

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES

REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PHASE TWO

Please complete the relevant sections of this form

Goal One: Teaching and Learning

Recommendation 1	The Faculty should consider developing a more proactive and co-ordinated strategy to integrating graduate attributes throughout degree programs
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed in review and revision of curricula in 2004 and 2005 for implementation in 2005 and 2006 • Policy developed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee has been adopted • Substantial progress through TIF project on mapping and integrating generic attributes in curricula
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing emphasis on generic attributes as new curricula are fine tuned in 2006 • Generic attributes described for each degree
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success as indicated by TIF-funded graduate attributes project and active engagement of Faculty teaching staff • Improvement in student evaluation of Faculty's approach to generic attributes

Recommendation 2	Major work needs to be done so address the current mismatch between student expectations and the content of the Bachelor of Animal Science degree. The Faculty should establish a group to consider the program philosophy, promotional materials, marketing strategy, and target career options for the degree. Students should be consulted as part of this process, with a view to creating a higher level of student satisfaction and a more clearly articulated program identity. Deliberations should also involve the Faculties of Veterinary Science and Rural Management.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BAnimSc degree has been discontinued by the Faculty • The BAnimVetBioSci degree has been introduced in the Faculty of Veterinary Science, which includes some units taught by AFNR • A new BScAgr 4th Year specialisation in Livestock Production is being introduced in 2006, catering to students who wish to specialise across the agronomy-animal production nexus
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum development of the new BAnimVetBioSci degree is underway via the Board of Management for that degree (which includes FVS and FAFNR staff, and student representation) • The BOM is aware of student expectations for this degree and, with input from stakeholders, are aligning the curriculum accordingly – this includes more “animal content” in Years 1 and 2 of the degree
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful outcome for AFNR, FVS and College S&T of a difficult issue • Strength of enrolments for BAnimVetBioSci degree in the coming years, and numbers of BScAgr students specialising in Livestock Production in the coming years

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Recommendation 3	Consideration should be given to ways to improving the student experience in general. The Review Team perceived unevenness in levels of student satisfaction
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised curricula have improving student experience as an objective • Full detail of all units made explicit in new curricula • Increased resources and support from Faculty for PG students; e.g. all postgraduate students now have a computer supplied by Faculty • Faculty-Student Liaison Committee seeking to increase cross-year communication among students • Mentoring program • Function for parents of First Year Students • Major upgrade of student computing facilities
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to address concerns of PG students based at Cobbitty • Continue to press for upgrade of the Faculty's inadequate accommodation and teaching venues • Identify areas of dissatisfaction through USE results
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student evaluations of student experience through SCEQ and CEQ survey scores.

Recommendation 4	Priority should be given to improving communication in the Faculty in relation to a range of activities. This should include, for example, transmission of information to students (and a co-ordinated approach to email communication), ensuring that all students receive accurate unit of study outlines in a timely fashion, and ensuring that program promotional materials accurately describe programs of study
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students receive information electronically (email, intranet) and in handouts in all UoS; • Detailed PG and 4th Year handbooks given to all students concerned • Student email lists checked and updated • Faculty intranet considerably enhanced • Adoption of WebCT in many units (~18 in 2005)
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing improvements to the Faculty intranet • Increased adoption of WebCT; the Faculty's ICT Committee released a report in June 2005 (accepted by Faculty) calling for the gradual implementation of WebCT into all AFNR units with more than 20 enrolled students by July 2007
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer complaints from students • Fewer incidents of miscommunication • Improved USE scores for the (Faculty-specific) question relating to ICT and learning

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Recommendation 5	While there have clearly been improvements in the provision of feedback on work to students, the Review Team found that this was patchy, and recommended a more co-ordinated Faculty strategy supported by quality assurance mechanisms to ensure implementation. For example, the Faculty might wish to set maximum deadlines for feedback
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressed in revision of curricula - better scheduling of assessment tasks, ensuring number and magnitude of assessment tasks are consistent with expectations of student effort, and reducing over-assessment
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Learning & Teaching Committee will develop guidelines (for staff) for the timely provision of feedback on all items of assessment, and advise students of these via the Faculty Intranet The LTC will also advise staff on the broad level of feedback required for various assessment task types
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved scores for the question relating to assessment in USE surveys

Recommendation 6	Academic Board policy must be complied with in relation to parallel teaching of Masters and undergraduate students. The Review Team suggests that high achieving undergraduate students take masters courses so that they too are extended. By so doing the standards and expectations of high achieving undergraduate students are being met and postgraduate students are being provided with units of study at an appropriate level
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced streams in BIOL and PLNT units are available to AFNR students from 2005 High achieving UG students are offered opportunities for extension through co-curricular activities Revision and development of coursework postgraduate programs, including the offering of a re-organised MAgr program, and new GradCertAgr and GradDipAgr programs for 2006/2007- Academic Policy on parallel teaching has been complied with in the formulating of these programs
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All units offered as part of the coursework postgraduate programs will carry the following advice; <i>To achieve the objectives of the courses, especially for students seeking training in a new discipline, some material taught in advanced undergraduate Units may form a part of the postgraduate coursework Units. However, the learning level and completion of assessment tasks are at a postgraduate level, and expectations of students will be clearly specified as such in the learning objectives</i>
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased enrolments in advanced undergraduate units Increased enrolments in coursework postgraduate programs Improved USE "Overall satisfaction" scores for advanced undergraduate units and postgraduate units

