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## Learning and Teaching Committee Agenda

Committee Officer: Louise Young

Secretariat, Quadrangle, A14

Phone: 9036 7891; Fax: 9351 3572

E-mail: [l.young@secretariat.usyd.edu.au](mailto:l.young@secretariat.usyd.edu.au)

Web site: [http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/committees/learn\\_teach/](http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/committees/learn_teach/)

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### Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** will be held at **10.00am** on **Wednesday 12 August 2009** in the in the **Science Meeting Room** (Carslaw Building, Room 450).

Members who are unable to attend are asked to notify Louise Young at the above address. Enquiries concerning this meeting may also be directed to Ms Young.

*Louise Young*  
for  
Ms Megan Kemmis  
**Secretary to Academic Board**

31 July 2009

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## Agenda

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** (pages [4-9](#))  
*Recommendation*  
*That the Learning and Teaching Committee adopt the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 June 2009 as a true record.*
3. **Business arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)**
4. **Report of the Chair**  
*Recommendation*  
*That the Learning and Teaching Committee note the report of the Chair.*
5. **Report of the Academic Board** (page [10](#))  
*Recommendation*

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting of 1 July 2009, as presented.*

**6. Report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)**

**Recommendation**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee note the report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), as presented.*

**7. Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework**

(pages [11](#) and [12-50](#), [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#))

**Recommendation**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve amendments to the Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework with immediate effect, as set out in the report presented.*

**8. University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006 (as amended)**

(pages [51](#) and [52-58](#))

**Recommendation**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee recommend that the Academic Board:*

- (1) *recommend that Senate approve amendments to the University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006 (as amended);*
  - (2) *approve the rescission of the Academic Board Resolutions: Student Appeals against Academic Decisions, as of the date the revised Senate rule becomes effective; and*
  - (3) *approve the development of a user's guide in conjunction with the revised Senate rule*
- with immediate effect, as set out in the report presented.*

**9. Revisions to the plagiarism policy**

**Recommendation**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee note the report from Associate Professor Peter McCallum on proposed revisions to the University's 'Student plagiarism: course work' policy.*

**10. Academic Board Faculty Reviews**

**11.1 Faculty of Economics and Business**

([Appendix 3](#))

The Academic Board Review Phase Three Report for the Faculty of Economics and Business is attached as Appendix 3.

**Recommendation**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee note the Academic Board Phase 3 Review Reports for the Faculty of Economics and Business, as presented.*

- 12. Policy Updates and Reviews**
  - 12.1 Students at Risk Working Party**
  - 12.2 Assessment Working Party**

***Recommendation***

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee note the update reports of the Students at Risk Working Party and the Assessment Working Party.*

- 13. General business**

- 14. Next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled from 10am-12pm on Wednesday 23 September 2009.

## Agenda Item 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

### Minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17 June 2009

**There were present:** The Acting Chair (Professor B Sutton) presiding; Associate Professors S Barrie, T Ho and M Scoufis; Drs S Cattle, S Cumming, M Edmund, C Groenlund, I Koprinska, H McKenzie, T Mogg, B Rooney, R Roubin, R Saunders and C Taylor; Ms H Drury, S Hanfling, J Gavan, R Kumar (from 10.30am) and A O'Hara; and Mr N White. Professor T Aspromourgos and Ms L Young were in attendance.

#### 1. **Welcome and Apologies**

The Acting Chair welcomed Professor Tony Aspromourgos, new Chair of the Committee, who will actively take up his position next semester when he is officially returned from study leave.

Apologies were received from Professor D Armstrong, Associate Professor P McCallum, Dr F Waugh, Mr B Meikle and Mr J Saurine.

#### 2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Ms Gavan raised one clarification on Item 7.1, the Academic Board Faculty Review of the Sydney College of the Arts (SCA). The reference to occupational health and safety issues was in regard to limited resources and infrastructure for the current and projected numbers of students.

##### **Resolution 21/09**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee adopt the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 May 2009, as emended, as a true record.*

#### 3. **Business arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)**

Ms Gavan reported back on two questions raised in the Committee's discussion of the SCA's Faculty Review (Item 7.1 in the minutes). The "proposed exhibition to be organised in conjunction with the Koori Centre" referred to part of the Bella Workshops. Ms Gavan said she had also checked with the Dean about postgraduate common room facilities and could confirm these were available in Building 11.

The Acting Chair also commented on the SCA's feedback about their disappointment over the lack of women on the Faculty review panel. He said he had invited six female academics to join the panel but only Dr Penny Gay, who was subsequently unable to attend because of illness, accepted. The Acting Chair assured the Committee that a lot of consideration went into recruiting the academics with the appropriate skills and background for each faculty review.

#### 4. **Report of the Chair**

The Acting Chair discussed the issue of students requesting special consideration for assessment. Many students with non medical reasons, such as being a victim of theft, were referred by faculties to the University's Counselling Service. The latter has suggested to the Acting Chair that such students, rather than come to them for advice on special consideration assessment, should instead prepare their own statutory declaration for consideration by the relevant faculty. The Counselling Service wants reassurance that faculties will properly consider such declarations by students. The Acting Chair said he thought this was very appropriate. He asked that associate deans on the Committee should look at their faculty's process for special

consideration of assessment and offer advice to students on how to prepare such a document. This included advice on clearly stating what happened and how it affected the student and any supporting documentation they should provide (for example, a filed police report for stolen goods). Faculties could then make an informed decision from the declarations about whether a student's ability to perform had been impaired. Ms Hanfling commented that the Library already accepted statutory declarations from students. The Acting Chair concluded by advising Committee members to raise awareness of the statutory declaration procedure in their faculty to prevent the Counselling Service from being overlaid with students seeking advice on special consideration.

**Resolution 22/09**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee note the report of the Chair.*

**5. Report of the Academic Board**

The Acting Chair began by discussing how ideas around the role of the Academic Board were progressing, following response from Board members and student groups such as the Student Representative Council (SRC). With the Senior Executive Group (SEG) Committees taking over the operational management aspect of the University, the Acting Chair said the Academic Board was able to focus on its academic standards and quality maintenance role, as defined in the academic governance rules. He said SEG allowed the Academic Board to operate more cleanly as a reviewer of academic quality across the University. He referred to the specific part of the Academic Governance Rule 2003 which stated that the Board has extensive rights to review any academic activity in the University and take action on the basis of reports. The Acting Chair said the specific role of the standing committees would develop in accordance with the Board's focus on standards, with the Learning and Teaching Committee perhaps morphing into something like the "Academic Standards and Quality Committee".

The Acting Chair also talked about the changing external landscape in which the University operates. He said there were signs the Federal Government body to replace the Australian Universities Quality Audit (AUQA) would hold universities to a more absolute account of standards. He added that universities would require reaccreditation by the Federal Government body on a regular basis. In such an environment, the Deputy Chair observed that an independent Academic Board that takes direction is vital.

Associate Professor Ho asked if it was likely the AUQA replacement body would adopt any international benchmarking standards. In response the Acting Chair discussed how some references in the Bradley Review tended to confuse "standards" with "standardisation". While all universities would agree that it was important to have a benchmark from which to operate, national standardisation, for example of student assessment, could have a negative impact on the University. Currently the University strives to operate at the highest academic level possible but a standardised level of assessment could mean this is reduced. This could in turn affect the University's reputation and marketing power to recruit students. He said that research into why students, particularly international students, chose the University over others indicated that it was because of its high academic performance.

The Acting Chair said the University had to have both the mechanism to define and defend its academic standards at a demonstrable standard, and to show the Federal Government Regulatory Authority that the University not only could exceed its standards but defend them. He added that defining standards was one of the main issues to emerge from the Assessment Working Party. The Acting Chair also discussed what the University can offer to appeal to students for formally accredited

courses, such as in Medicine. The Acting Chair again advised that he believed high academic standards were paramount, noting that the University's business is tied to the Academic Board's role as guardian of academic standards. The Acting Chair summarised by saying that SEG were charged, and had accepted, responsibility for operations at the University. The Academic Board's role should be to ensure a high-quality outcome from these operations, and if not, to provide constructive advice on how to achieve this.

Mr Taylor expressed concern at the perception that the Academic Board would no longer create policy, pointing out that the Board had played important roles in developing policies around Special Consideration and assessment of group work. The Acting Chair assured him that the Academic Board would always have the role of developing academic policies and approving the academic standards of proposed courses. In regards to the latter, the Acting Chair said the Academic Board currently sent back about 40 per cent of course proposals to faculties for more work before approval.

Dr Rooney discussed how the Academic Board could consider supporting benchmarking processes and suggested to the Committee that setting up a taskforce in liaison with SEG might be appropriate. The Acting Chair replied that much of the work around defining standards was being done by the Assessment Working Party and that the Board could request that SEG take action on their recommendations.

Associate Professor Ho discussed the issue of risk prevention at the University, expressing concerns about how SEG was chiefly concerned with financial risk while the Academic Board focussed on reputational risk. The Acting Chair replied that the two were entwined, as the best way to ensure financial safety was strong student demand, and students were attracted by the University's good academic reputation. It was always important that students and employers saw the University as viable, he said. The Acting Chair went on to discuss the valuable roles the University plays for society – a civic role, to educate citizens for a democracy, and a knowledge economy role. In regards to the latter, he said that while universities have lost their monopoly on knowledge generation wealth – raising Microsoft and Google as examples of giants of this industry – their unique strength was the different learning experiences of students and how these were carried over into society.

The Acting Chair asked the Committee how many members were also members of SEG Committees, to which approximately 16 members confirmed they were. He said he wanted to avoid people repeatedly having to go to meetings for similar kinds of committees for the Academic Board and SEG. He raised the question of whether the associate deans on the Board's standing committees, many of who also serve on SEG committees, should be replaced by other Academic Board members. The latter would be given training on becoming members of a standing committee and workload would be spread more evenly. It would also mean that the same people bringing proposals to committees weren't voting on them, which from an outside perspective could appear self serving.

Professor Aspromourgos raised the issue of how the Bradley Review, and later AUQA, were more inclined to focus on discipline-specific, rather than generic, standards. He cautioned that if this approach was also adopted by the body replacing AUQA it would be difficult for the Academic Board to be guardian of the accreditation process. Where external discipline-based standards mimicked professional accreditation, the process would effectively become the property of the faculties. The Acting Chair observed that it was important for the Academic Board to ensure that some generic fundamentals applied across all disciplines. He noted that while the specification of standards between faculties would always be different, it was important that common general standards must be found. At the same time the

University wanted to avoid the trap of being constrained by a single national standard, which it had and would continue to aspire to exceed.

**Resolution 03/09**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting of 27 May 2009, as presented.*

**6. Report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)**

In the absence of Professor Armstrong, it was agreed that this item be held over to the next meeting.

**7. Academic Board Faculty Reviews**

**7.1 Faculty of Arts**

Dr Rooney spoke to this item. On behalf of the Faculty of Arts, she thanked the Academic Board's faculty review team for the report. She said the Faculty found it a valuable exercise and that it had coincidentally taken place at the same time an internal strategic plan review was initiated by the faculty. The two processes had come together well and the Faculty was already engaged in activities to achieve the review's recommendations. The review team had accurately identified the Faculty's strengths and affirmations and also its two major challenges – the complexity of the faculty in size, spread and diversity, and limitations imposed by physical infrastructure.

Dr Rooney said she would focus on the first 10 review recommendations for the Committee, which she clustered into three broad issues. The first was risk management in regards to the Faculty's diversity, large size and wide geographic spread. The potential negative impact of this on staffing issues, workloads, coherence of curriculum and student experience was identified by the review team. Dr Rooney said the challenge was to find solutions that were sensitive and not undermine the Faculty's integrity. She added that some of the Faculty's larger schools and departments faced the same issues internally. It was reported that the Dean of Arts and Heads of School were working together to canvas relevant solutions to the issue.

The second broad recommendation area was better connection of staff and students with the Faculty community. Again, the chief challenge here was the diversity and geographic spread of the Faculty. Dr Rooney said staff and students were being invited to participate in the strategic direction planning process. The Faculty was working to overhaul its website, in response to a direct review recommendation. Part of this overhaul includes development of a calendar system and a student interface to bring students into better virtual communication. A new student advisory committee has also been established by the Faculty with direct access to the Dean. In regards to staff community, Dr Rooney said the Faculty had a high level commitment to improving communication and were trying to boost school representation in Faculty decision making. She said the Faculty was currently engaged in a very involved and thorough process of committee and governance overhaul, developing a closer mesh between two areas of the Faculty – school line-management and Faculty committee structures.

