Macquarie University: Departmental Review

**Department of Ancient History**

12 – 14 September 2011

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**1. Introduction**

**1.1 Terms of Reference**

**1. Governance, Leadership and Management**

Review the effectiveness of the Department 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 the Department 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 the Department in terms of its resources, research, teaching and community/industry engagement activity.

**1.2 Review Team**

*Chair:*

Professor Robert Hannah

Department of Classics

University of Otago

*External Discipline Experts:*

Dr Tom Stevenson

Head of Classics and Ancient History

School of History, Philosophy, Religion, and Classics

University of Queensland

Professor Sarah Pearce

Ian Karten Professor of Ancient Jewish Studies

Department of History, School of Humanities

University of Southampton

*MQ peer:*

Professor Julie Fitness

Department of Psychology

*Secretary*

Ms Ursula Thurgate

Human Resources Officer

Faculty of Arts

**1.3 Review Program**

**Monday, 12 September 2011**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 8.30 – 9.30 am | Panel convene |
| 9.30 – 10.15 am | Professor John Simons: Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts |
| 10.15 – 10.45 am | Professor Alanna Nobbs: Head of Department of Ancient History |
| 10.45 – 11.30 am | Karl Van Dyke: Director, Ancient History Museum |
| 11.30 – 12.00 pm | Professor Brian Bosworth: CORE appointment, Ancient History |
| 12.00 – 12.45 pm | Dr Trevor Evans: Senior Lecturer – Research and Classical Languages |
| 12.45 – 1.45 pm | Lunch |
| 1.45 – 2.00 pm | Panel debrief |
| 2.00 – 2.30 pm | Professor Naguib Kanawati: Egyptology Teaching Program |
| 2.30 – 3.00 pm | Dr Lea Beness and Dr Peter Keegan: Learning and Teaching |
| 3.00 – 4.30 pm | Tour of Facilities- Karl Van Dyke: Museum of Ancient History- Dr Ken Sheedy: Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies- Dr Linda Evans and Dr Jaye McKenzie-Clarke: Scanning Facilities- Associate Professor Boyo Ockinga, Australian Centre for Egyptology: Egyptology Art Room- Rachael Yuen-Collingridge and Jon Dalrymple, Documentary Research Centre: Papyrology Research |
| 4.30 – 5.30 pm | Dr Ian Plant: Postgraduate Coursework Program |
| 5.30 – 5.45 pm | Panel debrief |

**Tuesday, 13 September 2011**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9.00 – 9.30 am | Panel convene |
| 9.30 – 10.15 am | Professor Gail Whiteford: Pro Vice Chancellor (Social Inclusion) |
| 10.15 – 10.45 am | Ms Elizabeth Smith: President, Macquarie Ancient History Association Student Advisory Council |
| 10.45 – 11.15 am | Dr Malcolm Choat: Coptic Studies |
| 11.15 – 11.45 am | Associate Professor Marea Mitchell: Associate Dean (Higher Degree Research) |
| 11.45 – 12.15 pm | Ms Raina Kim: Department Administrator, Ancient History |
| 12.15 – 1.15 pm | Lunch |
| 1.15 – 2.00 pm | Panel debrief |
| 2.00 – 2.30 pm | Associate Professor Boyo Ockinga and Dr Stephen Llewellyn: HDR students and Egyptology  |
| 2.30 – 3.00 pm | Associate Professor Sherman Young: Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) |
| 3.00 – 3.45 pm | Professor Naguib Kanawati and Dr Malcolm Choat: Ancient Cultures Research Centre |
| 3.45 – 4.30 pm | Associate Professor Paul McKechnie: Oral Submission |
| 4.30 – 5.15 pm | Dr JoAnne Page: Faculty General Manager |
| 5.15 – 6.00 pm | Panel debrief |

**Wednesday, 14 September 2011**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9.00 – 9.30 am | Panel convene |
| 9.30 – 10.15 am | Dr Peter Keegan: Postgraduate Coursework and Open Universities Australia |
| 10.15 – 10.45 am | Associate Professor Tom Hillard: Roman and Greek History |
| 10.45 – 11.30 am | Associate Professor Stuart Piggin: Director, Centre for the History of Christian Thought and Experience |
| 11.30 – 12.15 pm | Associate Professor Andrew Gillett: Research and Late Antiquity |
| 12.15 – 1.15 pm | Lunch |
| 1.15 – 2.45 pm | Preliminary findings |
| 2.45 – 3.00 pm | Professor Alanna Nobbs: Head of Department of Ancient History |
| 3.00 – 3.30 pm | Present preliminary findings to Ancient History Department |
| 3.30 – 4.00 pm | Panel debrief, discuss next steps |

**2. Executive Summary**

An organizationally separate Department of Ancient History was first established in 1999 as part of the then University administrative reorganization. The Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatics Studies (ACANS) was created in 2000 from a private donation for infrastructure and salary. In 2006-2007 Ancient Cultures was recognized as a CORE area of research, with consequential recruitment of research staff. In 2009 two research centres based in the department – the Ancient History Documentary Research Centre (established 1981 primarily to support papyrological research) and the Australian Centre for Egyptology (established 1989) – were integrated, including researchers from across the university (Departments of Environment and Geography, and International Studies – Asian Studies), to create the MQ Ancient Cultures Research Centre (MQACRC), as a focus for the CORE.

‘Ancient History’ is conceived of in broad and interdisciplinary terms at Macquarie. The geographical scope is Eurasian, from western Europe to China, and the chronological scope runs from the 3rd millenium BCE (the Egyptian pre-dynastic period) to the 12th century CE (the High Byzantine period in eastern Europe).

