

ACIAR Learn Course Guide

Aug **2023**





Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Introduction

Course structure overview

Course list

Foundational Courses

Introduction to Research for Development

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Research

<u>Principles of Ethics in Research</u>

Research Project Management Essentials

Extension Courses

Applying Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research

Research Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Practice

Research Project Management in Practice

Elective Courses

Academic Writing - Introduction to Academic Writing

<u>Academic Writing - Writing an Empirical Journal Article</u>

Mentoring Skills

Policy Influencing Skills

Qualitative Research Methods

Quantitative Research Methods

Research in the Field

Research Proposal Skills

Science Communication

Scientific Data Analysis & Interpretation

Values-based Leadership

Introduction

Welcome to the ACIAR Learn Course Guide, where you can find all the information you need to choose the courses that meet your learning goals and interests. ACIAR Learn is a platform that offers a range of courses on topics related to agricultural research for development, such as academic writing, project management, scientific data analysis and interpretation, and more. Whether you are a researcher, a practitioner, a policy maker, or a student, you will find courses that are relevant and useful for your work and support increased effectiveness in research.

ACIAR Learn courses are divided into three categories: foundational, extension, and elective.

Foundational courses are designed to introduce you to the core concepts and principles of topics related to agricultural research for development. They are suitable for anyone who wants to learn the basics or refresh their knowledge.

Extension courses are designed to build on the foundational courses and provide you with more in-depth and practical knowledge and skills on specific topics. They are suitable for anyone who wants to deepen their understanding or apply their learning to real-world situations.

Elective courses are designed to offer you more flexibility and choice in your learning. They cover a variety of topics that are not covered in detail in the foundational or extension courses. They are suitable for anyone who wants to explore or deepen new areas of interest or diversify their learning.

In this guide, you will find a description of each course and information about the Course Convenor, who is the person who designed and developed the course. Please note that some details of the courses may change over time, so please check this document available via the home page or as a resource link within the 'Welcome to ACIAR Learn' course for the most up to date information. For additional details such as course dates, duration and learning outcomes, please refer to individual courses as listed in the ACIAR Learn platform's <u>Catalogue</u>.

We hope that this guide will help you make informed decisions about your learning and enrolment in ACIAR Learn courses. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact us at aciarlearn@uq.edu.au. We look forward to seeing you in our courses and supporting you in your learning journey.

Course structure overview

The new ACIAR Learn platform has three types of courses:

- 1. **Foundational courses** provide knowledge which is considered to be foundational for your research work. Each foundational course can be done as a standalone course or as preparation for an extension course.
- 2. **Extension courses** provide an extension of the content of a foundational course, with a strong focus on application of knowledge in your research work. They can be done as standalone courses or following the relevant foundational course. Some foundational courses may require prior completion of the relevant Foundational course.
- 3. **Elective courses** allow you to explore different subjects and acquire new or additional knowledge to support your research work. Each elective course can be done as a standalone course and concurrently to other courses.

Foundational courses

- Foundational knowledge for research work
- · Self-paced over three months
- Live facilitated sessions are optional for course completion
- No cap on enrolment numbers

Extension courses

- · Extension of foundational courses
- · Focused on application of knowledge
- Self-paced over three months
- Live facilitated sessions are mandatory for course completion
- Capped enrolment numbers

Elective courses

- · Standalone courses
- Self-paced over three months
- · Live facilitated sessions are optional for course completion
- No cap on enrolment numbers

Course list

Foundational Courses	Extension Courses
Introduction to Research for Development	Leading and Engaging in Research for Development (details TBC)
Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research	Applying Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Research	Research Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Practice
Principles of Ethics in Research	Ethical Research in Practice (details TBC)
Research Project Management Essentials	Research Project Management in Practice
Elective Courses	
Academic Writing - Introduction to Academic Writing	Research in the Field
Academic Writing - Writing an Empirical Journal Article	Research Proposal Skills
Mentoring Skills	Science Communication
Policy Influencing Skills	Scientific Data Analysis & Interpretation
Qualitative Research Methods	<u>Values-based Leadership</u>
Quantitative Research Methods	

Note: course titles may be subject to change

Foundational Courses

Introduction to Research for Development

Course description

Agricultural systems are facing increasingly complex challenges to provide the world with safe and sufficient food and fibre, while ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and dealing with global issues such as climate change and economic crises. ACIAR attempts to tackle these complex issues by supporting research that is designed from a systems-thinking perspective. This requires interdisciplinary approaches to research and development to align the various solutions across diverse disciplines and thematic areas in a holistic way. It also requires critical and collaborative skills to design and implement projects through functional teams. This course will enable participants to understand the principles and articulate the value of an interdisciplinary approach to research for development, reflect on individual and institutional abilities to establish and manage functional interdisciplinary teams and projects, and identify ways and develop the skills for these approaches to be applied into projects, programs and institutions.

