

Ian Marshman
Senior Vice-Principal



TO : Deputy Vice-Chancellors
Vice-Principals
Deputy-Principals
Heads of Administrative Departments/Sections
Faculty General Managers

COPY : Vice-Chancellor
Deans
University Secretary
Director, MRIO
General Manager, Office of the Senior Vice-Principal

FROM : Mr. Ian Marshman
Senior Vice-Principal

SUBJECT : **Preparation of papers for Council, Academic Board
and University Committees**

DATE : 3 March 2004

Late last year, the Chancellor and Chancellor Elect undertook a round of discussions with Council members to ascertain how well the University Council operates. One of the key issues raised in those discussions was the desire for a more consistent and accessible approach to the way in which papers are prepared for and presented to Council and its key committees. In particular, Council members have expressed the wish for a more concise or executive style presentation of the matters requiring determination rather than the submission of a large volume of paper relating to the history of the matter under consideration.

At its Planning Conference in February this year, Council asked the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Vice-Principal to introduce updated protocols about the presentation of papers for Council and its committees.

In light of this advice, and after consultation with the Vice-Chancellor, the following arrangements are to be implemented in relation to the preparation of papers for Council, Academic Board and all University Committees.

- Where practicable, papers should not exceed three pages in length. Where it is considered essential that a paper exceed three pages a one or two page Executive Summary must accompany the paper.
- Any attachments to a paper must be kept to a minimum. Where the purpose of attachments is to provide antecedent background to the matter under deliberation, it is expected that the requisite background information will be provided in summary form in the paper itself rather than requiring the reader to access the information by resort to attachments.
- The structure that is to be followed in the preparation of papers is as follows:

A. HEADINGB. PURPOSE

A brief section setting out the matter(s) that give rise to the need for the paper or need to be decided.

C. BACKGROUND

This section sets out any relevant history or context which is pertinent to the matters under deliberation. It is important that this section makes appropriate reference to all key issues that are relevant to the current matter, rather than merely referring to past documents as attachments. This section might also set out the policy context (e.g. refer to the relevant part of the University's Strategic Plan in which the matter is to be considered).

D. ISSUES/INTENDED OUTCOMES

This section sets out the policy, financial, relationship or other issues that are pertinent to the matter under consideration. This is likely to be the most substantive part of the paper. Where the substance of the paper is about the achievement of identified outcomes, this section should specify those outcomes and any outputs relevant to their achievement.

E. OPTIONS

Where an important or sensitive issue is the subject of the paper it is good practice to include a brief analysis of the most significant options available to the decision making body.

As part of the identification of the range of options it is important also to include a brief analysis of the pros and cons of each of the available options.

F. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is essential that any proposal with funding consequences sets out unambiguously what those consequences are, and the proposed sources of funding

N.B. This section is not required where it is clear that the paper does not deal with funding.

G. RISK ASSESSMENT

For any substantive policy or funding proposals it is vital that the paper includes a formal risk assessment, identifying the risks, the risk rating (ie probability / consequences) and the risk management strategy. For major proposals a summary risk assessment in the paper would be accompanied by a more detailed attachment.

H. IMPLEMENTATION

This section sets out how, if the proposal referred to in the paper were approved, it is expected that it would subsequently be implemented. The extent to which the implementation arrangements need to be convened will vary depending on the nature of the matter under consideration. However, it is always necessary to identify the officer(s) responsible for implementation and what their subsequent reporting responsibilities will be.

I. RECOMMENDATION

This section sets out the specific recommendation that Council, Academic Board or other University committees are being asked to approve. The recommendation must be self-contained and not merely refer to discussion earlier in the paper.

J. PROPONENT / AUTHOR

The paper should end with the name of the chief proponent of the paper. Where the author is someone other than the proponent it is appropriate for the authors name also to be included.

N.B. Within the University Administration any paper for Council a Council committee on the Academic Board must include the name of a Vice-Principal, Deputy Principal, the University Secretary or the Director, Melbourne Research and Innovation Office or, in the case of a paper for the Academic Board, the Academic Secretary. Papers must be cleared with the Vice-Principal or other senior officers before his or her name is added to the paper.

- Where an Executive Summary is necessary it must contain, in summary form, the following items from the structure set out above:
 - A. HEADING
 - B. PURPOSE
 - C. Key ISSUES/INTENDED OUTCOMES
 - D. SUMMARY OF OPTIONS
 - E. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (if relevant)
 - F. KEY IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS
 - G. RISK ASSESSMENT
 - Where relevant, the Executive Summary should refer to that part of the paper where the risks and risk management strategy are discussed.
 - H. RECOMMENDATIONS
 - A separate Summary of Recommendations attachment can be referred to if need be.
 - I. PROPONENT/AUTHOR

- The University Secretary is to be responsible for monitoring compliance with these protocols. I seek your cooperation in ensuring that these revised protocols are put into immediate effect. Further advice about their implementation may be obtained from Ms Jennifer Mann, General Manager, Office of the Senior Vice-Principal, Mr Len Currie, University Secretary, or myself.



Ian Marshman
Senior Vice-Principal