



MONASH University

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Academic Review

2004

VOLUME 2

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Monash University – Excellence and Diversity¹

Strategic Framework – 2004-2008

I. Statement of Purpose

Monash University seeks to improve the human condition by advancing and transmitting knowledge through research and education and by a commitment to social justice, human rights and a sustainable environment.

II. Context

In the 43 years since Monash admitted its first students, the university has established a reputation for innovation and quality in research and education. It has seen four decades of growth and development that are a tribute to the vision of its founders and those who have come after them. Monash is now at a critical phase in its history. Higher education faces new challenges and Monash must build on its foundations and seize the opportunities the new environment presents. *Leading the Way: Monash 2020* describes an exciting vision for Monash over the next two decades. Its defining themes of *innovation, engagement* and *internationalisation* and its underlying philosophy are still relevant and appropriate. In the light of new and emerging opportunities, however, it is necessary to define the strategic directions for Monash over the next five years. Recent data relating to both research performance and evaluation of teaching suggests that in relative terms Monash is stable rather than improving compared with other leading Australian universities. A major new effort is required if Monash is to achieve its potential to become not only a leading Australian university but also a truly great international university. It is the best positioned of any Australian university to do so.

Monash was one of the first Australian universities to recognise the importance of an international focus. Through its innovative approach to research, international student recruitment and in attracting excellent staff, the university has put itself on an exciting path. Its international campuses provide particular opportunities and challenges.

Monash is unusual among Australia's research-intensive universities in having multiple locations including one regional, two outer urban and two overseas campuses. Monash is big enough to be able to concentrate on cutting-edge international research excellence while also delivering high quality education and research programs with a more regional or applied focus. This provides particular opportunities for local community and regional engagement and gives students from diverse backgrounds access to quality education. It also requires careful planning to ensure that all programs are consistent with Monash's overall strategy and vision.

III. Values

Monash's strategies will be directed towards achieving or enhancing the following qualities:

- Excellence in education
- Excellence in research and scholarship
- Excellence in management
- Innovation and creativity
- Diversity
- International focus
- Fairness
- Engagement
- Integrity
- Self-reliance.

¹ Note: This version of Excellence and Diversity reflects amendments arising from discussions at the University's Planning Conference 2004.

IV. Strategic Overview

Excellence in education:

Recognising the fundamental significance of high quality education to the future of Australia and the world, Monash will strive for the highest possible quality in teaching and learning. To achieve this, Monash will:

- foster an environment that attracts the highest quality staff and students
- be guided by its view of the nexus between teaching and research
- provide sufficient financial and physical resources to sustain high quality education
- design and deliver staff development and student leadership programs to assist staff and students to achieve their full potential
- maintain and further develop an environment where staff are valued for their contributions to teaching and learning
- plan teaching carefully and creatively, with planning for each campus designed to meet local needs as well as the university's overall objectives
- continue to enhance teaching and learning by development and application of advances in information technology and apply such advances to increase flexibility in teaching and learning whether on or off campus
- further implement the principles of student-centred, flexible learning emphasising the discovery, analysis and integration of information, problem-solving, communication and a preparation for a life-time of learning
- develop effective methods to ensure quality of teaching and learning for our own quality improvement cycle and to demonstrate to others that we are performing at an excellent level.

Excellence in research and scholarship:

Monash is committed to being a great research-intensive university and to playing a major role in preparing the research leaders of the future for the public and private sectors. Monash will enlarge its horizons and look internationally to establish benchmarks for its performance. Improving research performance is a major priority for the next five years. This will involve striking a balance between established peaks of excellence at the cutting edge internationally and research and scholarship with applied or local relevance. The location of the Australian synchrotron at Monash provides a wonderful opportunity for Monash to become the regional centre for science and technology but this will require careful planning. To enhance its activities in research and research training Monash will:

