MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF STUDIES – BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONOURS)
Nominee of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) (Winthrop Professor Krishna Sen), Chair
Dean of Coursework Studies (Winthrop Professor Grady Venville)
Dean, Graduate Research School (Winthrop Professor Alan Dench)
Appointees of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Chair of Academic Board: (Winthrop Professor Ian McArthur), (Professor Murray Maybery), (Associate Professor Fiona Pixley), (Professor Trish Todd) and (Winthrop Professor Philippa Maddern)
Registrar’s Nominee (Dr Sato Juniper)
Guild President (Mr Cameron Barnes)

STANDING INVITEES
Academic Coordinator for Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) (TBA)
Mr Jon Stubbs, Director, Student Services

OBSERVERS
Assistant Professor Kathy Sanders
Ms Donna Utz (Executive Assistant to Dean, Coursework Studies)

BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONS) MEETING
WEDNESDAY 12TH JUNE 2013

AGENDA

This is to confirm that the next meeting of the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) will be held from 10.00am to 11.30am on Wednesday 12th June 2013 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 consists of items for communication. Part 2 of the agenda relates to items for decision to be dealt with en bloc by motion by the Chair. Part 3 is for discussion. There are no items in Part 1. A member may request the transfer of an item from Part 2 to Part 3.

Ms Sylvia Lang
Executive Officer
Academic Policy Services

Welcome

The Chair will welcome members to the meeting of the Boards of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons).

APOLOGIES

The Chair will record any apologies. Members are reminded that apologies should be forwarded to the Executive Officer prior to the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair will invite members to declare potential for conflict or perceived conflicts of interest, if applicable, with regard to items on the agenda.
1. MINUTES – Ref F50133

Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Studies for Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) held on 13th March 2013.

Minutes are available from the committee’s web page: http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staff/committees/bcs/interim_boards_of_studies/board_of_study_bachelor_of_philosophy_hons

PART 1 – ITEM(S) FOR COMMUNICATION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

2. BOARD OF STUDIES (BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONS)) – CONSTITUTION – Ref F50134

Members will note that by R15/13, Academic Council approved by way of a circular consequential amendments to the constitutions of the Boards of Studies to take account of the University’s restructure with the establishment of new positions of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Dean of Coursework Studies. The amended constitution for the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) is available from the following link: Board of Studies for Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons)

For noting.

3. INDUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF STUDIES – Ref F50135


A joint-induction for new members on the Boards of Studies was held in the week commencing 15th April 2013. The Chair will briefly speak to this item in Part 3. All members, both new and existing, are encouraged to use this as a reference document during their term of office.

For noting.

PART 2 – ITEM(S) FOR DECISION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

No items in Part 2.

PART 3 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

4. MODUS OPERANDI FOR THE BOARD OF STUDIES (BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONS)) – Ref F50135

In accordance with the Committee’s practice, the Chair will briefly outline the role of the Committee and the expectations of its members, which are guided by the following University policies and practices:

- Principles for the Operation of Committees
- Rules for the Operation of Committees
- University Committee Members’ Code of Conduct
- The Effective Committee Member

Noted in Part 1 (Item 3) is the provision of an “Information Package: A Handbook for Members of the Board of Studies” which has been circulated to new members and is available on the web for reference by all members. The package is primarily for the information of new members but should also serve as
a reminder to all members of the Committee as to the protocols for best practice in committees and
details the above policies and practices. Members are welcome to provide any comment on these
documents during this item.

The Board of Studies (Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons)), as a standing committee of the Board of
Coursework Studies, is subject to annual review by its members. The review report from 2012,
comprised by the Institutional Research Unit, is attached (Attachment A). In addition to responding to
this survey at the end of each year, members are encouraged, during the course of the year, to raise
any issues associated with the Committee’s activities and processes which may improve its efficiency
and effectiveness.

Within the context of the Committee’s modus operandi and its self-review, the Chair will invite
comments on the outcomes of the Committee’s review, and on how the Board can contribute to the
University’s strategic and policy thinking relating to curriculum matters.

