**Department of Psychology Review**

**Response to recommendations**

**Implementation Plan**

**June 1, 2011**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rec No.** | **Recommendation** | **Responsibility** | **Response and Status** |
| 1. | **Undergraduate programs**:  *That the Department examine its undergraduate offerings within the constraints of APAC requirements with a view to:* |  |  |
| a | Reducing the number of hours taught in some units including transition to more Web-based units to decrease the need for double classes. | Learning & Teaching committee and HoD | 1. 104 & 105: Implemented staged reduction of face-to-face hours. In 2011 we reduced the tutorial hours to 16 hours per semester (total 55 hours per semester face-to-face.  2. Introduced composite mode option in all 2nd year units, and developing alternative-delivery modes in two units taught by R. Rapee & J. Cornish. |
| b | Correcting the imbalance that sees 7 out of 8 second year units as compulsory core units, which although ensuring a greater number of students continuing to third year Psychology, causes less choice for students across disciplines and more internal workload. | Learning & Teaching committee & HoD | Discussed at L&T and Departmental meetings and have agreement in principle. Currently investigating APAC graduate attribute requirements but hope to implement a reduction in number of 2nd year core units from 2013 to align with the timing of the next APAC accreditation cycle. |
| c | Reducing the units in the core program in psychology to allow students within the Bachelor of Arts to complete a second non-psychology major | Learning & Teaching committee and HoD | 1. See response to b  2. Negotiated a staged removal of 1sst year stats unit PSY122 from curriculum, as of 2013. |
| d | Equalizing and where appropriate reducing assessment across units while ensuring any student completing the core meets the attributes required of a psychology undergraduate program and the University. | Learning & Teaching committee and HoD | Assessment is constrained by MQ policy requiring 3 forms of assessment in 2 modes for each unit. Plan to map graduate capabilities to streamline and reduce duplication across units while ensuring all capabilities are addressed. |
| e | Allowing students who meet the ATAR to undertake the Bachelor of Arts to take the introductory courses in Psychology | Learning & Teaching committee and HoD | This issue will be addressed once we know the effect of removing PSY122 on enrolment numbers and progression to 2nd year. This could have implications for space, timetabling and workloads so will need to be managed carefully. |
| f | Building some practical skills, e.g., counselling and interviewing (e.g., units from Social Health), into the undergraduate program to ensure that the three-year degree remains attractive and viable. | Learning & Teaching committee and HoD | We will be working at establishing external partners such that our PACE unit (PSY399) is professionally relevant. |
| g | Redesigning the Honours programme to allow group Honours projects with individual reporting to decrease supervision workload. Attempt to find strategies to reduce competitive anxiety level in Honours students. | Fourth year committee and HoD | No dept support for suggestion to have group thesis projects. We will continue to communicate the various registration pathways. We are also seeking accreditation for 5th year (PG Dip applied psych) which will offer another alternative to masters. |
| i | Using complementary expertise in teaching from other University staff both internally (MACCS) and externally (MGSM, ASAM, BBE) to reduce teaching load whilst increasing exposure to new research areas. | Learning & Teaching committee, Departmental Executive, and HoD in consultation with other HoDs and directors | We are continuing discussions of strengthening links with CCD & IHCBS and already share HDR/ hons supervision. If CCD develops U/G units we will discuss how such units might fit into our curricula. We will examine a wider range of options from across the university for our next accreditation in 2013. |
| 2 | **Postgraduate programs**:  *That the Department examines its postgraduate offerings with a view to:* |  |  |
| a | Deleting the Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology, or allowing students who graduate from this program the opportunity to apply for the coursework Masters/PhD programs at Macquarie. | Fourth year committee and HoD | No dept support for closing this program. It is a feeder into our 5th year accredited program (PG Dip applied psych) and many are admitted to clinical master’s programs elsewhere or to our own Master’s in Organisational psych. |
| b | Reducing any electives within each of the postgraduate programs to ensure that staff with expertise and experience in teaching skills can contribute to the undergraduate program. | Postgraduate coursework committee and HoD | We have reduced offerings as a result of the PG Review, and will revisit the teaching loads once the new curriculum is rolled out. |