- provide an environment that supports high quality research and attracts the best researchers from around the world
- strengthen funding and develop strategies to provide appropriate infrastructure to support high quality research
- create an environment where staff are valued for their contributions to research and scholarship
- develop strategies including scholarships to attract the highest quality research students
- add to existing support and professional development of research students and ensure training of supervisors on all campuses
- develop funding strategies that allow a balance between areas of research strength and the encouragement and support of early career researchers and scholars
- provide mentorship for early career researchers including, in particular, those returning after career interruptions
- respond to external research initiatives and attract research funding from State and Commonwealth governments, international sources and industry
- enhance research and scholarship in disciplines and campuses where it is currently underdeveloped and encourage and mentor capable staff currently inactive in research to become active
- build collaborative research groupings within Monash as appropriate through cross-departmental and faculty structures such as centres or institutes
- collaborate widely with other institutions in Australia and overseas including other universities, CSIRO and industry
- develop clear and mutually supportive relationships with Monash's affiliated research institutes and teaching hospitals to enhance research and research training

- actively recruit leading researchers to enhance existing areas of strength and to serve as the nucleus for new research initiatives
- enhance success in national competitive grants by encouraging researchers to prepare and submit better bids for competitive funding
- develop programs to gain maximum benefit from the location of the synchrotron on the Monash Clayton campus
- benchmark Monash research performance against leading international universities and the Group of Eight.

Excellence in Management:

Excellent education and research need to be supported by excellent management. Monash's complexity, size and diversity provide significant management challenges. A fundamental component of excellence in management is to value staff and to be an exemplary employer. To achieve excellence in this area Monash will:

- ensure that management processes are efficient, accountable and transparent
- develop an explicit approach to the management of Monash as a matrix of campuses and faculties
- foster a consultative and collegial approach to management whilst maintaining efficiency
- have a rigorous program of planning, risk management, implementation and evaluation of plans and reporting for all divisions whether academic, commercial or administrative
- continue to improve information management including upgrading information technology systems
- ensure that all proposals for new initiatives are accompanied by rigorous financial plans and risk analyses
- pay attention to all aspects of responsible environmental management
- address occupational health and safety so all aspects of our duty of care are satisfied
- create an environment where all staff are valued as equal partners in achieving the vision of the university
- appoint and support excellent general staff and provide them with high quality development and educational programs
- provide leadership and development programs for staff in senior positions
- maintain excellent communication throughout the University
- ensure that the quality of the support services for students and staff are excellent
- ensure that employment conditions are optimised

Diversity:

Monash is distinguished by its organisational diversity, and the university must build and promote this. Its diversity includes multiple campuses in city, regional and international locations, an extensive range of educational and research programs and centres of excellence covering almost all fields and disciplines. The wider Monash encompasses a foundation studies program and Monash College. To take advantage of its diversity Monash will:

- formulate strategic plans for each of its campuses that ensure that not only are educational opportunities provided to students from a diverse range of backgrounds but that each campus provides high quality education and research appropriate to its region and consistent with Monash's overall vision
- recognise that the changes re-shaping modern society require advancement in knowledge across the full range of scholarship.
- develop and support the humanities and creative and performing arts as well as the sciences and professional education
- recognise that maximising performance requires community diversity to be reflected in staffing at all levels of seniority
- provide educational and counselling support so that students and staff from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible are attracted to Monash.

Innovation and Creativity:

Monash University prides itself on its culture of innovation and creativity, with imaginative thinking fostering new and exciting approaches across the spectrum of education, research and development. In a rapidly changing world it is essential that Monash continues to take advantage of new opportunities and develop new solutions. To sustain and develop this culture, Monash will:

- celebrate and reward creative ideas and approaches in education, research and external engagement
- encourage faculties, departments and service divisions to develop new methods of realising the Monash vision
- question accepted concepts and methods, welcome debate and encourage positive ideas for improvement
- ensure that all academic programs provide opportunities for Monash students to develop their creative abilities
- while recognising, defining and managing risk, make conscious decisions to take risks if the potential academic returns justify them.

