



The EIT Strategic Plan 2010-2020

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Purpose: The purpose of the EIT Strategic Plan is to indicate the principles that will guide the development of the EIT during the period 2010 – 2020. As well as indicating the context in which the EIT will operate, it sets out the vision, the mission, the core values and principles, the competitive business advantage and the goals of the institution.

Scope: This Strategic Plan is relevant for all members of the EIT Governance Board and Academic Board and EIT staff

Overview: This Strategic Plan has been developed in the light of significant changes influencing the Higher Education sector in Australia which are particularly relevant to this institution as it seeks to bridge the divide between the vocational and higher education sector.

This document sets out a framework as to how the EIT plans to provide higher education courses in the field of engineering to mature age students through innovative distance learning technologies. Through these technologies the EIT plans to provide an experience equivalent to or even superior to that offered in a classroom. The EIT is developing this method of providing higher education courses because it is considerably more convenient and flexible for mature age students who are holding down a career and have other significant challenges in terms of personal commitments.



Essential Supporting Documents:

References: ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System:
<http://www.acpet.edu.au/industry-advocacy/higher-education-benchmarking>

Strategic Planning in Australian Universities by Don Anderson, Richard Johnson and Bruce Milligan (99/1, June 1999, Evaluations and Investigations Programme Higher Education Division from the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs).

Acknowledgement is made to the following universities for inspiration and use of parts of their strategic plans (accessed directly from their web sites):

- Australian Catholic University (Strategic Plan 2009 to 2011)
- University of Queensland Plan 2009 – 2013
- The University of Canberra's Thirty-nine Steps Strategic Plan 2008-2012
- The University of Adelaide Building a Great Research University Strategic Plan 2008-2012
- University of South Queensland Strategic Plan 2009 – 2013
- Strategic Plan University of South Australia Educating Professionals. Creating and applying knowledge. Engaging our communities.
- Murdoch University Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015

Related Documents:

- Policy on Benchmarking
- Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy

Introduction

The EIT Strategic Plan 2010-2020 is set out as follows:

1. Preface
2. Context
3. EIT Vision
4. EIT Mission
5. EIT Core Values
6. EIT Principal Community Contribution
7. EIT Competitive Business Advantage
6. Goals



- Goal 1: Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Goal 2: Excellence in Student Learning and Support Experiences
- Goal 3: Excellence in Management, Staff and Staffing Processes
- Goal 4: Excellence in Scholarship and Research
- Goal 5: Excellence in Academic Programs
- Goal 6: Excellence in Partnerships and Engagement with Industry
- Goal 7: Excellence in Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion
- Goal 8: Excellence in Financial Effectiveness and Security
- Goal 9: Excellence in Physical Facilities and Systems

1. Preface

Message from the Dean of Engineering

This Strategic Plan has been developed on the threshold of significant changes expected for the Higher Education sector in Australia which are expected to flow from the Bradley review, commissioned by the Commonwealth Government. The expected changes are particularly relevant to those institutions such as ours who are seeking to bridge the divide between the vocational and higher education sector.

The key strengths of the EIT are in the provision of engineering higher education courses to mature age students through innovative distance learning technologies (especially synchronous e-learning, remote and virtual labs). We believe that correct application of these technologies can provide an experience equivalent to or indeed (in some cases) superior to that of a classroom. In addition, this method of provision of courses is considerably more convenient and flexible for mature age students who are holding down a career and have other significant challenges in terms of personal commitments.

EIT has already built up an enviable track record with significant experience in the provision of high quality Advanced Diplomas and Diplomas to thousands of students throughout the world with glowing feedback on the quality of materials, method of instruction and the experience of lecturers.

In addition, based on developments particularly in the United States, we believe the increasing globalisation of education will have a significant impact on engineering and technology higher education in creating a far more competitive environment and it is thus vital that Australia has an equivalent institution.

The EIT Strategic Plan is underpinned by a significant consultation with all stakeholders in its preparation and I acknowledge the enormous contribution from current students, staff and consultants in its formulation.

I commend this Strategic Plan to you.

Steve Mackay PhD
Dean of Engineering



2. Context

The EIT has been founded on the pioneering work done by its sister institution, IDC Technologies, in providing engineering training to over 300,000 engineers, technologists and technicians throughout the world over the past twenty years.

As a Government Registered Training Organisation (RTO), the EIT has been established as a distance learning provider and has already built up an enviable track record with significant experience in the provision of high quality Vocational Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas and Certificate courses to thousands of students throughout the world with excellent feedback on the quality of materials, method of instruction and the experience and knowledge of its lecturers.

