

ACADEMIC BOARD – MEETING 3/02 (18 APRIL 2002)



**THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE**

**NINE PRINCIPLES GUIDING
TEACHING AND LEARNING
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**

**The framework for a first-class
teaching and learning environment**

March 2002

Nine Principles Guiding Teaching and Learning in the University of Melbourne is a statement on the scholarship of teaching and learning in a research-led University and a reference guide to good practice and University resources. It has been developed on behalf of the Academic Board by Richard James and Gabrielle Baldwin of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education.

18 March 2002

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MAINTAINING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR FIRST-CLASS HIGHER EDUCATION

Nine educational principles underpin the University of Melbourne's teaching and learning objectives. These principles represent the shared view within the University of the processes and conditions that contribute to first-class higher education.

NINE GUIDING PRINCIPLES	1. An atmosphere of intellectual excitement
	2. An intensive research culture permeating all teaching and learning activities
	3. A vibrant and embracing social context
	4. An international and culturally diverse curriculum and learning community
	5. Explicit concern and support for individual development
	6. Clear academic expectations and standards
	7. Learning cycles of experimentation, feedback and assessment
	8. Premium quality learning resources and technologies
	9. An adaptive curriculum

The nine guiding principles are closely interrelated and interdependent. The first four principles relate to the broad intellectual environment of the University while the remaining five describe specific components of the teaching and learning process.

Together, these principles reflect the balance of evidence in the research literature on the conditions under which student learning thrives. Each principle has a direct bearing on the quality of students' intellectual development and their overall experience of university life, regardless of whether they are undergraduate, postgraduate coursework or postgraduate research students.

Generic statements of beliefs, values and practices cannot completely capture the diversity and variation present in a large and complex University. However, the underlying principles presented in this document hold true despite variations across the disciplines in traditions of scholarship and in philosophies and approaches towards teaching and learning.

The ultimate objective of the University of Melbourne's teaching and learning programs is to prepare graduates with distinctive attributes, which are later described. The purpose of the

present document is to guide the maintenance and enhancement of teaching and learning standards that serve this end. It is a statement of what the University community values. As such, it has aspirational qualities and the suggestions for good practice offered provide laudable benchmarks to which the University is committed within the availability of resources.

Responsibilities

The maintenance of the University of Melbourne's teaching and learning environment is the responsibility of the whole institution. This document identifies various University, Faculty and individual responsibilities, though not all of the detailed implications apply equally to all members of the University community.

The Academic Board has major overarching responsibility for the supervision and development of all academic activities of the University of Melbourne, including the preservation of high standards in teaching and research. In regard to teaching, the University, under the guidance of the Academic Board:

- recognises and rewards excellence in teaching through its policies in staff recruitment, selection and promotion criteria;
- provides extensive opportunities for professional development in teaching and learning;
- develops and maintains high quality teaching and learning spaces and resources;
- encourages and supports innovative approaches to teaching and learning, including through the application of advancements in information and communications technology; and
- provides mechanisms for on-going curriculum review involving all stakeholders (students, community, industry, professional associations, and academics) of the content, structure and delivery of courses and the learning experiences of students.

The University is committed to the scholarship of teaching in the belief that academic staff in a research-led environment should apply scholarly principles to teaching and to the leadership of student learning. In practice, the scholarship of teaching involves academic staff being familiar with and drawing on research into the relationship between teaching and student learning. It also involves evaluating and reflecting on the effects on student learning of curriculum design, teaching styles and approaches to assessment. The present document is designed to support consideration of the University's obligations in terms of the scholarship of teaching and to assist in the review and enhancement of the quality of personal teaching practices.

Students have responsibilities as well for the quality of teaching and learning. The effectiveness of a higher education environment cannot be expressed simply in terms of the challenge, facilitation, support and resources provided by teaching staff and the University as an institution. Students have complementary responsibilities. Students have responsibilities for their personal progress through their level of engagement, commitment and time devoted to study. Students also have obligations to contribute to the creation and maintenance of an effective overall teaching and learning environment. These obligations include:

- collaborating with other students in learning;
- contributing to the University community and participating in life beyond the classroom;

- developing a capacity for tolerating complexity and, where appropriate, ambiguity;
- respecting the viewpoints of others;
- being reflective, creative, open-minded and receptive to new ideas;
- actively participating in discussion and debate;
- seeking support and guidance from staff when necessary;
- accepting the responsibility to move towards intellectual independence;
- respecting and complying with the conventions of academic scholarship, especially with regard to the authorship of ideas; and
- providing considered feedback to the University and its staff on the quality of teaching and University services.

PRINCIPLE 1

AN ATMOSPHERE OF INTELLECTUAL EXCITEMENT

The excitement of ideas is the catalyst for learning

Intellectual excitement is probably the most powerful motivating force for students and teachers alike. Effective university teachers are passionate about ideas. They stimulate the curiosity of their students, channel it within structured frameworks, and reveal their own intellectual interests. While students have strong vocational reasons for enrolling in courses of study, unless they are genuinely interested in what they are studying their chances of success are low. Pascarella and Terenzini's (1998) meta-analysis of research on the effects of university education concluded that the evidence unequivocally indicates that greater learning and cognitive development occur when students are closely engaged and involved with the subjects they are studying.