There is much to admire in what the Department of Ancient History at Macquarie University does. It has high student numbers at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, even in the notoriously difficult ancient language units. Its staff have won teaching awards, and its student mentoring program, Tele’s Angels, is nationally recognized for its outstanding work. The Department has a distinguished record in research and publication. Its commitment to high quality, innovative research is evident in its CORE appointments and its research centres. The department undertakes magnificent community outreach, e.g. through MAHA (Macquarie Ancient History Association), the Rundle Foundation (Egyptology), the Sir Asher Joel Foundation and the Society for the Study of Early Christianity (SSEC), the Macquarie Ancient History Teachers Conference (held annually), the teaching and learning forum, SPQR (*Scientia Pertinens (ad) Quaestiones Romanas*), the activities of the Museum of Ancient Cultures (especially the travel into the outback), and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS), which works closely with local collectors, dealers and numismatic organizations.

Success has created pressure-points, which now need to be alleviated. The Department should have a Deputy Head of Department and an Executive Committee to advise the HOD and to share administrative responsibilities. The Job Description of the Departmental Administrator must be reviewed with a view to streamlining processes and ameliorating the stresses involved in managing so large a department. Succession planning should be set in train for the leadership of the highly successful Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies. A further priority must be the strategic rationalization of the teaching program, which is currently very broad and resource-intensive. Such rationalization should capitalize on the Department’s unique position in Ancient World Studies in Australasia: the absence of serious competition in breadth of program and the comprehensive understanding of the ancient world adopted by the Department should enable a more unified view of the units and degrees offered by the Department. Threats to the program through retirements in the near future might be averted and gaps which currently exist (e.g. in Assyriology, Demotic and Jewish Studies) might be filled through judicious application to external sources of funding, something that the Department under its current Head has shown itself outstandingly capable of achieving. The reduction in the teaching program needs to be undertaken with a view to reducing the workload of those staff who face large student numbers and huge assessment loads; e.g. through team-teaching and unit rotation.

Planning for the forthcoming ERA assessment is underway in the Department, and this Review affirms the considered approach being adopted. This Report suggests some means by which this approach may be refined, e.g. through internationalizing its peer-review systems for in-house publications. Senior mentorship of junior staff in the area of research could also be increased. HDR completions must be made in a more timely fashion, with mechanisms put in place for the reduction of ‘out of time’ students on the Department’s books and a more systematic approach towards the recruitment and probation of HDR students, notably through an Admissions Committee for HDRs and Research Supervision Agreements.

**3. List of Affirmations (A), Commendations (C) and Recommendations (R)**

**1. Governance, Leadership and Management**

C1 The focus of the Department has been on developing through its offerings an impressively broad definition of Ancient History, and on strengthening student engagement. It has done superbly well in this regard under its present leadership. This has been a major factor in establishing the Department’s distinctive character and excellent reputation in the international context.

R1 That the Job Description of the Departmental Administrator be reviewed, with a view to improving the efficacy and efficiency of the position.

R2 That the Department should appoint a Deputy Head of Department.

R3 That the Department should have an Executive Committee, comprising the Head of Department, Deputy Head of Department, Departmental Administrator and discipline leaders, working in a coordinated manner to plan and oversee the implementation of departmental strategies in relation to research, teaching & learning, and outreach activities. The Executive Committee should consult closely with the Faculty Executive to align goals and to plan proactively toward mitigating budgetary challenges.

R4 That the Department should establish five-year teaching plans across all its programs, so as to enable forward planning to be made of other commitments, such as OSP.

R5 That the Department should put in place a succession plan for the leadership of the Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies.

**2. Academic Program**

C2 The Department is commended on the high quality of its Teaching & Learning practices.

C3 The Directors of the Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies are commended for their respective collections, outreach programs and innovation in support of Teaching & Learning and of Research.

C4 The Department is commended on the success of the Mythology units in attracting remarkably large numbers of students.

C5 The Telemachus Ancient History Mentor Program (Tele’s Angels) is commended for its effective engagement with the student body.

C6 The Macquarie Ancient History Association Student Advisory Council is commended for its effective engagement with the student body.

R6 That the contact details for the Macquarie Ancient History Association Student Advisory Council be included in Unit guides.

R7 That the Department should ameliorate the teaching and assessment workloads for staff at both UG and PG levels.

R8 That the Department should investigate external funding opportunities for academic positions in Assyriology, Demotic and Jewish Studies.

R9 That the Department should communicate with the Office of Institutional Advancement to seek funding to assist in publicizing the Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, and even to make these flagship enterprises for the University.

R10 That means be found for the position held by Dr Peter Keegan to be retained.

**3. Research**

A1 The Department’s intention to apply for an ARC Centre of Excellence status is affirmed.

A2 The Department’s strategies for enhancing its research ranking in the next round of the ERA are affirmed.

C7 The Department is commended on its successes in ARC grant applications.

R11 That the Department should generate a research strategy which enables all members of the Department to develop projects which might become the subject of ARC or other external funding applications.

R12 That the Department should consider means whereby senior staff can mentor junior staff in seeking external funding.

**4. Research Training**

C8 The Department is commended for its success in attracting HDR students.

R13 That the Department should establish means to improve completion-in-time rates of HDRs.

R14 That the Department should establish explicit guidelines in regard to what constitutes effective HDR supervision and encourages co-supervision arrangements in which experienced staff mentor junior staff in supervising HDR students.

R15 That the Department should establish an Admissions Committee for HDRs so as to align internal schedules and processes better with those of the Faculty and University.

R16 That the Department should pay careful attention to the recruitment and probation of new HDR students to ensure they have the necessary skills to achieve successful, on-time completions.

**5. Staff and Student Profile**

 See R8.

**6. Community Engagement**

C9 The Department is commended for its high level Community Engagement, outreach programs and entrepreneurial activities, which represent best-practice to the University.

**7. Future Directions**

R17 That the Department should devote attention to forging an effective working relationship with the Faculty of Arts and Associate Deans within the Faculty, so that it may respond more quickly and creatively to the changing higher-education environment.

R18 That the Department should focus more on sustainability for the future than on simple expansion for its own sake.

