

## **SAE Institute General Policy**

### **G08 Staff Development Policy**

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide sustained and targeted support for staff professional development activities which lead to the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and expertise that are relevant to the changing demands of the vocational and higher education environments and which are aligned with the strategic priorities of SAE Institute.

#### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all campuses and operations of SAE Institute in Europe, Licensed operations and campuses offering programmes in collaboration with Middlesex University.

#### **3. Associated Policies and Procedures**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Strategic Directions
- A01 Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
- A02 Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy
- G01 Code of Conduct

#### **4. Principles**

SAE recognises that its continued status as a world leader in education and training in the fields of creative media technologies will be heavily dependent on the ongoing excellence of its staff. The Institute is committed to the provision of opportunities and support for staff development in order to ensure that staff are best able to serve the needs of students and industry. Support for development activities related to extending current disciplinary and technological knowledge, professional expertise, and learning and teaching skills to ensure the effective transmission of knowledge and encouraging self-directed lifelong learning for students will have the highest priority.

It is characteristic of SAE that many staff members have outstanding credentials through industry experience and professional expertise. Further, given the relative 'newness' of the 'disciplines' in which SAE works, it is not surprising that, on the world market, there are few who have both outstanding industry credentials and high-level academic recognition. Currently, world-wide demand for 'hands-on' training in these creative media areas (a hallmark of SAE's style of education and training) is increasing at a speed significantly greater than the current development of properly experienced and qualified staff. Therefore, as SAE Institute moves to provide more higher education courses, particular support for staff to make a successful transition on many campuses to working within the environment of higher education will be needed.

SAE will continue to provide financial incentives for staff development and will actively encourage staff to take advantage of this support especially wherever it is complementary to SAE's strategic growth plans. Opportunities for completing higher degrees, professional qualifications, research, publication, and active professional dialogue will be coordinated and

systematically supported, taking full advantage of the technological facilities available through SAE. Wherever possible commitment of time to support staff development should be approved in such a way that standards of service to students and normal work responsibilities are not put at risk, and opportunities to utilise modern electronic media should be maximised.

These principles apply equally to general staff as they do to academic staff, and a skilled and qualified professional staff workforce at all levels of operation is the continuing aim. The major objectives of the SAE professional development strategy at this time are to:

- Increase the capacity of the individual staff member and the organisation to meet the different requirements of delivering both higher education and vocational training
- Enable all teaching and administrative staff to develop a practical appreciation of a higher education learning culture
- Enable teaching staff to further develop expertise in subject knowledge, and appropriate teaching and learning strategies for higher education
- Enable staff to develop further expertise in implementing policy and procedures relevant to a higher education provider, and to
- Promote a culture of continuous inquiry and improvement.

## **5. Staff Needs Assessment**

Annual performance reviews will be carried out for all staff and will involve retrospective evaluation of performance and achievement and assessment of prospective development needs. In the annual review of performance outcomes and developmental need, SAE takes into account:

- The judgement of senior staff and peers;
- Informed views offered by external examiners and representatives of professional bodies;
- Staff performance and ability measured against prescribed sets of criteria in role and responsibility statements;
- Feedback gleaned by formal and informal interview, discussion with students and student representatives, and the results of student questionnaires and other feedback mechanisms;
- The period and quality of service already rendered.

College Managers are responsible for the organization and conduct of annual performance reviews for all campus staff. Part of this review process will include assistance with individual professional development planning for each staff member for the twelve months ahead related to their performance and their needs in relation to their assigned responsibilities, and subsequent performance reviews will assess progress with those objectives.

## **6. Development Strategies**

SAE sees the primary aim of staff development as the need to productively integrate the career plans of staff with the strategic aims and development plans of the Institute. SAE therefore recognises that the employer and employee have a mutual responsibility for staff

development, and views staff development as a self-directed activity proactively supported by the employing organisation.

This is a two-stage process involving:

- *Career Planning*: The employee's development of a career plan through the analysis of their own aptitudes, skills, qualifications, interests and values.
- *Career Management*: Support provided by the Institute, through the mechanisms outlined below, to produce a better workforce to address strategic priorities.

