# Review of Undergraduate Curriculum Management Working Group Report

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## DOCUMENT APPROVAL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main driver of the undergraduate curriculum management review was to ensure that processes aligned to the University’s new course structure in 2012, were both effective and efficient.

The scope of the review included centrally managed processes as well as those managed at the faculty level. Phase One of the review was facilitated by Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS) and included representation from each faculty, key University stakeholders and representatives from Academic Policy Services. The review consisted of three distinct phases:

- **Phase One** – A workshop to identify what is working well and what needs to be modified
- **Phase Two** – Working group, with all faculties and the School of Indigenous Studies represented, to consider outcomes from Phase One and provide recommendations for process improvement
- **Phase Three** – Review of tools used eg workbooks, proposal forms

Section 2 of the report provides details of the Phase One workshop and includes a list of attendees. Appendix A provides a summary of the themes and issues raised and a key take home message was that communication needed to improve, particularly at the faculty level. The themes are summarised as follows:

- Communication
- Faculty Process
- Assessment Items
- Timelines
- Tools

Section 3 of the report captures discussions that took place during the working group meetings (Phase Two) and includes agreed outcomes with action points for process improvement for each of the themes listed above. It should be noted that many of the improvements have already been implemented.

Section 4 provides a summary of an evaluation of the review process. Respondents confirmed that many benefits were realised by conducting the review and that the aims of the review were mostly met. Comments received included:

‘The review certainly prompted critical review of faculty internal communication and processes.’

‘I am grateful for this opportunity to meet the admin/professional staff of other faculties and learn from them.’

Section 5 of the report provides a summary of outcomes/action points and recommendations from the working group to achieve its’ aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of current processes and administrative procedures.

In conclusion, the undergraduate curriculum management review has identified many opportunities for process improvement and has gone a long way to improve communication within faculties (as well as across faculties) and with key stakeholders.
As a result of the review the working group would like to recommend:

- That faculties and Academic Policy Services (APS) amend their processes regarding assessment items as detailed in Section 3.4, to provide greater flexibility to faculties
- That faculties disseminate and align their processes to ensure appropriate approval for change (see Outcomes, Section 3.5)
- That the current annual deadline of April for the submission of proposals and changes be reviewed for 2015 offerings (see Outcomes, Section 3.6)
- That the curriculum management processes should be regularly reviewed and subject to continuous improvement
- Continuation of the working group to provide a forum into the future for collaboration and improvement

Finally a common frustration across the University is the lack of a University-wide system that can manage all aspects of curriculum management. Therefore the working group would like to:

- Recommend that urgent consideration and appropriate resources are given to formulating and implementing a University-wide system (if the proposed CAPS system is thought to be unsuitable) that would not only manage curriculum approvals, but would meet the needs of all stakeholders (including faculties) who have a requirement to access approved curriculum data at UWA
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Curriculum management processes, aligned to the new courses framework, were introduced to support the ongoing development of undergraduate curriculum for offering from 2012 and beyond. The processes were designed to facilitate approvals, both for changes to approved curriculum and new proposals submissions, through the relevant board(s) approval process as required.

Faculties were encouraged to review and align their processes to ensure they interlink with University-wide processes and timelines. Major stakeholders (such as Publications and Student Systems) were consulted and each process aligned to interact with the central process.

In preparation for the next round of new proposal submissions and annual change requests, for curriculum for offering from 2014, an independent review, commencing with a workshop facilitated by Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS), was put in place to identify what is working well and identify opportunities for process improvement.

1.2 Review Process

The review process consisted of three distinct phases.

- **Phase One** – A workshop to identify what is working well and what needs to be modified
- **Phase Two** – Working group, with all faculties and the School of Indigenous Studies represented, to consider outcomes from phase one and provide recommendations for process improvement
- **Phase Three** – Review of tools used eg workbooks, proposal forms

2. Phase One – Workshop

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for round table discussion to review what is going well and what needs to be modified since the implementation of new courses and can be summarised as follows:

- An opportunity to share information and opinions about the work being done within faculties and across the University on undergraduate course changes.
- An opportunity to stand back from procedural details and remind ourselves why UWA has undertaken this complex and far-reaching challenge of curriculum transformation.

The focus of the review was on the undergraduate curriculum management process and provided a starting point for a detailed review to dovetail with University policy and supporting processes.