Course Convenor - Associate Professor Elske van de Fliert



Elske is the Director of the Centre for Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland (UQ). She also facilitates and teaches in the Communication for Social Change field of study of the Master of Communication program. She obtained a PhD in Communication & Innovation in 1993 from Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands. Elske started her academic career at UQ in 2006, after two decades working in research, development and teaching positions in Indonesia, Vietnam, China and Sri Lanka, and across other countries in Asia and East Africa.

Elske's research interests include participatory development communication, facilitation of transdisciplinary research for sustainable and equitable development, and impact assessment of social change processes. Over the years at UQ, she has conducted research projects and consultancies in Indonesia, Timor Leste, Vietnam, Mongolia, Philippines and Azerbaijan. She has published widely on a range of topics related to participatory research and communication in sustainable rural development.

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research

Course description

Participants will acquire the skills to articulate the application of gender dynamics within agricultural settings. They will also learn to assess and develop strategies aimed at tackling gender equity challenges prevalent in agricultural research. Moreover, participants will gain the tools to enhance gender equity within their own research work.

Course Convenor - Dr Gomathy Palaniappan



Gomathy is a senior research fellow and lecturer at the School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability at The University of Queensland (UQ). Her work primarily focuses on socio-economic and gender research. She has played a key role in conceptualising and conducting research related to behavioural change among farmers, as well as gender equity and social inclusion in agriculture. She manages research on key cross-cutting issues of gender equity and socioeconomics in agrifood chains, focusing on improving food security and farmers' livelihoods in crops and vegetables, as well as Soil and Land Management for conservation agriculture.

She has expertise in using participatory techniques to foster capacity building in rural communities. Through her involvement in multiple projects by The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) in countries such as Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Pacific Island countries, The Philippines, and Pakistan, Gomathy has gained extensive experience as a social scientist and gender expert/consultant. Her significant contributions to the advancement of socio-economic and gender research in agriculture are evident in her ability to establish and maintain strong alliances and strategic partnerships with research institutions in the countries where she has worked on ACIAR projects.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Research

Course description

A fundamental element of research is to both adapt the research scope based on findings and data, while also measuring the degree to which the research delivered on its objectives. Developing a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) practice within research is therefore a core skill of an effective researcher. This course will enable participants to articulate the primary function of MEL practice within their research; identify its core components; and the steps required to develop a MEL framework.

Course Convenor - Ms Alison Moore



Alison is an agricultural extension professional with 30 years' experience in community development with research experience in rural sociology. She has interdisciplinary science qualifications with a first degree in agricultural economics and a Masters in social planning and development. She has coordinated the community support program for Landcare in Queensland, Australia and has worked in Canada, Sweden, Finland, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands.

Alison is currently the manager of The University of Queensland's (UQ) Pinjarra Hills Research Precinct and most recently she has been a member of

a UQ team delivering an ACIAR project with agricultural and veterinary universities in Myanmar. She lectures in postgraduate courses of evaluation, social planning/community development, extension and stakeholder engagement. As a consultant she has conducted evaluations including with the Queensland Farmers Federation, Queensland University of Technology, the non-government sector in Timor-Leste, European Union and both Australian and Queensland Governments.

Principles of Ethics in Research

Course description

As an Australian organisation commissioning research, ACIAR has a responsibility to ensure that all research - conducted within Australia or internationally - is undertaken ethically, applying the best practices and approaches. This course will enhance participants' understanding of the importance of ethics in agricultural research, ethical considerations in agricultural science, and key standards and frameworks applicable to ACIAR projects.

Course Convenor - Emeritus Professor Richard Baker



Richard has been a passionate advocate for equity and fairness at the Australian National University (ANU). He has spent a professional lifetime at the University, and as Pro Vice-Chancellor (University Experience), he championed outcomes to support student and staff equity, Indigenous Reconciliation and the student experience.