International Focus:

Although remaining centred in Australia, Monash will be fully engaged internationally and, anticipating an increasing trend to global systems of education, industry, trade and governance, ensure that all our educational programs have strong international content and focus. To achieve this, Monash will:

- continue to attract a significant number of international students to all Monash campuses by providing high quality, internationally-relevant educational and research training programs
- further develop the Monash Abroad program increasing the opportunities for Monash students to gain international experience
- further develop online learning so that Monash programs are available to a wider range of international students studying either partly or fully off-campus
- liaise with its joint venture partner in Malaysia to further develop the Malaysian campus and extend the range of programs available
- further develop Monash South Africa guided by a business plan with carefully defined milestones and targets
- continue to promote Monash in Asia, Europe and North America through well-planned strategies involving centres, sponsored events and targeted marketing.
- form strategic alliances with high quality universities and research centres in Asia, Europe, the Americas and Africa to enhance research collaboration and international staff and student exchanges
- ensure that all Monash educational programs have strong international content and perspectives and that our international campuses contribute to their development
- develop further international campuses, when and if they are supported by a sound business plan and risk assessment, are welcomed by the host country and are compatible with Monash's strategic vision and financial planning.

Fairness:

Respect for individuals regardless of religion, race, belief, gender or disability is fundamental to Monash. The university is fully committed to the principles of fairness and tolerance and is committed to assisting students from diverse backgrounds to develop through higher education. Monash is also committed to providing employment opportunities for staff in a fair and equitable way. In accord with these values, Monash will:

- provide a range of equity-based scholarship programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels aimed at educationally or financially disadvantaged students in Australia and internationally
- develop, in consultation with indigenous leaders, a comprehensive education program to achieve effective preparation and bridging, recruitment and retention of indigenous students
- enter partnerships with TAFE providers and secondary schools to develop bridging and articulation programs to assist educationally disadvantaged students to access Monash courses
- continue to develop and implement programs to ensure that no staff member is unfairly disadvantaged as a result of her or his gender, race, religion or disability
- further develop an environment which welcomes and supports individuals without discrimination or intolerance.

Engagement:

Monash will be fully engaged with its communities including local schools, governments, industry, professions and the general public. Monash will:

- interact as relevant and appropriate with local communities, local government and local politicians with respect to each of its campuses, both in Australia and overseas

- actively engage Monash alumni in the development of the university and its relations with wider communities
- develop campuses to become vibrant centres featuring high quality art, music and theatre that is accessible to the community
- use its excellent sporting facilities to enliven campuses and engage with students and staff and surrounding communities
- engage with the professions at all levels, especially in the design of educational programs
- enhance relations with secondary schools and provide high quality information to prospective students
- maintain continuing and constructive relationships with relevant politicians and government officials
- involve industry partners in advisory and liaison roles, seek joint industry-academic research funding, and where appropriate recruit part-time or honorary staff from industry
- encourage academic staff to undertake consulting for industry where this does not impinge substantially on teaching and research
- encourage staff to contribute to public debate and advocacy in areas of expertise and in more general areas relating to social justice, human rights and a sustainable environment
- develop campuses to allow for relevant business presence where this enhances research, educational or infrastructure objectives.

Integrity:

Monash recognises that only by placing an absolute value on integrity and honesty will it be able to achieve its aspiration to be a great international university. To ensure this, Monash will:

- see that all its dealings are characterised by openness and transparency and conform to best academic, financial and business standards
- have an active program of educating staff and students about appropriate standards of academic and professional conduct
- implement processes for detection, handling and minimisation of all forms of academic fraud and misconduct
- ensure that its policies for ownership of intellectual property are clear and fair
- have processes to deal with conflicts of interest in research, teaching and assessment, human resource management and financial and business dealings.

Self-reliance:

It is very unlikely that there will be increases in public funding for Australian universities of sufficient magnitude to allow them to become competitive with the top rank of overseas universities. Yet if Australia is to become a significant international player in innovation, industry and in the global economy it is essential that there is a substantial increase in the funding available to our universities. While continuing to argue for increased public investment in tertiary education Monash recognizes that it has the capacity to improve its financial position steadily and to become progressively more self-reliant. To this end, Monash will:

- develop an explicit approach to the understanding of the cost of all our activities and the revenue generated in helping to arrive at a transparent budgeting and financial management system which is strategic with respect to achieving the core objectives of the university in education and research
- continue to improve the financial management capacity of senior staff
- regularly review structures and processes to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency
- continue to optimize the use of our physical resources
- encourage research commercialisation
- initiate a major university-wide fund-raising campaign
- seek to maximise fee income while offering merit and equity scholarships to students
- seek support for joint ventures with industry or government consistent with the strategic directions of the university
- encourage submissions for support to traditional and non-traditional granting agencies both in Australia and overseas and ensure that such applications are of high quality.

