



The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers
in higher education

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Examples from Australian universities

Encouraging Students to Undertake Honours and PhD Research

Associate Professor Andrew Shalliker
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Broad discipline area:

Natural and Physical Sciences

- Chemistry

Year level:

- Second and third year undergraduate

TRN strategy:

- Encouraging students to feel part of the research culture of departments

Teaching and learning context:

- Mentoring of individual students

Brief description of the initiative:

This academic builds up a pool of research students who go on to undertake PhDs using a structured strategy, starting at second year, for attracting high quality research students to his projects. During lectures at second year level, he introduces his research, in part, to spark the interest of students who may want to pursue research in his area of expertise. At the end of second year, this lecturer sends a letter to selected students to:

- congratulate the student on his/her results
- introduce the student to the research environment of the Department by telling them about:
 - the Honours year project and the requirements to qualify for Honours
 - his research interests and current projects and other research currently being conducted in the Department
 - strategies for selecting a potential Honour supervisor (for example, examining the publication record of research active staff)

When these students are in their third year, this academic invites them to meet with him to discuss their research interests and hear more about his research so the students can determine if they would be interested in undertaking a research project with him. This academic also tries to involve these selected third year students in the research environment of the Faculty by inviting them to attend meetings with postgraduate

students, to observe the activities the postgraduate students undertake and possibly to carry out a small-scale research project.

This academic limits the number of Honours students he supervises to no more than two at a time. This enables him to devote time to their projects and leads to high-level outcomes. He attributes the fact that most of his Honours students go on to a PhD under his supervision, providing him with a continual flow of PhD students working on his research projects, to this close supervision and mentoring.

For further details:

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