MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members and conveyed apologies from those unable to attend.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Minutes of Meeting 3/2016 on 8 June 2016

Members confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 June 2016.

Resolution ASPC16/4-1

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee resolve that the minutes of meeting 3/2016, held on 8 June 2016, be confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Actions Arising

Ms Henderson sought advice as to responsibility for reporting on Simple Extensions, as discussed at Item 4.4. The Secretary undertook to contact faculties to request that they report on instances of simple extension at the end of each semester.

A brief update was provided on the work of the Exams Working Group, with members advised that the Working Group had met earlier in the year and provided feedback on the proposed simplification of exams to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar). The Working Group is to be re-convened to consider draft amendments to a number of exams-related processes and policies that will be impacted by changes to Student Administration Services. Ms Henderson asked to be advised of any information regarding timelines for any changes to policy. Associate Professor McCallum advised that de-identified marking, online examinations and invigilation are also to be addressed in this tranche of changes to policy and procedure.

Action 1/2016: Contact faculties to request a report on simple extensions at the end of each semester. Responsible: Secretary. Timing: At the beginning of each semester.
3 STANDING ITEMS

3.1 Report of the Chair

Further to the written report, the Chair asked members to convey a consistent message regarding the availability of simple extensions to faculty colleagues and students, advising that the policy applies to all students across the University. The decision to grant an extension is at the discretion of the Unit of Study Coordinator and can be rejected across a unit of study, but students have the right to request an extension. She asked that no communication – whether written or verbal – be presented to students that advises that simple extensions are not offered by a faculty.

Resolution ASPC16/4-2
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of the Academic Board meeting of 29 June 2016

Noting the written report circulated with the agenda, Associate Professor Masters advised that he had nothing further to report.

Resolution ASPC16/4-3
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 29 June 2016.

4 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

4.1 Course Amendment Proposal: Faculty of Engineering and IT – Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)

Associate Professor Wilkinson spoke to this proposal and advised that the accrediting body, Engineers Australia, has notified institutions that it will only provide accreditation to graduates who hold a qualification at AQF Level 8. The Bachelor of Engineering program currently offers integrated Honours, but students who do not achieve the minimum standard set for the award of Honours (a minimum Credit average) are awarded a Pass (AQF7) degree, and would therefore be ineligible to be accredited for practice. To address this, the Faculty proposes to award students who achieve an average overall mark for the degree of between 50 and 64 per cent, a degree with Third Class Honours. Members were advised that other institutions offering an Engineering program have already made this change, so to remain competitive and ensure consistency of practice across the profession, the Faculty has developed the current proposal as the best option.

The Committee was advised that the proposal has been endorsed in principle by the Undergraduate Studies Committee at its meeting of 8 June, subject to the ASPC supporting the change to the Coursework Policy that will enable faculties to determine the level at which they will award Third Class Honours.

In discussion, Ms Mantle sought information regarding how long Engineers Australia is likely to continue accepting the current AQF7 qualification and was advised that Engineers Australia will honour accreditation for all degrees that have a transition plan to move toward AQF8 standard. The necessity of using the label ‘Honours’ to denote an AQF8 qualification was also discussed, with the possibility suggested that the Pass degree be recognised as AQF8 without needing to change its name. Associate Professor Wilkinson advised that the Faculty had investigated this at the outset and advised the Committee that Engineers Australia is insisting that the word Honours be included in degree titles for accreditation purposes, regardless of whether AQF nomenclature is legally binding.

Reservations were expressed regarding the desirability of awarding an Honours qualification to students who achieve a fifty per cent average across their degree. It was noted that Third Class Honours already exists for appended Honours, with grades commencing at 65, so the award of Third Class Honours degrees has precedent. The difference between integrated and appended Honours was also raised, with the Chair advising that degrees offering appended Honours generally enable students to choose their favourite or best subjects in completing the Pass section of their degree (and hence obtain higher marks), whereas degrees offering integrated Honours usually have a more structured program, with little opportunity for students to choose areas of academic strength to determine their Honours mark, meaning that a case could be made for grading integrated Honours in a more accommodating fashion.
The Chair asked whether the presence of an EIHWAM in the Course Resolutions is necessary, and Associate Professor Wilkinson undertook to investigate further [Note: Professor Wilkinson subsequently advised that it is necessary as it is distinctive from the University-wide WAM and includes a weighting for both year and thesis].

Ms Henderson asked that the Course Resolutions be updated to include reference to both the Coursework Rule and Coursework Policy, noting that Course Resolutions sit under both University policies.