V. Planning Cycle

An annual planning cycle will be implemented involving the formulation of a university wide annual plan, the formulation or updating of the teaching and learning plan, the research and research training management plan, the support services plan, faculty specific plans, campus specific plans, and the marketing plan. The

emphasis will be on formulating plans that are linked to the budget-setting process and are subjected to an annual cycle of evaluation of progress against plan. It will be essential throughout that staff and students have substantial input into the planning process and feel committed to the plans proposed.

V1. Monash in 2008

As we are in an environment of change and unpredictability, it is impossible to predict the future. Our aspiration is that by 2008 Monash will be established as a leading international university, recognised for its excellence in research and scholarship and as a destination of choice for students from all over the world. Our campuses in Australia and overseas will be united by common governance and a commitment to the highest standards but they will also be fully engaged with their local regions and in the case of the international campuses integrated into the higher education systems of their country. Monash will be recognised as an excellent employer in all respects and will be known for its advocacy of social justice and tolerance and for its integrity. It will be fully engaged with its alumni, government and industry and will have moved further towards self-reliance.



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

FACULTY VISION AND BROAD STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

FACULTY VISION

The focus of the work of the Faculty of Education is learning and development — the learning and development of individuals of all ages, and of organisations and communities.

We are committed to advancing the public interest through high quality, innovative and ethical research, teaching and community service that takes seriously the complexity of the local and global horizons of a public university. To this end, we will create and pursue opportunities that strengthen and sustain a vibrant intellectual community.

Our vision is of:

Graduates drawn from diverse communities who are capable, ethical citizens of the world, distinguished by their knowledge, intellectual engagement and professional skill, and their innovation and flexibility.

Research practice and scholarly output that is recognized locally and internationally for its originality, rigour and impartiality, and advice and services that inform and lead professional practice, public debate and policy, and community action.

An environment — intellectual, social, physical and web — that challenges, enthuses and supports all to learn and excel and which sustains productive working relations characterised by parity of respect, contribution and recognition.

To strengthen and sustain our capacity to realise this vision, we will become increasingly self reliant, vigorously pursuing new opportunities while managing an effective balance between diversification, growth and consolidation. We will privilege forms of diversification that align most closely with our research and teaching priorities and strengths.

ABOUT THE FACULTY

The Faculty of Education is located on three Australian campuses, Gippsland, Peninsula and Clayton, and teaches offshore in Singapore. While the majority of our 3100+ students are Australian residents, our 300+ international students come from approximately 50 countries. We are a broad-based and pluralist educational community. Our staff and students have a wide range of discipline backgrounds, thus we offer a variety of teaching and research perspectives, orientations and expertise.

Our teaching

Our courses span initial and further education for teachers of early childhood, primary, secondary and adult learners, counselling and human development, sport and outdoor recreation, and capacity building for individuals, organisations and communities. We recognise that students have a wealth of experiences and expertise that can enhance both their own learning and that of others. Thus our pedagogies acknowledge the contributions to learning that are made by both staff and students. The majority of our courses are available both on and off campus, and are complemented with on-line learning materials.

Our undergraduate and graduate courses

Almost half of our students (42%) are undergraduates in initial teacher education ranging from early childhood to adult, or in sport and outdoor recreation. These courses are in considerable demand attracting approximately two thirds of all first preference applications in the state of Victoria. Another quarter (27%) is enrolled in graduate diplomas that provide initial teacher education for students who have a Bachelors degree in a non-Education field. Primary and Secondary Education and Sport and Outdoor Recreation are offered at Gippsland, Early Childhood and Primary Education at Peninsula, and Secondary and Adult Education at Clayton. Within our teacher education program we offer 25 curriculum specialisations ranging across the humanities and social sciences, creative and performing arts, mathematics and sciences, business and information technology.