| c | Allowing students to take units outside the Department as part of their program, e.g., units in the MBA could feed into the Masters in Organizational Psychology and vice-versa. | Postgraduate coursework committee and HoD | Not high priority: we will examine this suggestion once we roll out the other suggested changes in the curriculum (e.g., elimination of PSY122, reduction in core units) |
| d | Consider whether the best interests of the Department and its students are served by continuing with the Post Graduate Diploma in Social Health, or whether the skills employed in this program would be better used elsewhere within the undergraduate programmes. | Postgraduate coursework committee, Departmental Executive and HoD | We plan to evaluate the Social Health program to ensure it serves a useful function. As for including such skills in the U/G program we encourage these skills within our capstone “PACE” unit (PSY399) and there are counseling units at the 4th year level. |
| e | Seek accreditation of the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Psychology as five year training in Psychology | Postgraduate coursework committee, Departmental Executive and HoD | Actioned: Submitted application and site visit on 18th August 2011. Program also changed name to PGDIP in Professional Psych. |
| f | Give serious consideration to succession planning with respect to the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Psychology and the Graduate Diploma in Social Health, as even though they expressed concern re the latter, they felt it should continue. | Departmental Executive and HoD | Not high priority: There is existing capacity within the department for immediate succession for an interim period. Should one or both directors of these programs resign we would readvertise the positions. |
| g | Building MQ University differentiation of offerings in areas of research strength, in line with the Strategic plan e.g. research intersections with ASAM and MACCS (Clin Neuro) or MGSM (Org) | Postgraduate coursework committee, Departmental Executive and HoD | MACCS already owns a unit in clinical neuropsychology. As the CCD evolves other opportunities may arise. MGSM options were trialled previously and the outcome proved difficult for our students. |
|  | **Feedback** |  |  |
| a | the Department cease using Blackboard to obtain feedback and require unit coordinators to seek feedback in the last class that is likely to be well–attended, e.g., a tutorial class | Learning and Teaching committee | Student feedback is rarely obtained through Blackboard. Rather, it is obtained once per semester through LEUs and TEDS. We are considering making these compulsory for all units every semester. This will need to be discussed with LTC to ensure they have the capacity to carry out this task. |
| b | As a requirement for entry into a doctoral program, students agree to be interviewed by a third party on conclusion of their program | HDR committee | We encourage response rates to MUSEQ-R. We are open to the suggestion but there may be budgetary considerations in getting a “third party” involved. We will forward the recommendation to Faculty HDR. The Faculty HDR Office is investigating its capacity to take on this task. |
| c | That the University seek to align its practices with respect to obtaining feedback on the CEQ and GDS with those of other Universities – i.e., and do this at graduation | Learning & Teaching and HDR committee | This is a University responsibility that seems to have been implemented at the recent graduation. |
|  | **Workload:**  *That the Dept/Faculty re-examine workload models to ensure:* |  |  |
| a | That they capture the diversity of interests and expertise to be found within the Department with a new balanced teaching/research workload model. | Faculty working group on the Workloads model | The Faculty is currently designing a new workload model, and Psychology is represented on this working group. |
| b | That they do not place an emphasis on face-to-face teaching and all that entails | Faculty working group on the Workloads model | As above. We will convey this view in the working group. |
| c | They recognize in a period of transition that it may be necessary for a senior academic to take on a significant academic advising role (e.g., as *Undergraduate Director*). | Dept Executive Committee and HoD | The current Head of Department has taken the role as Chair of the Teaching and Learning committee in order to implement some of these recommendations. We do plan to create Undergraduate Director positions, and will determine workload implication within the executive committee. |
| d | That they recognize all aspects of academic work and reward people for quality not quantity | Faculty working group on the Workloads model | We agree and will convey this sentiment in the workloads working group, but it may be difficult to implement. |
