



The University of Sydney

Academic Board Agenda

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Enclosure for the agenda

for the meeting of the Academic Board on 13 November 2002

- ★ 5. **Report of the Chair**
 - 5.2 **General report**
 - 5.2.3 **Working Party on Communication, Implementation and Monitoring of Academic Board Policies**

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board relating to the Working Party on Communication, Implementation and Monitoring of Academic Board Policies, as set out in the report presented.

Recommendations on Communication of Board Policy

Prepared for The University of Sydney
Academic Board

11 October 2002

Recommendations on the Communication of Board Policy prepared for The University of Sydney Academic Board

1. Background

1.1 Commissioning of this report

This report was commissioned as part of the ongoing process to improve Academic Board Communication. It takes place within the University Strategic Plan and is intended to contribute to its Major Goals, especially Goal One: *The University of Sydney will maintain and enhance its position as an outstanding provider of high quality undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, both in Australia and internationally.*

The Final Report to the Senate of the Review of the Academic Board and Forum (2002) addressed the issue of Communication within the University. Representing the input of the Academic Board, *The Final Report* recommended a model of distributed participation, drawing upon interest and expertise of staff at various levels across the University.

It is in this context that the following recommendations on improving communication of Board Policy have been created. This is referenced to the larger issue of Quality Assurance throughout The University, including its position with regard to risk management. The guiding principles surrounding Quality Assurance were drawn from sources including The Australian Universities Quality Agency (located on the Web at www.auqa.edu.au) and The University of Sydney's own Quality Assurance reference page (www.usyd.edu.au/about/quality/resources/).

The consultant would like to thank all those who took the time to give thoughtful and candid input to the process. The willingness to participate demonstrated that there is a general feeling of support for the way in which the Academic Board is operating. Many comments from those interviewed showed there was a genuine and widespread wish to contribute to the ongoing improvements already in evidence.

1.2 Process

The process consisted of:

- Consultation with the Working Party and review of the intended effect of Board Policy.
- Provision of parameters to the Academic Board for selection of interviewees and those to receive questionnaires. This was to provide a mix of those involved in the formulation, communication and implementation of policy.
- Preparation of a questionnaire for stakeholders and Board members.
- Stakeholder interviews.
- Working session to present results to the Working Party, to obtain input to the report and recommendations 4 October 2002.
- Delivery of final report 11 October 2002.

2. Findings

2.1 Key Findings

The key findings show that in general, Board Policy is travelling through established hierarchies. The interviews and questionnaires sought to examine what happens when Board Policy is received in greater detail.

2.1.1 Purpose and Objective of Board Policy

The majority of those contacted felt that the purpose and objective of Board Policy was understood.

2.1.2 Compliance

In both discussions and questionnaires, the majority felt that the need for compliance was understood.

2.1.3 Dissemination

Board Policy is believed to reach most people, however there is no mechanism to confirm receipt of Board Policy or to confirm details of the communication path through the Faculties.

2.1.4 Retrieval

The Academic Board Website redesign which is underway will factor in problems expressed about retrieval of information.

Improvements suggested included: an improved Website; plain English summaries of important changes; action points as emails and not attachments and improved referencing and layout to assist with retrieval.

Of more urgency is the fact that the version of policy retrieved might not be current, depending on which search engine was used.

There is still a call for hard as well as electronic versions of policy, with a minority expressing interest in hard copies for file copy, or a summary of key points in brochure form, or a publication of policy as relevant to particular activities.

2.1.5 Communication Path

The Communication Path varied in each area but generally was characterised as travelling from the Dean to either the Associate Dean and/or Head as appropriate. From here the path was more diverse and might go to staff, or via Coordinators and Admin staff to staff and students. In some cases, depending on the Policy and who it affects in a particular Faculty, it may also go to the Undergraduate or Graduate Studies Committee, or straight to Student Administration. It is not always clear however that the path is amended each time Policy is disseminated to ensure it reaches those who will action it.

