

ACADEMIC BOARD REVIEW

PHASE TWO

FACULTY OF ARTS

26/27 AUGUST 2003

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Note: This report draws on the information provided in the documentation considered by the Review Team as well as discussion with staff and students. In some places, text from the Self-Evaluation Report has been incorporated directly into the text.

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Review Team

Professor Judyth Sachs (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of the Academic Board
Professor Paul Ramsden	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
Professor Masud Behnia	Dean of Graduate Studies
Dr Ann Elias	Sydney College of the Arts
 <i>Observers</i>	
Ms Marianne Hulsbosch	Faculty of Education and Social Work
Ms Barb McLean	Major Projects Group
 <i>Review Team Secretary</i>	
Ms Rachel Symons	Quality Assurance Officer (Teaching and Learning)

1.2 Senior Faculty representatives

1.2.1 The Review Team met the following Senior Faculty representatives during the first interview:

Professor Stephen Garton	Dean
Assoc Professor Geraldine Barnes	Pro-Dean
Professor Tony Stephens	Head, School of European, Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Studies (SEAMELS)
Professor Richard Waterhouse	Head, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry (SOPHI)
Assoc Professor Adrian Mitchell	Head, School of English, Art History, Film and Media (SEAHFM))
Assoc Professor Tim Fitzpatrick	Head, School of Society, Culture and Performance (SSCP)
Dr Peter Marks	Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning
Dr Ian Maxwell	Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning
Assoc Professor Robert van Krieken	Associate Dean, Research
Assoc Professor Joanne Finkelstein	Associate Dean, Postgraduate Research
Dr Margaret Rogerson	Associate Dean, Postgraduate Coursework
Assoc Professor Vrasidas Karalis	Associate Dean, International and Community Relations
Assoc Professor Marie-Therese Barbaux-Couper	Director, Multimedia & Educational Technologies in Arts Centre
Dr Nerida Jarkey	Faculty Director of 1 st Year Teaching & Learning

1.3 Students

- 1.3.1 The Review Team met with three groups of students: twelve undergraduate students; three postgraduate coursework students; and twelve postgraduate research students.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Academic Board Phase Two review of the Faculty of Arts took place on 26/27 August 2003. The current Phase Two process complements the Phase One review, following up on its recommendations and also considering the Faculty's activities and quality assurance arrangements in relation to the seven goals of the University's Strategic Plan.
- 2.2 The Academic Board Phase One report of the visit to the Faculty in August 2002 recorded that it was still in the process of evolving under the new structure which had been implemented in 2000, and that it was committed to resolving outstanding difficulties and to progressing successful consolidation and rejuvenation of the Faculty.
- 2.3 The Review Team noted that, notwithstanding the difficulties encountered by the Faculty due to decanting of staff to widespread locations around the campus, because of the refurbishing of various building occupied by staff, considerable progress had been during the past twelve months. The morale of staff and students had improved and there was a more positive feeling towards the restructuring. The Faculty acknowledged the benefits of cross disciplinary work and initiatives such as the First Year Experience program, increased opportunities in teaching and learning, research and social relationships.
- 2.4 The Dean acknowledged that there are still pockets of resistance and is implementing strategies to overcome these. For example: SDFs and SESQUI appointments have been made to areas with previous significant staff loss, and RIBG funds are awarded on the basis of research performance. The Review Team noted the implementation of a Faculty workloads policy, which had indicated inequities in teaching and learning and research practices. This information had subsequently been used as an effective change management process by publicising these inequities and rewarding high performers.
- 2.5 The Review Team commends the Faculty on the significant cultural shift in staff and students' attitudes to the restructuring; and the effective use of the workloads policy to implement change. It encourages the Dean to continue the successful change management process. (*See Commendation One*)

3 OVERVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

3.1 Self-Evaluation Report

- 3.1.1 The Faculty Self-Evaluation Report was developed collaboratively. Schools provided individual reports which were developed into the final Faculty submission. The Dean considered that this had provided opportunities for departments to reflect on their activities, and that it had been useful in uncovering diversities in practice at departmental level.

3.2 Monitoring of quality assurance processes

See also Section 4.11

- 3.2.1 The Teaching and Learning Committee, Undergraduate Matters Committee, and the Postgraduate Matters Committee monitor the implementation of formal quality assurance policies and processes across the Faculty.

- 3.2.2 The assessment policy is monitored by the Undergraduate Matters Committee who ensure compliance with the approved format, and consider applications that diverge from the approved format. At School level, general staff check that Unit of Study outlines comply with the policy before printing. Workload policies are developed and monitored at School level.