The 2012 Survey Report will be forwarded to the Board of Coursework Studies for its information.
For discussion.

5. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSE RULE 15 – Ref F36453

By way of background, Rule 15 of the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules for the Bachelor of
Philosophy (Hons), which was approved by Academic Council by R132/12, includes the following:

“(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.

(2) 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.”

Rule 15(2) of the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) is in line
with Council’s approval (by R233/11 and R132/12) of the following:

• “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;
• 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
• 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”.

At its meeting of March 2013, the Board of Coursework Studies considered a proposal, as
recommended by the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons), which suggested that
Rule 15 of the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules be amended by deleting Rule 15(1). The proposal
from the Board of Studies arose from recommendations of the Academic Progress Review sub-
Committee for the BPhil(Hons) who had expressed the view that the introduction of a credit grade in
Rule 15(1) as the primary criterion for progression was in conflict with Rule 15(2) in which the criterion
was a WAM from the best six out of eight results. In addition, the sub-Committee had been concerned
that it was possible under the current rules for a student to be excluded from the BPhil(Hons) course on
the basis of having a mark below 60 in a single unit.
In providing its feedback on the proposed amendment, the Board of Coursework Studies “expressed a concern that the proposed deletion of Rule 15(1) would set a minimum threshold that might be too high. Further, the proposed deletion of Rule 15(1) might imply that it would be acceptable for students to fail in the two units which did not count towards the calculation of the WAM.”

Further to the Board’s feedback, the then Academic Coordinator for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) provided a response which suggested that according to Rule 15(1) a student who satisfies Rule 15(2) by achieving a WAM of 80 calculated as an average of the student’s best six unit results, but obtains only a pass in another unit will fail to make satisfactory progress. Consequently, this may result in the student’s exclusion from the course.

At its meeting held on 24 April 2013, the Steering Committee of Academic Council agreed that the documentation provided by the Coordinator was insufficient for Council to make any informed decision. Further, it was agreed that the rationale provided for deleting Rule 15(1) was not sound. Rule 15(1) could still remain as the minimum requirement that students must meet to make satisfactory progress and Rule 15(2) should be viewed as an additional requirement. Therefore, the steering Committee was not convinced that Rules 15(1) and 15(2) were contradicting each other.

Further, the Chair of the Academic Council Steering Committee queried the rationale for setting a WAM of 80 for the first two years and a WAM of 75 for the third year. It was suggested that this be reviewed with a view to developing a simple satisfactory progress rule.

The Steering Committee agreed that a small working party convened by the Dean of Coursework Studies and comprising the following members be set up to review Rule 15 of the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) and make a recommendation to the Academic Council via the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) and the Board of Coursework Studies: Prof Cara MacNish – as nominee of the Chair of Academic Board and Mr Jon Stubbs – as nominee of the Registrar.

Attached (Attachment B) are the following for the Board’s consideration:

For proposed revision to Rule 15, see:
- Analysis of BPhil Academic progress Rule 15 (Attachment B1-B4)
- Proposed amendment to Rule 15 (Attachment B5-B6)

For Background reading, see:
- Extract from minutes of a meeting of Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) held on 13 March 2013 (Attachment B7).
- Extract from minutes of a meeting of the Board of Coursework Studies held on 21 March 2013 (Attachment B9)
- Response, provided by the then Academic Coordinator, to the feedback provided by the Board of Coursework Studies at its meeting held on 21 March 2013 (Attachment B10)

6. REPORT ON 2013 ADMISSIONS TO THE BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONS) – Ref: F38749

A report on the 2013 admissions exercise for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) will be tabled. W/Professor Ian McArthur will speak to the report.
Introduction

In December 2012/January 2013, members of the Boards of Study were asked to evaluate their board’s performance during the past year. This report presents the results of the survey of the 12 members of the Board of Studies (Bachelor of Philosophy). Given the small number of respondents, caution is recommended when interpreting these results.

Summary

Responses to the online survey were received from 7 members of the Board of Studies (Bachelor of Philosophy), a response rate of 58% (c.f. 55% for all boards of study combined).

