductive Pharmacy

[PC4102:03](#) Oncology, Haematology and Toxicology for Pharmacists

[PC4103:03](#) Professional Pharmacy Practice 3

#### **Plus one subject selected from the following:**

[PC4104:03](#) Pharmacy Project

[BU1002:03](#) Accounting for Decision Making

[BU1003:03](#) Economics for Business (SP2)

[BU1008:03](#) Marketing Fundamentals

[BU1112:03](#) Business Law and Ethics

[MA1401:03](#) Statistics and Data Analysis 1 (SP2)

[MG1731:03](#) Management in the New Global Economy

[PY1101:03](#) Exploring Psychology 1

[SP1001:03](#) Science and Practice of Physical Activity

[BX2081:03](#) Consumer Behaviour

[SP3006:03](#) Environmental and Sports Medicine

### **Study Period 2**

[PC4203:12](#) Advanced Professional Pharmacy Practice

### **On-course honours**

- Selected students invited in Year 2

### **Post graduate opportunities**

- Post graduate honours
- Master of Pharmaceutical Public Health
- Masters by Research
- Doctor of Public Health

## 3. Getting Started

### 3.1 Workplace sign-on and orientation

All tutors must complete a **Casual Appointment Form – Teaching Employees** prior to attending their first practical session. All NEW tutors will need to:

- Complete a Tax Declaration Form
- Provide a copy of a current Australian passport OR an Australian Birth Certificate

All NEW tutors will be required to complete an Online HR Staff Induction Program. The program has been designed to help ease you into university life by providing you with information on the University management and structure, basic employment conditions, equal employment opportunity and workplace health and safety. At the end of this induction you will be asked a few questions to confirm that you have understood these areas, and also asked to sign a statement showing that you have understood your rights and obligations in these areas. The Online HR Staff Induction Program can be completed on the computer in Pharmacy Reception.

For further information about workplace sign-on and orientation, please contact the PHARMACY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT in Pharmacy:

Administrative Assistant  
Room X, Pharmacy Building (DB47)  
James Cook University  
Email:  
Telephone:

- Note - it is preferable to make an appointment with [administrative assistant] to ensure that she is available at the time that you wish to come in.

### 3.2 Payment procedures – My HR Online

James Cook University has moved towards a paperless office and therefore all claims for casual employees are submitted electronically through **My HR Online**. My HR Online is a web based application that can be accessed any time of day, on or off campus. It is available to all University employees and is used to manage information and tasks related to your employment. It allows staff to:

- View and edit personal details
- View employment information relating to your position(s) at the University
- View and print payslips and payment summaries
- View and edit bank account details
- Submit and view Timesheets for casual staff members, including casual teaching staff.

Once your Casual Appointment Form – Teaching Employees has been processed you will be issued with a JCU Log-in. You will need this Log-in to access the My HR Online system to submit your pay claims. Your JCU Log-in can be collected from the central HR Office which is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Ken Back Chancellery Building. You must show photo ID when collecting your JCU Log-in.

Once you have received your login details from the University, you may login to the JCU website and submit a timesheet for the hours that you have worked. Access to My HR Online is made by opening your Internet browser to the JCU homepage, clicking on Staff, then onto My HR Online. Staff payments are made on a fortnightly basis, therefore submitting your timesheets just prior to a pay date will ensure that you receive your payments promptly. Further details on how to access payment information and submit timesheets is available on the LearnJCU Pharmacist Tutor Community website.

### **3.3 Staff Parking**

Staff parking at JCU is available with the purchase of a yearly or half yearly parking permit. (Permits are obtainable from the University bookshop for \$45 per Semester or \$80 per year). Alternatively daily \$2 parking vouchers can be purchased from the University bookshop. It should be noted that carparks can become quite full during the Semester, particularly in the Health Sciences area of campus, therefore time should be allowed for finding an available parking space.

## **4. Communication**

### **4.1 *Tutor email address***

Once you have signed on at the University, you will receive your University Staff login number and password. This will allow you to access Staff online, the University library and any LearnJCU modules in which you are involved. Your supervising lecturer will be able to organise access to the lecture materials for the particular subject you are tutoring in.

### **4.2 *LearnJCU***

LearnJCU is the University teaching platform – all student subject outlines, practical group lists and subject materials (Which includes notes for lectures, tutorials and practicals and additional subject information) are uploaded onto this platform for students to view and/or download.

### **4.3 *Tutor absences from practical classes***

If you are for any reason unable to attend your allocated practical class, please contact either the supervising lecturer for that practical or Pharmacy reception, who will relay this message to the supervising lecturer.


Pharmacy reception is generally staffed by Ms Lisa Murray

Contact details: Ph. 47814699 email: [lisa.murray1@jcu.edu.au](mailto:lisa.murray1@jcu.edu.au)

Should you have trouble contacting the appropriate person, please contact the tutor co-ordinator Ms Gillian Knott Ph. 47816180 email: [gillian.knott@jcu.edu.au](mailto:gillian.knott@jcu.edu.au)

## 5. Presenter Notes

### 5.1 Director, Teaching and Learning



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Welcome to the JCU Teaching  
and Learning community

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**Acknowledgement of country** 

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*I wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land [Townsville: both the Wulgaruka and Bindal Nations of People] [Cairns: Yirrgandydi Nations of Aboriginal People] and pay respect to the Elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.  
By this acknowledgement, I am upholding the James Cook University's commitment to Reconciliation.*

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**Important protocols** 

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- Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country
- JCU Reconciliation statement

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### Section 1: JCU Strategic Intent and Curriculum Refresh

- Identify the unique mission of JCU
- Define implications for own teaching role at JCU

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### JCU's mission

- JCU and IRU
- Strategic Intent

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ONE University  
TWO Countries  
THREE Tropical Campuses



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Australia's University for the Tropics  
Curriculum Refresh Project

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

## Curriculum Refresh: *Australia's University for the Tropics*

SEE: [HTTP://WWW.JCU.EDU.AU/CURRICULUMREFRESH/](http://www.jcu.edu.au/curriculumrefresh/)

7

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## Section 2: Who is who in teaching and learning @JCU