The third broad recommendation area was how the Faculty addresses quality issues such as benchmarking, mentoring and induction. Dr Rooney said the Faculty had recently appointed a Director of Support and Development to develop more sustainability for induction programs and more widespread mentoring practices. In regards to benchmarking, she acknowledged that the

faculty had a lot of work to do and said the Dean and Heads of School would be discussing the issue. One step forward in the area was the recent appointment of an Associate Dean of Honours, whose role will include developing increased benchmarking in honours programs.

In conclusion, Dr Rooney noted that the Faculty was embracing the recommendations and was busy putting in place strategic and structural reforms. She said they looked forward to reporting back to the Academic Board on their progress next year, and asked the Acting Chair if he could clarify approximately when this should be. Professor Sutton replied that early next year would be appropriate.

Dr Taylor asked the Acting Chair how the issue of space was being handled by University management, as it was a prominent issue that came up repeatedly in faculty reviews. The Acting Chair replied that it was a prominent topic being discussed by SEG and the Senate. While some details were still confidential, he said he could tell the Committee the University was in discussion with the State Government about proposals for improved infrastructure. He said the University was always interested in acquiring more physical space, even if only to temporarily house faculties or departments while refurbishing their existing space. Financing infrastructure – and the issue of what to develop first – required careful consideration by the University as its investments had been affected by the global economic crisis. Dr Taylor said there was still no big picture available of infrastructure plans across the University. This led to discussion about the importance of all faculties being aware of infrastructure plans as knowledge of things such as new availability of shared teaching spaces could make a big difference to curriculum planning. The importance of new infrastructure being appropriately refurbished for teaching spaces was also discussed. Associate Professor Ho said new infrastructure needed to consider how the spaces might be used in ten years time, and that student learning – not the building – should drive this. The Acting Chair agreed the relationship between infrastructure and pedagogy required careful consideration and suggested Committee members look at the 'Campus 2020' section on the University website for more information on infrastructure plans. He also said he would invite Professor Armstrong to discuss the issue further in the next meeting.

In regards to the Faculty of Arts Academic Board review, Ms Kumar asked how the lack of space issue fitted in with recommendations for attracting more students and the Faculty's own plans to attract more postgraduate coursework and international fee paying students. Dr Rooney replied that the University's infrastructure projects had recently approved space expansion for postgraduate students. The Faculty was also working on recommendations for greater availability of University facilities for after-hours students.

**Resolution 24/09**

*That the Teaching and Learning and Teaching Committee note the Academic Board Phase 3 Review Report for the Faculty of Arts.*

**9. Policy Updates and Reviews**

The Acting Chair spoke first about the Students at Risk Working Party. Overall the working party had enabled healthy discussion on the issue of Students At Risk, he said. They were beginning the challenge of redrafting the policy, incorporating the discussion points raised so far.

Interesting findings of the party included that there was low awareness across the University that the first course of appeal should be to the relevant faculty, not the

Student Appeals Body. The Acting Chair said faculties were in the best position to decide if any extenuating circumstances raised were appropriate, and discussed how the concept of reasonableness – which has a legal definition – was vital to the drafting of the policy which would otherwise be patronisingly worded and too controlling in tone. “Reasonableness” applied to both students seeking consideration and staff making the decision. When a full appeal came to the Student Appeals Body they should be able to investigate for evidence of reasonable behaviour from all parties.

The Assessment Working Party is similarly at the stage where policy is being redrafted, the Acting Chair said. He added that the issue of group work assessment also came up in the last Assessment Working Party meeting, which he missed, and that they hoped to consolidate a set of principles around this in the next meeting. Dr Edmond suggested to the Acting Chair they invite Ms Jordi Austin of the University’s Counselling Service to the Working Party, which he agreed was a good idea.

**10. General Business**

Ms Kumar asked if there was any follow-up on developing a revised plagiarism policy, as discussed in the last Committee meeting. The Acting Chair noted that Associate Professor McCallum was not present to speak about the issue but that he was working on it for the next meeting.

**11. Next meeting**

The Committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled from 10am to 12pm on Wednesday 12 August 2009, in the Science Meeting Room (Room 450, Carslaw Building).

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **Report of the Academic Board**

#### **5.1 Report of the Academic Board meeting held on 1 July 2009**

The agenda for the meeting of the Academic Board on 1 July 2009 may be accessed on the web: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/>

##### **5.1.1 Academic Board Phase Three Faculty Reviews**

The Academic Board noted the Academic Board Review Phase Three Report for the Faculty of Arts.

##### **5.1.2 Proceedings of the Committee**

The Academic Board noted the proceedings of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 17 June 2009.

##### **5.1.3 Other matters**

The Academic Board also:

- approved an amendment to the membership of the Academic Board;
- approved the appointment of Professor Sutton as Chair of the Research and Research Training Committee for a period expiring 31 December 2009;
- approved amendments to the Glossary;
- noted a report of the review of the Academic Board;
- farewelled Professor Nutbeam (Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor) and thanked him for his many contributions;
- approved the 2010 semester dates for the Faculty of Education and Social Work; and
- approved the amended table of comparative English test scores.

## **Agenda Item 7**

### **Academic Board Resolutions**

#### **7. Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework**

*(pages [12-50](#) and [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#))*

The Assessment Working Party has now reached a stage in its deliberations where it can recommend the first series of amendments to the Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework.

These amendments relate to Parts 1, 5 and 6, with minor changes to Parts 2, 3 and 4. Part 6 has also been renumbered as Part 7 with a new Part 6 on Reasonable Adjustments to Examinations and Assessments inserted.

A copy of the amended version of the policy follows – it also available on the Learning and Teaching Committee website along with a copy with tracked changes.

#### ***Recommendation***

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve amendments to the Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework with immediate effect, as set out in the report presented.*



# The University of Sydney

## Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework

**Approved by:** Academic Board on 13 December 2000  
**Last amended:** [insert date] (Sections 5-7)  
**Date of effect:** [insert date]

<b>Part 1 - Preliminary</b> .....	<b>13</b>
1.1 Citation.....	13
1.2 Commencement .....	13
1.3 Purpose .....	13
1.4 Authority.....	13
1.5 Revision.....	13
1.6 Associated Rules and Resolutions .....	13
1.7 Definitions.....	13
<b>Part 2 - Principles, Criteria and Responsibilities for Assessment</b> .....	<b>15</b>
2.1 Statement of Principles.....	15
2.2 Criteria for Effective, Efficient and Acceptable Assessment.....	18
2.3 Rights and Responsibilities.....	21
<b>Part 3 - Grades</b> .....	<b>26</b>
3.1 Common Result Grades .....	26
3.2 Distribution of Grades .....	28
<b>Part 4 - The Conduct of Examinations</b> .....	<b>31</b>
4.1 Principles .....	31
4.2 Examination Procedures.....	31
4.3 Conduct of Examinations and Determination of Results.....	32
4.4 Processing and Releasing Results .....	33
4.5 Security of Examination Papers and Results .....	34
4.6 The Use of Computers and Calculators in Assessments.....	35
4.7 Examinations – Emergency Evacuations.....	36
<b>Part 5 - Special Consideration Due to Illness and Misadventure</b> .....	<b>37</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	37
5.2 Principles for Dealing with Cases of Special Consideration.....	37
5.3 Responsibilities.....	38
5.4 Serious Illness or Misadventure.....	39
5.5 Extensions, Reweighting and Groupwork .....	40
5.6 Replacement Assessment .....	42
5.7 Medical Certificates.....	43
5.8 Procedures .....	43
5.9 Students with a Disability .....	44
5.10 <i>Aegrotat</i> and Posthumous Awards .....	45
<b>Part 7 - Special Arrangements for Examination and Assessment</b> .....	<b>48</b>
7.1 Coverage .....	48
7.2 Types of Special Arrangement.....	48
7.3 Timelines for Applications .....	49
7.4 Supporting Documentation .....	49

## Part 1 - Preliminary

### 1.1 **Citation**

This Resolution is made by the Academic Board of the University, pursuant to Clause 11(5) of the *University of Sydney (Academic Governance) Rule 2003* (as amended).

### 1.2 **Commencement**

This Resolution will commence on **[insert date]**.

### 1.3 **Purpose**

The purpose of this Resolution is:

1.3.1 to set out the principles underpinning the University's approach to assessment and examination of coursework award courses and units of study; and

1.3.2 to identify responsibilities for ensuring that the principles are implemented.

### 1.4 **Authority**

The University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000 (Division 1, 5(4)) requires the Academic Board to establish policies for assessment and examination of coursework.

### 1.5 **Revision**

This document is maintained by the Academic Board. It is published by the Academic Board and also as part of the Manual for Examiners.

### 1.6 **Associated Rules and Resolutions**

This Academic Board Resolution refers to, or should be read in conjunction with, the following Senate and Academic Board Resolutions relating to student appeals against academic decisions.

1.6.1 Student Appeals against Academic Decisions: Senate Resolutions

1.6.2 Student Appeals against Academic Decisions: Academic Board Resolutions

1.6.3 Academic Board Resolutions: Academic Honesty in Coursework

1.6.4 University Privacy Policy

### 1.7 **Definitions**

In this document:

**Academic unit** means a Faculty, academic college, Board of Studies, school, department, centre or interdisciplinary committee of the University;

**Assessment** means examinations, assignments and other assessable work that contributes to a student's academic results in a unit of study;

**Award course** means a formally approved program of study which can lead to an academic award granted by the University;

**Coursework award course** means an award course not designated as a research award course. While the program of study in a coursework award course may include a component of original, supervised research, other forms of instruction and

learning normally will be dominant. All undergraduate award courses are coursework award courses;

**Dean** means the dean of a Faculty or the director or principal of an academic college, or chairperson of a Board of Studies;

**Department** means a Faculty (if the Faculty does not have an internal departmental structure), Board of Studies, school, centre or interdisciplinary committee of the University. Departments are responsible for determining and implementing assessment, including examinations, in units of study, and in this document the term refers to the department responsible for assessing and examining the unit of study concerned;

**Disability** has the meaning prescribed in section 4 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), and includes chronic medical conditions;

**Enrolled Student** means a student enrolled in an award course of the University;

**Faculty** means a Faculty or college board as established in each case by its constitution, or, where applicable, a Board of Studies. Faculties are responsible for award courses, and in this document the term refers to the Faculty responsible for the award course concerned;

**GDA (General Disposal Authority)** means a General Disposal Authority issued by the State Records Authority under the NSW State Records Act 1998. The University is required to comply with these GDAs in keeping its records; **Misadventure** means an unforeseen accident, mishap or personal misfortune;

**Norm-referencing** means the interpretation of scores on a measure that focuses on the rank ordering of students not their performance in relation to criteria;

**Scaling** means any system for the adjustment of scores or marks where such scores or marks are to be compared against a norm;

**Script Retention Period** means the period from the date of release of results to students during which departments are required to arrange for coursework students to request, peruse and if required copy their script. The Script Retention Period is four (4) months;

**Special Consideration** has the meaning prescribed in section 5.2;

**Standards-referencing** means a form of referencing against predetermined standards for grades. Predetermined standards are written in terms of grade descriptors, identifying key characteristics of performance for each grade and key differences in performance between the grades;

**Student** means a person admitted to candidature in an award course of the University, but does not include a person whose candidature has ceased; and

**Unit of study** or **unit** means a stand-alone component of an award course. Determining and implementing assessment, including examinations, in each unit of study is the responsibility of a department.

## Part 2 - Principles, Criteria and Responsibilities for Assessment

This Part of the document identifies the principles that should underpin student assessment, and, based on those principles, sets out the criteria which student assessments should satisfy. This leads on to the responsibilities of the University, departments and faculties, academic staff, and students, in ensuring that these criteria are met.

### 2.1 **Statement of Principles**

Any system for assessing the progress and achievement of students must be effective, efficient and acceptable. Furthermore, there is a tight link between what students believe are the aims of assessment, and how they learn.

#### 2.1.1 **Effective Assessment**

2.1.1.1 Effective assessment achieves the goals and purposes for which it is undertaken, and does not create perverse incentives. Assessment can have a number of goals and purposes, some of which may be mutually exclusive. These potential conflicts can be minimised by explicit statements about the goals and purposes of each assessment.

2.1.1.2 The goals and purposes of assessment must reflect and reinforce the goals and purposes of the curriculum. In doing so, the assessment must be a representative test of the knowledge, understanding and skills to be achieved by successful completion of the curriculum. This requirement for representativeness also applies to any further assessment or re-assessment which students may be required to undergo.

2.1.1.3 The University's academic honesty policy is implemented.

2.1.1.4 Assessment is often classified as formative or summative. Most assessments include both a formative and summative component.

2.1.1.4.1 That aspect of assessment which is **summative** is used to certify competence, or to arrange students in a rank order of merit. It certifies the attainment of a standard, and is used as the basis for progression to the next part of a course, or to graduation. Success at summative assessment is an important goal for students, and will have a powerful impact on the way they study and learn. While summative assessment may motivate students to learn, it should not be the means by which students are induced to study. "Knowledge acquired under compulsion has no hold on the mind" (A. N. Whitehead).