3.3 Benchmarking

- 3.3.1 The Faculty has a number of informal benchmarking processes in place. These include: gender studies with the University of Adelaide; first year experience with the University of Queensland; languages with the Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide; the use of external staff to review and report on programs; the use of external markers; staff marking and reviewing for other universities; the assessment of continuity between the HSC and university curriculum; visiting lecturers; and staff exchanges. The placement of honours students at funded places in United States universities, the accessing of WebCT courses by other universities and the comparison of Units of Study occasioned by applications for credit were considered by staff to be forms of informal benchmarking.

4 GOAL ONE: QUALITY OF TEACHING

- 4.1 Appendix One provides a summary of the action taken by the Faculty in relation to each of the recommendations from the Faculty's Phase One review. Further detail follows in relation to some of these recommendations. Information relating to teaching and learning activities not covered during the Phase One review is also provided.

4.2 Dissemination of Academic Board policies

- 4.2.1 Recommendation 1 from the Phase One review related to improving the dissemination of Academic Board policies between the Faculty office, Schools and Departments.
- 4.2.2 The Faculty has instituted a series of regular workshops for general staff to update them on recent developments in policies and procedures. Sessions on effective administration and resource specific issues, suggested by the general staff, have also been run. At School level, Heads of School hold regular discussions on policy issues with general staff. In February 2003 chairs of departments attended a Faculty workshop to discuss their responsibilities in relation to Academic Board policies and procedures. A number of initiatives arose from this workshop, including the instigation of a Teaching and Learning Newsletter. Information about changes in the Research Training Scheme was disseminated through workshops for academic and general staff and students. The Faculty reported that feedback from the workshops had been positive, and that communication had improved.

4.3 Postgraduate coursework programs

- 4.3.1 Recommendation 2 from Phase One stated that the Faculty needed to develop strategies to ensure that they comply with the Academic Board policy on the use of parallel teaching of postgraduate and undergraduate students.
- 4.3.2 The Faculty reported initiatives which it has taken to address joint teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students. A survey of all schools has been undertaken which has identified a small number of departments that might be operating outside the guidelines; new interdisciplinary and vocational courses are being developed; and new programs are being evaluated for compliance prior to offering. The Postgraduate Matters Committee is developing a discussion paper and series of recommendations for consideration. The Faculty is investing \$80,000 in the development and teaching of new postgraduate coursework Units of Study in 2005.

4.3.3 The Review Team commends the Faculty on the work it is doing to address the issue of parallel teaching of postgraduate and undergraduate students; and the initiative it is taking in the development of new interdisciplinary and vocational courses. (*See Commendation Two*)

4.4 Communication of teaching and learning activities

4.4.1 The establishment of strategies for communicating milestones and achievements of the Teaching and Learning Plan to staff and students was the subject of Recommendation 3 of the Phase One report.

4.4.2 The Faculty reports that communications with staff and students on areas of teaching and learning policy and processes continue to be upgraded. The Faculty Teaching and Learning website has been linked directly to the Faculty of Arts homepage, and has been refurbished to include reports on teaching and learning seminars and issues. The 'Easing the Transition and Peer Support' website has also been made more prominent and available to staff and students; and electronic Unit of Study templates will become available via the web in 2004. First year students are provided with information regarding degree pathways, Faculty goals and teaching and Teaching and Learning Plan goals via a dedicated website. Programs on how to use the website effectively are being trialled for students entering in second semester. An information and communication manager has been appointed to the Multimedia and Educational Technologies in the Arts Centre (META).

4.4.3 The Review Team noted that there are currently no formalised mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning link in disseminating its milestones and achievements. The Faculty reported a significant increase in enquiries from prospective international students, exchange partners, and other universities regarding their programs. It considered that this indicated that the information was accessible and being used.

4.5 Quality of Teaching

4.5.1 Recommendation 4 from Phase One stated that, in order to enhance the student experience, variation in the quality of teaching, particularly in tutorials, across departments needed to be considered.

4.5.2 The Faculty has a number of strategies in place to address this issue. It is currently implementing workloads and assessment policies which will ensure and encourage greater consistency across departments, and individual schools have adopted their own workloads policies in accordance with University principles. (*See also Section 4.11.2*)

4.5.3 The Institute for Teaching and Learning has provided workshops on teaching for graduates engaged in part-time teaching; scholarships are provided for junior members of staff to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Higher Education); seminars to train postgraduate students in the art of tutoring small groups; and the development of a departmental tutors handbook which includes guidelines, policies, marking criteria and expectations. The latter may provide the basis for a Faculty wide training scheme. An Excellence in Tutoring award has also been established to indicate the value of small group teaching from a Faculty point of view.

