

Australian Catholic University earns historic Carnegie Classification

Australian Catholic University (ACU) has become one of the first Australian higher education institutions to receive the new Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

ACU and University of Technology Sydney (UTS) were announced as the inaugural recipients of the new Classification for Australian universities at the Engagement Australia conference in Sydney today.

The historic announcement makes ACU one of the first universities outside the United States to receive this significant classification, which was formally implemented in Australia in June this year.

The Classification recognises ACU as a higher education leader in institutionalised community engagement, committed to working with community to transform society.

Established by US-based Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Carnegie Classifications have been used to recognise and advance the community-engaged practices of higher education institutions. The Community Engagement accreditation is an elective classification describing the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

Community Engagement at ACU encompasses activities and initiatives that build capacity and affirm human dignity through sustainable and reciprocal collaborations with communities, especially those which have historically experienced disadvantage or marginalisation.

ACU undergraduate students participate in Community Engagement opportunities as part of the Core Curriculum. ACU staff can also apply to work with community organisations on research projects that address real-world challenges and opportunities. They can additionally apply to receive up to 35 hours of time release throughout the years to participate in approved community engagement activities.

Other community engagement initiatives at ACU include the Clemente program, the award-winning Solomon Islands Initial Teacher Immersion Program; extensive and sustained multi-disciplinary programs in Timor Leste; and the Order of Malta and ACU Community Hub in Melbourne.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis said ACU's successful Carnegie Classification was a momentous achievement for the university.

"ACU is delighted to be one of the first Australian universities in the history of the Carnegie Foundation to receive the Community Engagement Classification," Professor Skrbis said.

"As a national university –with an overseas campus in Rome- ACU serves and works closely in at least ten local communities connected to our campuses and leadership centres. The Carnegie Classification reaffirms our commitment to working with these communities and partner organisations to improve the lives of members living in our communities and to take on research that serves the common good."

ACU Vice-President Fr Anthony Casamento csma, whose Office oversees ACU Engagement, said the Carnegie Classification recognised the value of Community Engagement across the university.

"Community Engagement is a core value for ACU, and I am delighted that the Carnegie Foundation has recognized our commitment and efforts by awarding the University the Elective Classification for Community Engagement," Fr Casamento said.

"The awarding of this classification is recognition of the work done by both our ACU Engagement team and our faculties who support in-class learning experiences and research that partner with the communities we belong to. These experiences are living examples of how we live our values as a Catholic university every day."

ACU has become a renowned leader in community-engaged learning, research and outreach, and is part of the global Uniservitate network of Catholic higher education institutions committed to the promotion of service-learning.

Australian Catholic University has specialists who can comment on news matters relating to their area of expertise. Please direct requests to ACU's [Media Team](mailto:media@acu.edu.au) at acu.edu.au/media-enquiries.

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The university most recently participated in the Uniservitate IV Global Symposium, where Pope Francis thanked the participants, in a letter, for their dedication to educating minds, hearts, and hands.

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