2.1.6 Interpretation and Application

From interviews and questionnaires, it appears that not all departments are equally well-served by a local interpretation of Board Policy. The consequence of failing to integrate Board Policy in Department practice is not always fully understood by all stakeholders.

The Academic Board office is able to provide advice on Policy to those who ask. It may not however always be clear to newcomers responsible for aspects of disseminating Board Policy how best to seek advice.

Several of those interviewed have established excellent knowledge management practice. They break down Policy for the stakeholders who will receive it, based on their knowledge of the creation of the Policy and knowing the input they had into its final design. Because they were representing their area of responsibility in the process of formulating Policy, they can be specific in interpreting it for all of those they send it to. This is important for full-time staff and critical for sessional and part-time staff who may need assistance with context in order to be effective in practice.

Incidentally and surprisingly, despite a range of communication on the way in which Policy is created including publication on the Website, in the Calendar and elsewhere, some respondents to the questionnaire were unclear about the way in which the Committees of the Academic Board functioned with regard to Policy formation. A gap in understanding was expressed about how issues are initially put forward for consideration even though there are clear processes in place.

With regard to Quality Assurance, in the *Final Report to the Senate of the Review of the Academic Board and the Academic Forum*, the Board endorsed the recommendation that quality assurance matters be embedded in the terms of reference for each committee rather than establishing a Quality Assurance Committee (*ibid* 2002: 21).

It was not clear however in what ways quality assurance is monitored and reviewed at Faculty level and several of the recommendations that follow suggest methods for improving this.

Overall, improved communication will enhance intelligent decision-making and a circular flow of information. All of the recommendations attempt to leverage existing approaches where possible rather than inventing new ones. While limited to a review of the communication of Board Policy, these recommendations are intended to assist measurement and contribute to critical management processes.

Though beyond the scope of this brief, it is worth noting that Quality Assurance initiatives, policies and requirements were coming from several areas of The University. Coordination across the institution is vital, and is the province of *Quality Assurance Coordination Group* (QACG).

3. Recommendations

3.1.1 Purpose and Objective of Board Policy

While the purpose and objective of Board Policy is understood in theory, the lack of feedback loops within Faculties or to the Academic Board suggests that practice and theory can move still closer together.

Recommendation: All Policy posted should invite electronic or hard copy feedback from everyone who refers to Policy. Deadline for feedback should be clearly stated, and the deadline should be set 3 months prior to the scheduled review of Policy. Feedback should be collected and presented as part of the Policy review process.

Recommendation: To assist understanding about the consultative process surrounding policy design, a plain English description of how policy is formulated, and preferred models of dissemination and implementation should appear on the Website and be made available to all staff. Each Faculty should make an effort to provide a cover note of examples demonstrating Faculty input to recent policies.

Recommendation: Electronic and hard copy of Policy should be presented with links to any pertinent legislation it is connected to. This will assist with better understanding of the importance of compliance, and with appropriate referencing when Policy is reviewed.

3.1.2 Compliance

Due to a range of factors, one of the most significant being the sheer volume of information sent round The University, Policy is most often referred to when and as needed and not until that time. In principle, this is adequate. However, 'just in time' is not sufficient if The University is to demonstrate accountability, monitor the quality of its functions and behave consistently on strategic issues. It may impair rapid response to issues. It allows the potential for misunderstanding. It means that the considerable consultation, thought and time that goes into Policy design is lost at the time of implementation.

Recommendation: The Academic Board Committees should provide a master checklist for each Dean to complete to advise how and where each Policy was circulated. Subsequently, in a timely fashion and to an agreed schedule, there should be a confirmation that any affected procedures in the Faculty were amended.

Recommendation: A clear, succinct statement of compliance requirements and the resulting benefits need to be set out with each policy. The consequences of failure to comply should also be set out.

Recommendation: A supporting statement to the *Terms of Reference* should nominate the accountable officer for implementation and dissemination of Policy (see below).

Recommendation: To assist with compliance, the Academic Board should identify the priority policies and procedures

3.1.3 Dissemination

The Academic Board should be able to confirm that Policy has been received for the purposes of quality control.