**Workshop Leaders:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acting Chair – BoS (BDes)</td>
<td>W/Prof Ian Reid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair – BoS (Arts)</td>
<td>W/Prof Alan Dench</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair – BoS (Sc)</td>
<td>W/Prof Grady Venville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair – BoS (Com)</td>
<td>W/Prof Izan H. Y. Izan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting Director, OSDS</td>
<td>Assoc/Prof Vivienne Blake</td>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Convenor</td>
<td>W/Prof Grady Venville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Convenor</td>
<td>W/Prof Alan Dench</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Convenor</td>
<td>Assoc/Prof Vivienne Blake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Participants:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Samantha Millar</td>
<td>ALVA</td>
<td>W/Prof Mark Israel</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina Evangelista</td>
<td>ALVA</td>
<td>Assoc/Prof Peter Sinden</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Neil O’Sullivan</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>W/Prof Brendan Waddell</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst/Prof Jonathan McIntosh</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Jan Taylor</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Sullivan</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Marjan Heibloem</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noni May</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Katherine Williams</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbia Tilli</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Asst/Prof Mel Thomas</td>
<td>SIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W/Prof Phil Hancock</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Joy Neri</td>
<td>SIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assoc/Prof Nick Letch</td>
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<td>Sarah Heinzman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Gorey</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Mary Carroll</td>
<td>Student Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Cara MacNish</td>
<td>ECM</td>
<td>Larissa Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Beckley</td>
<td>ECM</td>
<td>Sue Smurthwaite</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Mythen</td>
<td>ECM</td>
<td>Sylvia Lang</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Jane Heyworth</td>
<td>MDHSc</td>
<td>Kabilan Krishnasamy</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc/Prof Dian Jonas-Dwyer</td>
<td>MDHSc</td>
<td>Claire McIlroy</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erica Yeh</td>
<td>MDHSc</td>
<td>Jan Cardy</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deborah Rhys-Jones</td>
<td>MDHSc</td>
<td>Benita Hube</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst/Prof Elaine Sharplin</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Wanda Warlik</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services/Arts</td>
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2.2 Welcome and Introductions

Winthrop Professor Ian Reid opened the workshop with a reminder of the basic rationale as to why the University reviewed its previous course structures and the guiding objectives of that review:

- to meet the future educational needs of students, and therefore the needs of the wider community, at the highest possible standard;
- to position the University well for the future by reinforcing its international reputation for a commitment to excellence;
- to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and related administrative arrangements, for the benefit of staff and students.

The third objective, achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and related administrative matters, is still necessarily a work in progress, and the main focus of the review. During the transitional period it’s inevitable that some aspects of the adjustment to new procedures will at times seem irksome and laborious. But much has been accomplished: the hard work has largely been done to ensure:

- a better quality of service to students,
- increased reliability of course information,
- long-term efficiencies in course administration,
- gradual streamlining of procedures, and
- greater transparency and consistency in definitions, rules, procedures and nomenclature – for the ultimate benefit of all parties.

The workshop facilitator, Assoc/Prof Vivienne Blake, Acting Director OSDS, opened the discussion and focussed participants on the following questions:

- What experiences have the Faculties and Boards of Studies had so far in working with the new undergraduate curriculum management process?
- What steps have been taken within the Faculties to accommodate new courses?
• What is working well so far for the Faculties and the Boards of Studies, and other committees and stakeholders? (eg Board of Coursework Studies/Academic Council/Handbook/Student Systems)
• What needs modifying? What suggestions can be offered for improving the process?

2.3 Phase One - Outcomes

Four discussion groups were facilitated by the Chairs of Boards of Studies and a summary of the themes and issues raised during the workshop is available at Attachment A.

3. Phase Two - Review Working Group

The second phase of the review was to convene a working group to look at the detail of the issues raised and make recommendations for process improvement. Members met weekly over a four week period during November 2012.

The aim of the working group was to review the current undergraduate curriculum management processes and make recommendations for process improvement. The scope of the review was limited to undergraduate curriculum development. Postgraduate curriculum and pre-2012 curriculum were considered as out of scope of the review, however it was recognised that some of the recommendations for improvement may also have an impact on postgraduate curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Jan Cardy</td>
<td>Convenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Samantha Millar</td>
<td>Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Gillian Trahorsch</td>
<td>Faculty of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Lisa Gorey</td>
<td>Faculty of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst/Prof Elaine Sharplin</td>
<td>Graduate School of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Kathrin Stroud</td>
<td>Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc/Prof Peter Sinden</td>
<td>Faculty of Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Deborah Rhys-Jones</td>
<td>Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Marjan Heibloom</td>
<td>Faculty of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Joy Neri</td>
<td>School of Indigenous Studies</td>
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<td>Ms Mary Carroll</td>
<td>Student Systems</td>
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<td>Ms Sarah Heinzman</td>
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<td>Dr Kabilan Krishnasamy</td>
<td>Executive Officer, Boards of Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Wanda Warlik</td>
<td>Project Officer, APS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Benita Hube</td>
<td>Executive Officer, Review Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Kath Williams</td>
<td>Observer</td>
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The following special Invitees (brought technical knowledge to meetings as required):

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<tr>
<td>Asst/Prof Tim French</td>
<td>School of Computer Science and Software Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Maxwell Keeble</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Marc Padros Goossens</td>
<td>Academic Policy Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Claire McIlroy</td>
<td>Senior Legislative Officer, Academic Policy Services</td>
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3.1 Communication

Phase one - Issues raised at the October workshop – refer to Attachment A

Phase Two - Working Group Discussion

At the first meeting of the working group members further discussed communication issues at all levels across the University and included the following:

Email address
The introduction of generic email addresses curriculum-aps@uwa.edu.au and curriculum-faculty@uwa.edu.au were working well. Generic email addresses removed the need to know which member(s) of staff to communicate with and removed any issues that would have been related to staff changes or absences for recreational and/or sick leave.

