

**Confirmed**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**

**POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS COMMITTEE**

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING**

An extraordinary meeting of the Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committee was held on Friday 20 June 2008 at 10.00 am in the Moot Court Old Quad to consider the Master of Science course proposal. All other matters were held over until the next regular meeting.

**Present:** Professor M Elgar, Professor L Hawthorne, Professor B Lukas, Associate Professor R Misson (Chair), Associate Professor A O'Brien, Professor N Olekalns, Professor P Pattison, Professor R Pettman, Ms T Tjia

**In attendance:** Dr R Edis, Dr L Godden, Ms P Pepperell (Secretary), Ms J Reese, Mr A Schultz

**BUSINESS**

**A Formal Matters**

**A01 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Ms S Beattie, Ms P Fernandez, Associate Professor K Love, Mr R Hillbrich, Associate Professor E Ozanne, Professor R Speed, Professor R Slocombe and Professor G Stevens.

**H Course Proposals**

**H01 Master of Science**

The Committee received the course proposal for the Master of Science noting that it had received in principle support from both the Committee and the Academic Board in November 2007. The Committee also had before it tabled papers including letters from the Deans, Shepherds' reports and subsequent changes to the proposal. The Chair noted that the proposal would go to the APMC in the afternoon of 20 June 2008 for consideration and that any recommendation from the Committee would be dependent on the outcome of the APMC meeting.

The Committee noted the proposal involved almost all faculties of the University including Arts, Engineering, Land and Food Resources, Melbourne Business School, Economics and Commerce and Victorian College of the Arts. The course is characterised by 3 strands; discipline modules, professional tools module and project modules. In the professional specialisations, the project module is usually a single 12.5 point subject. In the research-oriented streams, the project is a substantial research project, varying from 50 to 125 points, thus providing a pathway for students going on to PhD or other research degrees.

In discussion it was noted that:

- The program was conceptually excellent but there was concern over the detail of assessments in the subjects.
- The assessment requirements varied both across and within the different tagged specialisations and it would be desirable to have a consistent approach whereby points and weightings were allocated evenly. For example there were varied weightings for the same length (in time) in mathematics subjects' examinations.
- There should be some consonance between the time expected to be devoted to an item of assessment and its weighting.

- Details provided for assessments needed to include the percentage value of assessments, the size in words/time, and the timing of the assessment in the semester. If the expected outcome was to be in a specific form, such as a publishable article, that needed to be stated.
- While the rationale for the differences in assessment expectations may be justifiable based on discipline, the nature of those differences needed to be explained to students and it would be useful to have a statement for their benefit to indicate why the variation was necessary.
- The subject descriptions in some cases were not always easy to follow or clearly explained and the objectives statements generally required improvement.
- Where students enter with equivalences, and so are exempt from particular core subjects, they would pick up additional elective subjects. This would be made clear to students entering the course.
- Students who exited from the research streams before completion would not be eligible for entrance into research programs or be eligible for PhD candidature and would need to plan their exit point carefully, with advice from the faculty, to ensure they were eligible to take out a postgraduate diploma in that discipline. This needed to be clarified in the exit point statements.
- The professional programs were primarily aimed at those students who did not want to go on to honours or research programs.
- The prerequisites in the subject statements were often not relevant to students from other universities.

The Committee agreed to give in principle approval to the proposal but noted it required more work taking into account the comments made by the Committee. It was further agreed that, subject to appropriate revision and the support of the APMC, Professor Misson and Associate Professor O'Brien would consider the revised proposal and that either Professor Misson would give final approval executively or a recommendation would be brought to the next meeting. Professor Pattison would meet with Professor Elgar to discuss the timing of the submission of the course proposal to the Board.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am.