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Recommendation 7	Consideration needs to be given to finding ways to better support the language needs international and NESB students
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of identifying students at risk (e.g. unit coordinators monitoring progressive assessment task results of international and NESB students during Year 1) – mentoring by the degree coordinator if necessary • Recommend that identified students at risk should attend the Centre for English Teaching
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a formal mechanism of cross-referencing end-of-semester results for all international and NESB students to identify English language problems
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improvement of retention and progression rates of international and NESB students

Recommendation 8	The Faculty should consider providing handbooks, in a similar vein to the excellent Postgraduate Student Handbook, to all students
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive 4th Year Sciences Handbook produced in 2004 and 2005
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional handbooks for specific senior units are under consideration for 2006
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct feedback sought annually from this cohort of less than 50 students - the 4th Year Sciences Handbook has been well received by students in 2004 and 2005

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Recommendation 9	The profile of the University's Intellectual Property rule should be raised among the student body.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG Handbook provides general information on IP rule for all PG students • Additional specific information provided to students as relevant
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No feedback received from students

Goal Four: Internationalisation

Recommendation 10	It is recommended that the Faculty consider whether it might be appropriate to extend student professional experience opportunities to encompass more developing countries, perhaps working with NGOs and organisations such as AusAid
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students are made aware of opportunities for PE in developing countries in connection with CARD and ACIAR projects, or through staff links • Students encouraged to self-manage own PE portfolio to assist in developing workplace skills
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General review of PE program in 2005/2006
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students undertaking PE overseas

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Goal Six: Effective Management

Recommendation 11	<p>The Faculty should give priority to improving its IT strategy, including in particular improving systems of communication (such as email and the Web) and implementing a proper and fully supported WebCT strategy (which would need to be supported by appropriate staff development).</p>
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty IT Committee and Computer Sub-Committee established for policy and operational matters, respectively • Extensive adoption of ICT to enhance teaching (WebCT, Faculty Intranet) • TIF project to enhance adoption of WebCT • Workshops for staff on ICT in teaching • Conversion of a “Mac” lab to PC has brought substantial improvement for UG access • Acquisition of new computers and changes in hardware configuration has led to major and rapid improvement • All students receive information electronically (email, intranet) and in handouts in all UoS • Student email lists checked and updated
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to enhance Faculty intranet • Further adoption of WebCT as appropriate and link to existing web-enhanced teaching – the Faculty intends to gradually implement a WebCT presence into all AFNR units with more than 20 enrolled students by July 2007 • Application for a TIF grant for 2006 to expedite the development of new WebCT sites by staff members of AFNR • Conduct a series of “in-house” workshops dealing with WebCT site development and to stimulate idea exchange on blended learning strategies
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing proportion of units of study supported by ICT, and by online resources of increased complexity • Improved USE scores for the (Faculty specific) question relating to ICT and learning

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Recommendation 12	The Faculty should implement a succession planning strategy. The Review Team perceived a need for support and development for staff taking up management positions. The Faculty may also wish to provide greater encouragement to staff to undertake staff development, such as teaching programs offered by the University's Institute of Teaching and Learning.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several staff have completed ITL programs • Increased involvement of staff in College and University development programs • All new academic appointments have completion of ITL programs as confirmation criteria
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing encouragement, through the PM&D program, for all teaching staff to undertake development programs • Expressions of interest for Faculty management positions called every two years • Strategy for replacement of retiring staff in place
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of staff with teaching qualifications

Recommendation 13	It is recommended that the Faculty keep a watching brief on the effectiveness and sustainability of the new structure as it beds down
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one-year-on review of the Faculty's new structure has been completed, with recommended changes implemented
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further review of faculty structures as part of ongoing strategic planning
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major operational issues identified

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Quality Assurance Issues

Recommendation 14	While the impending review of the undergraduate programs was welcome, the Review Team considered that this was somewhat overdue and recommends that the Faculty implement a more systematic approach to faculty and program review procedures.
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum review of the BScAgr, BHortSc, BLWSc, BAgEc and BResEc programs completed in 2005• Staffing profile has been reviewed with input from stakeholders, through the many contacts that AFNR has with industry and professional groups
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing review of agricultural sector needs for graduates, through interaction with industry groups and organisations such as CRCs, rural funding bodies and catchment management authorities• Agricultural sector feedback will inform the curriculum review process, which would normally occur every 3-5 years
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued strong graduate employment rates, as indicated by CEQ results and the Good Universities Guide