

## **Universitas 21 Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDOGS)**

### **On-line Learning Module for Postgraduate Research Students**

#### **Global Research Ethics and Integrity**

##### **Outline**

1. Universitas 21 Presidents have supported the development of an e-learning module for U21 research students with international relevance in the area of “Research integrity and ethics”.
2. The module will be designed and approved by a consortium of participating universities and the project will be managed by the University of Melbourne.
3. The project will be funded by a US\$30000 allocation from U21 and the remaining US\$60000 to be from cash contributions from participating universities (maximum of US\$10000 each).

##### **Background**

Since the May 2004 meeting of the U21 Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies the group has been exploring the possibilities for collaborative online resource development. The development of online learning modules centred on integrated international perspectives and understandings that would be accessible to research students from all U21 member institutions would enhance current programs and provide a vehicle for a truly international learning experience. With careful designing, testing and evaluation, an interactive course could address the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds, offer peer networking and support, as well as providing exposure to and interaction with fellow students and potential colleagues around the world.

The November 2005 meeting of the U21 Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies in Vancouver gave strong support to a proposal to develop a e-learning module and identified this project as a priority for the group in 2006.

The development of a Universitas 21 interactive multimedia online course would:

- Emphasize the global nature, standards and responsibilities of research and research training
- Respect the international differences in research and research training cultures and practices
- Ensure that valuable learning experiences are available to students from all member institutions, either as on or off campus students
- Enable postgraduates to learn at their own pace and convenience
- Increase access to and uptake of related web learning materials and services
- Facilitate on-line access to peers and advisors
- Improve the multimedia literacy of postgraduates
- Foster a sense of belonging to a community of postgraduate researchers

Internationally universities seek to develop doctoral graduates who demonstrate academic leadership, increasing independence, creativity and innovation in their research work. Doctoral studies provide advanced training designed to enhance professional knowledge in a specialist area. As a majority of graduates work in business, industry, non-profit and government sectors, it is increasingly important to

encourage the acquisition of a wide range of advanced and transferable skills. Most importantly research training should instil a profound respect for truth and intellectual integrity, and for the ethics of research and scholarship.

### **The Project**

The November 2005 Vancouver meeting of the U21 DDOGS endorsed a University of Melbourne proposal to collaboratively develop an e-learning module for U21 research students with international relevance in the area of “Research integrity and ethics”. The project aims to develop a resource which would be freely available to participating U21 members and could be adapted to reflect the particular regulations and customs of each institution. The meeting felt strongly that this project aligns with the strategic objectives of Universitas 21 and would provide a valuable resource to all members of the consortium. The University of Melbourne will manage the project and a project advisory group was proposed including the Deans from Edinburgh, Nottingham, Auckland, Hong Kong and Melbourne.

To ensure global relevance and financial viability, a minimum sign-up of six institutions would be required for this project to proceed. To optimise the potential value of the program it is also intended to investigate the possibility of developing the program so that it could be presented as a credit bearing course.

### **Progressing the Project**

A preliminary budget has been developed for the program and development will commence in 2006 with delivery expected by 2007. The advisory group will develop a full project plan once the project is endorsed. There is also potential to commercialise this product to a broader market and this will be considered in the design stage. Any income could be redirected further program development.

Further information:

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