1. AWARDING OF CREDIT (ADVANCED STANDING) FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Garry Hendy addressed a request from a number of faculties that the International Centre include details of approved credit on offer letters to international students.

Garry noted that offer letters from the International Centre to international students currently did not list the actual credit (advanced standing). This was partly due to resource issues, but also because the International Centre did not have the responsibility or the expertise to respond to students' queries regarding their credit details: faculties were the appropriate source of contact for students in this regard.

It was noted that while the International Centre had a requirement to know the value of credit for visa requirements, there was no necessity for the International Centre to know credit details. While this information was maintained by faculties and provided to the International Centre, Garry noted that the International Centre did not have the staffing resources to provide these details on international student offer letters.

It was noted that PSB and Canning College were two exceptions where offer letters with full credit listings are provided by the International Centre.

Garry also advised that student queries regarding detailed credit information were directed to the relevant faculties as they were best equipped to provide it. It was suggested that credit/advanced standing issues be addressed at the pre-enrolment sessions; perhaps by expanding the sessions so that students with credit queries could be assisted at this early stage. This would also ensure efficient processing at the enrolment session.

It was pointed out that there was currently double handling of credit details, as these were sent to the International Centre, but as they were not then passed on to students, the students were contacting the faculty for details. A member asked if the International Centre could include with the student offer letters the credit details provided by the faculties.

Garry noted that the current format provided by the faculties was not suitable for mailing direct with the offer letters. Garry pointed out that, if the International Centre were to include the credit details with the offer letters, the details would have to be in a form that would not require any editing or reformatting.

There was agreement that the process should be streamlined to reduce the amount of work for all concerned.

It was agreed that a template letter coming from faculties and including credit/advanced standing in detail should be developed.

The following members volunteered to prepare a draft template:

- Paul Lloyd
- Mary Carroll
- Jenny Gamble

2. UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Sylvia Lang provided the following update on the Academic Council meeting held on Wednesday 2 September 2009:

- Future Framework Implementation: Decision Making Process – Sylvia noted there was considerable discussion regarding a draft flowchart tabled at Council. The main concern was that the Future Framework Implementation Committee contact with the Academic Council's sub-committees should be direct rather than via
the Academic Council Steering Committee. It had been agreed that the chart be reviewed in the light of the discussion.

Jenny noted concern that faculties appeared to be excluded from the consultation process and FFIC working parties were not consulting adequately through the faculties. Sylvia advised that there was some concern at Council that Terms of Reference and membership for the FFIC working parties were not readily available. FFIC had been asked if these could be published on the Future Framework site. Sylvia advised that Interim Boards of Studies agendas and minutes were available at the Committees website on the intranet at:

- Allocation of UWA ‘Safety-Net’ Top-Up Scholarships
Council had considered a decision of the Scholarships Committee to provide top-up scholarship to bring scholarship holders’ income above the poverty line.

It was noted that there had been considerable discussion of the Scholarships Committee decision as those scholarship holders who had not benefited from the top-ups (because they held pre-2009 top-ups which already brought them above the poverty line) had asked for a review of the decision.

The Scholarships Committee had reaffirmed its decision in the matter and Council had endorsed that decision.

- Sirtex
It was noted that the University had been unsuccessful in its appeal and was considering its options.

- Proposed Amendment to Admission Regulations – Change to Deferral Regulations
Members were advised that some faculties had concerns about the proposed wording of the regulations relating to deferral of places as they felt it could be read to suggest that certain students commencing undergraduate courses in 2012 would be guaranteed places in postgraduate professional courses. It had been agreed that there should be further discussion of the proposed wording with the faculties concerned and that it would be brought back to Council at its next meeting.

3. CHANGED OPTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – UPDATE FROM INTERNATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICER

The International Quality Assurance Officer, Mr David Norman spoke to the following items.

(a) ACCESS UWA

Members noted that the University had previously been advised by DEEWR that Student Visa holders could only undertake concurrent study in CRICOS-registered courses. DEEWR had recently confirmed that this also applied to units studied via Access UWA.

The International Centre and UWA Extension had suggested that a group of interested Sub Deans and FAQs meet with International Centre staff to discuss how best to proceed. Any interested persons should email David Norman direct.

Sylvia noted that this matter should be brought to the attention of the Registrar. David Norman will be preparing a paper in support.
(b) UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS – STUDENT VISA HOLDERS

Members were reminded that failure to make satisfactory academic progress was a breach of the conditions of a student visa, resulting in mandatory visa cancellation and a three-year exclusion from Australia.

It was noted that students who successfully appealed a suspension or exclusion did not have to be reported. As a ‘Suspended’ or ‘Excluded’ status was course specific, practice had been to permit students with such a status to transfer into another UWA course for which they were eligible.

Members were advised that DEEWR had recently informed the University that it must set a time limit for appeals outside the University. However, as the University did not control the processes of external agencies, it had proposed another approach to DEEWR whereby students who had a ‘Suspended’ or ‘Excluded’ status would be reported at the end of the internal appeals process. Members were advised that there had been little progress since.

Members were informed that as from the forthcoming examination period, students who were suspended or excluded would only be able to avoid visa cancellation if their suspension/exclusion was lifted. This made it critical that the University’s intervention strategies were as effective as possible and that its appeals management system was straightforward, consistent and allowed students to present a case based not just on process but on their personal circumstances.

To improve the situation for international students who were struggling with their course, it was recommended to re-word the intervention letter to make clear the consequences for them of failing. As the penalties for international students making unsatisfactory progress were severe, it was recommended that intervention strategies be pro-active and provide support as soon as it is noticed that a student may be struggling with their studies.

There was also a suggestion that an ‘interim’ progress status be assigned in the case of status of ‘Suspended’ or ‘Excluded’. This status would be in place for 20 University working days to permit the student to lodge an appeal or a ‘show cause’ application if appropriate. The status would automatically be confirmed by a set date if the student had not lodged an appeal or a ‘show cause’ letter.

Sylvia noted that it would be feasible to reinstate a ‘show cause’ provision but also stressed the importance of re-wording the mid-year letters to students so there was no doubt about the seriousness of their situation and so that they were aware of the options available to them.

A member asked whether lists of students sent ‘intervention’ letters could be provided to faculties. It was agreed that this would be followed up.

It was agreed that the Manager, Student Administration would provide copies of the current ‘intervention’, warning, and end of year letters so that they could be redrafted for further consideration. A proposed show cause rule would be drafted for consideration by Academic Council.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Re-Admission

The Manager, Student Administration queried the rules applying to re-admission and whether re-admission was to the same course or to any course of the University.

It was noted that this would have to be clarified.

(ii) Calculator Policy

Rob Blandford advised that he would wish this considered at a future meeting as the current policy was not working well. He suggested a very limited range of calculators be permitted and that these be made available for sale on campus at a competitive price.