Faculty members agreed that critical information sent from curriculum-aps@uwa.edu.au to their curriculum-faculty email address should be disseminated to all relevant academic and administrative staff in a timely manner. It was noted that faculties need to ensure that the key staff, from relevant areas, had access to mailboxes and that processes were in place for the management of the mailboxes.

Website
Some members of the working group reiterated that they were unsure where to find information and forms via the Curriculum Management webpage. It was noted that APS was currently re-designing the Curriculum Management webpage in conjunction with the Web Office and that the new platform would include visual prompts and clear links to the relevant policies and forms. Each faculty agreed to include a link to the Curriculum Management webpage on their faculty Teaching & Learning webpage for ease of access for all faculty staff.

The re-designed webpage is available from http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staff committees/bcs/curriculum-management and a screen shot is available at Attachment B.

Policy
Members highlighted the need for new policies to be introduced to faculty staff in a simple and consistent way as they often found it difficult to have a clear understanding of the purpose of a new policy. It has been suggested, that the Sub Dean/FAO monthly meetings may be an appropriate platform for this introduction, and the convener, Ms Sylvia Lang (Academic Secretary) will address this from 2013.

Proposal Progress
Currently faculties tend to be unaware of new curriculum proposals submitted by other faculties and often do not know which units other faculties will offer until the handbook is published in November each year. They emphasised the need to know other faculties’ offerings much earlier to assist with cross-faculty course offerings and to facilitate student advising.

Members were reminded that a ‘Self-Serve’ facility is available from the Curriculum Management webpage (http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staff committees/bcs/curriculum-management/curriculum self-service) where up to date information is provided as a proposal progresses through the approval process. Also reports listing new majors, honours and broadening units on offer are available from

Process Flowchart
To assist further with communication it was suggested that each faculty create a process flowchart showing their internal deadlines for processing curriculum and that align with the University process.

Casual / Sessional Staff
A discussion took place around the need for better communication with casual / sessional staff and it was suggested, that the faculties should consider remunerating sessional staff for attending orientations, meetings and extra work in preparing curriculum proposals.

Next Step
Members were asked to further discuss how communication could be improved within their faculty with key staff members, and provide feedback on progress to the working group’s week four meeting – refer to Section 3.3.

3.2 Faculty Process

| Phase one - Issues raised at the October workshop – refer to Attachment A |

| Phase Two - Working Group Discussion |

Members recognised that there was considerable variety in processes across faculties. While some had undergone a review of their internal processes, as a result of the implementation of new courses, some still had work to do.

Concerns were raised that the introduction of new courses had resulted in greater than expected numbers of students enrolling in broadening units. This in turn created challenges such as venue size and insufficient teaching staff due to the unpredicted numbers. It was noted that strategic planning and budgeting at the faculty level will need to incorporate these unplanned issues into the future.

Another impact of new courses is that teaching and student advising are not always provided by the same faculty and this can create gaps in communication between unit coordinators and student advisers. Student advisers need to be familiar with different rules and pathways that exist across the University and be supported by improved communication across faculties.

It was recommended that each faculty representative should discuss ways to improve their processes with key staff members and provide feedback on progress to the working group’s week four meeting.

3.3 Feedback on Communication and Faculty Process

At the final working group meeting faculty members provided feedback on progress made within each faculty related to improving communication and processes. It should be noted that the Graduate School of Education and the Law School were not represented at this meeting.
Feedback from Ms Samantha Millar, Faculty Administration Officer, Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts (ALVA)

- ALVA is a ‘studio’ based faculty where communication is not a big issue.
- Academic staff are supportive of the changes proposed by the working group, as is the Teaching and Learning Committee.
- ALVA is slowly moving forward in aligning their processes and deadlines.

Feedback from Ms Gillian Trahorsch, Team Leader, Faculty of Arts

- The administrative staff created a process flowchart (see Attachment C), which was disseminated among the working group. The feedback from the group was overwhelmingly positive, with some faculties already using it as a model in aligning their internal processes.
- Approval process has been streamlined and made stricter, with all requests for change going ultimately to Dr Neil O’Sullivan, Associate Dean (Education) for authorisation.
- The first steps have been taken in working out streamlined processes for dealing with the Albany Centre. The Centre will need to be included in all internal communication and approval processes.

Feedback from Ms Lisa Gorey, Faculty Administration Officer (FAO), Faculty of Business

- Good internal communication and change processes are already in place within the Business School
- The FAO as single point of contact for curriculum matters works well.
- Faculty of Business already has a process map, but liked the format of the Arts flowchart.
- Internal communication and processes work well: external communication is an area for improvement.

Feedback from Ms Kathrin Stroud, Manager, Strategic and Operational Planning, Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics

- This review prompted ECM to think more critically about communication and internal processes; areas for improvement have been identified.
- The communication about new proposals is generally good, some problems occur around annual change (defining types of change – major vs. minor – and methods of change appropriate for types of change – fast track v. annual).
- Faculty needs to educate responsible staff members on school level
- Constructive conversations are being conducted in ECM with a focus on reviewing the internal committee system.