The current focus of the engineering education offered by the EIT is in the fields of electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, industrial automation, chemical engineering, industrial data communications and networking. To date, over 1200 students have attended these courses provided solely through distance learning (mainly using web and video conferencing software developed in-house) with highly experienced lecturers at locations throughout the world.

3. Mission

Our mission is to provide students throughout the world with measurable and significant productivity gains through cutting edge and applied engineering education ranging from the vocational to higher education areas.

4. Vision

By 2020, EIT will be internationally recognised for its distance learning education in the engineering and technology areas. We will draw students from throughout the world because of our reputation for engineering programs which meet the current needs of industry, government and the professions. Specifically:

- We will be ranked in the upper half of Australian universities in our education performance in engineering education.
- We will have 1900 full-time equivalent students drawn from throughout the world in a range of engineering degree courses.
- Our courses will be world renowned for the way they prepare engineering para-professionals and professionals through flexible distance learning for careers in demand.

5. EIT Core Values

The EIT's values are an intrinsic part of its culture. These values listed below give a sense of identity and a context for all its activities, including:

- Excellence and quality in all our endeavours
- Scholarly integrity and excellence
- Sustainability
- Respect for the individual, equity and social justice



- Free intellectual enquiry
- Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurial endeavour.

6. EIT Principal Community Contribution

We support Australia as a socially inclusive society, building Australia's engineering skills base with a focus on mature age students who need flexible, affordable education in the context of sustainability – on a regional, national and international basis. In operating on a global basis, with students drawn from vastly different nationalities, cultures and religions, we can significantly enhance the degree of understanding.

7. EIT Competitive Business Advantage

The EIT has a significant advantage in 2010 in terms of providing a high quality, flexible and affordable distance learning engineering experience to mature age students throughout the world using innovative e-learning and remote lab technologies with highly experienced lecturers drawn from industry. In addition, the EIT will offer easy articulation processes (and recognised prior learning provided with integrity and academic rigour) from existing (or partially completed) qualifications from other institutions, no matter whether they be at a university or community college/vocational level. Finally, with regard to the EIT's global footprint, international accreditation from a wide range of higher education accreditation bodies has been achieved, and will be expanded. This will thus help the international career mobility of all EIT graduates.

8. EIT Goals

Objectives, which are both qualitative and quantitative, have been listed under each of the nine goals set out below.

Goal 1: To encourage excellence in Learning and Teaching

Rationale

The first goal is to provide a high quality student-centred learning experience characterised by an emphasis on flexibility, a professional engineering career and encouraging lifelong learning, critical enquiry and best practice.

In the context of the traditional distance learning approaches, the learning and teaching provided by the EIT can be considered to be somewhat more challenging. However, based on highly interactive synchronous e-learning as a core, supplemented by asynchronous e-learning and hands-on remote laboratories, the learning experience can indeed be at least equivalent to or considerably better than a traditional classroom experience. The use of distance learning fits in well with the mature age student requirements as well as those from a disadvantaged background.

To encourage excellence in Learning and Teaching Objectives

Objective 1: Provide a great student experience, appropriate to the age, stage, background and circumstances of a diverse student population.



- Objective 2: Achieve measurable improvement in students' reaction surveys (for both course and teaching) on a year-on-year basis.
- Objective 3: Demonstrate students' enhanced academic skills.
- Objective 4: Achieve a sustainable and measurable quality improvement of teaching performance.
- Objective 5: Provide additional training to optimise use of the new web and video conferencing (and other distance learning) technologies and ensure all staff and students achieve a measurable standard of familiarity and confidence.

Key Performance Indicators

1. When was the last time the institution undertook a student satisfaction survey?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking Point 5.4.

2. How does the institution use the findings from student satisfaction surveys to improve teaching and learning outcomes for students?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 5.6.

3. What is the student pass rate?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 5.1.

Goal 2: To encourage excellence in Student Learning and Support Experiences

Rationale

EIT students have growing pressures due to increased workload, time constraints and personal challenges as most are studying part-time while employed. This is further complicated by the provision of distance learning on an international basis with different time zones. Taking these issues into account, the EIT's advantage is based on providing a high quality experience to all of its students no matter where they are located in the world and what their individual circumstances are. The ongoing challenge is for EIT to continue to be flexible and responsive to all students.

The distance learning environment can be a lonely experience and there are major challenges in creating a supportive bond between students, their peers and the lecturer. However, with the availability of the latest internet web and video conferencing technologies, close and enduring linkages can be built between students and lecturers and support can be provided to both.

Students undertaking the EIT's range of Vocational Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas should be encouraged to articulate their qualifications into the higher education area.

