

ACADEMIC BOARD – MEETING 7/04 (26 AUGUST 2004)

New DEST Guidelines Regarding Work Experience in Industry (WEI) Subjects

Background

New DEST guidelines come into effect from 1 January 2005 which require higher education providers to report on Work Experience in Industry (WEI) subjects. A WEI subject is one that involves work experience placement, e.g. subjects that include professional practice or clinical placements. WEI subjects must be classified into one of three categories in accordance with the guidelines. Each classification must be justifiable.

To enable the University to fulfil its obligations and appropriately receive tuition fees or Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding, the Merlin Nelson Reforms has asked Faculties to identify all WEI subjects offered in 2005, classify each WEI subject, and provide the reason for the classification to Mr Les McFarland, Manager of the Project by 6 August 2004. The Project will arrange for this data to be uploaded into Merlin once received.

Current Classification Rules

Subjects are currently classified into two categories, in accordance with whether the subject does or doesn't include industrial experience.

New Classification Rules

For 2005 onwards, DEST requires higher education providers to classify subjects into three categories, in accordance with the provider's level of student support and/or direction with regard to the subject. Importantly, the classification impacts on the University's ability to charge tuition fees and receive Commonwealth funding for the subject's load, as identified in the table below:

Category	Level of student support by provider	Student consumes Student Learning Entitlement (SLE)?	Student contribution or tuition fee charged?	Counted in teaching load?
1	Learning and performance not supported nor directed by provider (WEI)	No	No	No
2	Learning and performance supported but not directed by the provider (WEI)	No	Yes	No
3	Learning and performance directed by the provider (not WEI)	Yes	Yes	Yes

It is therefore vital that these subjects are classified correctly as the category assigned impacts both on CGS funding of the University and the HECS paid by Commonwealth supported students.

The *Administration Guidelines* (draft dated 11 June 2004) 3.5.1 outline the qualities for a Category 3 subject (i.e. one which is 'directed'):

'A unit of study is not considered work experience in industry if all the following are performed by staff of the higher education provider or by persons engaged by the higher education provider:

- (a) ongoing and regular input and contact with students; and
- (b) oversight and direction of work occurring during its performance; and
- (c) definition and management of the implementation of educational content and objectives of the unit; and
- (d) definition and management of assessment of student learning and performance during the student placement; and
- (e) definition and management of the standard of learning and performance to be achieved by the student during the student placement.'

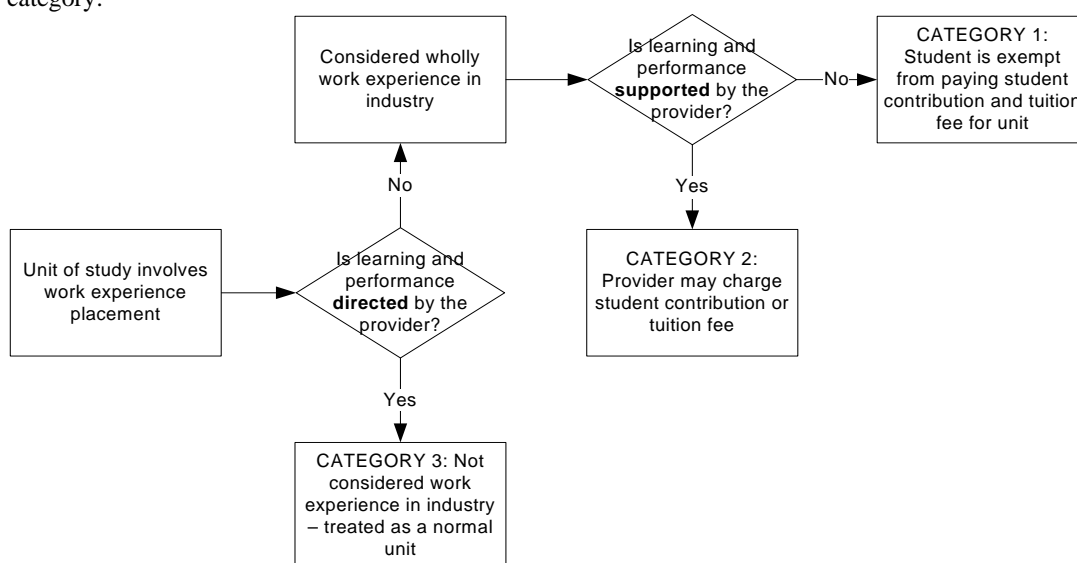
The *Administration Guidelines* 4.10.1 outline the qualities for a Category 2 subject (i.e. one which is 'supported but not directed'):

'For the purposes of 4.5.1 of these guidelines a higher education provider supports student learning and performance if all the following are performed by staff of the higher education provider or by persons engaged by the higher education provider:

- (a) interaction with the student which may include site visits; and
- (b) organisation of student placements; and
- (c) ongoing monitoring of student work and progress; and
- (d) assessment of student learning and performance during the student placement.'

Any WEI subject that does not meet the above criteria for Category 3 or Category 2 is therefore a Category 1 subject (i.e. one that is 'not supported nor directed').

The following flow-chart guides higher education providers in to determining a subject's appropriate category.



Recommendations

It will be necessary to capture this information at the time new subjects are proposed as part of the course approvals process managed by APC. It is recommended that APC:

1. Note the DEST changes to classification of WEI subjects; and
2. Amend *The Guidelines for the Submission of Course Proposals* (the Blue Book) to incorporate information about the classification of WEI subjects; and
3. Amend the course and subject proposal proformas to incorporate identification of a WEI subject, its classification, and the reason for its classification.

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Vice-Principal and Academic Registrar

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Nelson Reforms Project (Changes to Student Administration Practices and Merlin)