Richard is a geographer with a passion for teaching and learning. He graduated from ANU in 1981 with a Bachelor (Honours) and a University Medal and was the first person at ANU to complete a joint Honours degree in Geography and Archaeology. He then worked as an archaeologist and oral

historian, and completed his PhD at the University of Adelaide in cultural geography on the topic of Indigenous understandings of Australian history and geography. He returned to ANU in 1993 in a teaching position and in 1996 was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence. In 2002, he became the first person to win this award twice. He has also been awarded three separate national teaching awards.

Research Project Management Essentials

Course description

This course will develop essential project management skills critical for successful management of ACIAR funded research. Topics include scope and proposal design, resource management, stakeholder communication, risk management and project monitoring strategies.

Course Convenor - Dr Karen Harper



Karen is an Associate Professor of agriculture at Central Queensland University (CQU). She has broad teaching experience both in domestic and international settings. She completed her Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours), Master of Agricultural Science, and PhD at The University of Queensland (UQ). Karen has worked on a number of ACIAR funded research projects in Indonesia, Myanmar and across Africa, in either an administrative/management role, or project leader. She is strongly motivated in building successful teams and building capacity.

Karen has also worked in a variety of research areas across a broad range of research groups. This research has focussed on ruminant nutrition and

tropical pastures and includes: supplementing feeds to increase productivity and reduce methane emissions (Meat and Livestock Australia funded); the role of iNDF in dairy cattle nutrition in subtropical Australia (Dairy Australia funded); Kikuyu ecotype Studies (Queensland Government's Department of Agricultural and Fisheries and Norco funded); and a range of probiotic studies (Australian Research Council, Ridley and Christian-Hansen funded).

Extension Courses

Applying Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research

Course description

Building on the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Research foundational course, participants will cultivate advanced proficiencies in explaining the nuanced application of gender dynamics within agricultural settings. Additionally, they will master the art of critically developing innovative strategies and action plans for effectively mitigating pervasive gender equity challenges embedded in agricultural research. Participants will graduate with a comprehensive toolkit empowering them to evaluate gender equity within their own research work.

Course Convenor - Dr Gomathy Palaniappan



Gomathy is a senior research fellow and lecturer at the School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability at The University of Queensland (UQ). Her work primarily focuses on socio-economic and gender research. She has played a key role in conceptualising and conducting research related to behavioural change among farmers, as well as gender equity and social inclusion in agriculture. She manages research on key cross-cutting issues of gender equity and socioeconomics in agrifood chains, focusing on improving food security and farmers' livelihoods in crops and vegetables, as well as Soil and Land Management for conservation agriculture.

She has expertise in using participatory techniques to foster capacity building in rural communities. Through her involvement in multiple projects by The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) in countries such as Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Pacific Island countries, The Philippines, and Pakistan, Gomathy has gained extensive experience as a social scientist and gender expert/consultant. Her significant contributions to the advancement of socio-economic and gender research in agriculture are evident in her ability to establish and maintain strong alliances and strategic partnerships with research institutions in the countries where she has worked on ACIAR projects.

Research Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Practice

Course description

Developing and refining skills in the practice of evaluation is critical for any researcher seeking to see their research results applied to the real world. Using activities and case studies, this course builds on the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Research foundational course, providing participants with further opportunity to apply their foundational knowledge in real world contexts.

Course Convenor - Ms Alison Moore



Alison is an agricultural extension professional with 30 years' experience in community development with research experience in rural sociology. She has interdisciplinary science qualifications with a first degree in agricultural economics and a Masters in social planning and development. She has coordinated the community support program for Landcare in Queensland, Australia and has worked in Canada, Sweden, Finland, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands.

Alison is currently the manager of The University of Queensland's (UQ) Pinjarra Hills Research Precinct and most recently she has been a member of

a UQ team delivering an ACIAR project with agricultural and veterinary universities in Myanmar. She lectures in postgraduate courses of evaluation, social planning/community development, extension and stakeholder engagement. As a consultant she has conducted evaluations including with the Queensland Farmers Federation, Queensland University of Technology, the non-government sector in Timor-Leste, European Union and both Australian and Queensland Governments.

Research Project Management in Practice

Course description

This course builds on the foundational Research Project Management Essentials course, enabling participants to develop additional skills in the management of research projects. This course further explores the topics of research project budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, project and peer review processes, and research ethics and approval processes.