- Identify your support network for enhancing teaching and learning quality
- Apply an understanding of quality assurance mechanisms for teaching and learning to own teaching role

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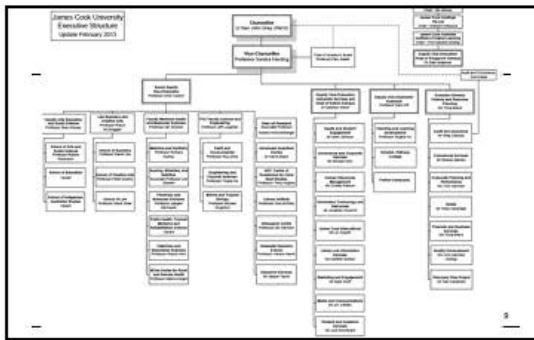
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## Quality assurance oversight



- Regulators
  - Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
  - Professional Accreditation bodies
- JCU
  - Academic Board
  - DVC-Academic
  - Charter of Responsibilities for Academic Quality
  - Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy
- School
  - Clear responsibilities

10

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## Charter of Responsibilities



- Deputy Vice Chancellor- Academic
- Campus Deans (Singapore, Brisbane)
- Faculty based roles
  - Pro Vice Chancellors
  - Associate Deans, Teaching and Learning
    - MHMS: John Smithson (TSV) and Dr Felicity Croker (CNS)
    - AESS: Dr Maree Dinan Thompson (CNS) and Dr Cecily Knight (TSV)
    - S & E: Phil Turner
    - LBCA: Associate Professor Romy Lawson

11

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## Key quality assurance roles



### School based roles

- Course coordinator
- First Year Experience Coordinator
- Academic advisers: some schools only
- Subject coordinators

12

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## Your role



### Academic/Clinical Staff

With the support of the relevant Head of School Course Coordinator, Professional/ Placement Director and Subject Coordinator, academic/clinical staff including sessional staff

- Comply with all relevant JCU learning and teaching policies including availability for student consultation
- Participate in professional development opportunities related to learning and teaching, including induction sessions
- Maintain a sound understanding of current scholarship and/ or professional practice in the discipline they teach
- Engage with relevant pedagogical principles for their teaching role

13

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## Your role continued...



### Academic/Clinical Staff

With the support of the relevant Head of School Course Coordinator, Professional/ Placement Director and Subject Coordinator, academic/clinical staff including sessional staff

- Engage students in activities relevant to the cognitive demand of the course
- Support the development of graduate attributes including requirements for proficiency in English language
- Promote and engage with student support services
- Provide relevant and timely feedback to students on their progress
- Participate in moderation activities to ensure the integrity of University grades
- Engage with data on the student experience of learning and teaching and respond to such data

14

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## Key quality assurance roles



### Student and Academic Services

- Faculty Registrars and Enrolment Officers are staff members who can provide advice about enrolment, including:
  - Course and subject selection
  - Study loads
  - Changing courses and majors
  - Planning your study
  - Credit for previous study
- Faculty Registrars
  - Vicki Matthews (FAESS)
  - Shane Foster (LBCA)
  - Virginia McHugh (MHMS)
  - Dianne McNamara (S & E)

15

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## Teaching and Learning Support

- [Video Conferencing](#)
- [Room Bookings](#)
- Infohelp
- [Teaching and Learning Development](#)
  - Learning Technologies
  - Learning Skills
  - Teaching Evaluation
  - Academic Staff Development

36

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## Section 3: Understanding and supporting students @JCU

- Explain the implications of a 'universal' higher education system for teaching and learning
- Determine the implications of a diverse cohort of students for own teaching and learning practice

37

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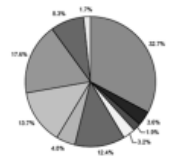
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Figure 1 Main destinations of Year 12 completers, Northern-Burth West, 2011



Legend:  
■ University (degree) (32.7%)  
■ UET Cert IVa (13.4%)  
■ UET Cert IIIa (12.4%)  
■ UET Cert - another (12.4%)  
■ Apprenticeship (10.7%)  
■ Trainee (8.2%)  
■ Working FT (6.2%)  
■ Working PT (4.8%)  
■ Working with (3.7%)  
■ Not participating (1.7%)  
\* Included in UET total  
VET total = 28.8%

38

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Want to find out more about the students you teach?



- Ask your course coordinator for the *Course Performance Report*
- Ask your ADTL about information they have in faculty reports
- Contact the Corporate Planning and Performance Unit

25

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Student support



- Learning Advisers
  - Library staff
  - Accessibility
  - School of Indigenous Australian Studies
  - JCU Professional College
- Review *Current Students* webpage for full list

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Section 4: TEQSA, Quality Assurance, Learning and Teaching and your role



- Explain the current regulatory environment as it impacts on your role @JCU
- Engage with the Australian Qualifications Framework requirements pertinent to your role @JCU

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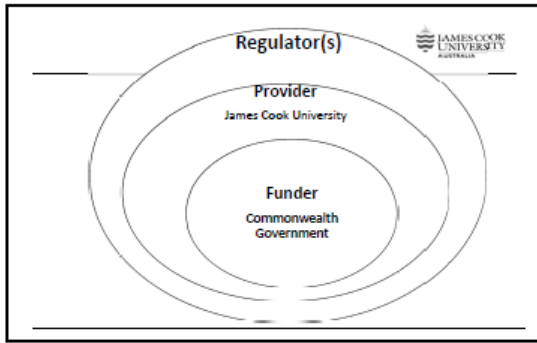
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**Regulator(s)** 

<p><b>PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION BODIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Medical Council</li> <li>• Australian Physiotherapy Association</li> <li>• Queensland College of Teachers</li> <li>• Engineers Australia</li> <li>• Etc</li> </ul>	<p><b>TERTIARY EDUCATION QUALITY AND STANDARDS AGENCY Higher Education Standards Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider Standards comprising:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provider Registration Standards</li> <li>– Provider Category Standards</li> <li>– Provider Course Accreditation Standards</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Qualification Standards</li> <li>• Teaching and Learning Standards</li> <li>• Research Standards</li> <li>• Information Standards</li> </ul>
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**TEQSA: an example** 

**Provider Course Accreditation Standards**

Section 5 Assessment is effective and expected student learning outcomes are achieved

5.1 Assessment tasks for the course of study and its units provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of the expected student learning outcomes for the course of study.

