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## Graduate Studies Committee Agenda

Committee Secretary: Megan Kemmis

Secretariat, Quadrangle, A14

Phone: 9351 3306; Fax: 9351 3572

E-mail: [gradstudies@academicboard.usyd.edu.au](mailto:gradstudies@academicboard.usyd.edu.au)

Web site: [http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/committees/grad\\_studies/index.shtml](http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/committees/grad_studies/index.shtml)

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### Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the **Graduate Studies Committee** will be held at **2.00pm** on **Tuesday 27 November 2007** in the Western Tower Room. (Room S 495, first floor of the Western Tower area of the Quadrangle Building on the Camperdown Campus, opposite the Clock Tower.)

Members who are unable to attend are asked to notify Megan Kemmis at the above address. Enquiries concerning this meeting may also be directed to Ms Kemmis.

*Megan Kemmis*

for

Dr W Adams

**Registrar**

20 November 2007

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### Agenda

### Pages

**1. Apologies**

Apologies have been received from: Dr M Boughton.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

**pages 3-8**

***Recommendation***

*That the Graduate Studies Committee adopt the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 October 2007 as a true record.*

**3. Business arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)**

**4. Report of the Chair**

**pages 9-13**

**4.1 Amendments to ESOS Act and Skilled Migration Program**

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**4.2 English Language Competencies Working Party**

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**4.3 Postgraduate Coursework Working Group**

*pages 9-13*

**4.4 Oral Report**

**Recommendation**

*That the Graduate Studies Committee note the report of the Chair.*

**5. Report of the Academic Board**

**supplementary agenda**

**Recommendation**

*That the Graduate Studies Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting of 21 November 2007, as set out in the report presented.*

**6. Analysis of SCEQ Results**

**pages 14-15**

**Recommendation**

*That the Graduate Studies Committee note the response from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the Faculty of Science to the analysis of SCEQ results, as set out in the report presented.*

**7. General business**

**8. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, 13 February 2008**.

## **Agenda Item 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

### **Minutes of the Graduate Studies Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 31 October 2007**

**There were present:** The Chair (Associate Professor P McCallum) presiding, Professors M Behnia and B Sutton, Associate Professors A Bashford, D Dragovich and J Shields, Drs L Hossain, T Lyon and R Walker, and Ms K Barnsley, Ms J Gamble, Mr M Goldberg, Mr C Riley and Mr B Shelton. Ms M Kemmis was in attendance.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from: Professors L Burns, J Lawler and R Overall, Associate Professors B Buckley (Mr M Goldberg attended in his place) and J Thistlethwaite (Dr T Lyon attended in her place), Drs M Boughton and M Collins, and Mr P Ball (Mr C Riley attended in his place).

#### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Members noted the following change under item 6.1 in the minutes:

The new mode would allow ~~require~~ students to complete three units of study on-line.

#### **Resolution 91/07**

The Graduate Studies Committee adopted the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 September 2007, as amended, as a true record.

#### **3. Business arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)**

The Chair noted that at the last meeting there had been some discussion regarding the changes to the ESOS Act and the Skilled Migration Program. He advised members that Ms Margaret O'Byrne from the International Office would be invited to the next meeting to provide further advice on these matters.

#### **4. Report of the Chair**

##### **4.1 English Language Competencies Working Party**

The Chair advised members that there had been one further meeting of the Working Party since the Committee's last meeting. The major focus of the group at the moment was undertaking a benchmarking exercise, particularly with other Go8 universities.

##### **Resolution 92/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee note the Chair's report on the English Language Competencies Working Party.