4.5.4 Variations in the quality of tutorial teaching were evident during discussions with students. Students expressed the view that training should be provided for tutors. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider the introduction of a Faculty tutors handbook and the implementation of an in-house training program for tutors. This will ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the Faculty and improve the student experience. (*See Recommendation One*)

4.5.5 The Teaching and Learning Committee is running four related Teaching Improvement Fund (TIF) projects which seek to improve the quality of the student learning experience through

support for First Year Students, including students at risk and students with particular learning needs in written communication. They will also enhance student-centred pedagogy through task-based learning and teamwork, and facilitate the adoption of standards-referenced assessment through closer articulation of learning goals and outcomes.

- 4.5.6 The Review Team noted Faculty concerns that the student experience is being compromised by the decanting of staff offices and the lack of suitable teaching spaces. The Faculty acknowledged that the move back into refurbished buildings, which will not include the same teaching spaces as previously, will require a change in teaching practice from some members of staff. It acknowledged that students' choice of units was often determined by the quality of teaching provided.
- 4.5.7 Discussions with staff and students indicated variation in the timeliness and usefulness of feedback on assignments. Whilst some assignments were returned with constructive feedback which allowed students to improve their understanding, others were either not returned or provided less than useful comments. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty should introduce greater variety in forms of assessment including formative, as well as summative assessment, peer marking by students, and should develop grade descriptors for levels of performance. (*See Recommendation Two*)

4.6 Rewarding excellence in teaching

- 4.6.1 The Phase One Review recommended that the Faculty consider ways of improving communication to students regarding University and Faculty awards for good teaching and that staff should be encouraged to nominate themselves for these awards. [Recommendation 6]
- 4.6.2 The Faculty reported that information regarding teaching excellence and teaching initiative awards was made available through the Teaching and Learning electronic bulletin and on the Teaching and Learning Committee website. Awards were presented at the first teaching and learning seminar in 2003. Staff, however, continue to be reluctant to apply for these awards. In addition to the current peer-assessed awards, the Faculty is introducing a scheme whereby students can nominate outstanding teachers for recognition. The Review Team noted the Faculty's aspiration that this would enhance staff and student awareness of the importance placed by the Faculty on excellent teaching.

4.7 Online learning

- 4.7.1 Improved ways of communicating information about the Arts On-line Teaching and Learning Project throughout the Faculty was the subject of Recommendation 7 from Phase One.
- 4.7.2 The Review Team noted that the Multimedia and Technologies in Arts Centre had been formed from the amalgamation of the Arts IT Unit and the Language Centre, with the aim of fostering greater coordination of Faculty teaching and learning strategies, particularly online learning. The Director reported that improvement of communication within and without the Faculty was one of the main objectives of META. Faculty committees will have an increased presence on the web with the publication of minutes and agenda papers and unit of study outlines will provide information to students in a homogenous format.
- 4.7.3 The Review Team noted that the Faculty is complying with the Academic Board policy *Quality Assurance and On-line Learning*. Twenty percent of Units of Study have a web presence with sixty percent of these being in Mode A (web supplemented with participation on-line optional for the student).

4.8 Research methodology course for postgraduate research students

- 4.8.1 Recommendation 8 from Phase One proposed that the Faculty consider the introduction of a compulsory research methodology course to induct new graduate students.
- 4.8.2 The Review Team noted that a compulsory unit had been incorporated into the new professional doctorate programs in the Faculty, and discussions were taking place regarding the use of such a unit in other postgraduate programs e.g. Masters by research. PhD students may attend the course on the recommendation of their supervisor or as a result of learning about it through the PGARC community.

4.9 Research supervision and completion rates

See also Section 6: Excellence in research

- 4.9.1 Recommendations 9 and 10 from Phase One related to research supervision and training. Recommendation 9 stated that postgraduate research students should be encouraged to have regular and timely contact with their supervisors. Recommendation 10 related to further investigation of the Faculty's research completion rates.

