

ACADEMIC BOARD – MEETING 4/02 (23 MAY 2002)

ENTRY PATHWAYS TO MASTERS COURSES Notes for Faculties

Selection Procedures Committee (SPC) has approved the following document for Faculties in their preparation of pathways for coursework Masters programs. No other guide has been endorsed or approved by SPC.

Background

A working group chaired by Prof Jon Robinson prepared a Report (Robinson Report) on Coursework Masters Programs, which was adopted by Academic Board on 13 December 2001.

The Robinson Report identified three broad types of Masters courses: 1. 'traditional' masters; 2. course enhancing professional specialisation; 3. courses offering applicants a new field of professional study. A wide range of pathways were acknowledged for these three types of Masters (and other graduate coursework) programs.

Entry Pathways

The pathway(s) depends on combinations of 1. undergraduate degree; 2. preliminary study; and 3. relevant professional or work experience.

Entry pathways must ensure that students are likely to succeed in the course. This requires careful consideration to ensure that applicants using different pathways are equally able to succeed in the course. Masters courses involve at least 100 points of study at Masters level, and student entry pathways must ensure likelihood of success at this level.

Assuring SPC

Faculties must assure SPC that the entry pathways proposed are appropriate for the type of Masters degree. In many cases, the entry requirements in the documentation (*Proposal for the Introduction of New Programs* Item 14b Entry Requirements) submitted by faculties to SPC are adequate for SPC's decision-making on entry. In some cases, SPC will seek further assurances.

Appropriate Bachelor Degree Pathway

Academic Board endorsed the proposition that all applicants must have completed an appropriate Bachelors degree as a prerequisite for a 100 point Masters degree.

Whether an undergraduate degree is appropriate refers to:

1. cognateness
2. length
3. level.

In addition to an appropriate Bachelors degree, and depending on the applicant's experience and background, entry into a Masters degree may be direct or through preliminary study (such as certificates and diplomas, professional work experience or some combination of certificates and work experience).

No Appropriate Bachelors Degree Pathway

In cases where applicants do not have an appropriate Bachelors degree, then, normally, applicants will need to undertake 100 points of preliminary study or a combination of preliminary study and work experience. Some preliminary study is required, while allowing work or professional experience to be substituted for up to 50 points of preliminary study.

Summary: Range of Pathways

The Robinson Report provided Faculties with a range of entry pathways into Masters (and other graduate coursework) programs. These pathways depend on the preparation of the student in terms of their undergraduate degree, preliminary study and work and professional experience.

In certain cases, there may be no direct entry, since the course requires work experience by all applicants. In other cases, work experience may be substituted for preliminary study. The pathways will depend on the nature, length and level of the course. There is no general “rule” that covers pathways for graduate coursework study.

SPC and Approval of Pathways

SPC will work with Faculties to ensure pathways that ensure applicants the likelihood of success in the course.

Academic judgement is required to specify the pathway for a Masters (or other graduate coursework) degree. SPC expects that Faculties can assure SPC that the pathways is appropriate taking into consideration:

1. type of Masters (or postgraduate coursework) program
2. type of undergraduate degree (cognateness, length and level)
3. number of points of preliminary study
4. work and professional experience.

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Chair, Selection Procedures Committee
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