##### **4.2 Postgraduate Coursework Working Group**

The Chair advised members that he had given a presentation at the recent Vice-Chancellor's Forum on the Postgraduate Coursework Working Group. He took the Committee through the presentation and made the following points:

- there was evidence for a sector-wide shift towards graduate entry and postgraduate coursework in some discipline areas, as well as growth in cross-border education;
- alongside this growth were restraints to capacity, and increased competition from private providers and international providers (e.g. Carnegie Mellon in Adelaide, the on-line provider, University of Phoenix, etc.);

- while there has been strong growth in enrolments in postgraduate coursework, this growth was beginning to level out, although the growth in new courses was still climbing;
- the University's goals in this area are ensuring its courses are distinctive, of high quality, internationally competitive, flexible (i.e. faculties should be able to respond quickly to market demands) and diverse yet coherent;
- the proposed, broad framework for postgraduate coursework masters would include the option of a research component (25%) with a pathway to PhD entry, interdisciplinary study (6 to 12 credit points), professional experience and international experience (these last factors would be available as options to the student, often on a competitive basis, and would not be mandatory);
- a capstone or synthesising experience should be an identifying element of these courses, which would draw together the learning outcomes via a thesis, internship or professional placement, viva, final examination, research paper, chapter, report, exhibition, recital, lecture or presentation;
- advanced learning masters – this could be a Master of Arts, or Master of Science, in a named discipline area, and these degrees could be governed by a generic set of course resolutions to which the faculties could add additional requirements;
- the generic resolutions would cover admissions, minimum requirements (e.g. number of credit points and final assessment), standard core requirements (e.g. 50% core units plus electives), progression (including embedding with graduate certificate and/or graduate diploma), the minimum options for research, interdisciplinary study, professional experience and graduate attributes;
- professional masters are governed to a greater extent by the requirements of the relevant accrediting and professional bodies, so while there is less scope for a generic framework for such courses, they should still be broadly congruent in substance and structure with the framework to be set out in the proposed Postgraduate Coursework Rule;
- the development of combined degree programs would remain a distinctive feature of the University's offerings (e.g. Bachelor plus Masters, Masters plus Masters, Masters plus PhD); and
- issues to be resolved include the role of honours in masters degrees, and the length of coursework masters (there were arguments for both 1 year and 2 year degrees).

Ms Barnsley noted the recent changes to student visa requirements (particularly under the skilled migration program) meant some international students were required to study for a minimum of two years full-time, and she queried whether this would increase the dichotomy between local and international postgraduate coursework students. The Chair agreed that this was a problem, as they were two different groups with different needs. The new visa requirements could see the introduction of more combined degrees (similar to the recently approved Master of Commerce/Master of Professional Accounting). Associate Professor Dragovich pointed out that it was already possible for international student to apply for admission to two degrees, with progression requirements negotiated between the two faculties concerned. There was some discussion about providing "extended" masters to such students, but Professor Behnia argued that it would be more beneficial for the University to align itself with the US definition of a masters, which would also include a minimum amount of research.

**Resolution 93/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee note the Chair's report on the Postgraduate Coursework Working Group.

#### **4.3 Oral report**

The Chair advised members that he had nothing further to report.

#### **Resolution 94/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee note the report of the Chair.

### **5. Report of the Academic Board**

The Chair of the Academic Board drew members' attention to the two focus topics at the last meeting of the Academic Board. He added that focus topics allowed the Academic Board to discuss broader issues, as a counterpoint to the more detailed work of the committees. He pointed out that there was a broad representation of staff from all levels on the Board, as well as an increased student representation (as of 2008), which enabled the Board to function as an effective, democratic academic forum. He invited members to send him suggestions for future focus topics.

He advised members that the recent focus topic (the Academic User's Guide to Ethical Entrepreneurialism) had been developed by him and the Provost, and had arisen from concerns expressed by people both within and from outside the University regarding the current processes and policies for dealing with external funding. A working party would be established to develop a practical user's guide for negotiating with external agencies while retaining and upholding the University's core values. He advised that he was considering inviting ACER (the Australian Centre for Educational Research) to the next Academic Board meeting to give a presentation on uniTEST, an admissions testing scheme which was being trialled for 2008 by Macquarie University and ANU. A discussion would also be held regarding the proposed College.

