COMMITTEE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

FINAL REPORT ON UNIVERSITY TEACHING DEVELOPMENT GRANT

CALT intends its reporting processes to be as simple as possible but sufficiently detailed to ensure that the findings of the research and development work undertaken can be used to maximum effect in improving the learning of students. CALT expects that the project will produce a demonstrated improvement in student learning outcomes and a publication related to the project in a discipline related education journal or general higher education journal. CALT accepts that if either of these has been achieved in full then the amount of additional reporting required should be minimal. If neither have been achieved a full report is required.

Your Final Report should consist of both electronic and paper copies of, in order of preference;

a) a paper accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal or peer-reviewed conference proceedings that relates directly to the project (assuming that the paper does address issues of learning and teaching associated with the project). In addition please provide a synopsis of your project for the CALT web-site - no more than 200 words, and attach a copy of the final statement for the Activity Centre set up for your Grant.

b) an evaluative report on the impact of the innovation or development on student learning (including a description of the innovation, and an evaluation of impact based on student perceptions, self-review, and peer or expert review). Examples of such reports are available from Academic Developers in HEDC. In addition please provide a synopsis of your project for the CALT web-site - no more than 200 words, and attach a copy of the final statement for the Activity Centre set up for your Grant.

c) the completed CALT report template provided below; please update CALT as outcomes of the project become available. Reports and related documentation will be made available to the University in HEDC's Resources Room.

In addition, all CALT grant recipients are strongly encouraged to further disseminate their results. They may write an article for Akoranga http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/resources/Akoranga.html and present a departmental seminar. Recipients will also be contacted by HEDC and supported to prepare a Case Study to annotate the University's Teaching and Learning Plan.

Name: Nell Smith and Rachel Spronken-Smith

Department: HEDC

Title of Project (as on application)**: The doctoral research journey: Understanding attrition on the way to completion**

Date on letter notifying award of grant: December 2010

General progress report (approximately 200 words)**:**
Please include here an indication of the degree to which the project is completed. If some outputs (such as research papers) are in progress, please give an indication of when they will become available.

As noted in an earlier progress report, after a general review of the doctoral completion literature the focus of this review narrowed to: furthering understanding of the pre-entry personal characteristics of on-time and early doctoral completers. A literature review based on this is now being finalised for submission to a higher education journal (HERD). This process has been delayed slightly due to a re-location and illness, however, I am now in a great position to be able to complete this work.

Specific objectives achieved and any notable successes:

The literature review is being finalised for journal submission**.**
Review findings and recommendations will be presented to the Student Learning Centre and Graduate Research Services.

Specific objectives not achieved (plus a brief statement of the reasons):
N/A

Student groups directly involved in the project or whose learning might indirectly benefit from the project:
There were no students directly involved in the project, however, it is intended that the literature review produced will inform postgraduate discussion, policy and practice at the University of Otago and beyond.

Details of publications arising from the research (e.g. papers submitted, in press and/or published)**:**
Reports, papers and related documentation will be made available to the University in HEDC's Resources Room **so it is important that they are forwarded to CALT**. In addition, all CALT grant recipients are strongly encouraged to further disseminate their results. They may write an article for Akoranga http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/resources/Akoranga.html and present a departmental seminar. In addition, recipients will be contacted by HEDC and supported to prepare a Case Study to annotate the University's Teaching and Learning Plan.

A paper by the authors to be submitted to HERD.
The review and recommendations will be made available to relevant people in the postgraduate community at Otago.

Financial information:

Please attach a copy of the final statement for the Activity Centre set up for your Grant. The statement will be sufficient information for this section, provided that you explain any variation from the original conditions of your grant. If your project was supported by additional funding from other sources please describe.

Summary:
Please include here a synopsis of your project for the CALT web-site - no more than 200 words. Please include any evaluative reflections you have, and any hyperlinks to further information on the project.

Furthering understanding of the pre-entry personal characteristics of early and on-time PhD completers

The past decade or so has seen a growth in research in the area of doctoral completion, persistence and attrition with a focus on the three corners of what has been described as the Completion Triangle (Jiranek 2010). The triangle consists of 1) the personal situation of the student, 2) the nature and quality of supervision, and 3) the resources and facilities available. To date there appears to have been some reluctance to place too much emphasis on pre-entry characteristics, especially those non-demographic student variables that are not necessarily easy to measure. Non-cognitive pre-entry characteristics are those of the individual – the student – and there is an argument that putting too much attention here can imply that later when the student "drops out" it is these personal or psychological characteristics, rather than candidature or institutional characteristics, that are to blame. This literature review however turns this argument around with a focus on the personal pre-entry characteristics of early or on-time PhD completers. Did these students have some pre-entry characteristics that could possibly be identified and of use to those involved in selecting and supporting doctoral students? This focus on personal candidate variables is considered to be a relatively new direction in doctoral completion research, and it is to this that this review will contribute (Bair and Haworth 2004). The overall aim of this review is to further understanding of the complex doctoral journey and to better support doctoral students to achieve a positive result.

Signature:

Date:

Please return to Ruth Taylor by email and in paper form no later than 31 December 2012.