
ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND POLICY COMMITTEE

2:00pm – 4:00pm, Tuesday 22 May 2018

Senate Room, Quadrangle (A14)

Members Present: Professor Jane Hanrahan (Chair); Helen Agus (Science); Associate Professor Salvatore Babones (Academic Board); Dr Vasiliki Betihavas (Nursing); Professor Peter Bryant (Business); Dr Bret Church (Pharmacy); Professor Alan Fekete (Academic Board); Professor Manuel Graeber (co-opted, Medicine); Imogen Grant (President, SRC); Kerrie Henderson (co-opted, Office of General Counsel); Pranay Jha (UG Student); Nanda Jorsz (nominee of the President, SUPRA); Patty Kamvounias (Academic Board); Dr Adrienne Keane (Architecture, Design & Planning); Associate Professor Tony Masters (Chair of the Academic Board); Professor Greg Murray (Dentistry); Associate Professor Alison Purcell (Health Sciences).

Attendees: Dr Amanda Budde-Sung (Academic Board) (for Item 4.1); Dr Matthew Charet (Secretary); Associate Professor Peter McCallum (Director, Educational Strategy) (for Items 4.2 and 5.1); Associate Professor Susan McGrath-Champ (Academic Board) (for Item 4.1); Dr James Parkinson (Academic Board) (for Item 4.1).

Apologies: Associate Professor Vincent Gomes (Engineering & IT); Dr Peter Knight (Medicine); Associate Professor Mark Melatos (Arts & Social Sciences); Professor Pip Pattison (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Associate Professor Maurice Peat (co-opted, Business); Associate Professor Jennifer Rowley (Conservatorium); Associate Professor Rita Shackel (Law).

3/2018

MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed new members and conveyed apologies as recorded above.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 April 2018 were approved as a true record.

Resolution ASPC18/3-1

The Academic Standards and Policy Committee resolved that the minutes of meeting 2/2018, held on 10 April 2018, be confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Business Arising

There was no business arising.

3 STANDING ITEMS

3.1 Report of the Chair

The Chair advised that she had nothing to report.

Resolution ASPC18/3-2

The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of Academic Board

The Chair of Academic Board advised that he had nothing to add to the written report.

Resolution ASPC18/3-3

The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 1 May 2018.

4 ITEMS FOR ACTION

4.1 Late Penalties & Common Submission Time

The Chair advised that this item was discussed at the previous Committee meeting and had been presented for approval to the 1 May meeting of the Academic Board. At that meeting, a number of members requested that the proposal receive further discussion and it was agreed that the proposal be referred back to the Committee. Members of the Academic Board with a particular interest in the proposal were also invited to attend the current meeting.

In discussion, Dr Budde-Sung suggested that a five per cent penalty is unlikely to significantly alter behaviour and recommended that the penalty be increased to ten per cent; Associate Professor McGrath-Champ concurred, advising that the Business School has experienced a marked reduction in late submissions since the faculty increased late penalties from five to ten per cent. Mrs Agus informed members that Science supports the proposal as presented and has reduced its penalty to five per cent to accommodate a common standard. Mr Jha suggested that enabling students to submit work late – regardless of penalty – does not prepare students for real-world workplace expectations, and Dr Betihavas observed that professional practice requirements need to be factored into discussion of late submission as lateness is not tolerated in many professions (and indeed can be extremely dangerous). Associate Professor Babones suggested eliminating late penalties entirely. Professor Fekete observed that if there is to be a penalty, it should be common and that five per cent seemed reasonable; he also suggested that students might instead be allowed a number of ‘slippage days’ per semester so they could directly adjust due dates to allow for scheduling conflicts or other impediments to timely submission. Ms Grant observed that the current penalties are not based in pedagogy or research and are somewhat arbitrary, building largely on historical practice in individual faculties.

The Director, Educational Strategy advised that with this year’s introduction of the new undergraduate curriculum – which allows both greater cross-faculty opportunities and increased interdisciplinarity in individual units of study – there is a growing need for institutional consistency in application of late penalties. The Chair of Academic Board informed members that this discussion had been initiated by students to address discrepancies not only between faculties but between units of study within faculties, with confusion as to what penalty would be applied in different subjects. Exceptions to the availability of penalties on pedagogical grounds are enabled by the proposal, so if compelling reasons exist for disallowing late submission or not applying a penalty for a given assessment activity, this can be explicitly stated in the unit of study outline. Preliminary data collection suggested that the most popular submission time at the moment is between 11pm and midnight, so adjusting the common submission time simply reflects current practice; there is also nothing to prevent students from earlier submission (and many students do in fact submit early).

