
ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND POLICY COMMITTEE

2:00pm – 4:00pm, Tuesday 17 July 2018

Senate Room, Quadrangle (A14)

Members of ASPC Present: Professor Jane Hanrahan (Chair); Helen Agus (Science); Associate Professor Salvatore Babones (Academic Board); Dr Vasiliki Betihavas (Nursing and Midwifery); Professor Alan Fekete (Academic Board); Associate Professor Vincent Gomes (Engineering & IT); Imogen Grant (President, SRC); Kerrie Henderson (co-opted, Office of General Counsel); 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); Associate Professor Peter McCallum (Director, Educational Strategy) (for Pip Pattison); Professor Greg Murray (Dentistry); Associate Professor Maurice Peat (co-opted, Business); Associate Professor Alison Purcell (Health Sciences); Associate Professor Rita Shackel (Law).

Members of the Admissions Sub-Committee Present: Associate Professor Tim Wilkinson (Chair); Wencong Chai (Head of Admissions); Peter Finneran (nominee of Director, Student Recruitment); Sally Pearce (for Kubra Chambers); Associate Professor Michael Kertesz (Chair, Graduate Studies Committee); Mary Teague (Head, Widening Participation and Outreach).

Attendees: Linda Carmichael (Information Management Officer, Brand and Marketing Services); Dr Matthew Charet (Secretary); Dr Glenys Eddy (Committee Officer, University Secretariat); Dr Christopher Hartney (Member, Academic Board) (for Item 4.2); Associate Professor Eric Knight (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research - Enterprise & Engagement)) (for Item 5.1); Kathy Lynch (Acting Associate Director (Operations)) (for Item 5.1); Hugh O'Dwyer (Policy/Project Officer, Education Portfolio) (for Item 4.1).

Apologies: Kubra Chambers (Director, Institutional Analytics & Planning) (Admissions Committee, Sally Pearce attending instead); Dr Bret Church (Pharmacy); Professor Manuel Graeber (co-opted, Medicine); Professor Pip Pattison (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)) (Associate Professor Peter McCallum attending instead); Associate Professor Jennifer Rowley (Conservatorium).

4/2018

MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members of the Admissions Sub-Committee, who were in attendance for Item 4.1, and members of the Academic Board, who were in attendance for Item 4.2.

The Committee also welcomed *in absentia* Weihong Liang as the new President of SUPRA.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 May 2018 were approved as a true record.

Resolution ASPC18/4-1

The Academic Standards and Policy Committee resolved that the minutes of meeting 3/2018, held on 22 May 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 ASPC18/4-2

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 ASPC18/4-3

The Academic Standards & Policy Committee noted the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 12 June 2018.

4 ITEMS FOR ACTION

4.1 Maths Prerequisites

The Director, Educational Strategy, spoke to this paper, advising that it finalises a proposal initially endorsed by the then-Admissions Committee in 2015 to mandate the satisfactory completion of HSC Mathematics for admission to specified undergraduate degrees. Members were informed that this requirement has been advertised to school students since 2016 and it is now necessary to amend the *Coursework Policy 2014* and associated policy instruments accordingly. It is also necessary to determine arrangements for the operation of pre-requisites in Mathematics beyond those already advertised by the University, which currently apply only to students completing an Australian Year 12 qualification in 2018 seeking a place for 2019. It was noted in this connection that prerequisites will apply to all applicants from 2020. Decisions are needed about how students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, students transferring or entering on the basis of prior tertiary study, and students applying on the basis of preparation programs and other qualifications will be handled. The possibility of providing a 'bridging course' option (with maths support during candidature) to enable access by disadvantaged students was also proposed, and making MATH1111 available as a MOOC from November 2018 may also help address this (although requiring completion of a MOOC may reduce applications by in effect imposing an additional entry step). Discussion is ongoing about the extension of the prerequisite to international students (acknowledging that students require extended notice before implementation to ensure they can select appropriate subjects).

In discussion, the University Policy Manager drew the attention of members to the proposed amendment of the *Coursework Policy 2014* to enable the Academic Board to set standards for admission. Mechanisms for student support were discussed, including whether the proposed MOOC is available on a fee-paying basis or free of charge and whether the Mathematics Learning Centre had sufficient resources to accommodate those who may need additional support. The types of mathematics or statistics that might be necessary to succeed in particular courses was also raised, with a question as to whether calculus is essential for some degrees and whether statistics-focussed skills might be more helpful in some disciplines. In proposing multiple mechanisms for students to demonstrate that they have the required mathematics skills (including completion of a bridging course, 1000-level or Table A Maths during their early candidature), it was questioned as to how these completions will be monitored and what consequences there will be if a course is not completed to the required standard (considering that the student has already been admitted to the degree).