Subject to the amendment to the Course Resolutions to refer to the Coursework Rule, the proposal was approved as presented.

**Resolution ASPC16/4-4**

*That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend that Academic Board approve the amendment of the clauses relating to honours in the Coursework Policy 2014 to allow for the awarding of third class honours in programs with integrated honours, to take effect from 1 January, 2017.*

### 4.2 Academic Honesty Procedures

Associate Professor McCallum spoke to a proposal to adopt Academic Honesty Procedures 2016 and amend the Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015, the Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Policy 2015, the Research Code of Conduct 2013 and the Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students policy. This proposal has arisen from the Vice Chancellor’s Taskforce on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism and the desirability to include HDR students in policy and procedures related to Academic Honesty. The Procedures and amendments provide a mechanism for the review of HDR students that does not necessitate reporting to the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar); rather, the appropriate Associate Dean in each faculty will be empowered to receive reports and advise on remediation of any cases that require follow-up. It also provides line-of-sight for HDR students generally, with few cases of academic dishonesty currently reported. Use of text-matching software and identification of processes for action if a breach is suspected, also form part of the proposal.

In discussion, clarification was sought regarding the need to report infringements during candidature, when students might be presenting early drafts of their research. Associate Professor McCallum advised that use of text-matching software is recommended at all stages of candidature, but that supervisor discretion is encouraged as to whether an infringement constitutes a reportable breach of the policy or can be addressed through remedial action. Members were informed that the Progression Policy now requires the use of text-matching software as part of progression requirements during candidature. In order to eliminate false positives from checking of previous drafts of a thesis, the use of CrossCheck is suggested rather than Turnitin, as it checks against published works and theses rather than previous submissions.

The location of some clauses in either procedure or policy was discussed, with members being advised that a pragmatic approach has been taken based on the likelihood of grey areas (that could be either policy or procedural) to change or be tinkered with. Such areas that are unlikely to be modified have been located in the Policy, and others in the Procedures, due to the comparative ease of changing the latter. Such areas can be re-located if a need to do so is identified.

Several amendments or clarifications were suggested. There was discussion on the merits of providing a grade of Absent Fail (AF) versus supressing results while suspected infringement is being investigated. The Chair suggested that if the assessment task concerned is a compulsory course requirement, it is appropriate that an AF grade be returned if this requirement is not completed by the set date, and AF also stops progression through the degree until the matter is resolved; this has greater impact on the student and provides urgency for the situation to be addressed. Local discretion on when to schedule the Academic Honesty module is also intended.

Concern was expressed that the new procedures would increase the workload on HDR Coordinators, and the HDR Admin Centre will work with faculties to support these additional requirements.

Associate Professor McCallum tabled an additional change to Section 7 in the Procedures, suggesting a requirement that students acknowledge the contribution of proof-readers and editors (if any) of their work. An implementation plan for this section is currently in development.
Several minor amendments to wording were suggested. Members were asked to communicate any further amendments to the Secretary for incorporation into a revised version for circulation to the Committee.

**Resolution ASPC16/4-5**

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee request changes to the proposal to adopt the Academic Honesty Procedures and amend related policy documents, to be revised and circulated for approval before the next meeting of the Academic Board.

**Action 2/2016**: Revised proposal to be circulated to members for approval. **Responsible**: Peter McCallum. **Timing**: Before 17 August Academic Board meeting.

5 **ITEMS FOR NOTING**

5.1 **2015 Academic Dishonesty Reports**

The Chair informed the Committee that advice has been received that the first report from Medicine is confidential and members were asked not to disseminate this report. Ms Mantle advised that student numbers have been included in the report from the Business School and the Secretary undertook to remove these immediately following the meeting.

Associate Professor McCallum advised that from Semester 1 2016, incident tracking has been automated and that a report of Semester 1 statistics will be presented to a future meeting.


**Resolution ASPC16/4-6**

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the 2015 Faculty Reports on Academic Dishonesty.

6 **OTHER BUSINESS**

6.1 **Any Other Business**

Ms Henderson advised that the Learning & Teaching Procedures and amended Learning and Teaching Policy and Coursework Policy, as approved at the previous meeting, will be promulgated on the Policy register this afternoon.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3:40pm.

**Next meeting**: 2:00pm – 4:00pm, **Wednesday 24 August 2016**

Senate Room, Quadrangle

**Remaining Meeting Dates for 2016**:

2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 24 August 2016
2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 12 October 2016
2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 9 November 2016

A full copy of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee papers is available at:

http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/ac_stands/ac_stands_agendas.shtml