



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
*Achieving International Excellence*

# Education for Tomorrow's World: Courses of Action

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*Report of the Review of Course Structures  
The University of Western Australia*

## Volume 1 Report

**September 2008**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Volume 1 - Report

1	Overview .....	1
1.1	Challenge, opportunity and vision .....	1
1.2	A badge of excellence .....	2
1.3	Features of proposed changes .....	3
2	Rationale .....	5
2.1	Why change is necessary .....	5
2.2	Benefits envisaged .....	6
3	Undergraduate courses .....	7
3.1	Breadth as well as depth .....	7
3.2	A simple and flexible framework .....	8
3.3	Compulsory components .....	9
3.4	Restructuring of combined courses .....	12
3.5	Honours .....	13
3.6	The building blocks of undergraduate courses .....	14
4	Postgraduate courses .....	17
4.1	Reshaping the relationship between degrees .....	17
4.2	Implications for professional studies .....	19
4.3	Pathways to postgraduate degrees .....	24
4.4	Transitional arrangements .....	29
5	Financial Impact, Resources and Implementation Responsibilities .....	30
5.1	Forecasting the impact of proposed changes on student enrolment .....	30
5.2	Modelling the impact on student load distribution across faculties .....	30
5.3	Forecasting additional costs to the University .....	31
5.4	Offsetting any financial difficulties for students .....	31
6	Conclusion .....	33
7	Recommendations .....	34
8	References .....	41

## Volume 2 – Appendices

Appendix 1	Terms of reference and review process
Appendix 2	Members of the Steering Group
Appendix 3	Working Parties assisting the Steering Group
Appendix 4	List of submissions received in response to the 2006 Discussion Paper
Appendix 5	List of submissions received in response to the 2007 Issues and Options paper <i>Courses for Tomorrow's World</i>
Appendix 6	Evaluation of the options
Appendix 7	Recommendations of the Report of the Working Party on Postgraduate Coursework as adopted by Academic Council
Appendix 8	Report of the Working Party on Honours
Appendix 9	Report of the Working Party on Teaching-Research Nexus
Appendix 10	UWA Educational Principles
Appendix 11	Guidelines for developing the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) course
Appendix 12	Draft Constitution of a Board of Coursework Studies



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If the University accepts the recommendations in this report, its future course structures will have the following salient features:

1. Every undergraduate student will be enrolled in one of six courses, superseding the present array of more than 70. Except for the Bachelor of Philosophy (a new four-year Honours degree), each of these new courses will be of three years' duration, with a fourth year available for those students who qualify to proceed to an Honours course. The three-year Bachelor degrees will be in Arts, Science, Commerce, Design and Health. Each corresponds to an "area of knowledge" – a basic cluster of associated disciplinary fields.
2. Each three-year undergraduate course will require a student to complete 24 units, of which no more than twelve will be at Level 1 and at least four will be at Level 3. It will also include a "degree-specific major", consisting of 8 units (two at Level 1, two at Level 2, and four at Level 3), which provides the rationale for the nomenclature of the degree – for example, in order to be awarded a BA, a student must have completed a major from a list of approved majors for the BA, along with complementary units (to a maximum of four) taken from within that same area of knowledge.
3. Undergraduate courses will also include the following components:
  - Four "broadening units" taught within an area (or areas) of knowledge other than the one in which the student's degree-specific major is taught. This includes a requirement to study aspects of the globalised and culturally diverse environment in which graduates will live and work.
  - A demonstrable emphasis on inquiry-based learning and research skill development, introducing students directly to the research culture of the relevant discipline and fostering independent study.
  - At least one unit that focuses explicitly on oral and written communication skills.
  - Community engagement through a structured "service learning" experience with a not-for-profit organisation.
4. The Bachelor of Philosophy will be available to outstanding students in any discipline. It will include an especially intensive research focus, and provide support arrangements for a Study Abroad experience.
5. Courses designed to meet professional accreditation requirements will normally be offered only at the postgraduate level.
6. Combined first-cycle courses leading to two Bachelor degrees will be discontinued. Instead, the University will provide sequential pathways for undergraduate and postgraduate course combinations in professional fields (e.g. Law, Medicine, Engineering). This will enable suitably qualified applicants, at the point of initial undergraduate enrolment, to be offered assured entry into the postgraduate professional course after the first-cycle degree, subject to meeting course and progression requirements. Other places will be available to students who compete for them after the first-cycle degree.

The report contains many more detailed recommendations, along with supporting arguments, supplementary information, and remarks on the resource implications of what it proposes.



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# REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF COURSE STRUCTURES

## THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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### 1 Overview

*Our world is not a stable one, and students are ill-served by a curriculum that assumes that the shape of things today is all they need to understand in order to engage with the political, socio-economic, and technological landscape of tomorrow. Students need ... skills to match the world's speed.*

Harvard University (2007), *Report of the Task Force on General Education*

Since its establishment in 1911 The University of Western Australia (“UWA”) has helped shape the careers of nearly 100,000 graduates. During that time, and at an increasing pace in recent years, the environment within which it operates – locally, nationally, internationally – has undergone huge transformations. As the University approaches its centenary, it has been considering how it can continue to provide the best possible community of learning well into the future.

Achieving excellence is the University’s main focus. UWA is acknowledged to be one of the leading universities in Australia and has an international reputation for innovation, enterprise, and a commitment to the highest academic standards.

The UWA Review of Course Structures (“the Review”) has taken place in the context of trends and pressures that are prompting a worldwide re-evaluation of tertiary education. These include demographic changes, globalisation, the advent of new knowledge and new technology, matters relating to graduate employment and work mobility, reduced reliance on public funding, redevelopment of secondary school curricula, and a more competitive and diverse higher education market. Internal considerations include preserving the University’s defining characteristics, addressing issues related to the student population, and alleviating pressure on resources, students and staff.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1 **Challenge, opportunity and vision**

The challenge of devising courses for tomorrow’s world is attracting keen attention in many countries. The Bologna Process, an ambitious international project to align degree structures, has changed the shape of higher education in Europe and influenced universities around the world.<sup>2</sup> Leading institutions in Asia, the United

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<sup>1</sup> These factors are examined in detail in the Issues and Options paper developed by the Review Steering Group, *Courses for Tomorrow’s World* (UWA 2007a): <http://www.coursestructuresreview.uwa.edu.au/>.

<sup>2</sup> An inter-governmental initiative that aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, the Bologna Process has established a three-cycle system of qualifications (bachelor, master, doctor), a set of learning outcome descriptors, a credit transfer system, a common reporting mechanism, quality assurance standards, and steps to eliminate obstacles that hinder the mobility of students and academics: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/>.

Kingdom, and the United States have recently conducted major reviews of their academic programs.<sup>3</sup> Several Australian universities are currently restructuring their courses.<sup>4</sup>

[The UWA Review] *raises a broad range of issues that the University must address in our effort to become a world-leading university in the twenty-first century.*

Submission from the Postgraduate Students' Association

This Review represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for UWA to design course structures of lasting benefit to its students, its staff and the communities it serves. In doing this, it can strengthen its place as one of the leading universities in Australia, and attain its vision of achieving international excellence. The Review process has been highly consultative, involving discussion papers, invited submissions, working parties, a survey of student opinion, and many meetings with individuals and groups across the University community and beyond, including discussions held interstate and overseas. Appendix 1 contains its terms of reference and summarises the process.

The Review's terms of reference imply three linked objectives that have shaped the changes recommended in this Report:

- to meet the future educational needs of students, and therefore the needs of the wider community, at the highest possible standard;
- to position the University well for the future by reinforcing its international reputation for a commitment to excellence;
- to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and related administrative arrangements, for the benefit of staff and students.

These are visionary objectives, befitting the traditions and ambitions that UWA cherishes. Nevertheless, in translating the objectives into proposed lines of action, the Review Steering Group has been mindful of various practical constraints. The recommendations combine a bold vision with a sense of realism.

## **1.2 A badge of excellence**

Paramount in this Review has been the principle of upholding the highest academic standards, so that in the years ahead a degree from UWA continues to deserve recognition as a badge of excellence. By implementing the proposed course structure changes, the University can ensure that its graduates will be recognised as:

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<sup>3</sup> Examples of recent reviews in Asia include the University of Hong Kong – <http://www.hku.hk/crweb/>; and Tokyo University – [http://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/gen03/b01\\_07\\_e.html](http://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/gen03/b01_07_e.html). Initiatives in the United Kingdom include those of the University of Manchester – <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/facts/vision/2015document>. A prominent example from the United States is Harvard University's Report of the Task Force on General Education – [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~secfas/General\\_Education\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~secfas/General_Education_Final_Report.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> For example: Monash University – <http://www.monash.edu.au/teaching/passport/>; Macquarie University – [http://www.mq.edu.au/provost/reports/docs/GreenPaper\\_v2\\_28Apr08.pdf](http://www.mq.edu.au/provost/reports/docs/GreenPaper_v2_28Apr08.pdf); University of Melbourne – <http://growingesteem.unimelb.edu.au/>; University of South Australia – <http://www.unisa.edu.au/icer/ICUP/default.asp>; Victoria University – <http://www.vu.edu.au/library/pdf/Making%20VU%20A%20New%20School%20of%20Thought.pdf>.

**EDUCATED** – provided not only with specific disciplinary expertise and employability skills but also with a broader understanding that prepares them resourcefully for life and work in a changing and culturally diverse environment.

**ENQUIRING** – able to bring to every new challenge an open but critical mind, accomplished in analysing and interpreting information, discovering knowledge, and seeking wisdom.