He further advised members that he had reactivated the Assessment Working Party which would continue looking at the University's assessment policies. The working party would also develop a position statement on the University's philosophy of assessment. This task would take some time, and he indicated that the working party would release a series of discussion papers as its work progressed, with the first discussion paper due in early 2008.

#### **Resolution 95/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting of 10 October 2007, as set out in the report presented.

### **6. Proposals for new and amended postgraduate courses**

#### **6.1 Sydney College of the Arts: Master of Contemporary Art for Educators**

The Chair introduced the item, noting that it was surprising that the course had not attracted more students. Mr Goldberg advised that there was significant overlap between this course and the Master of Studio Art. It had also been anticipated that the course would receive accreditation, but this had not occurred.

Members endorsed the proposal.

#### **Resolution 96/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Sydney College of the Arts to delete the Master of Contemporary Art for Educators,
- (2) recommend that Senate:
  - (a) endorse the Academic Board's approval of the proposal;
  - (b) approve the amendment of the Resolutions of Senate relating to the Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates in the Sydney College of the Arts; and

- (c) rescind the Resolutions of Senate relating to the course; and
- (3) approve the rescission of the Faculty resolutions relating to the course with effect from 1 January 2008, as set out in the report.

## **7. Amendments to Faculty Resolutions**

### **7.1 Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning**

Members noted that the two items from the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning involved minor amendments to the courses involved.

Both proposals were endorsed by the Committee.

#### **7.1.1 Master of Architecture**

##### **Resolution 97/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning to amend the Master of Architecture,
- (2) note the amendment of the Faculty Resolutions relating to this course, and approve the resolutions relating to admission, units of study, requirements for the pass degree and requirements for the honours degree

with effect from 1 January 2008, as set out in the report.

#### **7.1.2 Master of Architectural History and Theory, Master of Design Science, Master of Facilities Management, Master of Heritage Conservation, Master of Urban Design, Master of Urban and Regional Planning, Graduate Diploma in Architectural History and Theory, Graduate Diploma in Design Science, Graduate Diploma in Facilities Management, Graduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation, Graduate Diploma in Urban Design, Graduate Diploma in Urban and Regional Planning, Graduate Certificate in Architectural History and Theory, Graduate Certificate in Design Science, Graduate Certificate in Facilities Management, Graduate Certificate in Heritage Conservation, Graduate Certificate in Urban Design, Graduate Certificate in Urban and Regional Planning**

##### **Resolution 98/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning to amend the Master of Architectural History and Theory, Master of Design Science, Master of Facilities Management, Master of Heritage Conservation, Master of Urban Design, Master of Urban and Regional Planning, Graduate Diploma in Architectural History and Theory, Graduate Diploma in Design Science, Graduate Diploma in Facilities Management, Graduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation, Graduate Diploma in Urban Design, Graduate Diploma in Urban and Regional Planning, Graduate Certificate in Architectural History and Theory, Graduate Certificate in Design Science, Graduate Certificate in Facilities Management, Graduate Certificate in Heritage Conservation, Graduate Certificate in Urban Design, Graduate Certificate in Urban and Regional Planning, and
- (2) note the amendment of the Faculty Resolutions relating to these courses

with effect from 1 January 2008, as set out in the report.

**7.2 Faculty of Medicine: Master of Medical Education, Graduate Diploma in Medical Education and Graduate Certificate in Medical Education**

The Chair recommended to Dr Lyon that the Faculty replace the clause on satisfactory progress with the wording used by the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning.

The revised resolutions were approved subject to this amendment.

Note: After further discussion with the Faculty of Medicine, during which the Faculty pointed to particular problems with taking the wording suggested, it was agreed between the Chair and the Faculty that the wording below would cover the Faculty's and Committee's concerns:

11.1 The faculty requires students to demonstrate satisfactory progress with their studies as set out in the current relevant University policy on progression.

