MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF LIFE AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Professor Geoff Hammond (Chair)
Dr Jane Emberson (Academic Student Advisor)
Ms Jenny Gamble (Faculty Manager)
Dr Nancy Longnecker (CATLyst)

Representatives from Schools:
Dr Jan Meyer (Anatomy and Human Biology)
Professor Don Robertson (Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences)
Dr Peter Whip (Sports Science, Exercise and Health)
Dr Ralph James (Physics)
Dr Vance Locke (Psychology)

Other Representatives:
Associate Professor Les Jennings (Mathematics and Statistics)
Ms Marjan Heilbloom (Representative from FNAS)
Ms Felicity Renner (Biological Sciences Library)
Mrs Judy Fetherston (Representative from PSB)
Ms Jacqueline McNally (Postgraduate Student Representative)
Miss Matilda Oke (Undergraduate Student Representative)

The next meeting of the Teaching & Learning Committee will be held in the Faculty Meeting Room 155 on Tuesday 12 August 2008 at 2pm. All members are expected to attend or ensure that a representative from the School will attend on their behalf.

1. MINUTES
   Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Teaching and Learning Committee held on Tuesday 8 July 2008.

2. DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICT OF INTEREST
   The Chair invites members to declare interest in relation to any item on the agenda.

3. ITEMS/BUSINESS IN PROGRESS FOR NOTING SINCE PREVIOUS MEETING

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<tr>
<th>Item/Business in Progress</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning Guide for Faculty Staff.</td>
<td>Draft to be checked by Faculty Student Advisor and Faculty Manager prepared by Ms Heather Morton</td>
<td>On hold.</td>
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Part I – Items for Communication to be dealt with en bloc

4. IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING GRANTS
Expressions of interest are sought for the Semester 2, 2008 round of Improving Student Learning (ISL) Grants, for project to be undertaken in Semester 1, 2009. The ISL Grants program provides small grants to encourage teachers to make practical and innovative changes to their units in order to improve current practice. To encourage applicants to put forward their ideas there is an option of submitting a brief Expression of Interest (EOI) paper. Applicants who would prefer to bypass this intermediary stage and submit a full proposal are welcome to do so.

EOI’s are due on 5 September 2008.
Full proposals are due on 29 September 2008.

The guidelines and application process for the ISL Grants are available on the web at:

http://www.catl.uwa.edu.au/islgrants

Part II – Items for Decision to be dealt with en bloc
There are no items for inclusion Part II

Part III – Items for Discussion and Decision

5. CHAIR’S REPORT
The Chair will report on Teaching and Learning issues of interest to members.

6. SCHOOL REPORT

7. DEVELOPMENTS IN SCIENCE TEACHING
A discussion of the 2007 paper ‘Linking teaching and research in disciplines and departments’ by Jenkins, Healey and Zetter was foreshadowed at the July meeting. The paper has been distributed to members previously and is available at


Committee members are asked to consider whether any examples in the paper designed to encourage scientific ways of thinking could be introduced early in the undergraduate curriculum.

8. UNIVERSITY POLICIES IN RELATION TO SCALING
At the last meeting the committee were asked to discuss the scaling of marks. It was acknowledged that there were varying methods of scaling that were practiced across the University. Further information is sought on the University policies in relation to scaling as well as examples of scaling used by other faculties, particularly Engineering, Computing and Mathematics (FECM) and Medicine, Dentistry and Health Science. A memorandum from The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) is attached (Attachment A). An extract including general guidelines, minimum essentials for good practice in assessment and the Guild paper on scaling policy is attached (Attachment B).
9. **ISSUES RELATING TO PSB**
   The committee have been asked to discuss the following issues in relation to PSB.
   - Should we offer a straight BSc at PSB, to allow students to take advantage of the 72-point degree? Students who enrol in a BSc program at PSB must take all 144 points to complete the requirements of the program.
   - How students repeat a core unit they have failed twice, either via a non award course or retaken within the BSc course.