**4. Background: the Department of Ancient History**

**4.1 History**

Ancient History has been central to the History academic program at MQ since 1969. An organizationally separate Department of Ancient History was first established in 1999 as part of the then University administrative reorganization. The Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatics Studies (ACANS) was created in 2000 from a private donation for infrastructure and salary. In 2006-2007 Ancient Cultures was recognized as a CORE area of research, with consequential recruitment of research staff. In 2009 two research centres based in the department – the Ancient History Documentary Research Centre (established 1981 primarily to support papyrological research) and the Australian Centre for Egyptology (established 1989) – were integrated, including researchers from across the university (Departments of Environment and Geography, and International Studies – Asian Studies), to create the MQ Ancient Cultures Research Centre (MQACRC), as a focus for the CORE.

**4.2 Overview and Aims**

The Department of Ancient History is the primary platform for activities in teaching, research, research training, and outreach in Ancient Cultures at MQ. Attached to the Department is a range of organizations which facilitate these activities, including three research centres, a museum, four community partner associations, three community teaching programs, and three student-based organizations (Table 1).

**Table 1: The Department and Associated Teaching, Research, and Outreach Bodies**

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| **Department of Ancient History** |
| Research Centres |
| MQ Ancient Cultures Research Centre (MQACRC) | Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS) | Centre for the History of Christian Thought and Experience (CHCTE) |
| Museum of Ancient Cultures (MAC) |
| Community partner associations |
| Rundle Foundation (Egyptology) | Macquarie Ancient History Association (MAHA) | Society for the Study of Early Christianity (SSEC) | Sir Asher Joel Foundation |
| Community teaching programs  |
| Macquarie Ancient Languages School (MALS) | Teachers Conference | Continuing Education program |
| Student-based Organizations  |
| Telemachus Ancient History Mentor Program (Tele’s Angels) | University Students for Egyptological Research (USER) | Macquarie Ancient History Association – Student Advisory Council |

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The **aims** of the Department are:

• to produce world-class research into ancient Eurasian cultures, and in particular to expand the knowledge base of interactions between major cultures, through developing research strength in multiple ancient cultures and through facilitating research on situations and periods of cultural interaction

• to deliver undergraduate teaching on ancient Eurasian cultures, both as a field of specialization and as a contribution to other areas of university study; and to provide training in sub-disciplines necessary to support higher-level learning (languages, archaeology, art history, papyrology, numismatics)

• to provide research training for the next generation of scholars in ancient cultures, and to foster early careers of young scholars

• to contribute to the wider community through outreach programs that address community desire to understand both the ancient world in itself as well as ancient structures and concepts that shape modern societies.

**4.3 ‘Ancient Cultures’: Scope of Research and Teaching programs**

‘Ancient History’ is intentionally conceived of in broad and interdisciplinary terms at MQ. MQ Ancient History is not a Classics program (i.e. classical Greek and Roman language, literature, and history, ca. 6th century BCE-4th century CE), though classical Greece and Rome are central areas of research and teaching. The geographical scope of MQ Ancient History is Eurasian, from western Europe to China, and the chronological scope runs from the 3rd millenium BCE (the Egyptian pre-dynastic period) to the 12th century CE (the High Byzantine period in eastern Europe). This wide scope is addressed in part through focuses and strengths in specific ancient societies, with major research and teaching programs in e.g. dynastic Egypt and Roman republic and empire (both with a teaching program from first year to MA level, a substantial HDR program, and active research programs including 5 digs in Egypt). The scope is also addressed through overarching approaches: to issues of methodology and sources (art history, papyrology, numismatics, language), and to questions of cultural interactions between and within ancient societies, in particular the role of religion in ancient societies. This interest in cultural interactions has generated research and teaching programs in early Christianity (Judaic/Middle Eastern culture in the late Classical Greek and Roman context), Late Antiquity (the transition of the classical Mediterranean and ancient Iranian societies to the medieval Christian and Islamic world), Coptic Studies (Egyptian culture under Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic rule), and Silk Road studies (cultural interactions from the Mediterranean and Middle East to China). The term ‘Ancient Cultures’ is used for e.g. the CORE in Ancient Cultures and the MQ Ancient Cultures Research Centre to denote this interest in cultural interactions.

The research and teaching programs now encompass:

• Egyptology (predynastic to New Kingdom)

• Greek history

• Roman Republic and Imperial history

• New Testament / Early Christian and Jewish studies

• Late Antique through Byzantine/Medieval history

• Coptic studies

• ancient China and central Asian/Silk Road studies

• archaeology

• papyrology

• epigraphy

• numismatics

• ancient languages.

Teaching in these areas is supported by coursework language programs in:

• Hieroglyphs (5 units)

• Classical Greek (5 units)

• Latin (5 units)

• Coptic (4 units)

• Hebrew (2 units)

• Sanskrit (1 unit)

• Syriac (1 unit)

• Akkadian (1 unit).

Outreach programs operate for Egyptology, Greek and Roman studies, and ECJS, and the Department operates a museum and activities for schools. These programs contribute to the community through public lectures and seminars, continuing education programs, public and schools programs for the museum, and HSC-curriculum-based training for school teachers. They also serve as fund-raising activities that support research activities, HDR students, and staffing.

The research and teaching programs of the Department are therefore interdisciplinary in terms of subject and methodology. They map onto the activities of a range of traditional disciplinary and institutional contexts – Classical Studies, Religious Studies, Egyptology, Oriental Studies, Semitic Studies, History (Medieval), Archaeology, Art History (Ancient), and Asian Studies – as part of an integrated program.

***Commendation 1***

 The focus of the Department has been on developing through its offerings an impressively broad definition of Ancient History, and on strengthening student engagement. It has done superbly well in this regard under its present leadership. This has been a major factor in establishing the Department’s distinctive character and excellent reputation in the international context.