To encourage excellence in Student Learning and Support Experience

Objectives

- Objective 1: Increase student retention and satisfaction as measured by annual surveys.
- Objective 2: Promote recruitment of mature age students, both Australian and international, who have at least a few years of work experience, are academically strong, suitable for entry to the engineering profession and who align well with the mission and values of the EIT.



- Objective 3: Develop a strong, enduring and beneficial relationship with the alumni of the EIT no matter where they are located.
- Objective 4: Optimise personal contact between lecturers and students especially using phone, email, web and video conferencing and encourage all staff to see pastoral care as a primary responsibility.
- Objective 5: Offer academic and career counseling to all students
- Objective 6: Offer students an easy route to articulate from the vocational courses into the higher education programs.

Key Performance Indicators

1. What services are in place to ensure students receive a positive learning experience?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 5.7

2. Does the Institution being benchmarked have a published student grievance policy?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 3.6.

3. Do students have input into this policy (Student grievance)?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Key Performance Indicator 3.6a

Describe the Institution's processes ensure there are well maintained facilities and infrastructure for effective student learning?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Key performance Indicator 5.2.

Goal 3: To encourage excellence in Management, Staff and Staffing Processes

Rationale

A key attribute of the EIT's success is in recruiting and retaining high quality experienced staff. The staff cohort are mainly part-time professional engineers working in industry and there will be special challenges in this situation, especially in terms of lectures presented after hours with sometimes challenging time zones issues being confronted by both staff and students.

Improving staff recruitment and retention strategies, supporting a work life balance through flexible working arrangements, career development and effective leadership and management by the EIT are all vital factors in improving on the existing staff profile. Finally, achieving equitable participation for women as engineering lecturers is a challenging but critical objective in a male dominated profession.

To encourage excellence in Management, Staff and Staffing Processes Objectives

- Objective 1: Work on ensuring that all staff have strong empathy with, and commitment to, the objects of the EIT.
- Objective 2: Recognise that EIT lecturers are mainly part time with their own work related pressures and ensure seamless and adequate support with alternative high quality staff.
- Objective 3: Encourage great leadership in management and nurture a great work environment which attracts, engages and retains excellent, entrepreneurial, experienced, industry involved and diverse staff who are



- committed to higher education and research in a collegial but geographically scattered environment.
- Objective 4: Give priority to teaching quality in academic staff recruitment and promotion.
- Objective 5: Recognise and reward excellence in teaching and professional training.
- Objective 6: Provide professional and personal development and further education opportunities for academic and administrative staff to enable them to enhance their career oriented skills.
- Objective 7: Maintain a clear scheme for the performance development and review of all staff, designed to promote career development and reward high achievement.
- Objective 8: Increase the research degree qualifications of academic staff on a measurable annual basis.
- Objective 9: Draw on the extensive industry experience of lecturers to enhance the learning experience and career opportunities of EIT students.

Key Performance Indicators

1. What strategies are in place to enhance teaching quality and other aspects of staff performance (including sessional staff)?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Key Performance Indicator 4.1

2. What percentage of the institution's Higher Education academic staff have a postgraduate qualification?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Key Performance Indicator 4.2

3. When was the last time the institution undertook a staff satisfaction survey?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Key Performance Indicator 4.3

4. From the findings of your staff satisfaction research, please respond to the following statement: The institution has a strong level of staff satisfaction.

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Key Performance Indicator 4.4.

5. How does your institution use the findings from staff satisfaction surveys to improve teaching and learning outcomes for students?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Key Performance Indicator 4.5.

Goal 4: To encourage excellence in Scholarship and Research

Rationale

Whilst teaching is the primary focus of the EIT, with such an enormous resource of students ranging in levels from vocational diplomas to master degrees, research (and in the case of the EIT applied research) should not be neglected as it is a key attribute of a university level education. A core focus of the EIT has been in researching and developing remote labs and web and video conferencing software and it is expected that this work should be accelerated in future.

To encourage excellence in Scholarship and Research Objectives

- Objective 1: Encourage a culture of scholarship among all academic staff with a focus on applied contemporary knowledge and skill in engineering.



- Objective 2: Support existing staff in research studies in engineering distance learning especially in technologies related to web and video conferencing, remote and virtual laboratories.
- Objective 3: Undertake to submit at least two major applications per annum for Research and Development grants from the Commonwealth government (eg. Ausindustry) and corporations.
- Objective 4: Encourage and support academic staff to publish regularly the outcomes of their scholarship and research in scholarly journals, books and other means and to financially reward staff appropriately.
- Objective 5: Encourage (and financially support staff to present at the regular conferences held by our sister company, IDC Technologies, where they can mix with their peers in an industry intense environment.
- Objective 6: Develop an academic milieu within EIT which supports academic freedom and a spirit of enquiry and intellectual challenge.

