

Master of Education (Student Wellbeing)

1. Background

It is proposed that the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing) replace the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Student Welfare) in the Faculty of Education. Research on the impact of student social and emotional wellbeing on educational outcomes and education's role in promoting student wellbeing has expanded over the last three decades. The new program will incorporate advances in knowledge and practice in the field and meet teacher demand and qualification for study at Masters level.

The proposed course replaces the PGDES (SW). It is now timely and essential to reposition this course at masters level. As with the PGDES (SW) the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing) is designed for all teachers at all levels in all systems of education. Educational systems are encouraging teachers to engage in ongoing professional development and the preferred qualification for systems and practising teachers is masters level study. With significant advances in the field of student social and emotional wellbeing a substantial and coherent program can be offered at Masters level. The original course has had an ongoing intake of teachers from all systems since 1981. Feedback from graduates and prospective students suggests that the continuation of a course in this field with CSP assistance is critical as completion of the qualification does not provide additional remuneration in current teaching awards.

The PGDES(SW) has attracted both CSP and sponsored Australian fee paying students. In 1999 the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria(CECV) recognised the alignment of this course with their objectives for the promotion of student wellbeing. The CECV has subsequently sponsored over 700 students to enrol in the PGDES(SW), including an intake of 90 students in 2005. This unparalleled systemic professional development initiative acknowledged the ability of accredited training to support systemic initiatives in the the promotion of student wellbeing. The accredited training component of the CECV strategy has also been complemented by research confirming the positive impact of this professional development strategy through a SPIRT grant partnership between the University and the CECV. The strong relationship with this system continues and the sponsorship of a further cohort is currently being negotiated. The current proposal, however, has been developed to address the needs of educators from all systems not only those enrolling under the current CECV sponsorship program which has a progressively reducing limit on available funds.

The PGDES(SW), on which the present Masters proposal is based, has been unique in its coherent framework for understanding the centrality of student wellbeing to positive educational and mental health outcomes and the role of education and the teacher in student wellbeing. The conceptual framework for the original program was in advance of other developments in this field and rests on a multidisciplinary base. In 2005 the Catholic Education Office Melbourne have combined with Faculty of Education staff to submit a Linkage Grant application which, if successful, will increase the nexus between research and teaching in the area of student wellbeing and has the potential to again contribute to national and international best practice. With the development of a master level program there are now opportunities to build an even stronger link between training and research and other institutions and researchers nationally and internationally.

2. Entry Requirements

1. The Selection Committee will evaluate the applicant's ability to pursue this course successfully using the following criteria:
 - an honours degree in Education and at least one year of documented, relevant work experience; or
 - a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma in the field of Education and at least one year of documented, relevant, work experience; or
 - a four year degree in a relevant area and at least two years of documented, relevant, work experience.

2. The Selection Committee may conduct interviews and tests and call for referee reports and employer references to elucidate any of the matters referred to above.

3. Course/Program Structure

To qualify for the award in the 100 points Master of Education (Student Wellbeing) 5 compulsory subjects must be undertaken.

Subjects

First Year

Semester 1

Student Wellbeing Context & Frameworks	12.5
Counselling in Educational Settings 1	12.5

Semester 2

Counselling in Educational Settings 2	25
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Second Year

Semester 1

Student Wellbeing Process & Partnerships	25
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Semester 2

Research Project in Student Wellbeing	25
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Total 100 points

4. Availability of course

The course will be available to Commonwealth supported and fee-paying Australian students on a part time basis from Semester 1, 2006.