**ELOQUENT** – equipped with outstanding capability as clear, logical and powerful communicators who are highly articulate in oral and written forms of the English language.

**ENGAGED** – linked strongly to local, national and international communities in a spirit of ethical participation, social service and responsible leadership.

### **1.3 Features of proposed changes**

Distinctive features of the new course structures may be summarised as follows in relation to the Review's three general objectives.

#### *1.3.1 Meeting the future educational needs of students and of the wider community*

Towards this end, there are recommendations that will have the effect of:

- requiring that the UWA Educational Principles become incorporated into every undergraduate course, and providing institution-wide support to make this feasible;
- including in every undergraduate course a broader base of knowledge and skill than has previously been obligatory;
- increasing the emphasis on specialised studies at the postgraduate level, and replacing combined Bachelor-level courses with a “3 plus” sequential structure;
- preserving the strengths of the end-on Honours course as a valued pathway;
- giving particular hallmark emphasis to the development of research skills and communication skills within every undergraduate course;
- providing arrangements for students to engage with the wider community through service learning experiences; and
- structuring courses to provide pathways that enable students to make a considered choice about their focus and preferred profession or academic orientation.

### 1.3.2 *Positioning the University well for the future by reinforcing its international reputation for excellence*

Towards this end, there are recommendations that will have the effect of:

- strengthening the nexus between core academic activities, so that UWA becomes better recognised as an institution that excels in its integration of a research-intensive culture with a student-centred community of learning;
- increasing international linkages by enlarging opportunities and support arrangements for study abroad within undergraduate courses; and
- providing a special degree program for exceptionally talented students, with a strong emphasis on research and international experience.

### 1.3.3 *Achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and related administrative processes*

Towards this end, there are recommendations that will have the effect of:

- simplifying and standardising the framework of degrees and courses to create much greater transparency and flexibility;
- making definitions, rules, procedures and nomenclature consistent across the University;
- reducing significantly the total number of units offered, and thus alleviating a situation in which students face a bewilderingly excessive range of choices, academic staff time is spread too thinly to ensure consistently high quality in teaching or allow enough time for research, and the administrative impact of unit proliferation is unduly expensive; and
- establishing a Board of Coursework Studies to coordinate policy regulation and associated matters for all first-cycle and second-cycle courses, ensuring the educational integrity of their structures and content.

In arriving at its recommendations, the Steering Group has not simply chosen one of the seven options sketched out in *Courses for Tomorrow's World*, the Issues and Options paper released in October 2007. Those options were presented in broad-brush terms. It was never expected that any would be adopted without modification. They achieved the purpose of stimulating discussion and exposing a range of ideas to critique. All options, along with variant suggestions put forward during the consultation process, were assessed systematically, as shown in Appendix 6, which includes a summary of the responses to each option, the practical implications of adopting it, and the extent to which it met the criteria used for evaluation. The evaluative criteria mirror the four factors discussed in section 2.1 below: strengths to develop, problems to solve, opportunities to pursue, and risks to mitigate.

The recommendations that accompany this report draw on some aspects of every option, and on feedback obtained from submissions, consultations, surveys, and working party advice.

## 2 Rationale

*Regardless of the result of this Review, it is clear that the drivers for change will only become stronger over time, and change is inevitable.... UWA's Course Review is an appropriate response to a rapidly changing and increasingly global education and workforce environment.*

Submission from the WA Medical Students' Society

### 2.1 Why change is necessary

Structural changes to UWA courses are necessary for four main reasons. There are strengths to develop; problems to solve; opportunities to pursue; and risks to mitigate. These points are explained more fully in Appendix 6.

Strengths to develop include the high academic quality of the students and of those who teach them; the comprehensive curriculum range; the rigorous Honours courses; the energising of the learning community by a top-quality research culture; and the opportunities for co-curricular enrichment (e.g. through colleges, Guild, societies, campus amenities). These strengths need enhancing so that they earn wider recognition as distinctive and attractive features of a UWA education.

Problems to solve include inconsistent and confusing course rules, heavy workload pressure on staff, premature choice of career paths by many students, and the absence of any mechanism for ensuring that the UWA Educational Principles are comprehensively embedded in all courses.<sup>5</sup> There is also a large measure of agreement that many undergraduate courses are not broad enough for tomorrow's needs: that the knowledge economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires skills and understandings more extensive than disciplinary boundaries, and that workforce mobility and population changes make it imperative to prepare students for more resourceful participation and leadership in a complex, rapidly changing, globalised, culturally diverse environment.

Opportunities to pursue include extending across the University several exemplary innovations that have already been developed within particular areas. These innovations include embedding an explicit research component into courses (as is currently done in several majors), enhancing discipline-focused communication skill development (as in Science Communication units), offering cross-faculty courses (as in the teaching partnership between Business and Engineering), linking student projects with the research and development needs of organisations in the wider community (as in the work of the Centre for Co-operative Education for Enterprise Development) and providing special challenges for outstanding students (as in the Advanced Science program).

Risks to mitigate include stagnating through complacency or timidity, losing enrolments, ignoring patterns of student demand, failing to anticipate changing expectations (e.g. on the part of employers or professional bodies), and underestimating the costs of structural change.

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<sup>5</sup> The statement of UWA Educational Principles was discussed at length in the Issues and Options paper *Courses for Tomorrow's World*. It is provided as Appendix 10 to the present report, and is also accessible as part of the University's Strategic Plan: [http://www.registrar.uwa.edu.au/university\\_planning/strategic\\_operational\\_plans/uwa\\_strategic\\_plan](http://www.registrar.uwa.edu.au/university_planning/strategic_operational_plans/uwa_strategic_plan).

## **2.2 Benefits envisaged**

The recommended set of structures can deliver significant benefits to the University and its stakeholders. Later sections of the report discuss some of the benefits more fully, but in general terms they include:

- Ensuring that UWA graduates, in addition to achieving mastery of their chosen discipline, will acquire a broader range of knowledge and attributes to help them navigate the changing world of the twenty-first century, with a particular emphasis on communication and research skills and on engagement with the wider community.
- Reshaping the relationship between undergraduate and postgraduate courses in professional fields so that students are better equipped to make a considered choice about their preferred vocational or academic specialisation, can move more readily and more equitably from one field to another after completing the first-cycle degree, and can receive a more rounded preparation for their professional careers.
- Producing a much simpler, more flexible and more consistent framework for course administration, rules, definitions and nomenclature than before, in the interests of students, staff and other stakeholders.
- Enabling the University as a whole to meet its ultimate responsibility for educational outcomes in a cohesive and interconnected way, while maintaining the role of faculties and schools as the centres for discipline-based teaching and research.

The main features of the proposed new course structures correspond closely to the University's defining characteristics, identified in its 2007 Strategic Plan. For instance, by adopting the recommended changes UWA can ensure that its established and developing strengths as a research-intensive community flow more fully into its teaching and learning. At the same time the changes can produce significant efficiencies that will clear more time for staff to devote to research, and this in turn will contribute to the quality of the learning environment for students. A desire to reinforce the linkage between research activities and student learning experiences, as a hallmark of any UWA degree, is reflected in several recommendations of the Review. These include:

- The increased emphasis on inquiry-based learning and research skill development in all undergraduate courses.
- The creation of a four-year BPhil degree, potentially available in all disciplines to students of exceptional capability, which will involve an especially intensive research focus and international experience.
- The continued provision of an end-on Honours year opportunity across a wide range of disciplines.

Similarly, some of the recommendations are designed to fortify the University's commitment to attract students of the highest quality, and sharpen its focus on international and intercultural aspects of the educational experience that its courses provide.

### 3 Undergraduate courses

Graduates ought to “be aware of a breadth of issues, including how to work in teams and how to accommodate and understand other people’s views.” [Too many students] “come out of universities with specialist knowledge but not understanding the context of their decisions or anything outside their specialty.”

The Chancellor of UWA, Dr Michael Chaney,  
*Australian Financial Review*, 11 February 2008

#### 3.1 Breadth as well as depth

There is a widespread view that students can be better equipped for the world of tomorrow if they study an undergraduate degree that includes broadening components as well as depth in their chosen field, followed (where appropriate) by a specialised postgraduate degree. This view, strongly expressed not only within the University but also by external stakeholders including representatives of secondary schools, commerce and industry, has recurred in submissions and consultations during the review process. It echoes other relevant findings.

- Australian employer groups and professional associations, as well as international reports on the changing role of tertiary education in the knowledge economy, have repeatedly emphasised the need for graduates who are equipped not only with specific disciplinary expertise, technical knowledge and employability skills but also with a broader understanding that prepares them resourcefully for the challenges of a dynamic environment.<sup>6</sup>
- Many world-class universities are distinguished by a commitment to ensure that their students’ learning is broad as well as deep. A recent study of the educational attributes of some of the world’s “Top 50” universities noted that in many of them “undergraduate courses are not primarily vocational but are general or ‘liberal’, giving students a wide range of knowledge and developing independent study skills and, in particular, writing and communication skills” (Daniel 2008).
- A market survey commissioned by the Review indicates that most students are receptive to the concept of a broader Bachelor degree followed (if a further qualification is sought) by a more specialised Master degree. Section 3.4 below discusses this further.
- The Student Guild submission, among others, has underlined the importance of developing cross-cultural competency as a particularly valuable form of educational breadth that is emphasised in the UWA Educational Principles but not reflected in current course structures.

This report recommends that every undergraduate course include four “broadening units” (taught outside the area of knowledge in which the student’s degree-specific major is taught), at least one of which will have as its main focus some aspects of the

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<sup>6</sup> An example of an international perspective on this topic, from the 2002 World Bank report *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*, is quoted in *Courses for Tomorrow’s World*, p26: accessible at <http://www.coursestructuresreview.uwa.edu.au/>.

globalised and culturally diverse environment in which graduates will be living and working.