2.1.1.4.2 That aspect of assessment which is formative is used principally to provide students with feedback on their progress in learning. Not only does it reinforce successful learning, but it is an opportunity for students to expose the limitations in their knowledge and

understanding, rather than to hide them. For this reason, tasks which focus largely on the formative aspect of assessment should not be the sole contributor to decisions about progression or graduation.

Further, feedback from formative assessments should be presented within a timeframe that will enable students to undertake the additional learning they need in order to remedy their weaknesses. Feedback should also be provided in a form that students find useful in identifying their strengths, and in pinpointing areas for improvement. However, feedback should be presented in ways that will encourage self-reliance in learning and in assessment, rather than dependence on authority. Formative assessment also provides students with opportunities for practice on the types of assessment instrument that will be used in summative assessment. Summative assessments can provide useful learning experiences, but their formative value should not be over-estimated.

2.1.1.4.3 Both types of assessment can be used to provide feedback to teachers about the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and information that can be used in program evaluation.

2.1.1.5 Assessment may have unintended or negative consequences. For example, an assessment which ranks students in order of merit may encourage competitive attitudes and activities, which may not be appropriate in a world where co-operation, collaboration and teamwork are increasingly valued. Likewise, an assessment which is marked solely by academic staff may not be the best way of encouraging teamwork and peer-review, if these are valued activities. Again, an assessment which rewards the recall of isolated facts is unlikely to encourage students to explore the meaning of what they are learning, and to synthesise information from different sources. Thus the potential unintended and negative consequences of an assessment should be explored carefully before a particular type of assessment is implemented.

## 2.1.2 Efficient Assessment

2.1.2.1 An assessment that is efficient for **students** will maximise the benefit that they derive from the assessment for the effort that they expend on preparation for it. The benefit will depend on the type of assessment: for a final (summative) examination, the benefit will be the mark or merit grade obtained. For a primarily formative assessment, the benefit will be the quality, quantity and

timeliness of feedback that students receive to assist their future learning.

2.1.2.2 An assessment that is efficient for **academic staff** will likewise maximise the benefit arising from the effort invested in developing, implementing and marking and providing feedback to students on the assessment. Benefits will include the benefits to students described above, but also feedback to staff on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and the intangible benefit of contributing to a quality learning environment. Against this must be set not only the effort invested, but also the opportunity costs of assessment – the benefits foregone through non-participation in other valued activities, e.g. research.

2.1.2.3 The minimum number of assessment tasks needed to make judgements about students' progression and learning should be used.

### 2.1.3 **Acceptable Assessment**

2.1.3.1 Any assessment system has to be acceptable to a number of stakeholders: the general community, the professions, Government, the University, academic staff, and students. While some of these stakeholders' requirements will be largely met by assessments that are effective and efficient, other factors contributing to acceptability should also be recognised:

2.1.3.1.1 For the **community**, there must be an assurance of the competence of graduates to carry out whatever roles and functions in society their degree has qualified them to undertake.

2.1.3.1.2 For the **professions**, there must be an assurance that the education and training components of the registration or licensing requirements for their industry will be met by a recognised course of study conducted by the University.

2.1.3.1.3 For **Government**, there must be confidence that the public funds invested in the University are being well spent. In addition, the assessment system should comply with any quality standards imposed by funding agencies.

2.1.3.1.4 The **University's** assessment system must match contemporary best practice. The assessment system must also be consistent with the image and ethos of the University. Assessments must be conducted in such a way that they do not attract negative publicity to the University, e.g. through the exposure of academic dishonesty, or impersonation, or unreliable marking. The system must also

maximise opportunities for students in the University's equity target groups to realise their full potential, and should take account of the diverse cultural backgrounds of students enrolled at the University.

2.1.3.1.5 For **academic staff**, effectiveness and efficiency will contribute largely to the acceptability of the assessment system.

2.1.3.1.6 Likewise, for **students**, effectiveness and efficiency will contribute largely to acceptability. However, for students, there are three additional considerations. First, the assessment system should not generate levels of stress which are so high that they interfere with performance. Secondly, students have an increasing financial investment in their tertiary education, and they too will require value for money. Finally, the assessment system must be seen to be fair and transparent.

#### **2.1.4 Student-centred Assessment**

Assessment plays an important role in determining what students learn and understand. Indeed, a substantial amount of research in student learning in higher education has established a tight link between (1) students' perceptions and understanding of what the assessment aims to test, and (2) what and how much students learn. Consequently, the student-centred or student-focussed perspective of teaching and learning encouraged by the Academic Board requires not only that assessment systems be effective, efficient and acceptable but also that students be helped to understand the assessment system, what is to be assessed and why it is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed.

### **2.2 Criteria for Effective, Efficient and Acceptable Assessment**

The principles of efficiency, effectiveness, acceptability and student-centredness imply that the University's assessment system should satisfy the following criteria.

#### **2.2.1 Curriculum**

2.2.1.1 Each unit of study has an explicit statement of the generic and specific goals of the unit.

2.2.1.2 The curriculum for each unit of study is consistent with the University's Generic Attributes of Graduates.

#### **2.2.2 Scope of Assessment**

2.2.2.1 The assessment is generally representative of the generic and specific goals of the unit of study. While it will rarely be appropriate to test the achievement of all goals on every occasion, each assessment can be shown to address a balanced portfolio of goals.

2.2.2.2 The scope and nature of the assessment for each unit of study is explicitly stated at the beginning of delivery of the unit. This statement should include details of all aspects

of the assessment system (but see 2.2.5.4 below). Reference should also be made to the Unit of Study outline requirements contained in the Academic Board Resolutions: *Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching*.

2.2.2.3 The formative or summative nature of each assessment task is explicitly stated.

### **2.2.3 Assessment Instruments**

2.2.3.1 The assessment instruments employed (written paper, practical task, etc.) are capable of validly testing the goals of the unit of study.

2.2.3.2 The assessment instruments possess reliability and reproducibility.

2.2.3.3 The length of each assessment balances the demands of validity and reliability on the one hand, and efficiency on the other.

2.2.3.4 Students have had the opportunity for formative practice or experience on each type of instrument that is used summatively.

### **2.2.4 Assessment Timetable**

2.2.4.1 Assessments are timetabled to take account of other academic demands on a student's time, e.g. other assessments, or the requirements of other units of study.

2.2.4.2 Adequate arrangements are made to cater for students with disability or other special needs to ensure transparency, fairness and equity.

2.2.4.3 Formative assessments are timetabled to provide adequate time for feedback and remediation before summative assessment.

2.2.4.4 In courses or units where failure at summative assessment requires remediation and re-assessment before progression in the course or unit, summative assessments are timed, if possible, to allow adequate opportunity for remediation and re-assessment.

2.2.4.5 Where an assessment requires the submission of an assignment, students are given reasonable opportunities to attempt and submit the assignment. Submission deadlines take reasonable account of practical difficulties that students might encounter, such as equipment failure and the temporary unavailability of materials, reference texts and so forth (technical and other difficulties should also be taken account where they affect other types of assessment, e.g. oral presentations, laboratory work, etc).

### **2.2.5 Assessment Tasks**

2.2.5.1 Each task is demonstrably valid (it tests achievement of one or more of the goals of the unit of study).

2.2.5.2 The set of tasks comprising the assessment of a unit of study can be shown collectively to test a balanced and sufficient proportion of the goals of the unit of study.

2.2.5.3 The scope and nature of each task is explicit. This includes such matters as the goals to be tested, the criteria against which performance will be measured, the weighting of items and of tasks / papers, the due date for submission or testing, the conditions under which examinations will be sat, the conditions for extensions of time (if any), the penalties for lateness or for violation of assessment specifications (e.g. length).

2.2.5.4 Any necessary modifications to the scope or nature of any assessment task are communicated in writing to all students enrolled in the unit before the halfway point of the unit, and are applied so that no student is differentially disadvantaged by the modification.

## **2.2.6 Marking**

2.2.6.1 Tasks are marked according to the published criteria (such as marking schema and grade descriptors) which have been provided to students when they receive the unit of study outline (as required under the Unit of Study provisions in the Academic Board Resolutions: *Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching*).

2.2.6.2 Decisions which may impact on a student's progression or graduation do not depend on judgments made by a single marker without review by colleagues for calibration or moderation.

2.2.6.3 Decisions which may impact on a student's progression or graduation are based solely on the assessments specified for that purpose.

2.2.6.4 When marks from tasks are combined, the methods used are statistically and educationally defensible.

2.2.6.5 Any necessary retrospective modifications to the marking criteria are published at the same time as the results of the assessment.

2.2.6.6 Academic judgments, particularly adverse academic judgments, are supported by documented evidence of failure to satisfy academic standards. Frequently, such documentation will be entered directly onto an assignment or examination script. Where documentation exists beyond such markings on assignments and scripts, such documents will be placed on the relevant student file registered in the University's records management system, TRIM.

2.2.6.7 Due account is taken of the University's special consideration policy in relation to illness or misadventure.

## **2.2.7 Feedback**

- 2.2.7.1 Feedback to students is sufficiently timely to allow remediation where necessary.
- 2.2.7.2 Feedback to students, either individually or in a group, is sufficiently detailed to be a useful identification of strengths and deficiencies, yet not so detailed as to discourage self-reliance in learning and assessment.
- 2.2.7.3 Feedback to students includes access to their own scripts, and to other relevant assessment material provided that students may not access test materials which are secured for re-use in subsequent assessments.
- 2.2.7.4 Evaluative feedback from students to academic staff is incorporated into teaching and learning strategies, and into future assessments.

## **2.2.8 Remediation**

- 2.2.8.1 Adequate academic support is given to students to clarify errors, misunderstandings and so forth requiring remediation.
- 2.2.8.2 Appropriate support is given to students undertaking remedial learning.

## **2.2.9 Re-assessment**

- 2.2.9.1 Where allowed, re-assessment of students refers to situations where failure at the first attempt requires remediation and subsequent re-assessment. Such re-assessment needs to be delayed long enough for useful remedial learning to have been possible.
- 2.2.9.2 The criteria for successful re-assessment are published, and consistent with the criteria applied to the first assessment.

## **2.2.10 Appeals**

The grounds for, and mechanism for, appeals against academic judgments which will impede progression or graduation are explicit.

## **2.3 Rights and Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the University, departments and faculties, academic staff, and students in meeting these criteria for effective, efficient and acceptable assessment are detailed in this section.

### **2.3.1 Responsibilities of the University**

The University, through the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Board, has a responsibility to ensure that:

- 2.3.1.1 assessment practices are explicit, fair, transparent and consistent across the institution;
- 2.3.1.2 assessment practices and procedures are monitored at the level of departments and faculties to ensure that they meet the criteria set out in this document;

- 2.3.1.3 resources are available to provide staff with access to information and expertise on the theory and practice of assessment;
- 2.3.1.4 facilities to sustain good assessment practice are available to staff and students;
- 2.3.1.5 policies regarding special consideration pursuant to illness or other misadventure, and for students with special needs, are explicit and consistently applied;
- 2.3.1.6 policies on academic honesty, legitimate cooperation, plagiarism and cheating, including sanctions and penalties for breaches, are explicit and consistently applied; and
- 2.3.1.7 appropriate mechanisms of appeal are available and publicised.

### **2.3.2 Responsibilities of Departments and Faculties**

Faculties and departments have responsibilities to ensure that:

- 2.3.2.1 the principles and criteria for assessment are adopted;
- 2.3.2.2 policies, consistent with the principles and criteria, are clear and available to all staff;
- 2.3.2.3 wherever required, individuals are identified and given appropriate authorities to act as the Principal Examiner of each unit of study;
- 2.3.2.4 information on all aspects of assessments, including criteria for satisfactory and meritorious performance, penalties for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, attendance and class requirements and the weighting of those assessments, are explicit to students within one week of commencing a unit of study;
- 2.3.2.5 assessment tasks reflect the relevant objectives of the unit of study, the goals for the degree and the generic attributes of graduates, as appropriate to the academic level of the students;
- 2.3.2.6 formative assessment is incorporated so that feedback is provided in a timely fashion during each unit of study;
- 2.3.2.7 appropriate amounts and a range of valid assessment instruments are applied, monitored by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees;
- 2.3.2.8 students have an opportunity to become familiar with all assessment instruments that will be used summatively;
- 2.3.2.9 assessments are coordinated as far as possible to provide appropriate workloads for students across their units of study;

- 2.3.2.10 when marks are combined, statistically defensible methods are applied;
- 2.3.2.11 sanctions and penalties are made clear in the unit of study outline and are applied fairly;
- 2.3.2.12 examination scripts and other forms of summative assessment (other than secure databanks) are held for the mandated script retention period and appeal period for review by students;
- 2.3.2.13 publicly posted results are identified only by student number (students' names may only be used with the permission of the student, in accordance with the University Privacy Policy);
- 2.3.2.14 mechanisms of appeal against decisions on assessments, consistent with University policy, are in place;
- 2.3.2.15 accurate records of assessments and supporting academic judgements, and how they were formed, are made and kept for the mandated retention periods (see General Disposal Authority 9 governing University records); and
- 2.3.2.16 that all documentation arising from assessment action of a non-routine nature are placed on the relevant student's file (reference should be made to the University of Sydney By-law 1999, the Academic Board Resolutions: *Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions* and the University Recordkeeping Policy for the procedures for dealing with documentation relating to misconduct and appeals).