Research supervision

- 4.9.2 The Review Team noted good progress in this area. Following consultation across the Faculty a Research Supervision Plan and a Seven Stage Monitoring Plan for PhD supervision have been implemented. These stress the importance of regular contact with supervisors and the monitoring of progress. Faculty and departmental postgraduate committees review all students annually and provide feedback to the students on their progress. Staff considered that the Seven Stage Monitoring Plan was useful for providing students with milestones in terms of their candidature, and for students who are not progressing satisfactorily. They expressed the view, which was confirmed by the students, that supervision should not be prescriptively structured but should be negotiated on a case by case basis.
- 4.9.3 The Review Team commends the Faculty on the implementation of the Seven Stage Monitoring Plan, which provides a sense of structure to RHD candidates. It suggests that the Plan be used to guide students' progress and not be implemented too stringently. *(See Commendation Three)*

Research completion rates

- 4.9.4 The Review Team noted that latest figures indicated that the Faculty is performing well with 17.75% of weighted research completions the second highest of any Faculty in the University (2000/2001). Reasons behind the improvement include: an awareness among incoming students of the need to complete within three and a half years; a high proportion of full-time candidates, a large proportion of whom are APA holders; vigilance by the Faculty regarding the legitimacy of requests for suspension; and the establishment of the PGARC facility and resulting closer community of scholars.
- 4.9.5 The Faculty is commended on the increase in research completion rates, and its performance in relation to other faculties in the University. *(See Commendation Four)*

4.10 Academic advisors

- 4.10.1 Recommendation 11 from Phase One indicated that the role and presence of academic advisors needed to be more effectively communicated to staff and students.
- 4.10.2 The Review Team noted that advisors are listed on the Faculty website and that information about academic advisors is provided to all enrolling students. Prospective students are advised

about them at Careers and Open Day in August. The Faculty acknowledged that although more students were availing themselves of advice than last year, it still needed to improve communication regarding the role and presence of the advisors to students. It considered that updating of information in the handbook and directing of students to advisors by the Faculty Office would promulgate their existence and usefulness.

- 4.10.3 Discussions with students revealed that knowledge about academic advisors varied. Some students were unaware of their existence; others knew about their existence but had not accessed them, preferring to use the Faculty website; and others considered their lecturers to be so approachable that they had not felt it necessary to use the services of the academic advisors.
- 4.10.4 The Review Team considers the introduction of academic advisors to be a good initiative, but recommends that the Faculty investigate ways of more effectively communicating information about academic advisors to the students. This may include educating students about how to access information. *(See Recommendation Three)*

4.11 Consistency in Quality Assurance Processes

See also Section 3: Overview of Quality Assurance Processes

- 4.11.1 Recommendation 13 of Phase One encouraged the Faculty to consider ways of ensuring consistency in its quality assurance processes, particularly in relation to feedback, Unit of Study outlines, clarity of goals in postgraduate coursework units, and research supervision.
- 4.11.2 In response to this recommendation the Faculty has put a number of targeted responses in place. A working party consisting of members of the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Undergraduate Matters Committee has established a set of guidelines for Units of Study covering consistency in weighted assessment tasks, contact hours required, and assessment requirements. All Units of Study will be amended accordingly in time for the 2004 handbook. The Arts IT Unit has developed an online Unit of Study outline template which will allow unit coordinators to publish individual units under headings recommended in the Academic Board's policy *Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching*. These measures will ensure consistency in course outlines across the Faculty. The Faculty acknowledges that there is a need for greater consistency of assessment across the Faculty as a whole. Heads of School have been asked to provide information on the extent of current Unit of Study assessment, and this information will be used to formulate ways of improving and formalising such assessment in the future. Staff were aware of, and were using, the new guidelines on assessment and Unit of Study templates. The Review Team commends the Faculty for the work it has done to ensure consistency in Units of Study outlines and assessment. *(See Commendation Five)*
- 4.11.3 The Review Team noted that most departments evaluated Units of Study on a regular basis. However, there was inconsistency in how responses to student feedback were disseminated. These included: placing responses on the website the following semester; reporting to the incoming group on changes made from the previous cohort's feedback; and responding to students' evaluation during the semester. One department provided information about the importance of evaluation in course outlines.
- 4.11.4 Mindful of the progress that has been made in this area and the size of the Faculty, the Review Team further encourages it to consider ways of ensuring consistency in its quality assurance processes. The Team suggests that the Dean might consider devolving responsibility to the Heads of School. *(See Recommendation Four)*

4.12 Teaching and Learning Committee

- 4.12.1 The Review Team commended the Faculty on the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee. It is the engine for significant change within the Faculty and is effective in

communicating teaching and learning issues to Schools. The work that the Committee is doing in increasing the understanding and importance of teaching and learning issues is appreciated by all staff. The Faculty is benefiting from important initiatives that have emanated from the Committee (some of them in conjunction with the Undergraduate Matters Committee). These include: the Assessment Policy; the Workload Policy; TIF Grants to enhance the student learning experience; First Year Experience Program; teaching and learning seminars; teaching and learning initiative grants; and teaching excellence awards. *(See Commendation Six)*

4.13 Research-led teaching

4.13.1 Students appreciated the fact that they were exposed to current research through the involvement of academic staff and visiting lecturers in their teaching. They expressed the view that this inspired them and made the courses interesting and stimulating. However, first year students would value the discussion of research within their general courses, considering that this would engage their interest in subjects.

