**Report on the Review of the Department of International Studies**

**Macquarie University**

Conducted 6-7 February 2014

Macquarie University

North Ryde

Terms of Reference 1

Review panel 1

Executive summary 2

Governance, leadership and management 3

Commendations 3

Background 3

Integration: 3

Resources, funding and sustainability: 4

Governance: 4

Administration: 4

Recommendations 5

Academic program 6

Commendations 6

Background 6

Retention: 6

Undergraduate program – overall curriculum orientation: 6

Undergraduate program – structural flexibility: 7

Diploma in Languages: 7

Post-graduate program: 7

Language units, levels of proficiency and assessment: 7

Delivery: 8

Teaching – research nexus: 8

Recommendations 9

Research and research training 10

Commendations 10

Background 10

Connections with other people in the same or similar disciplines: 11

HDR teaching: 11

Publications: 11

Grants: 11

Research-led teaching: 11

Recommendations 12

Staff and student profile 13

Commendations 13

Background 13

Teaching a full major: 13

Limits in assigning workload: 13

Staff profile and mentoring: 13

The naming of roles: 13

Recruitment strategy: 14

Recommendations 14

Community engagement 15

Commendations 15

Background 15

The nature of relationships and impact: 15

Links with commerce and industry: 15

Recommendations 15

Future directions 16

Recommendation 16

# Terms of Reference

1. Governance, Leadership and Management

Review the effectiveness of Department of International Studies planning, leadership and management structure, processes and resources in responding to Faculty and University strategic planning directions.

2. Academic Program

Review the appropriateness of the degrees, programs, and units offered by Department of International Studies relative to Faculty and University priorities, employer and professional community demands.

3. Research

Review current research outputs, activity, and capability relative to Faculty and University objectives including opportunities for developing research and knowledge leadership.

4. Research Training

Review the HDR program, including admission standards, methodology and skills training, completion times and drop-out rates, supervision and reporting standards.

5. Staff and Student Profile

Review the alignment of academic, professional, and student profile relative to current and future objectives and plans.

6. Community Engagement

Review the scale, scope, and quality of community/industry engagement, including external/professional contribution to and referencing of, curriculum and research development.

7. Future Directions

Recommend future development opportunities for Department of International Studies in terms of its resources, research, teaching and community/industry engagement activity.

# Review panel

**Associate Professor Angela Scarino (Chair)**

Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and

Director, Research Centre for Languages and Cultures, University of South Australia.

**Professor Jane Simpson**

Chair of Indigenous Linguistics

Australian National University, College of Arts and Social Sciences

**Associate Professor Mark Evans**

Head of Department of Media, Music, Communication & Cultural Studies

Macquarie University

# Executive summary

The review of the Department of International Studies included consideration of seven key areas (1) governance, leadership and management, (2) the academic program, (3) research, (4) research training, (5) the staff and student profile, (6) community engagement and (7) future directions.

The process involved a review of departmental and faculty documentation and the self-evaluation report prepared by the Head of Department, and conducting a series of interviews with key members of the Department and of the Faculty. The panel also viewed a presentation of online course developments in the Department.

The panel recognises the strong leadership of the Head of Department and the efforts made towards integration between the European and Asian languages departments in seeking to develop a strong departmental vision and identity. It also commends the Department’s commitment towards sustaining a program of ten languages, the work of seeking to achieve curriculum coherence and to increase student enrolments.

The panel proposes a series of recommendations that are intended to support the Department’s further development in each of the seven key areas. Some key directions and considerations include the need to:

* make research a central focus in all activities;
* develop a set of research themes that can be fruitful for the Department as a whole;
* recognise that not all developments will be equally possible in all languages and that some tailoring that is responsive to student demand, student choice and staff capacity will be necessary;
* further develop collaboration in new ways in both research and teaching within and beyond Macquarie University;
* establish connections with industry for research and teaching;
* consider the introduction of EFL;
* capitalise on successful international partnerships to shift towards collaboration specifically in research.

