

# Learning and Teaching Plan 2013–2017



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# Welcome



## *Our Future Ready strategy envisages bold futures for La Trobe's students, and maps the educational means for them to realise their potential.*

The University is unerring in its belief that higher education is transformative; unwavering in its commitment to deliver distinctive, relevant courses in a period of rapid change; and determined to do so in ways that highlight La Trobe's proud traditions of quality, social justice, and effective engagement with diversity. In this dynamic context, I am very pleased to present the La Trobe University *Learning and Teaching Plan 2013–2017*, which articulates the learning and teaching goals underpinning *Future Ready*, and their realisation over the next five years.

The engagement of the La Trobe community in areas of strategic and operational decision-making has been amply demonstrated throughout the development of *Future Ready* under the guidance of Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar. As we have developed this plan, the dedication of all those contributing to a vision that focuses on the student learning experience has been clear. The development of distinctive La Trobe *Essentials* within the

curriculum; the provision of a distinctive *Hallmark* program associated with our new Research Focus Areas; planning for learning enrichment: all have engaged us in intensive collegial exchange. That process itself attests to La Trobe's ongoing commitment to innovation and scholarship to benefit student learning.

The resultant Plan articulates five major goals to be realised in the period to 2017, all designed to contribute to our aspiration to produce future-ready students. We aim to be placed within the top three universities in the State and the top twelve nationally, in relation to student satisfaction, retention and success, and graduate employment, across all fields of education. These goals, ambitious but achievable, are not mere abstractions – behind each stand thousands of individual graduates whose future higher education at La Trobe must have a powerful impact upon them if they are to meet the demands of our collective future.

In this spirit, I look forward to working with you all to meet the goals and targets in the Plan, to develop work-ready, world-ready and future-ready graduates.

**Professor Jane Long**  
May 2013

# Our past, our future



Since 1967, La Trobe University has placed a high value on the quality of learning and teaching and the experience of students. The University is dedicated to supporting students to develop the capacities they need to help shape their own futures and to make a positive contribution to the global communities they inhabit.

The current strategy continues in this vein and is avowedly student-centric.

Participation in higher education has grown significantly since La Trobe's early days. The University has expanded in Melbourne and reached out into regional Victoria to establish campuses at Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo, Mildura and Shepparton. As a multi-campus provider of higher education, La Trobe's courses and learning modes must meet the needs of cohorts who differ considerably in age, demographics and preparation pathways for university study. Increasingly, we must recognise the diverse backgrounds and associated needs of our student population, and acknowledge the wealth of experience they bring to the learning partnership of higher education.

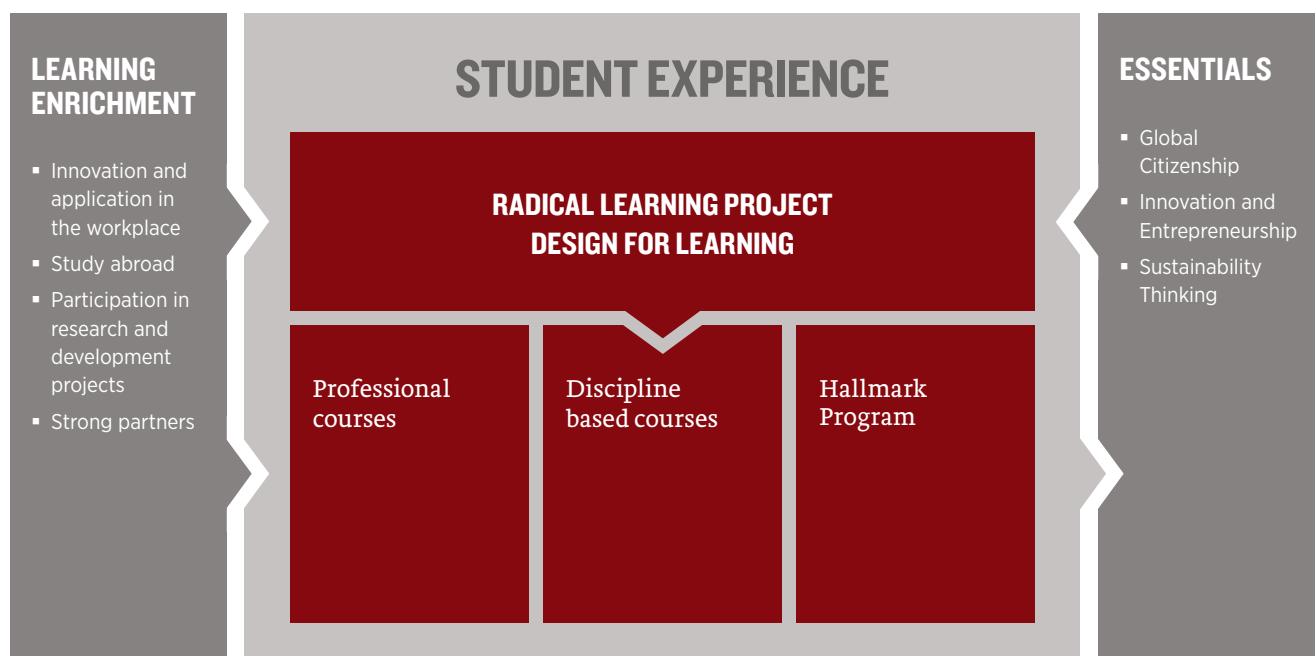
The University is re-imagining how learning and teaching is conducted and how the experiences across all campuses reflect the University's standards, culture and values.