4.13.2 The Review Team commends the Faculty on the way in which the research activities of staff are being integrated into their teaching, and the positive effect this is having on the student learning experience. *(See Commendation Seven)*

5 GOAL TWO: DIVERSITY, ACCESS AND EQUITY

5.1 Flexible Entry and Special Admissions Schemes

5.1.1 The Faculty's *Undergraduate Admissions Policy* enumerates the Faculty's participation in University-wide and Faculty-specific special admissions schemes. The Review Team particularly noted the *Flexible Entry Scheme* introduced in 2002 for the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Arts (Media & Communications). The Scheme was widened in 2003 to include the Bachelor of Liberal Studies both at Camperdown and the Centre for Regional Education Orange; and will be further extended in 2004 with the Bachelor of Arts at Orange. *(See Commendation Eight)*

5.1.2 The Review Team noted the intention to monitor the progress of students admitted under the Flexible Entry Scheme and to profile the students failing one or more Unit of Study. Given the recent raising of the UAI this was felt to be timely.

5.2 Student Support Mechanisms

5.2.1 Both the Self Evaluation Report and the interview with Faculty staff revealed a number of measures to support students, especially NESB students. Measures range from specific Units of Study (e.g. ENGL 1000), targeted grants (e.g. Competence in Written English TIF Grant), provision of financial support (e.g. Arts In-Country Language Scholarships), establishing support positions (e.g. Departmental International Co-ordinators) and developing directed events (e.g. Postgraduate Welcome Day). The Review Team noted the success of the Faculty in this area, as born out by its Student Progress Rates for NESB students. *(See Commendation Nine)*

5.2.2 Students reported both local and systemic issues with regard to student support (outside the control of the Faculty) - a University support package for "out of towners" was distributed but not followed up; child care is an issue; and for International students concerns were lack of access to proof readers, travel concessions and visas not extending to the Graduation Ceremony

5.3 Indigenous Participation

- 5.3.1 While the Review Team noted the good relations and participation of the Faculty in Koori Centre programs, and the usage of SESQUI funds in indigenous projects, the Review Team felt that the Faculty could be more pro-active in raising the participation rates of indigenous Australians in Faculty programs and attracting high quality students from all equity groups. *(See Recommendation Five)*

5.4 Benefits of Diversity

- 5.4.1 Students felt that diversity was a special strength of the University – both within the University and with regard to the University’s geographical setting. Diversity was felt to improve the depth of tutorial discussions and to deepen the education experience.

6 GOAL THREE: EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

6.1 Research Performance

- 6.1.1 The Review Team congratulated the Faculty on their improved research income and postgraduate completion rates. *(See Commendation Four)*
- 6.1.2 The Faculty’s Self Evaluation Report acknowledges a drop in research productivity (as measured by publications) and variations in research participation rates across the Faculty. Measures such as the Arts Research Day and the regular distribution and discussion of data on research performance, the inclusion of research in the workload formula, and the provision of financial and mentoring assistance will assist in developing a more consistent profile across the Faculty.
- 6.1.3 Student feedback indicated a need for more documentation and communication of Faculty research strengths and expertise; while the Self-Evaluation Report reported a dearth of interdisciplinary research. It was felt that the new Faculty School structure and the greater emphasis on research quality assurance processes would assist in this area.

6.2 Research Higher Degree Experience

- 6.2.1 The growing number of full-time PhD students, the introduction of a 7-stage monitoring plan for PhD supervision and tightened application requirements for PG Research students appears to be positively affecting postgraduate completion rates.
- 6.2.2 While the Review Team were of the opinion that the 7-stage monitoring plan for PhD supervision should not be rigidly applied, student reports of variable quality in supervision indicated the need for such a guide.
- 6.2.3 Students commented favourably on the development of the Postgraduate Arts Research Centre (PGARC) and its role in developing a sense of collegiality. However the 69 desks and computers in PGARC1, the 28 in PGARC2 and the 24 planned for PGARC3 are totally inadequate for a postgraduate research cohort of 532, of which 300 are full time. While access to this infrastructure was rationed by a booking system, the Review Team were strongly of the opinion that this was inadequate and the Faculty should place a high priority on finding a solution for the infrastructure and accommodation needs of postgraduate research students. The Review Team suggested the possible formation of an alliance with another Faculty in the College e.g. Education and Social Work. *(See Recommendation Six)*
- 6.2.4 Students also reported that they had inadequate opportunities to participate in tutoring and teaching and that this negatively impacted on the development of a sense of participating in a fraternity of academics and would also have negative impacts on their future academic careers.