# Governance, leadership and management

## Commendations

The panel commends the Department for its efforts to date towards integration between the European languages and Asian languages departments in seeking to develop a strong departmental identity.

The panel commends the Head of Department for her energy, competence, leadership and vision for the Department; these qualities were endorsed by all.

The panel commends the Department for its efforts to sustain a range of offerings in the academic program while achieving efficiencies.

The panel commends the Dean of Faculty for the interest and support he has given to language studies at Macquarie University.

## Background

### Integration:

The study of the languages and societies of Europe, and the study of the languages and societies of Asia have different histories and cultures in Australian higher education, with European languages being most frequently situated in Arts and Humanities faculties and Asian languages in Social Sciences faculties. Because of the different histories and cultures, bringing together the two groups of languages, and indeed specific language teams within them, is a complex undertaking – and one that takes time. The fact that the two antecedent departments are functioning well is a mark of the leadership in the Department and its desire to work towards a common purpose and to succeed. However, more time is needed for the teaching and research programs to be fully integrated. There is evidence of some language ‘silos’. Full integration needs to be achieved. This process should begin with the Department’s presentation to the external world through its website. In this context it is also worth highlighting that for some participants in the review process (staff and students), there is a view that the name of the Department presents some confusion. The title ‘languages’ does not appear in the naming of the Department and there is some confusion between International Studies and International Relations. This matter could be considered as part of the process.

The strategy towards integration has been based primarily on creating common ways of teaching: using a common curriculum framework (using the Common European Framework of Reference), a focus on developing on-line delivery, the organisation of exchanges, internships and community alliances. The Bachelor of International Studies has provided distinctiveness and a common galvanising project for all in the Department. Although these strategies have been successful in advancing the work of the Department to date, it is now important to recognise that the same approaches do not necessarily need to be applied to all languages. In addition, interdisciplinary relationships for both teaching and research need to be developed with other Departments at Macquarie and beyond. It is the acceptance of some differences among language programs within the Department and interdisciplinary connections beyond the Department that will provide a basis for consolidation and growth.

### Resources, funding and sustainability:

The Department is working to sustain a full major in a range of languages, some of which are offered in Australia only by the Department. This should be continued as far as it is possible to do so. Managing the range of languages requires a constant juggling of human and material resources. Academic staff resources are stretched, with some programs sustained by only one staff member (Polish, Russian, and Modern Greek) and, based on current demand, it will not be likely that further staff can be employed in these languages. This situation impacts on the overall staff profile, workloads and the ‘balance’ between teaching and research, as well as on the career prospects of the staff concerned.

The Macquarie and Faculty funding models have changed in recent times. Specifically, Departments are funded on a formula that includes a relative percentage allocation to teaching and research. The panel understands that the change involves a higher percentage weighting being accorded to research and this has had a major impact on the Department of International Studies. The Department receives a small proportion of the income that it generates. Though the changed formula applies equally across the University as a whole, its consequences are marked for teaching-intensive Departments; while the Faculty has taken this into account, it is desirable that this should be taken into account at higher levels of the University, as language studies are an asset for Macquarie University, and a point of difference between Macquarie University and most other universities. The panel found that there were aspects of the Macquarie funding model that were not fully understood by all, including those at Faculty level. The budget settings and processes need to be transparent and well understood so that appropriate monitoring and analysis can occur for the purposes of ongoing planning.

### Governance:

The Department is well managed, and the Head of Department can be, and has been replaced during absences. Nonetheless, there is an over-reliance on the Head of Department and a small group of academic staff to manage the work of the Department, which in turns reduces the capacity of those staff to engage in research. The Department has an HDR director and a director of learning and teaching, and runs through the mechanism of regular and well-documented, departmental meetings. In order to meet the Department’s desired growth in teaching, research (including HDR), and community engagement, it will be necessary to consider a governance structure that will spread the load of planning and direction-setting for the Department. Formal research and Learning and Teaching committees should be established. Given the positive stage of development that the Department has reached towards integration, the membership of these committees should be based on functions rather than the representation of all languages.