The research evidence shows that most undergraduates commence university with a strong interest and curiosity in the field they have selected, providing a strong foundation on which to build. Centre for the Study of Higher Education research (McInnis & James, 1994) revealed that for the majority of students in a large national sample of first-year students, studying in a field that really interested them was a very important reason for enrolling. Another CSHE study of applicants for university places (James, Baldwin & McInnis, 1999) showed that intrinsic interest in the area of knowledge was among the most important influences on their choice of a university course. University of Melbourne graduates confirm these sentiments. When asked for their views of their educational experience at the University some time after graduation, graduates consistently stress the influence of staff who were excited about ideas, and the importance to them of studying in an atmosphere of intellectual stimulation and discovery.

Implications for practice

- Subjects are planned and presented in terms of ideas, theories and concepts.
- Conflicting theories and approaches are incorporated into courses to stimulate discussion and debate.
- Knowledge is presented in terms of broader contexts – intellectual, social, political, historical – to help students understand the significance of what they are studying.
- Students' personal engagement is fostered by teaching which encourages them to relate their learning to their own experiences.
- Staff convey enthusiasm for the subject matter and work to provoke students' curiosity.
- Course and subjects are revised regularly to incorporate new theories and approaches.
- Staff model the excitement of intellectual exploration when working with students.
- Students are given opportunities to make discoveries for themselves and creativity is rewarded.
- Innovative approaches to teaching and learning are incorporated into existing courses so that necessary, 'base-line' learning is revitalised.
- The University provides resources and activities to allow students to develop their interests beyond the experiences provided within their courses.

Resources and programs

Deans' Lecture Series

A number of faculties offer Deans' Lecture Series. These lectures often present prominent speakers discussing important issues facing the Australian community. For example:

<http://www.gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/ExtRels/PubLectures/index.html>

Public Lecture Program

The Public Lecture Program aims to encourage informed debate on current controversies and public issues via a series of public lectures presented by prominent local, national, and international speakers.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExtRels/PubLectures/>

Study Abroad and Exchange Program

The Study Abroad and Exchange Program provides students with the opportunity to study and experience life in another country.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/international/sabroad4.html>

Library and Information Resources

The University's library systems provide students with opportunities to learn for the requirements of their courses and beyond. These opportunities include:

Percy Grainger Museum: <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/grainger/museum.home.html>

Special Collections: <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/special>

Maps: <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/maps>

Archives: <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/special>

Community Access Program (CAP)

The Community Access Program allows members of the community to study individual subjects offered by various faculties at the university.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExtRels/CAP/contact.html>

PRINCIPLE 2

AN INTENSIVE RESEARCH CULTURE PERMEATING ALL TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

A climate of inquiry and respect for knowledge and the processes of knowledge creation shapes the essential character of the education offered by a research-led University

It is a basic conviction within the University of Melbourne that the University's research activities and research culture must infuse, inform and enhance all aspects of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and learning. Across all disciplines and across all study levels, education in a research-led university develops its distinctive character from an understanding of and respect for existing knowledge and the traditions of scholarship in particular fields, recognition of the provisional nature of this knowledge, and familiarity with the processes involved in the ongoing creation of new knowledge.

Not all students are directly involved in research activity, but the University aims for all undergraduate and postgraduate students to benefit from being taught or supervised by active researchers, from studying a curriculum informed by the latest research developments, and from learning in a research-led environment. It is fundamental, therefore, that teaching staff are learners too and that their teaching is infused by their learning and their love of research and scholarship.

The particular benefits for undergraduate students of an intensive research culture derive from experiencing the 'latest story' – curricula underpinned not only by the corpus of human knowledge in the particular field but also by the latest research and scholarship – and from learning in an educational climate in which knowledge claims are viewed as fallible, ideas are questioned and inquiry-based learning is given a high priority. A climate of respect for ideas and spirited inquiry in which theories and ideas are actively contested supports the development of critical thinkers and heightens student sensitivity to the history of the evolution of knowledge, the provisional nature of knowledge and the processes of knowledge renewal.

Implications for practice

- Current research and consultancy experiences are directly incorporated into teaching content and approaches.
- Teachers demonstrate that they value lifelong learning, and foster in students an awareness that it will be essential in their professional and personal lives.
- Students are made aware of the traditions of scholarship in particular fields, the history of knowledge development, and the body of existing knowledge.
- Teachers keep abreast of current developments in their own and related disciplines and incorporate this knowledge into their teaching.
- Research students are exposed to current research through involvement in staff seminars and conferences.

- Teachers model intellectual engagement in the discipline, including an approach of analytical scepticism in the evaluation of all research.
- Students are made aware of the questioning of paradigms that is central to the development of knowledge.
- Staff demonstrate a commitment to professional values and ethical practice in the conduct of research.
- Students conducting research are made to feel part of the community of researchers while they are being trained in its procedures and values.
- Staff adopt a scholarly, evidence-based approach to the decisions made about curriculum design, teaching approaches and assessment methods.
- As appropriate, staff conduct research into the effects of teaching on student learning.
- Staff demonstrate a willingness to revise their own views and admit error, and encourage this attitude in students.

Resources and programs

The Melbourne Research and Innovation Office

The Melbourne Research and Innovation Office provides quality support to both postgraduate students and academic staff.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/research>

Universitas 21

Universitas 21 encourages international engagement with research-led universities around the world and assists members to advance their plans for internationalisation.

Exchange Programs and Melbourne Abroad

Melbourne Abroad provides students with the opportunity to undertake international study as part of their degree, either at an exchange partner institution or as a 'study abroad' student at other institutions.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/scholarships/exchanges/>

Melbourne Scholarships Office

The Scholarships Office co-ordinates and supports all the major scholarship programs administered by the university.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/scholarships/>

Joint Academic Scholarships On-line Network (JASON)

The Joint Academic Scholarships On-line Network is a national database and website that provides information about postgraduate scholarships available at Australian universities.