- 6.2.5 Postgraduate research students commented that processes and forms around the University's ethics structure were biased towards the Sciences and inhibited their ability to link into the Arts community.

7 GOAL FOUR: INTERNATIONALISATION

- 7.1 The Faculty is attracting an increasing number of International and Study Abroad students and this reflects a growing internationalisation of the curriculum. A number of departments offer units focussed on Asia and/or the Pacific Rim, with a growing number of 'comparative' and 'cross-cultural' units e.g. Cultural Transmission: America & Australia is taught concurrently at Sydney and University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) – this has facilitated UNC students coming to Sydney as Study Abroad students.
- 7.2 The Faculty has several offshore programs – the Museum Studies Graduate Diploma has been offered in collaboration with the University of Hong Kong's School of Professional & Continuing Education since 1998. Quality of offshore programs is ensured by evaluation - the recent evaluation of this Graduate Diploma has been presented to the Academic Board of the University of Hong Kong.
- 7.3 International postgraduate students reported favourably on the quality of the educational experience they are receiving through the Faculty due to the collegiality of the staff. However, in spite of the support mechanisms for NESB students listed in *Section 5.2.1*, their peers reported the difficulties facing NESB International students with essay assessments and the impact of language difficulties in group project work. The Review Team recommended that the Faculty increase the usage of alternative assessment methods offered via online teaching and learning and endorsed the plans to provide 'University English' at a postgraduate level.
- 7.4 Students remarked on the lack of scholarships available for International students. While a submission to the recent International Review has requested a doubling of the IPRS, the Review Team felt that the Faculty could investigate the development of Faculty-based scholarships for International students. (*See Recommendation Seven*)

8 GOAL FIVE: ENGAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY AND THE PROFESSIONS

- 8.1 Unlike a faculty for which engagement with a single profession (and related professions) is both obvious and straightforward, the Faculty of Arts engagement is as broad and generic as the degree outcomes it promotes. However, individually discipline areas have demonstrated responsiveness to industry and profession demands with both developments in curriculum and courses, internships and placements. The Review Team suggests that a committee be established at the Faculty level to better focus and market linkages with industry and the professions. (*See Recommendation Eight*)
- 8.2 The first intakes in the 'vocational' undergraduate degrees (*Media & Communications, Social Sciences, Informatics*) are due to complete at the end of 2003. The Review Team endorses the intention to track these first graduates to establish what type of employment they have obtained and how well their degree training has equipped them for that employment.
- 8.3 The Review Team noted the broad range of partners involved in Faculty SPIRT and Linkage Grants and the Faculty initiative to facilitate grant applications through seed-funding.

9 GOAL SIX: EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

9.1 Restructuring

9.1.1 The Review Team commended the Faculty on the obvious embedding of the new Faculty structure and the much improved financial situation of the Faculty. (*See Commendation Ten*)

9.1.2 The emphasis placed on policy development, training and communication was also noted, specifically the Chairs Retreat and the General Staff Forum. However resistance to change was still apparent, and is currently being fuelled by the decanting and redistribution of staff across the Camperdown Campus, which often involves a separation from administrative support.

9.2 Student Administration

9.2.1 The development of degree and program advisors in individual departments and the development of a brochure to advise students at enrolment were welcomed by the Review Team as an interface between academic and administration.

9.2.2 Students reported that in spite of an increasing usage of online self-administration they still encountered poor customer service and inconsistent advice at Faculty counters. Students undertaking combined and double degrees were particularly affected. The occurrence of timetable and exam clashes was also detrimentally commented on. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty continue to refine its work practices and communication in the area of Student Administration. (*See Recommendation Nine*)

10 GOAL SEVEN: SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

10.1 The Faculty was able to demonstrate a weight of evidence in support of their activities under this Goal area. These include external funding of positions and projects, with community language groups, foundations and all three levels of government; collaborative work e.g. at Angkor Wat and the Iraq National Museum; and public lectures and workshops held in collaboration with Faculty and discipline-based centres, foundations and associations.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Commendations

1. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the significant cultural shift in staff and students' attitudes to the restructuring; the effective use of the workloads policy to implement change, and encourages the Dean to continue the successful change management process. (*See Section 2.5*)

Goal One: Quality of Teaching

2. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the work it is doing to address the issue of parallel teaching of postgraduate and undergraduate students; and the initiative it is taking in the development of new interdisciplinary and vocational courses. (*See Section 4.3.3*)

3. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the implementation of the Seven stage monitoring plan, which provides a sense of structure to RHD candidates. It suggests that the Plan be used to guide students' progress and not be implemented to stringently. (*See Section 4.9.3*)

4. The Faculty is commended on the increase in research completion rates, and its performance in relation to other faculties in the University. (*See Sections 4.9.5 and 6.1*)

5. The Review Team commends the Faculty for the work it has done to ensure consistency in units of study outlines and assessment. *(See Section 4.11.2)*
6. The Review Team commended the Faculty on the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee. It is the engine for significant change within the Faculty and is effective in communicating teaching and learning issues to all departments. *(See Section 4.12.1)*
7. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the way in which the research activities of staff are being integrated into their teaching, and the positive effect this is having on the student learning experience. *(See Section 4.13.2)*

Goal Two: Diversity, Access and Equity

8. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the extension of the Flexible Entry Scheme, both in the number of courses involved and its application at the Centre for Regional Education Orange. *(See Section 5.1.1)*
9. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the measures established to support both local and international NESB students. *(See Section 5.2.1)*

Goal Six: Effective Management

10. The Review Team commends the Faculty on the obvious embedding of the new Faculty structure and the much improved financial situation of the Faculty. *(See Section 9.1.1)*

11.2 Recommendations

Goal One: Quality of Teaching

1. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty consider the introduction of a Faculty tutors handbook and the implementation of an in-house training program for tutors. This will ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the Faculty and improve the student experience. *(See Section 4.5.4)*
2. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty should introduce greater variety in forms of assessment including formative, as well as summative assessment, peer marking by students, and should develop grade descriptors for levels of performance. *(See Section 4.5.7)*
3. The Review Team considers the introduction of academic advisors to be a good initiative, but recommends that the Faculty investigate ways of more effectively communicating information about academic advisors to the students. This may include educating students about how to access information. *(See Section 4.10.4)*
4. Mindful of the progress that has been made in this area and the size of the Faculty, the Review Team further encourages it to consider ways of ensuring consistency in its quality assurance processes. The Team suggests that the Dean might consider devolving responsibility to the Heads of School. *(See Section 4.11.4)*

Goal Two: Diversity, Access and Equity

5. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty develop a more pro-active approach to increasing the participation of Indigenous students in its programs and attracting high quality students from all equity groups. *(See Section 5.3.1)*

Goal Three: Excellence in Research

- 6 The Review Team were strongly of the opinion that the Faculty should place a high priority on finding a solution for the infrastructure and accommodation needs of postgraduate research students. The Review Team suggests the formation of an alliance with another Faculty in the College (e.g. Education and Social Work). *(See Section 6.2.3)*

Goal Four: Internationalisation

- 7 The Review Team expressed the view that the Faculty should investigate the development of Faculty-based scholarships for International students. *(See Section 7.4)*

Goal Five: Engagement with Industry and the Professions

- 8 The Review Team suggests that a committee be established at Faculty level to focus on and market linkages with industry and the professions. *(See Section 8.1)*

Goal Six: Effective Management

- 9 The Review Team recommends that the Faculty continue to refine its work practices and communication in the area of Student Administration. *(See Section 9.2.2)*

Prof. Judyth Sachs
Chair, Review Team
Chair, Academic Board

31 October 2003

APPENDIX ONE: REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PHASE ONE REVIEW

Recommendation 1	The Faculty needs to consider improving the dissemination of Academic Board policies between the Faculty office, Schools and Departments.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular workshops for general staff to update them on recent developments in policies and procedures. • A day-long retreat for chairs of departments to discuss Academic Board policies and procedures. • More Dean's emails on policies for all staff. • Teaching & Learning link to Faculty home page.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve Teaching & Learning link. • Further workshops for general staff and chairs to orient them to Academic Board policies, as well as other areas of Faculty administration and Academic leadership.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed-back from the workshops and retreats has been very positive.

Recommendation 2	The Faculty needs to develop strategies to ensure that they comply with the Academic Board policy on the use of parallel teaching of postgraduate and undergraduate students.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty has undertaken a survey of the practice and identified a small number of departments that might be operating outside the guidelines. • Dean has identified this as an issue of importance at the Faculty Policy and Review Committee.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Postgraduate Matters Committee is developing a discussion document and series of recommendations for consideration by Faculty.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Recommendation 3	Strategies for communicating the milestones and achievements within the Teaching and Learning Plan to staff and students need to be established.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Teaching and Learning link established on faculty Website to provide easy access to latest achievements and developments in Teaching and Learning for staff and students. • Continue to operate regular Teaching and Learning workshops/presentations. • Awards ceremony for Teaching Excellence and new award for tutoring. • Teaching and Learning newsletter is an item available on the website.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular update Teaching and Learning newsletter to be placed on the Faculty home page to engage interest of staff and students. • More workshops and Teaching and Learning presentations. • Regular reports on Teaching and Learning to Faculty. • Continue to hold and publicise awards ceremonies – consider further categories for teaching awards.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from staff on Teaching and Learning link has been positive.