### Administration:

The Department’s administrative work is carried out by two highly professional, loyal and dedicated staff members, one working mainly in European languages and the other in Asian languages. There is evidence of sound working relations between administrative staff. Although this organisation has served the Department well up to this point, it is essential that the integration of administrative functions and processes be achieved across the Department. There is little value in the extensive replication of duties that results from the current separation. The administrative staff would have an important new role in supporting the two major departmental committees that the review panel proposes. In the context of the likely outcomes of the review of administrative functions across the Faculty, it will be important for the Department to develop clarity about which administrative functions will continue to require knowledge that is specific to the administration of the languages programs, and which can be effectively devolved to central administration.

## Recommendations

1. The Department extend its efforts towards full integration of the European and Asian languages programs including:

* recognising that the developments do not necessarily need to be the same in each of the languages;
* ensuring that the website that informs the external community and students about the academic and research programs and activities present the Department as a single, integrated, departmental whole.
* streamlining its administration by establishing a shared administrative space and integrating all administrative functions and processes.

1. The Department consider developing interdisciplinary relationships with other Departments at Macquarie and beyond to provide a basis for consolidation and growth.
2. As part of its governing structure, the Department establish two formal, expert committees, one for Research and the HDR program, and another for Learning and Teaching; these committees will be responsible, with the Head of Department, for developing the research and learning and teaching programs and strategies of the Department, and supporting their implementation, monitoring and ongoing refinement.

1. The Faculty ensure that the Macquarie and Faculty funding models are well understood to assist planning and that the impact on the new model on teaching-intensive Departments such as the Department of International Studies be addressed. The Department monitor the impact of the funding model on its activities.

# Academic program

## Commendations

The panel commends the Department and Faculty for its commitment to sustaining a program of ten languages. This represents an important point of distinction for Macquarie University, and a commitment to the communities associated with those languages in the Sydney region.

The panel commends the Department for developing ‘culture units’ and ‘cross-cultural units’ as a successful means for extending the academic program.

The panel commends the Department for its sound establishment and use of the international exchanges, the cotutelle arrangements and internships; these add value and distinctiveness to the academic program and are much appreciated by students.

The panel commends the Department for its efforts to achieve consistency in the program across the diverse range of languages.

The panel commends the Department for its work on on-line delivery as a form of innovation and it acknowledges the value of a dedicated position (part-time) to support this.

The panel commends the Department for its success in attracting learning and teaching grants and awards, including the internal mentoring that has nurtured this success.

## Background

The Department has engaged in major development of its academic program and seen the benefit in terms of increased student enrolments at the level of the award as a whole, namely in the Bachelor of International Studies. Having reached this stage of development, it is timely to consider further strategies that will sustain growth.

There is also a sense among some students and academic staff that the Bachelor of International Studies only offers languages and these issues of perception need to be addressed.

### Retention:

Although the uptake of the Bachelor of International Studies as a whole is increasing, for the purposes of long-term planning it is important to continue to monitor the pattern of enrolments and retention in each of the units that comprise the award. The performance of majors in different languages fluctuates and it is necessary to analyse and understand changes that occur. Teaching teams in the different languages should be encouraged to maintain records of enrolment figures and monitor trends in uptake and retention over time so that they develop a clear understanding of how their major is performing and appropriate action towards improvement can be taken as necessary.

### Undergraduate program – overall curriculum orientation:

The undergraduate program has expanded and the growth, particularly in the culture units, is noted. Now that the various components of the award are in place (i.e. language units, culture units, semester abroad program, internship) it is worthwhile considering specifically the curriculum orientation of the units in the award. An analysis of the curriculum content of units and the relationship among units should be examined for balance and coherence, as well as affording all staff the opportunity to teach in their areas of research from time to time. This would necessitate a finer grain analysis than that undertaken to develop learning outcome statements as part of the AQF exercise.

