Brendan O’Keefe

A PROJECT to teach course co-ordinators how to become better academic leaders will soon form the basis of a new higher education qualification, its creators hope.

Curtin University learning support network director Bruce Shortland-Jones told the HES he would negotiate to gain award recognition for participants in the project, which has won the backing of the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

The institute will fund the project with $197,000 from its first round of grants, worth more than $3 million, for developing leadership in universities. Professor Shortland-Jones said: “We will be making links to higher education qualifications for a graduate certificate in teaching and learning, or negotiating for the project to become a unit in an MBA.”

“[We hope] there’s a flow-on from professional learning to further qualifications.”

Curtin dean of teaching and learning in health sciences Sue Jones said the project grew from recognition that course co-ordinators received little training for their roles.

The project aimed to “improve student experience by enhancing leadership capabilities, to help co-ordinators improve course quality and strengthen peer relationships”.

Professor Shortland-Jones said most universities had leadership training but it was not well understood.

A cohort of 20 participants will undergo a 12-module pilot program, including personal leadership development and managing people, programs and curriculums.

The pilot would be one semester in the development, one in delivery and one in evaluation and refining, Ms Jones said.

The Curtin-ATN project is one of 17 from 32 universities to receive part of the Carrick Institute’s leadership grants. The project group is made up of ATN teaching and learning committee directors from Curtin, the University of South Australia, Queensland University of Technology, the University of Technology, Sydney and RMIT University.
Leading the way: The Curtin team, from left, Rick Ladyshewsky, Sue Jones, Beverley Oliver and Bruce Shortland-Jones

Picture: Colin Murty