Course Development Criteria for Majors

Endorsed by the (Interim) Boards of Studies in May 2010:
(Bachelor of Arts – R32/10); (Bachelor of Commerce – R17/10); (Bachelor of Design – R8/10); (Bachelor of Science – R51/10)

The following criteria will provide the basis for considering proposals for offering majors in the new undergraduate degree:

1. Structure of Major Sequence
   - Consistency with the structural requirement (normally 2+2+4, but 2+3+3 may be acceptable if a good academic case is made)
   - Uniqueness of the major (distinct disciplinary rationale reflected in its own set of units i.e. limited overlap of units within 2 or more majors)

2. Units within the Major Sequence
   - Sequential progression and academic coherence of units from Level 1 to Level 3
   - Relevance of units proposed within the major

3. Logic, cogency and coherence of academic justification provided for principled exceptions to the standard major structure that may apply:
   - double or two distinct majors
   - sharing of 2 level one units within a double major
   - prescribing complementary units as a ‘necessary adjunct’

4. Number of majors proposed by disciplines (the relevant approving board would need to be convinced that there is a strong reason for allowing one discipline to offer more than one major in any one degree, and would need to ensure that any inclusion of two majors in any degree places no obligations on any student to undertake both majors).

5. Logic, cogency and academic coherence of either embedding educational principles within the major or of demonstrating an alternative way of meeting the requirement.

6. Communication skills (either embedded within the major or offered as a separate unit (i.e. complementary unit):
   - Demonstrate that communication skill development
     - is clearly identifiable in:
       - curriculum content (what has to be learnt);
       - the pedagogy (how the learning occurs) and
       - assessment (how students demonstrate what they have learnt).
   - occurs in each of the following dimensions: written skills, oral and presentation skills, critical thinking and information literacy skills and relevant interpersonal skills such as active listening, teamwork and negotiation

7. Research skills must be embedded within the major
   - Research skills must be reflected in the following three aspects:
     - Curriculum content (what has to be learnt – e.g. Discourse conventions must be taught)
     - Pedagogy (how the learning occurs – e.g. field work, lab classes)
     - Assessment (how students demonstrate what they have learnt – e.g. critical reviews, exams)
   - And this must be addressed for each of the following elements:
     - Element A: Evolution of the discipline
     - Element B: Methods
     - Element C: Practice
     - Element D: Discourse

[Note: “when a discipline proposes a major to the relevant approving board, it must be able to guarantee that all graduates of that degree, with that major will have acquired the enquiring attribute through knowledge acquisition, learning experiences and formal assessment. Some majors may be uniquely specified by just eight units; others may offer students some constrained choice. When choice is offered, the core units must result in each of the attributes being covered, or the options must all guarantee the same attribute outcomes”.]