Recommendation: To assist with quality control across the University, automatic electronic recording and reporting of receipt of Policy should be implemented.

Recommendation: When policy is being formulated by the Academic Board, the examples and scenarios that are considered by Faculties should be captured to assist with interpretation at the time of dissemination.

Recommendation: The Academic Board should seek expertise from the relevant departments to improve the meta data keyword identification of policies. This can be enhanced by seeking user input, and would be facilitated by tracking the details of unsuccessful searches electronically to get a sense of how users look for information on Board Policy in practice. When deciding how to improve searches, reports on failed searches combined with a user perspective will enhance retrieval. Users could also be surveyed for their recommendations based on the matters in which they most commonly consult Policy. For example, entering 'cheating' should bring up the *Academic Board Policy on Academic Honesty*, 'drunk' should bring up the *Policy on Alcohol*, 'wills' should bring up the *Bequest Policy*, 'wheelchairs' or 'sight impaired' should bring up the *Disability Action Policy* and so on.

Recommendation: As part of their induction, staff should receive a concise summary of where Policy resides, how it is created, links the University's Strategic Plan and Quality Assurance procedures, and what the priority areas and policies are. This would be part of a coordinated approach on briefing new staff and each Faculty should review how it contributes to Policy so the process is clear. New staff should also be invited to participate in the work of the Academic Board and be given guidelines on how recruitment occurs if they would like to participate.

3.1.3.1 Format

Recommendation: A new cover page for Policy should be designed to carry the essential information in a plain English summary/abstract, the user-appropriate keywords and the likely action needed. This should be repeated in the email from the Dean accompanying the full policy. The covering email or document should summarise the particular instances of current practice a Policy may have impact on at Faculty level. The cover page should also repeat that the Policy is part of The University's Quality Assurance process and that this process includes external audits of compliance with policy. It may also show how the Policy contributes to the Goals of The University *Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: A template should be created at the time a matter proceeds to Policy consideration to: capture information relevant to its creation; identify its priority; gather specific examples that are considered during the formation of Policy as they will apply to specific Faculties and Schools in order to assist with implementation; identify who is responsible for the Policy so that those implementing Policy can contact them for further information (person and committee, to be scheduled for regular update); nominate the user-appropriate keywords to be marked as meta data; invite feedback to a nominated person on the Academic Board.

3.1.4 Retrieval

The Academic Board Website is currently being redesigned to be more user-friendly with improvements in layout, design, navigation and language. The way in which policy is stored and retrieved is also being reviewed. There are several recommendations in **3.1.3 Dissemination** that will impact on retrieval.

Recommendation: Assistance for the Academic Board from relevant departments with expertise in designing databases and creating hierarchies of information, electronic document design and Website design would enhance efforts to make Policy more accessible. This would also help to embed feedback loops at design stage, where they are most effective and can best assist with ongoing improvements.

Recommendation: The Academic Board should work with the relevant departments of The University to eliminate all out-of-date electronic copies of policies. A single list of all policies and their most recent effective date should be catalogued on the site for easy reference. There should also be clearly signposted links on the *Panoptic* search engine to the correct page for Board Policy.

3.1.5 Communication Path

Policy implementation would be enhanced by ensuring that all recipients are advised, or know how to find out, how Policy might affect them in practice. This could be supported by activities around interpretation (see 3.1.6). While the communication path of Policy is generally well-understood, it was interesting that there are no communities of practice established across Faculties. Given that one Faculty has reviewed Policies and Procedures on Academic Matters, and that this may be occurring elsewhere, there is an opportunity for capturing information about practice across Faculties. The combined knowledge and sharing of best practice would be invaluable. So would a summary of best practice in those faculties interpreting Policy before disseminating it.

Recommendation: The next step in improving communication of Board Policy is to identify and gather communities of practice across Faculties with regard to implementation of Policy. This is likely to consist of both academic and administrative personnel. Building on a base of existing practice, the shared solutions and the management of knowledge about the ways in which Policy will affect practice should significantly enhance implementation and understanding of policy.