### **3.2 A simple and flexible framework**

It is widely believed that UWA now offers far too many undergraduate courses, as well as far too many units. There are more than 70 separately named undergraduate degrees. Their proliferation in recent years has had several undesirable consequences, including unclear and inconsistent nomenclature, increasingly complex admission criteria and categories, unduly elaborate rules and regulations, an array of options that often bewilders students, and intricate course administration processes that take up a disproportionate amount of staff time at the expense of teaching and research priorities. Rationalisation of course rules and simplification of degree titles will produce greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The Review Steering Group has formed the view that there should be far fewer courses and that they should be uniform in their structure, nomenclature and rules. Uniformity is vital: allowing exceptions to this simple and flexible framework would soon undermine the significant achievable benefits.

Accordingly the recommended changes include the following fundamental innovations.

Every undergraduate student will be enrolled in one of six courses:

- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Design
- Bachelor of Health
- Bachelor of Science
- Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons)

Except for the BPhil (Hons), which is a new four-year Honours degree, each of these courses will be of three years' duration, with a fourth year available for those students who qualify to proceed to an Honours course, and will also correspond directly to an "area of knowledge" (a basic cluster of associated disciplinary fields).

Every undergraduate course will include the following components:

- Four "broadening units" (one-sixth of a three-year degree course) taught within an area (or areas) of knowledge other than the one in which the student's degree-specific major is taught. This includes a requirement to study aspects of the globalised and culturally diverse environment in which graduates will be living and working.
- At least one unit within the degree-specific major that has an explicit focus on oral and written communication skills.
- A demonstrable emphasis within the degree-specific major on inquiry-based learning and research skill development, introducing students directly to the research culture of the relevant discipline.
- Engagement with the wider community through a structured experience with a not-for-profit organisation.

The Bachelor of Philosophy will potentially be available to outstanding students in any discipline offered by the University. It will include an especially intensive

research focus, and provide support arrangements for a Study Abroad experience. (Appendix 11 provides more details.)

Normally, courses designed to meet professional accreditation requirements will be offered only at the postgraduate level, as explained in section 4 below.

### **3.3 Compulsory components**

The compulsory components of the new undergraduate courses are designed to underpin the University's intention that its graduates will be (as explained in section 1.2 above) *educated, enquiring, eloquent and engaged*.

The first of these four qualities will be fostered by the broadening requirements for which a case is put in section 3.1 above. In addition, all undergraduate courses will develop the following.

#### **3.3.1 Research skills**

*Research is fundamental to the methodology in any discipline and therefore it needs to be embedded in teaching programs.*

Working Party on the Teaching-Research Nexus (2007)

There is wide agreement that research skill development should be a hallmark of all UWA degrees. Research is no longer a specialised activity of the intellectually elite. In the twenty-first century, research skills are not only essential for many different kinds of employment, they are also basic survival skills. Learning how to find information, interpret it and evaluate it critically will be increasingly necessary for any properly educated citizen. Graduates need to be able to pursue further studies independently, explore new bodies of knowledge, and understand the assumptions underlying different methods of inquiry.

Therefore every UWA undergraduate major (as defined in section 3.6 below) must emphasise inquiry-based learning and research skill development in a manner appropriate to the research culture of the relevant discipline.

An international perspective confirms the appropriateness of research skills as a component of all UWA undergraduate courses. A decade ago the ground-breaking Boyer Commission Report *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities* made a cogent case for moving from traditional lecturing to inquiry-based learning, where learning through research is introduced into the curriculum from the beginning of tertiary study. That theme was echoed when, as part of the present Review, Steering Group representatives held consultations in Asia with institutional partners, international student recruitment agencies, government departments, leading universities, alumni, professional and business associations, and other groups. In all these discussions, research skill development within undergraduate courses was recognised as valuable, seen as an appropriate hallmark for UWA, and thought likely (according to nearly all those consulted) to be attractive to high-calibre students from Asian countries if carefully marketed.

### 3.3.2 Communication skills

*The failure of research universities seems most serious in conferring degrees upon inarticulate students.*

The Boyer Report (1998)

Communication skill development deserves special emphasis for a number of reasons, foreshadowed in *Courses for Tomorrow's World* (CTW). First, the core importance of communication is indisputable.

- “Several other fundamental generic skills (e.g. thinking critically, analysing and interpreting information accurately, and solving problems collaboratively) depend on a confident command of the resources of language. While different disciplines may legitimately favour different kinds of communication, it is axiomatic that graduates of a reputable university should have learnt how to express themselves in a fluent manner, convey clear information, articulate a cogent argument, give a precise exposition of a problem in their field, and choose appropriate forms of written as well as oral language for various professional purposes” (CTW p24).
- Graduates generally recognise that this set of skills is vital in the workplace. For instance a recent UWA-based research project asked 300 established engineers to rate the professional importance of 63 different competencies, and the one rated as critical by the highest percentage of participants was “communicating clearly and concisely in writing” (Male, Chapman and Bush 2007). This echoes the results of comparable research elsewhere across various fields: for instance a survey of mid-career Harvard alumni (cited by Light 2001) found that more than 90% judged the “need to write effectively” as being “of great importance” for their careers.
- A recent UWA report on the educational attributes of some of the world's top 50 universities (Daniel 2008) found that “Leading universities typically place considerable emphasis on the development of communication skills, most especially writing skills. Compulsory writing or English (composition) courses are a particularly prominent feature at many such universities.”
- Extensive consultations conducted for the present Review in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong (currently the main source countries for UWA international students) reinforced the educational importance of a more intensive focus on communication, especially writing. This has been recognised by leading universities in the region (notably the National University of Singapore and Hong Kong University) and is reflected in their recent curriculum developments. It was also a recurrent theme in discussions with many other stakeholders in these Asian countries.

Second, it is apparent that some graduates (including some UWA graduates) are not acquiring sufficient communicative competence to equip them well for their employment and their social responsibilities.

- Survey information indicates that a significant number of UWA students and graduates are dissatisfied with this aspect of their

courses, while acknowledging the high importance of communication skills. In the context of School reviews, recent feedback from UWA graduates about their acquisition of various generic skills indicates relatively low support (especially among students in certain professional fields) for the statement that their courses taught them to “communicate clearly, concisely and logically” (data provided by Institutional Research Unit). Annual results of the nationally administered Course Experience Questionnaire also continue to show that, on average, UWA graduates in some fields are lukewarm when asked whether their course improved their written communication skills.

- In a study for the Australian Council of Deans of Science (2000), close to 90% of the 1245 graduates surveyed stated that their course did not provide them with the level of communication skills required by their employer.
- *Courses for Tomorrow's World* cited findings from the Australian Association of Graduate Employers that the most commonly perceived deficiency of graduates is in the area of written English (AAGE 2007). Also relevant is the fact that UWA international students need to satisfy employers in their own countries after graduation. A noteworthy survey shows that Hong Kong employers rank English language proficiency higher in importance than technical skills, information literacy, analytical ability and management skills, but give a relatively low rating to this aspect of local graduates' performance in the workplace (HK Education and Manpower Bureau, 2006).

How best to foster communication skill development within an undergraduate course is a vexed question to which there is no simple answer. Some submissions to the Review argue that every student should be required to pass an all-purpose communication unit taken early in the degree course; others contend that this ability develops most effectively within specific disciplinary contexts, and that therefore demanding oral and written work should be part of the subject matter and assessment of most units. But while a pervasive embedding of communicative practices may be ideal, it certainly does not happen in some courses, and in any case it needs to be demonstrably informed by expertise. For a university that aspires to the highest international standards of excellence, the best arrangement is to require, alongside whatever communicative practices are more generally spread through a course, at least one unit within every major that focuses explicitly on oral and written work in an intellectually demanding way (as with the existing Science Communication units in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences and the Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences). That is what this report recommends.

### 3.3.3 *Community engagement*

Although UWA already recognises the value of student engagement with communities beyond the University, there has not previously been any formal requirement to include this as part of the undergraduate learning experience. What is now being recommended is that all students should undertake a structured “service learning” experience with a not-for-profit organisation as a means of developing an awareness of community needs, citizenship responsibilities and leadership capabilities.

This is by no means the only valuable kind of engagement with external communities that can occur during the undergraduate years. Students who avail themselves of the opportunity to study abroad can enlarge their sense of community so that it

includes immersion in a foreign culture and allows them to develop peer networks in an international context. The Student Guild warmly acknowledges these and other benefits, which are underlined by a report on *Enhancing the Cultural Competence of Students at UWA* (UWA 2007b). But while the University is keen to encourage greater numbers to include such an experience in their education, the International Centre has identified a number of practical impediments, notably the difficulty of obtaining due credit within a UWA course for what is studied overseas. The simplification of course structures now being recommended should facilitate the necessary flexibility to provide windows of opportunity for study abroad. Faculties and schools have an obligation to take due note of this, and the Board of Coursework Studies must ensure that courses are constructed in such a way as to make study abroad possible. Financial assistance for travel overseas will remain another hurdle for many students unless the University can further increase its scholarship support for this purpose, as it envisages doing through a Centenary fundraising campaign. The Review has underlined the importance of that increased support.

Also of great potential value as a form of community engagement is a practicum, which arranges for a student's activity in a workplace situation to be incorporated into the academic course for formal assessment and credit. The UWA Centre for Cooperative Education for Enterprise Development is one vehicle for this: it links student academic projects with research required by outside organisations. The Arts Practicum is another successful example. A practicum is not suited to all disciplines, and is costly to administer, but it is a thoroughly worthwhile experience for many students and there may be a case for introducing it into some additional courses.