In implementing staff development procedures, SAE seeks to:

- Provide targeted opportunities through the design, delivery and coordination of in-house workshops and professional learning opportunities at the workplace;
- Expand upon current collaborative arrangements and partnerships with a view to creating staff development programs designed specifically for the unique learning environment catered for by SAE;
- Prioritise planned activities within realistic resource constraints;
- Increase awareness, amongst its employees, of the development opportunities available;
- Make development programs available to all staff;
- Regularly update and review its staff development procedures.

## **7. Guidance and Clive Pascoe Fellowships**

Appendix 1 provides detailed Guidance on practical initiatives designed to support the professional development of academic staff as part of the growth of a higher education culture, including the provision of Clive Pascoe Fellowships. While framed predominantly for academic staff development and the improvement of Teaching and Learning, the principles, initiatives and support levels detailed there apply equally to professional development initiatives for general staff.

## **8. Professional Development Activities and Approval**

Following is a list of Professional Development activities that may be supported by SAE Institute which is illustrative and not intended to be exhaustive. It is important to stress that the provision of support for any of these activities will depend on the individual's approved performance review outcomes, the needs of the organization and any prevailing resource constraints or opportunities.

In principle, any levels of support to be provided and any approved related expenses should all be planned, discussed and approved before any commitments are made or activities undertaken.

### Induction

It is the responsibility of the SAE Institute to ensure that effective arrangements are made for the induction of new members of staff. Staff induction should include a general introduction to SAE Institute, the relevant local Campus operations and programmes, and the role of the specific position. Where appropriate it should include an initial discussion of development needs and opportunities.

### Courses, conferences and seminars

SAE Institute provides targeted in-house training sessions and workshops to all full-time and part-time staff and encourages relevant staff attendance at qualification courses, short courses, conferences and seminars. Time off may be granted to full-time staff for attendance at courses and other development events and, where appropriate, for taking examinations, guided by the principles of this policy.

### Leave of absence

The Campus Manager in consultation with other staff may approve leave of absence for Professional Development purposes for up to one day, but should consult with the Regional Manager over longer periods.

### Curriculum development

Academic staff may be included in teaching, learning and curriculum development projects for SAE which relate to their areas of expertise, and this may involve approval of allocated time for such activities.

### Job enhancement

Opportunities exist for staff to undertake special responsibilities or projects to enhance their experience. Special projects can arise which a member of staff can be asked to undertake individually or as a member of a team, and which can involve partial or complete absence from their normal duties.

### Secondments

A member of staff may be seconded to another part of the Institute or to an external organisation. This may include industrial exchanges to enhance staff professional knowledge of current or future industry priorities. Such arrangements need to be discussed initially with the Campus Manager, and final approval with the Regional Manager.

### Research and further relevant qualifications

Research seeks to advance knowledge and understanding and is, therefore, developmental by its nature. It is important to SAE Institute that the importance of research is recognised, and therefore staff may be assisted in relevant research projects with resources and in-kind support. Staff are also encouraged and supported to gain further qualifications relevant to their areas of teaching expertise and these may involve postgraduate research degree programs.

### Professional Practice

Professional practice can serve a range of objectives and needs for maintaining industry currency for SAE Institute academic staff and can be an approved developmental activity.

### Peer Observation

It is essential that all teaching staff continue to enhance their skills as lecturers. A mechanism used to continuously evaluate teaching quality can be by way of observation and feedback.

Campus Academic Coordinators are responsible for the implementation of this practice and have the necessary documents.

**9. Annual Reporting**

All staff development activities, as an integral component of performance planning and review, are to be monitored across SAE Institute campuses, and a yearly summary of all professional development activities undertaken should be maintained by the Campus Manager.

**10. Policy History**

*Policy approved: September 2009 (SAE Board and Governing Council)*

*Policy revised: October 2011; February 2012 (Managing Director and CEO)*

*Policy to be reviewed: July 2013*

## **Appendix 1: A Systematic Approach to Academic Staff Development: Guidance for SAE Institute**

### **1. Introduction**

In the last five years, SAE Institute has undergone increasing numbers of accreditation processes for higher education courses in different locations around the world.

In Australia, having successfully completed more than 16 external registration, accreditation and review processes under various state, federal and overseas jurisdictions, SAE was fully approved by Government to offer undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in its own right. It was also granted the same access to Government student loan and support provisions as the university sector, and a complete Quality Audit by the Australian Universities Quality Agency resulted in one of the best private Higher Education Provider reports in the country (November 2011). In the United States, a strategic and coordinated approach to achieving accreditation pathways for higher education qualifications has now been adopted and is well under way.

