



The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers
in higher education

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Examples from Australian universities

Students Undertaking Commercial Projects during a Popular Music Program

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Broad discipline area:

Creative Arts

- Popular Music

Year level:

- All undergraduate years

TRN strategy:

- Linking research, community/industry engagement and teaching
- Designing learning activities around contemporary research issues
- Lecturer/student co-production of knowledge

Teaching and learning context:

- Community-based project

Brief description of the initiative:

The *Popular Music Production* course studied in each of the six semesters of the Bachelor of Popular Music program [see also Popular Music 1 & Popular Music 2] has 90 students across the three year levels. Students engage in an authentic environment where they discover new ways of writing and producing music in collaboration with industry practitioners. In a creative sense, this is a means of discovering new knowledge. Some examples of student learning activities in this setting include:

- A range of music industry practitioners give presentations on their areas of expertise and several classes are devoted to assisting students in the commercialisation of their music and the development of their careers.
- Students work for industry clients who usually want their project to sound like a particular artist or specific song. Students need to listen to recordings of these reference points and decide what will be needed technically to support the desired artistic result. This is a form of research in the music industry. In some cases, this research extends to include relevant academic, trade or popular literature (for example, interviews with record producers and

engineers about how recordings were made) regarding participants in the reference recordings. A formal work-integrated-learning structure for the recording collaborations between staff and students is under development.

- Students and graduates work as assistants in the commercial recording projects of sessional lecturers, with their professional input appropriately acknowledged. While students have the option of substituting approved work-integrated learning activities and commercial projects for elements of the portfolio of recorded work, these projects are intended as commercial projects designed to result in publication of the song or the recording.

These activities are examples of several aspects of the TRN:

- A staff/student learning community is established. Students interact with lecturers as colleagues rather than authority figures in this context.
- Students are inducted into the decision-making, investigative, and self-development processes of the discipline/field. These ‘real life’ activities expose students to the expectations of the professional recording industry and have an authenticity that is difficult to achieve through normal coursework.
- Industry links and engagement enhance students’ employability by providing networking opportunities and job contacts.

For further details:

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