### Undergraduate program – structural flexibility:

Although the named Bachelor of International Studies has been successful, greater flexibility in its compulsory/non-compulsory components may be warranted in order to deal with issues of retention, progression to postgraduate studies and graduate employability. For example, it may be feasible to provide students with the possibility of taking a double major within the Bachelor of International Studies that would add another discipline to the students’ program. Some of these majors would serve the purpose of strengthening students’ work in languages while others could provide a professional major for students to use as an adjunct to their language study. Equally, it may be feasible to extend the availability of named concurrent or double degrees, for example, a Bachelor of International Studies and Education or a Bachelor of International Studies and Journalism. It may be helpful to have named awards that permit students either to consolidate their study of languages by including an allied study, (for example, in linguistics, literary studies, film studies, history, politics, etc.) or by including a professional study that enhances their employability (for example, marketing, business, international relations).

Collaboration with other Departments is crucial to the further development of the academic program. The Department needs to enable both (a) the inclusion of studies from allied departments into the Bachelor of International Studies and (b) ensure that its offerings are made available as majors, minors or electives in other awards offered at Macquarie University. The review panel considers these strategies to be more fruitful than developing more single area awards such as a Bachelor of Asian Studies.

### Diploma in Languages:

The Diploma (or Associate degree) in Languages is a distinctive award in the languages area, that is offered as a concurrent award in most Australian universities. Not to offer such an award at Macquarie University would be exceptional and would miss the point that language learning is necessarily sequential and many students appreciate the opportunity to learn a language over the course of their degree that a concurrent diploma provides.

### Post-graduate program:

The Department has concentrated on developing its undergraduate program and, given the stretched staff capacity, has not been able to build a program of post-graduate units. The absence of a fully developed post-graduate program has been particularly evident with the introduction of the Masters in Research. Students have necessarily taken units from other departments in order to strengthen their disciplinary base for the diverse research projects that they are undertaking. This is likely to continue. One area that could be explored is the possibility of co-badging language units such that post-graduate students could include a specialization in a language in their program of study. This would be particularly fruitful in areas such as translation studies.

### Language units, levels of proficiency and assessment:

The redevelopment of languages units has been focused on the use of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This framework is frequently used to establish benchmarks in language learning. Its use would imply a system of placement tests and units pitched at levels of proficiency that are described in a manner that is independent of the curriculum. The Framework has not been used in this way in the Department. A Japanese-specific scale has been developed by the Japan Foundation and this scale has been used as a reference point by the program team for Japanese. They note that the levels on the Japan Foundation proficiency scale are pitched ‘too high’ with respect to the levels achieved by students at Macquarie. This observation raises questions about the referencing of standards in Japanese and in all languages units. It will be useful to set in motion the moderation of standards across the different levels in each language within the Department. Some referencing of standards with programs in other universities would also be valuable.

The case of Chinese language teaching and learning is distinctive. The cohort typically includes students who are first language speakers of Chinese, those who have lived in Australia for many years and have some home background in the Chinese language and those who are learning Chinese as a second or additional language. While the program has taken steps towards catering for these markedly different student groupings, more needs to be done. In addition to the pathways for beginner and post HSC students, there needs to be in Chinese, a differentiation between pathways for background speakers and non-background speakers of Chinese both in relation to the nature of the program for each pathway and the nature of outcomes. It is important to do so in order to graduate Australian students in Chinese, as well as background speakers who will have further developed their Chinese language use and literacy in Chinese as the language of their home. This necessitates a larger number of units and a careful monitoring of standards which must be accommodated in the teaching and learning of Chinese. It would also be valuable to offer some tutorials in Chinese for Chinese-background students who take units from the Chinese program that are offered in English.

A language which is not yet part of the academic program but which could add value to the internationalisation focus of the Department and Macquarie University is English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Consideration should be given to the introduction of EFL as a credit-bearing pathway. It could be discussed with the Translation program, as international students of Translation Studies may well require enrichment of their English language skills which could be provided for by a specialization in English language, perhaps including some units taught in collaboration with English literature staff.