That re-imagining must also engage with the diversity of our students and their needs to ensure effective outcomes.

La Trobe University is evolving constantly by not only meeting its internal challenges but through vibrant and vital relationships stretching out across local communities and national and international borders. Pedagogy is influenced by leading-edge research and partnerships with industries and other universities across the globe.

Over the next five years to 2017, the global higher education environment will continue to be very challenging for all universities as they focus on high quality research and learning in a sector competing for resources. It is vital that La Trobe has a clear understanding of its distinctive mission and directions so that the University can maximise the impact of its achievements for the benefit of the whole community.

# Future learning



## LA TROBE FRAMEWORK

The La Trobe Framework (above) has been designed to integrate elements contributing to the development of distinctive capabilities of our graduates and to provide them with the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills so that they are work-ready, world-ready and future-ready. The Framework builds on the *Design for Learning* (DfL) project initiated in 2009, which has been a significant program of curriculum review and renewal to provide measurable indicators of student learning and student success. The DfL project has also prompted a review of the University's orientation program, the implementation of policies and a First Year Experience Plan and the provision of dedicated support for commencing students, including academic and language support. In 2013, the DfL project is nearing completion and has laid a very valuable foundation for further work on the 'Radical Learning Project', the 'Essentials', 'Learning

Enrichment' and the 'Hallmark Program'. This foundation will also enable La Trobe to move reasonably quickly to take advantage of opportunities available through new technologies.

## RADICAL LEARNING PROJECT

The Radical Learning Project, undertaken in late 2012, investigated possible learning futures and aimed to re-imagine learning at La Trobe through new pedagogical approaches, rich educational technologies, online educational resources and blended learning. In its report, the project team emphasised the importance of La Trobe moving to position itself as an adaptive, innovative and creative institution. The University will adopt institution-wide twenty-first century teaching and learning models, with increased emphasis on a blended learning model and some fully online delivery.

Blended learning design approaches may include:

- predominantly face-to-face teaching, with some online learning
- a mix of face-to-face and online learning
- predominantly online learning.

Any arrangements for blended learning need to be matched to student needs, and in particular, the contingencies of time and place. Teaching and learning models will be based on the principle of constructive alignment, student engagement and learner-centred approaches and customised design, which will equip students with the digital literacies they need for a changing future.

La Trobe will use learning technologies to facilitate new learning approaches, collaboration and co-creation of learning experiences. La Trobe will become flexible in its course designs and be responsive to the needs and preferences of a diverse student body. The University will work with technology providers and teaching partners

## GOALS, TARGETS AND STRATEGIES

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Group study, Shepparton Campus

to investigate possible educational uses of emerging and new technologies. Physical learning spaces will be designed to support the full range of learning activities, including collaboration, interactivity, individual study and informal learning. It is also important to broaden the depth and extent of collaboration and personalisation in learning and teaching, including the use of social media in learning, global idea exchanges, and disciplinary and interdisciplinary student collaboration on projects. La Trobe must systematically develop and refine its use of data from learning environments and administrative systems to support decision-making at all levels that impacts on educational programs and the course review life-cycle.

### THE ESSENTIALS

These are three vital areas of learning to foster the skills and knowledge needed to become future-ready in the workplace and beyond. Engagement with the Essentials

is a prerequisite for graduates to make a meaningful contribution to the debate and decision-making needed in rapidly changing global environments.