Feedback from Ms Deborah Rhys-Jones, Manager (Student Affairs), Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

- The process flowchart created by the Faculty of Arts has been received with great interest.
• A standing item on the October Faculty Board agenda – termed a ‘call for courses’ - is presented yearly as a reminder about deadlines; in future they may include a flowchart similar to that provided by Arts.
• Steps have been taken to highlight the importance of curriculum-fmdhs@uwa.edu.au among school managers; the use of that central e-mail has been improving things so far.
• The outcomes of this working group will be reported back to the faculty’s Teaching & Learning Committee.

Feedback from Ms Kath Williams, Senior Project Officer, Faculty of Science

• As a result of a structural change involving the merger of two separate Faculties (FNAS and LPS) the review of internal processes is underway and largely complete.
• One of the responsibilities of the newly created Science Executive Committee (equivalent to Faculty Board) is to deal with matters relating to curriculum.
• Steps have been taken to strengthen internal communication between the faculty office and all schools. This involves better dissemination of information on processes and related timelines and, improved use of a faculty central email address as one point of contact for all curriculum-related enquiries.

Feedback from Ms Joy Neri, Administrative Officer (Teaching and Learning), School of Indigenous Studies

• For a small school, communication is generally easy; a few difficulties may be caused by the fact that there is not enough academic staff however this is likely to change.
• Communication between APS and SIS is done in a cooperative and mutually supportive manner.
• The Administrative Officer’s role is a central point of contact.
• The Teaching and Learning Committee has been meeting more at least once a semester to review the new Indigenous major.
• A suggestion has been made to appoint a course coordinator for the Indigenous major and that role would manage internal and external communication and associated processes.
• One academic staff member thinks that UIMS is another administrative task that may not be needed as he uses the LMS (Modle) to post unit outlines. (Note – UIMS and LMS issues are outside the scope of the review).

OUTCOMES - Communication and Faculty Process

The following action points were agreed:

• That the dissemination of information on processes and related timelines be improved between the faculty office and schools, disciplines and centres.
• That the use of a faculty central email address as one point of contact for all curriculum-related enquiries be improved and processes for the management of the mailbox be in place.
• That faculties continue to review and strengthen their communication and internal processes.
• That APS provide clear and timely information to faculties via the Curriculum Management webpages and regular workshops

### 3.4 Assessment Items

| Example A | Generic statement provided in the handbook with full details in the unit outline (for example - Assessment details are advised in the unit outline) |
| Example B | Broad information provided in the handbook and full details provided in the unit outline (for example - This comprises essays and tutorial presentations) |
| Example C | Detailed assessment items provided in the handbook and unit outline (for example - This comprises progressive assessment through practical exercises and short reports (35 per cent), a practical examination (20 per cent) and a theory examination (45 per cent)). [Note: Providing detailed assessment items in the handbook leaves no flexibility for change once published]. |

• All members agreed that there should be no contradiction of information provided in the handbook and in the unit outline.
• Some concerns were raised about the timing and the level of detail required in a proposal form, which could be submitted up to 18 months prior to commencement of the unit and may need to be changed before the unit is taught.
• It was also noted that unit coordinators require flexibility in changing assessment details due to changing environment and opportunities for improvement (e.g., to implement recommendations made from SURF reports).
• A new unit proposal captures the following information:

**PSYC2212 Psychology and Social Behaviour**

| Unit Outcome (published in handbook) | Students are able to (1) acquire an understanding of the central topics in social psychology and of the relationships between them; (2) understand the principles of measurement in social psychology; (3) learn how to collect, describe and analyse data relevant to basic social psychological questions and draw appropriate inferences from such data; (4) write | Approved by BoS |

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research reports relevant to psychological issues in the format appropriate for psychological science (American Psychological Association style); and (5) understand the language of social psychology and associated concepts appropriately.

| Assessment linked to outcome (not published) | Outcome 1: Lab Reports, Examination  
Outcome 2: Lab Reports, Examination  
Outcome 3: Lab Reports  
Outcome 4: Lab Reports  
Outcome 5: Examination | Approved by BoS |
| Assessment items (published in handbook) | Students demonstrate achievement of the outcomes in a variety of assessment methods which include a participation component (10 per cent), laboratory reports (40 per cent) and an examination (50 per cent). | Approved by Faculty |

- A solution is needed to allow faculties the flexibility they require to publish Assessment Items in a style that suits their individual preferences and allow necessary change that can be approved by a faculty, whilst at the same time providing adequate information for each Board of Studies (BoS) to approve the unit.
- It was also noted that flexibility to accommodate changes required as a result of assessment of professional courses should be taken into consideration.

The group agreed the following principles:

- Keep assessment items broad in the proposal form / handbook and details in the unit outline
- BoS approve assessment in broad terms to ensure alignment to outcomes, detail to be the responsibility of the faculty providing them with flexibility to change assessments details providing the learning outcomes are still met.

Faculty representatives were asked to take these principles back to their faculty, seek approval for this approach from appropriate faculty staff and provide feedback at the next scheduled meeting (7th November).