SAE Institute has increasingly worked closely with Middlesex University (MU). Originally agreed in 2003, a renewed Partnership Agreement was signed in 2009, and a revised Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) for five BA and BSc degrees offered with Middlesex University was renewed in the same year. In September 2010, after an extended review of SAE Quality Assurance processes, MU granted Accredited Status to SAE, and in late 2010, a renewed MoC for postgraduate MA and MSc degrees was signed after formal validation processes. In 2011, a Special Associate College Agreement for SAE-UK was signed with MU, and the 2009 MoC for the five undergraduate degrees was revised to provide a fully integrated and unified set of undergraduate awards.

In nearly all of these many processes, there has been a constant challenge, often highlighted by external Panels that our academic staff profile of appropriate qualification levels and relevant higher education experience needs to be improved.

Whatever the location, the external critique is typically presented as:

***“If this organisation wants to move successfully from its origins in vocational education to higher education, then staff need to become familiar with the culture of higher education, they need to learn about good teaching and learning practices in higher education, and they need supported career paths”.***

Our response needs to be strategic as befits a global organisation determined to succeed and committed to high standards. Our response needs to be systematic, sustained, coordinated and consistent, if we are to deliver the potential benefits for staff and students cumulatively over time, and our response needs to be properly resourced and supported.

**Investing in the development of our staff is not optional: it is essential. If we are serious about success in higher education, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, then strategic investment in targeted and sustained staff development is vital, and this Guidance offers practical ways in which we can do that.**

## 2. Upgrading Qualifications: Clive Pascoe Fellowships

The overall and reasonable expectation in the higher education sector, which is rapidly becoming a requirement, is that every staff member teaching in a degree level program has a qualification at least one level above that which they are teaching. This is a standard and a challenge that we need to address, but we should do so strategically, with clarity of purpose, and with some caution.

For example, one of the strategic objectives of SAE Institute, and one of its traditional strengths, is that students will be “industry-ready”, that teaching staff have “professional credibility” ie are currently involved and successful in their field and remain well-connected with the latest developments in their profession, and that our courses draw upon current best practice. We should not lose that strength in a rush for “paper” qualifications (which some audio-engineers for example would see as being too “theory-based” and lacking in “studio and street credibility”). Many of our valuable professional staff who have served us well over previous years should also not be left “high and dry” in the new era of higher education.

However, it is already evident that without appropriately qualified staff we may not be successful competitors in higher education, nor will we achieve what independent reviewers, quality auditors and the university sector would consider to be high quality standards in our higher education courses, as opposed to the vocational education successes and industry credibility of our past. And this pressure will continue to grow.

In some cases various initiatives have already been undertaken, and far-sighted campus managers have encouraged staff to undertake honours degrees or the MA degree route with Middlesex. But these advances have not always been strategic or coordinated, and levels of support for staff undertaking such programs have varied considerably. In addition, it is not unusual for a staff member who, having gained additional postgraduate qualifications, then chooses to leave our organisation to pursue greener pastures elsewhere.

We have therefore adopted a systematic approach to this challenge, namely the creation and use of “**Clive Pascoe Fellowships**”. Originally approved in 2010, these are essentially staff development fellowships with guidelines and minimum specified levels of support to assist staff to gain further qualifications appropriate to their field and to the needs of the organisation, as well as a commitment to SAE from the relevant staff member.

They are named in honour of Professor Clive Pascoe, whose work made a distinguished contribution to the educational and academic vision for SAE Institute in its early years, and whose unfortunate illness and death in December 2005 meant a great loss for his colleagues and friends at SAE Institute.

In essence, ‘getting a Clive’ means that a staff member receives considerable support from SAE Institute, both in terms of finance and time, to enable them to study for a further qualification. The details need to be agreed by senior management in each individual case, but these are guidelines.

The conditions for ‘getting a Clive’ normally are:

- a) the staff member has given a period of valued service to the organisation, or shows considerable promise as evidenced through a performance review;

- b) the staff member proposes to gain a qualification that will be appropriate to their field of knowledge and their teaching program, and of value to the organisation;
- c) the staff member signs a written undertaking to remain with the organisation for a period of at least two years after gaining the qualification (or will proportionally reimburse the levels of support provided).