Regardless of whether a student is able to take up study abroad opportunities or workplace practicum arrangements, the Review Steering Group believes that all UWA undergraduates should be required to undertake a structured unpaid service learning activity in association with a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to community benefit work. The primary aim of such activities is to develop ethical awareness and civic responsibility through practical insights into specific social justice issues, though there are other obvious benefits as well. It is hoped that, in the long term, this requirement will encourage a much higher level of community engagement by UWA students and graduates.

Ideally the service learning can be organised in many instances through the Student Guild, which has already initiated a Student Volunteer Management Project in accordance with national guidelines for involving volunteers in not-for-profit organisations and is interested in expanding this to operate as a full-service volunteer placement unit. For situations in which Guild assistance is not feasible, there will need to be a Student Community Engagement office operated by the University to liaise with community organisations, coordinate placements, and ensure that the scheme works well. It is not envisaged that formally assessed assignment work will be part of the service learning activity, but a pro forma record will need to be lodged. A suggested guideline is that a minimum of 20 hours, at some stage during the period of undergraduate enrolment, should be devoted to this kind of community engagement. Although it will not produce formal credit towards a unit, the service learning activity will be cited on the student's academic transcript.

### **3.4 Restructuring of combined courses**

For a number of years the University has offered combined courses leading to the award of two Bachelor degrees. Typically these courses have required students to undertake the two degrees in five years of study (commonly involving overloading of units), though completion of both often takes longer. It is an arrangement that has become common in Australia but is little known overseas.

Although combined Bachelor-level courses are popular with many students and staff, the Review process has uncovered some dissatisfaction with their educational value. Concerns expressed include the difficulty of maintaining a coherent learning experience; the difficulty of ensuring a sufficient exposure to the research culture of one or more of the disciplines; the likelihood that combined courses are diverting many able students from Honours and hence from postgraduate research; the high level of exit transfers and non-completion; and practical problems such as inevitable timetable clashes.

The course structures and pathways recommended in this report will result in the discontinuation of combined courses leading to the award of two Bachelor degrees. They will be replaced by a different kind of combination: a sequential “3 plus” structure linking undergraduate degrees to more specialised studies at the postgraduate level, as explained further in section 4 below.

Submissions to the Review indicated some support from most faculties for this change. For instance the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences noted that there may be educational benefits in discontinuing combined undergraduate courses, “as they have often led to course juxtapositions which lack academic integration and diminish a student’s sense of connectedness to a discipline.”

One of the questions asked in a survey of first-year and third-year UWA students, conducted for this Review and attracting over 1500 responses, was whether it is desirable to change the structure of combined degrees “so that you can get a relatively broad Bachelor degree and a more specialised Master degree (e.g. BSc/ME) in the same time frame (5 years).” The students were also asked whether they would still have chosen UWA if that change had been made. Of those who expressed an opinion, 86% said the change was desirable and 91% said they would still have chosen UWA if it had been introduced (IRU 2008b). While submissions from some student groups do not favour the abolition of combined degrees, others recognise that graduate entry into professional studies “may raise the maturity and commitment of students, foster a better learning environment and result in a smaller and more engaged cohort” (Blackstone Society).

The Steering Group believes that the perceived advantages of combined undergraduate courses are outweighed by those of the new course structures and pathways now being recommended, including the proposed balance between breadth and depth for undergraduate courses, and direct sequential entry pathways. (The situation is different at the postgraduate level, where very small numbers of students enrol for combined courses leading to two degrees, one or both of which usually involve intensive research, e.g. PhD and Master of Clinical Audiology. Students should continue to be permitted to enrol in combined postgraduate courses, provided that one or both will allow cross-crediting of some units.)

### **3.5 Honours**

Honours at UWA may be taken, at present, either as a course that follows completion of a pass degree (end-on Honours), or in some cases integrated with the pass degree requirements (integrated Honours). The co-existence of two different structures has made it difficult for the University to ensure that the highest entry and exit standards are consistently met in its highest undergraduate degree. The Steering Group believes that integrated Honours should be discontinued, so that all students enrolled in Honours courses are subject to the same set of rigorous requirements, from admission through to graduation.

There are good reasons for not persisting with four-year first-cycle degrees except in the form of end-on Honours. First, it is inequitable to require one group of students to complete a year more than others in order to earn the same qualification (e.g. at present the minimum time that a BSc takes is either three years or four, depending

partly on the Faculty in which the student enrolls). Providing an exit point after three years enlarges the range of options for students and does not prevent them from proceeding to a fourth year (Honours or Graduate Diploma) if they wish. Second, the additional time requirement increases the financial burden for the student, including a significant opportunity cost. Third, the University also pays a price for the extra length of the first-cycle degree, since compulsory continuation into a fourth year restricts the pool of enrolled students and requires additional resources. Further, the advantages of maintaining simple consistency in course structure across the University outweigh any arguments for preserving exceptions.

A Working Party on Honours was established under the auspices of the review and reported to the Steering Group in August 2007. Its report (Appendix 8) affirmed the value of an Honours course as an intensively supervised yet independently managed research experience for the best UWA students. It also advised that only fourth-year courses in which students undertake an intensive research project or its equivalent should merit the title "Honours".

The Review process has reinforced the importance of continuing to provide an Honours year opportunity across all areas of knowledge, building on the linkages between research activities and student learning experiences that should be a hallmark of any UWA degree. The creation of a four-year BPhil (Hons) degree, potentially available in all disciplines to students of exceptional capability, will further reinforce the nexus between teaching and research.

The Steering Group endorses the Honours Working Party's view that the University should seek ways of better publicising and promoting its Honours courses, and particularly the value of their research-intensive component, to undergraduate students and to external stakeholders.

### **3.6     *The building blocks of undergraduate courses***

A Bachelor degree is to be defined primarily by the requirement to complete at least one major – that is, the following developmental structure within the same disciplinary field: two units at Level 1, two at Level 2, and four at Level 3.

While a single major is sufficient, two majors may be undertaken, constituting 16 units. Alternatively, a double major (14 units) is possible in cases where the same pair of Level 1 units is considered an acceptable foundation for disciplinary depth through separate majors. Thus a double major is defined as comprising two units at Level 1, four at Level 2 and eight at Level 3.

To each of these structures an Honours year may be added.

The standardisation of course structures recommended in this report removes the need to persist with the practice of assigning a points value to each unit. A simple unitary notation will suffice for recording student workload, academic progress, statistical reports, and the like. Subdividing units into fractions should not be permissible. The weight of research projects or other extended tasks that may form part of the degree requirements (e.g. an Honours thesis) can be gauged as equivalent to two or more units.

When the five new undergraduate degrees named in section 3.2 above are established, each will offer a range of majors appropriate to the area of knowledge it represents. The term "area of knowledge" is used to signify a basic cluster of associated disciplinary fields. None of these areas of knowledge, nor any of the degrees or courses that correspond to them, will be the possession of a particular Faculty. In principle, any Faculty may submit to the Board of Coursework Studies a proposal to teach a "degree-specific major" (defined below) in any course. For instance, the Business School may put forward for approval a major in Economics

that could meet the degree-specific major requirements for a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Commerce or Bachelor of Science; the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts may do the same for a Bachelor of Arts; the Faculty of Law may do the same for a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Commerce; the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics may do the same for a Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Health or Bachelor of Design. There are several other such possibilities. While faculties and schools are responsible for units, all courses and degrees belong to the University as a whole. This means that, within the constraints indicated for all undergraduate course structures, a student may choose units and majors from anywhere in the University. For instance someone enrolled for a BA, studying 12 units (including a degree-specific major) in History, can also take a major in Mathematics along with the requisite four broadening units.

Each three-year undergraduate course will require a student to complete 24 units, at least 12 of which must be taken from within the majors listed for the area of knowledge to which their degree corresponds.

Each course will include a “degree-specific major”, consisting of 8 units, which provides the rationale for the nomenclature of the degree – for example, in order to be awarded a BA, a student must have completed a major from a list of approved majors for the BA.

The degree-specific major may be supplemented by further units (to a maximum of four) taken from within the same area of knowledge as the degree-specific major, which meet any prerequisites and/or co-requisites and ensure that all the UWA Educational Principles are embedded in the course. For example, students undertaking a Physics major may be required to take up to four units of Mathematics. Faculties wishing to expand their specialisation beyond the 8-unit degree-specific major and four units of complementary content will be able to offer a double major, as indicated above, but it should always be possible for a student to graduate with a single major in any discipline.

In addition to the degree-specific major, each undergraduate course may include other majors and units from outside the list of majors approved for the degree or within it.

In many disciplines the new course structures will not involve a significant reshaping of what is studied, except for the compulsory units and other requirements summarised in 3.2 above. In some disciplines the structural change will bring more noticeable differences, yet these may be less fundamental than they appear at first. For example the undergraduate study of Agriculture at UWA is at present a four-year undertaking (32 units), and the recommended structures will bring it into line with the predominant existing form of the BSc, which takes three years (24 units); but it will remain possible for graduates in Agriculture to proceed to a fourth-year Honours course or Graduate Diploma – and no doubt a large number will choose to do so. There will be the further option of a two-year Master-level degree. The framework is simple and flexible.

Figure 1 sets out diagrammatically the basic building blocks for the new first-cycle course structures.