5.2 Assessment is undertaken by appropriately qualified academic staff, and timely, adequate feedback is provided to students on their assessed work.

5.3 Course management and coordination, including moderation procedures, ensure consistent and appropriate assessment.

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Teaching and Learning:  
Inputs and Outputs



With thanks to AssProf Romy Lawson

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Professional Standards    Qualification Standards

ASSESSMENT TASKS  
provide the key evidence

Graduate Attributes    Course  
Outcomes/Subject  
Outcomes



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Section 5: Teaching and Learning  
Policies @JCU

- Locate key policy documents relevant to own teaching role
- Relate policy documents to quality assurance measures for teaching and learning

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## Assessment management



- [Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy: 5.18- 5.25](#)
- [Student academic misconduct requirements](#)
- [Review of Assessment and Student Access to Scripts and Material](#)

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## Good practice framework for moderation



### Integrity of grades: Core Principle 5 – LTA policy

- **Consensus moderation**
- **Pre-assessment moderation**
  - Identifying and agreeing on the standards and criteria
- **Post-assessment moderation**
  - Process to ensure consistency- review performances and agree on standard

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## Providing quality feedback



### Three key components

- Describe student's actions/response
- Evaluate student's actions/responses
- Guide student to next steps- learning goals/resources

### Ensure

- Appropriate setting
- Provide specifics
- Constructive comments
- Positives BUT honest
- Timeliness

36

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## Teaching evaluation



### Four methods

- Student achievement
- Student feedback- formal and informal
- Peer review of teaching
  - Observation of teaching
  - Review of teaching materials/processes etc
- Personal reflection

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## 5.2 Pharmacy Lecturer in Extemporaneous Dispensing.

### Extemporaneous Dispensing Practicals



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*Extemporaneous Dispensing: Revising a SKILL*  
*Prof Beverley Glass*



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### Contents

- Introduction – the drug (solid-state)
  - Extemporaneous Dispensing – APF 22 pgs 32-36
- Solutions
  - External USE
  - Oral Liquids (mixtures)
- Suspensions / Emulsions
  - External USE
  - Oral Liquids
- Semi-solid dosage forms
  - Emulsions (Creams)
  - Ointments, Pastes, Gels

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### Introduction

- DRUG (solid-state)
  - Organic medicinal agents - weak acids or bases with solubility, pH dependant
  - Weak ACID (unionized form)
    - + base = acid salt ( pH decrease results in precipitation of the free acid
  - Weak BASE
    - + acid = basic salt (pH increase results in precipitation of the free base)
    - SALTS – ionized form of the drug

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## Introduction



- DRUG (solid-state)
  - Most drugs exist in the crystalline form
  - Polymorphs – two crystals with same chemical composition but different internal structure
    - Solubility and stability
      - Bioavailability
  - Pseudopolymorphism
    - HYDRATES – molecules of a given substance + molecules of water
  - Key criteria in drug (form) selection

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## Introduction



- Polymorphism ~ 70% of drug compounds
  - One crystal form is stable, others are metastable and convert to stable form
    - True stable forms – highest melting point
- Correlation between the melting point and the rate of dissolution
  - High melting point – low dissolution
- Materials may crystallise and trap a molecule of solvent (water) in the lattice
  - Drugs - monohydrates, dihydrates and trihydrates
    - Different properties from anhydrous form

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## Introductions



- Hydrates may be more rapidly soluble than the anhydrous form
- Dissolution of erythromycin
  - Dihydrate > monohydrate > anhydrate
- Crystalline forms (I, II, III) of carbamazepine
- Anhydrous form transformed to dihydrate
  - Thermodynamically stable but less soluble
    - Bioavailability
- Material in the solid-state but not packed in a repeating long-range ordered fashion
  - Amorphous – Solubility?

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## Introduction



- Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) - Drug
  - Chosen to be in the most stable form
  - Problem - most stable = least soluble
- Excipients
  - Added for a variety of
  - Avoid interactions with API
- Processing steps
  - Milling, grinding, blending, tableting (pressure, temperature)
    - POLYMORPHISM

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## Solutions



- Drug dissolves in the vehicle (water) and co-solvents
- Solubility USP – grams of solute dissolving in millilitres of solvent
- Solutions are unsaturated with solute – WHY?
- External USE
  - Ear drops, eye drops, eye lotions, nasal instillations, solutions (topical, preservative)
  - What is a LOTION?
- Oral liquids (Mixtures)
  - Elixirs (not in APF 22), linctuses, mixtures, syrups

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## Solutions



- To increase the dissolution of a drug
  - Heat
  - Reduction of particle size
    - Grind in a mortar
    - Sieve
      - Increase surface area, dissolution and bioavailability
  - Solubilizing agent
    - Co-solvent
  - Agitation

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## Solutions



- External USE – General principles
- METHOD - Reduce particle size, add drug, co-solvents and vehicle (may be water)
- Ear Drops
  - Co-solvents
- Eye Drops, Nasal Instillations
  - Isotonicity, Preservatives, Antioxidants
- Lotions
  - Co-solvents – ethanol, propylene glycol
- Paints
  - Solvent – acetone, ethanol, flexible collodion

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## Solutions



- Phenylephrine Instillation – APF 22
  - Phenylephrine hydrochloride      0.25 g
  - Sodium metabisulphite            0.1 g
  - Sodium chloride                    0.6 g
  - Chlorbutol                            0.5 g
  - Propylene glycol                    5 ml
  - Water to                                100ml
- Exercise
  - Method of preparation – isotonicity (Calculation)
  - Why ingredients?

