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## Academic Board Agenda

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10 March 1999

### AGENDA ITEM 12. Report of the Academic Staffing Committee

#### 12.2 Report of the Chair

##### 1. Feedback from last Academic Board meeting 10 February.

###### 1.1 *Appointments policy documents*

These were approved in principle subject to the consideration of a number of specific matters by the Academic Staffing Committee. The Committee met one week later on 17 February and worked through the particular points, most of which were taken on board. Thanks in particular to Associate Professor Masters for pointing out a number of matters in the documents that required attention.

Two particular matters on which I would like to report back to the Board:

###### (1) *Selection Committee Meeting*

At the last Board meeting there was divergent comment in relation to the selection committee meeting and the conduct of interviews. The ASC paid particular attention to this matter in its meeting of the 17 February. The Committee's decision was to clarify the policy as approved by the Board the week before.

The present policy document did not seek to change the policy as expressed in the earlier policy document of 1996 with respect to the operation or functioning of the selection committee meeting. In particular in both documents it is required that in the case of continuing appointments interviews are to be conducted as part of the selection process. In looking at this matter in the Academic Staffing Committee what became clear to us were the practical implications of the HECE award in relation to appointments generally. Namely, interviews are required virtually for all appointments given that most will be continuing appointments. This increases the burden particularly on Heads of Department - but this is the effect of the HECE award, not the policy with respect to interviewing which we did not change in the document - and which has been a clear requirement at least since the beginning of 1996.

Interviews are different from departmental presentations and consultation. The policy document makes clear that the selection committee as a whole does not need to be in attendance for the departmental presentations and consultation. Where interviews are required, however, and this will be the case for all continuing appointments, the selection committee is required to attend now as before.

The key to the point raised in the Board is the timing: the response in the policy which is consistent with the prior policy is that the Selection Committee has to attend for the interviews and the decision - the whole process is the selection meeting, as before, and, depending on the number of candidates to be interviewed, may take place over more than one day.

Associate Professor Davey of the Academic Staffing Committee raised a concern as to the practical implications that this has now and suggested that there might be another way to approach the process which was less demanding on the non-Departmental members of the committee. However the Committee as a whole considered that to change this aspect of the policy now was beyond our brief. We acknowledge that this is a matter that others may wish to raise. But at this time we recommend that it be kept as part of the overall responsibility of the Committee in relation to monitoring, on behalf of the Board, the effectiveness of the policy. I would like to address this particular point later on, but I am grateful to Professor Davey for flagging this as a concern that we should consider in due course.

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One aspect of the interviewing process that is made a little clearer is that interviews can take place either in person or by equivalent methods of evaluation.

(2) *Size of Selection Committees*

Both Professors Cass and Webber raised a question about the size of selection committees and suggested that in some cases additional members might be useful, for example where outside funding was involved.

The Committee agreed that the committees should be kept small and that it would only be in exceptional cases that a larger committee might be seen as useful. We thought it important to maintain a balance in the committee structure and thought a simple discretion to add extra members would not necessarily preserve this. Hence we decided to make provision for the Head to recommend in exceptional circumstances that the Selection Committee for Levels A to C be constituted according to the requirements for Level D. The level D committee allows for the addition of two additional members according to a designated formula. This follows the usual path: The Head recommends to the Dean the package for the appointment - including nominations for the selection committee. This would be subject to approval in the same way. It places the onus on the Head to recommend that bigger committee (with the work that goes with it). The recommendation would be made after the designated consultation. The Committee considered that this maintained the balance but also provided a little more flexibility at the Departmental level.

**1.2 Follow-up action**

This applies in relation to this particular set of documents and the other sets that are before the Board today.