Feedback

The following feedback was received from faculty representatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Preference for publishing assessment items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALVA</td>
<td>Samantha Millar confirmed that ALVA’s Teaching and Learning committee members agreed with the principles. The faculty prefers to provide assessment details in the unit outline rather than in the handbook.</td>
<td>Example A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDHS</td>
<td>Deborah Rhys-Jones confirmed that MDHS’s Teaching and Learning committee members agreed with the principles. MDHS preference was to provide broad information in the</td>
<td>Example B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Marjan Heibloem confirmed that the faculty of Science’s preference was to provide detailed information in the handbook as well as in the unit outline. Marjan consulted with the Faculty Manager, Ms Jan Taylor and the Deputy Dean, W/Prof Brendan Waddell.</td>
<td>Example C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arts</strong></td>
<td>Gillian Trahorsch confirmed the principles with the Associate Dean (Education), Dr Neil O’Sullivan. The Arts faculty preference was to publish broad information in the handbook to allow the faculty flexibility to manage changes that do not have an impact a unit’s outcomes.</td>
<td>Example B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Asst/Prof Elaine Sharplin confirmed that Education agreed with the principles and their preference to publish broad assessment items in the handbook.</td>
<td>Example B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIS</strong></td>
<td>Joy Neri confirmed the School’s agreement of the principles and the preference to provide broad details in the handbook.</td>
<td>Example B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business</strong></td>
<td>Lisa Gorey confirmed the principles with W/Prof Phil Hancock (Associate Dean T &amp; L) and Mr Paul Lloyd. The school’s preference is to provide assessment details in the unit outline.</td>
<td>Example A – (or similar generic wording)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECM</strong></td>
<td>Kathrin Stroud sought agreement from Prof Cara MacNish (Deputy Dean (Education)) and sought feedback from a student perspective. Kathrin informed the group that students want to see assessment items in the handbook and that could be at the broad level. The faculty would like to take this into consideration before confirming their preference but indicated they would like to retain flexibility to be able make change with faculty approval.</td>
<td>(Example A or B (to be confirmed))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Law</strong></td>
<td>Assoc Prof Peter Sinden confirmed that the Law School’s preference is to provide broad details in the handbook.</td>
<td>Example B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OUTCOMES - Assessment Items

The following action points were agreed:

- That flexibility is provided to faculties to manage change to assessment items providing the change does not have an impact on the unit outcomes (and assessment linked to outcomes) as approved by the Boards of Studies
- That assessment item changes with an impact on unit outcomes should be submitted for approval through the annual change process
- That approval of minor assessment item changes are the responsibility of each faculty
- That there should be no contradiction between details of assessment items published in the handbook and those provided in the unit outline which would be monitored by the faculty (as is current practice)

### RECOMMENDATION - Assessment Items

- It is recommended that faculties and APS align approval processes to accommodate the above outcomes.
3.5 Approval Process

Phase one - Issues raised at the October workshop – refer to Attachment A

Phase Two – Working group discussions

New Proposals
The working group agreed that the new proposal process works well. Faculties like one-stop-shop context for all queries and one central point of contact for submissions.

The unit proposal form was reviewed to consider the following:

- what information is required for approval purposes
- what information can be provided at a later stage as it may not be known at the proposal submission stage or may be subject to change before the unit is taught for the first time

As a result it was agreed that a number of questions could be removed from the unit proposal form as the information gathered was not required for approval purposes. The revised unit form will be tested by several faculty staff before it is available from the curriculum management website.

Annual Change
Faculty members confirmed that they do not expect many changes to majors and honours for 2014; however it is expected that there will be changes at a unit level.

What is a major change?
A discussion followed on the differences between major changes (requiring approval) and minor changes (do not require BoS approval). The following points were discussed:

Undergraduate Major (Refer to UP12/6 - University Policy on Changes to Approved Majors)
A major change involves any of the following changes to an undergraduate major and requires approval by the relevant board of studies:

- changing the title of an approved major
- changing the subject prerequisites for an approved major
- changing the academic objectives of an approved major
- changing the learning outcomes of an approved major
- changing the structure of an approved major (eg 2+2+4)
- changing the sequence of units comprising an approved major (eg removal of a complementary unit
- adding or removing a specialisation within an approved major
- changing the title of a specialisation within an approved major
- changing the incompatibility of an approved major
- changing the corequisites of an approved major
- changing the responsible organisational entity of an approved major
- rescission of an approved major

Honours Specialisation (Refer to UP12/9 – University Policy on: Changes to Approved Honours Specialisations)
A major change involves any of the following changes to an honours specialisation and requires approval by the relevant board of studies:
• changing the title of an honours specialisation
• changing the units comprising an honours specialisation
• changing the learning outcomes of an honours specialisation and subsequent changes to assessment details
• rescission of an honours specialisation
• changing the student categories (ie fee-paying (international/domestic), commonwealth supported, offshore) for which an honours specialisation is offered
• changing admission requirements

Undergraduate Unit (Refer to UP 11/46 – University Policy on: Changes to Units)
A major change involves any of the following changes to a unit
• changing the unit content (with course impact)
• changing the grading or marking scheme to ungraded pass / fail
• changing the learning outcomes for a unit (as a result of change in the learning outcomes of a major / honours specialisation) and subsequent changes to assessment
• changes that affect ESOS compliance
• change to unit rules that have an impact on the major / honours where it is taught
• changing the status of a unit (upgrade to Cat A or removal from Cat B)
• changing the teaching period when the unit is available (with course impact)
• making a unit not available in a calendar year (with course impact)
• making a unit available in a calendar year (with course impact)
• permanent deletion of a unit

It was agreed that changes to units cannot be made in isolation but must be considered within context of where it is taught and that an impact assessment should be undertaken to ascertain if the change does have an impact and therefore result in a major change request.