### **2.3.3 Responsibilities of Academic Staff**

Individual members of staff have responsibilities to:

- 2.3.3.1 familiarise themselves with the University and Faculty requirements for best practice in assessment;
- 2.3.3.2 ensure that each assessment is congruent with the objectives of the unit of study;
- 2.3.3.3 adhere consistently to the policies of the Faculty and department on submission of assignments and other assessment items;
- 2.3.3.4 review and give timely and adequately detailed feedback on work submitted;
- 2.3.3.5 communicate clearly the requirements for assessment (including the balance of formative and summative assessment, procedures, weighting of marks and methods to be used, as well as penalties for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty) at the commencement of each unit of study and, if changes are needed, discuss them with the students; such changes should not occur later than halfway through the relevant

- teaching period and should be applied so that no student is significantly disadvantaged;
- 2.3.3.6 ensure that reports of students' progress and achievement are based only on relevant evidence;
- 2.3.3.7 contribute to the setting and review of assessment tasks within their discipline to ensure fairness and the application of agreed standards;
- 2.3.3.8 ensure that students are assessed in a variety of ways and have opportunities to develop their own skills in self-evaluation;
- 2.3.3.9 evaluate their own performance as assessors and examiners against the principles and criteria. Such evaluations will assist in the continued enhancement of the learning environment and provide evidence to support applications for promotion;
- 2.3.3.10 not to discuss or disclose personal information, such as results, about students to anyone who does not have a legitimate right and need to have access to the information in order to carry out their duties (refer to the University's Privacy Policy); and
- 2.3.3.11 ensure adequate records relating to feedback, assessment, re-assessment and appeals are made and attached to the appropriate student file.

#### **2.3.4 Rights and Responsibilities of Students**

Students have a right to:

- 2.3.4.1 be informed of all aspects of assessment policies and practices in each unit of study, including the criteria to be met and sanctions or penalties for breaches;
- 2.3.4.2 consistent application of policies and practices;
- 2.3.4.3 the timely return of the results of assessments with appropriate feedback;
- 2.3.4.4 information which allows them to calibrate their own performance against the criteria for each unit of study;
- 2.3.4.5 review their examination scripts and other forms of summative assessment (except those saved for reuse in subsequent testing) for the duration of the script retention period;
- 2.3.4.6 have access to their student file and any other documents relating to the assessment;
- 2.3.4.7 appeal against academic decisions made on the basis of flawed processes, during the appeal period; and
- 2.3.4.8 be informed of mechanisms for appeal.

Students have a responsibility to:

- 2.3.4.9 behave ethically and appropriately, avoiding any action or behaviour which would unfairly disadvantage or advantage another student;
- 2.3.4.10 be aware that a major objective of assessment is the facilitation of learning rather than the achievement of grades;
- 2.3.4.11 use assessments to help them develop strategies for self-assessment;
- 2.3.4.12 be aware of the rules of progression for each unit of study and the requirements for the award of the degree, diploma or certificate;
- 2.3.4.13 be aware of, and abide by, assessment policies and practices, including the University policies about academic honesty, legitimate cooperation, plagiarism and cheating;
- 2.3.4.14 be aware of the means for seeking assistance and advice on assessment within departments and the University;
- 2.3.4.15 ensure that they understand the requirements, including timetables, for examinations and other assessment tasks;
- 2.3.4.16 submit work on time, ensuring that it is their own except when they share ownership of a group project;
- 2.3.4.17 notify staff as early as possible if difficulties arise with the timing or other requirements of assessment tasks;
- 2.3.4.18 advise departments or faculties as appropriate of any substantial absence and be aware of the appropriate use of medical and other certificates in applications for special consideration;
- 2.3.4.19 ensure that they understand the advantages and possible adverse implications of discontinuation or withdrawal; and
- 2.3.4.20 be aware of appropriate mechanisms for appeal.

### Part 3 - Grades

This Part summarises the merit grades awarded in the University's assessment system, and the University's approach to the determination of grades, Honours and Medals.

#### 3.1 Common Result Grades

The Academic Board has adopted a set of grades that will be common to all undergraduate and postgraduate courses which award merit grades for coursework, effective from Semester 1, 1999, as set out in the following Table.

Permanent results			
Grade	Description	Mark Range, if applicable	Comments
HD	High Distinction	85-100	-
D	Distinction	75-84	-
CR	Credit	65-74	-
P	Pass	50-64	-
R	Satisfied requirements	-	This is used in Pass/Fail only outcomes.
UCN	Unit of Study continuing	-	Used at the end of a semester for units of study which have been approved to extend into a following semester. This will automatically flag that no final result is required until the end of the last semester of the unit of study.
PCON	Pass (Concessional)	46-49	Use of this grade is restricted to those courses which allow for a Concessional Pass of some kind to be awarded. A student may re-enrol in a unit of study for which the result was PCON. Each Faculty will determine and state in its course regulations what proportion, if any, may count – e.g. “no more than one sixth of the total credit points for a course can be made up from PCON results”.
F	Fail	0-49	This grade may be used for students with marks from 46-49 in those faculties which do not use PCON
AF	Absent Fail	-	Includes non-submission of compulsory work (or non-attendance at compulsory labs, etc) as well as failure to attend an examination
W	Withdrawn	-	Not recorded on external transcript. This is the result that obtains where a student applies to discontinue a unit of study by the HECS Census Date (i.e., within the first four weeks of enrolment).
DNF	Discontinued - Not to count as failure	-	Recorded on external transcript. This result applies automatically where a student discontinues after the HECS Census Date but before the end of the seventh week of the Semester (or before half of the unit of study has run in the case of units of study which are not semester-length). A Faculty may determine that the result of DNF is

			warranted after this date if the student has made out a special case based on illness or misadventure (see also Section 5.6.7).
DF	Discontinued - Fail	-	Recorded on external transcript. This applies from the time DNF ceases to be automatically available up to the cessation of classes for the unit of study.
Temporary results			
MINC	Incomplete with a mark of at least 50	50-100	<p>This result may be used when examiners have grounds (such as illness or misadventure) for seeking further information or for considering additional work from the student before confirming the final mark and passing grade.</p> <p>Except in special cases approved by the Academic Board [1], this result will be converted to a normal passing mark and grade either:</p> <p>(a) by the dean following a review of examination results pursuant to Part 4 (3)(5) of these Resolutions; or (b) automatically to the indicated mark and grade by the third week of the immediately subsequent academic session.</p>
INC	Incomplete	-	<p>This result is used when examiners have grounds (such as illness or misadventure) for seeking further information or for considering additional work from the student before confirming the final result.</p> <p>Except in special cases approved by the Academic Board[1], this result will be converted to a normal permanent passing or failing grade either:</p> <p>(a) by the dean at the review of examination results pursuant to Part 4 (3)(5) of these Resolutions; or (b) automatically to an AF grade by the third week of the immediately subsequent academic session.</p>

### 3.1.1 Special Cases

At its meeting of 13 October 1999, the Academic Board approved the following policies for dealing with special cases:

#### 3.1.1.1 Incomplete Units of Study

Where a MINC or INC grade arises because all or many students in a Unit of Study have not completed the requirements of the Unit, the grade will be converted to UCN on the advice of the relevant dean. The students may be engaged in practicum or clinical placements, or in courses extending beyond the end of the semester (e.g.

Honours). Heads of departments are encouraged to return UCN and not INC for students in such extended Units of Study. Deans are asked to avoid approving the use of UCN to deal with late results from a completed Unit of Study.

**3.1.1.2 Students with incomplete results**

Deans are authorised to approve the extension of a MINC/INC grade for individual students having a valid reason for their incomplete status.

**3.2 Distribution of Grades**

**3.2.1** There are two main approaches to the award of grades. The **standards-referencing** approach assesses the achievements of students against a pre-determined standard. The **norm-referencing** (with associated scaling of marks) approach, on the other hand, grades students by comparing their achievements with that of other students undergoing the same assessment. (Here standards referencing is not to be confused with criterion referencing. Criterion referencing refers to the criteria to be used to make judgements – it does not usually refer to standards to be used in making the judgements. Standards based assessment usually refers to the general standards to be used in allocating grades.)

**3.2.2** Traditionally, merit grades have been awarded largely on a norm-referenced (with scaling) basis, based on the expectation that, within a certain range, from year to year a relatively constant proportion of the class will achieve a High Distinction, a Distinction, etc. These proportions have been refined over a number of years to provide a basis for equity of examination results particularly in cases where students are shared between faculties. The proportions are cumulative and are based on the number of students who gain a Pass or better in the particular unit of study.

	%HD	%D+	%CR+
First Year	3	14	42
Senior/Upper	4	18	50

It is important to note that the proportions of merit grades may vary from unit of study to unit of study, and from year to year, reflecting differences in the capabilities of different groups of students. Proportions should not be interpreted too literally, particularly with small numbers of students or in units that traditionally set exceptionally high academic standards. The proportions should apply at highly aggregated levels .

**3.2.3** Norm-referencing (with scaling) has several advantages over standards-referencing. It requires no additional information or specification of standards, no estimates of how students will perform in a given assessment, no pre-specification of expected levels of achievement, and it compensates for a range of parameters that are hard to standardize, such as the quality of curriculum and instruction, adequacy of assessment practice, and variation in student cohorts. It also assists the control of grade inflation and the intercomparison of achievements between different disciplines.

**3.2.4** Norm-referencing (with scaling), however, has several disadvantages when compared with standards-referencing. It will fail to take

account of changes in the quality of students enrolled in the program. It does not require specification of the academic standards reached in the course or unit, making it difficult to benchmark those standards. It is difficult to provide a clear statement of expected levels of achievement using the norm-referencing (with scaling) approach, and it is known that undergraduate students complain frequently about the absence of such information.

- 3.2.5** Recognizing the deficiencies of norm-based assessment, some faculties and departments already engage in standards-based assessment. Each Faculty will have a policy statement on standards applying in that Faculty and how those standards are being assured. Two major approaches to this are (a) a standards-referenced approach, with explicit statement of standards and (b) a norm-referenced (with scaling) approach, incorporating some form of external check on standards. The Academic Board recommends greater use of standards-based assessment, while acknowledging that many faculties and departments *will wish* to retain norm-based approaches to review the distribution of merit grades.
  
- 3.2.6** Faculties are required to submit an annual report to the Academic Board outlining the approach to be used for awarding grades (i.e. standards-referenced or norm-reference with scaling) in the following academic year. This report will be collated by the Dean of each Faculty from reports submitted by Heads of Schools.
  
- 3.2.7** The Academic Board commends the following approach for faculties and departments in the implementation of standards-based assessment:
  - 3.2.7.1 at unit of study level, identify examples of students' work that are characteristic of achievement at different merit grades (benchmarks);
  
  - 3.2.7.2 describe the differences between work at different achievement levels in information given to students. Descriptions are likely to be statements such as the following:

“At HD level a student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the unit material, and exhibits initiative and self-reliance in critically evaluating and synthesizing ideas related to the unit.”;
  
  - 3.2.7.3 provide students with samples of work at different achievement levels (Note: If samples mean examples of real students' work, then a copy of the signed permission of the student author must be kept for as long as the example is used for this purpose);
  
  - 3.2.7.4 grade assessments and examinations against the benchmarks, discussing the outcomes with colleagues teaching within the unit and in similar units to refine the standards;
  
  - 3.2.7.5 use norm-referenced statistics to review the distribution of merit grades of standards-based assessment, seeking further justification from Unit of Study Co-ordinators if the

- distribution appears too aberrant. Such a review must adhere to the policy and any guidelines established by the Faculty or department or provided in unit of study descriptions;
- 3.2.7.6 if some form of scaling of marks is considered necessary by the Unit of Study Co-ordinator because the distribution of grades is not considered appropriate, a statement justifying the scaling with reference to appropriate standards will be included with the submission of final grades and marks. Evidence of a discussion of the justification with a colleague in a similar unit will also be submitted and the final report will be submitted by the Head of School to the Dean of the relevant Faculty. Scale marks are to represent a relation to the standard/s but not a position in a cohort; and
- 3.2.7.7 as part of the information provided to students regarding assessment procedures (see Part 2, section 2 (6) (a)), it must be clearly stated whether or not scaling may be used and the implications of the use of scaling on students' final marks.