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## Solutions



- LINCTUSES are viscous liquid preparations having demulcent, expectorant or sedative properties
- Codeine Linctus APF 22
  - Codeine phosphate                500mg
  - Purified water                        10 ml
  - Glycerol                                20 ml
  - Methyl hydroxybenzoate soln   1 ml
  - Syrup                                    to 100 ml
- Exercise: Method and Ingredients

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## Solutions



- MIXTURES are liquid preparations intended for oral administration, in which APIs are dissolved (solutions) or suspended in an essentially aqueous vehicle
- Ferrous Sulphate Mixture APF 22
  - Ferrous sulphate 3 g
  - Ascorbic acid 100mg
  - Orange Syrup 5 ml
  - Benzoic acid solution 2 ml
  - Water to 100 ml
- Exercise: Method, stability and preservation

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



- Disperse systems are liquid preparations containing **undissolved or immiscible drugs** distributed in a **vehicle**
- Substance (drug) distributed - **dispersed phase** + the vehicle is termed the *dispersing phase or dispersion medium = dispersed system*
- The particles of the dispersed phase are usually solid materials insoluble in the dispersion medium
  - Suspension
- **Emulsions**, the dispersed phase is a liquid, neither soluble nor miscible with dispersing medium (liquid)

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



- *An acceptable suspension possess certain desirable qualities, including the following:*
- Suspended material should not settle too rapidly; the particles that do settle must not form a hard cake and redispense easily when the container is shaken
- Suspension must not be too viscous to pour
- For an external lotion, the product must be fluid enough to spread over the affected area and yet must not be so mobile that it runs off the surface to which it is applied
  - Particle size of API (NB)

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



- **Settling in suspensions**
- Stokes' Law expresses velocity of sedimentation:  
$$v = \frac{d^2 (\rho_s - \rho_o)g}{18\eta_o}$$

**where**

- v = terminal velocity in cm/sec
- d = diameter of the particle in cm
- $\rho_s$  = density of the dispersed phase
- $\rho_o$  = density of the dispersion medium
- g = acceleration due to gravity
- $\eta_o$  = viscosity of the dispersion medium

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



- External USE – LOTIONS
- APF 22 – lotions are liquid preparations intended for application to the skin, which may be based on aqueous, ethanolic or emulsified vehicles
- Aqueous (solutions and suspensions)
  - Aluminium acetate lotion aqueous APF
- Ethanolic
  - Salicylic acid and Coal Tar Lotion APF
- Emulsified
  - Cetomacrogol Lotion APF

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



- *Calamine Lotion APF 22*

- Calamine 15 g
- Zinc Oxide 5 g
- Bentonite 3 g
- Sodium Citrate 0.5 g
- Liquefied Phenol 0.5 ml
- Glycerol 5 ml
- Water to 100 ml
- Exercise: Method

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



- *Calamine Lotion Oily APF 22*

- Calamine 5g
- Woolfat 1 g
- Arachis Oil 50 ml
- Oleic acid 0.5 ml
- Calcium Hydroxide Soln to 100ml
- Emulsifying agent
  - Calcium Oleate (METHOD)

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



- Oral Liquids – Suspension

- General Formula

- API qs
- Suspending Agent APF
- Sweetener / Flavour qs
- Compound hydroxybenzoate soln 1%v/v
- Water to 100 %
- Exercise: Method / Why Ingredients?

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



- Oral Liquids – METHOD (written) for 50 ml

- Calculate and weigh the correct amount of tablet powder
- Reduce the particle size
- Triturate the powder with the suspending agent in a mortar
- Transfer to a tared 100 ml medicine bottle
- Add sweetener / flavor and finally the preservative solution
- Make up to volume with water

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



### • Baclofen Suspension CF – 5 mg/ml

- Baclofen tablets 20 mg 15
- Glycerol 12 ml
- Syrup 6 ml
- Methylcellulose Mucilage 2% APF 15 ml
- Compound hydroxybenzoate soln 0.6 ml
- Water to 60 ml
- Citric acid qs pH 4-5
- DISCUSSION

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## Suspensions / Emulsions



### • Propranolol Mixture CF- 5mg/ml

- Propranolol Hydrochloride 500mg
- Citric acid monohydrate 1g
- Sodium benzoate 100mg
- Syrup 40 ml
- Water to 100 ml

#### • NOTE

- Do not use brands of tablets containing calcium carbonate as an excipient

#### • DISCUSSION

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



### • Emulsions

- *An emulsion is a dispersion in which the dispersed phase (internal phase) composed of small globules of liquid distributed throughout the vehicle (dispersion medium : external phase) in which it is immiscible*
- Oil-in-water and water-in-oil emulsions
- To prepare a stable emulsion, a third phase is necessary – the emulsifying agent
  - Liquids – orally, topically, parenterally
  - Semi-solids – topically

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- Emulsions (Creams)
- Oil-miscible (water-in-oil emulsions) = oily creams
- Water-miscible (oil-in-water emulsions) = aqueous creams
- Stability of medicaments/microbial growth
- *Preservative availability in emulsified systems*
  - Solubility of the preservative - partition coefficient of the preservative
  - Oil/water phase ratio

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- ***Classified according to the type of emulgent:***
- Anionic creams
  - Emulgents yield anions – incompatible with cationic drugs e.g. aqueous cream
- Cationic creams
  - Emulgents yield cations – incompatible with anionic drugs e.g. aqueous cetrimide cream
- Non-ionic creams
  - Emulgents yield no ions – e.g. aqueous cetomacrogol cream (sorbolene cream)

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- Cold Cream APF
- White Beeswax            17 g
- Liquid Paraffin        45 g
- Borax                        1 g
- Water                        37 ml
- METHOD of Preparation.
- What type of APIs can be added
  - Levigating agents
    - Liquid paraffin / glycerol / propylene glycol

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- Salicylic and Sulphur Cream Aqueous APF
- Salicylic acid            2 g
- Sulphur                    2 g
- Aqueous Cream APF    96 g
  - Emulsifying ointment
  - Glycerol
  - Phenoxyethanol
  - Water
- METHOD
- How to incorporate APIs

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- Ointments
- Physical effects and as vehicles for medicated ointments
- Hydrocarbon bases (oleaginous bases)
  - Emollient, occlusive, immiscible with water
- Absorption bases
  - Incorporation of aqueous solutions = w/o
- Water-removable bases (o/w)
  - External phase, aqueous, easily washed from the skin
- Water-soluble bases
  - No oleaginous components, greaseless, soften on addition of water, incorporation of solids