**Resolution 99/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Faculty of Medicine to amend the Master of Medical Education, Graduate Diploma in Medical Education and Graduate Certificate in Medical Education, and
- (2) note the amendment of the Faculty Resolutions relating to these courses

with effect from 1 January 2008, as set out in the report.

**7.3 Faculty of Science**

**7.3.1 Master of Applied Science (Health Psychology), Graduate Diploma in Applied Science (Health Psychology), Graduate Certificate in Applied Science (Health Psychology)**

The Chair noted and queried that the unit of study BACH5180 was listed as a core unit, but had been deleted from the list of units of study under clause 4. It was agreed that clarification would be sought from the Faculty of Science on this matter.

The amended resolutions were approved, subject to this clarification.

Note: following the meeting, the Faculty of Science confirmed that this unit should not have been deleted from the table in the resolutions. The resolutions sent to the Academic Board were amended to reflect this information.

**Resolution 100/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Faculty of Science to amend the Master of Applied Science (Health Psychology), Graduate Diploma in Applied Science (Health Psychology) and Graduate Certificate in Applied Science (Health Psychology)
- (2) note the amendment of the Faculty Resolutions relating to these courses, and approve the resolutions relating to the requirements for the certificate, diploma and degree

with effect from 1 January 2008, as set out in the report.

**7.3.2 Master of Medical Physics, Graduate Diploma in Medical Physics**

Members noted and approved the amendments to the core units of study for the Master of Medical Physics and the Graduate Diploma in Medical Physics.

**Resolution 101/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Faculty of Science to amend the Master of Medical Physics and Graduate Diploma in Medical Physics
- (2) note the amendment of the Faculty Resolutions relating to these courses, and approve the resolutions relating to the requirements for the certificate, diploma and degree with effect from 1 January 2008, as set out in the report.

**8 Analysis of SCEQ Results**

This item was deferred to the following meeting.

**9 2008 Meeting Dates**

Members noted the schedule of meeting dates for 2008.

**Resolution 102/07**

That the Graduate Studies Committee note the meeting dates for 2008, as set out in the report presented.

**10. General business**

There were no items of general business.

**11. Next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 27 November 2007.

## **Agenda Item 4 Report of the Chair**

### **4.1 Amendments to ESOS Act and Skilled Migration Program**

Ms Margaret O'Byrne from the International Office will attend the meeting to advise members of the recent amendments to the ESOS Act and the Skilled Migration program.

#### ***Recommendation***

*That the Graduate Studies Committee note the report on recent amendments to the ESOS Act and the Skilled Migration program.*

### **4.2 English Language Competencies Working Party**

The Chair will provide an update on the recent meetings of the English Language Competencies Working Party.

#### ***Recommendation***

*That the Graduate Studies Committee note the report of the Chair regarding the English Language Competencies Working Party.*

### **4.3 Postgraduate Coursework Working Group**

10-13

Attached is a draft proposal from the Provost's Postgraduate Coursework Working Group.

#### ***Recommendation***

*That the Graduate Studies Committee note the report of the Provost's Postgraduate Coursework Working Group.*

*Postgraduate Coursework at the University of Sydney*  
Draft Proposal  
7 November, 2007

## **Context**

This proposal is made in the context of steady growth in the University's postgraduate coursework load and programs over the last decade. While load figures have experienced a slight decline since their peak in 2003, the number of programs has continued to rise with 365 programs accepting enrolments in 2006, although over 50% of these had enrolments of ten students or less and a significant percentage (13.7%) had only a single enrolment. Despite the levelling out of growth, various factors in the higher education environment indicate that this will continue to be an area of high demand and increasing competition from other public universities and from what is predicted to be an increasingly active private higher education sector. The latter is likely to include both local colleges and new international players encouraged by government efforts to promote competition.