Recommendation: A discussion of the Communication Path of Board Policy in each Faculty could be a timely addition to Academic Board Faculty Review visits. This would assist with knowledge capture, sharing and feedback. Commencement of identification of communities of practice across Faculties could support this discussion.

3.1.6 Interpretation and Application

The amount of interpretation accompanying Policy when it is disseminated varies considerably. To make it more consistent throughout The University, a range of communication tools are available and the best guiding principle can be described as ‘show, don’t tell’. Showing the Policy in action through practical examples in vehicles such as articles in internal publications, through examples when disseminating Policy, and through presentation formats such as workshops and in induction materials for new staff (administrative and academic) all present opportunities. There will be myriad Faculty opportunities to disseminate examples of Policy in action.

Recommendation: The working party should formulate a ‘preferred model’ of dissemination, including practical examples of interpretation, to reside on the Website.

3.1.7 General

Overall, to assist the free flow of best practice throughout The University, and to feed back into Policy formulation, cross-functional communities of practice could be created. This would enhance the sharing of knowledge and where relevant, assist with facilitated transfer of information should it be required. This would support the current self-directed use of Policy appearing in printed or electronic form, and the communication of Policy through existing hierarchies.

4 . APPENDIX

4.1 Suggestions for Website re-design

The current update of the Website is being undertaken on a zero-budget basis, using existing resources within the Academic Board to implement changes. Any suggestions for the re-design of the Website will be bound by resource implications, and the final result will be subject to those limitations.

4.1.1 Recording failed searches

Recording the details used for failed searches will help to facilitate word searches by the terms users most frequently use.

4.1.2 Keywords based on practice

A user survey could be conducted asking in what circumstances Policy is most often referred to. This will help to mark keywords linked to practice. For example, ‘cheating’ should bring up the *Academic Honesty Policy* and so on.

4.1.3 Site design

The site design should reflect user patterns. There should be a site map to refresh context for visitors. Careful thought should continue to go into the page headings and topics in order to best assist visitors. A *Frequently Asked Questions* section could assist visitors by demonstrating aspects of Policy in action with hypothetical examples where privacy is an issue. Alternatively, actual examples might be used on procedural matters if access were appropriately limited.

4.1.4 Document design

There are a variety of sound reference works on document design and Web Page design to enhance work underway in re-designing the Website. The same principles as those found in works like *Dynamics in Document Design* by Karen A Schriver and *The Graphic Design Cookbook* by Koren and Meckler provide good basic principles on both text and layout.

4.1.5 Feedback

Feedback should be facilitated both on the site, and in each policy. There are standard mechanisms to automate this process and the Academic Board can set up a process of acknowledgement and action.

4.1.6 Access

While transparency is an important goal, it may be that not all Policy should be accessible to anyone visiting the University of Sydney Website. Many universities limit access to students and staff, or staff where appropriate.

4.1.7 Cover summary

A succinct cover summary for policy would be the ideal entry point. This would lay out the key points of the policy and summarise circumstances in which it is most likely to be used. The existing template provides important consistency, but is not ideal of electronic reading. Recommendations for the template in *3.1.31 Format* will be refined by the Committees and a final version approved.

4.2 Details of Interviewees

Dr. W G Adams, Registrar

Professor S I (Charlie) Benrimoj, Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, Working Party

Associate Professor Simon Carlile, Assistant Pro Vice-Chancellor, IT

Associate Professor John Christodoulou, Medicine

Ms Olwen Cornelius, Director, Secretariat and Corporate Information Unit (SCIU)

Associate Professor Scott Kable, School of Chemistry, Working Party

Professor Michael Jackson, Economics and Business

Ms Megan Kemmis, Committee Secretary, Secretariat, SCIU

Associate Professor Peter McCallum, Conservatorium of Music

Associate Professor Tony Masters, Chemistry, Chair of the Academic Forum

Keri Neveldsen, Academic Board Officer, Secretariat

Professor Paul Ramsden, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning

Professor Beth Reid, Professor of Health Information Management, Faculty of Health Sciences, Working Party

Mr Tim Robinson, Manager, Archives and Records Management Services

Professor Judyth Sachs, Chair of the Academic Board

Miss Erica Sainsbury, Pharmacy

Dr. Rosanne Taylor, Animal Science

4.3 Questionnaire responses

Stakeholders

A total of 18 stakeholder questionnaires were sent. There were 12 replies.