### Global Citizenship

During their degrees all La Trobe University Students will reflect on the opportunities and obligations of their citizenship in a globalising world. This entails:

- recognising the broader global context in which their studies exist
- understanding the diversity of values and perspectives across the globe
- developing personal and technical skills to interact effectively with a diverse range of people in a world of complex interdependence
- actively engaging with a wide range of communities and institutions to meet the demands of global challenges and obligations.

The Global Citizenship Essential is strongly supported by the development of cultural literacy as a graduate capability at La Trobe. Acquiring cultural literacy entails engagement with Indigenous values and knowledge by all students.

### Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Innovation relates to the introduction of the new; renewal, and change. Entrepreneurship at La Trobe refers to seizing opportunities and managing them effectively to realise their potential. La Trobe students will develop skills and knowledge in innovation and entrepreneurship, to include:

- understanding and experiencing the dynamics of change
- the generation and effective management of new ideas
- the ability to network, forge partnerships, collaborate and effectively communicate
- flexibility and creativity in developing ideas, and in resolving complex problems
- the capacity to apply theory, locate and synthesise knowledge resources, prioritise action and manage associated risks.

### Sustainability Thinking

Sustainability Thinking is a capacity to engage effectively with social, environmental and economic change and challenges in the contemporary world. For example: climate change, food and water security, and human and labour rights.

Sustainability Thinking demands that all La Trobe University students reflect on:

- the complex interactions between natural, economic, social, political and cultural systems
- our obligations to future generations
- how the choices we make will affect the public good and the wellbeing of future generations.

At La Trobe, Sustainability Thinking is inextricably linked to good global citizenship.

### LEARNING ENRICHMENT

Learning Enrichment in the curriculum or co-curriculum provides invaluable opportunities to apply knowledge and skills within the workplace, in research and development projects and through partnership arrangements.

La Trobe University has offered professional degrees for many years, for example, in Health Sciences, Education, Engineering, Business and Law. These have mandatory requirements for students to complete clinical placements, practicum or industry experience as part of their programs of study. In addition, some faculties include work integrated learning and other forms of experience-based learning in the curriculum to provide an opportunity for students to gain supervised work experience and reflect on that experience as part of their learning.

Most recently, work-ready degrees in Arts and Science have been developed. These recognise student involvement in co-curricular learning activities and incorporate specific units delivered by the Career Development Centre to prepare students for the world of work. In addition to these existing opportunities, the University must make these experiences available to a much greater number of students and increase opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship in conjunction with partners in business and industry and the community.

The University provides enrichment opportunities to all students for volunteering in the community, programs in leadership, career development, peer mentoring and peer support during their studies. These programs are designed to complement the La Trobe Essentials, engage key University partners and offer students official acknowledgement of their contributions. La Trobe has numerous partnerships with international universities for a variety of academic and cultural exchange and interaction.



The Study Abroad program offers students an educational experience overseas, which when combined with the opportunities provided by La Trobe, can have a profound influence on their personal and academic development and capacity to contribute as global citizens.

### HALLMARK PROGRAM

The program will be creative, bold and distinctive. It will strengthen the links between coursework programs and research, provide opportunities for cross-disciplinary teams to work on the world's most pressing issues and feature significant student scholarship and enrichment elements beyond the classroom experience.

The University is currently developing Research Focus Areas (RFAs) in:

- Securing food, water and the environment
- Sport, exercise and rehabilitation
- Understanding disease
- Building healthy communities
- Population movement and human security.

Through the RFAs, Hallmark students will be exposed to the latest cross-disciplinary research addressing national or global problems and discover how they can make a contribution individually, or by combining their ideas and talents.

**GOAL 1****DEVELOP A DISTINCTIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE VIA THE INTEGRATED ELEMENTS OF THE LATROBE FRAMEWORK****2017 Targets**

- Graduate capabilities and student involvement in the Essentials recorded on the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) for all students
- Involvement in at least one learning enrichment opportunity recorded on the AHEGS for all students