Goal 5: To encourage excellence in Academic Programs

Rationale

The rapid change in engineering and computer technology places significant strain on providing up to date resources and job-ready graduates. It is thus critical that the EIT works closely with industry and its industry experienced and active lecturers to ensure that materials are kept up to date. There is a huge amount of data that comes from the presentation of courses to students which needs to be assessed for integrity and then managed by the publishing department into the updating of existing materials. This will thus require a significant investment in updating and publishing new materials on an almost monthly basis.

Perhaps in contrast to other universities focusing on younger, less work experienced students, the EIT is also fortunate to have students who are generally working in industry and who can give valuable feedback. It is also important for the EIT to devote resources to researching, talking to industry and identifying new topics and courses which need to be created to ensure its students are skilled and made knowledgeable in courses that are in demand.

As EIT courses are presented on a worldwide basis with differing local standards, care has to be taken to cover all the local standards effectively without compromising the integrity of the academic programs. Another feature of many practising engineering professionals is that they work on an international basis and the materials provided to them need to address this need.

To encourage excellence in Academic Programs Objectives

- Objective 1: Achieve a sustainable and measurable quality improvement of the EIT curricula.
- Objective 2: Offer academic programs at pre-university, undergraduate and graduate levels which are highly regarded within the engineering profession.
- Objective 3: Update academic programs on a six monthly basis to ensure they are state-of-the-art and distinguished by their high quality and practical applied nature.



Objective 4: Apply resources to researching new course topics and updating existing course materials.

Key Performance Indicators

1. What arrangements are in place to ensure the institution meets the principles of the academic governance and quality assurance protocols relating to the national protocols for Higher Education? This includes processes that are designed to strengthen academic arrangements.

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 3.1

2. Does the Academic Board (or equivalent) formally report to the Governing board?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 3.2.

3. If yes, how often does the Academic Board (or equivalent) formally report to the Governing body?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 3.3

4. Describe the process the Academic Board uses to formally report to the Governing Board.

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 3.4

5. Is the Academic Governance Structure published on the website of the institution being benchmarked?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 3.5.

6. Describe the measures the institution has in place to prevent and detect cheating and plagiarism amongst students. Are incidence of these dealt with appropriately?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 5.3.

Goal 6: To encourage excellence in Partnerships and Engagement with Industry

Rationale

The EIT needs to ensure that all its graduates are in demand by industry and commerce. This requires close collaboration, partnerships and linkages with industry to identify trends and to take prompt corrective action where required. The EIT is fortunate in that many of the lecturers are working professionals in industry and this provides an excellent avenue to capitalise on this resource.

To encourage excellence in Partnerships and Engagement with Industry Objectives

Objective 1: Engage through various means, including recourse to the Academic Board, in regular consultation with the engineering profession in the key industrial countries, industry and employers to ensure courses and units meet the highest possible standards of professional accreditation and are career focused.

Objective 2: Ensure that all courses promote the recognition, understanding and development of ethical professional behaviour.

Objective 3: Emphasise work experience and industry ready approaches to course design, content and implementation.



- Objective 4: Support and promote the quality and availability of substantial industry involvement in course projects.
- Objective 5: Contribute to strengthening the national economy through appropriate high levels of engineering skills, knowledge and research by working closely with industry and government.

Goal 7: To encourage excellence in Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion

Rationale

The EIT draws students from throughout the world with significant differences in nationality, culture and religion. If not used correctly, distance learning can create barriers between students and staff. Hence it is vital to broaden equitable participation by students and staff and to encourage the development of a culture that values diversity, multiculturalism and social inclusiveness. In addition, students using distance learning are often drawn from some of the poorer countries (such as those in Africa and Asia) who have significant challenges. It is thus vital to provide them with the necessary support to make them feel included in the EIT community.

There is a significant under-representation of indigenous Australians (especially those in remote communities) in engineering and science programs, and it is vital to increase the enrolment in these areas. This is where the distance learning element can be coupled together with the EIT's strong offerings in diplomas and advanced diplomas can be useful (for example, to help towards articulation into higher level degrees). The EIT bridging programs in maths, physics and chemistry, which are provided at below cost, can also be of value to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who lack these educational foundations.