### Delivery:

The preparation of units for on-line delivery has been a major focus of the Department in the development of its academic program, and is essential for the long-term viability of some of the lesser-taught languages offered by the Department. The nature and extent of on-line development differs across languages, with some being more innovative than others. In order to sustain the on-line presence of the Department’s units, all units need to be included in the iLearn environment as the university-wide standard for all units. In languages, greater attention will need to be given to innovation in the ways that maximise interactivity.

A different issue related to delivery that emerged from the students’ perspective is that there is some disjuncture in units that are comprised of a series of guest lectures. In units developed and offered by teams, mechanisms need to be introduced that ensure continuity and coherence across the series of lectures.

### Teaching – research nexus:

Given the intensity of teaching in the Department it is appropriate for academic staff to consider more explicitly the teaching-research nexus and research-based teaching. It is necessary to include research as an essential part of the program for each unit, such that research is integrated into the students’ undergraduate experience. This has been a clear priority in the development of the French Studies, German Studies, Spanish and Latin American Studies and Japanese Studies program. It is in this way that the Department will begin, from the outset, to build a research culture with students.

Several staff members have applied for small grants to allow them to research their own teaching practices, or to introduce and element of innovation in their practice. This is valuable and, given their success in attracting small grants, it would now be appropriate for the Department to consider applying for larger Faculty grants, and, in collaboration with other institutions, for OLT grants.

## Recommendations

1. The Department continue to support the range of languages offered.
2. The Department monitor, in an explicit way, the long-term pattern of enrolments and retention in each of the units that comprise the Bachelor of International Studies as a basis for ongoing planning and development.
3. The Department address the perception that the Bachelor of International Studies only offers languages units.
4. The Department re-consider the orientation of the Bachelor of International Studies award as a whole, including the relationship among components.
5. The Department consider further flexibility in the structure of the Bachelor of International Studies that would allow for double majors, named concurrent and double degrees with allied language and culture studies or professional specialisations.
6. The Department work with other Departments at Macquarie University to ensure that language and culture units are made available as electives, minors and majors in a wide range of awards across the University.
7. The Faculty/Macquarie University approve the offering of the Diploma in Languages, in line with most Australian universities that offer language studies.
8. The Department explore the possibility of co-badging language units such that they may be incorporated in post-graduate programs.
9. The Department put in place processes of moderation and benchmarking to support high standards of language learning.
10. The Department build on its recognition of the distinctive nature of the cohort of students learning Chinese and continue to provide explicit pathways for background and non-background students and monitor the learning outcomes for each pathway.
11. The Department consider the introduction of English as a Foreign Language.
12. The Department deliberately shift from a focus on ensuring a basic on-line presence for languages units through the use of iLearn to a focus on innovation in on-line teaching particularly in the area of interactivity.
13. The Department ensure that units that are taught by teams of staff retain continuity and coherence across all classes offered.
14. The Department seek larger scale funding for research on learning and teaching such as Faculty or OLT funding.
15. The Department consider developing research-based dimensions through the curriculum of all units.

# Research and research training

## Commendations

The panel commends the Department on the moves to build a stronger research climate through encouraging staff to become research active, encouraging attendance at research seminars through PDRs, developing research plans, and encouraging scholarship in teaching.

The panel commends the Faculty of Arts and the Department on providing a process whereby staff who wish to focus on teaching and not on research can move into teaching intensive positions, and staff who have become research inactive can receive assistance to become more research active.

The panel commends the Faculty of Arts for its program of teaching relief and travel grants and research support targeted at early career researchers and Level B/C staff.

## Background

Language Studies programs have traditionally struggled with research activity, in part because of heavy teaching loads, in part because many language staff find fulfilment through teaching rather than research, and in part because of the diversity of disciplines that are to be found among staff teaching languages. The resulting track records make it hard for the staff to apply for research grant funding whether as individuals or as teams. The two departments that merged to become the Department of International Studies shared these properties with other Language studies program.