## **Part 4 - The Conduct of Examinations**

### **4.1 Principles**

The University's commitment to fairness has a number of implications for the conduct of the University's assessment system, including the conduct of examinations.

**4.1.1** Implementation of the University's Equal Opportunity in Education Policy includes the provision of special examination conditions for students with disabilities or other needs, as published in Part 6 of this document.

**4.1.2** The University's assessment system aims to be fair to all students. Students who experience illness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control may therefore receive special consideration as described in Part 5 of this document.

**4.1.3** Students may appeal against the procedures used to arrive at an academic decision. The policies and procedures in respect of student appeals are found in the documents:

4.1.3.1 Principles and Procedures for Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Awards: Academic Board Resolutions.

4.1.3.2 Principles and Procedures for Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions for Postgraduate Research Awards: Academic Board Resolutions.

4.1.3.3 Appeals Against Academic Decisions: Senate Resolutions.

4.1.3.4 Academic Board Resolutions: Academic Honesty in Coursework.

### **4.2 Examination Procedures**

The following procedures are to be followed, except with the permission of the Dean:

**4.2.1** Examiners are strongly encouraged to require no more than 30 minutes of examination per credit point; a shorter time is quite acceptable, especially when students are also assessed progressively. Examinations during the formal examination period will normally be no longer than two hours. The responsible dean may make provision for three-hour examinations in special cases, provided that no unit of study has examinations which are in total longer than the equivalent of 30 minutes per credit point.

**4.2.2** Assessment strategies must be appropriate for the learning objectives of a unit of study, so that there is no requirement that units of study must be examined in the formal examination period. Where a formal examination is conducted during the formal examination period for a unit of study:

4.2.2.1 any unit of study with a value of 6 or fewer credit points will be examined in no more than one examination in the formal examination period;

- 4.2.2.2 any unit of study with a value of more than 6 credit points will be examined in no more than two examinations in the formal examination period;
  - 4.2.2.3 two two-hour and one three-hour examination session(s) may be scheduled each day during the examination period. The three-hour session will be the last one of each day in order to allow students to complete by 6.00 p.m., and
  - 4.2.2.4 no student will be required to sit for more than two examinations on the same day. In cases where a student has three examinations scheduled for the same day, provision must be available for one of those examinations to be taken at an alternative time.
- 4.2.3** There is no formal provision for supplementary examinations, but departments may arrange for further testing in cases of special consideration, in accordance with Academic Board policy and any relevant Faculty policies.
- 4.2.4** Examinations may be held during classes provided that faculties ensure that the assessment practices for all units of study are reasonable and not structured in a way that may disrupt attendance at other classes. Examiners should consider which forms of assessment may be appropriate to use during classes.
- 4.2.5** The week after the end of teaching, e.g. lectures, in each semester will be a study break (Stu-vac) with examinations to commence the following week.
- 4.2.6** Faculties whose examination processes are fully quarantined or contained may conduct examinations outside these guidelines, within the spirit of the agreed procedures. This dispensation cannot apply when it leads to timetable clashes, for example for students taking combined degrees.
- 4.3 *Conduct of Examinations and Determination of Results***
- 4.3.1** The head of the relevant department shall be responsible for all academic aspects of the conduct of examinations in the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework units of study taught in that department and shall ensure that they are conducted in accordance with the policies and directions of the Academic Board and the relevant Faculty.
- 4.3.2** In cases where the teaching of a unit of study is shared by more than one department, **the relevant dean(s) will appoint a head to undertake the responsibilities of a head as set out in section 1 above**, following consultation between the departments concerned.
- 4.3.3** The head shall appoint a Principal Examiner for each unit of study. Principal Examiner(s) are responsible for:
- 4.3.3.1 providing a copy of examination paper(s) to the Examinations Section by the specified deadline or, failing this, to print the examination paper(s) locally; copies of all examination papers must be forwarded to the Examinations

- Section for retention by the University Archives (GDA 9, 19.4.2);
- 4.3.3.2 ensuring security of working papers developed in preparation for the examination, and ensuring that all secure papers are accounted for;
  - 4.3.3.3 justifying the returned result from evidence such as marksheets, annotated examination scripts, minutes of departmental meetings, in case an appeal process requires such evidence. If an appeal is made, all documentation relevant to that student's assessment must be placed on the student's appeal file (such files to be created and maintained on TRIM in accordance with Records Management Systems procedures). All other annotated scripts are to be retained together for each examination for the appeal period (GDA 9, 10.4.1), marksheets for 12 months (GDA 10.5.1) and minutes of departmental meetings are to be centrally filed where they will be retained for 5 years (GDA 2, 2.4.1)
  - 4.3.3.4 for all students in the unit of study concerned, ensuring the security of marks, arranging the collation of marks, and transmitting final results to the head by a date specified by the head.
- 4.3.4 The relevant Faculty will determine the award of honours degrees and the levels at which they are awarded.
  - 4.3.5 The relevant Faculty will establish mechanisms for review of results, including those for students affected by illness or misadventure, in accordance with any policies of the Academic Board.
- 4.4 Processing and Releasing Results**
- 4.4.1 The head will forward the results to the Student Records Office on a date to be determined by the Registrar (where spreadsheets are used for recording final results there needs to be an authorised read-only copy - electronic or paper - which is maintained in the department). In order to minimise delays in the transmission of results to students, the Registrar will normally set this date no later than five working days after the last scheduled examination. This tight timetable requires that special attention be given to scheduling large enrolment examinations as close as possible to the commencement of the examination period.
  - 4.4.2 Results not forwarded to the Student Records Office by the due date must be approved by the relevant dean. Heads seeking late approval should forward the unapproved results to the Student Records Office who will contact the appropriate dean.
  - 4.4.3 Departments are normally expected to make results available to students directly after they have been confirmed by the head.
  - 4.4.4 The Registrar shall ensure that results are released to students as soon as possible after receiving them from the head. The final numerical marks obtained by undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students in completed units of study will be made available to them by printing such marks on the Examination Result Notices forwarded to them.

- 4.4.5 Departments are required to make arrangements for providing undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students, on request, with the numerical marks for each assessment task (where there is more than one), which comprise the final numerical mark reported on Examination Result Notices. Records of such marks should be retained for 12 months (GDA 9, 10.5.1).
- 4.4.6 Departments are asked to make arrangements for undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students, on request, to peruse and, where they so desire, to obtain (a copy of) their examination scripts or any other written answers to examination questions, provided that:
  - 4.4.6.1 the request is made within the script retention period, and
  - 4.4.6.2 in the case of examinations involving confidential examination papers, where examination questions are used on more than one occasion, students may peruse under supervision, but not obtain a copy of, the examination paper and their answers to the questions.
- 4.4.7 The destruction of examination scripts and marking sheets after the respective retention periods should be documented and authorised by the head of the unit on a form available from Records Management Services.

#### **4.5 Security of Examination Papers and Results**

- 4.5.1 In the preparation of examinations, it is essential to ensure the security of questions and papers so that examinations are fair to all students and preclude (as far as possible) opportunity for unfair advantage for any individual or group. There is also a need to keep results secure while they are being entered and summed so that they cannot be changed.
- 4.5.2 Computer systems used to prepare examinations and to record results are potential sources of security breaches. Information transmitted over networks (including networked printers and email), and information saved on shared devices is potentially insecure. The most secure computer system may be a non-networked computer with data stored on removable media (e.g. floppy discs) that are normally locked away, and with a non-networked printer. Care should be taken to avoid casual observation of computer screens by unauthorised persons.
- 4.5.3 Working papers should be kept secure at all times, without clearly indicative labelling. After use, all working papers should be shredded or discarded via the University's Confidential Bag Waste service.
- 4.5.4 To prevent any breakdown in security when questions are re-used in subsequent examination papers, variation is encouraged as much as is practicable, within the constraint that questions requiring selected responses (including multiple choice variants) need to be trialled adequately to ensure their validity and reliability.
- 4.5.5 The Principal Examiner of a unit of study is responsible for security of working copies of examination papers during the examination preparation process for that unit. Complete copies of the

examination paper should not be circulated by mail, by fax or by any other electronic means, but should be delivered by hand or courier.

- 4.5.6 It is assumed that the University Printing Service and Central Duplicating are secure. All final examination papers should be delivered to Examinations by hand or courier. All reproduction of examination papers should be undertaken by University Printing Service through the Examinations Office.
- 4.5.7 The Principal Examiner will ensure that all secure papers used in the examination are returned/accounted for by the Examinations Office or internally if the examination was a departmental one.
- 4.5.8 Students' examination scripts should be retained by the department for the specified script retention period. During this time, students have a right to access their own written paper. Papers should be destroyed after the script retention period.
- 4.5.9 All examination results recorded by individual staff members must be held securely, and handed on expeditiously to Principal Examiners.
- 4.5.10 Final results, appropriately checked and validated, whether recorded in the form of hard copy or electronic media, should be sent by courier or by hand to the Student Records Office, or transmitted electronically with appropriate security protocols.
- 4.5.11 Possible breaches of security or misconduct during an examination must be reported to the Principal Examiner and, if appropriate, to the Registrar. All unusual events, breaches of security or difficulties encountered in the setting, transport, marking or entering of marks should be reported to the head, if possible before the head determines the results of the examination.
- 4.5.12 Any paper whose security may have been compromised should be re-set.

#### **4.6 *The Use of Computers and Calculators in Assessments***

- 4.6.1 It is generally expected that "written" student assignments will be presented as documents printed from a relevant computer program. The ability to prepare such documents is an expected generic skill of graduates, and the University provides access in a variety of ways to computers that may be used by students to prepare assessment items. Where the submission of word-processed work is required, students shall be given adequate advanced notice of the requirement.
- 4.6.2 Departments should recognise that hand-held computing devices may allow students to take large amounts of information into examinations. Acknowledging the equity issues associated with the cost of powerful advanced hand-held computing technologies, and the difficulty faced by examination supervisors in assessing the power of particular devices, it is University policy that such hand-held devices normally are not permitted in formal examinations. Departments may however develop examinations and assessments in which such devices are permitted, and in doing so should consider the equity, supervisory and logistical implications.

- 4.6.3** The University will provide suitable non-programmable calculators to be supplied to students during examinations. Each department will decide whether students are supplied with these calculators during all or some of its examinations. Departments or faculties may elect to provide students with an approved list of calculators for use in examinations (e.g. the approved calculator list for 2 Unit Mathematics issued by the NSW Board of Studies).

**4.7 Examinations – Emergency Evacuations**

When an examination room is evacuated, the relevant Dean shall determine whether the examination shall be resumed at the earliest opportunity, or whether the examination shall be re-sat by the affected students. Where the Dean is not available, the appropriate Associate or Sub-Dean shall be consulted. If this person also is not available then the examination is deemed to be abandoned. The following principles are also to be employed:

- 4.7.1** Only the examination/s in the affected rooms is/are deemed to be abandoned. Students should be advised by the room Supervisor-in-Charge that the examination will not resume after the evacuation. Where the examination is also being held in other buildings (not affected by the emergency), those sessions will continue as normal. Where an examination room has been evacuated, students must remain in the immediate vicinity and examination supervisors must continue to ensure that no communication occurs between students.
- 4.7.2** The moment the Supervisor-in-Charge leaves the examination room, the examination question papers, whether confidential or not, are deemed to be compromised and must be declared invalid for future use.
- 4.7.3** The moment the Supervisor-in-Charge leaves the examination room, students' work (i.e., answer booklets, computer answer sheets, etc) must be deemed null and void for the purposes of marking.
- 4.7.4** At the time of evacuation, examination supervisors must inform the department concerned of the abandonment of the examination and advise the students to contact their department in person as soon as possible and no later than the following working day to obtain information about re-assessment.
- 4.7.5** In the event of the abandonment of an examination, departments should ensure that the affected students re-sit the examination/s as soon as possible.
- 4.7.6** Students are advised to remain in Sydney and not make any overseas or interstate travel plans until the official end of the examination period.

The University's policy on Illness and Misadventure applies in the circumstances of an abandoned examination.

## **Part 5 - Special Consideration Due to Illness and Misadventure**

### **5.1 Introduction**

**5.1.1** Assessments are designed to provide feedback on performance or to establish that students have achieved an adequate standard to proceed or to graduate. The University's assessment system is designed to ensure that conditions are fair to all students, as consistent as possible and that individual students are not disadvantaged by adverse personal circumstances beyond their control or by the activities of other students.