In this survey, the structured items requested a response on a 4-point scale. The percentage of responses in the top two categories of the scale is a simple measure of performance (the higher this percentage the better). Overall, members rated the performance of the Board of Studies (Bachelor of Philosophy) very positively: across all 28 structured items, 164 of 190 responses received were in the top two categories, i.e., 86% of responses were in the top two categories (c.f. 93% for all boards of study combined).

For an individual item, where there are less than 70% of responses in the top two categories it suggests a need for improvement on that item. In this survey of the Board of Studies (Bachelor of Philosophy), there was 3 such items.

- The induction you received when you joined the Board of Studies was useful
- The atmosphere at meetings was conducive to open and productive discussion of issues
- The working relationships between members of the Board of Studies were

Detailed results, including respondents’ comments, are presented below. A copy of the survey form is attached.
## Role of the Board of Studies and its members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>% top two categories*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The role of the Board of Studies is clearly defined in its Constitution.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The induction you received when you joined the Board of Studies was useful.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Chair and Executive Officer provided you with clear and sufficient information about your role and responsibilities as a member of the Board of Studies.</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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*Percentage of responses in the top two categories (Agree or Strongly agree)

** 1 respondent chose the 'not applicable' option and are not included in the table

## Performance of the Board of Studies

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<th>Question</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>% top two categories*</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Board of Studies operates according to the University's:</td>
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<td>Principles for the Operation of Committees</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules for the Operation of Committees</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee Members' Code of Conduct</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>The Board of Studies has performed appropriately in the process of the approval of related academic matters during 2012.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board of Studies has performed appropriately in providing guidance on related key academic issues during 2012.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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*Percentage of responses in the top two categories (Agree or Strongly Agree)
**Board of Studies agenda and minutes**

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<th>% top two categories*</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Usually</td>
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<td>In your role as a member of the Board of Studies, how effectively have you been able to use your skills, abilities and experience to fulfill the roles of the Board of Studies and the Committee(s) concerned?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>how effectively have you been able to use your skills, abilities and experience to fulfill the roles of the Board of Studies and the Committee(s) concerned?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>how effectively have you been able to use your skills, abilities and experience to fulfill the roles of the Board of Studies and the Committee(s) concerned?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>How confident are you that you can obtain any information or advice you need about the Board of Studies and related activities from the Chair of the Board of Studies?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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* Percentage of responses in the top two categories (Effectively or Very effectively for Question 7, Confident or Very Confident for Question 8)
### Conduct during the Board of Studies meetings

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<tr>
<td>10a The Chair conducted meetings efficiently and effectively...</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10b The Chair enabled all members to participate in meetings...</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10c The Chair ensured that the Board of Studies devoted the right amount of time to items on its agendas...</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10d The atmosphere at meetings was conducive to open and productive discussion of issues...</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10e Members of the Board of Studies acted professionally at meetings...</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3</td>
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* Percentage of responses in the top two categories (Usually or Always)

### Key relationships

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<tr>
<td>11a The working relationship between the Chair and the rest of the Board of Studies was:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>11b The working relationships between members of the Board of Studies were:</td>
<td>6</td>
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* Percentage of responses in the top two categories (Good or Excellent)

### Membership

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<td>With regard to the membership of the Board of Studies during 2012, how effectively have the skills, abilities and experience enabled the Board of Studies to perform and add value to the Academic Board's operations:</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>12a Skills...</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>12b Abilities...</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>12c Experience...</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
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* Percentage of responses in the top two categories (Effectively or Very Effectively)
Analysis of BPhil Academic progress Rule 15

TRIM FILE REFERENCE: F36453

FILE PATH ON SERVER: C:\Documents AND SETTINGS\KKRISHNA\DESKTOP\COVER SHEETS\DOCUMENT CONTROL TEMPLATE.DOC

DOCUMENT STATUS

☐ Draft  ☐ Ready for Review  ☑ Final

DOCUMENT MODIFICATION HISTORY

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<td>7.05.2013</td>
<td>W/Prof Grady Venville – Dean, Coursework Studies Mr Jon Stubbs – Director, Student Services</td>
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Analysis of BPhil Academic Progress Rule 15

There has been some discussion at the boards and committees recently of Rule 15 of the Bachelor of Philosophy, which defines satisfactory progress, including a proposed amendment to the Board of Coursework Studies (Ref F36453 & F28852) and subsequent response to the Board’s concerns from the Academic Coordinator. This paper provides a brief analysis of the existing rule and alternatives, to support discussions with the Dean of Coursework Studies and the Director, Student Services, and clarify the decision required by the Boards and Academic Council.