To encourage excellence in Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion Objectives

- Objective 1: Promote the development of interactive communities in each course using web and video conferencing, email, phone and the learning management systems.
- Objective 2: Ensure that the EIT is free from discrimination of all kinds, and that it is a place of acceptance and understanding especially in a global context.
- Objective 3: Support international students and encourage their integration into EIT activities.
- Objective 4: Provide financial support for students, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, with supportive repayment schemes over the duration of their courses.
- Objective 5: Support Indigenous Australians and those from other disadvantaged communities in engineering education by providing programs commencing at lower levels that can easily articulate into higher education programs and by offering scholarships to self-funded students.
- Objective 6: Ensure that all courses promote the recognition, understanding and development of ethical, moral and professional behaviour.
- Objective 7: Encourage the development of a democratic, equitable and civilised society.
- Objective 8: Arm the community with social, cultural and international knowledge, skills and attitudes to improve the quality of life of all citizens.



Goal 8: To encourage excellence in Financial Effectiveness and Security

Rationale

Over the past two years, there have been some destabilising events occurring in the financial arena, necessitating educational institutions to take tighter control of their finances and to manage their financial risk more effectively. In addition, the higher education environment has been characterised by increasing competition and deregulation on a global scale since the beginning of the twenty first century.

It is thus important that the EIT has a strong and secure financial base, that it operates in surplus, that all courses are viable and sustainable and that it has the resources to support the recruitment and retention of an excellent student and staff body.

In addition, with the more challenging financial conditions impacting on students, it is vital to provide outstanding value for fees paid by students and the funds they provide to support teaching, scholarship, research, professional training and career guidance for students. This requires that overheads are minimised and to ensure a careful balance to keep the surplus to a reasonable level based on a moderate return on funds invested.

To encourage excellence in Financial Effectiveness and Security Objectives

- Objective 1: Ensure the EIT has a small sustainable surplus with no borrowings and resources in order to survive any short term financial shocks, such as a 40% collapse in overall student numbers.
- Objective 2: Ensure that the student fees provide the best value for money for courses offered against those offered by any other Australian university, based on student contact hours.
- Objective 3: Manage the annual surplus to be equivalent to a return on investment which is 40% lower than that from the lowest cost university in Australia (in terms of total real student fees charged).
- Objective 4: By 2020, using a 20% growth rate, achieve an enrolment base of approximately 1500 students (300 enrolled in associate degrees, 300 enrolled in bachelor of engineering degrees, 400 enrolled in bachelor of engineering technology degrees, 400 undertaking master degrees and 100 enrolled in doctoral studies).
- Objective 5: Improve the EIT marketing processes and impact (through means of direct mail, web, email and word of mouth) to generate an additional 40% of enquiries for courses per annum.

Goal 9: To encourage excellence in Physical Facilities and Systems

Rationale

Although students may not often visit the EIT's local facilities in Western Australia due to the provision of distance learning, well managed, reliable and high quality facilities, equipment and software are critical to the success of this endeavour. This is perhaps a challenge that will not be as obvious at a residential university with regard to items such as offices, lecture rooms, equipment, web conferencing software, broadband internet connections and laboratory equipment.



Similarly, the administrative systems based on software should be streamlined to be simple, effective and will minimise the waste of paper and will operate flawlessly on a multitude of different computer systems throughout the world.

With the climate change issue at the forefront of all physical infrastructure planning, it is vital that our overall operations are carbon neutral and clearly demonstrate sustainability. This strategy is helped by our use of distance learning and web conferencing, which necessitates considerably lower levels of travel for students and minimal power and water usage when compared with those for a traditional university campus.

To encourage excellence in Physical Facilities and Systems Objectives

- Objective 1: Develop outstanding campus facilities in West Perth which are functional, appealing and reflect well on the mission and vision of the EIT.
- Objective 2: Ensure that the provision of broadband infrastructure operates 24x7 with minimal risk of failure, with dual redundant systems and alternative delivery systems and is available outside Australia in case of massive internet failure within Australia.
- Objective 3: Manage software systems, including web conferencing and learning management systems, that are reliable and secure at all times.
- Objective 4: Ensure the support software systems for students, including the Learning Management System are up to date, effective, secure and user-friendly and in operation 24x7.
- Objective 5: Provide round the clock support to students in cases of computer and equipment problems no matter what the cause.
- Objective 6: Streamline procedures and cost structures, making full use of information technologies that eliminate paper transactions wherever possible.
- Objective 7: Provide quick and extensive support for students, their computer hardware, software and internet connections to minimise frustration.
- Objective 8: Install a carbon neutral operation throughout the EIT West Perth campus and all other offices throughout the world by 2015.

Key Performance Indicator

1. What services are in place to ensure students receive a positive learning experience?

ACPET Higher Education Benchmarking System Point 5.7