26 March 2012

Dear Colleagues

Re: New Courses: Requests for changes to undergraduate curriculum

We have come a long way in developing the University’s new undergraduate courses. Despite the magnitude and complexity of the implementation process, outcomes so far are predominantly very positive, thanks to a great deal of dedicated effort by you, your staff and others right across the institution.

Inevitably there seem to be a few teething problems for particular units and majors. An understandable reaction in such cases would be to seek approval straight away for some structural changes, so that they can go through the committee process in time to be listed for 2013.

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 initial enrolment patterns may turn out to be premature. It is likely to take a year or two for most 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 rules than students undertaking it in 2012) would produce complications that could lead to student complaints.

Where a reasonable argument can be made that a particular change is vital and urgent, and does not compromise the basic structure of the new courses, the relevant Board of Studies will give this due consideration. To assist faculties, on-line workbooks have been prepared. These are designed to streamline the submission process.

Although the process for seeking approval to modify units and majors has been kept as simple as possible to facilitate any necessary submissions, it is important to emphasise that changes should be requested at present only when there is a compelling case for them.

Sincerely

Professor Bill Louden
Senior Deputy-Vice Chancellor

Professor Karen Simmer
Chair, Academic Board