<http://www.jason.unimelb.edu.au>

Postgraduate Research Supervision

The publication, *Eleven practices of effective postgraduate supervisors*, James, R. and Baldwin, G., 1999, provides a guide for supervisors on their role in ensuring research supervision of the highest quality.

Melbourne Research Scholarships

The University offers a range of research scholarships.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/scholarships/pgrad/australian/mrs.html>

PRINCIPLE 3

A VIBRANT AND EMBRACING SOCIAL CONTEXT

Premium quality higher education is an intensely social activity that extends beyond classroom interactions

The quality of the day-to-day interaction between staff and students and between students themselves, whether structured or incidental, is at the heart of the Melbourne Experience. The University of Melbourne is strongly guided by a belief in the importance to student development of a stimulating and encompassing social context that spills over from the classroom into the broader life of the University.

Educational research points to three compelling conclusions about the importance of the social environment for learning. First, when students reflect on the quality of teaching and their overall university experience they invariably focus on the respect they are shown by staff and the availability, approachability and personal integrity of staff. Second, students benefit from learning from each other. Activities that bring students together for the purposes of study, such as collaborative team projects and peer tutoring, have been demonstrated to enhance learning. Finally, international research, as well as studies conducted here at the University of Melbourne, show quite clearly that involvement in the full university life within a comprehensive on-campus universities is an important determinant of student persistence and overall learning outcomes (McInnis & James 1995, Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998).

For these reasons, the University of Melbourne is committed to learning being embedded within a strong social context and to providing a rich social and cultural environment. There are many challenges in achieving this objective. Large campuses can be lonely places for some students and there are students who do not engage in the broader aspects of university life. The University recognises that some groups of students, including students from rural Australia, interstate and overseas, require particular consideration and social support, especially in the early stages of their University experience. Maintaining the quality of the social environment for learning, encouraging all to participate in it, and ensuring respect for others involves mutual responsibilities on the part of all staff and students.

Implications for practice

- Students are recognised as active participants in the education process.
- Courses and subjects provide for interaction among participants – in whatever form – as a central activity so that students collaborate in their learning.
- Students have opportunities to articulate their own views and responses, and those views are treated with respect.
- Staff have opportunities to collaborate in their teaching.
- Students have opportunities to assist and lead others in learning.
- Students have opportunities to work together inside and outside the classroom.
- Some staff are readily available to assist students on a one-to-one basis.

- Students conducting research can frequently and regularly confer with their supervisors, and are welcomed as members of departments' research communities.
- Students are offered extensive opportunities to participate in the broad intellectual and cultural life of the University and are encouraged to see this as an essential part of the Melbourne educational experience.

Resources and programs

Percy Baxter Collaborative Learning Centre

The Percy Baxter Collaborative Learning Centre provides services, programs, and development resources that focus on the development of skills in information literacy and technology-enhanced teaching and learning. The Centre has training rooms and open area for individual or small group use.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/infdiv/telars/pbcic>

Collaborative Learning Spaces

The university has seven collaborative learning spaces that use new technologies to enhance and enrich the collaboration among students and staff, and also to bridge the gap between individual and collective modes of study.

<http://www.ists.unimelb.edu.au/ts/reports.htm>

Transition Program

The transition program helps students adjust successfully to various stages of university life via the implementation of activities such as study groups and mentor programs.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/sss/transition/>

Gradflash

The weekly electronic e-mail bulletin, *Gradflash*, provides postgraduate students with information about new resources; forthcoming programs, conferences, and events; scholarships; library resources and services.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/research/sgs/programs.html>

The Ian Potter Museum

The Ian Potter Museum offers a dynamic public program of exhibitions, lectures, and events that help promote the significance of Australian culture in the global community.

<http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/site/intro.html>

Academic Activity Grants

Through the School of Graduate Studies, Academic Activity Grants provide encouragement and support for individuals and groups of postgraduate students to help organise academic activities such as conferences, visual exhibitions, music recitals, seminars, and lectures by visiting speakers, usually held in the Graduate Centre.

Student Ambassador Leadership Program

The Melbourne Leadership program provides students with the opportunity to enhance their experience of the University of Melbourne by getting involved in community service and leadership seminars and workshops.

<http://www-test.services.unimelb.edu.au/sss/leadership/>

Student Union Building

The Student Union provides a full range of facilities and services, including a wide variety of clubs and societies.

<http://www.union.unimelb.edu.au/>

Graduate Centre

The Graduate Centre provides social and academic facilities, activities and support for postgraduate students.

<http://www.gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/gradcentre/>

PRINCIPLE 4

AN INTERNATIONAL AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE CURRICULUM AND LEARNING COMMUNITY

Learning requires openness to difference and challenge

The University of Melbourne seeks to ensure that the Melbourne Experience is an international and intercultural experience. The achievement of this objective requires the University to maintain a richly diverse staff and student community, and to offer an international, culturally sensitive curriculum. This includes a curriculum which values other cultures, languages and ways of understanding.

While there are many contemporary imperatives for fostering an educational milieu in which explicit attention is given to international and intercultural perspectives, a major educational benefit can be captured in a single educational maxim: learning requires openness to difference and challenge. This is true of learning in any context, however an international and culturally diverse setting provides special opportunities for intellectual broadening and requires students to have particular openness to their viewpoints and assumptions being questioned.