Our post-graduate courses

One fifth (20%) of our students are enrolled in postgraduate coursework leading to Post-graduate Certificates and Diplomas, and Masters by Coursework. They are drawn from formal and informal education settings and a wide range of occupations concerned with human and organisational development and learning. Our postgraduate coursework offerings are flexible and diverse, recognising different starting points and pathways to learning. We offer Work and Learning Studies with specialisations in Adult and Vocational Education, Educational Leadership, Organisational Leadership, Mentoring and Coaching and Community Development. Global Learning, Language and Culture studies includes specialisations in International Education, Teaching Languages Other Than English, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Literacy Studies. Curriculum and Professional Studies offers special pathways in Literacy Studies, Mathematics and Science Education, Music Education, Information and Communication Technologies in Education (ICTE) and Early Childhood Education. Our Psychology pathways include Counselling, Mentoring and Coaching, Educational and Developmental Psychology and Inclusive Education.

Our research degree courses

The Faculty has a large research preparation program with 12% of our students (over 340) enrolled in higher degrees by research at both masters and doctoral levels. Many other students undertake honours degrees or a significant research project as part of their coursework Masters degree, and in this way can gain access to doctoral programs. Our doctoral programs offer supervision and support leading to both PhDs and EdDs. The Doctor of Education (EdD) has been offered since 1991 and provides an opportunity for professionals to undertake a research-based program of study that makes a contribution to knowledge that advances professional practice. The PhD is expected to make a contribution to knowledge. Graduates from our doctoral programs now occupy senior positions in education and in research in many countries.

Our research

A commitment to producing knowledge that links academic and professional knowledge in ways that enhance professional practice is a motivating force for many of our academic staff. We have been involved in a series of ARC linkage projects that have considered teaching standards in different subject areas: science, maths, English, history and early childhood education. We host the National Centre for History Education, which aims to build an internationally recognised Australian research community in history education and are known for our work in civics and citizenship education. We also hosts PEEL, the Project for Enhancing Effective Learning, which is an ongoing collaborative activity between academics and teachers operating as a network of autonomous groups of teachers who take on a role of interdependent

innovators. Other faculty members work more locally with schools and school clusters in Victoria, supporting school-based research in which teachers develop as researchers. Teachers have opportunities to use their experience in these research projects to gain research qualifications, including the EdD and our research Masters degree.

The Faculty has a national and international profile in various fields of education research. There is a long tradition of research in science and mathematics education that is now being extended through formal linkages with Kings College London. This field of inquiry extends into broader research on teaching and learning and professional practice. The Centre for Work and Learning Studies draws together researchers with profiles in policy studies and studies of work, organisation and leadership. This work interfaces with academic studies of globalisation, international education, cross-cultural and cross-national policy and practice undertaken through MCRIE, the Monash Centre for Research in International Education. The Monash University-ACER Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) focuses on the contribution of education and training to economic and social development and the implications for education and training of the changing nature of the Australian economy. Much of the work is concerned with improving the knowledge base for policy development and implementation.

Staff working in psychology conduct significant NHMRC and ARC funded studies and engage in professional research which has made serious contributions to knowledge. The Krongold Centre for Exceptional Children and the Elwyn Morey Centre for Early Intervention each have strong reputations for their work with children.

Language and literacy, early childhood education, sport and outdoor recreation, and studies of cultural difference and youth have also provided contexts in which staff have built distinctive individual research profiles and communities of research students. We are now engaged in growing numbers of local, national and international consultancies. This work is highly valued in the Faculty, offering significant opportunities for close engagement with the professions that we serve and providing access to situations and conversations for purposes of research.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Faculty of Education will support Monash University's values and strategic directions by our attention to quality and to the local and global horizons of all that we do. We will seek a balanced portfolio of high quality teaching and research on each of our campuses and, wherever we operate, locally and internationally, we will strive for fidelity to the research-teaching nexus that we believe to be the essence of a university education