OUTCOMES - Approval Process

The following action points were agreed:

• That the new unit proposal form be reviewed to remove the need to provide information that is not required for approval purposes
• That APS should make easily available information regarding the differences between a major and a minor change
• That faculties ensure that changes to a unit proposal are not made in isolation but should be considered within the context of where it is taught

RECOMMENDATION - Approval Process

• It is recommended that faculties disseminate and align their processes to ensure appropriate approval for change
3.6 Timelines

Phase One – Issues raised at the October workshop – refer to Attachment A

Phase Two – Working group discussions

Trigger for change
All members agreed that there is a need for another round of changes to be made after the current July approval deadline. The second round of change relates mostly to resources and is unlikely to require approval. It has been proposed that the availability check conducted in September be broadened to include fields such as: mode of delivery, unit coordinator, and assessment (if applicable). However the timeline of the second round of change is crucial to accommodate external reporting, curriculum management processes and the handbook deadlines, but also allow for internal faculty processes such as teaching allocation to take place. It was pointed out that teaching allocation tends to take place within faculties during November / December each year and at this point unit coordinators may want to make further changes to unit details in the Handbook. It was also recognised that changes at this late stage should only be made to correct an error because of any likely impact on DIISRTE reporting (i.e. Ministerial approval is required for late changes) or impact on students who have already enrolled in a unit.

The following reasons that trigger change have been identified:

1. Administrative errors, genuine mistakes
2. Unforeseen circumstances (unit coordinator leaving)
3. Need to be more responsive to feedback (unit taught for the first time, SURF results)
4. Accreditation process

Critical dates
The recently disseminated document ‘Timing of Approvals for Courses and Units - Influencing Factors and National Benchmarking’ (available from http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staff/committees/bcs/curriculum-management ) outlines critical dates such as DIISRTE reporting deadlines that have a direct impact on deadlines associated with the submission of new proposals and changes to approved curriculum. Faculties were encouraged to take these dates into consideration and start early with plans for change.

Timelines and flowcharts
Members reviewed the timelines document available from the UWA Curriculum Management web page http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staff/committees/bcs/curriculum-management

All faculties agreed to prepare a faculty flowchart with timelines that dovetailed these timelines in line with the example provided the Faculty of Arts (available at Attachment C).

A schedule of 2013 committee meeting dates is also available from the web page.

OUTCOMES - Timelines

The following action points were agreed:
• That the unit availability process, undertaken in September to capture updates, be broadened to include other resource related fields such as mode of delivery, unit coordinator.

• That further changes (after September) should be limited to issues that are a result of unforeseen circumstances.

• That faculties consider critical dates, as outlined in the document titled ‘Timing of Approvals for Courses and Units – Influencing Factors and National Benchmarking’ when undertaking their review and future planning of curriculum.

• That all faculties create a faculty flowchart with timelines that dovetail with the University-wide timelines.

RECOMMENDATION - Timelines

• It is recommended that the current annual deadline of April for the submission of proposals and changes be reviewed for 2015 offerings, in light of the above comments.
3.7 Tools

Phase One – Issues raised at the October workshop – refer to Attachment A

Phase Three – Working group discussions

Several faculty members asked for an update on the development of a University-wide system that would not only manage curriculum approvals, but would meet the needs of all stakeholders (including faculties) who have a requirement to access approved curriculum data at UWA via an online system.

The Associate Director, Student Systems advised that Curriculum Approval and Publishing System (CAPS) is currently undergoing a system update and should be available in mid-2013 for Student Systems to determine if the new version meets the University’s requirements for curriculum management into the future. If it is considered to be suitable, a project team will begin work on developing the system at that point.

Concern was expressed as to what will happen if CAPS is found to be unsuitable and a suggestion was made to start looking for alternative solutions now, as this would avoid lengthy delays. This suggestion has been taken on board by Student Systems.

All agreed that curriculum management is core University business and as highlighted in the Vice-Chancellor’s paper UWA Futures “the University needs to be run with the same degree of professionalism as would be expected in any company of comparable size and complexity”. It is therefore crucial that human and financial resources are allocated for its ongoing developmental needs and to ensure quality and effectiveness in all aspects of curriculum management.

Members were asked to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the annual change workbooks that were used in the 2013 annual change process. Most found the process to be cumbersome which was caused mostly by the large volume of data provided.

After some discussion on how the workbook could be improved for the 2014 annual change process, all agreed that by creating workbooks for each major most of the frustrations would be resolved. Assistant Professor Tim French from the School of Computer Science and Software Engineering has offered to provide assistance with further development of the workbooks.