**4.4 Acknowledgements**

The Review Team wishes to acknowledge Associate Professor Andrew Gillett, who produced the SER with meticulous care and detail, and no small effort, and then liaised with the Review Team Chair and Secretary to provide, where possible, further background documentation at the University and Departmental levels and to identify potential sources for submissions, much of this during his time on OSP. The departmental staff are to congratulated also on their exemplary input into this Review through their oral and written submissions and guided tours of facilities. The team is also very grateful to its Secretary, Ms Ursula Thurgate, for her superlative oversight of the logistics of the Review and her detailed notes of the meetings. The Chair also gratefully acknowledges the efforts and valuable input of all the panel members during the on-site Review and in the drafting of this Report.

**5. The Report**

**5.1 Governance, Leadership and Management**

The Department of Ancient History sits within the Faculty of Arts, one of four faculties formed at MQ in 2010 (Arts, Business and Economics, Human Sciences, Science). The Faculty of Arts consists of the previous Divisions of Humanities; Law; and Society, Culture, Media and Philosophy.

The Faculty of Arts houses 11 academic teaching and research units (some of which in turn are portmanteau units), and four research centres funded under the MQ Research Centre policy (as well as 15 Faculty- or Department-funded centres). Of the 18 MQ Concentrations of Research Excellence, four are in the Faculty of Arts (Table 2). Heads of Departments, Associate Deans, and Chairs of Faculty committees report to the Executive Dean. Directors of MQ Research Centres report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

**Table 2. Faculty of Arts Academic Structure**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Academic Teaching and Research units |
| Departments: **Ancient History** Anthropology English Indigenous Studies International Studies (Asian Studies, European Languages and Cultures) Media, Music, and Cultural Studies Modern History, and Politics and International Relations Philosophy SociologySchool: LawCentre: Policing, Intelligence, and Counter Terrorism |
| MQ Research Centres |
| **MQ Ancient Cultures Research Centre (MQACRC)**Centre for Research on Social InclusionCentre for Agency, Values and EthicsCentre for Comparative Law, History and Governance |
| Concentrations of Research Excellence (CORES) |
| **Ancient Cultures**Social, Political and Cultural ChangeSocial InclusionEnvironmental Law |

 |

Table 3 presents the Management Structure of the Faculty, with reporting lines and major Boards and Committees. The Executive Dean or his delegate is represented on the Boards of the Centres.

**Table 3. Faculty of Arts Management Structure**

(academic positions shaded)

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| Executive Dean |
| Faculty General Manager  | Associate Dean – Research | Associate Dean – L&T | Associate Dean – HDR | Faculty HR Manager  | Faculty Business Develop. Manager  | Heads of Depts **(incl. Dept Ancient History)**, Head of School of Law | Directors of MQ Centres **(incl. MQ-ACRC)** | Chairs of Faculty Committees |
| Main Board and Committees: Faculty Board Faculty Standards and Quality Committee Faculty Higher Degree Research Committee Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee Faculty Research Committee Faculty IT Committee Faculty OH&S Committee Student Experience Sub-Committee |

 |

The Review Team did not delve into the Faculty structure, nor the frequency of meetings or modes of communication, as these matters lie outside its brief. Nonetheless, it gained the impression that the Faculty officers (Executive Dean, Faculty General Manager, Associate Deans) are well-informed about the Department. The same could not yet be said of the Department’s familiarity with Faculty data, notably financial. It may be that the new Faculty structure is still bedding down, with communication lines in some need of strengthening.

The spread of student numbers across the Faculty is presented in Table 4. In terms of relative size, the Department of Ancient History lies in the middle-band of departments in the Faculty, with just-above-average numbers.

**Table 4. Total EFTSL by Department, 2011, BA Program Only**

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| **Department** | **Student Load (EFTSL)** |
| Dept of Ancient History | 514.5 |
| Dept of Anthropology | 291.8 |
| Dept of Indigenous Studies - Warrawara | 72.5 |
| Dept of International Studies | 720.1 |
| Dept of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies | 1,262.7 |
| Dept of Modern History, Politics and International Relations | 544.5 |
| Dept of Philosophy | 241.5 |
| Dept of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism | 66.3 |
| Dept of Sociology | 286.7 |
| Dept. of English | 288.7 |
| Faculty of Arts | 2.9 |
| Macquarie Law School | 1,248.5 |
| Social Inclusion | 18.0 |
| FoA total | 5,558.6 |
| Ancient History as % of FoA total | 9.26 |

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Table 5 presents Academic and General Staff establishments in the Faculty, and ratios between the two groups. In terms of academic staff, the Department is one of the larger units in the Faculty, whereas its general staff entitlement is proportionately on the low side, and indeed its overall ratio is the worst in the Faculty by a long way. It became clear to the Review Team from submissions that the workload of the Departmental Administrator is currently too great. Some means of ameliorating this, and thereby improving the conditions of work for the person(s) in this position, should be sought. An initial step would be a review of the Job Description for the position.

**Table 5. Faculty of Arts Academic and General Staff establishments (ongoing) 2011**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Department** | **Academic Staff** | **General Staff** | **Ratio** |
| Admin | 5.6 | 30.77 | 0.18 |
| Ancient History | 27.25 | 1 | 27.25 |
| Anthropology | 10 | 1 | 10.00 |
| English | 12.44 | 0.74 | 16.81 |
| Warawara | 7 | 3.7 | 1.89 |
| Internat Studies | 27.8 | 2 | 13.90 |
| Law | 29 | 1.8 | 16.11 |
| Mod Hist & PIR | 35 | 3.6 | 9.72 |
| MMCCS | 46.45 | 9.4 | 4.94 |
| Philosophy | 14.1 | 1 | 14.10 |
| PICT | 13.2 | 6.6 | 2.00 |
| SOC | 16.2 | 1.5 | 10.80 |
| CRSI | 6 | 0.8 | 7.50 |
| Totals | 250.04 | 63.91 |  |
| Ancient History as % of FoA total | 10.9% | 1.6% |  |

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***Recommendation 1***

 That the Job Description of the Departmental Administrator be reviewed, with a view to improving the efficacy and efficiency of the position.