Strategies	Responsibility
1.1 Build on curriculum re-design and renewal through the Design for Learning project to embed the Essentials into the curriculum, or as required subjects, and develop mechanisms for recording student learning in global citizenship, innovation and entrepreneurship and sustainability thinking	DVC(A), Executive Deans, PVC(FL), VP(A)
1.2 Increase opportunities for experience-based learning in the workplace or through the involvement of industry partners in course content and delivery	DVC(A), Executive Deans, SDVC, DVC(R)
1.3 Increase opportunities for undergraduate students to be involved in cross-disciplinary research projects linked to disciplinary areas, the La Trobe Research Focus Areas (RFAs) and the interests of University partners	DVC(A), DVC(R), SDVC
1.4 Establish an innovative Hallmark program in high demand from prospective students and delivering a range of learning and enrichment experiences uniquely 'packaged' in the Australian higher education environment.	DVC(A), PVC(FL), Executive Deans, DVC(R)

**GOAL 2****DEVELOP INNOVATIVE, ADAPTIVE AND CREATIVE APPROACHES TO EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY THAT ARE BASED ON SOUND PEDAGOGY AND ENHANCE EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEARNING****2017 Targets**

- At least 60% of subjects offered by the University to be in blended delivery mode
- At least 5% of subjects offered by the University to be in online mode

Strategies	Responsibility
2.1 Investigate and develop new markets and new environments through flexible, online and blended learning	DVC(A), SDVC, PVC(FL), Executive Deans
2.2 Create a design policy for subjects and courses to recognise the extent to which students rely on mobile learning to access learning materials	DVC(A), PVC(FL), Executive Deans
2.3 Develop effective and equitable teaching delivery to regional and isolated students	DVC(A), PVC(FL), Executive Deans
2.4 Increase the depth and extent of collaboration between learners, teachers and peers, locally, regionally and globally	DVC(A), PVC(FL), Executive Deans
2.5 Develop online and physical learning environments to suit student learning-focused pedagogical models	DVC(A), PVC(FL), Executive Deans

SDVC = Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor; DVC(A) = Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); DVC(R) = Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research); VP(A) = Vice-President (Administration); PVC(FL) = Pro Vice-Chancellor (Future Learning); PVC(EPQ) = Pro Vice-Chancellor (Educational Partnerships and Quality); PVC(ESE) = Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Student Experience).

# Future communities



Through the realisation of the *Future Ready* agenda, La Trobe University will be positioned to make a significant contribution to the education of future communities both in Australia and internationally.

La Trobe's Melbourne Campus is operating in a geographical area of rapid growth with demand for higher education from local students expected to rise in future years. In regional Victoria, growth is strong in the larger regional centres but smaller communities are stable or declining. The uncapped, student demand-driven funding model introduced by government for the first time in 2012 has made it more difficult for regional campuses to compete against an increase in metropolitan places and less local student demand. La Trobe is highly committed to regional education and has

the highest proportion of regional students of any Victorian university. Course offerings at all campuses must suit student demand and also anticipate growth in key industries for Australia's future as well as meeting the workforce needs of particular localities. There is an opportunity to tailor some growth at all campuses to the postgraduate coursework market where additional study can assist career development and foster the higher level skills needed in the workplace.

La Trobe University is socially and culturally diverse. Low SES students make up a higher proportion than in many Australian universities, but the University can still do more to ensure that university education is available to students who have experienced disadvantage. Because of its geographical position in the growing northern suburbs of Melbourne and in regional centres, La Trobe has significant numbers of students who are 'first in family' to enrol at university (43% overall in 2011). The University needs to increase the numbers of Australian

Indigenous students who make up less than 1% of the La Trobe student population. An Indigenous Participation Strategy will guide the University's work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to strengthen pathways to higher education and provide support for full participation in the life of the University and achievement of educational goals.

La Trobe has a vibrant mix of domestic students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the student group also includes international students from over 100 countries. There have been marked shifts in numbers of international students coming to Australia from source countries in recent years due to economic factors and the growth of higher education in Asian countries, particularly China. It will be important to expand the range of source countries for international students and develop additional transnational partnerships to strengthen the University's internationalisation agenda.

La Trobe University wants to encourage high-ability students regardless of their means or circumstances and is working with donors and partners to increase the numbers and types of scholarships to help support many more students through university. The University aims to increase its market share of first preference VTAC applicants and also increase the proportion of students entering La Trobe with an ATAR of 80+. To achieve this, La Trobe must build its reputation in the prospective student market for high-quality learning and student experience and work closely with feeder schools, TAFEs, other providers and the mature-age market to provide a variety of opportunities for prospective students to test out La Trobe as their university of choice.