Bramble Marketing and Communications

The University of Sydney

Stakeholders: Questionnaire on Communication and Implementation of Academic Board Policy

1 Situational data

1.1 Tick the box that best describes your role in Academic Board policy

	<input type="checkbox"/> Disseminating	OR	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementing	OR	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	OR	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) Faculty Review
Responses	3		2				

1.2 Are you a full-time employee of the University of Sydney?

	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes.
Responses	12	

1.3 How long have you been involved in disseminating and /or implementing Academic Board policy?

	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 5 years
Responses	2	2	2	6

2 Purpose and Objective of Academic Board Policy

		<u>Agree strongly</u>		<u>Agree</u>		<u>Strongly disagree</u>
2.1 The relevance of Academic Board policy is understood by those I deal with	1	2	3	4	5	
Responses	1	3	4	3	1	
2.2 The need for compliance with Academic Board policy is understood by those I deal with	1	2	3	4	5	
Responses	2	2	3	5		
2.3 I understand the relevance and need for compliance with Academic Board policy	1	2	3	4	5	
Responses	7	1	4			

3 Dissemination of Academic Board Policy: Process, Format and Retrieval

3.1 How many people in total in your area would you estimate receive new or amended Board Policy?

Responses: All. 1. 3. Most, if by email (but do they read it?). 10. 50. 20. 2.
6 directly from me (research & research training related). Unsure about other issues.
Papers (3). Info (17 or so).

No response = 2

	Agree <u>strongly</u>		Agree		Strongly <u>disagree</u>
3.2 <i>New/amended Academic Board policy goes to people who will implement it</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	3	2	4	2	
3.3 <i>Retrieval or access to relevant Academic Board policy is easy</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses		2	3	6	1
3.4 <i>How often would you refer to Academic Board policy in a calendar year?</i>					
Responses	<input type="checkbox"/> Never 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 3 times 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-10 times 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 – 20 times 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 30 times 3

If more than 30 times, how often would you estimate?

Responses

3.5 *Tick the appropriate box*

Academic Board policy is most effective in hard copy No Yes

Responses 5 1

Academic Board policy is most effective in electronic copy No Yes

Responses 3 3

Academic Board policy is most effective in both hard and electronic copy No Yes

Responses 3 8

Academic Board policy is most effective when personally addressed No Yes

Responses 6 3

3.6 *Are there other formats you'd recommend for existing and new/amended Academic Board policy?* No Yes
Responses 3 8

If yes, please list:

Responses: Web: but at a greatly improved site where one can find the relevant policy.

Plain English summaries of important changes, as emails (NOT attachments) and hard copy for display on dept noticeboards.

I think it would help to have 1) a policy log where people could indicate electronically an area where policy might be required; 2) a policy 'help desk'.

Coherent sets of documents are best assembled as guides (e.g. The Good Teaching Guide last year), that will provide policy, contacts, references and examples – on line or as hard copy.

email.

Implementation appears best when people meet and discuss it.

Better layout so it is not just an extract from minutes but all policies have the same layout with clear headings, date of effect, etc. The Personnel Policy models are not bad.

No response = 4

3.7 Please describe how Academic Board policy travels through your area. You may find this easiest to describe by diagram, for example:

Dean → Associate-Dean → and so on

Responses: Dean → (Assoc Dean) → Head → Associate Heads (Teaching, Research, Pgrad) → Committee members → key people of relevance.

Transmission: Dean → HoS → COD → Staff

Queries: Staff → Web → COD → HOS → Dean

AB → Dean → HOD → Dept staff

PVC → me → staff members

Dean → AD Teaching and Learning → Chair Teaching and Learning Committee (me) → Teaching and Learning Committee for inclusion in action plan → Faculty by email.