Currently the task of overseeing the research efforts rests with the Head of Department. Since the merger, the HoD and her colleagues have worked hard to bring the two departments together and to build a common research environment. This has resulted in an increase in publications and in HDR students. The panel was impressed by the enthusiasm that the staff interviewed and the students showed for the research seminars, and the sense that the students showed of being part of the Department’s research culture.

The task of building a research culture is particularly demanding, since 11 of the 28 listed language studies staff do not have doctorates. Opportunities for increasing HDR supervision are limited as a result. This is particularly critical in in some language studies areas (Italian, Polish) where no staff have doctorates. The move to classify some staff as teaching-intensive reduces the risk in research quality exercises of having a high proportion of staff without doctorates. If other staff are progressing well towards completion of doctorates, this is not a long-term problem. However, in the short-term, the lack of staff with doctorates increases the load on the Head of Department and the staff with doctorates of carrying the research work of the Department.

### Connections with other people in the same or similar disciplines:

The Department research seminar is an important means for building a research climate in the Department, for allowing staff to know who is working on what topics, and for bringing the different strands of the Department together. At the same time, staff working in diverse disciplines also need the support and interest and feedback from specialists in their areas. Some staff members have excellent links with colleagues elsewhere in the University working in the same or related disciplines. However, the panel gained the impression that some HDR students and staff work in isolation from their colleagues in similar disciplines elsewhere at Macquarie University, most commonly because they are not aware of the connections that exist. A two-way flow between language studies and staff would be important to develop research strengths in these areas. This is something that is easily remedied. It requires staff identifying the major non-language disciplines within which they work (the material given suggests: language teaching and learning methods and SLA, history, cultural studies, literature, film studies, memory studies, linguistics, phonetics, philosophy), and actively seeking out colleagues with similar interests elsewhere at Macquarie University, both for themselves and for the HDR students they supervise. Looking further afield, the Department could host more guest lectures and symposia that will bring in external expertise.

### HDR teaching:

The HDR students interviewed were enthusiastic about their work. Their work would probably benefit from advanced-level coursework, or, in cases where the topic is leading into a discipline area in which they have not majored, in coursework in that new area. They would also benefit from early discussion of what is needed to establish an academic career - of publication opportunities, grant applications, as well as teaching opportunities.

### Publications:

The Department has made a good start on improving the research output, and it is now time to work to maximize the impact of that output. Looking at the 45 journal articles produced between 2011-2013, the bulk of these were written by 6 staff members, sometimes in collaboration with others. Several journals are not on the ERA list of journals, and this needs to be addressed as a priority (*Temida, Revista de Teoria, Deutsch als Zweitsprache*). 11 articles were published in well-regarded ERA-recognised international journals, but most of these were by one department member. Two were in journals published by groups appearing on Beall’s list of questionable publishers http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/: *Asian Social Science* and *Open Journal of Philosophy*. Ten were in different journals published by *Common Ground* publishing. CG is a laudable initiative, but it has unfortunately not succeeded in creating much impact in terms of citations of articles. [There is a similar problem with book chapters; staff need to be advised to aim to publish as much as possible with publishers with better distribution (and hence reputation) than Cambridge Scholars Press]. The remainder of the publications were in journals produced in Australia by local professional associations and local universities.

### Grants:

The workload and track record of some staff precludes them from being competitive in ARC grants at the moment. Hence the focus for them should be on improving the quality of research. However, they should be encouraged to seek out potential DECRAs and postdoctoral fellowship applicants with whom they could collaborate. Other sources of grants would be the European Union grants, and the country-specific grants.

### Research-led teaching:

A final area to consider is the benefit from teaching in areas that staff carry out research in. So-called ‘contextual’ or ‘thematic’ courses allow staff to teach in their research areas, and allow them to inspire students. Of course, such units must still be attractive to students - there is no point in having a highly specialised thematic course for a handful of students. Managing this requires allowing staff to develop popular thematic courses in their areas of interest, and rotating thematic courses every 2-3 years. The lack of this opportunity is particularly marked in the Japanese program, where, despite the comparatively large number of staff, there appears to be little or no rotation of thematic courses, and staff who are highly research-active appear not to be teaching thematic courses in the areas of their research.