| e | That future recruitment is at ECR level to distribute teaching load better. | Department Executive and HoD | We have recruited two level B positions in 2011 and will plan future opportunities at this level |
|  | **Research** |  |  |
| a | That the Department continue with its development of the Centre in Elite Performance Expertise and Training | Director of Centre, Associate Dean Research, and Centre members | This has been achieved. |
| b | That the Department continue to support and build upon the successes of the Centre for Emotional Health | Department executive and HoD | First, we have supported the CEH by providing budget for a marketing and administration staff member for 2011. Second, we have supported the recruitment of a CORE staff member (Nick Titov); Third, we supported their application to become a National Centre of Excellence. |
| c | That the Research Higher Degrees Committee continue with its initiatives designed to improve completion rates including a re-assessment of the value of the combined Masters/PhD. | HDR committee | We have accessed statistics on completion rates. We have flagged the rigour of the combined Masters/PhD program and recommended to University HDRO increased allocation of time to complete. |
| d | That the Department/ Faculty/ University re-examine the issue of the number of students who can supervised by one academic | HDR committee and HoD | We are currently addressing this problem by analysing the data across psychology and MACCS and by ensuring that all possible academics are on the Macquarie University Supervisor Register (MQSR). The average primary supervisor to student ratio is 1:4, with only 4 academics with a student load greater than a reasonable limit of 8 (in popular programs). This information will also be tabled at Faculty to ensure that appropriate limits are placed on the number of students that are supervised by each academic. |
| e | That the Department / Faculty University attempt to arrive at a balance between student choice and the needs of the University and broader community when allocating scholarships | HDR committee and HoD | The University is attempting to streamline ranking procedures for scholarships. |
| f | That the Department/ Faculty University recognize that all good research is not nor can be located within Centres and that where excellence exists it should be supported and rewarded | Departmental executive and HoD | Opportunities for research support and rewards are equitable across all staff members and do not favour centre members. We do encourage collaborative groupings and the formation of research centres. |
|  | **Space** |  |  |
| a | That the Faculty/University provide research space to be shared by members of staff of the Department of Psychology who are not in Centres or who do not require dedicated laboratory space | HoD and Faculty space planning committee | There are plans to relocate Psychology and its research space, and we will be advocating for allocation of shared / bookable research space, in addition to dedicated space for researchers with heavy / regular lab-space needs |
| b | The Faculty/University recognize that where research involves members of the public, the space must be of adequate standard. Likewise, it needs to consider allocating a parking space close to a Centre, e.g., the Centre for Emotional Health, to ensure that the experience of visiting Macquarie is a positive one | HoD in consultation with the Faculty space planning committee & the DVC Research | There are plans to relocate Psychology and its research space, motivated partly to address the low standards of research space currently allocated to Psychology. The Rod Power Clinic and the CEH are being located to the Hearing Hub where visitor parking has been allocated. |
| c | All professional programs within the University should be accorded space that is fit for purpose. Thus, all of the postgraduate programs in Psychology should be provided with access to a large room with adjoining break-out rooms. | Faculty space planning committee & time-tabling project | As part of the University drive for innovative teaching spaces, a room (C5C Forum) was built and can accommodate smaller-group work within the room. We don’t comply with requirements for booking the C5C Forum (min of 90 students) so will need new teaching space. Requests for this type of space have been made repeatedly. The need for teaching rooms with smaller break-out rooms is high-priority. |
| d | That the Faculty/University recognise that the inadequate space has impacted the University strategy of CoRE recruitment, resulting in the loss of potential high calibre researchers to MQ. | HoD in consultation with the Faculty space planning committee & the DVC Research | The Faculty is aware that poor research space has affected recruitment of outstanding international new staff members and plans are in place to relocate Psychology and enhance its research space |
|  |  |  |  |