Associate Professor Babones expressed concern regarding "essentialising" disadvantaged students by providing specific exemption for them, and he moved that the proposed pathway for disadvantaged students be extended to all applicants; Ms Chai concurred and advised that the Admissions Office has been suggesting this since the proposal was first discussed in 2015. The Director, Educational Strategy advised that deans (who have delegation to admit students) had rejected a "one size" approach and that this would effectively render obsolete the University's advertised prerequisite requirement with potentially severe reputational impact and possibly opening the University to legal action by students who have jeopardised their ATAR by attempting a higher level of maths than they would have otherwise. The motion was put to the vote, with ten members for and seven against; it was therefore narrowly supported.

It was agreed that a revised version of the proposal would be circulated for endorsement before progression to the Academic Board.

[Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the Chair Admissions Sub-Committee, Chair Academic Standards & Policy Committee, Chair Academic Board and Director, Educational Strategy, agreed that the change proposed by the committee to extend the clause extending pathways for disadvantaged students to all who do not meet pre-requisites needs more examination for its

impact, and it was agreed to withdraw this component from the proposal. An amended version of the proposal – excluding this provision – was circulated to members for endorsement on 24 July, and no objections were raised to its endorsement. The circulated version of the proposal will therefore be presented to the Academic Board for approval.]

Resolution ASPC18/4-4

The Academic Standards and Policy Committee endorsed an amended proposal pertaining to changes arising from the implementation of mathematics prerequisites.

4.2 Educational Services Agreements Policy 2017

Time did not permit this item to be discussed in detail and it was agreed to hold over discussion to the next meeting. In brief, matters for consideration include whether this policy needs to be more comprehensive or is fundamentally misguided, acknowledging that it does not exist in isolation and that several service agreements are already in place (with Singapore Institute of Management and Taronga Zoo). Members wishing to provide feedback before the next meeting were invited to do so via the Secretary.

Resolution ASPC18/4-5

The Academic Standards & Policy Committee agreed to hold over detailed discussion of this item to the next meeting.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 Academic Promotions Normative Criteria

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research - Enterprise & Engagement) informed members that in a shifting research funding landscape, academic demonstration of engagement and impact is becoming increasingly important. In late 2017, the Academic Board and UE Heads of School Committee discussed possible updates to academic promotion criteria to include criteria for impact and engagement, and a more structured discussion took place at the UE Heads of School Committee meeting of 21 June 2018 regarding specific elements of the proposal. An earlier version had previously been considered by the UE Heads of School, Education and Research Education Committees, with feedback from these bodies incorporated into the current paper. Through the consultation phase, it was agreed that engagement contributes to teaching, research and service and is not separate from these core activities; hence, the development of amended normative criteria incorporating engagement within the existing categories.

In discussion, members were advised that online training will be available to applicants as well as panel members to guide interpretation of the criteria, and that communication is planned regarding the changes. Clarification was sought as to how the new process is intended to modify current behaviour, and how this will be rolled out. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research - Enterprise & Engagement) emphasised that the promotions process prompts a conversation between applicants and their supervisors, but that the process alone does not complete this conversation. Initiatives at school and faculty level are also vital, as are those emerging from central portfolios such as Research and Education. Associate Professor Fekete expressed his strong objection to the fact that the Academic Board is not the approving authority for academic promotion criteria and recommended that the Academic Board should express its dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. The University Policy Manager advised members that the Academic Board has never had authority to determine policy in this area.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research - Enterprise & Engagement) advised that the paper would be updated to include the current feedback before it is presented to the August meeting of the Academic Board for discussion, and that a final version would come back to the next meeting of the Committee for endorsement.

Resolution ASPC18/3-7

The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the changes to the normative criteria and additional criteria (within the Academic Promotions Procedures document) that includes information that explicitly acknowledges the work academics undertake around research engagement.

6 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Any Other Business

Ms Kamvounias asked whether items submitted to the Academic Quality Committee are also expected to be presented to the Academic Standards & Policy Committee. It may be helpful to discuss at a future meeting the distinction between academic standards and academic quality.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 4:08pm.

Next meeting: 2:00pm – 4:00pm, **Tuesday 11 September 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/2018/20180717-ASPC-Agenda-Pack.pdf