MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF STUDIES – BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONOURS)

Nominee of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) (Winthrop Professor Alan Dench), Chair
Dean, Coursework Studies (Winthrop Professor Grady Venville)
Appointees of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Chair of Academic Board: (Winthrop Professor Ian McArthur), (Associate Professor Romina Palermo), (Professor Fiona Pixley), (Professor Trish Todd)
Registrar’s Nominee (Dr Sato Juniper)
Guild President (Mr Max Riley)

STANDING INVITEES
Academic Coordinator for Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) (Associate Professor Kathy Sanders)
Ms Gaelen Perrone, President of the BPhil Union
Ms Jan Cardy (Manager, Curriculum Management, Academic Policy Services)

BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONOURS) MEETING
Wednesday 10 September 2014

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

This is to confirm that the next meeting of the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) will be held from 10.30 am – 12.00 pm on Wednesday, 10 September 2014 in the Chancellor's room.

Members are advised that this agenda has been formatted to be ‘electronic device friendly’ by including bookmarks to provide easier navigation throughout the document. Click here for details.

Part 1 of the agenda, which relates to items for communication, is to be dealt with en bloc by motion of the Chair. Part 2 of the agenda has items for decision to be dealt with en bloc by motion of the Chair. Part 3 items are for discussion and decision. There are no items in Part 1 or 2.

Dr Kabilan Krishnasamy
Executive Officer
Academic Policy Services

6. CHALLENGES FOR THE BPHIL (HONS) WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF 72 POINT MASTERS – Ref F28852

Attached (Attachment C) for members’ consideration is a discussion paper that addresses the challenges arising from the introduction of 72 point master’s courses for BPhil (Hons) students.

For discussion.
Challenges for the BPhil with the introduction of 72 point Masters

Prepared by Ian McArthur

Currently, BPhil students must complete an Honours year. The BPhil is marketed as a research oriented degree. I argue that with the introduction of the 72 point (year and a half) Masters at UWA, students wanting to pursue PhD studies at institutions other than UWA could be disadvantaged if they enroll in the BPhil.

1. After a compulsory 4 years of study, a BPhil student achieves an undergraduate qualification (BPhil). In contrast, with the introduction of the 72 point masters, a non BPhil student can achieve an undergraduate qualification (BA, BSc etc) plus a postgraduate qualification (MA, MSc etc) after 4.5 (3 + 1.5) years of study.

2. In terms of CREDITED research experience, the BPhil student has less in 4 years than non BPhil student can achieve in 4.5 years:

   - For BPhil students, I found it very difficult to find on the UWA website what the CREDITED research component is. As far as I can ascertain, they do generic unit 6 point GCRL1000 (Global Challenges and Research Leadership), plus non credited research mentorship at Levels 2 and 3, plus 24 points of research at Honours level. In terms of CREDITED DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC research experience, this is 24 points.

   - A non BPhil student doing a 72 point masters achieve 42 points of CREDITED DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC research experience. Furthermore, since they have longer compared to Honours students to focus on a research project, the possibility of a research publication is significantly greater.

3. Scenario – a student with the equivalent of the BPhil and a student with the equivalent of a BSc + 72 point Masters apply to UWA for a PhD scholarship. They will be ranked using iAthena, which is a metric based assessment tool:

   - the non BPhil student is allocated extra points as they have a postgraduate qualification (MSc, MA etc);

   - the non BPhil student is more likely to have a research publication, yielding extra points;

   - they have more credited discipline specific research.

Result: the non BPhil student has a significant advantage if they are interested in a research pathway. This is despite our promotion of the BPhil as a degree for students interested in research.