Course Convenor - Dr Karen Harper



Karen is an Associate Professor of agriculture at Central Queensland University (CQU). She has broad teaching experience both in domestic and international settings. She completed her Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours), Master of Agricultural Science, and PhD at The University of Queensland (UQ). Karen has worked on a number of ACIAR funded research projects in Indonesia, Myanmar and across Africa, in either an administrative/management role, or project leader. She is strongly motivated in building successful teams and building capacity.

Karen has also worked in a variety of research areas across a broad range of research groups. This research has focussed on ruminant nutrition and

tropical pastures and includes: supplementing feeds to increase productivity and reduce methane emissions (Meat and Livestock Australia funded); the role of iNDF in dairy cattle nutrition in subtropical Australia (Dairy Australia funded); Kikuyu ecotype Studies (Queensland Government's Department of Agricultural and Fisheries and Norco funded); and a range of probiotic studies (Australian Research Council, Ridley and Christian-Hansen funded).

Elective Courses

Academic Writing - Introduction to Academic Writing

Course description

This course will provide participants with a comprehensive overview of how to clearly and effectively communicate with an academic audience. Participants will learn about how to recognise and use the conventions of academic writing, and how to use and cite literature to support arguments. Introduction to Academic Writing is one of two academic writing related courses. You can choose to do one or both courses.

Course Convenor - Dr Kathryn Page



Kathryn is a soil scientist with over 20 years' experience. She has worked extensively on natural resource management issues relating to soil, including carbon and nitrogen cycling, the management of greenhouse gas emissions from soil, soil constraint management, and conservation agriculture.

Kathryn is passionate about science communication and helping other researchers communicate their findings to the broader scientific community. She has a strong publication record and extensive experience in developing written material for an academic audience. Kathryn regularly supports other

researchers to write funding proposals, reports, and papers for scientific journals.

Academic Writing - Writing an Empirical Journal Article

Course description

Formerly named Writing an Academic Report, this course will provide participants with a comprehensive overview of how to clearly and effectively communicate with an academic audience. Participants will learn how to write clear and impactful scientific reports, and how to negotiate the publication process. Writing an Empirical Journal Article is one of two academic writing related courses. You can choose to do one or both courses, however it is highly recommended that you complete the Introduction to Academic Writing course prior to enrolling in the Writing an Empirical Journal Article course.

Course Convenor - Dr Kathryn Page



Kathryn is a soil scientist with over 20 years' experience. She has worked extensively on natural resource management issues relating to soil, including carbon and nitrogen cycling, the management of greenhouse gas emissions from soil, soil constraint management, and conservation agriculture.

Kathryn is passionate about science communication and helping other researchers communicate their findings to the broader scientific community. She has a strong publication record and extensive experience in developing written material for an academic audience. Kathryn regularly supports other

researchers to write funding proposals, reports, and papers for scientific journals.

Mentoring Skills

Course description

This course will match participant mentors with participant mentees and guide them through the process of developing and maintaining an effective mentoring partnership together. If you wish to be a mentor, this is an opportunity for you to develop your skills and experience in mentoring others - you will typically have more than 10 years' professional experience. If you wish to be a mentee, this is an opportunity for you to receive mentorship from a more experienced professional - you will typically have less than 10 years' professional experience. Topics will include setting boundaries, developing personal understanding, setting and tracking career goals, and reflecting upon and reviewing the mentoring partnership.

Course Convenor - Dr Rebecca Spence



Rebecca has over 20 years' experience working with civil society and government leaders in a range of Asia Pacific countries. Her professional experience includes: delivering leadership skills training in developing countries; delivering conflict and fragility advisory services; gender and social inclusion advisory services; specialised training design in leadership for peace, and women, peace and security; capacity building; dialogue design; monitoring and evaluation; partnership brokering; and facilitation of high-level meetings and dialogues. Rebecca is currently Team Leader for the

design and delivery of three ACIAR-funded leadership training programs which cater to agricultural researchers and scientists in 23 countries.

Course convenor - Dr Phil Harrell



Phil is a sought-after public speaker, educator and consultant. Phil is a qualified Master Coach in Leading, Managing and Coaching by Values through the International Coach Federation. He has been presenting his unique and engaging style of leadership and management development training throughout Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific and South East Asia for over 25 years. These have included the design and delivery of major organisational change initiatives, executive leadership development, strategic planning, organisational team building and project management

consulting and training. Phil is currently supporting the University of New England's involvement with ACIAR funded projects.

