



**Queensland University of Technology**  
Brisbane Australia

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[Quadrelli, Carol & Grevis-James, Nancy](#)  
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*Final Report: Cracking the code: A checklist to complement CRAs for first year Justice students.*

(Unpublished)

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### Final report *(limit 5 pages)*

The following project information will be published to an online searchable database on the Learning and Teaching Unit website: project leader(s), title, abstract, objectives, key words).

#### 1. Abstract of completed project

Please provide an abstract of the completed project, including project objectives and findings *(limit 200 words)*.

Widening participation brings with it increasing diversity and increased variation in the level of academic preparedness (Clarke, 2011; Nelson, Clarke, & Kift 2010). Cultural capital coupled with negotiating the academic culture creates an environment based on many assumptions about academic writing and university culture. Variations in staff and student expectations relating to the teaching and learning experience is captured in a range of national and institutional data (AUSSE, CEQ, LEX). The research team noted a recognisable shift in the changing cohort of students and their understanding and engagement with feedback and CRAs, as well as variations in teaching staff expectations and student expectations. The reality of assessment feedback is that:

- CRAs are not always used consistently by staff (different marking styles and levels of feedback);
- Student support services might be recommended to students once a poor grade has been given. Students can perceive this as remedial and a further sense of failure;
- Limited opportunities for sessionals to access professional development to assist with engaging students and feedback;
- FYE resources exist, however academic time is a factor in exploring and embedding these resources.

The aim was to develop a one page checklist/guide to be submitted with the CRA sheet and assessment piece. The checklist will:

- i) provide an interface to engage first year Justice students and tutors in managing understandings and expectations around academic culture skills, and;
- ii) assist students to make links to relevant university services thereby promoting support services for students as normative.

#### 3. What were the outcomes and impact of the project? *(Specifically identify outcomes for students and/or staff and/or QUT and/or other relevant groups and yourself professionally)*

Outcome	Evidence of impact <i>(drawn from evaluation data)</i>
For students: Students of varying capacity provided with diagnostic feedback with no grade; Checklist layout made it easier for students to understand where they needed to seek assistance; Checklist provided a focal point of discussion for tutors and students and consistency in feedback; demystified the CRA sheet for first year students.	Soapbox Student survey data from trial units (JSB278; JSB 207) Informal feedback from students (JSB986; JSB278; JSB 207; JSB177)

<p>For staff:</p> <p><b>consistency</b> in approach to feedback; was useful for unit coordinators &amp; tutors to <b>track</b> student <b>progress</b> in basic skills</p>	<p>Focus group with Justice Unit coordinators and tutors (10 attendees)</p> <p>Participating Unit Coordinator interview data</p> <p>Informal feedback from tutors involved in units</p>
<p>For QUT:</p> <p>addressed the following: blueprint objectives; enhanced student learning outcomes; reinforced links between learning objectives and assessment strategies; aided student transition</p>	<p>T&amp;L Justice committee (are considering implementation across first year units in 2014)</p> <p>Jo Bennett (First year experience) identified the checklist as a useful first year resource</p> <p>Wendy Cusack (Equity Officer, Law) is interested to review checklist and possible modification for MAPS 2014</p>
<p>For relevant groups:</p> <p>Project addressed the Faculty Learning and Teaching priorities of student centredness and alignment</p>	<p>This was by evidenced by feedback from:</p> <p>AGS Workshop 3: Sustainability and leveraging and funding (Georgia Smeal &amp; Rae-Anne Diehm)</p> <p>T&amp;L Justice committee</p> <p>Liz Ruinard (LTD, OTQ)</p> <p>Jo Bennett (First year experience)</p> <p>Julian Kapitski (Learning designer)</p> <p>Wendy Cusack (Equity Officer, Law)</p>
<p>For yourself professionally</p> <p>Recognition at a School/Faculty and university level.</p> <p>Increased awareness of key support and expert services within QUT</p> <p>Increased confidence to engage with academic peers (HoS, UC, FYE experts)</p> <p>Established an emerging grant track record and publications</p> <p>Further consolidated our knowledge in the First Year Experience</p>	<p>Grant application used as an exemplar of best practice</p> <p>Nancy Grevis-James was awarded a VC Performance award 2012, partly in recognition of the T&amp;L project</p> <p>Carol Quadrelli invited to be a member of the 'First Year Unit Review Working Party' 2013</p> <p>Stakeholders have been keenly following the progress of the trial and are interested in embedding within their units.</p> <p>Increased confidence of project team to engage with a range of stakeholders in the promotion and dissemination of our project</p>

#### 4. How will the project outcomes be sustained into the future?

As a First Year Unit-Coordinator (Sem 1, 2014) on the 'First Year Unit Review Working Party', Carol Quadrelli will promote and maintain the objectives and outcomes of the checklist. Implementation of the checklist across First Year Units is yet to be confirmed. However, approval is anticipated in the September Justice School T&L meeting.

The project team will apply for T&L Grant Funding (2014) to undertake an evaluation of the checklist within the School of Justice across all First Year units.

Checklist templates and promotional material will be stored on the Law Faculty Intra-net site.

Two journal articles are currently being developed and we anticipate publication in 2014, if not sooner.

## 5. Dissemination strategies

List strategies used to disseminate information on the project in progress, and any journal articles, presentations and conference papers that have resulted from this project. (*Bullet points*)

- T&L Committee Meetings
- Promoting project at Lectures
- DVD
- Flyer
- Brochure
- Focus Groups with Unit Coordinators and Tutors
- Awards & Grants Workshops
- Staff meetings
- Publications (in progress)
- Advocacy undertaken by research mentor
- Engagement with expert groups (Equity, LTU, Learning Design)
- Project updates to School of Justice HoS, LTD, Assistant Dean T&L (Law)
- Conference (abstract submitted to ALTA 2013)

## 6. Lessons learned

Identify any lessons learned from undertaking this project that might assist others undertaking projects in the future.

Partnerships and Lessons learned: established shared goals and values early on; open communication (roles and responsibilities); developed a timeline to define workloads; recognised the importance of flexibility; 'reality' progress checks; celebrated milestones; recognised and acknowledged team member's strengths and expertise; developed an honest rapport; confidence to negotiate and compromise when needed; regular contact; reciprocity of ideas; mapped publication ideas early on.

Mentorship and lessons learned: a well placed research mentor is a great bonus in gaining credibility and traction in the promotion of the project. In hindsight we could have maximised on this further.

Managing stakeholder expectations and lessons learned: maintaining the integrity of the project objectives and checklist design whilst also taking on stakeholder feedback. Managing

the enthusiasm of academics seeking to implement the checklist before the trial phase had been completed.

Managing data and lessons learned: Using one repository to store data and resources to maintain version control. For example, we commenced with box net, but due to ethical concerns around off-shore cloud storage we moved project files to a central university drive accessible by team members only.

## 7. Budget *(where a defined project account exists please attach Oracle budget report)*

There are still on-going costs that will be incurred up until the showcase in November 2013. Contact has been made with Awards and Grants who have indicated that project funds can still be accessed until the end of the 2013.

Project Account Code: 170111-0030/04

	Total project funding	Amount spent	In kind contribution	Funds remaining
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,321.00</b>	<b>\$5,999.91</b>	<b>\$4,079</b>	<b>\$1,321.09</b>

## 8. Key words

First year experience, assessment feedback, resource checklist, evaluation, diagnostic tool,