A feature common to virtually all educational theories of individual development and growth is that developmental movement requires the experience of intellectual tension or conflict, the awareness of a challenge to the learner's existing cognitive state (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). Whether growth occurs depends on the nature of the individual's response to this cognitive dissonance. It is the university teacher's responsibility to create this dissonance and then to manage it so that it produces beneficial outcomes for individual students. Some of the most significant outcomes are: awareness of complexity and ambiguity, scepticism about absolute claims, a relativism that allows for commitment, awareness of one's own limitations and respect for the perspectives of others.

In recent years, it has come to be understood that the discussion and debating of ideas and values does not take place in a disembodied sphere, but that individuals bring to intellectual debate a very broad range of cultural backgrounds and experiences, which vary according to factors such as ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status. Educational activities that do not respect and value these multiple perspectives are limited and narrow. The challenge for teachers is to manage educational processes so that individuals feel supported and learn to explore difference with civility, honesty and fairness.

Implications for practice

- The curriculum is international and incorporates intercultural perspectives as appropriate.
- Students are encouraged to examine and question their beliefs and confront challenging intellectual perspectives.
- Students are exposed to the widest possible range of perspectives.

- Staff emphasise and model the need for open-mindedness while fostering the development of critical analysis.
- Students are expected to develop a capacity for tolerating ambiguity, in the disciplines where this is appropriate, and complexity.
- Civility in the airing and debating of differences is insisted upon.
- Staff make assumptions, beliefs and values explicit, with the clear understanding that these are open to challenge.
- Staff respect and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of students and insist that respect of this kind govern students' interactions with each other.
- Learning resources incorporate the experiences of a wide range of cultures and the assumptions of the dominant culture are the subject of scrutiny.

Resources and programs

Equal Opportunity Policy

The Equal Opportunity Policy seeks to ensure that discrimination against students or staff members, on all grounds covered by state and federal legislation, is eliminated.

<http://hr.unimelb.edu.au/e/>

Cultural Diversity Policy and Website

The University of Melbourne's Cultural Diversity Policy endorses the notion of a culturally diverse university where students and staff seek to foster culturally inclusive behaviour and activities, ensure cultural differences are heard and explored, and actively seek to learn from other cultures. The Cultural Diversity website presents the cultural diversity implementation plan and provides practical strategies for encouraging diversity and inclusivity in administration, service delivery, university events and written and electronic publications.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/diversity>

Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures

The 'Statement of Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Alleged Sexual Harassment' - outlines the University's commitment to provide an environment that is free from sexual harassment, and its obligation to educate and inform its staff about such harassment.

<http://www.hr.unimelb.edu.au/e/>

Centre for Indigenous Education

The Centre for Indigenous Education assists students with course selection, tutorials, accommodation, study, personal support, community networking, cross-cultural development, and career counselling, as well as providing an opportunity for liaison between the indigenous community and the university.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/cie.html>

Access and Equity Committee

The Access and Equity Committee advises Council on equal opportunity issues outside the area of equal employment opportunity, including the development of policy relating to staff-student interaction and on matter relating to student access.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/elp/committees.html>

Academic Orientation Program for International Postgraduate Students (AOPIPS)

The AOPIPS offers support to international postgraduate students who are commencing or continuing their studies at the university.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/research/sgs/proevent/aopips.html>

PRINCIPLE 5

EXPLICIT CONCERN AND SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Learning is a highly individual process and students thrive when concern is shown for their individual development

Students learn in different ways and at different rates, and their understanding varies considerably according to personality, background and particular talents. This variation contributes to creativity and the generation of new knowledge. Within this variation, however, all students benefit from individual attention and deserve to receive assistance in developing their understandings. Such assistance must be based on insights into student backgrounds, what they are aiming for and the nature of any difficulties they encounter.

Research in the United States indicates that informal, friendly contact with academic staff is a significant factor in students' engagement and academic success (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1998). Some studies indicate that contact with only one staff member can be quite influential for many students – a conclusion borne out by the comments of many graduates of the University of Melbourne who, when surveyed about the best aspects of their experience of their university experience, focus on the personal impact of a single staff member. In an era where many university classes are large, such interactions are difficult to establish and maintain. But the University of Melbourne is committed to providing appropriate opportunities for one-to-one interaction, through provisions for out-of-class consultations.

In a university setting, concern for individual development is primarily a concern for intellectual development, but must encompass factors such as the personal circumstances that impinge on, and perhaps hamper, student progress. A nurturing environment for students requires the provision of a range of support services to meet students' needs, and close links between academic units and these services.

Implications for practice

- Students are treated as individuals with particular abilities, aspirations and concerns.
- Staff attempt as far as possible to accommodate students' different learning styles and approaches within the curriculum, the classroom, and learning resources.
- Staff respond sympathetically to the problems and demands experienced by students and provide appropriate assistance and support to individuals as they develop their own strategies for overcoming difficulties.
- Opportunities are provided for students to consult individually with teaching staff.
- Provision is made for students to pursue their own intellectual interests and to be challenged and stimulated in this process.
- Feedback is timely and focused on student development.
- Feedback is tailored to the individual student's performance as well as the performance of the cohort overall.
- The effectiveness of teaching is evaluated by seeking evidence about how much students have learned and modifying approaches accordingly.
- Students who experience academic difficulties are identified and offered assistance.

- The institution regularly monitors students' needs for support and assistance, and responds quickly to new concerns that may arise.
- Different study environments are provided in libraries and other spaces to meet the individual needs of students, including group study areas, carrels for individual study and services for students with disabilities.

