

ACADEMIC BOARD – MEETING 5/02 (20 JUNE 2002)

Masters level subjects

The recommendations for postgraduate coursework courses adopted by Board in late 2001 included a requirement that a masters course should comprise a minimum of 100 points of masters level subjects. Several queries have arisen as to what constitutes a masters level subject. A masters level subject (level 5) should take the student beyond level 4 which includes honours, postgraduate diploma* and fourth year** subjects. Selection procedures require that an approved pathway includes an appropriate degree (and may include other preliminary study, or professional work experience, or a combination of both) sufficient to enable a student to succeed in a Masters course. Masters level (or level 5) has been left to faculties to define and ultimately to “certify” and, apart from the level of study, regard should be had to aims and objectives, generic skills, depth and breadth, presentation, assessment and, in particular, prerequisites.

Additional queries and comments have included:

- The inability of faculties to resource separate suites of level 4 **and** level 5 subjects;
- The eligibility of honours, postgraduate diploma and fourth year (degree with honours) students to enrol in level 5 subjects; and
- The eligibility of masters students to enrol in level 4 subjects in the final year of the Masters course.

Members of PCPSC have agreed that it is appropriate for honours, postgraduate diploma and fourth year (degree with honours) students to enrol in level 5 subjects provided that certain conditions are met as set out below.

It has also been discussed whether subjects taught at both level 4 and level 5 should be allowed in coursework masters. This is only acceptable if the subject at level 4 and at masters level is clearly differentiated as set out below.

The following guidelines are therefore proposed:

1. Honours, postgraduate diploma and fourth year (degree with honours) students may be allowed to enrol in masters level subjects provided that:
 - the faculty is satisfied that relevant prerequisites and/or preliminary studies have been satisfactorily completed;
 - progression from level 4 to level 5 subjects is demonstrated by a reference to relevant prerequisites.
2. Masters students can only include level 5 subjects in the 100 points of masters level subjects.
3. When a Faculty wishes to offer a subject at both level 4 and level 5:
 - lectures and seminars/tutorials may be shared by level 4 and level 5 students;
 - shared subjects must be described in such a way as to differentiate between the requirements for level 4 and the requirements for level 5 by including some separate content, separate seminars or tutorials and separate assessment for Masters students;
 - shared subjects must have different codes, one for level 4 enrolments and the other for level 5 enrolments (possibly with the term “Masters” in the level 5 subject title);
 - students cannot obtain credit twice in a “shared” subject, ie, credit in a level 5 subject for which they have already received credit at level 4.

Note: It is recognized that offering a subject at level 4 and level 5 is a compromise and that a Masters course will not consist entirely of “shared” subjects.

4. Shared subjects with different codes are to be treated as the same subject for the purposes of business cases and the avoidance of penalties for small class sizes. (Note that at the time of writing (April 2002) the penalties for small class sizes do not apply to honours and masters subjects.)
5. That these recommendations apply as relevant to masters by research including masters by advanced seminars and shorter thesis.

- * Postgraduate diploma includes postgraduate certificate.
- ** Fourth year includes fifth and sixth years of Bachelors courses and refers to students undertaking degrees with honours