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- Ointments
- Emulsifying Ointment
  - Emulsifying wax        30 g
  - White soft paraffin    50 g
  - Liquid paraffin        20 g
- Macrogol Ointment
  - Macrogol 4000        35 g
  - Macrogol 400         65 g
- DISCUSSION

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- Ointments
- Lignocaine and Adrenaline Ointment
  - Lignocaine HCl 1 g
  - Water 4 ml
  - Adrenaline soln BP 10 ml
  - Woolfat 15 g
  - Liquid paraffin 20 g
  - White soft paraffin 50 g
- METHOD
  - APF 22

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- Pastes
- Semi-solid preparations with protective properties to deliver active ingredients for application to the skin.
- Often contain a large proportion of powdered ingredients – stiff and difficult to spread
- Zinc Paste
  - Zinc oxide 25 g
  - Starch 25 g
  - White soft paraffin 50 g
- METHOD

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- GELS - A polymer-solvent system containing a three-dimensional network of stable chemical or physical bonds which are unaffected by thermal motion
- Type II (heat-reversible, held together by intermolecular hydrogen bonds)
- *Water-soluble polymers used in pharmacy*
  - Methylcellulose, gum tragacanth and sodium carboxymethylcellulose
  - *Carboxypolymethylene (carbomer, carbopol)*
    - Aqueous solutions are acidic, when neutralized the solutions become very viscous (between pH 6 and 11)

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- GELS
- Formula from the APF
  - Chlorhexidine Gel APF 22
  - Chlorhexidine gluconate soln BP 2.5 ml
  - Tragacanth 2.5 g
  - Glycerol 25 ml
  - Water to 100g
- METHOD – Gels on heating

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- Formula from the APF – mucilage
- Methylcellulose mucilage APF 22
  - Methylcellulose (400-1500 cps) 2 g
  - Compound hydroxybenzoate soln 1 ml
  - Water to 100 ml
- METHOD – Gels on cooling

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## Semi-solid dosage forms



- GELS
- Formula (+ 0.5% Chlorhexidine Gluconate)
  - Alcohol 70% Isopropyl 321.4 ml
  - Water 125 ml
  - Carbomer 940 2.25 g
  - Trolamine 3 ml
- METHOD
  - Water + trolamine
  - Alcohol + sift carbomer
  - Alcohol to plastic bottle + trolamine solution

Pharmacist Tutor Manual - 2013

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### 5.3 Pharmacy Lecturer in Clinical Dispensing and Counselling Practicals



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*Clinical Dispensing & Counselling*  
*Mr David Herron*



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**Overview** 

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- Discuss the aims of these practical components
- Follow the process that occurs in each type of session
- Discuss the progression that occurs during the individual years and between third and fourth year
- Examine the roles of the tutor in the process.

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**Clinical Dispensing**

- Aims
  - To teach students both how to dispense as well as developing a robust dispensing process
- “Gold Standard Dispensing”
  - Slower and more thorough than would be seen in a practice setting
  - Greater emphasis is placed on detail and process
    - Speed comes with experience

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## Clinical Dispensing

- Process
  - Students are given a mock prescription
    - Start with 2 prescriptions in 3 hours
    - Expected to complete 3 prescriptions in 3 hours by approximately Week 8
  - Looking at both legal and clinical problems associated with the script
  - Patient counselling process for prescriptions
  - Computer dispensing systems

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## Clinical Dispensing

- Process
  - Students complete a standard worksheet which contains:
    - Legal Checklist
    - Standard patient questioning and patient counselling points
    - Role-play with tutors or volunteer patients simulating interactions between
      - Pharmacist and the Patient
      - Pharmacist and the Doctor

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## Clinical Dispensing

- Practicals commence in third year
  - Ties in with their first placement which occurs during the first semester
  - Links material presented in the Professional Pharmacy Subject with Practice
    - PBS Regulations
    - Forensics
    - Ethics
    - Communication
    - Patient History

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## Clinical Dispensing

- Progression
  - Third Year
    - Emphasis on written work
    - Establishment of process
  - Fourth Year
    - Increasing focus on verbal communication
      - Professional/Patient interaction, counselling

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## Clinical Dispensing

- Role of the tutor
  - Small group tutorials within the class
  - Advising students on how to approach legal and clinical problems
  - Assisting with computer generation of appropriate labels
  - Occasional marking
    - Mainly with verbal work
    - Providing feedback

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## Clinical Dispensing

- Role of the Tutor
  - Assessing student
    - In class as well as for Fourth Year end of semester exam
  - Feedback provided may be as an individual or a group
  - Offer support to volunteer patients

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### Clinical Counselling

- Aims
  - To develop student counselling skills and provide them with confidence
  - Once again, the emphasis is on the process and style rather than simply the information

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### Clinical Counselling

- Process
  - Introduced in Third Year Subject PC3102 Healthcare for Pharmacists
  - Focus in this subject is counselling on OTC products and conditions
    - Ties in with information provided in Lectures

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### Clinical Counselling

- Students given mock scenarios presented by volunteer patients
- Student then assesses and counsels volunteer patient with tutors assessing verbally/in writing
- Tutors and patient rotate around small groups
  - Students get opportunity to counsel once or twice a week depending on group size

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## Clinical Counselling

- Progression
  - Third Year
    - Introduction to counselling
      - OTC focus
      - Emphasis on process and style more than knowledge
  - Fourth Year
    - Refinement of counselling skills
      - Emphasis on process and style as well as knowledge
      - Focus also on use of devices
        - » Inhalers, suppositories, nasal sprays etc

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## Clinical Counselling

- Role of the tutor
  - Listen to student-volunteer patient scenario and provide written (limited) and verbal feedback
  - Discuss scenario options with groups of students
  - Give appropriate feedback and assessment when required of student performance
  - Demonstrate the use of medical devices

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## Questions?

- Are there any questions on anything I have covered?

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## Activity

- *Sam is a third year Pharmacy student who is participating in a counselling practical as part of "PC3102- Healthcare for Pharmacists".*
- *She is counselling a volunteer patient called Bill, with a tutor assessing the interaction.*
- Listen to the interaction between Sam and Bill and complete the following exercises:
- 1. Using the marking criteria provided, mark the interaction as you would in a practical class.
- 2. Provide feedback to the student on the interaction.

