Meeting notes

A communication and discussion forum on the new University Policy on Volume of Learning and Structures for Postgraduate Coursework Courses and the administration of Cycle 2 courses, with all stakeholders, was held on Wednesday 18 December. The findings of the forum are detailed below:

1. Key features of the New Policy on Volume of Learning and Structures for Postgraduate Coursework Courses
   Members were informed of the key features of the new policy which included, but not limited to the following:
   - Coordinators may choose to design cycle 2 courses with a minimum and maximum volume of learning with a view to attracting a broader market, including students from non-cognate backgrounds;
   - The difference between the minimum and maximum volume of learning is made up of conversion units which may take one of the following forms:
     a) Level 1 – Level 3 undergraduate units; or
     b) Postgraduate units (levels 4 and 5) teaching introductory content or
     c) a combination of (a) and (b)
   - That the University will continue to have two types of structures (named degree course and generic degree courses); and
   - That the Testamur will now include the name of the specialisation of a generic degree course.

   A number of faculties had indicated that they would be utilising this new development and the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics already had a new Master of Professional Engineering (62550) course, which had both a minimum and maximum volume of learning.

2. Admissions: Domestic & International
   Staff from the Admissions Centre advised members of the issues and possible solutions in their area relating to the ongoing administration and management of Cycle 2 courses.
   In conclusion:
   - Having one Masters Course as opposed to having to do a prelim in addition was seen to be favourable.
   - The vast majority of students will only need to complete the minimum volume of learning.
   - The decision of what volume of learning an applicant was required to complete would need to be determined at the point of admission.
   - Offer letters would need to specify details, such as the amount of advanced standing that would be granted for an applicant who seeks entry with the required preparatory knowledge.
   - Considerations that currently applied to matters relating to admissions, including advanced standing, for master’s preliminary courses would still apply to Cycle 2 courses under the new policy. As such it was noted that business would be as usual.

3. Government Requirements
   Staff from Planning Services informed members of the Government reporting requirements and provided an update on the funding arrangements that were currently in place.
   In conclusion:
   - Student Data Collection
     o Each course code must have only one course of study load and as such data element 350 must record the maximum volume of learning.
   - Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP)
Postgraduate CSP could only be offered in “designated” courses and there were significant challenges in getting additional places; and

There may be a need to consider offering both fee paying and CSP within the same course for future courses.

- Registration for Student Income Support Purposes
  - Each year the University applies to register eligible Master’s courses for student income support purposes (based on minimum volume of learning only). Re-registration was required if course code or course length changed.

4. CRICOS Registration
Staff from the International Centre advised members of the issues and potential solutions in their area relating to CRICOS Registration.

In conclusion:
- CRICOS codes were registered by course code and for courses with only the maximum volume of learning;
- Specialisations of generic degree courses were a subset of a course and as such should not require separate registration.

5. Student Administration
Staff from the Student Administration advised members of the issues and potential solutions in their area relating to the ongoing administration and management of Cycle 2 courses.

In conclusion:
- Members noted that the new policy was effective immediately; and
- The award title would be as follows; ‘Master of XXXX (YYY)’ where XXXX corresponded to the broad disciplinary field of the degree and YYY corresponded to the specialisation. It was suggested that instead of including the descriptor of the specialisation in parenthesis, the award title could be nuanced differently. For example, Master of Professional Engineering with a specialisation in Chemical Engineering.

6. Callista
Staff from Student Systems updated members of the issues and potential solutions in their area relating to the ongoing administration and management of Cycle 2 courses.

In conclusion:
- Callista reference data which captures the credit points required to complete the course, would reflect only the maximum volume of learning of a course;
- The functionality to add advanced standing onto the system prior to offers being made was noted as an added feature of Callista, and that this would expedite the process for granting advanced standing to students;
- There would be a need to distinguish between “admission level credit” and “further credit”; and
- The tracking of different cohorts was not necessary for funding, but was relevant to projections.

7. Implications for Marketing & Publications
Staff from publications updated members of the issues and potential solutions in their area relating to the ongoing administration and management of Cycle 2 courses.

In conclusion:
- That the new policy provides an opportunity to think about the target market and market the course accordingly;
- Complex language and concepts should be simplified for easy comprehension by prospective students. The University needed to be clear, honest and consistent about
what was being marketed and offered, whilst bearing in mind the University’s formal reporting requirements (Government, CRICOS, etc.); and

- The new policy has an impact on how the course overviews and course rules would be presented in the handbook. There was a need to have a systematic approach to gathering data and it was asserted that the University’s two authoritative sources of information from which data may be gathered were CAIDI (which is UWA’s online curriculum management system) and Callista. It was noted that Public Affairs (Publications Unit) would need to consider how to best present this information for the 2015 Handbook.

Summary of agreed outcomes:

1. Only the maximum volume of learning of a Postgraduate coursework course will be reported to the Commonwealth Government. For income support purposes, the University is required to submit the minimum volume of learning.

2. Postgraduate courses with a minimum and maximum volume of learning, including those with a generic degree structure will have only one course code and one CRICOS registration.

3. That Callista and CAIDI are the University’s authoritative sources of information from which data may be gathered for government reporting, CRICOS registration and publication (Handbook).

4. That instead of including the descriptor of the specialisation of a generic degree course in parenthesis in the testamur, the award title could be nuanced differently. For example, Master of Professional Engineering with a specialisation in Chemical Engineering.

In closing, the Facilitator noted that there would be a call for another meeting to further discuss some of the outstanding issues including the following:

- Impact of the policy on scholarships and related processes.
- Clarification on how to best present information in the handbook.
- Further clarification on best practices with regard to publishing course material in marketing brochures and related websites.
- Allocation of a single course code and CRICOS registration for a course by coursework and by coursework and dissertation.