Dr Albert Atkin

Dr Albert Atkin has a simple but extremely effective approach when it comes to his teaching. He believes wholeheartedly that success comes more easily for students when learning is fun, expectations are clear, and they feel their contribution is valued. Atkin injects humour and fun into his lectures, and students love the relaxed atmosphere he creates in the classroom.

“I try to make objectives explicit, and I always listen to students’ perspectives and opinions. It probably sounds corny, but every time I teach, I aim to have fun, be honest, be helpful and value everyone’s contributions. And when I teach, I also have fun and learn lots from my students.”

“Incredibly entertaining, eye opening, informative and engaging lectures; kind, caring, reasonable, realistic and fair teacher; embodies what he teaches very passionately. He doesn’t let any tangent go to waste. Dr Albert Atkin is an absolutely phenomenal teacher. He is incredibly engaging when teaching his lectures and makes learning so easy and simple. He can make extremely hard concepts easy to understand and explains them to the nth degree. As an external student, I could not have asked for a better lecturer.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student

Dr David Baker

Dr David Baker believes that seeing the course – any course – from a student’s point of view and teaching it accordingly is a great way to engage his students. He uses plain-speaking and ‘straight-shooting’ language when outlining what is required of his students in the given unit or course. He says that as simple as it sounds, it can go a long way towards setting them up for success.

“I have made a focal part of my seminar content about extensive training for writing academic essays. Since instituting this change, the average grade has risen considerably, and this has better prepared students for subsequent assessments in their university career. Always being available by email and a dose of humour in lectures doesn’t hurt either.”

“Best teacher I’ve had at university. Actively engaged every class. Presents lectures and course content in an intelligent and easy to learn manner. Knows the content back to front and spends time discussing content in depth with students. Has a great sense of humour, and knows how to use levers, such as humour in the right context, to get a class to engage. What I imagined university being on its best day, and David Baker should be commended for consistently bringing that atmosphere to his classes.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student
Fred Smith

Fred Smith inspires his students to perform at their best by challenging them to think critically and exercise skills that reflect those that would be required of them in the workplace. His intelligence-related units are designed to challenge students in both of these areas, ensuring that their learning is both practical and useful to them as they transition into the security profession.

“The units I have developed for the Department of Security Studies and Criminology create conditions where students must engage and perform at a professional level, producing work that reflects the level of responsibility and subject matter they will experience in the workplace.”

“Fred goes above and beyond for his students, always encouraging them, supporting them and seeking out opportunities for them to excel both academically and professionally. His classes are engaging, and he provides a variety of ways for students to put the material he teaches into practice.”

“Fred is not just the world’s greatest educator, he is also a mentor. His classes are not just theoretical and thorough, but they’re practical and fun. He engages every learning style. Most significant is his empathy, kindness and encouragement.”

– 2019 Macquarie Students

Associate Professor Kira Westaway, Michael Rampe and Matthew Cabanag

**Team winners**

**Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Learning Innovation (Team nomination)**

Associate Professor Kira Westaway, a lecturer with a passion for caves, sediments, fossils and discovery; Michael Rampe, a senior designer, a technologist and founder of the Pedestal 3D platform; and Matthew Cabanag, a VR guru and portable VR rig builder, have worked together to create REIM – Reality Embedded in Motion – a discipline-connecting, imagination-capturing tool that’s taking the Macquarie campus by storm.

“REIM was born out of a desire to provide students with an authentic learning environment that would take them to places we could never normally go and to push the virtual reality revolution into education. Together, we’re shaping the future of immersive technologies at Macquarie.”

– Associate Professor Kira Westaway
Roderick Smith

Highly commended
Vice-Chancellor's Learning and Teaching
Student Nominated Award

Roderick Smith recently took the Law School mooting team to Geneva for the Nelson Mandela world competition. Macquarie came second out of 190 participating universities. After their win, one student wrote, “Rod, somehow, you transformed me into a better mooter despite having been doing this for five years. I probably wouldn’t have improved my style if you hadn’t suggested subtle changes in the always respectful fashion you did. We wouldn’t have made the final without you”.

“I encourage students to go beyond their comfort zone, trust the process of learning in a safe zone, take risks and be proud of their achievements.”

Dr Saartje Tack

Highly commended
Vice-Chancellor’s Learning and Teaching
Sessional Staff Award

Dr Saartje Tack’s teaching aims to empower all students to speak up and think differently about the world we live in. She encourages students to critically interrogate the ways in which structures of oppression operate in all aspects of our lives, providing them with the conceptual and theoretical tools to investigate how inequalities affect them individually, and the impact of inequality on the world.

“I provide my students with the tools to investigate how inequality – as varied as those embedded in institutions, everyday practices, our categories of understanding the world and popular culture – affect their own position in the world, their choices, and whether or not they feel comfortable making their voices heard. It’s only if we view speaking up as a political act that we can begin to challenge the status quo.”

“Rod’s teaching style is so professional, engaging and enthusiastic. He’s very compassionate and caring towards his students and genuinely wanted to see us succeed. He identifies when students are struggling and reframes the content – complex legal concepts – in a way that ensures we understand it.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student
Dr Sonya Willis

🌟 Highly commended
    Vice-Chancellor’s Learning and Teaching Student Nominated Award

Dr Sonya Willis’ approach to teaching law is about fairness, knowledge and practical legal ability, and she works hard to create a learning environment where these three attributes are enhanced in her students. She also inspires her students with her own passion for the subject and her engaging style, and by explicitly and practically applying the principles she teaches.

“I aim to teach effective communication and interpersonal skills through my own interactions with students as well as by direct teaching. I train students to correspond like lawyers both explicitly and by example – demonstrating the value of politeness, careful wording and thoughtful correspondence. I also care deeply about my students’ wellbeing.”

“Sonya incites passion in her students with her engaging and interesting lectures. She’s incredibly dedicated and enthusiastic about seeing us achieve academically. Her ability to deconstruct complex concepts and procedures, then relay this information effectively, has never failed to amaze me.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student

Dr Yves-Heng Lim, Fred Smith and Dr Adam Lockyer

🌟 Highly commended
    Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Teaching Excellence (Team nomination)

The team believes that students perform at their best when they’re empowered to take full ownership of their learning. A simulation unit that the team developed achieves this by creating conditions in which students are put in a unique position of responsibility. In the main scenario-driven simulation, students act as experts in their respective fields and their team relies on their expert judgement to make policy recommendations.

“The recognition of this domain-specific expertise by their peers plays a critical role for students, bolstering their motivation and self-confidence.”

– Dr Yves-Heng Lim
Zara Bending inspires her students to succeed by demonstrating that their knowledge and skills have real-world application, and their work can make a difference in the world, no matter what they’re studying. She is focused on providing a learning environment that empowers her students towards creating a purposeful, meaningful career for themselves.

“My students know that they do not need to wait for the ink to dry on their testamurs to have a positive impact and pave their own way to careers with purpose. Together we have drafted policies for international NGOs, made submissions to parliamentary inquiries, organised conferences, drafted petitions, conducted court visits, and even collaborated towards high-impact research.”

“Zara is an enthusiastic, caring and strong leader and teacher. She shares so many unique experiences that make her teaching both truly inspiring and encouraging. She sees great qualities, in all her students and dedicates her time to nurture those qualities so she can see us grow into successful professionals.”

“Through her engaging lectures and general worldliness (she has great stories), she motivates all her students to strive for their individual ambitions regardless of how unattainable they may first appear.”

– 2019 Macquarie Students