**5.1.2** Generally, serious illness or misadventure will be taken into account when considering a student's performance in a course or unit of study. There is, however, a clear distinction between longstanding illness or difficulties which prevent students from attending classes or completing required work or which seriously interfere with their capacity to study for long periods and short-term illness or misadventure that may prevent a well-prepared student from sitting for an examination or completing a particular assessment. In general, the provisions of Special Consideration are intended to apply to the latter situations.

**5.1.3** Students who bear a primary carer responsibility toward another person at the time of the assessment may apply for Special Consideration based upon illness or misadventure on the part of the person for whom they bear the responsibility, and which affects their ability to prepare for or perform the assessment in the same manner as if the illness or misadventure was their own.

### **5.2 Principles for Dealing with Cases of Special Consideration**

**5.2.1** Special Consideration is a process that affords equal opportunity to Enrolled Students who have experienced circumstances that adversely impact their ability to complete an assessment task.

**5.2.2** Enrolled Students who are granted Special Consideration will nonetheless be required to demonstrate achievement of designated learning outcomes.

**5.2.3** An Enrolled Student who is capable of attempting an examination should do so, notwithstanding any claim for Special Consideration.

**5.2.4** All claims for Special Consideration will be genuine and will be made with good intent. Students seeking to use Special Consideration as a means of gaining an unfair advantage in the assessment of designated learning outcomes will be unsuccessful, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

**5.2.5** Other Students will not be disadvantaged by the approval of a request for Special Consideration.

**5.2.6** All claims for Special Consideration should be considered in the same manner across the university, but the response may vary depending on the circumstances of the illness, misadventure and assessment.

For example, consider the instance of a student who provides a medical certificate as evidence of a sprained wrist, and applies for special consideration in two assessments. In the first, which is a

creative performance assessment, the academic judges that the sprained wrist would be a serious impairment to the assessment task and a replacement task is scheduled. In the second assessment, which is a traditional examination, the University accepts that the student's ability to write is impaired, and provides a writer to transcribe the student's answers.

**5.2.7** Multiple and recurring claims for Special Consideration may be an indicator of a student at academic risk, as defined by the Academic Board policy "Identifying and Supporting Students At Risk".

**5.2.8** Requests for Special Consideration should be lodged within five working days of the assessment. Where circumstances preclude this, a student may still apply, but must provide a reasonable case for the delay in application. The Faculty will not decline an application on the grounds of lateness where a reasonable case is provided.

### **5.3 Responsibilities**

#### **5.3.1 Responsibilities of the University**

The University has a responsibility and obligation to:

5.3.1.1 ensure that its policies on special consideration are publicised to all academic staff and students;

5.3.1.2 ensure that its policies on special consideration are implemented and applied consistently across all faculties;

5.3.1.3 promote best practice in considering applications for special consideration; and

5.3.1.4 ensure that fair and well-publicised procedures are applied for the consideration of any cases where students are applying for special consideration.

#### **5.3.2 Responsibility of faculties**

Faculties have a responsibility and obligation to:

5.3.2.1 develop procedures for considering applications of special consideration which ensure:

5.3.2.1.1 timeliness of consideration of applications of special consideration;

5.3.2.1.2 fair consideration of applications of special consideration;

5.3.2.1.3 accurate reporting of how an academic judgment was formed;

5.3.2.1.4 respect for privacy; and

5.3.2.1.5 that all parties are informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the application of special consideration.

- 5.3.2.2 ensure consistent application of University policies and Faculty procedures both at a Faculty and department level.
- 5.3.2.3 ensure that there are clear and appropriate processes in place, consistent with the University's policies, so that students are treated fairly and equitably. These processes should be promoted widely and clearly in plain English.
- 5.3.2.4 ensure that two or more academic staff are involved in reaching an academic judgment regarding a student's formal special consideration application (see Sections 5.5.2 and 5.6) and that the process of determining that academic judgment is recorded in detail.

### **5.3.3 Responsibility of Students**

Students have a responsibility and an obligation to:

- 5.3.3.1 become familiar with University policy and Faculty procedures relating to special consideration;
- 5.3.3.2 act in accordance with the principles of special consideration as set out in this Resolution;
- 5.3.3.3 provide the relevant information to their Faculty offices as soon as practicable and certainly within five working days of the due date of the assessment for which special consideration is sought (see also 5.2.9);
- 5.3.3.4 act honestly when applying for special consideration; and
- 5.3.3.5 recognise that a claim for Special Consideration does not guarantee that the claim will be accepted and that general advice to students able to attempt the assessment is to do so, irrespective of whether a claim is lodged.

## **5.4 Serious Illness or Misadventure**

- 5.4.1** Special consideration is a process designed to effectively facilitate and provide students with appropriate means to demonstrate their academic achievements in assessment tasks in units of study, without an impairment on their ability.

It should be noted that only well-attested serious illness or misadventure during a semester or occurring at the time of an examination will warrant special consideration for academic performance. The academic judgement as to whether special consideration will be granted will depend upon both the nature of the illness or misadventure and its timing with respect to the assessment. For instance, a short acute illness supported by a medical certificate on the day of the examination would normally be accepted as causing an impairment to a student's ability to demonstrate academic achievement, but the same illness occurring several weeks before an assessment would be unlikely to cause such an impairment. The exact nature of misadventure will vary. For instance, serious illness or death of a close family member close to the assessment would clearly warrant consideration.

Occasionally there will be circumstances of a longer term nature, the impact of which on a student's ability to study and undertake assessments without impairment may be protracted and widespread. Such circumstances could include for example extended periods of recuperation from illness, or bereavement.

Under these circumstances, students should feel free to approach their academic advisor/s or counsellor to discuss relevant options and to determine how best to proceed. The intent of these discussions is to provide both the opportunity and forum in which particular needs of the student, and the impact of the relevant life event, can be holistically assessed within a context of ensuring academic achievement. In particular, where circumstances have prevented study for a significant proportion of the semester, an academic judgement, to which the student is a party, must be made as to whether the requirements of the student's study can be met by continuing at that time.

It is possible that one or even a number of special consideration applications may not serve the student's interest in these circumstances, and other options for study management may need to be discussed. These options could include for example, discontinuing with permission, or temporary leave of absence (see the *University of Sydney (Coursework Rule) 2000 (as amended)*). International students may need to seek advice regarding visa requirements prior to making any changes to enrolments. Assistance can be sought from the International Office.

**5.4.2** Special consideration will not be given in the following instances:

- 5.4.2.1 occasional brief or trivial illness of a one or two week duration that occur one week or more before an assessment is due or an examination undertaken;
- 5.4.2.2 to balance workloads from other units of study, disciplines or faculties. It is expected that in semester assessment tasks in units of study, disciplines or faculties will normally be timetabled to enable orderly completion. However in cases where this is not possible, students are encouraged in the first three weeks of semester to develop an individual study timetable. Academic staff are expected, upon request, to give advice and to assist students to develop a viable work plan for the timely completion of all set assessment tasks.;
- 5.4.2.3 I.T.-related problems, except where they could not have been prevented, avoided or the effects minimised by reasonable diligence on the part of the student, and
- 5.4.2.4 Jury Service, Military Service, National sporting, religious or cultural commitments and other unforeseen events are dealt with as Special Arrangements described later in this policy (see Part 7).

**5.5 Extensions, Reweighting and Groupwork**

**5.5.1** Informal Extensions

5.5.1.1 An informal claim for Special Consideration in the form of an extension is a claim relating to a non-examination based assessment task for which an extension of less than a week is sought.

5.5.1.2 A request for an informal extension may be granted following agreement with the Lecturer responsible for the Assessment. An application for an Extension must:

- clearly set out the basis for the claim;
- be recorded in writing (including by the exchange of emails).

5.5.1.3 In assessing whether to grant an extension, the extent to which the student's ability to prepare was affected will be balanced with equity, fairness and consistency for all students.

5.5.1.4 An Enrolled Student whose request for an informal extension is not granted by the Lecturer may make a formal request for an extension.

## **5.5.2 Formal Extensions**

5.5.2.1 A formal claim for an extension is a Special Consideration claim relating to non-examination based assessment task.

5.5.2.2 An application for a Formal Extension must:

- use the specified form
- be supported by: a Medical Certificate; a Statutory Declaration, where the Medical Certificate is not appropriate and where possible accompanied by other appropriate supporting documentation.

5.5.2.3 In assessing whether to grant an extension will take into account the extent to which the student's ability to prepare was affected. The Faculty will determine the duration of the extension.

5.5.2.4 Extensions up to 20 working days may be granted. Longer extensions will require the completion of an alternative assignment. Additionally, if an extension of up to 20 working days would extend past the release of other class results for the same assignment and this could be of advantage to the student applying, an alternative assignment will be given.

## **5.5.3 Reweighting or average across other assessments**

5.5.3.1 A claim for a reweighting or averaging is a claim relating to assessments that repeat on a regular basis. Repetitive assessments are typically assessments that occur throughout the semester, for instance, weekly class tests, tutorial participation marks, laboratory work in which each assessment alone is not worth a high percentage of the total unit mark.

5.5.3.2 A request for reweighting may be granted following agreement with the Lecturer responsible for the Assessment. An application for reweighting must:

- clearly set out the basis for the claim;
- be recorded in writing (including by the exchange of emails).

5.5.3.3 In assessing whether to reweight, the extent to which the student's ability was affected will be balanced with equity, fairness and consistency for all students.

5.5.3.4 The non-completion of some minor component of assessment must not compromise the integrity of the assessment of the curriculum. Therefore, there may be situations where re-weighting is not permitted on academic grounds: this will be declared in the description of assessment for that unit of study or curriculum. In these cases, students will complete an alternative assessment.

5.5.3.5 Should a student miss more than one third of the regular assessment component, the student will be required to submit an alternative assessment. The mark for this alternative assessment will replace the missed component of the repetitive assessment.

5.5.3.6 An Enrolled Student whose request to reweight an assessment is not granted by the Lecturer may make a formal request for Replacement Assessment.

#### **5.5.4 Groupwork**

Where one or more members of a group suffer an illness or misadventure,

5.5.4.1 if recovery from the illness or misadventure is such that, in the opinion of the teacher, continuation from the affected members is most impaired, no Special Consideration is necessary;

5.5.4.2 where the contribution is impaired in the opinion of the teacher;

5.5.4.2.a the member or members suffering illness or misadventure may apply for Special Consideration and if successful, will be given alternate assessments. The claim of Special Consideration should note that it is in respect of group work and will be made as described in section 5.6.2;

5.5.4.2.b the members of the group who are not suffering the illness or misadventure may apply for Special Consideration. The assessment task will be redefined for these members of the group by the teacher, based on the contributions they were to make and assessment will be based on this redefined task. The teacher, on the merits of the situation, may allow an extension of time. The claim of Special Consideration should note that it is in respect of group work and will be made as described in section 5.6.2.

#### **5.6 Replacement Assessment**

**5.6.1** A claim for a replacement assessment is a claim relating to an examination-based assessment.

**5.6.2** An application for a replacement assessment must:

5.6.2.1 clearly set out the basis for the claim on the specified form;

5.6.2.2 be supported by:

- a) a Medical Certificate or other authorised certificate provided by a registered health practitioner;
- b) a Statutory Declaration, where the Medical Certificate is not appropriate and where possible accompanied by other appropriate supporting documentation; and

- 5.6.2.3 be recorded in writing (including by the exchange of emails or completion of web forms or similar process).
- 5.6.3** Replacement assessment should assess the same skills and knowledge, with appropriate preparation, as the original assessment, irrespective of the form of the replacement assessment.
- 5.6.4** The Faculty is responsible for setting the date of replacement assessment. If a student is unable to attend the replacement assessment, they may lodge a further application for replacement assessment.
- 5.6.5** An Enrolled Student may withdraw a claim for Replacement Assessment made prior to, during or immediately after an Assessment (typically an examination) at any time prior to the release of the results for that Assessment. An Enrolled Student may seek academic advice regarding the withdrawal of a claim for special consideration, except from an academic who is associated with the assessment.
- 5.6.6** Where a successful claim for special consideration is made prior to, during or immediately after an assessment (typically an examination), any replacement assessment will be treated by the Faculty as a first attempt and the results of any original attempt at the assessment will be deemed not to have occurred.
- 5.6.7** Where an enrolled student, for demonstrated good reason, is unable to attempt a replacement assessment, or the Faculty is unable to construct a valid form of assessment, the Faculty will, where reasonable, determine alternative means of assessment. Both the faculty and the student will use their best endeavours to complete the replacement assessment within six weeks of the date of the final examination in that unit of study. When the assessment is unable to be completed in that period for the reasons described earlier in this paragraph, the Faculty will award a DNF grade to the student.
- 5.7 Medical Certificates**
- 5.7.1** Medical Certificates submitted to the University in support of a special consideration claim must:
- 5.7.1.1 be issued in accordance with the guidelines of the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the NSW Medical Practitioners' Board;
- 5.7.1.2 (a) indicate the date on which the medical examination took place  
(b) indicate the date the Certificate was written ; and
- 5.7.1.3 provide an assessment of the impact of the Illness on the ability of the enrolled student to achieve designated learning outcomes.
- 5.7.2** Where circumstances exist that enable a medical practitioner to certify that a period of Illness existed prior to the date of medical examination, the Medical Certificate must clearly detail those circumstances.
- 5.8 Procedures**
- 5.8.1** Applications for
- extension up to seven days
  - reweighting or averaging marks
- will be decided by the Lecturer responsible for the Assessment.
- 5.8.2** Applications for all other forms of Special Consideration will be decided by a faculty Special Consideration panel.