Director → Staff → official University brochures.

Dean → Associate Deans - → TLC → staff
↳ Discipline Heads → staff

Dean → Associate Dean/HOS → Coordinators/Admin staff → staff member → student or

Dean → Associate dean/HOS → staff member → student

Academic Board → associate Dean (Research) → Board Research/PG Studies → email → Faculty Research Website (undergoing development → Faculty supervisor's manual → supervisors & research students → other staff & students

Dean → Associate Dean → and so on.

It is less clear than a single pathway and depends on the nature of the decision and how it impacts on the faculty's work. It may or may not be referred to U'grad and Grad Studies C'ttees or may just go to Student Admin.

AB → Manager IO [International Office]

No response =

4 Interpretation and Application of Academic Board Policy

	Agree strongly		Agree		Strongly disagree
4.1 <i>The Academic Board office is able to provide advice on policy as required</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses		1	7	2	Never tried
4.2 <i>There are opportunities to provide feedback on policy</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses		1	4	2	6 Never tried
4.3 <i>The language of Academic Board policy is easy to understand</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	1	3	2	4	1
4.4 <i>When new or amended Academic Board policy is circulated, it is clear what action needs to be taken and by whom</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses		1	3	7	1
4.5 <i>Appropriate action is always taken when new or amended Board Policy is circulated</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	1		6	3	1
Appropriate action – by whom?					

4.6 *General comments you'd like to make with regard to interpretation and application of Academic Board policy:*

Responses: Recent policies are much improved on earlier versions – language is clearer and therefore action is easier to identify.

More effective two way communication would be desirable, e.g. between AB and the main person responsible for T&L in each faculty (AD or Chair T&L). This does not happen that well without opportunities for face to face contact, discussion, question and interchange. Currently faculties struggle to find solutions and miss out on the benefits of hearing the wider University experience (esp implementation phase) because there is no clear channel for 2 way, personal contact.

Policy often lags behind practice. Communication concerning the progress of submissions for new courses is poor.

Some policies are old and appear to be outdated. Some policies are poorly implemented and one wonders even about Ac Bd commitment to them. Ac Bd is perceived by many colleagues to be an ivory tower, little connected to the chalk face, and managerial in orientation. If we could find a way to make it a more democratic and participating process, I think it would work better. I realise that none of this is easy.

No response = 7

5 General Comments

Responses: It can't be assumed that a scattergun approach to dissemination will ensure uptake. Feedback loops need to be built in (this is a new policy. AB believes it will have these ramifications and that implementation procedures will need to be set at such and such a level. Please report back on responses.)

Sometimes difficult to determine when consultation process/discussion etc ceases and policy formally adopted, ie when action is required. Policy index is improving but one still needs to know the right "code word" to locate the appropriate policy. Is it possible to develop a form of issues to policy style index linkage? Often a particular issue may be addressed under several policies, not necessarily inconsistently but just difficult to locate all aspects.

AB should be responsive to faculty's needs – and allow faculties to generate problems/issues that can be resolved or receive AB guidance. Currently it is a top-down structure that involves faculties trying to implement policies that come down from above – without the benefit of any explanation/context/introduction to the faculty. This is why it doesn't always work – it all depends on whether faculty are receptive and ready to commit to the ideas. AB could reflect on more effective strategies for communication and consensus building with faculties. I believe the Chair is strongly committed to this and will be successful!

Good luck.

Most of my work is related to the Departmental and Faculty level. Most Academic Board policy is 'sensible' and many of the practices have been in place in our Department well before supposedly 'new' policy on academic matters has been implemented. Poor practices in ARTS seem to be what drives a lot of the rigidification that then flows down to other faculties.

No response = 7

Board

A total of 13 Board questionnaires were sent. There were 7 replies.