Factors which point to continuing high demand include:

- A shift to graduate entry programs, particularly in health and professional disciplines, and a move to graduate-level accreditation in some professions;
- Projected growth of around 20% by the OECD of students studying outside their home country, with higher growth experienced in the Asia Pacific region and in Master's level students;
- Predicted capacity constraints in both infrastructure and staff in the Australian Higher Education sector in the years 2012-2020 and the emergence of local and international private providers to fill these capacity constraints (Karmel 2007);
- Continuing financial pressures on Australian Universities.

It should also be noted that postgraduate coursework is, and is likely to remain, the least regulated part of the Australian higher education profile (when compared with undergraduate and research training) and this will contribute to competitive pressure. It also provides the University with an opportunity to demonstrate its ability to maintain quality without the interference of regulating bodies.

## **Aims of the current review**

Within this context, the Postgraduate Coursework Working Group was charged with transforming the current framework for postgraduate coursework into one which achieves:

- national and international distinctiveness in terms of what attainment of a University of Sydney Master's degree or other postgraduate award means to employers, graduates and the community in terms of quality; communication, problem solving and leadership ability; specific skills; richness of experience; and intellectual outlook
- a simplified articulation of requirements centering around one or two models
- clarity of structure
- flexibility which fosters innovation and responsiveness within departments and faculties
- opportunities for interdisciplinary study
- pathways to research
- professional relevance and opportunities for professional experience
- genuinely post-graduate pedagogy
- consistency in admission standards
- an improved postgraduate student experience.

In brief, the aim is to produce a framework for postgraduate coursework which is distinctive, internationally competitive, flexible, diverse, and coherent while delivering the standards

expected at the very highest levels of the professions and the international higher education sector through modern pedagogical methods developed through evidence-based research.

## **The Framework**

The internationally recognized degree in postgraduate coursework is the Master's degree. It is proposed that the University of Sydney adopt a framework recognising two types of Master's degrees:

- The Advanced Learning Master's degree
- The Professional Master's degree.

Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas will continue to provide feeder programs and staged exit points and, where appropriate, also exist as stand alone courses.

All coursework Master's programs at the University of Sydney will have the following characteristics:

- An opportunity for Research training at a level which enables suitably qualified students to enter a PhD and be eligible applicants for an Australian Postgraduate Award. Awards should be structured to allow an option of 25% research and/or the completion of a thesis of 20,000 words.
- An opportunity for interdisciplinary study. All awards will allow the option of up to 12 credit points of study in a faculty outside the home faculty.
- An opportunity for professional experience or an industry-relevant project\*.
- An opportunity for international experience through exchange, study abroad or participation in a project with an overseas partner\*.
- A synthesising or "capstone" experience in which the candidate has the opportunity to draw together and synthesise the learning which has taken place during the degree and to make high level comparisons and conclusions on the basis of that learning.

\* It is recognised that capacity constraints may limit the number opportunities for professional and international experience that can be offered to any one cohort and that it may be necessary in some cases for places to be allocated on a competitive basis.

## **The Advanced Learning Master's Degree.**

It is recommended that Master's Degrees of the Advanced Learning type normally be drawn together under the generalist names of:

Master of Arts in <discipline area>  
Master of Science in <discipline area>

Common nomenclature will assist broad recognition of our Master's degree, while still allowing recognition of the discipline diversity which is a strength of the University's academic profile at both the individual and discipline level.