- 5.8.3 The Panel will be composed of a senior academic responsible for coursework (e.g., Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Coursework degree coordinator or the like) and two academic staff. Academic staff serve on the Panel on a rotating basis.
- 5.8.4 The Panel will meet with sufficient regularity to ensure that students receive a decision on an application within one week of submission of a completed application.
- 5.8.5 The responsibilities of the Special Consideration Panel are to:
- assess all applications and approve or decline them in accordance with this policy.
  - ensure students and unit of study Coordinators are notified of the outcome of all applications by email within 24 hours of the Panel meeting.
  - keep detailed minutes and records of all meetings and decisions, and report as required.
- 5.8.6 The responsibilities of Unit of Study Coordinators/Heads of Disciplines/Schools are to:
- Ensure students are notified of this policy and the procedures to be followed when applying for Special Consideration.
  - Require that any student requesting a variation to assessment dates follows this policy. No other adjustments can be granted.
  - Apply the form of consideration decided by the Panel.
- 5.8.7 Replacement assessment for final exams may be administered centrally by the Examinations Office / Faculty (?). An exam schedule for replacement assessment will be published by the faculty upon release of the standard exam timetable.
- 5.8.8 Replacement assessments for mid-semester and other in-semester tests, and other exams will be administered by Faculties.

## **5.9 Students with a Disability**

**5.9.1** Students with a disability<sup>1</sup> who wish to obtain reasonable adjustments for their disability must register with and seek the support of the Disability Services Office (see also Part 6).

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of disability is based on the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* and includes; deafness/hearing impairment; blindness/vision impairment; physical disability; specific learning disability; psychiatric disability; acquired brain injury; chronic medical conditions and temporary disability.

Services are provided through Disability Services where:

- A student has a disability as defined in the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*; AND that disability impacts on the student's University studies; AND the student has supporting documentation, i.e., medical documentation describing the disability and any corresponding need for services and/or adjustments.

When assessing whether an adjustment is 'reasonable', the Disability Services Officer will consider in consultation with academic or other staff if appropriate:

- The inherent requirements of the course that demonstrate core learning outcomes
- The extent to which a disability impacts upon study, and
- The effect, if any, of the adjustment on other students or the teaching and learning process.

Disability Services also assists students with temporary disabilities (i.e., broken limb) to access reasonable adjustments and services.

- 5.9.2** A student with a disability may, notwithstanding his or her registration with the Disability Services Office, and prior provision of reasonable adjustments for the disability, make a claim for special consideration due to illness or misadventure, in accordance with this Resolution.

**5.10 Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards**

In exceptional circumstances involving serious illness or death, award of *aegrotat* and posthumous degrees and diplomas may be made. In this circumstance, the Dean, acting on behalf of the Faculty, would then authorise the Registrar to certify that the conditions for the award of the degree or diploma had been met.

## **Part 6 – Reasonable Adjustments for Examinations and Assessment**

Students who have registered with Disability Services and have satisfied the University's requirements for supporting documentation may be eligible for Accessible Examination and Assessment Arrangements. Students seeking registration with Disability Services must meet the definition of disability within the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

- 6.1** Students with a permanent or temporary disability that will impact on their ability to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge and ability in an examination or assessment may apply for accessible examination and/or assessment arrangements. The provision of any accessible examination and/or assessment arrangement is in keeping with the University's Equal Opportunity in Education guidelines.

Students wishing to apply for accessible examination and/or assessment arrangements on the grounds of medical, physical, sensory, psychiatric condition or learning disability must register with the Disability Services.

- 6.2** To register with Disability Services, the student must supply current relevant specialist documentation in support of their application. Documentation will indicate the nature of the condition, whether temporary or permanent, current treatment and condition management, the likely impact on the student's ability to study, and recommendations for adjustments. The Disability Service determines eligibility for adjustments and informs the student and faculty of required reasonable adjustments available, thus helping to ensure consistency and equity in the application of these procedures, as well as facilitating the University compliance with the DDA legislation.
- 6.3** Once registration with the DS is complete, students are required to notify the DS if they wish to apply for adjustments or accessible examination and assessment arrangements. Disability Services sends students an email attaching an application form at the time the examination timetable is released. The completed form must be returned to Disability Services for accessible examination and assessment adjustments to be provided.
- 6.4** Accessible examination and assessment conditions include, but are not limited to: extra time for reading, writing, resting or toilet breaks, use of a scribe, examination papers in alternative formats, use of assistive technology, ergonomic furniture, modified lighting, using a designated room and experienced supervisors, a separate room with scribe or assistive technology, rescheduling, and spacing of examinations into the deferred exam period.
- 6.5** Examination conditions for Formal Examinations are organised and supervised by Examinations – Student Centre.
- 6.6** In-department examinations, within semester assessment, practical and oral assessments, are managed by the Faculty. Responsibilities of the Faculty include
- 6.6.1 notifying student in timely manner of the confirmed adjustments, and time and location of adjusted examination
  - 6.6.2 provision of notified adjustments and accommodations including supervision, scribes, and equipment. Disability Services provides assistance with Specialist equipment, ergonomic furniture and access to assistive

technology. Disability Services also have a list of trained scribes and supervisors who can be employed by the Faculty.

6.6.3 responsibility to ensure that adjustments approved for the original formal exam period apply to and are delivered for any replacement assessment.

**6.8** Faculty staff are required to implement the examination and assessment adjustments as notified by Disability Services. Students are not required to undertake an examination when the notified adjustments are not provided accordingly, nor are they then required to lodge Special Consideration. A further test shall be provided by the Faculty with the required adjustments.

**6.7** A student with a disability may, notwithstanding his or her registration with Disability Services and prior provision of reasonable accommodations or adjustments for the Disability, make a claim for Special Consideration due to Illness or Misadventure. The student will be required to note on the Special Consideration form whether they have applied for accessible examination and/or assessment arrangements for the assessment for which they are applying for Consideration.

## Part 7 - Special Arrangements for Examination and Assessment

### 7.1 Coverage

7.1.1 Special arrangements may be made available to any student enrolled at the University of Sydney who is unable to meet assessment requirements or attend examinations because of one or more of the following situations:

7.1.1.1 essential religious commitments or essential beliefs (including cultural and ceremonial commitments);

7.1.1.2 compulsory legal absence (e.g. jury duty, court summons, etc);

7.1.1.3 sporting or cultural commitments, including political/union commitments, where the student is representing the University, state or nation;

7.1.1.4 birth or adoption of a child;

7.1.1.5 Australian defence force or emergency service commitments (including Army Reserve); and

7.1.1.6 When continuing employment is jeopardised.

7.1.2 Deans and/or faculties may consider special arrangements for situations other than those mentioned above at their own discretion and on a case-by-case basis.

7.1.3 Special arrangements are intended to support the University of Sydney's commitment to Flexible Learning. However it must be recognised that the University and its faculties, while making every reasonable attempt to accommodate student needs, may not be able to provide special arrangements for assessment and/or examination in all cases, e.g. it may not be possible to make flexible arrangements for clinical placements, practicums, etc.

### 7.2 Types of Special Arrangement

7.2.1 Special arrangements for assessment or examination may include but is not limited to the following:

7.2.1.1 alternative dates for submission of assessments;

7.2.1.2 provision of alternative assessment tasks; and

7.2.1.3 alternative examination times/arrangements.

7.2.2 Faculties or departments/schools are encouraged to deal with each application for special arrangements on a case-by-case basis and to provide a flexible response to applications. In cases of an extended absence, faculties should discuss the option of withdrawal without failure with students. Unit of study and course co-ordinators would be best placed to determine when a student's absence from the University would reach the point of making it improbable, if not impossible, for the student to meet the requirements of the unit and/or course even with special arrangements for assessment and examination.

### **7.3 Timelines for Applications**

**7.3.1** Any student who wishes to seek special arrangements for assessment or examination is to advise the Faculty which administers the unit of study affected by the request:

7.3.1.1 at the time of enrolment with regard to religious beliefs or commitments relating to moveable feasts, prayer or worship times, or with regard to other requirements of their religion which may have an impact on the types of assessment and/or examination they can undertake; and

7.3.1.2 as soon as possible after being notified of a requirement to be absent from the University in the case of other types of commitment.

**7.3.2** Faculties will advise students of the cut-off dates for lodgement of requests for special arrangements with regard to assessment due-dates and examination times. It is expected that faculties will consider late requests for special arrangements where the student's attendance is affected by a compulsory absence or late notification of cultural or sporting representational commitments.

**7.3.3** With regard to examinations held during University-wide examination periods, the following may be used as guide by faculties for cut-off times:

7.3.3.1 Notice of intent to apply for special arrangements with regard to an examination to be received within 2 weeks of the publication of the examination timetable.

7.3.3.2 Full application and all supporting documentation to be lodged with 1 week of submitting notice of intent to apply for special arrangements.

### **7.4 Supporting Documentation**

**7.4.1** Faculties have the right to expect students to provide sufficient and relevant supporting documentation in English with any application for special arrangements. Such documentation may include, but is not restricted to:

7.4.1.1 in the case of religious beliefs or commitments, a supporting letter from the student's mullah, pastor, rabbi or equivalent religious or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians' leader;

7.4.1.2 in the case of a compulsory absence, a copy of the summons, subpoena, court order or notice of selection for jury duty (faculties may ask to sight the original document);

7.4.1.3 in the case of sporting, cultural or political/union commitments, supporting documentation from the organising sporting, cultural or political/union body;

7.4.1.4 in the case of parental or adoption commitments, a certificate from a medical practitioner or midwife stating the expected date of birth or documentation from

- the relevant adoption agency concerning the expected date of placement;
  - 7.4.1.5 in the case of defence force or emergency services commitments, supporting documentation from the student's brigade or unit;
  - 7.4.1.6 in the case where continuing employment would be jeopardised, supporting documentation from the student's employer; and
  - 7.4.1.7 in the case of other situations being considered by the Dean and/or Faculty, such documentation as is considered necessary by the Dean and/or Faculty.
- 7.5** Students must also provide contact details to enable the Faculty to seek further advice from the person or body which issued the supporting documentation used in the application.

## Agenda Item 8 Student Appeals

### 8. University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006 (as amended) (pages [52-28](#))

In 2006, and in response to the Topley Review of student appeals, Senate approved the introduction of the *University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006* which replaced the existing Senate Resolutions on this matter. The Academic Board then amended its resolutions, also in response to the Topley Review.

The Chair of the Academic Board has asked the Office of General Counsel (OGC) to review the wording of the Academic Board resolutions. As a result of this review, OGC has recommended that the Academic Board resolutions be merged into the existing Senate rule to create one policy document on student appeals. The revised version of the Rule is attached.

As well as recommending approval of the amendments to the rule and the rescission of the existing Academic Board resolutions, it is recommended that the Academic Board be asked to approve the development of a user's guide to the revised Rule.

#### **Recommendation**

*That the Learning and Teaching Committee recommend that the Academic Board:*

- (1) recommend that Senate approve amendments to the University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006 (as amended);*
  - (2) approve the rescission of the Academic Board Resolutions: Student Appeals against Academic Decisions, as of the date the revised Senate rule becomes effective; and*
  - (3) approve the development of a user's guide in conjunction with the revised Senate rule*
- with immediate effect, as set out in the report presented.*



## The University of Sydney

# University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006 (as amended)

Latest amendment approved by: Senate on [insert date]

Date of effect: [Insert date]

### Part 1: Preliminary

#### 1.1 Citation

This Rule is made by the Senate of the University, pursuant to section 37(1) of the *University of Sydney Act 1989* and section 5(1) of the *University of Sydney By-law 1999 (as amended)*.

#### 1.2 Commencement

This Rule will commence on [insert date]

#### 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this Rule is to provide a mechanism for handling student concerns and appeals regarding Academic Decisions that reflects the University's commitment to fair academic decision-making.

#### 1.4 Effect

This Rule repeals and replaces:

1.4.1 clause 18 of the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000 (as amended)*;

1.4.2 the Resolutions of the Senate on *Student Appeals against Academic Decisions*; and

1.4.3 the Resolutions of the Academic Board on *Student Appeals against Academic Decisions*.