The benefits of ‘getting a Clive’ normally are:

- a) at least half the costs of study for the degree are subsidised by SAE on the basis of the staff member providing regular satisfactory evidence of successful progression through the study program (based on the view that getting the qualification is valuable both to the staff member and the organisation, so sharing the costs is reasonable);
- b) an individual may negotiate appropriate “time-release” for study, which could vary for example according to the type of degree and the nature of the study program, but could at the higher level comprise up to 30 “study days” per year for a doctoral award, to be approved however in such a way that does not put the normal work responsibilities of SAE at risk;
- c) approved support for other necessary incidental costs associated with the individual study program.

The negotiations with the staff member and the recommendation to award ‘a Clive Pascoe Fellowship’ are normally the responsibility of the Campus Manager, but the final decision on the award, partly to ensure fairness and consistency, rests at the national level with the CEO or nominee.

It is important to note that the “minimum” level of support for an award would be half the costs of the study program, but in exceptional cases, a Campus Manager could recommend higher levels of support, eg in the case of a valuable staff member with a distinguished record of contribution, full cost support might be considered (and a longer period of ‘sign-up’), but the final level of approval to ensure consistency, fairness and affordability, will always rest at the national level.

In general, the expectation is that every Campus which has been approved for delivery of degree level programs or is planning to run them, would award at least one Clive Pascoe Fellowship each year, and Campus Managers will be asked to produce annual reports on progress. Larger degree campuses, subject to funds availability, could award a number of Clives simultaneously, or in a planned annual sequence.

It is most important that appropriate records be kept and reviewed for various purposes, including an evaluation of this initiative over time.

It is equally important to point out that while this is one way to assist our existing valued staff to gain required higher education qualifications appropriate to their teaching domain, it is only part of the solution to the broader challenge.

The organisation will also need to ensure that new academic staff who are hired have appropriate higher level qualifications for their planned duties, and that other forms of staff development (internal workshops; updates on relevant sector developments and changes;

information about sector challenges ahead, etc) will also need to be sustained on an ongoing basis.

It is also critical that staff development initiatives such as these are not seen in isolation, but form part of a planned annual cycle including regular performance reviews, through which individual and organisational expectations are managed, and a system of recognising and rewarding staff achievements which reinforces the organisation's sustained commitment.

### **3. Mentoring Programmes**

The move for staff from vocational education to higher education, and from teaching undergraduate programmes to postgraduate courses, can be greatly assisted through organising and utilising mentoring programmes for campus staff groups.

An excellent example was initiated, carried out and evaluated in SAE Perth, Western Australia, as that campus moved to offer degree programmes. Responding to an external panel concern about *“the need to establish a culture of higher education”* SAE Perth responded by hiring not one but two qualified and experienced mentors from local universities who were engaged over a period of about four months to jointly participate in group mentoring sessions, to assist career development of staff and contribute to the academic culture of SAE Perth.

An evaluation report was then sent to the Ministry, and the response from the Chair of the Panel (which had expressed the original concern) is illuminating:

*“The members of the Higher Education Advisory Committee (HEAC) originally appointed to assess the SAE application and advise the Minister of Education have discussed the (staff development) report and arrived at a unanimous, positive conclusion.*

*As Chair, on behalf of the HEAC, I would like to compliment SAE for establishing an effective staff development program, which will certainly provide SAE Perth staff with the potential to make the successful transition from vocational education to higher education. Since staff development is an ongoing rather than a finite process, SAE has made an excellent decision to implement the staff development program on a continuing basis.*

*It is evident that SAE has invested substantial time and thought in the development and implementation of the program. HEAC members have been impressed with the collegiality and cohesiveness of SAE Perth and the keenness of the staff to build the academic culture of the institution as it moves forward into delivery of higher education courses. The work and commitment is beyond the requirements of the conditions set, aspiring to the spirit of what a higher education institution is truly meant to be”* (March, 2009).

So thanks to the commitment of staff and a forward thinking manager willing to think strategically and target appropriate resources, what was initially a perceived weakness was turned into an externally recognised strength. A similar initiative was also utilised in 2011 at SAE Dubai, with equally productive results.