Recommendation 4	Variation in the provision of teaching, particularly in tutorials, across departments needs to be considered, in order to enhance the student experience.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Faculty workloads policy which will work to ensure greater consistency across departments. • Implementation of Faculty assessment policy to encourage greater consistency. • Discussion with Heads of Schools about need to monitor and improve the provision of teaching especially small group teaching.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Teaching and Learning Committee promote discussion of the importance of small group face-to-face teaching.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early to tell – workloads and assessment policies are still in trial stage.

Recommendation 5	In order to improve large group discussion all staff should be made aware of the programs offered through the Institute for Teaching and Learning.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Dean's Info on Institute for Teaching and Learning courses on offer. • Encouragement to Heads of Schools to heighten awareness of these courses. • JTL programs future of Teaching & Learning committee discussion and feature in Teaching and Learning newsletter
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Recommendation 6	Ways of improving communication to students regarding University and Faculty awards for good teaching should be considered. Staff should be encouraged to nominate themselves for these awards.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards will be a feature of the direct Teaching and Learning link on the Faculty home page. • Heads of Schools have been asked to identify and encourage staff to apply. • Regular awards ceremonies to help encourage and reward staff.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early too tell.

Recommendation 7	Improved ways of communicating information about the Arts On-Line Teaching and learning project throughout the Faculty should be a priority.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and Learning link on the Faculty home page has this project as a key item. Amalgamation of Arts IT Unit and Language Centre into new Multimedia and Educational Technologies in Arts Centre (META) – aim to foster greater coordination of Faculty teaching and learning strategies, particularly ICT supported Teaching and Learning.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission statement of new centre will be drafted over next few months and Arts On-Line and how to expand awareness of this project will be a key goal.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too early to tell.

Recommendation 8	The Faculty may consider the introduction of a compulsory research methodology course to induct new graduate students within the Faculty, and to give them milestones in terms of their candidature.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A compulsory unit incorporated into new Professional doctorate programs in the Faculty.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current discussion about utility of such a unit for other postgraduate program (eg MA by research).
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too early to tell.

Recommendation 9	Postgraduate research students should be encouraged to have regular and timely contact with their supervisors
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty's research supervision management plan stresses the importance of regular contact and monitoring of progress. Heads of Schools are aware of the need to foster a culture of regular contact amongst all supervisors.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postgraduate Matters Committee to encourage departments to embrace culture of regular contact.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A key evaluative tool will be completion rates. Latest completion figures indicate significant improvement.

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Recommendation 10	While significant work has taken place further investigation regarding ways in which its research completion rates can be improved is suggested.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issue is implementation of the Faculty's research supervision plan.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty needs to monitor compliance with the plan to ensure that all departments have implemented the policies and procedures.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong indication of compliance is increased completion rate. Latest figures suggest that Arts is performing very well with 17.75% of weighted research completions the second highest rate of any Faculty in the University (2000/2001).

Recommendation 11	The role and presence of academic advisors needs to be more effectively communicated to staff and students
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisors listed on Faculty website. • Notice given to all enrolling students of the advisors, their role and how to contact them. • Introduction of new First Year Experience coordinator to help link students to advisors. • New Bachelor of Arts Advanced director to act as advisor for a new specialised group of students.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of further mentoring strategies.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisors report increased use of their services. • Initial student feedback on specialist mentors (eg BA Advanced) positive.

Recommendation 12	Better coordination and communication regarding how cross Faculty degrees can be implemented is required
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This issue was central to implementation of new BA/BMus Studies degree.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still have not resolved problem of administration of Liberal Studies. Requires further discussion with Faculty of Science.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New degree not on stream until 2004.

Recommendation 13	The Faculty is encouraged to consider ways of ensuring consistency in its quality assurance processes, particularly in relation to feedback, unit of study outlines, clarity of goals in postgraduate coursework units, and research supervision
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment Working Party report has been endorsed by Faculty – to ensure greater consistency.• New unit of study template has been developed to assist departments in Faculty to have a consistent framework for course outlines.• New Undergraduate and Postgraduate Matters new unit proposal forms to foster greater consistency.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore further proposals for templates for outlines and goals to foster consistency.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too early to tell yet.