#### 1.5 Associated Resolutions

This Rule should be read in conjunction with the Resolutions of the Academic Board on:

1.5.1 *Identifying and Supporting Students at Risk*; and

1.5.2 *Assessment and Examination of Coursework*.

#### 1.6 Definitions

In this Rule:

1.6.1 **Academic Decision** means a decision by the University that affects the academic assessment or progress of a person within his or her Award Course, including a decision:

- 1.6.1.1 to exclude a Student in accordance with the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000* (as amended);
- 1.6.1.2 not to readmit or re-enrol a person following exclusion in accordance with the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000* (as amended);
- 1.6.1.3 to terminate a Student's candidature for a post-graduate award.
- 1.6.2 **Appeal Hearing** means an Appeal Hearing under Part 8.
- 1.6.3 **Appellant** means:
  - 1.6.3.1 a person enrolled in an Award Course at the University at the time of, or in the semester immediately preceding, the lodgement of his or her appeal; or
  - 1.6.3.2 in the case of an Academic Decision by the University regarding an application for readmission or re-enrolment, a person who was excluded in accordance with the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000* (as amended), prior to the lodgement of his or her appeal.
- 1.6.4 **Award Course** means a formally approved program of study that can lead to an academic award granted by the University.
- 1.6.5 **Dean** means the dean of the Faculty, or chairperson of the board of studies.
- 1.6.6 **Due Academic Process** means the making of Academic Decisions according to published Faculty, Academic Board and University rules, resolutions, policy and procedure, as amended from time to time and as current at the time the Academic Decision was made.
- 1.6.7 **Faculty** means a Faculty or College of the University.
- 1.6.8 **Registrar** means the Registrar of the University of Sydney for the time being, or his or her nominee.
- 1.6.9 **Special Consideration** is to be determined *mutatis mutandis* by reference to the Resolutions of the Academic Board on *Special Consideration*.
- 1.6.10 **Student** has the meaning prescribed by sub-clause 3(1) of the *University of Sydney By-law 1999* (as amended).
- 1.6.11 **Student Appeals Body** means a Student Appeals Body constituted by the Registrar in accordance with Part 7.
- 1.6.12 **Student Appeals Panel** means the Student Appeals Panel constituted by the Senate in accordance with Part 6.
- 1.6.13 **University** means the University of Sydney established by the *University of Sydney Act 1989* (as amended).

## Part 2: Principles

- 2.1 The University is committed to fair academic decision-making.
- 2.2 Academic Decisions are entrusted to members of the academic staff acting reasonably in accordance with Due Academic Process.
- 2.3 A Student who is dissatisfied with an Academic Decision may apply to have the decision reviewed.

- 2.4 Where possible, Students and academic staff are required to resolve concerns about Academic Decisions in the manner more fully described in clause 3.1 of this Rule, by way of personal communication.
- 2.5 Where attempts to resolve a concern about an Academic decision under clause 3.1 of this Rule are unsuccessful, Students may appeal to the relevant Faculty in the first instance.
- 2.6 Students who are not satisfied with the decision of the Faculty may appeal to the Student Appeals Body in accordance with this Rule.
- 2.7 The University will handle all Student concerns and appeals regarding Academic Decisions in a procedurally fair and reasonable manner, having regard to the principles of timeliness, confidentiality, absence of bias and freedom from victimisation.

### **Part 3: Procedures for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework Students**

#### **3.1 Resolution with Teacher or Unit of Study Coordinator**

- 3.1.1 An undergraduate or postgraduate coursework Student who is dissatisfied with an Academic Decision should first discuss his or her concerns with the relevant teacher or unit of study co-ordinator.
- 3.1.2 Students are encouraged to take the earliest opportunity to discuss their concerns with relevant Faculty staff. Where possible, this will occur within:
  - (a) 15 working days of the Student being advised of the Academic Decision; or
  - (b) in the case of Academic Decisions relating to completion of a unit of study, within 15 working days of the unit of study result being posted by the University.
- 3.1.3 The teacher or unit of study co-ordinator will address the Student's concerns promptly, and provide to the Student a full explanation of the reasons for the Academic Decision.
- 3.1.4 If the Student's concerns are not resolved by these means, the teacher or unit of study co-ordinator will:
  - (a) explain the next step in the procedure, which is set out at clause 3.2 below; and
  - (b) give the Student a copy of this Rule or advise the Student how to access this Rule online.

#### **3.2 Appeals to the Faculty**

- 3.2.1 If the Student's concerns cannot be resolved under clause 3.1 above, the Student may appeal in writing to the Faculty.
- 3.2.2 The Student will submit his or her written appeal, including any supporting documentation:
  - (a) to the office or staff member nominated by the Faculty to receive Student appeals (such information to be provided to Students at the start of each Semester);

- (b) where possible, within 15 working days of the date on which he or she was advised of the outcome of discussions under clause 3.1.
- 3.2.3 The Faculty will acknowledge receipt of the appeal in writing within three working days of receipt.
- 3.2.4 The Faculty will determine who is to undertake an initial review of the appeal. This person will normally be the person to whom the relevant lecturer or unit of study co-ordinator reports, and may be the course co-ordinator, Head of Department or School, or relevant Associate Dean.
- 3.2.5 The person responsible for the initial review will prepare a report for consideration by the Dean, or by his or her nominee. Subject to sub-clause 3.2.6 below (and notwithstanding any consideration of the report by the Dean's nominee), the Dean retains final responsibility for any decision regarding a Student appeal to the Faculty.
- 3.2.6 If the Dean is the relevant teacher or unit of study coordinator referred to in clause 3.1 above, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will handle the Student's appeal to the Faculty, in accordance with this clause 3.2.
- 3.2.7 Where possible, within 10 working days of receiving a Student's appeal, the Faculty will:
  - (a) advise the Student in writing of the Dean's decision and the reasons for the decision;
  - (b) advise the Student of his or her right to appeal to the Student Appeals Body;
  - (c) give the Student a copy of this Rule or advise the Student how to access this Rule online.

#### **Part 4: Procedures for Postgraduate Research Award Students**

- 4.1 Subject to clause 4.2 below, a postgraduate research Student should follow the procedures for undergraduate and postgraduate coursework Students set out in Part 3 above.
- 4.2 A postgraduate research Student who is dissatisfied with an Academic Decision associated with:
  - (a) termination of candidature; or
  - (b) the examination of a thesis;is not required to follow the procedures set out in Part 3 above, and may lodge a written appeal to the Student Appeals Body in the first instance.

#### **Part 5: Appeals to the Student Appeals Body**

- 5.1 An Appellant may appeal to the Student Appeals Body against an Academic Decision on the ground that Due Academic Process has not been observed by the relevant Faculty in relation to the Academic Decision.
- 5.2 An Appellant must lodge his or her written appeal with the Registrar (on behalf of the Student Appeals Body) in accordance with sub-clause 5.3.2, within 20 working days of the date of the written decision of the Dean of the relevant Faculty (or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) pursuant to sub-clause 3.2.6) regarding the Academic

- Decision, or within such extended time as the Registrar, in his or her absolute discretion, authorises.
- 5.3 An appeal will not be heard by the Student Appeals Body unless:
- 5.3.1 the basis for the appeal has previously been considered by the relevant Faculty;
  - 5.3.2 the Appellant has set out in the written appeal his or her reasons, including any written evidence and written submissions, for believing that Due Academic Process has not been observed by the Faculty in relation to the Academic Decision, including matters pertaining to Special Consideration; and
  - 5.3.3 the Registrar has confirmed that the requirements under sub-clause 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 above have been satisfied.
- 5.4 A Student who has lodged an appeal against a decision to exclude him or her in accordance with the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000* (as amended), and who has complied with the requirements in this Part 5, may re-enrol pending determination of the appeal.
- 5.5 A person who has lodged an appeal against a decision not to readmit or re-enrol him or her following a period of exclusion may not re-enrol pending determination of the appeal, unless the Registrar, at his or her sole discretion, is satisfied that it is reasonable in the circumstances to permit re-enrolment.

#### **Part 6: Student Appeals Panel**

- 6.1 The Student Appeals Panel will comprise no fewer than 12 and no more than 20 persons appointed by Senate as members of the Student Appeals Panel on the recommendation of the Registrar.
- 6.2 At least one half of all members of the Student Appeals Panel will be a combination of members of the academic staff and Students of the University.
- 6.3 At least six members of the Student Appeals Panel will be undergraduate or postgraduate Students of the University, and at least six members of the Student Appeals Panel will be members of the Academic staff of the University.
- 6.4 The Registrar will consult with the Presidents of the Students' Representative Council and the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association, on behalf of the Senate, regarding Student appointments to the Student Appeals Panel, without prejudice to the Registrar retaining the ultimate discretion as to whom to recommend.
- 6.5 The Senate will not appoint a Senate Fellow (other than the Chair of the Academic Board) as a member of the Student Appeals Panel, and the Chair of the Academic Board is appointed in that capacity and not as a Fellow of Senate.

#### **Part 7: Student Appeals Body**

- 7.1 A Student Appeals Body will comprise three members of the Student Appeals Panel, including a Chairperson, selected by the Registrar to sit on the Student Appeals Body, such Student Appeals Body not being a committee of Senate.
- 7.2 The Chairperson of the Student Appeals Body will normally be, but is not required to be, the Chair of the Academic Board, who may in a particular case nominate a substitute from the Student Appeals Panel advising the Registrar accordingly.

- 7.3 The Student Appeals Body will normally include, but is not required to include:
  - 4.3.1 a member with academic qualifications (who may but need not be a member of the academic staff of the University); and
  - 4.3.2 a student (who may but need not be a Student of the University).
- 7.4 The Registrar will not select a member of the Student Appeals Panel to sit on a Student Appeals Body responsible for hearing an appeal arising from a Faculty in which the member is an enrolled student or staff member, or with which the member has other substantial involvements.
- 7.5 The Registrar will report annually to the Senate on:
  - 7.5.1 Student Appeals Body decisions; and
  - 7.5.2 the number of appeal hearings for which the membership of the Student Appeals Body did not include a Student of the University, as a proportion of the total number of appeal hearings.

### **Part 8: Appeal Hearings**

- 8.1 The Appellant will receive at least 10 business days notice of the date of an Appeal Hearing.
- 8.2.1 The relevant Faculty must provide written evidence and written submissions to the Registrar (on behalf of the Student Appeals Body), at least eight business days before the Appeal Hearing.
- 8.2.2 The Faculty's submissions must provide reasons for the Academic Decision, and may also address whether the Faculty believes that due academic process has been observed by the Faculty.
- 8.2.3 The Registrar (on behalf of the Student Appeals Body) will provide copies of written evidence and written submissions made by the Faculty to the Appellant at least five business days before the Appeal Hearing.
- 8.3.1 The Appellant will be invited to appear in person at an Appeal Hearing.
- 8.3.2 The Appellant may be accompanied by a representative, who may speak on the Appellant's behalf.
- 8.4 A representative of the relevant Faculty will be invited to appear in person at an Appeal Hearing.
- 8.5 The Medical Director of the University Health Service and/or a member of the Counselling Service may be invited to attend an Appeal Hearing, to advise the Student Appeals Body on interpretation of health and personal issues.
- 8.6 Members of the Student Appeals Body may address questions to the Student, the Student's representative, or the Faculty representative.
- 8.7 The purpose of an Appeal Hearing is for the Appellant and the Faculty to address any questions posed by the Student Appeals Body, but not to give further oral evidence or oral submissions unless the Student Appeals Body, in its absolute discretion, allows such further oral evidence or oral submissions.
- 8.8 If, due notice having been given, the Appellant or his or her representative does not attend an Appeal Hearing, the Student Appeals Body may, in its absolute discretion:
  - 8.8.1 defer consideration of the appeal; or
  - 8.8.2 hear and determine the appeal in the Appellant's or representative's absence.

- 8.9 A Student Appeals Body may uphold or dismiss an appeal and, in its absolute discretion:
  - 8.9.1 refer the Academic Decision back to the relevant Faculty for reconsideration in accordance with due academic process;
  - 8.9.2 make a new or amended Academic Decision; or
  - 8.9.3 determine that no further action should be taken in relation to the matter.
- 8.10 A decision of a Student Appeals Body is final.
- 8.11 The Appellant will be advised as soon as practicable of the Student Appeals Body's decision and the reasons for it.
- 8.12 Where a decision of a Student Appeals Body reveals a systemic or other serious failure by the Faculty to observe due academic process, the Chair of the Student Appeals Body will send a copy of the decision to the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor for consideration and action.

**Part 9: Further provisions**

- 9.1 Where a Faculty requires further and more detailed provision for the resolution of Student concerns or appeals about Academic Decisions, the Academic Board, on the request of that Faculty, may by resolution establish such provisions.