

## AGENDA ITEM 13

## Report of the Research and Research Training Committee

**13.2 Report of the Research and Research Training Committee meeting held on 5 August 2009**

The Committee met on 5 August 2009 when there were present: The Chair (Professor B Sutton) presiding; Professors J Christodoulou, G Clarke, T Hambley, K Howard, J Kril, B Paltridge, K Refshauge; Associate Professors R de Dear, M Fairskye, P McCallum, E Tipton (for Professor R Waterhouse), D Waters and S Williams; Drs I Shariv and P Young (for Associate Professor A Ammit); Mr N Irving and Mr J Shipp. Mr M Charet was in attendance.

The full agenda for the meeting may be accessed on the web at:

<http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/oldcom/rrtc/agendas.shtml>

**13.2.1 PhD Review Working Party report**

[separate attachment](#)

The final report of the Working Party had been circulated to the Committee with the agenda, and the Committee endorsed the report and agreed that the report would be submitted to the Academic Board for noting at its meeting of 26 August and also referred to the DVC(Education) and other parties for implementation. It was also proposed and agreed that the Working Party remain active to complete a revision of existing policy, with SUPRA to be invited to participate in the process.

**Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board receive and note the report of the PhD Review Working Party, as set out in the report presented.*

**13.2.2 Best Practice Manual**

[separate attachment](#)

The final version of the Best Practice Manual was circulated to the Committee with the agenda. The Committee was advised that the manual was anticipated to assist administrators and Postgraduate Coordinators with administrative concerns relating to research candidates, and it was anticipated that the Manual would be made available online allowing for easier update and transmission of changes. Professor Sutton suggested that the DVC (Education) be approached to make the Best Practice Manual available to staff and assume responsibility for future updates. The Committee agreed to endorse the presentation of the Best Practice Manual to the Academic Board, with Professors Sutton and Kril to communicate with the DVC (Education) regarding dissemination and future revision.

**Recommendation**

*That Academic Board endorse the adoption of the Best Practice Manual, as set out in the report presented.*

**13.2.3 Reports from Faculties****13.2.3.1 Faculty of Economics and Business: English Language Requirements**

*pages H3-H5*

The Faculty of Economics and Business submitted a proposal to increase the English language proficiency requirement for Higher Degree Research students in the faculty from the current overall requirement of 6.5 to 7 with a section minimum of 6.5.

**Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board approve the amendment to Schedule 1 of the policy "Postgraduate English Language Requirements", with effect from 1 January 2010, as set out in the report presented.*

### **13.2.4 Proceedings of the Committee**

#### **13.2.4.1 Report of the Chair**

The Committee noted that the Chair had approved the award of one Higher Degree.

#### **13.2.4.2 Report of the Academic Board**

The Committee noted the report of the Academic Board meeting of 1 July 2009.

#### **13.2.4.3 Other Reports**

The Committee also noted:

- an update report from the Open Access Working Party;
- the reports of the PhD Award Sub-Committee meetings of 23 June and 21 July (by circulation);
- the Framework for Doctoral Study discussion paper, presented by Associate Professor McCallum.

## **Minor Course Amendment Proposal**

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**Faculty/Board of Studies:** Faculty of Economics and Business

**Contact person:** Professor Elizabeth Cowley/Ms Mandy Nelson

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1. **Name of award course(s)**
  - a. **PhD – FB000**
  - b. **M.Phil (Economics) – FC021**

### **2. Purpose of proposal**

*The purpose of this proposal is to amend the existing English proficiency requirement for Higher Degree Research students in the Faculty of Economics and Business. The Faculty is applying to increase the overall result from 6.5 to 7 with a section minimum of 6.5.*

*This proposal is necessary to ensure students applying for a research degree within the Faculty of Economics and Business have obtained and developed the expected level of English skills in critical analysis and in oral and written communication. This will also place the Faculty inline with other Faculty English Language requirements within the University.*

*The request will put our faculty in line with many of the other business faculties at the G08 universities. Many already have 7.0 as the IELTS cut-off score. Others are moving in that direction. To write a thesis in a faculty where many of the disciplines are either drawing on literature from the social sciences and/or are attempting to contribute to that literature, the level of English has to greatly exceed the 6.5 level.*

*In fact, we have been informally applying the rule over the past few years. The proposal is to formalise this rule such that we do not confuse international students. The informal enforcement of the rule has reduced the number of situations where students and supervisors are frustrated by the inability of students to fully grasp the literature they are responsible to understand and critically assess. These objectives are also in line with the university's objective of 1-5-40.*

*An increased level of English proficiency is in line with the faculty's strategic objective of improving the level of training amongst PhD students and the desire to place students at internationally recognised research institutions. The proposal will also assist in our objective of increasing the occurrence of our students publishing their doctoral work.*

### **3. Details of amendment**

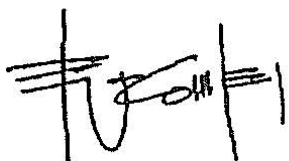
To increase the Faculty of Economics and Business IELTS English proficiency requirement for Research Degrees to an overall result of 7 with a section minimum of 6.5. The current requirement is an overall result of 6.5 with a section minimum of 6.

**4. Transitional arrangements**

*This will only affect higher degree research students applying for a PhD/MPhil in the coming semester, offers made to students prior to this amendment will BE honoured.*

**5. Other relevant information**

**6. Signature of Dean**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Cowley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Elizabeth Cowley