**Figure 1: Undergraduate Course Structures**

**Bachelor Degree – Single Major (24 units)**

Year/Level 1								
Year/Level 2								
Year/Level 3								

In addition to an 8-unit major, this includes 4 complementary units to cater for any prerequisites and ensure the embedding of UWA Educational Principles. There are also 4 broadening units taken from outside the area of knowledge of the major. A single-major degree permits 8 elective units from any area of knowledge. Note: Although this diagram and those below all show a stylised pattern, a student may take up to 12 units at Level 1 and as few as 4 units at Level 3.

**Bachelor Degree (Honours) – Single Major (32 units)**

Year/Level 1								
Year/Level 2								
Year/Level 3								
Year/Level 4								

Students undertaking a degree with a single major may include an end-on Honours year. The Honours research component must be from the area of knowledge of the major.

**Bachelor Degree – Two Majors (24 units)**

Year/Level 1								
Year/Level 2								
Year/Level 3								

In the case of a degree with two majors, the eight elective units constitute the second major.

**Bachelor Degree (Honours) – Two Majors (32 units)**

Year/Level 1								
Year/Level 2								
Year/Level 3								
Year/Level 4								

As with single-major degrees, degrees with two majors permit an end-on Honours year.

**Bachelor Degree – Double Major (24 units)**

Year/Level 1								
Year/Level 2								
Year/Level 3								

In a double-major degree, the majors share a common Level 1 foundation of 2 units.

**Bachelor Degree (Honours) – Double Major (32 units)**

Year/Level 1								
Year/Level 2								
Year/Level 3								
Year/Level 4								

As with single-major degrees, degrees with a double major permit an add-on Honours year.

Note: The BPhil (Hons) may take the form of any of the Honours options illustrated above.

Legend (each cell represents one unit)	
	Units for degree-specific major
	Units complementing the degree-specific major
	Second major units (double major)
	Second major units (two majors)
	Broadening units
	Elective units
	Honours units

## 4 Postgraduate courses

*UWA has less than 4% of all of the postgraduate coursework enrolments in the Group of Eight – the lowest level among Australian research-intensive universities.... Significant growth in postgraduate coursework education has taken place in Australia over the last two decades. UWA has not been in the mainstream of this development.*

Report of the Postgraduate Coursework Working Party (2007)

### 4.1 Reshaping the relationship between degrees

A Working Party on Postgraduate Coursework was established under the auspices of the Review and reported to the Steering Group in August 2007.

Academic Board considered the recommendations of the Working Party's report in September 2007 and Academic Council accepted the revised recommendations in February 2008. Some of those measures for improving structural and other administrative aspects of postgraduate courses are incorporated with minor amendments into the present report, and the Steering Group supports the full set of recommendations, available as Appendix 7.

Building on the advice of its Working Party, the Review Steering Group is recommending that the University should give greater emphasis to postgraduate coursework across all disciplines; should ensure that such courses are taught in a way that properly distinguishes them from undergraduate studies; and should reshape the relationship between undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, particularly in professional fields.

Except for a few fields of study, UWA has not participated in the rapid expansion of postgraduate courses across Australia. In the context of institutional growth targets, there is a strong case for responding more vigorously to opportunities for Master-level coursework provision. A significant increase in such enrolments can reinforce the University's defining characteristics and contribute substantially to the achievement of its strategic goals.

Successful development of postgraduate coursework will depend on adherence to recognised principles of best practice in teaching at this level (Reid, Rennie and Shortland-Jones 2003). Educational requirements include curriculum content that has appropriate intellectual depth, pedagogy that engages the students as mature learners whose experience is valued, and assessment that is more demanding than in a first-cycle course. Of special importance, as for all UWA students, is exposure to research work of some kind, in the context of the particular discipline or professional field.

The recommendations envisage that courses designed to meet professional accreditation requirements (for instance in Law, Medicine and Engineering) will normally be offered only at the postgraduate level. This proposed change can bring several benefits to students:

- A broader knowledge base and more transferable skills in the first-cycle course, opening new job opportunities as they emerge in the global workplace and providing a better intellectual foundation for further professional study at a mature stage.

- More specialised attention to professional training in the second-cycle course, instead of an over-packed curriculum at the undergraduate level.
- Easier transition from one field to another after completion of the first-cycle degree, so that a graduate may more readily proceed (where appropriate) to a Master-level degree in a different discipline.
- Enhanced international mobility for graduates whose degree qualifications comply with the “3 plus” structure emerging through the Bologna process.
- Clearer sequential pathways, with assured entry (for suitably qualified applicants) into the second-cycle professional qualification following completion of the first-cycle degree, subject to meeting course and progression requirements.
- More equitable educational opportunities through the availability of “second chance” specialisation for those students who have been hampered by social disadvantage or whose interests and capabilities develop as time goes by.
- Better opportunities to participate in a strong “graduate school” culture, including improved links with industry and professional practice where appropriate.
- More preparatory time for students to make a considered choice about their preferred vocational or academic specialisation.

Students who, when embarking on their undergraduate studies, already have a strong intention to pursue a particular professional course and can demonstrate a high level of academic aptitude for it, should be able to secure a place in that course. It is recommended that the University provide direct-entry sequential pathways for undergraduate and postgraduate course combinations in professional fields (e.g. Law, Medicine, Engineering), so that suitably qualified applicants can be offered, at the point of initial undergraduate enrolment, assured entry into the postgraduate professional course after completing the first-cycle degree, subject to meeting course and progression requirements.

Places will also be available to students who compete for them after completing the first-cycle degree.

In moving to the proposed arrangements, faculties and schools offering professional courses should be mindful of the graduate status that these will now have. Though they may include introductory content that is also treated in undergraduate courses, the modes of instruction and assessment, as well as the expected student input and outcomes, should reflect the entry level and increased maturity of second-cycle students.

In addition, consideration needs to be given to embodying the UWA Education Principles in postgraduate coursework. It is recommended that the Teaching and Learning Committee advise the Board of Coursework Studies whether the ways of embodying these principles in postgraduate courses should differ from those that apply to undergraduate courses.

Student workload requirements for postgraduate courses should be standardised, so that four units need to be completed for a Graduate Certificate, eight units for a Graduate Diploma, and sixteen units for a Master degree.

## **4.2 Implications for professional studies**

Remarks in this section of the report do not claim to analyse exhaustively all implications of the proposed changes for all areas of professional study, but they should serve to indicate the main issues through discussion of a variety of disciplines in turn.

In each case, accreditation will need to be negotiated with professional bodies.

### *4.2.1 Architecture*

Architecture at UWA already conforms to a 3+2 structure, in line with recent international developments within that profession. In order to qualify as a practising architect one must complete a three-year Bachelor degree (currently named Environmental Design) and a two-year Master of Architecture.

In its present form the Bachelor of Environmental Design leaves little room for anything other than Architecture content specified by professional competency stipulations. Yet while the first-cycle curriculum may appear to be tightly restricted by accreditation requirements, these are somewhat negotiable. NCSA01, the official competency document issued by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia, explicitly “endorses the professional responsibility of tertiary institutions for the determination of course structure and teaching methods and supports these institutions in their assertion of independence in such matters.” And while the competencies specified in NCSA01 focus on design and project management matters, they certainly indicate a need to acquire such generic skills as communication (for preparing clear documentation, negotiating with a range of stakeholders, keeping precise records, ensuring efficient flow of information, etc.), and to be well informed about topics in a range of other fields (e.g. legal, commercial, environmental, social) – which could be enhanced by a careful selection of broadening units.

There is currently a move among Australian Deans of Architecture to make more room for discretionary academic content in their degrees by moving some of the requisite professional practice elements out beyond graduation and beyond the responsibility of universities. If curriculum constraints are loosened in this way, it will allow broadening units to be incorporated more readily into the UWA first-cycle degree. The existing Bachelor course can then become more flexible, and (in its new form as a more capacious Bachelor of Design) can also incorporate additional majors so that it serves as one of the suitable pathways towards other graduate-entry programs such as Engineering, Urban and Regional Planning, and Landscape Architecture. (At present Landscape Architecture is a separate four-year course within the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts, but is considering integration as a major stream in the three-year course, with further specialisation available at a Master level.)

As with other professional qualifications, it is envisaged that students who have an appropriate first-cycle formation (in this case through the Bachelor of Design) can complete the Master of Architecture in the minimum two-year period. However, the postgraduate course should also be available to other Bachelor graduates in a three-year form that includes bridging studies. A document on accreditation procedures (APARP01), issued jointly by the Architects Accreditation Council and Royal Australian Institute of Architects, includes provision for recognising a Master-level degree taken after completion of a non-accredited Bachelor degree in Architecture or of studies in another discipline, if the Master degree includes the required competencies.

#### 4.2.2 *Medicine*

As the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences acknowledges in its submission to the Review, the structure envisaged here, creating in effect a graduate school for this group of professions, is certainly feasible. It is by no means a radical idea; the majority of Australian medical schools already offer only graduate-entry four-year programs. The Dean of this Faculty has recently stated that “UWA needs to seriously question the rationale for continuing with its six-year program” and that the present Review may provide “an opportunity to move from a good medical school to a great medical school” (Puddey 2008).

Currently UWA offers a six-year undergraduate medical course with entrance requirements based on a combination of TER, UMAT (Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admission Test) and interview. There is also a graduate-entry pathway via a compulsory bridging course into the third year of the undergraduate medical course. In addition the Faculty has undergraduate courses in dentistry (5 years), health science (4 years) and podiatry (4 years).

The new Bachelor of Health proposed in this report, by offering units on topics such as anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pharmacology, psychology, Indigenous studies, ethics, communication, epidemiology, medical technologies and public health, can serve as the platform for postgraduate specialisations in medicine, dentistry and other health professions.