## Recommendations

1. The Department add to its governing structure a Director of Research distinct from the Head of Department, who will be responsible for working with the Associate Dean for Research, the HDR convenor and the HoD to implement the recommendations below, and also to:

* to assist information flow about grant opportunities (European, DAAD, Japan Foundation etc) and to work with staff interested in applying to assess the feasibility and provide support
* to work with staff to highlight publication opportunities and risks, and to improve the digital distribution of material,
* to assist staff to build links with other disciplines
* to continue embedding HDR students in the culture of the Department and getting the HDR students linked up with relevant people and seminars in other parts of Macquarie University
* to work with the Department to identify areas of potential research strength
* to create research clusters, based on agreed criteria
* to organise guest lecturers and symposia that bring in external expertise to work on areas of local research strength

1. Priority in new appointments be given to researchers who have completed their doctorates, who are highly research-active, and who support existing research strengths with fresh approaches.
2. All staff at Level C and below be linked with research mentors from similar disciplines elsewhere at Macquarie University.
3. Staff be encouraged to consider the impact of their published work, and to publish in outlets that will maximize this impact.
4. Consideration be given for all HDR students having as a panel member a researcher from the same or similar disciplines elsewhere at Macquarie University.
5. All HDR students be encouraged to make a practice of attending seminars in the same or similar discipline area elsewhere at Macquarie University, to extend their cohort.
6. HDR students be encouraged to attend units in relevant areas to extend their knowledge and skills.
7. Potential and current HDR students be advised about career strategies (publication, grants and teaching), and the importance of making their ideas known through publication in reputable outlets and attending conferences.
8. Programs be encouraged to rotate thematic/contextual units, and to allow research-active staff to introduce new units that would at once be popular and showcase their research.

# Staff and student profile

## Commendations

The panel commends the willingness of all academic and administrative staff to work effortfully to sustain the language program.

## Background

As is typical for languages programs across the sector, there are several issues that relate to staffing. These include the reality of one staff member teaching a whole language major, the tension between high intensity in teaching on the one hand and seeking to develop a research profile on the other, the relationship between language and cultural/disciplinary studies. These realities produce a sense of intensity that makes it difficult for at least some of the academic staff to absorb the complex ‘balancing act’ of performing successfully as both a teaching and research active academic.

### Teaching a full major:

A single staff member cannot normally sustain the teaching of a full major in any discipline, including languages, especially if they are to be research-active and have occasional periods of research leave. However, as indicated by several participants in interviews with the review panel – ‘we can’t do it any other way’. The situation is mitigated to some extent by having a group of casual staff in each language who have continued to contribute to the program. It is appropriate to re-examine the staffing situation for each language, and consider less favoured but nonetheless feasible options such as reducing further the number of units offered or expanding choices of units made available to students particularly at higher levels by collaborating with other universities where the particular language is offered through say, online learning.

### Limits in assigning workload:

From a management point of view the review panel recognizes the real limits in assigning workload that results from the distinctive expertise of languages staff. Put simply, a staff member appointed to French cannot teach Chinese. This necessarily means that the Head of Department has limited flexibility, except for assigning Department administrative tasks.

### Staff profile and mentoring:

Considering the academic staff profile as a whole, it is skewed towards levels A and B. At this level academic staff are developing their academic profiles and will benefit from mentoring both within and beyond the Department.

### The naming of roles:

The naming of roles needs to hold meaning locally as well as across the university as a whole and beyond. The title of ‘convenor’, for example, normally implies the coordination of a team. Where the ‘team’ comprises one person, the notion of ‘coordination’ does not hold. In the Department of International Studies each member of staff convenes between 0 and 16 units. In the context of ongoing discussions about staff workload, the role of ‘convenor’ should be discussed in the Department with a view to ensuring that there is a common understanding of the role and title. Wherever possible, a limit should be set on the number of units that each staff member convenes. In addition, the role of Director, Learning and Teaching should be re-considered. At present the position is connected to the specific tasks of ensuring AQF compliance and ensuring an on-line presence for all units through I-Learn. The role of a Director Learning and Teaching would normally be wider than at present and would include a leadership dimension.