Policy Influencing Skills

Course description

So that research does not sit in a report and has real world application, translating science into action is an essential next step in the implementation of research outcomes. The development of science into policy is one way to create action. Although there is no model or approach that works for every context, participants will develop their knowledge of core tools that can be implemented to identify the stakeholder landscape and how change can occur to influence policy.

Course Convenor - Dr Alex Van Der Meer Simo



Alex has over 15 years in the international research and development sector. Currently, Alex works as a Manager Research and Development at VicForests, a state-owned business responsible for the harvesting, regrowing, and commercial sale of timber from Victoria's state forests on behalf of the Victorian Government.

Alex' research has contributed to a deeper understanding about the economic and livelihood benefits that smallholder farmers in Laos derive from forested landscapes and rivers. This research led to his appointment

on a Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) funded research project in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Alex draws on his ACIAR network to broker partnerships between national research and government institutions to deliver more effective in-country impact.

During his doctoral and postdoctoral appointments, Alex has also co-authored research papers, multiple briefs and research summaries tailored to policy makers and field practitioners.

Qualitative Research Methods

Course description

This course provides an introduction to qualitative research methods, equipping participants with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to be able to identify the role of qualitative research methods in interdisciplinary research projects, apply common qualitative research methods used in ACIAR research projects, apply best practice principles to analyse qualitative data in interdisciplinary research, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative analysis methods used in real world case studies.

Course Convenor - Ms Alison Moore



Alison is an agricultural extension professional with 30 years' experience in community development with research experience in rural sociology. She has interdisciplinary science qualifications with a first degree in agricultural economics and a Masters in social planning and development. She has coordinated the community support program for Landcare in Queensland, Australia and has worked in Canada, Sweden, Finland, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands.

Alison is currently the manager of The University of Queensland's (UQ) Pinjarra Hills Research Precinct and most recently she has been a member of a UQ team delivering an ACIAR project with agricultural and veterinary

universities in Myanmar. She lectures in postgraduate courses of evaluation, social planning/community development, extension and stakeholder engagement. As a consultant she has conducted evaluations including with the Queensland Farmers Federation, Queensland University of Technology, the non-government sector in Timor-Leste, European Union and both Australian and Queensland Governments.

Quantitative Research Methods

Course description

This course provides an introduction to quantitative research methods, equipping participants with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to be able to identify the role of quantitative research methods in interdisciplinary research projects, evaluate common quantitative research methods used in ACIAR research projects, apply best practice principles to analyse quantitative data in interdisciplinary research, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative analysis methods used in real world case studies.

Course Convenor - Dr Gunnar Kirchhof



Gunnar is a Principal Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer at the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences (SAFS) at The University of Queensland (UQ). As lecturer of Land Resources Sciences at UQ, he has both led and collaborated on over half a dozen projects, and supervised numerous research staff and students. His research has focussed on topics including soil–water relationships; conservation agriculture and irrigation scheduling; soil erosion; water and nutrient balances; dry-land salinity management; and water recycling. Gunnar combines over 35 years of academic research, teaching and consulting experience, including designing and leading 12 Australian Government-funded Australia Awards short courses on topics such as

Dryland Farming and Irrigation for Water Resources Management for Agriculture.

Research in the Field

Course description

After completing this course, participants will have developed their knowledge of field research and be able to apply best practice principles to field and farmer surveys and to experimental design. The course will also cover sampling methods used in agricultural research and key considerations when collecting seed, soil and water samples.

Course Convenor - Dr Yash Dang



Yash is Principal Research Fellow at The University of Queensland (UQ) who possesses extensive experience in soil and nutrient management. He is currently leading a national project on low-cost carbon stock estimation using proximal and remote sensing. He is also leading the northern grains region in national Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) projects to identify and manage soil constraints, conservation agriculture, strategic tillage and sustainable land management practices. While his research spans the areas of crop production, much of his research focuses

on soil constraints. He has also coordinated soil carbon and soil quality projects in Queensland cropping soils.

Yash has great faith in engaging with the farmers to develop collaborative, participatory research projects to address soil health issues. He also has strong interest in proximal and remote sensing to identify constraints at farm and national scales for site-specific soil and nutrient management.