If particular articulated courses specify a major (or even, for students who freely choose it, a double major), a large proportion of the undergraduate degree will become available for a dedicated pre-med or pre-dental science pathway. An appropriate first-cycle formation could allow the second-cycle accredited degree in Medicine to be completed in the minimum time of three years. As indicated by the fact that approximately 2,000 students sit the UMAT in Western Australia competing for 100-150 places, a pre-med pathway is likely to be very popular. A quota will need to be set, and clinical placements may not be possible in the Bachelor degree.

A variety of major streams can lead to several Master or Professional Doctorate degrees (of different lengths, depending on accreditation constraints) – such as the following:

- Master of Health Science or Public Health
- Master of Podiatry
- Master of Nursing
- Master of Medical Engineering
- Doctor of Medicine
- Doctor of Dental Science

A fourth (Honours) year following the Bachelor of Health will deliver research training equivalent to the current Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours).

Guaranteed entry into the BHealth/MD sequence can be given to a select cohort based on entry requirements similar to those for the current undergraduate course. Other students who perform well in the BHealth and have completed the pre-med pathway can compete for the substantial number of remaining places with students coming from other universities. If a pre-med pathway has not been undertaken, a bridging course/graduate diploma covering the subjects in the pre-med pathway will need to be completed before entry to the MD, with selection for these places in the MD course being based on grades and interview as well as GAMSAT (Graduate Australian Medical School Admission Test). The pre-med pathway will also be

available for students in the BPhil (Hons), and these students can apply for guaranteed entry to an MD.

The MD will be a totally revised course comprising medicine (including oncology), surgery (including ophthalmology), paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry, general practice and rural medicine. It will need to be adequately funded and staffed.

A similar articulation can work for dentistry: a pre-dentistry pathway within a BHealth, followed by a Doctorate of Dental Science. For those not completing pre-dentistry studies, again a bridging course or graduate diploma will be necessary to construct a 1+3 Doctorate of Dental Science after a three-year undergraduate degree.

A vigorous recruitment, mentoring and scholarship program will be vital to support Indigenous students.

There will also be a need for great care during a transitional three-year period when one course is being phased out and another is starting, to ensure that there is no shortfall in the number of graduates being produced annually. (The Faculty's submission to the Review includes details of a feasible transitional arrangement.)

The Faculty may require short-term funding assistance to manage the cost impact on any clinical schools whose teaching may be reduced.

#### 4.2.3 Law

Any first-cycle degree offered by UWA should be an acceptable precursor to graduate entry into Law if the grades achieved (and any relevant other results, such as LSAT) meet the Law School's requirements. Applicants whose first degree is not from UWA can be judged case by case.

Regarding the duration of a graduate-level Law course and the name of the degree, there seems no room for argument: it must be a three-year Juris Doctor (JD) because this is the established standard. Across Australia, a law degree (at whatever level) requires three years of full-time study if it is to be acceptable to the accrediting authorities, and currently cannot incorporate any work done previously as part of another course. Universities are not permitted at present to spread the necessary content across two degree levels. At several Australian universities (including Queensland, Monash and Melbourne) non-law graduates seeking the qualifications to practise law are required to undertake a Juris Doctor program. The JD is fundamentally different from an LLM, which usually refers to a second (that is, postgraduate) degree in Law. Monash does use the nomenclature "Master of Laws (Juris Doctor)" though this appears to reflect a transitional arrangement. In the case of Melbourne, the JD is the only law degree offered towards professional accreditation; this would be so for UWA as well under the proposed arrangement.

The UWA Law School indicated in its submission to the Review that it is receptive to a 3+3 structure, as this can satisfy the requirements of admitting authorities and also bring advantages over the present LLB structure on both educational and equity grounds. On the other hand it may add six months or a year to the university stage of qualifying for admission to legal practice. (Through acceleration and trimesterisation it is possible to compress the notional standard 3 postgraduate years into 2.5 calendar years, as is done in JD courses elsewhere.)

Providing at the undergraduate entry stage a guaranteed eventual JD place for high-achieving school leavers who want to study Law should alleviate the concern that these students will be turned away from UWA if they cannot use their TER (Tertiary Entrance Rank) score to enrol in an undergraduate Law degree. It should also be possible to guarantee a place to those who perform exceptionally well during the first undergraduate year.

A concern expressed in the Blackstone Society submission on behalf of students is that the sense of professional and social belonging now provided by discipline-based peer networks in the undergraduate years will no longer be readily available if it is only at graduate level that students can enter specialised faculties. However, a “3 plus” structure may enhance rather than diminish a student cohort experience by bringing broader cross-disciplinary groups together while still maintaining several different identity networks. It should also be possible for prospective Law students to be affiliated with the Blackstone Society during their first-cycle studies.

Although the only professional qualification in Law will become a graduate-entry degree, the Faculty should be encouraged to offer Legal Studies units in relevant undergraduate degrees.

#### *4.2.4 Engineering*

A three-year first-cycle degree will not qualify students to practise as engineers, though it will equip them for some jobs within the general field of Engineering. A 3+2 structure for Engineering, in the context of the set of undergraduate courses now being proposed for UWA, will mean that the normal pathway towards postgraduate studies in Engineering comprises a BSc, a BDesign, or a BCom, all of which can be vehicles for relevant units and majors. Therefore it is not expected that the entire content of the existing four-year BE need be compressed into a two-year ME. Some of it can be offered in the form of majors within the new undergraduate degree framework preceding the ME.

The “3 plus” structure (3+2 for those who complete appropriate studies in their undergraduate degree; longer for those who need to undertake bridging work) would bring certain advantages, as indicated in some submissions from within that Faculty, and would fit what appears to be an international trend in the field of Engineering, both in Europe and in the USA, where influential Engineering educators are strongly advocating a move to a five-year structure in which the first degree incorporates a broad education and the second is a professionally focused master-level program (American Society of Civil Engineers 2008; King 2006; National Academy of Sciences 2005).

The lengthening of a student's time commitment from the present four-year structure to a five-year span may raise some concern about potential loss of students from the profession – though this needs to be balanced against the consideration that the eventual pool of potential Engineering students, drawing on different undergraduate pathways, will probably be larger and more diverse as well as more broadly educated and better equipped with a range of employability skills. It should also be noted that in recent years about half of all Engineering undergraduates (49% in 2008) have been choosing to study for five years or more through their enrolment in combined Bachelor courses. The new structure will not increase that total time commitment for these students but will replace the two undergraduate qualifications with two different degrees, one of which is at the postgraduate level.

Concerns about losing excellent school leavers who want to pursue Engineering, and about losing the opportunity to develop disciplinary affiliation during the undergraduate years, can be overcome in the same way as mentioned above in relation to Law – through guaranteed sequential pathways for suitably qualified students. Further, it will be possible under the new course arrangements to attract students into Engineering after completing a Bachelor degree in any one of several fields, though this may entail bridging studies in some cases.

Transitional arrangements, phasing out the four-year undergraduate degree while the new 3+2 structure is introduced, will be critically important to ensure that there is no

hiatus in the annual emergence of new Engineering graduates into a workforce that already faces under-supply problems.

Although the only professional qualification in Engineering will become a graduate-entry degree, the Faculty should be encouraged to offer units in relevant undergraduate degrees.

#### 4.2.5 *Psychology*

The Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) determines what course content is necessary before one can register with the relevant State board to practise as a clinical psychologist. Federal registration requires satisfactory completion of an APAC-accredited four-year sequence in Psychology followed by two years of postgraduate training (or equivalent supervised experience). BA or BSc graduates with a double major in Psychology plus end-on Honours may be accredited under State legislation and practise in organisations requiring psychology expertise that is not clinical psychology.

Those UWA students requiring a postgraduate qualification preceded by a four-year sequence in Psychology can be accommodated within the proposed new course structure, provided that an Honours year is retained as a bridge. Although a 3+1+2 structure is a variation on the norm, it does not appear to pose any noteworthy difficulties. Students can complete an APAC-approved sequence of units in the BA, the BSc, the BHealth, or even (with some cross-crediting of subjects) in the BCom; then, if seeking a career as a practising psychologist, they will need to complete an Honours year before undertaking the two-year Master program.

It should be noted that the BPsych degree (a somewhat anomalous one-year course following a BA or BSc), which enables accreditation by the State, has not been available to commencing students in recent years, but this structure could be retained through a Graduate Diploma course.

#### 4.2.6 *Music*

Introducing more breadth into the first-cycle degree through distributed requirements does not pose a difficulty for Music studies. Students currently undertake two non-Music units in the first year of both the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music Education degrees.

If the four broadening units proposed in the new structure are spread evenly over the first two years (one unit per semester), they can readily be accommodated.

Regarding the impact of the proposed new course structures on Music, the view of the School of Music is that both existing first-cycle four-year courses should remain unchanged in content, length and degree titles to ensure that future enrolments are not further eroded in the face of competition from other providers. Current enrolments in the BMus are low (20 in first year, 6 in second year), and there is a concern that postgraduate coursework degrees would not be viable.

Yet within the new structure, which requires students to enrol in a three-year first-cycle degree (presumably a BA), it is still possible for musical skills and experience to be intensively developed. Students wishing to proceed to accreditation as a teacher of music can then do so by way of a Graduate Diploma (year 4) or Master of Education (years 4 and 5). The School already has in place an existing postgraduate degree in Music Practitioner Studies (MMusPS).

The new structure also gives the School an enhanced opportunity to offer broadening units to students from other parts of the University, and to attract additional enrolments into its units and majors (e.g. through its undergraduate Diploma in Music).