## **GOAL 3**

### **ACHIEVE GROWTH WHILE MAINTAINING ENTRY STANDARDS AND INCREASING DIVERSITY IN THE STUDENT POPULATION**

#### **2017 Targets (from 2011 baseline)**

- Student numbers increased from 25,989 to 33,000 EFTSL
- Student numbers increased from 5,470 to 7,300 EFTSL at regional sites
- The proportion of domestic, fee-paying, graduate coursework students increased from 3.7% of total load to 6% of projected total load
- The proportion of postgraduate coursework students increased from 15% of total load to 17% of projected total load
- The number of onshore international students increased from 4,720 to 6,000 EFTSL
- An increase of at least four source countries for international students, with no more than 35% coming from any single country
- The proportion of domestic undergraduate students from low socio-economic backgrounds increased from 18.6% to 20%
- The proportion of Indigenous domestic undergraduate students increased from 0.6% to 0.9%
- La Trobe's share of Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre first preference applicants increased from 12.6% to 14%
- La Trobe's share of students with an ATAR of 80+ increased from 7.1% to 12%
- The proportion of undergraduate courses and subjects below the 'low enrolment' threshold reduced from 4% to no more than 2% of UG courses and from 10.7% to no more than 5% of UG subjects

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
3.1 Provide engaging programs and activities for school-based and mature-age prospective students which encourage them to establish a relationship with La Trobe University and experience a high-quality learning environment	SDVC, Executive Deans, PVC (Regional)
3.2 Develop strong relationships with target schools in metropolitan and regional areas so that school staff and students are well informed about how La Trobe can prepare students who are work-ready, world-ready and future-ready	SDVC, Executive Deans, PVC (Regional)
3.3 Position La Trobe as university of first choice for school leavers because of the high-quality learning and student experience they can expect, including the development of work-readiness	SDVC, DVC(A), Executive Deans
3.4 Develop programs and extension opportunities for high-ability school students in target localities and in particular, Melbourne's north and regional Victoria, to engage them with La Trobe University and reinforce the value of high achievement in education as an investment for the future	SDVC, DVC(A), PVC (Regional), Executive Deans
3.5 Strengthen pathways to higher education through sustainable partnerships with TAFEs and other educational providers	SDVC, DVC(A), PVC(EPQ), PVC (Regional), Executive Deans
3.6 Build strong relationships with employers and communities to increase opportunities for graduate employment and provide feedback on market requirements	SDVC, DVC(A), PVC (Regional), Executive Deans
3.7 Research market need and develop new postgraduate courses tailored to specific market segments, particularly in professional areas where the qualification will assist promotional prospects	SDVC, DVC(A), Executive Deans
3.8 Improve brand awareness and positioning in key international markets and build the profile of La Trobe's regional campuses	SDVC, Executive Deans, PVC (Regional)
3.9 Research and evaluate the potential of new international markets for La Trobe through brand building and/or partnership arrangements	SDVC, Executive Deans
3.10 Work with donors and university partners to increase the number of scholarships available to support low SES students	SDVC, Executive Deans, PVC (EPQ), PVC (Regional)
3.11 Work closely with Indigenous communities to implement the Indigenous Participation Strategy, which includes building ongoing relationships with Indigenous communities and providing strong support for Indigenous staff and students at La Trobe	SDVC, DVC(A), Executive Deans, PVC (Regional)
3.12 Track undergraduate course and subject enrolments and prepare annual lists of those below the 'low enrolment' threshold for trend analysis and consideration of contributing factors.	SDVC, DVC(A), VP(A), Executive Deans

# Quality of learning and teaching



As La Trobe University grows and develops, course delivery, curriculum and the student experience must remain in clear sight to ensure high-quality learning outcomes.

The world of learning is changing rapidly – the University must be at the forefront of developments in pedagogy and support for students. Online and blended learning will be used to increase flexibility for study at a time and place to suit individual needs and to create new kinds of high-quality learning experiences. This will need to be underpinned by further development of the University's physical and online infrastructure.

Simultaneously, we are committed to an holistic approach to quality which recognises that learning outcomes reflect student

experience both within and beyond the classroom. A concerted focus on student retention, as well as academic success and achievement, demands even higher levels of integration between curriculum development, teaching delivery, and support services, than ever before.

The Design for Learning (DfL) project is an important foundation upon which the *Future Ready* strategy sits. DfL emphasised the importance of the first-year experience, and faculties have now dedicated additional resources to supporting commencing students through the critical transition period between school or other work/life experiences and university-level study. Students must get off to a good start at university and feel challenged and supported. Retention rates are important as indicators of the University's success in helping students to adjust to life at University and access the learning and social supports they need.