The bi-annual review of policy documents such as these needs to be integrated better with a planned monitoring and feedback strategy. I am working on this in conjunction with Helen Beamish, Jeannette Deitch and the Staffing Committee. It is our aim to bring the Heads, Deans and PVCs much closer into the loop and to be consulted in a timely way. For example rather than waiting for the biannual review period and in the meantime collecting comments passively, we want to institute an active review policy at moments when matters are fresh in the minds of Heads and Deans - such as the conclusion of each round of promotions each year. In the work of the committee even at this point in the year it seems clear that Heads need to be brought more actively into a monitoring and feedback strategy.

Together with an effective review strategy we also wish to build up the briefing available to selection committees and FPCs as well as the Academic Board nominees who provide a mechanism for consistency in relation to the application of Board policies. We will work together with the Colleges to establish a briefing pattern that fits College needs as well as providing the University wide briefings.

**1.3 Adjunct titles**

Professor Young raised a matter in relation to Adjunct Titles. I have had further discussions on this matter and some related questions in relation to Clinical Titles and these matters will both be considered by the Academic Staffing Committee in consultation with relevant people before coming back to the Board.

**2. Documents before the Board 10 March**

The set of documents before the Board comprises two broad matters: (1) A set of policy documents relating to Academic Research-only staff; and (2) Promotion Committee Procedures and Guidelines. These have been on the desks of Academic Staffing Committee members over a good part of last year. The promotions criteria for Academic staff generally was approved by the Board and is now in place, but it needs the procedural documents to complete the set. The Research-only documents are tailor made and new.

Given the length of time in consideration of these in the committee and now given the need to implement the policies with respect to promotions this year, the Committee wanted to bring the documents before you today. However in order to do this, what we were unable to do was to provide

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a lengthy additional consultation period apart from the particular consultation already undertaken in the preparation of the documents in committee. Immediately following our ASC meeting on 17 February the documents went out to Heads, Deans and Personnel teams for further comment, but with only a week in which to consider the three substantial documents. We are keen to gain your approval today so that the documents can be implemented as part of this year's working policies, but acknowledge that the thoroughness of our own work last year has delayed and greatly circumscribed your opportunity to consider them leisurely.

I would like to make a few key points with respect to each set of documents.

(1) *Promotions procedures*

The promotions procedures document is the result of the regular review of the prior policies. It has been tidied and repetition removed. The principal changes in the promotions document are as follows:

- *FPC Report*: The circulation and finalisation of the report before signoff by the FPC is clarified/improved (p 28 of the Board papers under 'Responsibility of the Chair of the FPC').
- *Reporting back on unsuccessful applicants - Dean's role*: The old procedure provided for a statement by the CPC as to why a candidate was unsuccessful. The Chair of the CPC then provided feedback to an unsuccessful applicant following the applicant's consultation with the Head and Chair of the CPC. Instead of this procedure a new procedure, modelled on that in place at the UNSW, has been included in the new policy. The new procedure is designed to include the Dean more thoroughly in the final deliberation stage of the CPC so that the Dean is fully appraised of the grounds for the decision and is able to discharge the responsibility which is now given to the Dean of notifying any unsuccessful applicant and other core members of the decision of the CPC not to endorse the FPC recommendation with respect to a particular applicant. This is found in the section entitled 'Functioning of the CPC' which is on page 31 of the Board papers. The CPC will no longer provide the short written statements. Instead the Dean, by being there during the deliberations, will be able to communicate appropriately to candidates who have been unsuccessful, in spite of the FPC's recommendation in their favour.

(2) *Promotion of Research-only Academic staff*

This set of documents were developed by a sub-committee of the ASC chaired by Professor Les Field. They are modelled on the regular promotions documents and directly parallel them in all particulars except for the prominence given to research. I am particularly grateful for the thorough work of Professor Field in particular in the preparation of these policy documents in the development of the criteria for progression applicable at each level of promotion. This is found in the Board papers from p 42.

The bulletpoints of the mainstream promotions criteria for progression are amplified and extended, particularly at level C and above.

Associate Professor Rosalind Atherton  
Chair, Academic Staffing Committee  
10 March 1999