

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## *Practise what we preach, says leadership study*

Leaders need to be treated like students, according to a recent study of higher education leaders from around the country.

The Learning Leaders in Times of Change survey, funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, is a joint project of the Australian Council for Educational Research and the University of Western Sydney. The project surveyed more than 500 Australian higher education leaders from 20 institutions about the contexts and challenges they face and the key capabilities that underpin their work.

University leaders said they face mounting external pressure for radical change in the higher education sector. To implement change, leaders must learn to do new things. And how best do higher education leaders learn? According to the survey, leaders learn in the same ways as their students.

A key recommendation of the project is that universities should ‘practise what they preach’ by modelling professional development programs on current university best practice.

University leaders want to be taught in the same way they teach their students. The study found that exactly the same flexible, responsive, active, problem-based, just-in-time, just-for-me learning methods found to engage university students in productive learning in studies is what leaders report they want.

Dr Hamish Coates, Principal Research Fellow at ACER, said the project has played a valuable role in developing ACER’s collaborative relationships with Australian universities.

“In collaboration with UWS, and with colleagues at all Australian universities, we’ve leveraged robust research methodologies and key insights from school research to shed light on this critical area of higher education,” he said.

“The study is one of the largest of its kind so far, and we look forward to further developments, both in Australia and abroad.”

The full report, *Learning Leaders in Times of Change: Academic Leadership Capabilities for Australian Higher Education*, by ACER researchers Dr Hamish Coates & Michelle Anderson and UWS academic Professor Geoff Scott, is available from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council website

[http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants\\_leadership\\_uws\\_acer\\_summary\\_june08.pdf](http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants_leadership_uws_acer_summary_june08.pdf)

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