Bramble Marketing and Communications

The University of Sydney

Academic Board: Questionnaire on Communication and Implementation of Academic Board Policy

1 Purpose and Objective of Academic Board Policy

Agree strongly 1 Agree 3 Strongly disagree 5

1.1	<i>The purpose of Academic Board policy is understood at the University</i>	1	2	3	4	5
	Responses		2	3	2	
1.2	<i>The objective of Academic Board policy is understood at the University</i>	1	2	3	4	5
	Responses		2	3	2	

1.3 Describe the purpose and objective of Academic Board policy at the University of Sydney:

Responses: To maintain high standards in research and teaching, and all other academic matters.

To provide for the academic governance of the University, inc approval of course of study and academic programmes; to establish consistent processes and procedures across the University.

To establish University wide standards/expectations in relation to teaching, learning, research and to ensure appropriate processes and procedures for evaluation.

Establishes policy for the academic administration of the University, in regards to academic activities, including degrees, coursework, assessment, quality, honesty, research, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

No response = 2.

2 Dissemination of Board Policy: Process, Format and Retrieval

2.1 How many people in total in your area would you estimate receive information on new/amended policy? 2 – 3; 30; 70; ?, 20. 3.

Responses: The information is disseminated at faculty meetings.

Unsure what "in your area" means: faculty, department, building?

No response = 3

		Agree strongly	Agree	Strongly disagree		
2.2	<i>New/amended Academic Board policy goes to the appropriate people</i>	1	2	3	4	5
	Responses		2	2	3	
2.3	<i>Retrieval or access to relevant Academic Board policy is easy</i>	1	2	3	4	5
	Responses		3	3	1	
2.4	<i>How often would you refer to Academic Board policy in a calendar year in your work outside the Academic Board?</i>					
	<i>Never</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>1 – 3 times</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>3-10 times</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>10 – 20 times</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>20 – 30 times</i>	
	Responses	1	4	2		

If more than 30 times, how often would you estimate?

Responses

2.5 Tick the appropriate box

<i>Academic Board policy is most effective in hard copy</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	1 for file
Responses		5	
<i>Academic Board policy is most effective in electronic copy</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	1 to circulate
Responses	1	1	
<i>Academic Board policy is most effective in both hard and electronic copy</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Responses		3	
<i>Academic Board policy is most effective when personally addressed</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Responses		2	
2.6 <i>Are there other formats you'd recommend for existing and new/amended Academic Board policy?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
<i>If yes, please list:</i>			
Responses		5	1
Responses: Web			

Provision of hard copy of AB policies in a loose leaf binder similar to that used for statutes, which allows for easy updating/revision and access.

No response =

2.7 Please describe how Academic Board policy travels through your area. You may find this easiest to describe by diagram, for example:

Dean → Associate-Dean → and so on

Responses: AB Secretariat → Dean → Head of School → Chair of Department

Faculty Management Group, Associate Deans, Heads of School

Dean – Associate Dean – Program Directors – Faculty Committees / Dean – Faculty Meeting

Don't know!

Dean → Ass. Deans → Others
↓ Program leaders → others

Chair of Faculty → Board

Dean → appropriate staff – Not clear how this should and does occur – or what the responsibility of the Chair of the Faculty in this regards is.

AB → final.

No response =

2.8 At which points in the dissemination is a cover note or interpretation added, and by whom?

Responses: Point of Origin + (sometimes) Dean
Becomes part of minutes in relevant committee
Interpretation and discussion is focussed principally at the level of Faculty committees
Don't know!
All
Sometimes at the Faculty Board level – or through email by Dean.

No response = 1

2.9 How would you describe an ideal communication path for Academic Board policy?

Responses: Possibly through direct communication with members of staff (either by an electronic copy or hard copy (preferably the latter)
To multiple sources in the Faculty with a request that it be talked [about]/considered at one or more of the committee meetings
Academic Board → Heads of School → Individual Academics
As it is
Dean → Associate Deans → appropriate staff – via email or hard copy.

No response = 2

2.10 What improvements would you recommend to achieve this communication path?

Responses: See above
The request to discuss/table at relevant meetings
New/amended policies can be sent directly to Heads of School to then forward on to academics within their schools together with their comments
None
A clear understanding of responsibility in dissemination. Also – who decides what gets circulated – should culling occur or should all Policy be disseminated?