Resources and programs

Skills Development Program

The School of Graduate Studies provides a range of workshops, seminars, and short courses to assist in the development of students' research, communication, computing, and leadership skills.

<http://gradstudies.unimelb.edu.au/services/skills>

Learning Skills Unit

The Learning Skills Unit assists both undergraduate and postgraduate students in the development of learning, writing, and research techniques.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/lisu/>

Centre for Communication Skills and ESL

The Centre for Communication Skills and English as a Second Language provides academic language and communication skills to undergraduate and postgraduate students whether they are native or non-native speakers of English.

<http://www.csesl.unimelb.edu.au/about/index.htm>

Disability Liaison Unit

The Disability Liaison Unit aims to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities or a long term medical condition are understood, communicated, and met within the university community.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/aboutus/dlurole.html>

Counselling Service

The Counselling Service offers help to students and staff who require psychological counselling, mediation, or advocacy.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel/services/campus/training.html>

Cultural Diversity Policy and Website

The University of Melbourne's Cultural Diversity Policy endorses the notion of a culturally diverse university where students and staff seek to foster culturally inclusive behaviour and activities, ensure cultural differences are heard and explored, and actively seek to learn from other cultures. The Cultural Diversity website provides practical strategies for encouraging diversity and inclusivity in administration, service delivery, university events and written and electronic publications.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/diversity>

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

The university recognises that it has an obligation to take all reasonable precautions to provide and maintain, as far as practicable, an environment that is safe and without risk to health for employees, students, and visitors.

<http://www.botany.unimelb.edu.au/admin/EHSwebmanual/UNIVERSITYPOLICY>

Chaplaincy

The chaplaincy provides counselling, support, and information for students of all denominations. A chaplain for international students is available.

8344 7560

Targeted Access Program (TAP)

TAP aims to help people who have the potential to succeed at university, but who due to ongoing difficulties, have not achieved the marks necessary to be offered a place.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/admissions/query/nrec/query>

Anti-Discrimination Advisers

A network of Anti-Discrimination Advisers provides a supportive and responsive environment for staff and students who believe they have experienced unlawful discrimination.

http://www.hr.unimelb.edu.au/e/discr/eo_ada-broch.html

Transition Program

The transition program helps students adjust successfully to various stages of university life via the implementation of activities such as study groups and mentor programs.
<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/sss/transition/>

PRINCIPLE 6 CLEAR ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS

Students study most effectively when they understand what is expected of them

Clarity of expectations is the first stage in the learning cycle, an essential precursor to the provision of feedback on individual progress and the assessment of learning. Students benefit from an understanding of the journey and destination that lies ahead, including both the subject-specific and generic skill development that is anticipated. The provision of clear expectations in higher education does not imply, however, that student development or creativity should be constrained by overly detailed prescriptions, or requirements narrowly formulated only in terms of tasks to be completed.

In most universities, student diversity has re-focused attention on the need to inform students explicitly about what is expected of them and of what they can do to be successful. In practical terms this attention has meant not merely providing students with lists of aims and objectives, but also permeating the day-to-day teaching and learning with discussion of intentions, purposes and desired outcomes. While an excessive focus on assessment requirements is undesirable, assessment tasks that are designed and scheduled in appropriate ways are an especially powerful means of confirming the expected learning outcomes.

Explicit efforts to clarify objectives involves treating students as active participants in their learning. A body of research has established the efficacy of assisting students to be aware of *how* they learn. This involves an attention to the processes of learning in the context of clearly articulated goals, and self-evaluation of the effectiveness of learning strategies. In technical terms this is the concept of meta-cognition – not just knowing, but being aware of what we know and how we come to know it. Such a capacity is invaluable for lifelong learning beyond graduation, when individuals must assume the major responsibility for deciding what they need to learn and how best to do so.

Needless to say, clarity of explanation is also a primary responsibility of classroom teachers. While learning by discovery is a vital part of students' mastery of areas of knowledge, they are also entitled to clear instruction and guidance from experts, particularly with central concepts that may be difficult to grasp. The art of clear explanation depends on an ability to 'read' and understand the source of students' confusion and to search for formulations and illustrations that will clear the blockage, including strategies such as the use of analogy or simplified schema.

Implications for practice

- Students are provided with clear statements of subject objectives, couched in terms of student learning outcomes.
- Students are provided with clear statements of anticipated generic skill outcomes.
- Students are provided with clear statements of assessment requirements, particularly the criteria by which their work is judged.

- Subject content is presented in a coherent manner and at an appropriate level.
- Learning experiences are designed to be consonant with course objectives and assessment criteria.
- Courses are structured so that students can plan their learning effectively.
- All administrative details of courses are conveyed in a timely, accessible and unambiguous fashion.
- Research students are supported by procedures which require them to clarify the nature of their projects, methodological procedures, schedules and research outcomes early in their candidature.
- Assessment is congruent with the subject objectives and teaching and learning methods
- Students are provided with explanations of their rights and responsibilities and those of their teachers.
- Students are informed about procedures for dealing with disputes and complaints.

Resources and programs

The School of Graduate Studies

The School of Graduate Studies provides enhanced services and facilities for all postgraduate students and their supervisors at the University.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/research/sgs/>

Postgraduate Research Supervision

The publication, *Eleven practices of effective postgraduate supervisors*, James , R. and Baldwin, G., 1999, provides a guide for supervisors on their role in ensuring research supervision of the highest quality.

Student Union Student Support Unit

The Student Support service offers assistance, advice, and referral on matters affecting student welfare. It also has an advocacy role in relation to students' rights.