10. **UNIT OUTLINES AND PREREQUISITES**
    It has been suggested that possible projects for the committee could include having the schools and disciplines
    - Check their unit prerequisites on SIMS available at: [http://www.callistasupport.uwa.edu.au/units_and_courses/units](http://www.callistasupport.uwa.edu.au/units_and_courses/units)
    - Check their unit outlines

11. **OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS**
Memorandum

OFFICE OF THE PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR
(TEACHING AND LEARNING)

Associate Professor Jane Long
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Deans
Heads of School
Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning)

Re: Assessment-related matters

With first semester rapidly approaching, it may be timely to remind all academic staff of the need for clarity in relation to all assessment arrangements for students at UWA. As you are aware, each year a number of appeals against assessment are lodged based on allegations about unclear advice, or assessment approaches which are not in keeping with the University’s requirements. I would be very grateful if the following reminders could be circulated to teaching staff in your area.

Assessment Mechanism Statements:
Assessment Mechanism Statements are required in all units of study, and they must be provided to students no later than the second week of semester. The Statement must indicate all components of assessment. It may be incorporated within a unit outline, as long as the distribution of the outline takes place within the required period.

Scaling:
Scaling procedures can only be applied within a unit or course of study where those procedures have been formally approved by a School or Faculty, and the scaling mechanism publicised for the information of students (usually within a handbook and/or website.) Where individual staff employ such approved procedures in their units, they must indicate to students within the relevant Assessment Mechanism Statement that scaling will occur, referenced to the relevant School or Faculty scaling policy.

Information regarding Assessment for new staff:
New staff may find it useful to know that the key documents in relation to assessment at UWA are:
Minimum Essentials for Good Practice in Assessment (12 principles governing assessment practice university-wide);
Guidelines on Assessment (a longer document in which the respective responsibilities for assessment at school, faculty and individual level are outlined).
General Guidelines

4.4 Every student has the right to assessment that is valid, educative, explicit, reliable and fair.

6.3. More specifically, formal assessment serves the following purposes, among others:
• Contributing to the student learning process.
• Providing students with feedback on their level of achievement, and providing the opportunity for them to understand and benefit from understanding the reasons for the assessment given.
• Providing students with an understanding of the standards of work expected for assessment at specific levels.
• Providing staff with information about the effectiveness of their teaching.
• Providing a fair judgement of a student’s level of achievement.
• Providing an indicator of likely future academic attainment.

Faculties are also normally expected to:
• take responsibility for reminding schools about their responsibilities in relation to assessment practices.
• encourage schools to review regularly the appropriateness/effectiveness of their assessment processes including benchmarking against other comparable universities.
• take responsibility for ensuring reasonable consistency in assessment standards for their constituent schools.

MINIMUM ESSENTIALS FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN ASSESSMENT:
(In accordance with Academic Council R240/97, R72/04)

A1. That the Head of School ensure there is a mechanism (whether a committee or an individual) to monitor and co-ordinate assessment practices.

A7. That the mechanism for monitoring and co-ordinating assessment practices within a School be responsible inter alia for ensuring comparability between assessors in a particular unit/course.

Guild Paper on Scaling Policy

Discipline Group/School Parity

When parity at a discipline group or school is sought, the distribution, rather than being the same for every unit, must take into account the cohort of students that are attempting the particular unit. This approach to scaling is taken in economics, where the cohort’s past performance in economics units is used to set a mean and standard deviation for the current unit. This avoids the problems associated with setting distributions at a unit level, but creates a number of other issues. The first is the question of predetermination; should the overall average performance level of the cohort be set before they have even started the unit? Ultimately, however, any distribution makes assumptions about the average performance prior to the start of the unit. The solution to this problem could be (in part) having a suitable level of tolerance around each point in the distribution allowing the cohort to perform differently should this eventuate.

Recommendation 5: That distributions set for units in order to establish discipline group/school and/or cross-institutional parity are set with significant levels of tolerance given the difficulties associated with establishing such standards.