The following points were also noted:

- The Faculties of Science and Arts were planning to have a session with all the administrative staff from schools to familiarise them with workbooks and the annual change process.
- The importance of internal communication within faculties was highlighted once again. Faculties need to start communicating earlier as to what is required regarding the upcoming change process and proposal submissions.
- APS highlighted the importance of considering any impact of making a change either to a major / honours or a unit and that it was important to complete the impact field in the workbook as this was important background information to the BoS when considering a change request.
- The two larger faculties (Science and Arts) requested that the workbooks are sent to them as early as possible in 2013.
OUTCOMES - Tools

The following action points were agreed:

- That the workbook process would be improved to accommodate the next annual process
- That, where possible, the workbooks would be disseminated earlier in the year

RECOMMENDATION - Tools

- It is recommended that urgent consideration and appropriate resources should be given to formulating and implementing a University-wide system (if the CAPS system is considered unsuitable) that would not only manage curriculum approvals, but would meet the needs of all stakeholders (including faculties) who have a requirement to access approved curriculum data at UWA
4. Evaluation of the Review Process

Questions
The members of the Review Working Group were asked to fill in the feedback form at the last working group meeting held on 21st November 2012. Seven forms have been received and the summary of the answers is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The aims and outcomes of the working group were clearly outlined</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The aims of the working group have been achieved</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The review process provided opportunities for working group members to put forward their ideas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The review process was well organised</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The review process was productive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The length of the review was adequate to achieve its aims</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The review working group has had a positive impact on communication within and across faculties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The review working group has had a positive impact on faculty processes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I would welcome the opportunity to be a member of a future review working group</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of the feedback from working group

Members agreed or strongly agreed with most of the questions with median of 5 for 8 out of 9 questions.

The only area, which received two responses lower than 4 (on a scale of 1 to 5) was question number 6: *The length of the review was adequate to achieve its aims*. It may have been caused by a necessarily short deadline (four weeks) set up for the working party, which may have curtailed discussion of complex curriculum issues in depth.
Comments
Three out of four written comments received from the participants were positive and highlighted different outcomes achieved by this working group:

1. *I am grateful for this opportunity to meet the admin/professional staff of other faculties and learn from them.*

2. *Well done! One of the most productive working groups I’ve been a part of.*

3. *The review certainly prompted critical review of faculty internal communication + processes.*

The only area for improvement indicated by a member in relation to questions 6 (analysed in the section above) was as follows:

1. *I feel there wasn’t enough time to address the current process issues regarding the accuracy of data input to output.*

RECOMMENDATIONS - Evaluation

- That the curriculum management processes should be regularly reviewed and subject to continuous improvement
- Continuation of the working group to provide a forum into the future for collaboration and improvement.
5. Summary of Outcomes and Recommendations

**OUTCOMES - Communication and Faculty Process**

The following action points were agreed:

- That the dissemination of information on processes and related timelines be improved between the faculty office and schools, disciplines and centres.
- That the use of a faculty central email address as one point of contact for all curriculum-related enquiries be improved and processes for the management of the mailbox be in place.
- That faculties continue to review and strengthen their communication and internal processes
- That APS provide clear and timely information to faculties via the Curriculum Management webpages and regular workshops

**OUTCOMES - Assessment Items**

The following action points were agreed:

- That flexibility is provided to faculties to manage change to assessment items providing the change does not have an impact on the unit outcomes (and assessment linked to outcomes) as approved by the Boards of Studies.
- That assessment item changes with an impact on unit outcomes should be submitted for approval through the annual change process.
- That approval of minor assessment item changes are the responsibility of each faculty.
- That there should be no contradiction between details of assessment items published in the handbook and those provided in the unit outline which would be monitored by the faculty (as is current practice).

**RECOMMENDATION - Assessment Items**

- It is recommended that faculties and APS align approval processes to accommodate the above outcomes.

**OUTCOMES - Approval Process**

The following action points were agreed:

- That the new unit proposal form be reviewed to remove the need to provide information that is not required for approval purposes.
- That APS should make easily available information regarding the differences between a major and a minor change.
- That faculties ensure that changes to a unit proposal are not made in isolation but should be considered within the context of where it is taught.
RECOMMENDATION - Approval Process

- It is recommended that faculties disseminate and align their processes to ensure appropriate approval for change

OUTCOMES - Timelines

The following action points were agreed:

- That the unit availability process, undertaken in September to capture updates, be broadened to include other resource related fields such as mode of delivery, unit coordinator.
- That further changes (after September) should be limited to issues that are a result of unforeseen circumstances
- That faculties consider critical dates, as outlined in the document titled ‘Timing of Approvals for Courses and Units – Influencing Factors and National Benchmarking’ when undertaking their review and future planning of curriculum
- That all faculties create a faculty flowchart with timelines that dovetail with the University-wide timelines

RECOMMENDATION - Timelines

- It is recommended that the current annual deadline of April for the submission of proposals and changes be reviewed for 2015 offerings, in light of the above comments.