1 Courses, teaching and learning

Strategies relating to *teaching and learning* will be directed towards achieving:

- 1-1 Curriculum that is current, theoretically and practically rigorous, internationally oriented and locally relevant and promotes professional ethics of care and justice.
- 1-2 Varied and productive pedagogies that challenge and extend all students intellectually while being respectful and inclusive of difference.
- 1-3 Course structures, policies and procedures that are efficient and sustainable while enabling innovative and flexible teaching, learning and assessment.
- 1-4 Rigorous and transparent quality assurance processes that inform all aspects of the curriculum of the Faculty and engender confidence in and satisfaction with outcomes.
- 1-5 High demand for the Faculty of Education's courses from a diverse range of students.

We will extend our global engagement through international teaching relationships particularly but not only in the Asia Pacific region and provide expanded opportunities for our students to learn and work in different cultural settings. We will further develop our relationship with our local communities — schools and public and private organisations — providing students with models of communities of learners at all stages of development in all kinds of settings.

We will develop innovative and flexible approaches to course delivery that offer face to face and virtual learning and pastoral care sites for students to support connections between students and peers and between students and staff. We will implement quality assurance processes and provide professional development opportunities to ensure teaching approaches, materials and resources that are contemporary,

engaging and professionally presented. Through integrated data management and innovative web design we will integrate and manage the educational facets of students' course experience including academic study, fieldwork, professional and community experiences and administration.

2 Research and scholarly practice

Strategies relating to *research and scholarly practice* will be directed towards achieving:

- 2-1 A clear and focused research profile which gives the Faculty of Education an identity, recognition and impact within its various research fields nationally and internationally, and influences policy and practice more broadly.
- 2-2 A culture of innovation and support that is vibrant and actively removes constraints to imaginative, high quality and impartial research practice.
- 2-3 Each academic Faculty member with her or his own productive research agenda and pursuing a distinctive intellectual trajectory.
- 2-4 Research induction that enables participants to pursue rigorous and ethical research practice in a range of different educational and occupational contexts, including for academic careers in universities.
- 2-5 A diversity of research supports that resource and acknowledges a diversity of innovative research outcomes.

An immediate focus will be the successful functioning of research groupings within the Faculty. These groupings will contribute to increased research productivity and reputation by:

- concentrating staff expertise in ways that consolidate existing and emerging research strengths;
- mentoring and working with staff who are 'new researchers' within the group, to assist in their writing of research proposals and recognised publications and generally support the development of their track records;
- being a focus for research development plans for extending opportunities and undertaking funded and contract research and consultancy work;
- providing a structure for communicating our research expertise and strengths to students and other scholars, assigning supervisors to new research students and facilitating the research training of these students;
- making our research work more visible outside the Faculty.

We will further the development of international research and professional networks on all continents and enhance the attractiveness of the Faculty of Education to international staff, students and visitors. Our research engagement with our local communities will strengthen links with schools and regions and also expand further into public and private sectors.

3 Faculty environment

Strategies relating to the *faculty environment* will be directed towards achieving:

- 3-1 A high quality physical and resource environment for learning and working
- 3-2 A friendly, efficient and inclusive organisational environment for students that encourages their engagement, autonomy and learning
- 3-3 A friendly, efficient and inclusive organisational environment for staff that supports high quality research, teaching and administration
- 3-4 High quality and diverse staffing for all facets of the Faculty of Education's activities.
- 3-5 All members of staff contributing productively and striving to excel in an atmosphere of fairness, trust and respect.

We will focus on ensuring the continuance of a vibrant intellectual community and a welcoming and friendly, efficient and effective learning and working environment even as we grow and diversify. In recognition of the different benefits of face to face and computer mediated interaction, we will seek innovative and robust approaches to each that facilitate communication and provide staff and students with a common and connected Monash experience, whatever their location or the extent and nature of their engagement with the Faculty.

We will encourage and support innovation, resourcefulness, flexibility and cooperation amongst staff, in order to develop satisfying, efficient and effective ways of working that further enhance our research and research training, our teaching and our management of the student experience. In this regard, we will invest in improvements to our IT content management and review our current administrative practices to identify areas for improvement and to increase seamlessness of activities. Our policies and practices will be premised on productive working relations characterised by parity of respect, contribution and recognition.