In order to achieve University-wide consistency, it is recommended that there be a Senate Postgraduate-Coursework Rule which specifies for the Master of Arts and Master of Science:

- Minimum admission requirements (with the capacity for faculties to specify additional discipline-specific requirements)
- Minimum requirements for the degree in terms of credit points, minimum and maximum duration
- A generic structure based on a discipline-based core comprising 50% and electives (including options for research, international experience, interdisciplinary experience and industry or professional experience) making up the other 50%. [percentages to be discussed]
- Minimum options for research, interdisciplinary experience, industry and professional experience, exchange and credit for study abroad units taken at overseas institutions.
- Progression rules including rules for transfer from embedded programs, exit points, and conditions under which the qualifications for embedded programs can be taken out
- The Final Examination. This section would articulate in general terms the expectations for a range of barriers that would be acceptable as the Capstone Experience which would include:
  - A thesis
  - An internship or professional placement (with assessment or viva)
  - A Viva Voce examination
  - A Final Written Examination
  - A Research Paper, Chapter, or a research report or professional report
  - An exhibition, recital, public lecture or other presentation.
- A set of Attributes and Skills of Master's Graduates of the University of Sydney (these attributes would either be written into the Postgraduate Coursework Rule or referred to as a stand alone document)
- Generic possibilities for combined degree programs.

In addition to the requirements set out in the Postgraduate Coursework rule, faculties will publish a list of those discipline areas in which they will offer Master's programs, specifications for the Core and, where necessary, for the Final Examination and any other additions to the minimum requirements set out in the Postgraduate Coursework Rule.

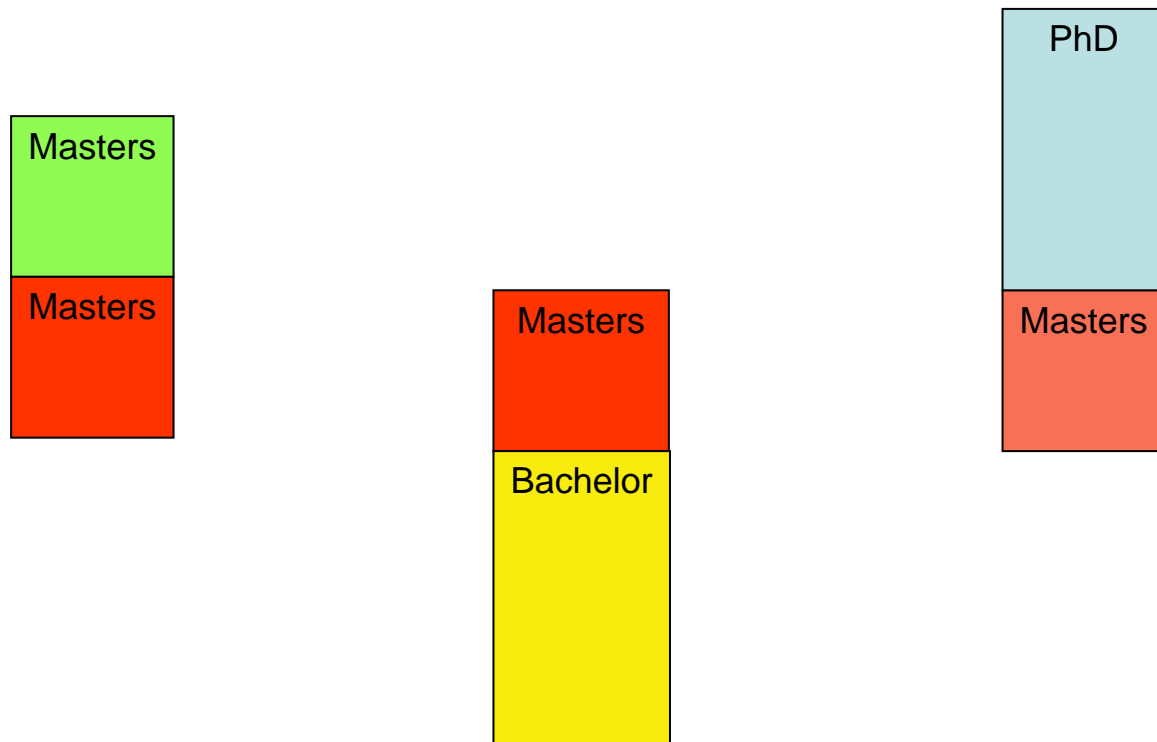
## **The Professional Master's Degree**

It is recognised that expectations for Professional Master's Programs will often be influenced by professional bodies, the expectations of professions, and in some cases the requirements of accrediting bodies. Faculties should be engaged in formal and active dialogue with such organizations, through accreditation visits and discussions, advisory boards and where appropriate participation in the governance of those bodies.