OUTCOMES - Tools

The following action points were agreed:

- That the workbook process would be improved to accommodate the next annual process
- That, where possible, the workbooks would be disseminated earlier in the year

RECOMMENDATION - Tools

- It is recommended that urgent consideration and appropriate resources should be given to formulating and implementing a University-wide system that would not only manage curriculum approvals, but would meet the needs of all stakeholders (including faculties) who have a requirement to access approved curriculum data at UWA
RECOMMENDATIONS - Evaluation

- That the curriculum management processes should be regularly reviewed and subject to continuous improvement
- Continuation of the working group to provide a forum into the future for collaboration and improvement.
### Appendix A – Themes


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Assessment Items</th>
<th>Timelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better communication needed at all levels within faculties (including schools, disciplines and centres etc) but particularly with unit coordinators – bring people on board at a local level</td>
<td>Keep assessment broad in the proposal form / handbook and details to unit outlines</td>
<td>Go early with plans for change – early planning is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universally valid processes need to be better disseminated within and across faculties in an effective way</td>
<td>There can be no contradiction between handbook and unit outlines</td>
<td>Early submissions allow more time for review and feedback (but downside might be closer scrutiny)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t assume people have all the information they need – how do you know what you don’t know</td>
<td>Proposed that BoS approve assessment in broad terms to ensure alignment to outcomes, details to be the responsibility of faculties</td>
<td>Provide a flowchart of University-wide process and deadlines and encourage faculty deadlines to align</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for awareness of where communication is breaking down</td>
<td>Faculty needs flexibility to change assessment details provided the learning outcomes are still met</td>
<td>Provision of faculty-based flowcharts indicating internal processes and deadlines would help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Curriculum Management website – some staff unsure where to find the information</td>
<td>Assessment of professional courses must comply with external rules for professional accreditation e.g. medicine. How can these two assessment processes be combined?</td>
<td>Deadlines not driven by handbook but include other external influencing factors e.g. DISHRTIE reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some faculties have put link to the Curriculum Management site on faculty website for easy access – recommend all faculties do so</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage early commencement of change process for faculties with large numbers of units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for better communication with casual / sessional staff about new courses</td>
<td></td>
<td>Information required for handbooks to go far in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep all communication channels open – use of generic emails working well</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recently disseminated document on timelines very informative and provides choices for faculties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure consistent (authoritative source) information always provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can faculties find out what other faculties are proposing / offering for future years?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of BoS are and should be responsible for communicating back into their area / section – this may need to be reiterated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faculty Process**

- Considerable variety in the level of changes to process undertaken by faculties - still work in progress for some faculties
- Business School has good central process in place – mentioned by several as a good example
- Faculties need to determine who is responsible for submissions and associated documentation (form filing) – is school or faculty/administrative or academic?
- There has been a shift in the distribution of the administrative workload related to curriculum management – Admin previously carried out by Schools is now done at faculty level
- Why are there multiple levels of approval in some faculties – is it necessary?
- Proposals tend to be rubber stamped by faculty board – what value is added?
- Who is responsible for the quality of information going to the Board of Studies?
- Not knowing how many students will be in a major makes it difficult to plan and deal with workloads and budgets
- Some concern with communication between student advisers and unit coordinators, especially when teaching into another degree
- Different approaches to special consideration across faculties
- UISM difficult and unwieldy to use

**Approval Process**

- New proposal process works well
- Faculties like one stop shop context is saw generic email addresses for all queries and one central point of contact for submissions
- Compromise between the unit detail needed for approval and academic needs for flexibility
- Academic requirements versus academic responsibility
- Revise annual change process
- BoS to meet more regularly at critical times
- Changes to units cannot be made in isolation – must be considered within context of where it is taught (impact assessment)
- Flexibility for changes to be made to reflect student feedback (e.g. results of SURF surveys)
- Not expected that the quantity of proposals will be as great as received in the last few years

**Tools**

- Annual change workbook is difficult to read and in some cases the size is too big
- Simplify process for managing workbook/handbook changes, making changes visible
- Technical assistance offered by FEDU
- Approval matrix well received in some faculties
- More diagrams (flowcharts) for change processes needed / disseminated
- Make forms more user friendly
- Forms quite lengthy and filled out by academics not admin staff in some faculties results in tension between academics and admin staff
- Need web site with simple and easy to find information
- Need to have easy to find policies, guidelines and other supporting documentation
Appendix B – UWA Curriculum Management webpage (screen shot)
Appendix C – Example Faculty Process Chart

Approval Process for New Unit, Major and Course Proposals for 2014 (UG and PG)

Discipline Chair

T&LC
Teaching and Learning Committee

FB
Faculty Board

Board of Studies (BA)
and/or Board of Coursework Studies

Academic Council

Proposal endorsed by T&LC
Proposal endorsed by FB
Proposal endorsed by Boards of Studies

Proposals may need to be revised by disciplines before they are approved at each level. To ensure that forms are processed in time to meet the final Boards of Studies cut-off date of 15 April, it is strongly recommended that disciplines submit new proposals to the Faculty Administrative Officer (Governance) by the February 2013 T&LC meeting deadline.

FORMS AND FURTHER INFORMATION: http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staff/committees/bcs/curriculum-management
Download the latest version of the relevant proposal form from the above website.
Email completed forms to <curriculum-arts@uwa.edu.au>
Please feel free to contact the faculty if you require any further assistance or advice.

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