#### **4.2.7 Social Work**

The School of Social Work has recently decided to replace its Bachelor of Social Work with a BA followed by a two-year Master of Social Work degree for professional preparation. (At least five Australian universities offer a two-year graduate-entry MSW.) This is consistent with the new structure being recommended for UWA courses.

Presumably some other first-cycle degrees would be acceptable alternative platforms for the postgraduate degree, and this could enlarge the pool of potential applicants, thus alleviating the current problem of low enrolment numbers in Social Work.

#### **4.2.8 Education**

The Graduate School of Education has a small number of undergraduate enrolments, which can easily be subsumed into the 3+2 sequence of studies. The recent introduction of the BA/MTeach and the BSc/MTeach provides a sound basis for future developments in this area.

### **4.3 Pathways to postgraduate degrees**

The following diagrams indicate the four main pathways that students may take to different kinds of postgraduate degrees (Figure 2), and provide examples (Figures 3 and 4). Not represented here are those situations in which students articulate from Graduate Diplomas into which they have been admitted on the basis of non-degree prior learning.

## Figure 2: Pathways to postgraduate degrees

### ***Discipline-based Pathway***

This sequence of studies builds directly upon the major of the undergraduate degree.

For example:

BA [e.g. in Italian] → MA [in Italian]  
 BCom → Masters [by research] in Marketing  
 BDes → Masters [by coursework] in Architecture  
 BSc (Hons) [in Chemistry] → PhD [in Chemistry]

### ***Sequential Entry Pathway***

This sequence of studies comprises an undergraduate degree followed by a professional postgraduate qualification. Unlike other forms of graduate entry, in this case applicants can be offered, at the point of initial undergraduate enrolment, assured entry into the professional course following completion of the Bachelor degree, subject to meeting course and progression requirements. Some postgraduate degrees (e.g. Doctor of Medicine and Master of Engineering) may require that a student complete certain units in the undergraduate degree. Others (e.g. Doctor of Jurisprudence) may not. Examples include:

BHlth → Doctor of Medicine  
 BA → Doctor of Jurisprudence  
 BSc → Master of Teaching  
 BCom → Master of Engineering

### ***Conversion Pathway***

This sequence of studies comprises an undergraduate degree followed by a graduate diploma or masters degree in a discipline unrelated to that of the undergraduate degree. In some cases bridging units may be required. Examples include:

BA → Master of Business Administration  
 BSc → Master of Commerce  
 BHlth → Master of Engineering Asset Management  
 BDes → Doctor of Medicine

### ***Research Pathway***

This pathway, which is not structurally separate from the other pathways but has a more direct and sustained research focus, can be provided in a number of ways:

BCom (Hons) → PhD  
 BA → MPhil → PhD  
 Master of Business Research → DBA  
 BSc → Grad Dip Research → PhD  
 BPhil (Hons) → PhD

**Figure 3: Examples of sequential pathways**

**Bachelor + Master of Teaching (24 units + 16 units)**

Year/Level 1	Blue	Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green
Year/Level 2	Blue	Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green
Year/Level 3	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Year/Level 4	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Year/Level 5	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey

The Bachelor degree requirements, while following the normal structure, include up to 8 units from the discipline of Education.

**Bachelor + Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Dental Science (24 units + 24 units)**

Year/Level 1	Light Green	Light Green	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
Year/Level 2	Light Green	Light Green	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
Year/Level 3	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Year/Level 4	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Year/Level 5	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Year/Level 6	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey

Again, the requirements of the Bachelor degree remain as normal. Students who have not completed requisite undergraduate units may have to undertake a bridging course, and thus an additional year of study. Note that in this example, the green-coloured cells (representing units directly related to the field of postgraduate study) should also be understood as constituting the degree-specific major of the Bachelor degree (represented in other examples by blue-coloured cells).

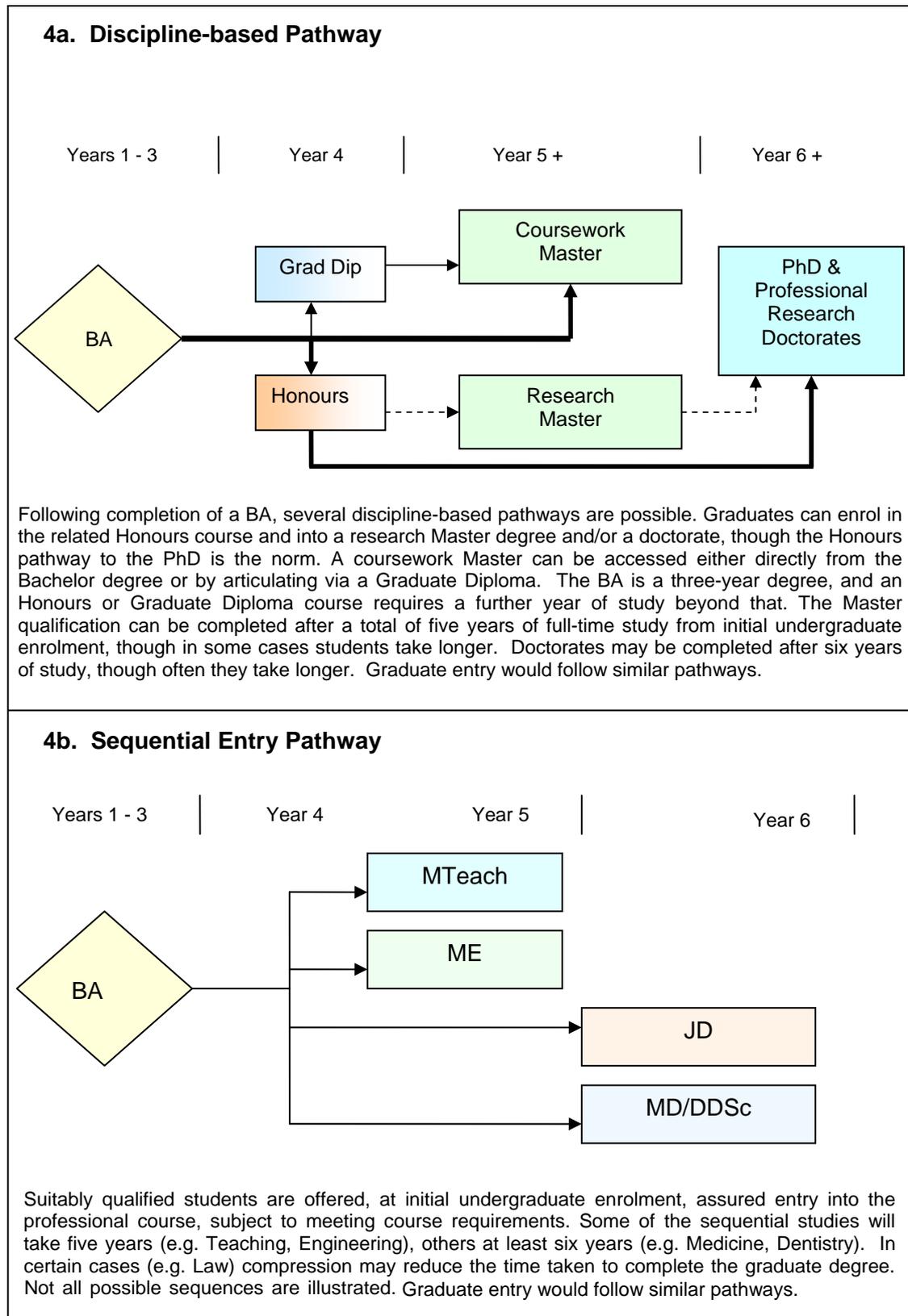
**Bachelor + Doctor of Jurisprudence (24 units + 24 units)**

Year/Level 1	Blue	Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
Year/Level 2	Blue	Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
Year/Level 3	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Year/Level 4	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Year/Level 5	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Year/Level 6	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey

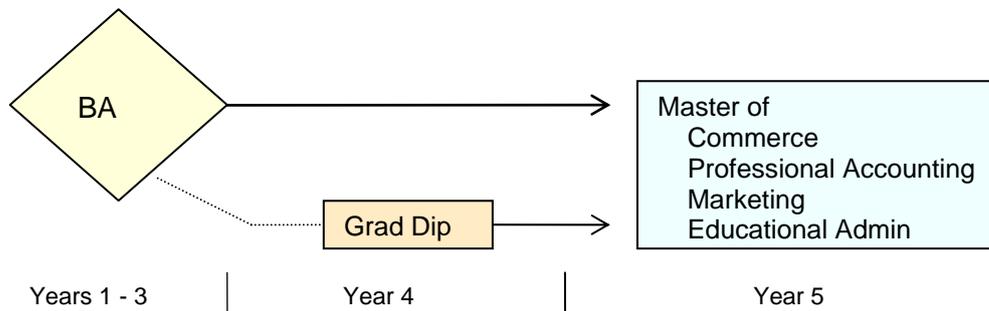
In this case all units from the discipline of Law are offered in the second-cycle (Levels 4 – 6). No units forming part of the Law degree are offered in the first cycle. Note that this schematic representation does not reflect the possibility that the second-cycle degree may be compressed into a shorter period than three years.