83446546

Program for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (PETL)

Workshops and seminars provided by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education address issues such as the assessment of student learning. Guides and pamphlets are available from the Centre or in pdf format from the website.

http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/academic_dev.html

The International Centre

The International Centre offers assistance to students when they first arrive at the university, and a range of social and support programs.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/international/support/IntCenter.html>

Plagiarism Policy and Website

The University's policy on plagiarism and advice to staff and students can be found on the plagiarism website.

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/plagiarism/>

PRINCIPLE 7

LEARNING CYCLES OF EXPERIMENTATION, FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT

*Learning requires feedback on understanding
and the freedom to experiment with knowledge*

Research into cognition has established that learning requires the organising, structuring and integration of new information into existing cognitive systems. Learners are never empty vessels who can be filled with knowledge: they are involved in the process of constructing meaning, even when apparently passive. But such constructions may be mistaken, confused or incomplete. They have to be tested against existing knowledge and the experience and the understandings of others.

For effective learning to occur, students need the opportunity to articulate and test their understandings and to receive informed and constructive feedback. The process of learning in higher education involves iterative loops of this kind and is enhanced by both the frequency and quality of the feedback given. During these learning cycles, students need some freedom to experiment with knowledge without the educational process in its entirety becoming one of 'trial and error'.

The act of articulating understandings should be, in itself, a clarifying process. A slogan of 1970s progressive education, 'How can I know what I think until I see what I say?' may be an exaggeration, but contains an important kernel of truth. Another vital way of consolidating new knowledge is to attempt to use it in new situations, either in theoretical argument or practical application. This process also involves extrapolation and adaptation to related issues and situations.

An effective learning environment provides frequent opportunities for learners to expose their understandings to the scrutiny of others – both experts and peers. Students benefit from thoughtful, supportive and challenging feedback, in both formal and informal contexts. They also benefit from a structured framework, where assessment requirements are designed to give them the opportunity to learn from feedback as they progress. A framework of this kind gradually should transfer responsibility for monitoring learning to students themselves, thus equipping them for ongoing independent learning throughout life and careers.

Implications for practice

- Students learn in supportive environments where they can try out explanations and ideas without fear.
- Students are given opportunities to receive feedback from each other as well as from staff.
- Feedback on submitted work is regular, prompt and at appropriate times is detailed.
- Subject schedules are structured so that students have the opportunity to learn from feedback before progressing to other assignments.

- Courses and subjects are designed on the understanding that feedback encompasses all opportunities for students to develop their understanding in the light of others' responses and is a much broader concept than simply comments on submitted work.
- Students are taught how to monitor and review their own learning.
- Courses are planned so that students have early feedback and regular assessment tasks on which they can test themselves.
- Assessment tasks are varied and measure the full range of desired learning outcomes.
- At appropriate stages, assessment tasks allow scope for student creativity and individuality.
- Student workloads are considered when designing and scheduling assessment.

Resources and programs

Reason!Able

Reason!Able is a computer software package designed to help students practice and develop general skills of reasoning and argument within the context of guided, scaffolded activities.

<http://www.goreason.com>

Tutoring and Demonstrating: A guide for the University of Melbourne, by Richard James and Gabrielle Baldwin, 1997, provides information on assessment, providing students with feedback on their progress, and how to offer support.

<http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/bookpages/chap7.html>

Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee

The committee of the Academic Board has responsibility for monitoring all aspects of the quality of teaching and learning.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExecServ/acadboard/telqua.htm>

PRINCIPLE 8

PREMIUM QUALITY LEARNING RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

State-of-the-art information resources and electronic learning technologies are central to the development of independent learners

Information and communication technologies are ubiquitous in higher education. In many fields, these technologies strongly influence and shape the character and day-to-day practices of research, scholarship and teaching. In particular, they dramatically enhance the possibilities for conceptualising and designing educational activities. The quality of learning technologies and resources, of all kinds, is a prominent indicator of the overall quality of a higher education learning environment.

The rapid revolution in information and communication technology brought with it educational challenges for university teachers. The challenges were, and continue to be, in integrating entirely new modes of learning into the curriculum: designing and selecting the best teaching and learning resources and activities for particular occasions; and supporting students as they experience new forms of learning and transform the information before them into knowledge.

At the University of Melbourne, the provision of state-of-the-art electronic technology and leading-edge resources is grounded in three beliefs:

1. information and communication technologies are an integral part of the process of knowledge development and dissemination in all fields;
2. information and communication technologies provide previously unimaginable learning experiences and can greatly assist in exposing students to the frontiers of knowledge in particular fields;
3. it is essential for Melbourne graduates to develop the skills of independent information searching, evaluation and utilisation using all available sources of information.

The latter belief is congruent with the view that one of the most important objectives of modern university education is to develop graduates with the attitudes and skills needed for independent learning throughout life (Candy, Crebert & O'Leary 1994). These qualities are essential in a world in which the workplace is both international and global, knowledge is growing and being renewed at a rapid rate, and the volume of new information at the fingertips of individuals is sometimes overwhelming.

The ways in which learning technologies and resources are deployed within the curriculum should reflect the educative principles of the present document. The effectiveness of technologies for teaching and learning can be measured therefore by the extent to which they enhance the excitement of learning, facilitate communication and discussion between students and staff and provide students with greater opportunities for practice and feedback – for, as Laurillard (1993) argues, multimedia and educational technologies in the hands of expert university educators greatly expand the opportunities for students to rehearse and articulate their knowledge.

