REQUESTS FOR CHANGES TO THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

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DOCUMENT APPROVAL

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Background

All undergraduate units and majors comprising the new courses underwent an exhaustive approval process, which involved very detailed submissions (in two phases) and meticulous scrutiny of their content and structure by Boards of Studies before acceptance of the proposals by Academic Council on advice from the Board of Coursework Studies.

In many cases the approval came only after a considerable amount of discussion and revision of various aspects of units. Special attention was given to such complex matters as the formulation of learning outcomes, the relationship between those outcomes and the assessment methods, the specification of prerequisites to underpin the learning progression through a major, and the arguments given for particular complementary units.

It is therefore undesirable to unpick any of those arrangements before the new courses have had time to settle into their approved configuration, except where it can be demonstrated that significant unanticipated difficulties have arisen.

Recommendation

That the Board of Coursework Studies provide the following advice to Academic Council for endorsement and transmission to Faculties and Boards of Studies:

_The University will be reluctant to contemplate changes to units and majors unless it can be persuaded that they are vital and urgent. There are two strong reasons for minimising changes at this stage, especially if they affect the requirements for majors._

_The first reason is that change proposals based on this year’s enrolment patterns would be premature. It is likely to take a couple of years for any new trends to become clear enough to warrant modification of current content and structures._

_The second reason is that some changes (e.g. if they produced a situation in which students undertaking a particular major in 2013 were to face less stringent requirements for complementary units or prerequisites than students undertaking it in 2012) would produce complications that could lead to student complaints._

_To assist faculties with the rare cases where there is a compelling argument for changing units or majors for 2013, on-line workbooks have been prepared. These are designed to streamline the submission process. The present need for them is expected to be small but they will be the vehicle for submitting change proposals in the future. Academic Policy Services will soon send information to each faculty about this._

_Although the process for seeking approval to modify units and majors has been kept as simple as possible to assist faculties with any genuinely necessary submissions, it is important to emphasise that changes should not be requested unless there is a compelling case for them._