The first thing to note is that there is no logical contradiction in the existing rules. The conjunction of rules 15 (1) and 15 (2) specifies a region in “grade space” that defines satisfactory progress. Providing a student's marks remain within that region, he or she is making satisfactory progress. The intention is clearly that students achieve a minimum baseline standard (credit pass) across the board, while achieving a higher standard (HD average) in the majority of units. (In the example provided in the response, where the student has achieved a mark of 59, the student would, quite correctly, not have satisfied this requirement.)

The proposed amendment (deleting 15 (1) and adding a requirement to pass to 15 (2)) simply moves the conjunction inside a single clause. Such a rearrangement does not change the meaning.

The substantive change in this proposed amendment is to reduce the lower bound on unit marks from 60 to 50. The same substantive change could be achieved simply by removing the word “credit” from 15 (1). However there appears to be no suggestion that the intention of the proposal is to lower the standards, but rather to allow more flexibility.

The appropriate questions to ask are:

1. Is the specified region the “right” one?
2. Are the rules overly complex or is there a simpler alternative?

These two questions are closely related - the complexity is only necessary if the shape of the permitted region is considered critical.

It is important to note that the existing rule uses two different mechanisms to allow variance in a student’s marks. The first is the use of an average. The second is the choice of 6 out of 8 units. While intuitively they may serve different purposes, mathematically both are mechanisms for increasing allowable variance, and the question is whether both are necessary.

A student who achieves the minimum allowable marks under the current rule (an average of 80 across six units, and 60 in another two) achieves an overall average of 75. The only reason for including the two mechanisms for variance would be if the University considers some mark profiles with an average of 75 to be acceptable, while others are unacceptable.

Figure 1 shows example mark profiles for three students who achieve an average of 75. Student A progresses satisfactorily according to the existing rules. Students B and C do not.

While Student B has not scored as highly as Student A in some units, she might be regarded as a “consistent performer”, achieving a distinction in all her units. Is this less laudable than achieving higher marks in many units while letting some drop to a lower standard? If so, then Student C might be regarded as an even higher achiever than Student A, having achieved higher grades in six of the eight units. However this profile is also excluded.

The existing rules therefore make a very fine distinction, and value judgement, about what mark profile warrants satisfactory progress. They rule out both less differentiation, and more
differentiation, between the student’s best and worst units. The answer to Question 1 depends on whether this fine differentiation, and value judgement, are both intended and warranted. If so, then the current rules should remain unchanged.

The complexity of the current rules comes not so much from the way they are stated, as the difficulties in assessing and administering them. Students no longer necessarily take units by academic year, nor are they required to take the same number of units at each level. Students may overload, taking more than 8 units in a year, or have fewer units included in their WAM due to study abroad. The Director of Student Services has advised that the current rules cannot be monitored automatically by SIMS, and has previously outlined the issues in more detail to the BPhil Board of Studies on 13th March.

A simpler alternative would be to require students to pass all units and maintain a WAM of 75, and would be easily monitored by SIMS. The answer to Question 2 is, again, that the complexity is only warranted if there is a specific intention to rule out alternative profiles such as those illustrated in Figure 1.

In summary, I would suggest there are two options available to the University that maintain the current overall standard. If the University specifically wishes to enforce the profile illustrated by Student A in Figure 1 over the alternatives with the same WAM, then the rules correctly achieve this and should remain as stated. If the University believes that the other profiles illustrated are equally valid and wishes to allow greater flexibility (and simplicity of implementation), then the rule can be modified to simply require a WAM of 75 along with a pass in all units.