Professional Master's Degrees may, where appropriate, use the generic structures of the MA and MSc degrees outlined in the Postgraduate Coursework Rule. In cases where this does not fit the needs of the students or the profession, faculties will need to publish a specific set of faculty and senate resolutions for the degree. It is expected that such Professional Master's degrees will be broadly congruent with the requirements outlined in the Postgraduate Coursework Rule.

## **Combined degree programs**

Combined degree programs provide great benefits for students in terms of facilitating interdisciplinary study and allowing for individual learning pathways balancing breadth through generalist programs and depth in specialised study. Combined programs are a distinctive and valued feature of the University of Sydney's profile and there is further capacity for innovation in this area, particularly in combine undergraduate programs with postgraduate coursework programs and in linking postgraduate coursework programs with PhDs.



The current mechanism for establishing combined programs is cumbersome, requiring specific resolutions for each combination, which inhibits combinations where there is small demand. The Postgraduate Coursework rule would specify and formalize generic rules under which degrees could be packaged together without the need for specific resolutions and give generic guidelines for allowable cross-crediting of programs and for how the Capstone Experience would be managed in such cases.

### **Honours**

The use of honours in Master's programs at the moment is inconsistent. In some programs, there is an appended honours program involving research while in other cases honours is awarded as a recognition of merit without research. However, honours is not a well recognized category internationally and in some cases there appears to be confusion with the use of honours at the undergraduate level where the practice is well-established within Australia and well-recognised locally. It is recommended that postgraduate coursework Master's programs not include an honours component and that all coursework Master's programs offer the opportunity for research.

## **Agenda Item 6 Analysis of SCEQ Results**

Members will recall that the response to the analysis of SCEQ results from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music was not considered at the Committee's last meeting, and was held over to this meeting. A response from the Faculty of Science has also been received, and is attached.

### ***Recommendation***

*That the Graduate Studies Committee note the responses from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the Faculty of Science to the analysis of SCEQ results, as set out in the report presented.*

### **Sydney Conservatorium of Music**

We discussed the report at our most recent Graduate Studies Committee meeting. Comments were:

1. it is difficult for us to see why ratings for the Conservatorium are so inconsistent and, in some cases, are declining, as over the past three years there has been much activity to support graduate students (refurbishing of spaces, purchase of ICT equipment, increased levels of liaison with students, reinforced communication, regular emails updates to students on relevant matters)
2. there has also been much discussion and analysis of the teaching of generic skills and clarity of expectations by the Conservatorium Teaching and Learning Committee and in discussions and workshops at our annual Teaching Day
3. the committee wondered whether there was a small sample size (this is alluded to in the report), in which case we might only be seeing results from a small group of students who feel they have complaints to make – at the same time, if there are students with complaints, that is worrying in itself and we have to work at getting these students to contact relevant staff when problems arise and not wait until a survey provides opportunity to criticise
4. it was felt that as we had just gone through a period of changeover between old and new degree structures, the ratings might reflect the unsettling nature of transition between degree structures.

### **Faculty of Science**

The Faculty of Science offers a number of discipline-specific postgraduate programs and no 'whole-of-degree' surveys are conducted independently by Science, so overall student satisfaction levels can only be assessed on a unit-by-unit basis within individual programs. It is planned to consider survey results for the SCEQ in relevant degree reviews being conducted this year. For those degrees not due for review, SCEQ results will be discussed with individual Program Coordinators.

It is expected that specific recommendations about particular units and overall degree structures and administration will be possible after these processes have been completed.