The systematic implementation of targeted mentoring programs at selected campuses could have a range of benefits, including the familiarisation of staff with higher education sector norms, the improvement of teaching and assessment practices, the strengthening of a scholarly culture within SAE, creating professional and academic networks with local higher

education institutions, creating benchmarking opportunities with local universities, identifying potential supervisors for future postgraduate projects, identifying possibilities for future research projects, etc; the possibilities are extensive. A careful analysis of the local higher education landscape should be undertaken, and then strategic networking with for example, relevant departments or the Learning and Teaching Centre of the local university is often a good starting point.

It is important that such initiatives are planned, supported, documented and reviewed, and if done well, like the Perth experience, could become an academic strength as we move towards a successful future in undergraduate and postgraduate higher education.

#### **4. Improving Learning and Teaching**

It has become clear that academic teaching staff need sustained support over time as they move from and between the vocational education world focused on training for a specific job to higher education teaching with learning processes focused on education for a career and a lifetime of professional learning. SAE has run a number of internal workshops as part of the preparation for higher education, and SAE initiatives such as the “Guide to Good Teaching at SAE Institute” developed with Professor Graham Webb, and the “Pathways to Good Teaching Practice” project from Southern Cross University, are made available electronically through the Staff Portal.

There are also many external sources of related research, advice and guidance that can be drawn upon. Many universities have identified the need to improve their learning and teaching practices, and to re-emphasise the importance of good teaching and learning, and as a result almost every university has created a “Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning” (or similar, eg see: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/celt/>, and various universities run special events or activities to focus on the improvement of student learning (eg see Oxford Brookes series of Learning and Teaching Conferences: [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocslid/resources/learn\\_teach\\_conf/](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocslid/resources/learn_teach_conf/)).

As well as individual institutions, governments and major professional peak bodies in the higher education sector have also recognised the need and desirability of researching, supporting and rewarding good teaching in higher education, and some Governments have put considerable resources to that aim, while others have chosen to encourage professional bodies. In the United Kingdom, the Higher Education Academy (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>) has operated since 2003, and its work was formally evaluated in 2008. It has various initiatives to support and reward teaching excellence, as well as many discipline specific initiatives which recognise that it is at the subject level where most networking and professional exchange is likely to take place.

In addition to institutional and national sources of expertise to improve teaching and student learning, individuals can also provide assistance and mentoring at the local level. For example, Dr Barbara Workman who is the Link Tutor from MU for the MA and MSc degrees with SAE, and chairs that SAE Assessment Board, is also the Director of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at MU’s Institute for Work-Based Learning, and received prestigious recognition with a National Teaching Fellowship award from the Higher Education Academy in 2010.

If we are to compete seriously in the world of higher education then we need to have similar commitments to the highest standards of teaching and learning in our courses, and to create a high quality educational experience for our students. But we do not need to re-invent the wheel, and collaboration with established Government and University initiatives probably represents the most efficient way for us to address this particular challenge.

For example, most University Centres for Teaching have produced courses (typically called a Graduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education) which allow their staff to gain a formal qualification in teaching in this sector, and usually to do so by encouraging staff to focus on real-life professional issues connected with their day-to-day teaching responsibilities. SAE has a special arrangement in place with MU from 2011, which allows SAE teaching staff to enrol in the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education course with Middlesex University via distance learning.

In addition, every SAE degree centre is required to have an appropriate Library and Learning Centre, yet often these are envisaged as being primarily for students. It would be useful and helpful for every such Library or Resource Centre to have a section for staff development in relation to improving teaching, with relevant resources, supporting documentation, copies of relevant research projects and links to Government sites and current projects to improve teaching.

## **5. Performance Review, Recognition, and Reward**

Staff engagement starts with a contract of employment. Employer expectations are stated in policies and guidelines, and individual and employer expectations for staff development are managed through the process of regular annual performance reviews.

Staff development therefore needs to be seen as part of a system including regular performance reviews, as well as recognition and rewards for achievement.

We have introduced regular performance review processes through which staff development needs can be clarified, and staff achievements recognised. If we want to keep our best staff however, then we will also need recognition and reward systems at the institutional level eg staff awards, and career pathways to retain their services over time. Such processes will also act as draw cards for attracting and recruiting good staff in the future.

**At this time, a serious and planned commitment to resources and initiatives to support staff development is a critical investment for our future success.**

**Professor Zbys Klich,  
Director of Academic Affairs  
3rd February, 2012**