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## 5.4 Pharmacy Lecturer and Placements Co-ordinator, Clinical Placements



### JCU Placement Program Year 3 and Year 4

"There's a rural pharmacy at the end of the road"



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### Overview of Placement Structure

- Preceptor pharmacists expressions of interest in placement venues
- Preceptors' placement preferences for JCU
- Contacting new venues
- Compulsory year 2 student placement introduction

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### Student Requirements

- Compulsory attendance placement briefing for year 2 students
- Presentation of Rural and Remote Video
- Placement preferences forms distributed to students
- All questions regarding placements welcomed

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## Student Requirements



- Students to indicate placement preferences
- Students notified of their placements venues
- Compulsory placement briefing prior to Block 1
- Placement e-workbook and activities explained
- JCU contacts for students during placement
- Contact methods for student placement queries
- Student placement program – USB flash drive

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## Marking of Workbooks



- Tutors asked for expressions of interest
- Budget costing - placement marking Yr 3 & Yr 4
- Completed assessable activities for tutors
- Tutors marking allocated assessments
- Activities requiring students' referral flagged
- Student appointments for activity review
- Monitoring of future students' placements

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## Overview of Placement Structure



### Placement Venues Acceptance

- Expressions of interest faxed during October
- Preceptor pharmacists complete faxed form
- Indication of preceptor base for following year
- Approach all new pharmacies to join program
- May have declined offers, only temporarily
- Must process these to avoid placements overlap

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Overview of Placement Structure 

• **Placement Blocks**

- **Year 3** – three blocks, each two weeks duration
- April\*, June - July, September\* – 2013
- MICRRH: June - July for 4 weeks – none in Sept
- **Year 4** – three blocks, each three weeks duration
- July, October, October - November – 2013

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Overview of Placement Structure 

**Year 2 Placement Introduction**

- Presentation during October
- Compulsory - student attendance recorded
- Remote and Rural Video Presentation
- Student placements in Queensland
- Types of placements available eg: Community, Hospital, Rural and Remote
- Students to indicate placement preferences

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Overview of Placement Structure 

• **Placement Allocations**

- Returned student placement requests processed
- Preceptor notified of student attending placement
- Coordinator allocates venue to year 3 student
- Consideration for students with no previous pharmacy work experience
- Students – with a fellow colleague to rural places

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## Student Requirements



### Year 2 Placement Introduction

- Requirements outlined to students
  - *Hepatitis B Vaccines declaration* [must for year 1]
  - *First Aid Certificate and CPR Certificate* [year 3]
  - *Positive notice "Blue Card"* [year 3]
- Student failure to fulfill placement prerequisites
  - *No placement venue is revealed*

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## Student Requirements



### Pre-Placement Briefing

- Compulsory placement briefing prior to Block 1
- Student must make prior contact with preceptor
- Student to familiarise with placement venue and related accommodation – out of town
- Retain receipts for rural travel expenses
- JCU to comply with Riskware Management- WHSQ

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## Student Requirements



### Pre-Placement Briefing

- Student maintains professional image during placement, integrate and work as part of a team
- Student to contact JCU re: student problems, queries via email, 1800 number, mobile phone
- Complete required activities and reflective journal
- Information resources provided on USB Key
- Expect high standard, quality work of activities

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**Student Requirements** 

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**Placement Activities**

Orientation Activity: (Activity 1)

- Demographics
- Population background
- Most common diseases treated in that community
- Pharmacy type, policies, and services
- Student to perform, complete desirable critical skills during placement
- Preceptor to sign off student has completed all required critical skills

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**Student Requirements** 

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**Placement Activities**

Compulsory Assessable Activities:

- Designed to complement on course work taught at JCU
- All students will display different rates of learning in real environment
- Enables students to conduct own research during placement
- Completed student placement activity checked, signed by preceptor
- Student reminded of plagiarism of activities and the consequences
- Must submit hard copies and electronic copies of activities

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**Student Requirements** 

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**Placement Activities**

Compulsory Assessable Activities: Year 3

- Activity 2: Community Pharmacy Practices – researching products
- Activity 3: Community Pharmacy Practice & Pharmacy Only Medicines
- Activity 5: Retrieval & Provision of Drug Info – Primary Health Care
- Activity 8: Hospital placement
- Activity 9: Rural Pharmacy Practices
- Activity 11: Compounding Pharmacy Practices
- Activity 10: Online calculations and quiz during placement

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**Student Requirements** 

**Placement Activities**

Compulsory Assessable Activities: Year 4

- Activity 2: Complementary and Alternative Medicines
- Activity 3: Learning Portfolio OTC Medicines
- Activity 5: Rural Pharmacy Practice - Indigenous Health, Vets
- Activity 6: Rural Pharmacy Practice Report – Roles, Services
- Activity 8: Hospital placement, Pharmaceutical Care Plans, TDM
- Activity 9: Online Placement Calculations and Quiz
- Activity 10: Health Promotion Elective

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**Student Requirements** 

**Placement Activities**

Compulsory Assessable Activities: Year 4.....continued

- Activity 11: Home Medicines Review Elective
- Activity 12: The Pharmacist as Manager Elective
- Activity 14 & 15: QUM Medicare Australia – eg Doctor Shopping
- Activity 17: Lavarack Barracks Pharmacy Practice Report
- Activity 19: ATODS Pharmacy Practice Report
- Activity 24: Headspace Observer Report
- Activity 26: Bluecare Observer Report

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**Marking of Workbooks** 

**Marking**

- Registered Pharmacist Tutors invited to mark student assessable placement activities – Year 3/or 4
- Estimation of tutors' marking costs of the activities
- Based on placements to be undertaken by students
- I mark the Orientation Activities, Reflective Journal and verify results of the completed online placement calculations – quiz
- Audit - students have completed and submitted correct activities

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## Marking of Workbooks



### Marking

- Tutors advised by email activities are available for collection and marking (except Year 4 block 2 and 3 Activities – delivered to tutors)
- Supplied a cover sheet with student names for relevant activity
- Marking conducted as per criteria page attached to each submitted completed printed hard copy of student activity