4 Faculty development

To support the managed growth and expansion of high quality research and teaching programs, strategies for the *sustainable development* of the faculty will be directed towards achieving:

- 4-1 High demand for the Faculty of Education's commercial research and consultancy services in fields that align with its research and development priorities
- 4-2 High demand for the Faculty of Education's award and non-award full fee based courses drawing a diversity of students from Education and non-Education sectors
- 4-3 Leadership of a diverse range of influential relationships with industry, community and the professions that enhance the reputation and position of the Faculty and its capacity to engage in productive research, teaching and community service
- 4-4 Business practices that are highly regarded within the Faculty and externally as efficient, ethical and effective in returning benefits to the Faculty and its staff and to its clients.

To secure these ends, we will seek to position ourselves so that we pro-actively influence the shape of, as well as respond to, emerging market opportunities. In this regard, we will also be selective in our responses to opportunities, by ensuring that we make strategically informed choices and commitments that are aligned with our capabilities, resources and priorities.

The maintenance and furtherance of our profile and reputation in teaching and research depend on the range of our existing partnerships and networked relations with other key groups, and their consolidation, and on the continued identification and expansion of the numbers of such partnerships. We will continue, therefore, to foster goodwill and trust in our dealings with customers and partners. Within the framework of scholarly values to which we stand committed, our aim will be to respond as flexibly as possible by, for example, customising our programs to meet their immediate and long term needs.

Review of Faculty of Education

Monash University Gippsland Student Union
Submission

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Introduction

The Faculty of Education at Monash University spans 3 campuses and has over 2500 EFTSU in teaching load. 9% of those students are enrolled externally, a total of 357 students through the Gippsland campus. This submission is made in response to the call for contributions from stakeholders in the Monash community to a Review of the Faculty of Education and deals primarily with those issues identified by and affecting students studying via off campus learning. The submission will focus on several key areas under the terms of reference which the Monash University Gippsland Student Union (MUGSU) would like to address. Specifically these are items 5, 7, 13, 14, and 16.

Environment, resources and support services

5. The appropriateness of the staffing profile for enabling the Faculty to promote, realise and sustain positive outcomes in relation to its vision and development strategy:

MUGSU has concerns about the staffing profile allocated in particular to the Graduate Diploma of Education courses offered via off campus learning. Attention is drawn to instances of only one staff member teaching units of some 120 enrolments; this seriously undermines the quality of the academic support provided. Marking of assignments is undertaken by unit advisors with no utilisation of casual markers even when required. This has led to a situation where the overwhelming majority of students in one unit in the Graduate Diploma (Secondary) course have not received feedback on any of their assignments from Semester 1 of 2004. Anecdotal feedback from students suggests that this is not an isolated circumstance and that inadequate staffing over a number of years has caused concerns related to assessment, feedback, timely production of unit material and organisation of fieldwork placements.

7. The quality and efficiency of the delivery of support services (student, academic, physical, library and IT):

The quality of support services offered to students is minimal in relation to off campus learning. Student support is inadequate in some instances. Information provided about and arrangement of placements in the Graduate Diploma courses was very poor this semester. Some students were given inadequate advance warning of placement arrangements – in some cases as little as two days - and some placements could not be arranged at all and alternative arrangements were necessary. The impact of this lack of communication and organisation is high given the nature of off campus students who are often mature age, working students with families and other responsibilities which cannot be easily altered or rearranged. Students were dissuaded from making their own placement arrangements by the Course Co-ordinator even though there was a possibility they would not be accommodated otherwise. Academic support in the core units of the Graduate Diploma courses is severely limited due to the numbers of students. Some staff do not provide consultation times for off campus student contact and respond to questions of an organisational and academic nature either not at all or after long delays.

A series of concerns have been raised by off campus learning students regarding their experience in several units, primarily core units EDF5421 Professional Issues 1 and EDF5423 Educational Contexts. Issues of the type detailed below, taken individually provide cause for concern; as a whole, each additional problem compounds the difficulties involved for students undertaking these units and increases the rate of attrition.