Cara MacNish
Deputy Chair, Academic Board
7/5/2013
**WAM category versus ATAR category**

Commencing in 2012
Credit points 36-60
Figures are estimates

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<th>WAM category</th>
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<tr>
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<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99.5+</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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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 enrolls 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 pass all units in achieve at least a credit pass in all units in which they remain enrolled after the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty and maintain a course weighted average mark of at least 75.

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(24) 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(42) is assigned the progress status of 'On Probation'.

(3) Unless the relevant board determines otherwise because of exceptional circumstances or (42) 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 80.75 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 80.75 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.
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 B PHIL(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.
8. PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSE RULE 15 AND DEVELOPMENT OF TERMINOLOGY CONCERNING PROGRESS STATUS – REF F36453 & F28852

At its meeting held on 13 March 2013, the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) resolved by R1/13 to recommend to the Board of Coursework Studies that Rule 15 of the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules be amended to reflect the following:

(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”.

Members noted that this recommendation by the Board of Studies (Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons)) was based on an advice provided by the Academic Progress Review Sub-Committee which had proposed that the introduction of a Credit grade in Rule 15(1) as the primary criterion for progression conflicted with Rule 15(2) in which the criterion was a WAM from the best six out of eight results.

However, the Board expressed a concern that the proposed deletion of Rule 15(1) would set a minimum threshold that might be too high. Further, the proposed deletion of Rule 15(1) might imply that it would be acceptable for students to fail in the two units which did not count towards the calculation of the WAM.

To this end, the Board agreed that further clarification was required from the Board of Studies for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) with regard to the proposed amendment to Rule 15 of the Undergraduate Degree Course Rules.
8. PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSE RULE 15 AND DEVELOPMENT OF TERMINOLOGY CONCERNING PROGRESS STATUS – REF F36453 & F28852

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RESPONSE

Background
The Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) Board of Studies, in accepting advice provided by the Academic Progress Review Sub-committee (March 2013), in relation to Rule 15 s1, noted evidence of:

(a) the anomaly whereby the requirement of a Credit result in all 8 units as the primary criterion for progression conflicts with Rule 15 s2’s requirement of a WAM of ≥ 80 in six out of eight units as the primary criterion for academic excellence in BPhil (Hons).

(b) the anomaly whereby the results below would have resulted in the student’s exclusion from BPhil (Hons); the student would have had to reapply to the University for admission.

<table>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>HD</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>59</td>
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Moreover, had the 59 been obtained while on Study Abroad, the result would have been excluded from consideration.

1.0 Re: “Minimum threshold that might be too high”

1.1.1 Evidence of declined offers into BPhil (Hons) confirms that BPhil (Hons) is in direct competition with the reputation of ANU’s PhB degree.
1.1.2 “To remain enrolled in the PhB (Hons) degree, students must maintain an average mark of 80 percent in science courses each semester.”

1.1.3 As a reputation marker, BPhil (Hons) needs to remain nationally competitive as a basis for extending reputation to international scale.

1.1.4 THE World University Rankings 2013: ANU 31 score 75.4 (University of Melbourne 28) cf. UWA 190 score 47.3; World Reputation Rankings 2013 ANU 42 (University of Melbourne at 39) cf. UWA not in top 100.

1.2.1 It is also relevant that ANU's BhP students are required to take 6 Academic Studies Units in Years 1-3 “especially designed to provide students with a strong research base.” These units are included in progression calculations.

1.2.2 UWA currently requires BPhil (Hons) students to take only one degree-specific unit (Global Challenges, Research and Leadership GCRL1000).

2.0 Re: Rule 15(1) might imply that it would be acceptable for students to fail in the two units that did not count towards the calculation of the WAM.

2.1.1 BPhil (Hons) students are required to undertake an approved Study Abroad/Exchange Program (Rule 104). Eligibility for SAS/Exchange programs precludes a Fail result. International Centre criteria state:

- You have to meet the following academic criteria . . .
  - you have a sound academic record - normally an overall weighted average of 65 per cent with no fail grades. A fail grade may be overlooked if there are extenuating circumstances.