

Confirmed

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

MEETING 13/07

Meeting 13/07 of the Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committee was held on Friday 7 December 2007 at 10.00 am in the Jim Potter Meeting Room, Old Physics Conference Centre.

Present: Professor A Christie, Professor K Darian-Smith, Associate Professor C Duffield, Professor M Elgar, Associate Professor R Misson (Chair), Associate Professor E Ozanne, Professor P Pattison, Associate Professor R Pettman, Professor R Speed, Associate Professor G Webb, Mr A Williams, Ms F Zammit

In attendance: Mr M Coyle (for item 4), Ms J Reese, Mr C Reid (Secretary)

BUSINESS

1 Formal Matters

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Professor C Cameron, Professor M Elgar, Associate Professor S Elliott, Dr L Godden, Professor L Hawthorne, Professor G Hutchinson, Professor R Slocombe, Ms M Smith, Professor G Stevens and Professor R Strugnell.

2 Minutes

2.1 Minutes of meeting 12/07 (9 November 2007)

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting, with the note that Professor Christie should be listed amongst those present.

2.2 PCPC Action Sheet 12/07

The Committee noted the action sheet as circulated. It was noted that the Academic Programs Approval Process Working Group (formerly the Blue Book Working Group) was taking up some matters listed in the action sheet concerning the design of the course approval form and the course approval process.

3 Matters Arising Not Dealt with Elsewhere

Nil

4 Policy Issues

Mr Michael Coyle, Executive Officer of the Policy and Procedures Working Group, attended for this item. He indicated that the draft policies had been widely circulated in the University for consultation.

4.1 Proposed Unsatisfactory Progress Policy

The Committee received the draft policy and noted that it was proposed that there should be two new triggers for unsatisfactory progress: exceeding the maximum time for completion of the course, and withdrawal from full enrolment. The policy also provided that students could return to good standing under particular conditions. The Committee noted that lecturers were sometimes reluctant to fail students who were known to be having problems, and so the requirement that all subjects had to have a result before an Unsatisfactory Process hearing could take place might be problematic. The Committee also noted that a student's withdrawal from a compulsory subject they had already failed once might provide a trigger for Unsatisfactory Progress. There was discussion on the timeliness of at-risk interventions, and it was suggested that students' mid-semester assessment could be considered and their records could be flagged at departmental level for follow-up.

It was suggested that it would be valuable to develop progress rules for postgraduate students undertaking minor theses.

The Committee noted that amendments would be made to the draft policy and it would be returned for further consideration in the New Year.

4.2 Proposed Subject Variation Dates Policy

The Committee noted that the draft policy was intended to extend students' ability to self-manage their enrolment, particularly their withdrawal from subjects, and to bring into line withdrawal dates and dates for assessment of fee liability. The Committee noted that problems could arise in applying the policy to intensive subjects since the census date might in some cases be after the period of intensive delivery. It was suggested that, rather than setting the census date as the last date for student withdrawal, a student withdrawal date could be prescribed for each subject to take account of the teaching period of that subject.

The Committee also noted a potential problem where students could withdraw themselves from subjects but not be able to enrol in other subjects to maintain their desired study load.

The Committee agreed to approve in principle the proposal to permit students greater self-management in enrolment by being able to withdraw online in the first two weeks of semester, and the proposal to align withdrawal dates with census dates. The Committee noted that the draft policy would be amended and returned for further consideration.

5 Chairs' Reports

5.1 UGPC Report

The Committee was advised that Undergraduate Programs Committee had discussed the draft policies listed under item 4 above and had discussed the proposed course approval process listed under item 7.2 below.

5.2 TALQAC Report

Nil

5.3 Teaching and Learning Development Committee

Nil

6 Student Members' Reports

The Committee was advised that the Council of Australian Postgraduate Student Associations was considering the issue of possible litigation over some teaching practices.

7 Working Group Reports

7.1 Examinations Working Group

The Committee received the proposal from the Examinations Working Group that the Group should be reconstituted as a standing sub-committee because of the need for it to consider examinations matters on an ongoing basis. It was suggested that the group should be made a sub-committee of TALQAC, as the operation of examinations is primarily related to the quality of teaching and associated assessment. It was noted that, as the Group currently considers examinations matters relating to coursework programs, its title should be Coursework Examinations Sub-committee. The Committee agreed to endorse the recommendation from the Examinations Working Group in the terms noted above.

The Chair of the Group noted that the Group had been asked to consider the implementation of the University policy stipulating that assessment in a subject should not involve a single examination that counts for 100% of the assessment for the subject. She indicated that the Group had attempted to collect information from faculties on their assessment practices, but few had responded. It was agreed that the matter should be put on hold for the time being and that, in due course, TALQAC might monitor the implementation of the policy. It was also suggested that APMC might coordinate the collection of such data on assessment practices, and that an APMC representative might be added to the Coursework Examinations Sub-committee when it is established.

7.2 Academic Programs Approval Process Working Group

The Committee received the circulated outline of the proposed course approval process that would apply from 2008, noting that the present course approval process must be modified to take into account the establishment of graduate schools, the Academic Programs Management Committee and the Committee of Deans. New course approval forms would also be put into operation from 2008.

The Committee noted that, although APMC is intended to be a representative body, neither the Melbourne Business School nor the School of Enterprise are represented on it. The Committee was advised that this matter had been raised with the Provost, and it was noted that the Melbourne Business School Committee, which is a committee of Academic Board, allows representation of the School in the University. It was suggested that, where academic entities are not represented on APMC, sub-groups of APMC should be established that include representatives of those bodies, particularly where collaborative enterprises are being proposed.

The Committee noted that the explanatory notes guiding completion of Part B of the course proposal form needed to be updated. Some typographical errors also needed to be corrected. With these notations, the Committee agreed to endorse the processes outlined.

8 Course Proposals

Nil

9 Student Awards

9.1 New Student Awards

Nil

9.2 Major Changes to Student Awards

Nil

9.3 Minor Changes to Student Awards

Nil

10 Quarterly Reports

10.1 School of Enterprise Report 4/07

The Committee received the School of Enterprise Postgraduate Quarterly Report as circulated. The Chair indicated that he intended to discuss with the School of Enterprise matters relating to the timing of assessment and details of assessment in some subjects.

10.2 Faculty of Science Report 2/07

The Committee received and adopted the Faculty of Science Postgraduate Quarterly Report 2/07, as circulated.

11 Matters dealt with by the Chair and/or President, Academic Board

The Committee noted matters approved by the Chair/President of Academic Board since PCPC meeting 12/07:

Executive approval by Chair of revised course proposals:

Master of Science

Master of Business Administration/Master of Information Systems and Master of Information Systems/Postgraduate Diploma in Management

12 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked members of the Committee for their contributions to the work of the Committee in 2007. The President of Academic Board thanked the Chair of the Committee for his work as chair, noting that it had been a particularly demanding year because of the introduction of the Melbourne Model.

13 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Friday 15 February 2008 at 10.00 am in Moot Court, Old Quad.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am.