It was observed that the *Procedures* would benefit from an explicit statement that the submission time applies only to “written assessment submitted electronically” to allow unit of study coordinators to set other times for physical submission or other forms of assessment. The need for clear communication to faculties, Unit of Study Coordinators and students was also highlighted; the Chair of Academic Board informed members that it is intended to notify Faculty Managers in the first instance to ensure that local communication is managed in a consistent fashion.

A number of minor changes to the proposed amendments were suggested to clarify meaning and applicability, and the proposal was endorsed subject to the making of these adjustments.

Resolution ASPC18/3-4

The Academic Standards & Policy Committee:

- (1) *endorsed the recommendation of the UE Education Committee that a common system of Late Penalties and a common submission time of 23:59 for written assessments be adopted; and*
- (2) *endorsed the amendment of the Assessment Procedures 2011, as amended with effect from Semester 1 2019.*

4.2 Coursework Rule 2014 amendments

The Director, Educational Strategy spoke to this item and advised that the proposed amendments to the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014* will provide a governance mechanism for the

creation and approval of non-AQF qualifications, including but not limited to coursework qualifications for HDR students, short professional education programs, micro-credentials at the post-bachelor level and creating pathway programs for international programs. The amendments also clarify delegations related to admission to candidature and time limits for embedded award courses.

The proposal was endorsed subject to minor corrections of language.

Resolution ASPC18/3-5

The Academic Standards & Policy Committee recommend that the Academic Board recommend that Senate approve the amendment of the University of Sydney (Coursework) Coursework Rule 2014, as amended, with effect as soon as practicable following approval by Senate.

4.3 Academic Delegations: Annual Amendment Round 2018

The University Policy Manager reminded members that the timeline for submission of changes to the Delegations of Authority were presented to the Academic Board earlier in the year, marking a return to an annual review process. The current proposal consists of two changes, and it was agreed to recommend that the Academic Board endorse the amendment for presentation to Senate.

Resolution ASPC18/3-6

The Academic Standards and Policy Committee endorsed the proposed amendments to the University of Sydney – Delegations of Authority (Academic Functions) Rule 2018.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 Education Portfolio: Update on Implementation of Strategic Initiatives Relating to Assessment

The Director, Educational Strategy, extended thanks to the members of the Working Party for their ongoing contribution and advised that this update presents the latest draft of the rubrics for measuring student attainment of the graduate qualities. He informed members that as a response to the timelines for faculty review of learning outcomes as originally presented, the Academic Board at its 1 May meeting agreed to extend the timeframe for completion. Full implementation is anticipated for 2020 so there is a need to ensure that the rubrics are valid and the validation process will involve staff, students and alumni. This process will examine units of study and majors to determine whether the rubrics are genuinely progressive, with a long-term intention to have discipline-specific variations to accommodate the different skills they may require. The stylistic diversity of the rubrics as currently presented will also be addressed during this consultation process. A discussion paper is anticipated for presentation to the August meeting of the Academic Board.

Resolution ASPC18/3-7

The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the progress report from the Assessment Working Group.

6 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Any Other Business

Professor Graeber asked whether the Committee / University would accept an AI making academic decisions. It was agreed that debate on this issue would be of interest to the Committee at a future meeting.

Associate Professor Babones sought advice regarding University policy on disability adjustments for assessment. In light of the fact that approximately eighty per cent of those on the Disability Register have a diagnosis of anxiety, he raised the possibility that it might be better to remove students with a non-physical diagnosis from the register and accommodate their needs through Special Consideration on a case-by-case basis. The University Policy Manager advised that the University's position on recognition of disability is compliant with relevant government legislation (such as the *Disability Act*) and if we were to adjust this, we would need to work within these parameters. The Chair of Academic Board suggested that this might best be raised as part of the

current Phase 5 thematic review of Student Wellbeing and Safety. He agreed to refer this matter to the review panel for further consideration.

Next meeting: 2:00pm – 4:00pm, **Tuesday 17 July 2018**
Senate Room, Quadrangle.

A full copy of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee papers is available at:
sydney.edu.au/secretariat/pdfs/academic-board-committees/academic-standards/2018/20180522-ASPC-Agenda-Pack.pdf