The Departmental Management structure is presented in Tables 6–7.

**Table 6: Departmental Management Structure**

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| --- |
| Head of Department (Prof. A. Nobbs) |
| Administrative Officer (professional staff) (R. Kim/A. Abberton) |
| Departmental committees | Research Centre | Museum | Community partner associations |
| *Committees aligned with Faculty committees*: Learning and Teaching(Dr L. Beness)  Sub-committees:  - Postgraduate coursework (Dr I. Plant)  - Honours (Dr. D. Phillips)  - OUA (Dr P. Keegan)  - Certificate and Diploma of Ancient Languages (Dr I. Plant)HDR (Dr S. Llewelyn, Assoc. Prof. B. Ockinga)Research (Dr T. Evans, Assoc. Prof. A. Gillett)*Other Committees: Outreach*:Museum (Dr K. Sheedy)Marketing (Dr M. Choat)Outreach – donations (Prof. A. Nobbs)Teachers’ Conference committee (Assoc. Prof. T. Hillard, Prof. A. Nobbs)Web committee (Dr M. Choat) | Director MQACRC(Prof. N. Kanawati)Director ACANS(Dr K. Sheedy)Director CHCTE(Assoc. Prof. S. Piggin) | Manager MAC(K. Van Dyke) | Rundle Foundation(Assoc. Prof. B. Ockinga,Dr S. Binder)MAHA(Assoc. Prof. T. Hillard,Dr I. Plant)SSEC (Prof. A. Nobbs)Sir Asher Joel Foundation(Prof. A. Nobbs) |

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**Table 7: Other Major Departmental Duties**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| UG Academic advising | Dr L. Beness, Dr P. Keegan, Dr S. Binder, Assoc. Prof. T. Hillard, Dr P. Edwell |
| PG Academic advising | Dr I. Plant, Assoc. Prof. P. McKechnie, Dr A. Woods |
| Staff meetings | Chair: Dr K. SheedyMinutes: Assoc. Prof. P. McKechnie |
| Co-ordinators of Postgraduate students | ECJS: Assoc. Prof. P. McKechnieRoman: Dr P. KeeganEgyptology: Dr S. Binder |
| Library Liaison | Assoc. Prof. B. Ockinga |
| Timetable | Dr C. Forbes, AO R. Kim |
| External representation | Australian Academy of the Humanities: Prof. S. Lieu, Prof. B. BosworthAustralasian Society for Classical Studies: Dr P. KeeganAustralian Archaeological Institute in Athens: Assoc. Prof. T. Hillard, Dr R. Kearsley |
| Research Seminar | Dr T. Evans |

In terms of academic staff, the Department is a large one by Faculty standards. It has clearly put a lot of thought into the division of administrative labour that such a large organizational unit demands, with all staff having some responsibility. This allows for the growth of a body of experience and institutional memory within the Department. The Team is aware, however, that the running of a unit as large as Ancient History still imposes significant demands on the Head of Department. The Team is of the view that it is in the best interests of the Department that it should have a Deputy Head of Department so as to offset the burden at the top.

In addition, the Team thinks that there is merit in the Department establishing an Executive Committee, the better to coordinate administration and to tap into institutional experience within the Department. Such a Committee might comprize the Head of Department, Deputy Head of Department, Departmental Administrator and discipline leaders. Some economies and efficiencies could be effected in the constitution of its membership, such that, for instance, the Deputy Head of Department should also be the leader of Teaching & Learning,

given the importance of Teaching & Learning in the Australian context under current funding arrangements, and the fact that it is the locus of most activity. It would be prudent also to rotate these roles relatively frequently among the staff. Such sharing of the leadership roles not only spreads the administrative burden but also provides a broad base for building support for necessary changes within the Department over time.

***Recommendation 2***

 That the Department should appoint a Deputy Head of Department.

***Recommendation 3***

 That the Department should have an Executive Committee, comprising the Head of Department, Deputy Head of Department, Departmental Administrator and discipline leaders, working in a coordinated manner to plan and oversee the implementation of departmental strategies in relation to research, teaching & learning, and outreach activities. The Executive Committee should consult closely with the Faculty Executive to align goals and to plan proactively toward mitigating budgetary challenges.

The Review Team believes the degree of forward planning within the Egyptology program is exemplary. This planning provides an overview of teaching commitments over the coming years, so that other commitments, such as OSP, can be foreseen and therefore organized with ease. The rest of the Department would benefit from the same attention to forward planning in its other programs.

The Review Team was also deeply impressed by the scale of both the Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, and by the energy of their respective Directors. It will have more to say later in this report on other aspects of these units, but in the present context of management, the Team believes it is incumbent on both units, and hence on the Department, to establish as a priority a succession plan for the leadership of both units. In this way it can be hoped that these very successful ventures will continue for some considerable time to come.

***Recommendation 4***

 That the Department should establish five-year teaching plans across all its programs, so as to enable forward planning to be made of other commitments, such as OSP.

***Recommendation 5***

 That the Department should put in place a succession plan for the leadership of the Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies.

**5.2 Academic Program**

From submissions and interviews the Review Team heard nothing but high praise for the Teaching & Learning practices in the Department of Ancient History. It is clear that the staff, both academic and general, take this aspect of the Department’s role very seriously, and conscientiously aim to improve where possible. A significant number of staff have achieved teaching awards, while others deserve to do so (and may just need a little persuading to allow themselves to be nominated). The ancillary units, the Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, are included in this accolade. Under their current Directors, the outstanding collections are available for the academic program, both internally and externally. In particular, the outreach program of the MAC is superlative, and ACANS was described by a representative from the British Museum as ‘a real jewel in the University’s crown’. Although it is sometimes invidious to pick out a particular unit, there is no doubt in the Team’s mind that the teaching of Mythology is an outstanding success, both from the point of view of student enrolments across all internal and external avenues, and of the lecturer’s care and attention to its delivery. It is also a first-class embodiment of the Department’s focus on the interaction of ancient cultures and their significance in the modern world.