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## Marking of Workbooks



### Marking

- Marking consistency of student activities by tutors
- Attention to content of material submitted, spelling, grammar and accuracy of information
- Work is not brief, depth of knowledge evident, referencing of work  
Plagiarism to be checked by software detection by Safe Assign and also by tutor marking the work.
- Tutors to flag students with poor quality activity work (possible U=Unsatisfactory)
- Will email the student to arrange suitable time to review activity/ies

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## Marking of Workbooks



### Marking

- Completed work will be reviewed with student - suggest areas for improvement for next activities
- Expect an improved performance for next placement
- Marks for all four assessed activities collated
- Must have an average pass of 50% (S= Satisfactory)
- Preceptor evaluation form also assessed and correlated with submitted placement activities
- If both assessment and Preceptor Evaluations are less than 50% student may need to undertake a supplementary placement

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## Marking of Workbooks



### Placement Activity Criteria Page

Marking Schedule	Well Done (5)	Satisfactory (4-3)	Needs Improvement (2-1)	Incomplete (0)
Content 45%				
Accuracy of Information 45%				
Organisation 5%				
Referencing 5%				

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Satisfactory (>50%)

Unsatisfactory (<50%)

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## Marking of Workbooks



### Marking Year 4

- Tutor markers expect a much higher standard than year 3 activities
- Students are expected to provide very professional, in depth knowledge in all submitted activities
- Failure to display improvement in quality of assessable activities and Preceptor Evaluation Report may :-
  - > render an additional placement in January the following year
- Goal is to ensure all students graduate after attaining satisfactory overall grade in placements and Preceptor Evaluations Reports
- are trained as a competent person in their pharmacy employment

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## 6. Tutor Support

### 6.1 *Pharmacist Tutor Web Community - LearnJCU*

The Pharmacist tutor web community has been developed to provide additional support for Pharmacist tutors. Once you have received your login details, you will have access to this site via LearnJCU (click on **Communities**). This community site contains further information about tutoring procedures, links to relevant tutor information, as well as the names of the subject co-ordinators for each Pharmacy-based subject. You also have the opportunity to participate in an online tutor discussion group.

### 6.2 *Library Resources*

As a casual staff member, you have access to library resources. If you are not at the University, you will need to gain remote access using your login ID and password. Pharmacy specific resources are available online via the Pharmacy subject LibGuide (go to the JCU website, click on Library on the top tool bar, then click on subject Libguides, then Pharmacy). Resources include standard references such as the Martindale (via Micromedex), Stockley's Drug Alerts, MD Consult, Up To Date and the RCH Paediatric Pharmacopoeia. There is also limited access to the Australian Medicines Handbook and Catalyst.

**APPENDIX P: Tutor training program attendance certificate**

<b>CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE</b>	
This is to certify that	
<b><i>A. Pharmacist</i></b>	
<i>Has attended the</i>	
<b><i>JCU Induction and Pharmacy Tutor Orientation Program</i></b>	
<b>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013 12.30pm - 5pm</b>	
..... <i>Date</i>	..... <i>Signature – Pharmacy Head of Discipline</i>



**APPENDIX Q: Ethics Approval H4580 Amendment for Program Evaluations**

This administrative form  
has been removed



4. Please comment on the best aspects of this training program:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. Please comment on suggested improvements to this training program:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. Your previous tutoring experience

**Have you previously tutored in pharmacy at JCU?**

Please circle ...                      Yes                      No

**If you answered yes, for how many years have you tutored?**

Please circle...

< 1 yr              1-2 yrs              2-5 yrs              > 5 yrs              N/A

**Have you attended a previous sessional staff induction program at JCU?**

Please circle ...                      Yes                      No

**Are you a past pharmacy graduate of JCU?**                      Yes                      No

*Thank you for your time*

*Your feedback is appreciated*

## APPENDIX S: Feedback evaluation survey 1 – Information sheet



### INFORMATION SHEET

#### Training and support program for pharmacist tutors at James Cook University

As a current or future tutor into the James Cook University (JCU) Pharmacy degree, you are invited to take part in a research project which is aiming to develop and evaluate a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at JCU. The study is being conducted by Gillian Knott and will contribute to a Master of Pharmacy degree at James Cook University.

If you agree to be involved in this study, after completion of the JCU pharmacist tutor training program, you will be asked to complete a written feedback evaluation survey which will help us to assess the relevance and usefulness of the tutor training program. The survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Additionally, if you agree, you will be invited to complete a second post-training evaluation survey after one full Semester of tutoring. This second survey will be distributed by mail at a later date in 2013.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose not to complete the feedback evaluation survey without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

Your responses will be strictly confidential. All evaluation surveys will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for the next 5 years. Any electronic data generated will be stored on a secure password protected server. The data from the study may be used in research publications and reports for health education and pharmacy practice journals. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

It would be appreciated if you could complete the feedback survey form and return it to us either immediately after the training program or via JCU pharmacy reception by Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact **Mrs Gillian Knott** or **Professor Beverley Glass**

**Principal Investigator:**  
**Gillian Knott**  
B. Pharm. Grad Cert Clin Pharm, AACPA  
Lecturer and Tutor Co-ordinator  
Discipline of Pharmacy  
School of Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences  
James Cook University  
Phone: 4781 6180

Email: [gillian.knott@jcu.edu.au](mailto:gillian.knott@jcu.edu.au)

**Supervisor:**  
**Professor Beverley Glass**  
B. Pharm.  
B. Science - Chemistry (Hons1)  
B. Tech. (Marketing) (Hons 1)  
PhD Rhodes University  
Professor of Pharmacy – James Cook University  
Discipline of Pharmacy  
School of Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences  
James Cook University  
Phone: 47816423  
Email: [beverley.glass@jcu.edu.au](mailto:beverley.glass@jcu.edu.au)

*If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:*  
**Human Ethics, Research Office,**  
**James Cook University,**  
**Townsville, Qld, 4811. Phone: 4781 5011, [ethics@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@jcu.edu.au)**

Caïms - Townsville - Brisbane - Singapore  
CRICOS Provider Code 00117J

## APPENDIX T: Feedback evaluation survey 1 – Informed consent form



### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	Gillian Knott
PROJECT TITLE:	Design and evaluation of a pharmacist tutor training program at James Cook University
SCHOOL	Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences

I understand that the aim of this research study is to develop and evaluate a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at James Cook University. I consent to participate in this project and I have been provided with a written information sheet to keep, which has satisfactorily explained the details of the project.