Implications for practice:

- Students are able to learn using state-of-the-art educational technologies.
- Students have ready access to comprehensive and up-to-date information, in printed and electronic form.
- Students are assisted in developing the skills to use these resources to their greatest advantage, including technical but more importantly analytical skills.
- Students are assisted to become increasingly independent explorers of these resources, using them to follow their individual interests and concerns.
- Independent, resource-based learning is incorporated into all courses, with the goal of establishing an appropriate balance of teacher-directed and self-directed learning.
- Staff provide sufficient structure and guidance for students to find their way through the masses of information available to them.
- Research students are provided with access to the resources necessary for the completion of their projects and, wherever possible, with the means to participate in activities of the research community, such as conferences.
- Students are made thoroughly familiar with the ethical considerations involved in the use of printed or electronic materials.
- Students are consulted on the quality and accessibility of book and other information collections of the University.

Resources and programs

Teaching, Learning and Research Support

The Department of Teaching, Learning and Research Support in the Information Division works with academic departments and faculties to transform teaching and learning with the use of multimedia and related educational technologies.

<http://www.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/telars/>

Learning Resource Teams

The learning resource teams from the Teaching Learning and Research Support Department (TeLaRS) are responsible for providing a range of services to help students and staff gain greater expertise and confidence when using information technology.

Information Technology Services

The ITS provides information, training programs, and courses on information technology to staff and students.

<http://www.its.unimelb.edu.au>

Buddy

Buddy is the access point to databases, library catalogues, full-text electronic journals, exam papers, and selected websites.

<http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/catalogues/catalogues.html>

Graduate Presentation and Publishing Centre (GPPC)

The GPPC is a multi-media computer laboratory that enables students to prepare thesis, seminar, and conference materials.

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/research/sgs/>

Teaching & Learning (Multimedia & Educational Technology) Committee

T&L(M&ET)C advises Academic Board on the most effective ways to expand the use of technology in the academic activities of the university so as enhance the quality of teaching and learning, diversify and extend academic programs, and provide students with a wider range of leaning opportunities.

<http://talmet.unimelb.edu.au>

Innopac: The online library catalogue
<http://library.unimleb.edu.au>

PRINCIPLE 9

AN ADAPTIVE CURRICULUM

The higher education curriculum must be grounded in the accumulated body of human knowledge yet responsive to the growth of knowledge and social change

The need for universities to offer socially relevant curricula is self-evident. However, there is growing complexity in achieving this objective. The undergraduate curriculum in Australia and elsewhere is under intense pressure to be responsive to a changing society. Students are expected to master a rapidly growing body of specialised knowledge, develop generic, transferable skills for a global workplace and benefit from a foundation of general education. Course structures throughout the Australian higher education system increasingly reflect market expectations for customisation to personal preferences and needs, including flexible and online delivery, modularisation, and opportunities for accelerated completion.

Curriculum decision-making in higher education must be responsive to social change yet must withstand the temptation to be fashionable. The University of Melbourne has a leadership responsibility to influence the expectations of students and the wider community rather than simply responding to perceived needs and fads. Its curriculum decision-making must be informed by academic standards and excellence.

Underpinning the University's curriculum decisions, therefore, are an unwavering respect for the accumulated body of human knowledge and a concern for the coherence of the overall educational experience. In this context, coherence refers to the integrity in the articulation of the core knowledge base that is being studied and in the sequencing and structuring of student learning. The weight of evidence emerging from longitudinal studies, largely conducted in the USA, is that fragmented and disjointed curricula can limit student learning. In contrast, coherent subject sequences and integrated academic experiences are positively associated with higher order learning outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini 1998, Gaff, Ratcliff & Associates 1996). With many of the University's undergraduate students enrolled in combined degrees there are ongoing challenges in providing students with structured sequences and the benefits of progressing through courses with a relatively stable cohort of peers.

Curriculum decision-making at the University of Melbourne involves multiple constituencies in dialogue on four interrelated curriculum elements: the evolving knowledge base that is to be taught; the desired student learning outcomes, the teaching and learning experiences to achieve these outcomes; and the forms of assessment. Academic staff, especially subject coordinators, have responsibility to build linkages between subjects and to convey to students the relevance of individual subjects within the course overall.

Through its Evaluation Cycle (<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/UPO/ecycle/ecycle.html>), the University of Melbourne collects feedback from a range of stakeholders on the quality, relevance and accessibility of its courses, programs and services and uses this information for the purposes of quality assurance and improvement. The Careers and Employment Unit (<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/careers/>) assists graduate transition to the workplace and liaises with employers of University of Melbourne graduates.

Implications for practice

- The University and its constituent parts (faculties, schools, departments) maintain structures and procedures for regular consultation with stakeholder groups – including employers, the professions, government, graduates and prospective students.
- There are systems of regular curriculum review in the light of responses from stakeholders.
- The University monitors employment outcomes and other measures of graduate success in order to ensure that its courses are providing graduates with skills and knowledge appropriate to their lives after graduation.
- Courses develop in students an awareness of the social context in which their knowledge and skills will be employed and the social responsibilities they will carry.
- The University has procedures for ongoing liaison with other sectors in the educational system, to ensure coherence of objectives and practices.
- There is regular evaluation by enrolled students, to provide staff with feedback to inform the design of subjects and courses and to identify needs which are not being met.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE GRADUATES

ATTRIBUTES OF THE MELBOURNE GRADUATE

The University of Melbourne is a research-intensive university that attaches the very highest priority to undergraduate education and seeks to stimulate, nurture and develop graduates of the finest international calibre.

