Design the Future: New Ways of Learning
Expressions of Interest for Multidisciplinary Project Based Learning 2006

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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Background
Key elements of the strategic plan, RMIT2010: Designing the Future, include developing new ways of learning and working, defining and strengthening areas for research focus and engaging with industry. The Design Project is currently looking at new ways of learning and engaging with industry in design.

To support this, the University will construct the RMIT Design Hub on the former CUB site. The Design Hub will be a collaborative environment for design teams from RMIT and industry to work together to innovate by design. It will be the place where disciplines, researchers, educators and industry practitioners and professionals collaborate and converge, creating a permeable boundary between RMIT and industry. The facility will contain project studios, advanced physical and virtual prototyping equipment and workshops, advanced design support tools, electronic and hardcopy resources, collaborative learning studios, seminar and exhibition space. The Design Hub is scheduled for completion in late 2009.

The Design Hub will provide a space for multidisciplinary student teams in studio projects to work with industry and researchers. This will not only allow students to make a contribution to industry while studying but also prepare graduates to be able to work in multidisciplinary teams. Design students will have a deep understanding of their discipline and a breadth of knowledge in business, social science, science and technology. Students in business, social science, science and technology-related disciplines will have a better understanding and appreciation of the value design and develop their creative abilities.
Multi-Disciplinary Project Based Learning

As part of this initiative, expressions of interest are sought from program and course coordinators for funding support to assist in the development and delivery of multidisciplinary project based learning for undergraduate higher education and VET students for Semester 1, 2007. Proposals should bring together students from a diverse set of disciplines, from all three portfolios, to work together on design-related projects. These projects may relate to the design of constructed environments, products and/or services. The proposal should also focus on the learning-industry-research nexus. This strategic initiative is intended to explore new ways of working and learning and establish models for multidisciplinary project based learning that can continue into the future.

The student projects will be showcased at the end of semester within the research exhibition spaces currently being developed on the ground floor of Building 91. Student teams will have access to the facilities and expertise of I-Cubed available.

Strategic Funding

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) has made a total of $100,000 strategic funding available by to support the development, delivery, dissemination and evaluation of the successful proposal/s. The number of proposals that receive funding support will be determined by the nature and quality of proposals received (up to four proposals will receive funding; large projects are encouraged to apply). Funding may be used for, but not limited to the following:

- Support for developing projects and multidisciplinary assessment models and methods
- Materials and equipment
- Support in delivering and coordinating the project
- Support in evaluating the project and disseminating the outcomes
- Teaching support and teaching buy-out

Proposals should include the amount of funding required and a break down of how this will be used.

Project guidelines

Who may apply?

- Teams of program or course coordinators may apply

What Students?

- Projects should involve students teams from across all three portfolios
- Dual sector proposals will be well considered

What kind of projects?

- Proposals should be linked to industry and/or the community and, where possible, have an external partner and should be focussed on a significant issue of state, national or international importance.
- The proposal must demonstrate how in the course of the project students will be exposed to state of the art discourse on innovation, design management and the role of design and creativity as a drive of economic growth and community development
Proposals may involve multiple student teams working concurrently on the same project (preferably from a different angle). Proposals may also involve multiple teams working on different projects, in this case projects should be connected by a common theme or be parts of a larger integrated project.

What approach could you take?

- Include details of the learning activities or “the new ways of learning” being proposed. This may build on current best practice from within RMIT or elsewhere.

- The structure should be such that students can be enrolled for credit while working on the project. Students from different disciplines can enrol in different courses and work on the same project.

- Include details of the broad learning objectives and assessment. Students from different disciplines may be assessed against different criteria as appropriate to their discipline and their level.

- The proposal may be integrated with an existing campaign, competition, Biennale or conference etc. Proposals that include showcasing of the outcomes will be well considered.

Please include brief details of how you will “operationalise” and administer your proposal:

- What course/s will students enrol in?
- How many of students would you expect?
- How would you run the projects?

Space & Resources

- Proposals should use the virtual reality and decision support equipment and the expertise available within the I-Cubed facility. Please contact Sean Hart - sean.hart@rmit.edu.au or extension 53090 - to discuss how it may be possible to utilise this facility and expertise.

- A limited amount of studio and office space has been identified. The use of this space will be negotiated with successful applicants.

- Please include details of other resources that would be required.

Project Evaluation, Dissemination and Research Outcomes

- Proposals should also contain details of how the experience will be evaluated. Evaluations should consider the learning outcomes and the outcomes for the community and industry. Appropriate data and observations should be collected throughout the semester to provide for an effective evaluation.

- A dissemination plan should be included, focussing on communicating the outcomes to the RMIT community. This dissemination plan should include a brief case study that can be included on the RMIT Teaching and Learning website and incorporated into a presentation and/or poster.

- The proposal should lead to research publications (related to teaching and learning and/or the project outcomes).

Due date

Proposals should be submitted to Josh Humphries (josh.humphries@rmit.edu.au) no later than 6 November 2006. Successful applicants will be notified by 1 December 2006.

For further information please contact
Josh Humphries: josh.humphries@rmit.edu.au or extension: 59526 (unavailable 31 August - 26 September) or Leon van Schaik: leon.vanschaik@rmit.edu.au or extension: 52002
Example Student Project: Olympic Village 2016

This fictional example is intended only to illustrate the kind of project/s that may be proposed for students to work on.

Melbourne is bidding to host a major international event in eight years time. As part of its submission it wishes to develop state of the art accommodation for participants, who will need a secure environment for a period of several weeks leading up to the event. To succeed the bid needs to demonstrate new thinking on policies for sustainable development, including public transport systems, recycling systems, life cycle analysis, and a range of innovations in design. The aim is to demonstrate an advance of the Olympic bids made by London, and to draw on the experiences of the commonwealth games, showing how Victoria will use the event to transform its and urban and regional environment for the future. Industry partners could include developers, sporting and cultural organizations, other NGOs and state and local governments.

New ways of learning:

In this example, students from disciplines in all three portfolios, such as business, social sciences, art, new and creative media, architecture, industrial design, engineering, planning and construction could come together to work in multidisciplinary teams. Students from each discipline would enrol in an existing studio or project based course in their program but work together in multidisciplinary teams on the project/s. Each multidisciplinary team could work on different elements of the village, such as transport, housing, commercial and educational infrastructure etc.

It is important that each student’s contribution to the project be founded in their discipline. A team member from social science could undertake relevant social research and public policy analysis. Business students could contribute economic and financial insights and analysis. Engineering, construction and industrial design students could design infrastructure and services. Architecture, landscape designers, urban designers and planning students could research and design the urban and constructed environments.

In one possible ‘new way of learning’, students could be supported by an initial intensive workshop bringing together champions of new development processes in many fields. A series of subsequent workshops at the beginning of the semester could provide information on the project, developing techniques and frameworks for running project teams and for providing information and developing discipline knowledge required for the project. These workshops could include engagement with industry partners and knowledge area experts.

Student teams could then work throughout the semester in the studio/project space with specific times set aside to work with project mentors. The students would also have access to the facilities of I-Cubed. Half way through the semester students would present their overall concepts to their peers, industry partners and the mentors for feedback.

At the end of semester the students would present their final project outcomes to their peers, industry partners and friends in a more formal presentation. This presentation would be supported by an exhibition that will be on display for several months.

Students could be assessed in their own discipline areas on a combination of overall project and group outcomes and discipline-specific assessment. This discipline specific assessment may be based on reflective work that demonstrates the contribution to the project based on the individual students discipline and attainment of discipline specific learning objectives.