No response = 2

2.11 Describe the problems or blockages you encounter in the implementation or communication of Academic Board policy.

Responses: Mainly because of lack of communication/awareness

The numerous policies that exist, and the lack of certainty that one is working within the latest policy. The Web should be the first place to look, but it now carries all historical policies.

The role of the PVC Colleges needs to be clarified – particularly as they will be members at the new Board.

It is unclear who is responsible for communicating policy – is it top/down or bottom/up communication? Not all academics are aware of policies or initiatives – they may find out because they are on relevant committees, but otherwise may simply have no idea what the policy is or how it is being implemented at local level.

Short institutional memory

Too much paper work – Too hard to find on Web – i.e. if you want a particular policy document from the Academic Board – you have to download – all the paperwork. Then work your way through it to find what you are looking for.

No response = 1

3 Interpretation and Application of Academic Board Policy

	Agree strongly	Agree	Strongly disagree		
3.1 The Academic Board office is able to provide advice on policy as required	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	2	2	2	1	
3.2 The Board invites and receives feedback on how policy is being received and implemented	1	2	3	4	5
Responses		1	1	4	1
3.3 The language of Academic Board policy is clear and easily understood by those who will refer to it and apply it	1	2	3	4	5
Responses		3	3	1	
3.4 When new or amended Academic Board policy is circulated, it is clear what action is to be taken and by whom	1	2	3	4	5
Responses		2	3	1	1
3.5 Appropriate action is always taken when new or amended Board Policy is circulated	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	1	3	1	2	

3.6 General comments you'd like to make with regard to the interpretation and application of Academic Board policy:

Responses: (3.4) Very unclear. Although responsibilities may be set out in the policies (ie at School, individual, student, level) little is done to clearly articulate how and by whom these are to be implemented at local level.

No response = 6

4 Individual Board Member checklist with regard to communication and implementation of Board Policy

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly disagree		
4.1 <i>I have a clear understanding of the Board's role and responsibilities with regard to communication and implementation of Board Policy</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	2	1	1	3	
4.2 <i>I have a clear understanding of my own role and responsibilities as a member of the Academic Board with regard to communication and implementation of Board Policy</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	2	1	2	1	1

4.3 *The following things would improve communication and implementation of Board Policy :*

Responses: As above
 Discussion of Board policy at the level of College PVCs + Deans. Meetings may assist its dissemination.
 A clarification of the role of Academic Board members. Do members report to their Schools? their Faculties? their electorate?
 New members to the Board should be provided with a document outlining the function of the Board and that members Role and Responsibilities.

No response = 3

5 General comments

Responses: I think that thing operate effectively.
 No response = 6

4.4 Questionnaires were sent to the following people:

Stakeholder

Mr A Ali	Manager, International Office
Mr D Bowan	Director, Student Centre
Ms R Deamer	Medicine
Ms P Castleden	Conservatorium of Music
Professor R Pesman	Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor P Ramsden	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
Dr J Sait	Summer School
Associate Professor G Sullivan	Education
Professor P Parkinson	Law
Associate Professor T Fitzpatrick	Arts
Ms K Sodersten	Architecture
Ms S Taylor	Pharmacy
Associate Professor G Gurr	Faculty of Rural Management
Dr R Taylor	Vet Science
Professor P Kuchel	Science
Associate Professor M Harding	Science
Associate Professor S West	Nursing
Dr R Gilbert	Conservatorium of Music

Board members

Professor L Copeland	Dean of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
Ms G Klix	College of the Arts
Professor G Sherington	Dean of Education
Professor B Hesketh	Dean of Science
Professor S Chapman	Medicine
President, SUPRA	SUPRA
Ms P Kamvounias	Economics & Business
Professor R Ebied	Arts
Associate Professor C Russell	Health Sciences
Associate Professor D Dragovich	Science
Professor C Adam	AGSM
Associate Professor G Barton	Engineering
Professor K Parton	Dean of Rural Management

4.5 Works Cited

Final Report to the Senate of the Review of the Academic Board and the Academic Forum (2002)
Sydney