The University expects its graduates to be educated and well-informed, able to contribute effectively to their communities wherever in the world they choose to live and work. It expects Melbourne graduates to have the following qualities and skills:

- profound respect for truth and intellectual integrity, and for the ethics of scholarship;
- highly developed cognitive, analytic and problem-solving skills;
- capacity for independent critical thought, rational inquiry and self-directed learning;
- intellectual curiosity and creativity, including understanding of the philosophical and methodological bases of research activity;
- openness to new ideas and unconventional critiques of received wisdom;
- extensive knowledge of a particular discipline or professional area, including relevant professional knowledge and skills, and informed respect for the principles, disciplines, values and ethics of a chosen profession;
- ability and self-confidence to comprehend complex concepts, to express them lucidly, whether orally or in writing, and to confront unfamiliar problems;
- awareness of advanced communications technologies and modalities, sound working skills in the application of computer systems and software, and receptiveness to the expanding opportunities of the 'information revolution';
- international awareness and openness to the world, based on understanding and appreciation of social and cultural diversity and respect for individual human rights and dignity;
- leadership capacity, including a willingness to engage in constructive public discourse, to accept social and civic responsibilities and to speak out against prejudice, injustice and the abuse of power;
- ability and confidence to participate effectively in collaborative learning as a team-member, while respecting individual differences; and
- ability to plan work and to use time effectively.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK GRADUATE

University of Melbourne postgraduate coursework degrees seek to develop graduates who demonstrate a capacity for contemporary professional practice and/or specialist knowledge and theory. Postgraduate coursework degrees have multiple purposes. They are designed to provide students with the opportunity for advanced knowledge and understanding in a specialist area; to enhance professional knowledge and skills; and to engage with new and emerging fields of study.

The University expects its postgraduate coursework graduates to have the following qualities and skills:

- an advanced understanding of the changing knowledge base in the specialist area;
- an ability to evaluate and synthesise the research and professional literature in the discipline;
- advanced skills and techniques applicable to the discipline;
- well-developed problem-solving abilities in the discipline area, characterised by flexibility of approach;
- advanced competencies in areas of professional expertise and/or scholarship;
- a capacity to articulate their knowledge and understanding in oral and written presentations;
- an advanced understanding of the international context and sensitivities of the specialist area;
- an appreciation of the design, conduct and reporting of original research;
- a capacity to manage competing demands on time, including self-directed project work;
- a profound respect for truth and intellectual integrity, and for the ethics of scholarship;
- an appreciation of the ways in which advanced knowledge equips the student to offer leadership in the specialist area;
- the capacity to value and participate in projects which require team-work;
- an understanding of the significance and value of their knowledge to the wider community (including business and industry);
- a capacity to engage where appropriate with issues in contemporary society; and
- where appropriate, advanced working skills in the application of computer systems and software and a receptiveness to the opportunities offered by new technologies.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE RESEARCH MASTERS GRADUATE

Research Masters degrees at the University of Melbourne seek to develop graduates who have a capacity for defining and managing a research project characterised by originality and independence. Their training equips them for more sustained and original work at the doctoral level or for applied research positions in a wide variety of contexts.

The University expects its research masters graduates to have the following qualities and skills:

- an ability to initiate research projects and to formulate viable research questions;
- a demonstrated capacity to design, conduct and report independent and original research on a closely-defined project;
- an ability to manage time to maximise the quality of research;
- an understanding of the major contours of international research in the research area;
- a capacity for critical evaluation of relevant scholarly literature;
- well-developed and flexible problem-solving abilities appropriate to the discipline;
- the ability to analyse research data within a changing disciplinary environment;
- the capacity to communicate effectively the results of research and scholarship by oral and written communication;

- an understanding of and facility with scholarly conventions in the discipline area;
- a profound respect for truth and intellectual integrity, and for the ethics of research and scholarship;
- a capacity to cooperate with other researchers;
- an ability to manage information effectively, including the application of computer systems and software where appropriate to the student's field of study.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE DOCTORAL GRADUATE

Doctoral degrees at the University of Melbourne seek to develop graduates who demonstrate academic leadership, increasing independence, creativity and innovation in their research work. In addition, professional doctoral studies provide advanced training designed to enhance professional knowledge in a specialist area, and encourage the acquisition of a wide range of advanced and transferable skills.

The University expects its doctoral graduates to have the following qualities and skills:

- an advanced ability to initiate research and to formulate viable research questions;
- a demonstrated capacity to design, conduct and report sustained and original research;
- the capacity to contextualise research within an international corpus of specialist knowledge;
- an advanced ability to evaluate and synthesize research-based and scholarly literature;
- an advanced understanding of key disciplinary and multi-disciplinary norms and perspectives relevant to the field;
- highly developed problem-solving abilities and flexibility of approach;
- the ability to analyse critically within and across a changing disciplinary environment;
- the capacity to disseminate the results of research and scholarship by oral and written communication to a variety of audiences;
- a capacity to cooperate with and respect the contributions of fellow researchers and scholars;
- a profound respect for truth and intellectual integrity, and for the ethics of research and scholarship;
- an advanced facility in the management of information, including the application of computer systems and software where appropriate to the student's field of study;
- an understanding of the relevance and value of their research to national and international communities of scholars and collaborators;
- an awareness where appropriate of issues related to intellectual property management and the commercialisation of innovation; and
- an ability to formulate applications to relevant agencies, such as funding bodies and ethics committees.

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