I understand that my participation will involve a **written feedback evaluation survey** and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the information sheet.

I give permission for the researcher to access my postal address from the James Cook University Pharmacy tutor database for the purpose of distributing a second written evaluation survey at a later date in 2013.

I acknowledge that:

- taking part in this study is voluntary and I am aware that I can stop taking part in it at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
- that any information I give will be kept strictly confidential and that no names will be used to identify me with this study without my approval;

*(Please tick to indicate consent)*

I consent to participate in the feedback evaluation survey	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
I consent to allow the researcher to access my address to distribute a second evaluation survey at a later date in 2013	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Name: <i>(printed)</i>	
Signature:	Date:

**APPENDIX U: Tutor training program – Feedback evaluation survey 2**



**JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY**

**PHARMACIST TUTOR TRAINING PROGRAM 2013**

**Feedback Evaluation Survey 2**

**1. In which subject(s) or areas did you participate in Semester 1 2013?**

*Please tick all relevant boxes*

Extemporaneous Dispensing	
Clinical Dispensing	
OTC counselling	
Placement marking	

**2. Rating of benefit**

Using the gradings listed below, please rate your competency as a tutor **prior to** the training program, **immediately after** the training program and **after one full semester**.

1. Unsure    2. Poor    3. Average    4. Good    5. Very Good

<b>Competence</b>	<b>Prior to training</b>	<b>Immediately after training</b>	<b>After one full Semester</b>
General confidence level			
Confidence in marking and assessment (if not marking, write N/A)			
Teaching consistency			
Teaching knowledge and skills			
Ability to work effectively in a team			
Ability to enhance student learning			
Ability to deal with problem students			
Enhancement of career opportunities			

**3. Having experienced one full semester as a tutor in the Discipline of Pharmacy at James Cook University, please comment on the following:**

a) Please comment on any problems that you may have experienced as a tutor in the Discipline of Pharmacy during Semester 1 2013.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

b) Please comment on how the tutor training program has been of benefit to you in your role as a pharmacist tutor.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

c) Please list any additional topics which you feel should be included in future tutor training programs and explain why they would be of benefit to the program.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**6. Your tutoring experience**

Have you tutored in Pharmacy at JCU prior to 2013?

*Please circle ....*                      Yes                      No

If you answered yes, for how many years have you tutored?

*Please circle ....*                      < 1 yr                      1-2 yrs                      2-5 yrs                      > 5yrs

Have you attended a sessional staff induction program at JCU prior to 2013?

*Please circle ....*                      Yes                      No

Are you a past pharmacy graduate of JCU?                      Yes                      No

## APPENDIX V: Feedback evaluation survey 2 – Information sheet



### INFORMATION SHEET

#### Training and support program for pharmacist tutors at James Cook University

#### Feedback Evaluation 2

As a tutor into the James Cook University (JCU) Pharmacy degree, you were a participant in the James Cook University Pharmacist Tutor Training Program in February 2013. The development and evaluation of this training program is part of a project being conducted by Gillian Knott and will contribute to a Master of Pharmacy degree at James Cook University.

Immediately after the tutor training program, you participated in a feedback evaluation survey for this program. As you have now been tutoring for a full semester, we are interested in obtaining your feedback on the effect of this training program on your tutoring. For this purpose, you are invited to participate in a second evaluation survey, which is designed to investigate the longer term benefits and usefulness of this training program and to inform future training programs.

If you agree to be involved in this survey, you will be asked to complete the enclosed written feedback evaluation survey. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose not to complete the feedback evaluation survey without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

Your responses will be strictly confidential. All evaluation surveys will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for the next 5 years. Any electronic data generated will be stored on a secure password protected server. The data from the study may be used in research publications and reports for health education and pharmacy practice journals. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

It would be appreciated if you could complete the feedback survey form and return it in the reply-paid envelope by Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

All participants will also be required to provide written informed consent. Therefore, please also complete the enclosed informed consent form and return it with your feedback survey form in the reply paid envelope provided.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Mrs Gillian Knott or Professor Beverley Glass

**Principal Investigator:**  
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AACPA (Accredited pharmacist)  
Lecturer and Tutor Co-ordinator  
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Email: [gillian.knott@jcu.edu.au](mailto:gillian.knott@jcu.edu.au)

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B. Science - Chemistry (Hons1)  
B. Tech. (Marketing) (Hons 1)  
PhD Rhodes University  
Professor of Pharmacy – James Cook University  
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Phone: 47816423  
Email: [beverley.glass@jcu.edu.au](mailto:beverley.glass@jcu.edu.au)

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*Townsville, Qld, 4811. Phone: 4781 5011, [ethics@jcu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@jcu.edu.au)*

Caïms - Townsville - Brisbane - Singapore  
CRICOS Provider Code 00117J



## APPENDIX W: Feedback evaluation survey 2 – Informed consent form



### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	Gillian Knott
PROJECT TITLE:	Design and evaluation of a pharmacist tutor training program at James Cook University
SCHOOL	Pharmacy and Molecular Sciences

I understand that the aim of this research study is to develop and evaluate a tutor training and support program for sessional pharmacist tutors who assist academic staff in the education of pharmacy students at James Cook University. I consent to participate in this project and I have been provided with a written information sheet to keep, which has satisfactorily explained the details of the project.

I understand that my participation will involve a **written feedback evaluation survey** and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the information sheet.

I acknowledge that:

- taking part in this study is voluntary and I am aware that I can stop taking part in it at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
- that any information I give will be kept strictly confidential and that no names will be used to identify me with this study without my approval;

*(Please tick to indicate consent)*

I consent to participate in the feedback evaluation survey  Yes  No

Name: <i>(printed)</i>	
Signature:	Date: