MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 1 MARCH 2010

PRESENT
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) (Winthrop Professor Jane Long) – Chair
Associate Chair of Academic Board (Professor Brett Kirk)
Director of Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (Winthrop Professor Denise Chalmers)
President of the Guild (Ms Emma Greeney)
Director of Student Services (Mr Jon Stubbs)
Faculty representatives from the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee:
  Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics (Dr Angus Tavner) – Deputy Chair
  Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (Dr Brenton Knott)
Assistant Professor Eileen Thompson (CATLyst, UWA Business School)
Professor Sid Nair (Higher Education Development (Evaluations), CATL

Ms Jan Cardy, Administration Officer, Education Policy Services as Executive Officer

APOLOGIES
Director of Institutional Research Unit (Dr Greg Marie)
Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (Associate Professor Sandra Carr)

WELCOME
The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting in 2010 of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee and in particular new members, Professor Sid Nair and, in her absence, Associate Professor Sandra Carr.

DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
No conflicts of interest were declared.

MINUTES – REF: - F29275

RESOLVED - 1/10
that the minutes of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 8th December 2009 be confirmed.

1. ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH ENBLOC
The following items were noted from Part 1 of the agenda, there were no items in Part 2:

i) Items/Business in Progress from the Assessment Standing Committee – Ref: F7739, F25751
ii) Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee – Terms of Reference – Ref: F29274

iii) Circulation of Assessment and Evaluation Standing committee agendas and minutes – Ref: 29275

iv) Approach to Assessment and Feedback to Students – Ref: F28685

v) Review of the University’s Assessment Policies – Ref F29501

2. FORMULATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (DAF) – REF: F29500

Members noted that the formulation of a Development Assessment Framework was being undertaken by the Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) and a paper titled ‘Forms of Assessment’ had been attached to the Agenda that introduced various different forms of assessment which were commonly available and when they were best used.

The Chair invited the author, W/Professor Denise Chalmers, to introduce the paper. Members noted that the attached report was not a DAF however its content provided an effective ‘tool’ which would assist staff with assessment practices and in particular:

- As a reference document to facilitate informed decisions on the correct form of assessment to implement
- Ensure a greater diversity of assessment than was currently in use
- Provide a background on assessment for less experienced staff

In conclusion, members agreed that the paper ‘Forms of Assessment’ be circulated to faculties and W/Professor Chalmers, would welcome any feedback on the document’s content - please email to denise.chalmers@uwa.edu.au

Members also noted that the completion of the Developmental Assessment Framework is anticipated to be mid 2010.

ACTION: To Be Actioned by:

1. To organise circulation of ‘Forms of Assessment’ to Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) 
   Executive Officer
2. To finalise DAF and refer to the committee by mid 2010 
   Director of CATL

3. MODERATION PRACTICES – REF: F8744

Anonymity in formal examinations had been a long standing issue that had been considered by the University over the last two decades. Although the concept was not new, given that the Law School has anonymous examination protocols in place and it is a common practice in some Australian universities, the issue had been revisited during 2007, when the (then) Assessment Standing Committee commissioned a small working party to reconsider the issue and undertook a trial of anonymous assessment in examinations.

Subsequent to this extensive review, the Academic Council had resolved (R33/09) as follows:

"(i) that the proposed anonymous assessment process be not mandated University-wide;
(ii) to endorse the proposal that the Assessment Standing Committee be requested to undertake appropriate steps to address students’ perceptions about bias in formal exam marking, fears of such bias and their overall confidence level in the University’s formal assessment processes;"
(iii) to encourage faculties and schools to adopt a form of anonymous assessment in examinations where deemed possible and appropriate.”

In October 2009, the Chair wrote to Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) to seek their advice about moderation practices and any other activities that may help to address part (ii) of the resolution. Tackling fears about bias by informing students of the extent of existing moderation was a measure strongly supported by the Guild as one means to ensure confidence in the University’s approaches to assessment.

In particular the Chair had requested any information from faculties, concerning:

“moderation in examination marking (extent, type and frequency) and moderation procedures used in other forms of assessment”.

Members had before them a document summarising feedback received from four faculties. The content of the feedback, and the wider subject of moderation, was discussed and the following points were noted:

- The feedback received did not address moderation practices / procedures currently in practice
- There may be a lack of clarity on what moderation is
- To what levels were assessments moderated internally throughout UWA?
- Are assessment practices comparable across faculties?
- Have moderation practices been embedded within UWA guidelines on assessment?

RESOLVED – 2/10

to send an email, to Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) requesting further feedback on moderation practices and the email would clearly define moderation and seek feedback on the issues raised.

ACTION: To Be Actioned by:

1. To email Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) requesting further feedback. To collate feedback for inclusion on the next agenda

Executive Officer

4. PUBLICATION OF EXAMINATIONS TIMETABLES – REF: F7739

At the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee meeting held on 8th December 2009, a suggestion had been raised ‘that the publication of the examination timetable be brought forward to the beginning of semester, or as early as possible in the semester.’

Members had discussed the benefits this would provide to all students, but in particular overseas students who could organise earlier, and hence cheaper, flights home. It would also benefit all students who might be considering undertaking travel and/or research during semester breaks. It had been noted that the provision of unit outlines, which included assessment mechanism statements, had been brought forward to at least one working day prior to the beginning of semester and any consequent flexibility regarding provision of the examination timetable had been raised. Examinations came within the purview of Student Services and it had been agreed to refer this suggestion to the Director of Student Services for consideration and advice to facilitate further discussion at the Committee’s next meeting.

A response from Student Services was attached to the agenda for members’ information and summarised that:
‘Student Services has been asked whether publication of the end-of-semester examination timetable could be brought forward, ideally to the beginning of semester. In our view, current procedures produce a high quality timetable at the earliest practical date in the semester.’

Further discussion of the response followed and members noted that one key influencing factor, for the timing of the release of the examination timetable, was the University’s well established process of allowing students to withdraw from units at a late date.

The Guild President suggested that there was a need to establish the students’ perspective on which of the following options would be most beneficial to them:

- The ability to withdraw from a unit at a late date, OR
- The earlier release of the examination timetable

Also the Guild President informed members that her key initiative was to survey students on key concerns, from a students’ perspective, on Teaching and Learning for this semester and this could be an appropriate vehicle to gather feedback on the above options.

The Chair welcomed such an initiative and offered full support from the Committee by means of providing informal consultation / feedback from its members as the survey developed and asked the Guild President to consider including the above options in the proposed survey.

**ACTION:**
1. The Chair invites the Guild President to update members on progress, as the Guild deems appropriate

5. **ASSESSMENT FUTURES – REF: F12207**

Professor David Boud, University Of Technology, Sydney, and Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Senior Fellow, throughout 2009 consulted widely within the sector to produce the document ‘Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education’.

Members noted that the full website associated with Professor Boud’s project could be found at [http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/assessment-futures/](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/assessment-futures/)

W/Professor Denise Chalmers, who had participated in the consultation, introduced the document and members discussed its benefits.

**RESOLVED 3/10**

to circulate the paper to faculties as:

- A guide to review assessment practices for the next century
- A model for assessment for new courses

**ACTION:**
1. To circulate the document ‘Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education’ to Associate Deans (Teaching & Learning)

**To Be Actioned by:**
- Guild President
- Executive Officer
6. NEXT MEETING
Members noted that the next meeting would be held on 8\textsuperscript{th} April 2010.

Confirmed

Chair

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