Research Proposal Skills

Course description

ACIAR and other international agricultural research organisations commission research from collaborators. Being able to develop a research proposal is therefore highly relevant to achieving collaboration on research projects. In this course, participants will understand and apply strategies to: formulate project ideas and locate funding opportunities; identify specific grant requirements, assemble a project team, and define broad project aims and activities; and structure and write a proposal document for maximum clarity and impact.

Course Convenor - Dr Kathryn Page



Kathryn is a soil scientist with over 20 years' experience. She has worked extensively on natural resource management issues relating to soil, including carbon and nitrogen cycling, the management of greenhouse gas emissions from soil, soil constraint management, and conservation agriculture.

Kathryn is passionate about science communication and helping other researchers communicate their findings to the broader scientific community. She has a strong publication record and extensive experience in developing written material for an academic audience. Kathryn regularly

supports other researchers to write funding proposals, reports, and papers for scientific journals.

Science Communication

Course description

In this course, we will explore why, to whom and how we can and should be communicating our science. We will unravel the various functions that science communication serves within the agricultural knowledge and information system, and for society at large. We will also review and practice how to design effective communication for specific audiences, using a variety of platforms and modes of communication, including written, verbal, visual and mixed formats.

Course Convenor - Associate Professor Elske van de Fliert



Elske is the Director of the Centre for Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland (UQ). She also facilitates and teaches in the Communication for Social Change field of study of the Master of Communication program. She obtained a PhD in Communication & Innovation in 1993 from Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands. Elske started her academic career at UQ in 2006, after two decades working in research, development and teaching positions in Indonesia, Vietnam, China and Sri Lanka, and across other countries in Asia and East Africa.

Elske's research interests include participatory development communication, facilitation of transdisciplinary research for sustainable and equitable development, and impact assessment of social change processes. Over the years at UQ, she has conducted research projects and consultancies in Indonesia, Timor Leste, Vietnam, Mongolia, Philippines and Azerbaijan. She has published widely on a range of topics related to participatory research and communication in sustainable rural development.

Scientific Data Analysis & Interpretation

Course description

Being able to analyse and interpret data is a crucial skill in an effective researcher. This course will enable participants to identify tools and processes to strengthen their data analysis and interpretation, have increased confidence to apply data analysis and interpretation, and identify areas for ongoing improvement to develop into a personal action plan.

Course Convenor - Dr Christina Birnbaum



Christina is an ecologist interested in plant ecology and plant-microbe-soil interactions. She uses field observations, combined with experimental manipulations and molecular tools to explore questions pertaining plant-microbe interactions in diverse ecosystems, including shrublands, saltmarshes, mangroves and peatlands, to inform invasive species management, restoration ecology and plant-microbial dynamics. Christina has gained 15+ years of research experience working in Europe, Australia and the USA.

In 2016, Christina co-founded the inaugural Ecological Society of Australia Plant-Soil Ecology research chapter (RC), where she now serves as a

lead-convener, an initiative to facilitate communication, networking and collaboration between academics, early career researchers, students and anyone else who is interested in plant-soil interactions in Australia.

Christina is a strong supporter of women and minorities in STEM through various mentoring schemes in the USA and Australia.

Values-based Leadership

Course description

Leadership skills are key to effectively managing research projects and teams to drive outcomes. As a result of completing this course, participants will be able to define values-based leadership, identify their personal leadership and effective communication practices within the contexts of their team, have an increased understanding of program management and strategic thinking, and have increased confidence to lead research teams.

Course Convenor - Dr Rebecca Spence



Rebecca has over 20 years' experience working with civil society and government leaders in a range of Asia Pacific countries. Her professional experience includes: delivering leadership skills training in developing countries; delivering conflict and fragility advisory services; gender and social inclusion advisory services; specialised training design in leadership for peace, and women, peace and security; capacity building; dialogue design; monitoring and evaluation; partnership brokering; and facilitation of

high-level meetings and dialogues. Rebecca is currently team leader for the design and delivery of three ACIAR-funded leadership training programs which cater to agricultural researchers and scientists in 23 countries.

Course Convenor - Dr Phil Harrell



Phil is a sought-after public speaker, educator and consultant. Phil is a qualified Master Coach in Leading, Managing and Coaching by Values through the International Coach Federation. He has been presenting his unique and engaging style of leadership and management development training throughout Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific and South East Asia for over 25 years. These have included the design and delivery of major

organisational change initiatives, executive leadership development, strategic planning, organisational team building and project management consulting and training. Phil is currently supporting the University of New England's involvement with ACIAR funded projects.