The University of Western Australia

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONOURS) HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2013 IN THE CHANCELLOR’S ROOM, WINTHROP TOWER

7 PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSE RULE 15 AND DEVELOPMENT OF TERMINOLOGY CONCERNING PROGRESS STATUS FOR BPHIL(HONS) STUDENTS – REF F

The Board was advised that, at its meetings held on 7 December and 10 December 2012, the Academic Progress Review sub-Committee had recommended as follows:

(a) that Rule 15 of the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules be revisited and, in particular, Rule 15(1); and

(b) that appropriate terminology concerning progress status be developed for the BPhil(Hons).

In relation to recommendation (a), members noted the sub-Committee’s view that the introduction of a Credit grade as the primary criterion for progression, evidenced by its position in the rule, conflicted with Rule 15(2), in which the criterion was a WAM from the best six out of eight results. The sub-Committee had also pointed out that, at its September 2012 meeting, the Board had argued that the criterion in Rule 15(2) acknowledged that broadening units might not represent a student’s strengths. Further, in the view of the sub-Committee, the Board’s acceptance that the criterion in Rule 15(2) be used over a two year period, to enable students to adapt and mature in the context of university learning, added weight to that criterion being the primary one for progression.

In relation to recommendation (b), the sub-Committee had pointed out that the categories nominated in Rule 15 were not the same as those applied in mainstream undergraduate degree courses.

The Board had before it the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Progress Review sub-Committee held on Friday 7 December and Monday 10 December 2012.

The Chair invited the Director, Students Services to address Recommendations (a) and (b) of the Academic Progress Review sub-Committee.

Concerning recommendation (a), the Director, Student Services provided a brief summary of the challenges that had been involved in faithfully reflecting the intent of the satisfactory progress rule, which was complex in expression. Members were advised that the University’s Institutional Research Unit (IRU) had devised a means to calculate a WAM for six out of eight units attempted by a student.

Regarding recommendation (b), the Director, Student Services informed the Board that the terminology and text used to advise students of progress status was under review for all degrees and that a report would be provided in the near future.

The Board was invited to consider whether achievement of a WAM, of, for example, 75 across the course and for any measurable period of the course might be an appropriate alternative measure of satisfactory progress for the BPhil(Hons).

There followed a wide-ranging discussion during which the following were among the key points made:

- A WAM of 75 across the course had the benefit of simplicity and allowed for some risk-taking by students in terms of choice of units in discipline areas that might be unfamiliar to them.

- The fact that a student’s WAM in the Student Information Management System might be different to that calculated by IRU for the purpose of determining satisfactory progress was not of concern provided that the reason for this was clearly explained to the students concerned. The Academic Co-ordinator confirmed that such an explanation was provided to students in the course of interviews.
The cut-off WAM for students applying for entry to the BPhil(Hons) course on completion of 48 points of study must be the same as the WAM set for satisfactory progress for students in the first year of the course otherwise there was the risk of a perception of inequitable treatment between the two groups of students.

A WAM of 80 in six out of eight units was well accepted by the BPhil(Hons) cohort as reflecting the high level of achievement required to progress in the course.

RESOLVED – 1

to recommend to the Board of Coursework Studies that the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules and the University Policy on the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) be amended to reflect that -

(i) to make satisfactory progress, the level of achievement to be attained by students in the first or second academic years of the BPhil(Hons) course is a WAM of at least 80 in six out of eight units undertaken;

(ii) to make satisfactory progress, the level of achievement to be attained by students in the third academic year of the BPhil(Hons) course is a WAM of at least 75 in six out of eight units undertaken; and

(iii) to be eligible to apply to transfer to the BPhil(Hons) on completion of Level 1 units to the value of 48 points, the level of achievement to be attained is a WAM of at least 80 in six out of eight units undertaken.
Part 1—Preliminary

1. Title
These rules are the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules.

2. Terms used
(Note: The Glossary provides a fuller explanation of the terms used in these rules.)

In these rules:

- **area of knowledge** means a group of associated disciplinary fields corresponding to a particular undergraduate pass degree;

- **broadening units** means the units referred to in rule Rule 5(5)(c):

- **Category A broadening units** means broadening units that—
  (a) have as their main focus some aspect(s) of the globalised and culturally diverse environment; and
  (b) are approved by the Academic Board, on the recommendation of the Board of Coursework Studies, as Category A broadening units;

  Note: Details of units that have been approved by the Academic Board as Category A units are provided at http://handbooks.uwa.edu.au/page/56205.

- **complementary unit** means a unit that is approved by the Academic Board as a complementary unit in relation to a degree-specific major;

- **course** means a plan of study, approved by the Academic Board, that a student must successfully undertake before qualifying for a degree;

- **degree-specific major** means one of the majors that are approved by the Academic Board as degree-specific majors;

  Note: Details of majors that have been approved by the Academic Board as degree-specific majors are provided at http://handbooks.uwa.edu.au/page/55399.