***Commendation 2***

 The Department is commended on the high quality of its Teaching & Learning practices.

***Commendation 3***

 The Directors of the Museum of Ancient Culture and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies are commended for their respective collections, outreach programs and innovation in support of Teaching & Learning and of Research.

***Commendation 4***

 The Department is commended on the success of the Mythology units in attracting remarkably large numbers of students.

In addition, the student body within the Department deserves mention for the excellent work it does in mentoring and adding value to the social experience of its members within the Department. The Telemachus Ancient History Mentor Program (‘Tele’s Angels’) has been publicly acknowledged through a national award for its mentoring achievements. The Macquarie Ancient History Association Student Advisory Council is also engaging effectively with the student body and academic staff. In one respect this engagement could be further improved by having the MAHASAC contact details included in Unit guides.

***Commendation 5***

 The Telemachus Ancient History Mentor Program (Tele’s Angels) is commended for its effective engagement with the student body.

***Commendation 6***

 The Macquarie Ancient History Association Student Advisory Council is commended for its effective engagement with the student body.

***Recommendation 6***

 That the contact details for the Macquarie Ancient History Association Student Advisory Council be included in Unit guides.

All this success in Teaching & Learning, however, comes at a high price, especially now, when a Department’s (and a University’s) success and reputation are measured at least as much in terms of research outputs as in teaching. The academic program of the Department is, by any measure, enormous: according to the Department’s SER (pp.37-38), 74 AHIS undergraduate Units are listed in the Handbook, and of these 58 are being taught in 2011, with the balance to be taught in 2012; in addition, the SER (pp.43-44) lists 67 MA Units, which already represents a pruning of 20 Units from previous offerings. The Department uses rotation and double-badging to make economies in the delivery of its program, but nonetheless there remains a significant burden of teaching, some of it unevenly spread across the academic staff. The size of the overall program also generates considerable work for the general staff. On top of this there are the supervisions of MA and PhD students, and for some staff these run well into double-digit figures. Furthermore, the department has significant teaching commitments in the OUA and Summer School programs, with projected increases in the former.

In the Review Team’s opinion, such workloads would be unsustainable even if the demands of the ERA did not exist. But with ERA, and indeed with the need to assist junior and middle-level staff along their career paths through the production of research, the Team cannot support the extent of teaching that currently pertains in the Department.

This is not to belittle the time and effort that go into the delivery of the teaching units in the Department, for without success in that area the Department would not exist. But it must find a balance between those pedagogical demands and the need to allow its staff, and especially its junior staff, to establish themselves on the national and international stages as up-and-coming and ultimately top-flight researchers. Staff who have become inured to heavy teaching loads can sometimes find in that occupation a reason for not engaging with research or for limiting their research only to the narrow limits of their doctoral theses. This leads eventually to a stultification of progress within the disciplines themselves, at least at the level of the Department. Increased research activity ought to enhance the quality of what is already a very good standard of teaching, and is especially important at HDR level where the Department has an excellent track record in recruitment. Nationally, departments which cover the ancient world have a hard row to hoe, as staff numbers are usually very small and teaching loads very high. Attendance at national or international research conferences is necessarily affected. Yet the Department of Ancient History is easily the largest of its type in Australasia, and it stands to reason that there must be means by which it can economize on its teaching program so as to grow its research program. The Team believes (from some personal experience) that the fear that any lessening of the teaching program will lead inevitably to a decline in student numbers, and hence a worsening of the Department’s budget situation, is misplaced. A re-packaging of the teaching program, if undertaken with an eye to both student and discipline demands, can in fact mean that fewer teaching units lead to increases in student uptake. As it stands, the teaching program by and large represents nothing more than the sum of several, discrete disciplinary parts. A re-packaging, which could recognize the synergies available from having several disciplines within one department, could witness a reduction in teaching loads with no consequent reduction in student attraction.

An immediate step in this direction must be a review of the teaching program with a view to condensing it, so as to ameliorate the heavy burden which many of the staff bear. Steps could include: integrating units, team-teaching, use of thematic courses, and disestablishing units which are being ‘rested’ or which are not covering their costs, except for language units which may be cross-subsidized. It is impossible to be prescriptive about the ideal number of offerings in a revised program, but the Review Team thinks that it would be a useful exercise for the Department to consider something like 30 units as the maximum at undergraduate level. A reduction should also help the Department become less reliant on casual staff appointments, which are unsustainable in the present financial situation.

***Recommendation 7***

 That the Department should ameliorate the teaching and assessment workloads for staff at both UG and PG levels.

The above does not remove the fact that there are some gaps in disciplinary expertise in the Department which, in a less fraught world, it would be good to fill. Assyriology and Demotic are the notable absences which were brought to the Review Team’s attention. Jewish Studies could also benefit from further support. The budgetary situation currently faced by the Department precludes its seeking funding from the Faculty for new staff with expertise in these fields. Opportunities may exist, however, through external sources, where the Department has already proved its skill at gaining funding. The Sir Asher Joel Foundation, for instance, springs to mind as a potential donor or part-donor towards positions in Assyriology and, more broadly, Jewish Studies.

***Recommendation 8***

 That the Department should investigate external funding opportunities for academic positions in Assyriology, Demotic and Jewish Studies.

An opportunity to raise the public profile of the Department, partly with a view to increasing its access to external funding, may be offered by the presence within the Department of the Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies. There seems to the Review Team scope to make one or both of these ventures flagship enterprises for the University as a whole. An approach to the Office of Institutional Advancement to seek funding to assist in publicizing MAC and ACANS might be couched in such terms.

***Recommendation 9***

 That the Department should communicate with the Office of Institutional Advancement to seek funding to assist in publicizing the Museum of Ancient Cultures and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, and even to make these flagship enterprises for the University.