Through the DfL project, faculties have already developed cornerstone subjects at first-year level which give an indication of the student's capacity to build on this foundation and successfully complete subjects at higher levels. All subjects at La Trobe now have clearly elaborated Intended Learning Outcomes which ensure the development of graduate capabilities throughout the course. Learning will be consolidated through capstone subjects in final year, including an orientation to work or further study, which can also draw upon the curriculum or co-curriculum Learning Enrichment opportunities, contributing to work-readiness.

Our further aim is for students to leave La Trobe with capabilities that are highly relevant to the workforce and the needs of global communities. Our learning environment must provide rich and engaging opportunities for students to grow and develop, in the realm of co-curricular and curricular activities.

In turn, to ensure high-quality student learning, new teaching staff must be supported to develop the professional understanding and skills required to work effectively with a wide range of student preparedness for university, and diverse demands in delivery. Face-to-face and blended modes of delivery require familiarity with new technologies relevant to their disciplines, for example. For academic staff of longer standing, the capacity to engage in development to refresh approaches and to engage with innovation, is also important. For all staff, innovation and excellence in learning and teaching must be celebrated, rewarded and shared widely across the institution.

**'COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT AGES WITH DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES HAS REALLY ENRICHED MY TERTIARY EXPERIENCE.'**

Martin Dickens  
BA (Hons) student  
Albury-Wodonga Campus

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## **GOAL 4**

**BUILD UPON THE QUALITY AND RANGE OF CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES  
TO ENHANCE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT RETENTION**

**2017 Targets**

- Top 12 nationally in student retention and success in each Field of Education in which we offer degrees
- Top 12 nationally in 'overall student satisfaction' on the CEQ in each Field of Education in which we offer degrees
- 20% of La Trobe students undertaking an overseas mobility program as part of their degree
- Achieve student employment rates on the Graduate Destination Survey equivalent to levels at least twelfth nationally for each Field of Education in which we offer degrees.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
4.1 Engage students as partners in the development of strategies, programs and services that can enhance the student experience	DVC(A), VP(A), PVC(ESE), Executive Deans
4.2 Coordinate resources to improve the effectiveness of orientation and the first-year experience to ensure a successful start to university life	DVC(A), VP(A), Executive Deans
4.3 Provide academic preparation and ongoing academic support for all undergraduate and postgraduate students, including students with disabilities and domestic and international students from non-English speaking backgrounds	DVC(A), SDVC, VP(A), Executive Deans
4.4 Develop a seamless experience for students through integrated support provided by student service areas including timetabling, ICT and the Library	VP(A), DVC(A), Executive Deans
4.5 Collect and analyse student feedback data on subjects and teaching for the purposes of benchmarking and quality improvement	VP(A), DVC(A), Executive Deans
4.6 Collect and analyse data on the student experience at La Trobe and provide an institutional response that supports improvement	VP(A), DVC(A), Executive Deans
4.7 Enhance the University's international partnerships, promote the value of the Study Abroad experience to students, facilitate their participation through scholarships and other supports and provide support on their return to ensure learning from the experience is maximised	SDVC, DVC(A), Executive Deans
4.8 Implement curricular and co-curricular programs for student work-readiness.	DVC(A), Executive Deans

