

DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANSFERABLE RESEARCH PORTAL - CREATING AN ON CAMPUS EQUIVALENT FULLY ONLINE RESEARCH COURSE COMPONENT

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Abstract

Monash University's Graduate Diploma in Psychology – Advanced – (GDP-A) is an innovative fully online accredited Fourth Year Psychology course which enables its students to undertake further specialised professional postgraduate training in psychology. The GDP-A commenced in March 2016 and consists of four course units and four research units presented in alternating six week teaching periods.

Many challenges are arising in the development of the GDP-A which are also opportunities, including the translation of a traditional on campus research project into a fully online mode, the ability to scale from a starting number of 80 students to several hundred students, and the development of clinical and research skills through virtual means. The scale and scope of the GDP-A and its challenges/ opportunities are unprecedented.

A particularly great challenge and opportunity for the successful development and implementation of the GDP-A is the need for a fully online research project that is fully equivalent to an on campus research project. This will consist of a research thesis based on the conducting of experiments, surveys, access to or creation of a database and associated statistical analyses. To meet this challenge/opportunity we are developing and implementing a Research Portal.

The Research Portal is a unified research environment that is accessible to GDP-A students, and potentially to others users, and is presented in the *Moodle* online Learning Management System (LMS). The components of the Research Portal are:

- ☐ Presentation and selection of innovative and online friendly research topics,
- ☐ Access of and contribution to a course specific and a general research participants base,
- ☐ Access to online experiments, surveys, tests and databases in a *Virtual Lab* environment,
- ☐ Allocation and tracking of students' supervisor resource use in student-supervisor shared electronic notebook/ data workbook space.

The Research Portal will provide the GDP-A course with an unprecedented online research project conducting capacity that can be successfully transferred across Monash University courses and beyond.