On a more personal level, and with awareness that this request is unusual in such a context, the Review Team is aware of the pivotal role played by Dr Peter Keegan across all the avenues of teaching within the Department. He is also a productive researcher. Yet his position stands to be terminated at the end of this year. It is the view of the Review Team that his loss would be catastrophic to several aspects of the Department’s functioning, and strongly recommends that the position be maintained.

***Recommendation 10***

 That means be found for the position held by Dr Peter Keegan to be retained.

**5.3 Research**

The Department has a distinguished record in research and publication. Its commitment to high quality, innovative research is evident in its CORE appointments, its research centres, its various research outputs, its archaeological activity and its publication annually of *Ancient History: Resources for Teachers*, which regularly incorporates articles of excellent quality. There is particular strength in Egyptology, not just in national but indeed in international terms. The Department has plans to apply to the ARC for funding to establish ‘Ancient Cultures’ as an ARC Centre of Excellence. These plans seem both reasonable and potentially valuable in both funding and academic terms.

A1 The Department’s intention to apply for an ARC Centre of Excellence status is affirmed.

Various members of the Department discussed with the Review panel several strategies for improving the Department’s rating in the next round of the ERA. These included short-term buyouts for particular staff, the production of textbooks and subsequent use of funds raised from sales to support research initiatives, and the revision of research codes under which the Department’s research outputs would be classified. All such proposals seem thoughtful and likely to bear fruit under the circumstances.

A2 The Department’s strategies for enhancing its research ranking in the next round of the ERA are affirmed.

One further strategy, which the Department should consider, is the expansion of the editorial boards of its publications, notably in Egyptology and Ancient History, to include overseas members. This would increase the international exposure of these publications, as well as providing independent, external review processes for what may seem to be otherwise in-house publications, and thereby improving the standing of these publications for ERA.

In general, the Department’s record of gaining funding from the ARC is second-to-none in national terms. Its research centres and individual achievements provide evidence of considerable success in submitting high quality research proposals to the ARC. It is clear, however, that some members have become labelled in recent years as ‘research inactive’ on Faculty criteria for a variety of reasons, which require attention. Inevitably, the issue of relative workloads, especially teaching workloads, is highly relevant to this result. So too are issues related to overall strategy, joint projects, effective mentoring by senior research staff of junior staff, and communication between the various research centres. There is a great concentration of research and funding expertise within the Department, which might be deployed more effectively to the good of all than is being achieved at the moment. Some economy of teaching might be obtained from a more widely shared awareness of what the different research centres are doing, as this could point to means for enhancing interaction between them. It would also be extremely valuable if a member of the Department could be appointed to the relevant ERA panels, so that the Department may be kept abreast of ERA thinking and developments.

C7 The Department is commended on its successes in ARC grant applications.

R11 That the Department should generate a research strategy which enables all members of the Department to develop projects which might become the subject of ARC or other external funding applications.

R12 That the Department should consider means whereby senior staff can mentor junior staff in seeking external funding.

**5.4 Research Training**

By any comparable measure, national or international, the Department has a huge number of HDR students, who research a wide range of topics, display considerable initiative, and are very appreciative of their supervisors. This breadth of supervision of students of such calibre is both a strength of the Department and a significant problem, in that supervision loads are not spread evenly and supervision practices seem to vary considerably among staff members. Student interest and personal style are natural reasons for this situation, and they have grown organically with the steady rise of HDR numbers. At present, however, there are escalating pressures on so-called ‘out of time’ students, and the Department has a fairly large number of these. It seems right, therefore, for the Department to formulate clear guidelines and expectations for HDR progression, ongoing review, and supervision. Research Supervision Agreements or Memoranda of Understanding between supervisors and students can be a useful mechanism for ensuring clear understanding of expectations on both sides with regard to such matters as frequency of meetings, access to resources, etc.

C8 The Department is commended for its success in attracting HDR students.

R13 That the Department should establish means to improve completion-in-time rates of HDRs.

R14 That the Department should establish explicit guidelines in regard to what constitutes effective HDR supervision and encourages co-supervision arrangements in which experienced staff mentor junior staff in supervising HDR students.

In addition to the need to monitor more closely the supervision of HDR students, and to ensure some equity in the supervision time given to individual students, other issues raised during the Review included the question of Macquarie HDR students’ (ancient) language skills, and the preparation of HDR students for employment. Macquarie has recently made significant and commendable moves to increase the number of units available up to 300-level in the ancient languages, which are necessary for postgraduate and later professional work. Mechanisms are available for students to increase their language skills if they have come through their undergraduate degree with insufficient units for postgraduate study, although there is a significant cost to students in taking the extra time to undertake these further units. This is an international problem to which there does not appear to be a simple solution.

The Department might also consider the breadth as well as the depth of studies undertaken by its HDR students. In an ancient world studies context, some relatively niche research areas are fostered in the Department, which may not be helpful for their graduates’ future employment.

In spite of the Department’s great success in attracting HDR students, the Review Team detects room for a more systematic approach towards the recruitment and probation of HDR students. We would like to see the Department’s practices in this regard aligned more closely with those of the Faculty and University, especially with respect to enrolment procedures, scholarship rounds and the timing of funding applications. Some preliminary communication between the different levels along these lines would be helpful. An ongoing system of review and appraisal of the work of all HDR students could profitably be adopted, and expectations implanted about the completion of certain goals by each successive stage. This should help with the guidance of new HDRs and, we hope, also with the prospects of completion of more seasoned HDR students. It would inevitably involve some common elements and expectations on the part of supervisors too, though personal style will still have an opportunity to flourish.

R15 That the Department should establish an Admissions Committee for HDRs so as to align internal schedules and processes better with those of the Faculty and University.

R16 That the Department should pay careful attention to the recruitment and probation of new HDR students to ensure they have the necessary skills to achieve successful, on-time completions.

**5.5 Staff and Student Profile**

The Review Team is aware that there will be some key retirements in coming years. Fortunately, there is willingness – not to mention energy, drive and ability – among the middle and junior members of the staff to take on more senior administrative and leadership roles, so from this perspective the future of the Department appears to be in good hands. This process of change needs to be managed. The Department needs to think about its senior leadership, and about grooming suitable people for its Executive Committee (see above), and not to lose sight of the gender balance among its senior leaders.