- **LOTE units** means units that are approved by the Academic Board as language other than English units;

- **normally**, in relation to a statement made in these rules, means the statement applies subject to one or more
exceptions approved by the Academic Board;

*relevant board* means a Board of the University relevant to the case in point;

*undergraduate degree course* means an undergraduate pass or honours degree course or the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course;

*undergraduate pass degree* course means the course for the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Commerce or Bachelor of Design pass degree;

*unit* means a discrete element in a course that normally represents six credit points.

3. **Range of undergraduate enrolments**

A student who is an undergraduate must be enrolled in—

(a) an undergraduate pass degree course; or

(b) an honours degree course referred to in *Rule 10*; or

(c) the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course referred to in *Rule 13*.

4. **Nomination of degree-specific major for undergraduate degree course**

A student enrolled in an undergraduate pass degree course or the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course must nominate a degree-specific major for the course in which the student is enrolled.

Part 3—**Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Design and Bachelor of Science honours degree courses**

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Part 4—**Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course**

13. **Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course**

(1) The Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course consists of 32 units.

(2) The units must include—

(a) no more than 12 Level 1 units; and

(b) at least four Level 3 units; and

(c) four units (broadening units) from one or more areas of knowledge that do not include the area of knowledge of the degree-specific major; and

(d) the equivalent of eight Level 4 units; and

(e) a degree-specific major in the form of either a single major or a double major; and

(f) a research dissertation component equivalent to four Level 4 units.

(3) LOTE units are broadening units as long as those units do not form part of the disciplinary field of the
student's degree-specific major.

(4) Permissible substitutes for Category A broadening units are—

(a) an approved Study Abroad/Student Exchange program for credit; or

(b) a LOTE unit except if it forms part of the disciplinary field of the student's degree-specific major.

(5) A single major consists of eight units from the same disciplinary field with, normally—

(a) two Level 1 units; and

(b) two Level 2 units; and

(c) four Level 3 units.

(6) A double major consists of 14 units with, normally—

(a) two Level 1 units that are acceptable to each major; and

(b) four Level 2 units; and

(c) eight Level 3 units.

(7) At least one of the units in the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course must normally involve the study of a language other than English.

(8) A unit that is a complementary unit in relation to a student's degree-specific major must be included in the student's degree course.

(9) Students are normally required to undertake a residential program approved by the Academic Board before the Level 1 units are completed.

(10) A semester of study outside of Australia (that may include a research placement) must normally be undertaken after the Level 1 units are completed and before the Level 3 units are completed.


(1) Except as stated in (2), a student who enrols in the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course for the first time, irrespective of whether they have previously been enrolled in another course of the University, must undertake modules called Academic Conduct Essentials (the ACE module), Communication and Research Skills (the CARS module) and Indigenous Studies Essentials (the ISE module) in the teaching period in which they are first enrolled.

(2) A student who has previously achieved a result of Ungraded Pass (UP) for the ACE module, the CARS module or the ISE module is not required to repeat the relevant module.

15. Satisfactory progress

(1) Subject to (2) to (4) inclusive, to make satisfactory progress in a calendar year a student must achieve at least a credit pass in all units in which they remain enrolled after the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty.

(12) Subject to (2) and (3), to make satisfactory progress a student must normally achieve a weighted average mark of at least 80 calculated as an average of the student’s best six unit results in each of their first two academic years, subject to (3), and a weighted average mark of at least 75 for the student’s best six unit results.
in their third academic year.

(23) If a student has completed more than a full-time load in the period for which the weighted average mark is calculated, the weighted average mark is calculated using the student's lowest scoring units that permit progression and the remainder, if the student is in their first or second academic years, contribute to the weighted average mark calculation for the next period.

(34) A student who has not achieved a result of Ungraded Pass (UP) in one or more of the ACE module, the CARS module or the ISE module when their progress status is assessed will not have made satisfactory progress.

16. Progress status

(1) A student who makes satisfactory progress is assigned the status of 'Good Standing'.

(2) A student who does not make satisfactory progress in terms of Rule 15(34) is assigned the progress status of 'On Probation'.

(3) Unless the relevant board determines otherwise because of exceptional circumstances or (34) applies, a student who does not make satisfactory progress is assigned the progress status of 'Excluded'.

(4) A student who has a weighted average mark below 80 in their first academic year but who, in the opinion of the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours), has a reasonable prospect of attaining a cumulative weighted average mark of 80 by the time their progress is next assessed, is assigned the progress status of 'On Probation' and appropriate conditions are applied to allow close monitoring of the student's progress in the next period with a view to course transfer if appropriate.

(5) To be awarded the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) a student must achieve an Honours classification of 2A or above.

(6) A student who is awarded an Honours classification below 2A is awarded the degree to which their degree-specific major belongs with the relevant classification of Honours.