MUGSU deplors the lack of academic support students are reporting including failure of teaching staff to return emails and respond to messages seeking clarification and information about the unit material. The WebCT forum for the Graduate Diploma courses is unmoderated despite this being an avenue to communicate with many students efficiently. Students are pleading for assistance in these forums when other support is not forthcoming to no avail.

MUGSU welcomes the Internal Review recently announced for the Graduate Diploma courses and will be making specific recommendations to that Review. It remains however that the Faculty has not responded to feedback that students have provided about the serious lack of support for these courses to date and this indicates a lack of responsiveness and concern for the welfare of students and the quality of the courses being delivered. Off campus learning is challenging for students in the best of circumstances. When it is not supported by academic and other services to assist students there is less opportunity for students to perform well academically and to internalise the important knowledge and skills which are being communicated to future educators.

Students, teaching, learning and assessment

13. The appropriateness and quality of the curriculum and pedagogy of courses and units (including placements) in relation to the existing and potential student profile and the Faculty's vision for teaching and learning and research training, and the effectiveness of processes and procedures for course and unit development and review:

It has become apparent to MUGSU by the nature of complaints over a period of time that the processes and procedures for course and unit review are inadequate. Student feedback is clearly not being listened to or acted upon. The Faculty has a responsibility to report on and incorporate student feedback into reviews of units. There is no indication this is currently taking place.

14. The appropriateness of information and feedback to students, considering such matters as:

- the Faculty's commitment to academic excellence and consistency of standards
- the alignment of assessment processes and tasks with course and unit objectives
- the quality and timeliness of feedback
- complaints and grievances

and the effectiveness of processes and procedures for monitoring, maintaining and developing consistently good practice in this regard:

Information provided to students about organisational matters including how and when placements will be arranged is inadequate. The WebCT forum is not promoted prominently to students although it is a place for students to seek support and share ideas with their peers. This forum is of prime importance given that other opportunities to interact with peers and teaching staff are limited.

Assessment practices and grading standards are not consistent. The predominance of Pass Grade Only grading gives little feedback to students on their progress. Coupled with the lack of feedback in other graded units this means students have very little idea of their progress and where improvement is needed. In some units no return of or feedback on assignments from units is given for months if at all.

Unit materials are not meeting the needs of students in some units with no assessment criteria being provided as per Monash policy. Students learning independently have a greatly reduced chance of success when they are not provided with support and are not given appropriate information to enable them to meet the course requirements. Core graded units in the Graduate Diploma courses return extraordinary numbers of like results; in the absence of assessment criteria and feedback/marking sheets on assignments this calls into question the integrity of the assessment practices.

The quality and timeliness of distribution of unit material is compromised by containing conflicting assignment due dates and consistent late production and receipt of unit material. Off Campus students are particularly disadvantaged by not receiving unit material in time for the commencement of semester as this may be the only information or contact they are provided with throughout the semester.

Complaints and grievances seem to be routinely dismissed by the simple expediency of ignoring them. Students approaching MUGSU have often raised the issues with unit advisors, course co-ordinators and others to no effect. Complaints may be dismissed as isolated problems with no acknowledgment that these kind of routine problems are being experienced by many students on a regular basis.

Research and research training

16. The Faculty's processes and procedures to monitor, maintain and develop excellence in research, considering such matters as:

- information, induction and mentoring
- facilities and infrastructure
- research culture

- research relationships (including collaborations and partnerships)
- the role and contribution of Centres:

Induction for postgraduates at the Gippsland campus is not offered. Mentoring is not available and facilities for postgraduate students are inadequate mainly due to lack of resourcing. This matter needs urgent attention. Postgraduate students who are not provided with appropriate information, facilities or mentoring are less likely to succeed in their research efforts and this reflects poorly on the faculty.

MUGSU appreciates the opportunity to put forward a students' perspective to this Review and wishes to take up the further option of presenting to the panel when it visits Gippsland as part of the Review process.