In terms of the spread of staff across the various cultures and disciplines, there are some apparent disparities: for example, Greek and Roman studies appear particularly stretched, especially taking into account forthcoming retirements. The loss of expertise in Classical Greek History, in particular, may be countered by some shifting of other staff into the general area of Greek History, but the fundamental area of Classical Greek History should not be overlooked for too long into the future.

Egyptology is an area of obvious strength. It has excellent student numbers, international respect, and significant community support. The Review Team agrees with submissions that Assyriology and Demotic are areas for potential future appointments (see Recommendation 8, above). They would give a splendid completeness both to Macquarie’s program and to the study of the Ancient Near East in Australasia.

The situation regarding the languages has been raised above with regard to HDR students. Generally it is obvious that there are fine things happening in relation to these programs. The numbers are very large in relative terms, especially in Greek, where much work has been done to increase options for students and to make use of technological advances in teaching the language. Egyptian language numbers also appear good in international terms. The ancient languages represent a key area where the Department has looked at things which were not working so well in the past and has introduced a new approach which is paying dividends now, and which will be important for the future careers of Macquarie students. It is very encouraging that the Faculty recognises the vital importance of the ancient languages and is prepared to support them, even when the numbers of students do not reach minimum quotas imposed on other units. This all seems a good result of the administrative reorganization which has taken Ancient History away from Modern History at Macquarie. One area which was highlighted in submissions as still in need of attention was training in epigraphy. This is a very specialized skill at the HDR level, so some thought might be given to means of increasing its profile and students’ proficiency where necessary.

The student profile is marked by several noteworthy features. First, the Greek and Roman numbers dwarf the others, especially in Coptic and ECJS and particularly if the astonishingly large numbers in Myth are included among Greek and Roman (although this might be a little unfair, given that Near Eastern content is incorporated into the course). In addition, Roman History predominates in student attraction over Greek History at the undergraduate level. This seems to be partly a product of the charisma of the particular lecturers and the great loyalty which they naturally engender. It might also have something to do with the compulsory units of the HSC (Higher School Certificate) curriculum, as the lecturers themselves modestly pointed out.

In general, it is a matter of concern to the Review Team that the Department depends so heavily on the efforts of a handful of lecturers in achieving its very high student numbers and in delivering its outreach programs. Some staff seem to be marking vast numbers of essays and teaching huge numbers of students, while other colleagues are nowhere near as busy in teaching terms. There are huge undergraduate numbers, but they are not evenly spread. There are also huge HDR numbers, and again they are not evenly spread. Honours numbers are good and to some extent dependent upon the personal appeal of lecturers. A simple risk management analysis would suggest that the situation is precarious, and in need of mitigation. The comments made earlier in this Report about the need to reduce the number of teaching units in the Department must be read in this context also, insofar as a condensing of the teaching program on its own will not alleviate the workloads of some staff. Rather, other approaches, such as team-teaching, offer ways of ameliorating the situation for these staff, so long as unit-coordination is not then allowed to become an extra administrative burden.

**5.6 Community Engagement**

It is hard to do anything other than enthuse over the magnificent community outreach of this Department. Highlights include: MAHA (Macquarie Ancient History Association), the Rundle Foundation (Egyptology), the Sir Asher Joel Foundation and the Society for the Study of Early Christianity (SSEC), the Macquarie Ancient History Teachers Conference (held annually), the teaching and learning forum, SPQR (*Scientia Pertinens (ad) Quaestiones Romanas*), the activities of the Museum of Ancient Cultures (especially the travel into the outback), and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS), which works closely with local collectors, dealers and numismatic organizations. It is a shining example to everyone and in many ways presents a best-practice model for the University. The current Head of Department’s role and signal success in this area is notable, particularly as the achievements will last into the foreseeable future. The inclusive vision of what constitutes Ancient History, which these successes represent, should also engender a new view of how the teaching program may be consolidated and made both manageable and financially viable.

C9 The Department is commended for its high level Community Engagement, outreach programs and entrepreneurial activities, which represent best-practice to the University.

**5.7 Future Directions**

There is much to admire in what the Department does. It is difficult, therefore, to make pronouncements about future directions for such a dynamic and brilliant group of people. The Review Team feels, however, that although times may seem difficult at present, the Department has yet to encounter the kind of contrary headwinds which cognate departments in other institutions have encountered to their cost. There must be moves towards sustainable practices and rationalization of course offerings through, for example, team-teaching, theme courses (rather than culture-based courses), and a measured permeation or dissolving of the cultural and chronological boundaries currently in place. This will not, we would hope, undermine student numbers, but instead it might even lead to a new phase of dynamism in course design (although we realize that the Department is tired as a result of recent changes). The various units (Egyptology, Greece and Rome, ECJS, Coptic, Late Antiquity) tend to operate as separate or discrete units at the moment. This is not only a source of inequity but a tempting target for cost-cutting of a type that the Department would not want. Consultation with the Faculty along the lines noted above in this Review Report, would, we hope, be enormously beneficial for future negotiations at times when reality might bite a bit more than it has to date. Clear communication channels with the Faculty and University should provide reliable information for the Department’s future well-being, and a good way to ensure a flow of information is for staff to become members of Faculty and University committees, where this is possible. The establishment of a Departmental Risk Register can also be a useful mechanism through which future risks – to student enrolments, finances, academic or administrative positions, stakeholder relationships, external partnerships, research funding, etc. – can be foreseen, widely discussed in Departmental meetings and mitigated.

R17 That the Department should devote attention to forging an effective working relationship with the Faculty of Arts and Associate Deans within the Faculty, so that it may respond more quickly and creatively to the changing higher-education environment.

R18 That the Department should focus more on sustainability for the future than on simple expansion for its own sake.