### Recruitment strategy:

As the Department works towards meeting Macquarie University’s teaching and research goals, it will be necessary to consider its recruitment strategy. A number of the current staff are graduates from Macquarie or other universities in Sydney (on the information available seven are in the former category and five in the latter). Although there is some value in ‘employing one’s own graduates’, it is strategic to go beyond in order to capture a diverse mix of teaching and research strengths. Given the current overall staff profile, all new appointments should be research active and bring areas of expertise that are likely to attract HDR students.

If the Faculty has a strategic appointments policy, it would be of value to the further development of the Department to support a senior appointment in Asian Studies with a research area that complements and strengthens existing research areas. This appointment could be considered in conjunction as a joint appointment with another Department.

## Recommendations

1. The Department examine the number of units offered in each language and consider the possibility in some languages of reducing the number of units or providing greater choice of units to students by collaborating with other universities.
2. The Department make arrangements for staff at levels A & B to be mentored within as well as beyond the Department.
3. The Department review the use of the title of ‘unit convenor’ to ensure that the role performed matches the title and that there is a common understanding of the role.
4. The Department move towards setting a limit on the number of units convened by each staff member.
5. The Department re-define the role of the Director, Learning and Teaching to include leadership for the Learning and Teaching portfolio.
6. The Department ensure that being research-active is the key criterion in recruitment.
7. The Faculty consider making a strategic senior appointment in Asian Studies, possibly in conjunction with another Department.

# Community engagement

## Commendations

The panel commends the Department for its work in engaging diverse linguistic and cultural communities, including embassies and consular services.

The panel commends the Department for its efforts to raise the image of Macquarie through its community engagement.

## Background

The work that the Department has done in engaging with the community is impressive. Personal and departmental connections are well-established and add value to the work of the Department. It is the contribution from some communities that permits the basic teaching of some languages.

### The nature of relationships and impact:

Given the high level of engagement that has been accomplished to date, it is now timely to shift the emphasis from establishing and maintaining healthy relationships to a re-examination of the nature of the relationships and their impact. For example, it may be feasible to seek community collaboration to (1) provide a post-doctoral scholarship or (2) to undertake research that would add value to the community and its language and culture in the Australian context, or (3) to provide openings for student internships in areas such as travel and tourism, translation, speech pathology, among many others.

### Links with commerce and industry:

The notion of ‘community engagement’ should be expanded to include links with commerce and industry. There are many industries in which a language-and-culture interest is called for. In the first instance this could include engaging with country-specific Chambers of Commerce and Industry, education providers, translation service providers, aged care providers, and developing relationships with professional associations.

## Recommendations

1. The Department undertake an analysis of the nature, value and impact of current community relationships and establish strategies for ensuring maximum positive impact.
2. The Department seek to expand the collaboration with communities to include research possibilities such as the sponsoring of post-doctoral scholarships, funding research projects or providing openings or student internships
3. The Department commence a process of building relationships with commerce and industry that could add value both to teaching and to research.
4. The Department seek to establish relationships with professional associations.

# Future directions

Throughout this report and in formulating its recommendations the panel has signaled directions for further development. These will not be restated here but we signal again key directions and considerations that should be incorporated in the Department’s future planning.

The Department should:

* make research a central focus in all activities;
* develop a set of research themes that can be fruitful for the Department as a whole;
* recognise that not all developments will be equally possible in all languages and that some tailoring that is responsive to student demand, student choice and staff capacity will be necessary;
* further develop collaboration in new ways in both research and teaching within and beyond Macquarie University;
* establish connections with industry for research and teaching;
* consider the introduction of EFL;
* capitalise on successful international partnerships to shift towards collaboration specifically in research.

## Recommendation

1. The Department hold a staff retreat to examine ways in which they can build a personal and team focus in the context of the reality of working at capacity.