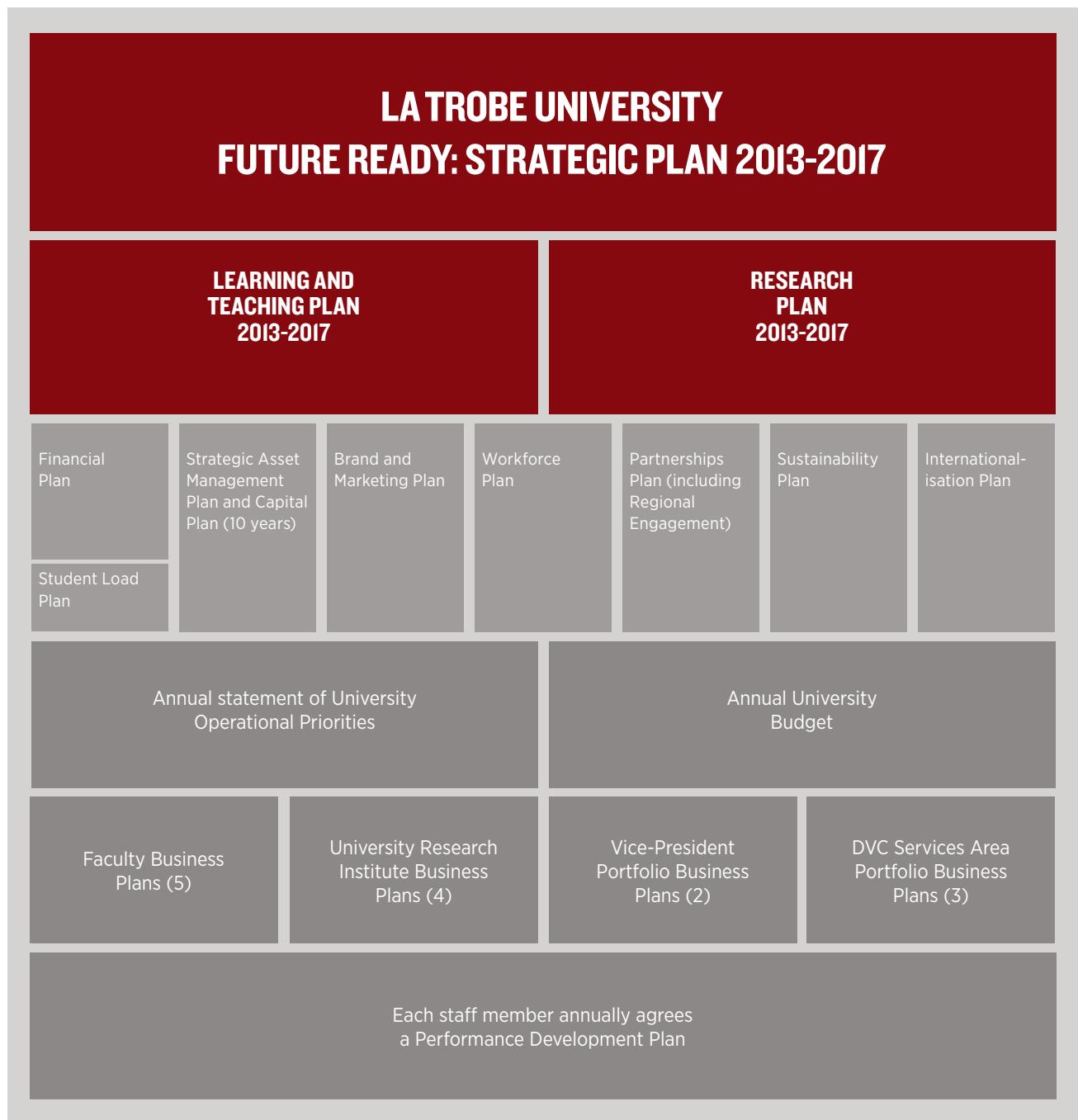
## **GOAL 5**

### **DEVELOP A UNIVERSITY CULTURE WHICH VALUES, RECOGNISES AND REWARDS HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING**

#### **2017 Targets**

- Two national teaching and learning grants and five national citations per annum to La Trobe University staff involved in learning and teaching
- All fixed-term and continuing staff complete at commencement the University's core professional development program on effective, research-based teaching and learning unless exempt through previous, recent professional development elsewhere
- All sessional staff are paid to complete minimum professional development requirements at commencement
- A robust Teaching Scholar career track is defined and populated across all faculties.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
5.1 Equip La Trobe staff to be well-informed about learning futures through comprehensive communications using a variety of media and technologies	DVC(A), PVC(FL), SDVC
5.2 Celebrate and encourage self-confidence and courage in learning and teaching by sharing stories of innovation through a renewed emphasis on teaching awards, grants and exemplars	DVC(A), Executive Deans
5.3 Enhance the teaching skills and practices of staff through effective induction, a relevant Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (GCHE) and professional development opportunities offered University-wide or by faculties, including OSP	DVC(A), Executive Deans
5.4 Develop a Teaching Scholar career track linked to academic promotion policy and procedures	DVC(A), Executive Deans
5.5 Facilitate workload planning to recognise and record involvement in learning and teaching activities by academic staff at La Trobe	DVC(A), Executive Deans
5.6 Provide professional development and support for academic staff to facilitate blended and online learning	DVC(A), PVC(FL), Executive Deans





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