Legend (each cell represents one unit)	
Blue	Units for degree-specific major units
Light Blue	Units complementing the degree-specific major
Orange	Second major or elective units
Yellow	Broadening units
Light Green	P/G related units (Major 1)
Grey	P/G units

**Figure 4: Examples of degree pathways from Bachelor of Arts**

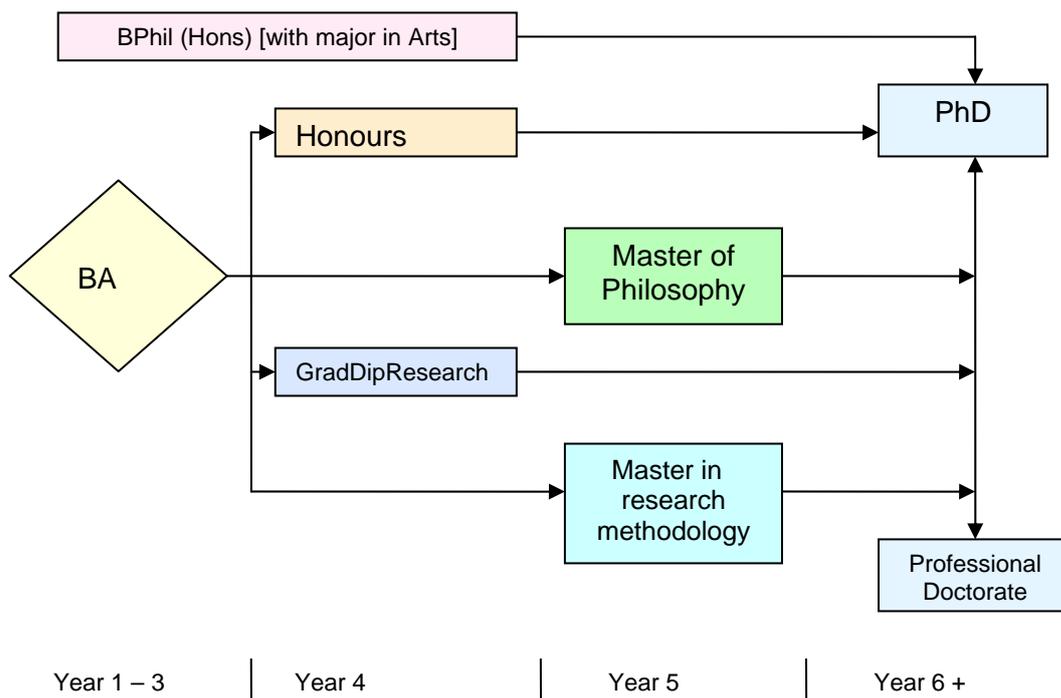


#### 4c. Conversion Pathway



A conversion Master degree is one that does not draw upon the discipline of the undergraduate degree. It is typically of 2 years' duration following the 3-year undergraduate degree. It may be entered either directly or by way of a Graduate Diploma. Graduate entry would follow the same pathway.

#### 4d. Research Pathway



This differs from the other pathways mainly in its greater research focus. BA graduates may advance to the PhD by way of an Honours course. Those with a BPhil (Hons) may advance directly to the PhD. BA graduates may undertake a two-year research Master (MPhil) and articulate to the PhD. Special research preparation courses such as the GradDipResearch, MBusResearch or MEd Research Methods may enable graduates to advance to the PhD or a professional doctorate.

#### **4.4     *Transitional arrangements***

Transitional arrangements will apply to the introduction of some of the new courses and the phasing out of current courses. These arrangements will need to ensure, among other things, that there is no interruption to the supply of graduates to the market, particularly in fields of acute social and economic importance. They are also likely to require transitional funding for some faculties that may need, for a limited period, to teach concurrently within new and existing structures.

Special care is necessary to ensure the provision of continuing advice and support for students who are completing courses that will be phased out. It is vital that they should not suffer any real or perceived disadvantage during the transitional period.

## **5 Financial Impact, Resources and Implementation Responsibilities**

A working party has provided advice to the Steering Group on potential resource implications of the proposed changes. Definitive modelling and precise costing are impossible at this stage because any calculations inevitably depend to some extent on various assumptions. Nonetheless, UWA Planning Services has carefully analysed student load implications of the recommended course structures, and the results have been made available to the Senate, Executive and Deans.

It is envisaged that an Implementation Committee, established by the Vice-Chancellor, will supervise the process of ensuring that all recommendations (once accepted) are systematically put into effect. This will involve liaising duly with Faculties, Academic Board, Academic Council, Board of Coursework Studies, Teaching and Learning Committee, Legislative Committee, Senate, and other University bodies as appropriate.

Meanwhile several summary observations can be made.

### **5.1 *Forecasting the impact of proposed changes on student enrolment***

Neither market research survey results (IRU 2008b) nor the consultations conducted offshore suggest that any substantial shift in student demand will occur if the proposed changes are introduced.

For instance, replacing combined Bachelor-level courses with sequential Bachelor/Master combinations does not seem likely to cause any serious decline in applications at the undergraduate level. Many students responding to the survey were not averse to changing the structure of the combined courses leading to two degrees to a broader Bachelor degree followed by a more specialised Master degree in the same time frame. As previously noted, 86% of those students who expressed an opinion (83% of local students and 93% of international students) saw this as a “desirable” change, while 91% said that their decision to enrol at UWA would not have been affected by this change if it had already been introduced.

It is not anticipated that there will be any significant long-term decline in international student income. While lengthening the time taken to acquire a degree with good employment prospects (e.g. for some students in Engineering) will not be immediately popular with all international students and could lead to some loss of enrolments in the short term, a significant finding of consultations conducted for this Review in UWA's main international markets is that a shift of emphasis towards postgraduate education is occurring gradually, and employers tend to favour this. Results of the student survey show that international students were more favourably disposed than local students to the idea of requiring all professional degrees to be at the postgraduate level. The Review recommendations are future-focused: they aim to meet student and community needs for the years ahead, not to be unduly preoccupied with current demand patterns.

### **5.2 *Modelling the impact on student load distribution across faculties***

Indicative modelling of the impact on student load distribution suggests that the recommended changes would produce a total increase of approximately 500 EFTSL, an amount that can be absorbed without great difficulty and indeed is in line with desired growth targets. It also suggests that there are unlikely to be drastic shifts in student load across faculties.

### **5.3 Forecasting additional costs to the University**

The modelling indicated above suggests that, if the University accepts the Review recommendations in full, there is no good reason to expect significantly adverse long-term financial consequences for any faculty with regard to the basic budget model.

However, during the transitional period it may be necessary to provide financial assistance to some faculties, subsidising the costs of moving from undergraduate to postgraduate provision (e.g. Law, Medicine, Engineering), and continuing to run old courses alongside new for a few years (e.g. Engineering).

There also will be a need to fund a range of other things, including:

- resource-intensive professional development to help staff members cope with the transition to new teaching and administrative arrangements;
- marketing initiatives to ensure that secondary schools, employer groups and all other stakeholders understand the nature and implications of the changes;
- increased scholarship provision to support study abroad and equity arrangements.

There are reasonable grounds for confidence that the University will have the capacity to meet these costs. For instance, expansion of scholarship support to students is an expected focus of Centenary fundraising efforts. The Implementation Committee will be responsible for identifying expenditure requirements in more specific detail.

### **5.4 Offsetting any financial difficulties for students**

While it is important to anticipate and mitigate any adverse effects on student finances that some of the recommended changes may produce, the following points should also be recognised:

- Some impacts are likely to be financially beneficial – e.g. moving all first-cycle courses to three years (compared with the four-year span of undergraduate studies now required in several disciplines) will substantially reduce the burden of compulsory direct costs and opportunity costs for a significant number of students.
- Although it will require longer under the new arrangements to complete professional qualifications in a few fields (mainly six months to a year of additional study), it is anticipated that UWA will negotiate with the Commonwealth Government the transfer of a large number of Commonwealth-supported HECS places from undergraduate to graduate courses.
- From 1 January 2008, Youth Allowance and Austudy assistance has been extended to students undertaking Master-level studies by coursework where the course is required for entry to a profession, is the fastest pathway to professional entry, or is the only pathway provided by the university following a restructure of existing course delivery. Only four UWA courses are currently approved for this purpose: Master of Architecture (coursework); Master of Clinical Audiology; Master of Pharmacy; and Master of Psychology. The University needs to apply to extend eligibility to other courses regardless of the outcome of the Review. It is therefore anticipated that students who meet the financial and other criteria and undertake

professional entry postgraduate courses will be eligible for such assistance.

- The Implementation Committee will need to investigate a number of other matters in relation to student-related funding requirements and opportunities, and in doing so it should continue to consult closely with the Student Guild and Postgraduate Students Association. Such issues cannot be specified comprehensively at this stage because they are likely to be affected substantially by the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education.

## 6 Conclusion

To earn a stronger international reputation for its commitment to excellence, UWA must meet the future educational needs of its students at the highest standard, and make its teaching and related administrative arrangements as efficient and effective as possible. It cannot achieve these objectives without significant reforms.

There are many reasons for the University to make fundamental changes to its present course structures. This report has discussed a number of strengths that can be enhanced, problems that can be solved, opportunities that can be pursued, and risks that can be mitigated. It has also indicated particular ways in which the recommended changes will enhance the quality of teaching and learning. In summary, these include the following expected improvements.

Students, staff and external stakeholders will all benefit from the introduction of a much simpler, more flexible, more transparent and more consistent framework for every course, accompanied by better institution-wide coordination of relevant policies.

Another gain for all members of the University will be the closer relationship recommended here between its two core academic activities, enhancing UWA's reputation as both a high-performing research-intensive institution and a high-quality student-centred teaching institution. The strengthening of this nexus will result from the emphasis on research skill development and inquiry-based learning in all undergraduate courses, and from the creation of the BPhil (Hons) degree with its especially intensive research focus and international experience. It is also anticipated that that efficiencies produced by several of the recommended changes will clear more time for staff to devote to research, which will contribute through a virtuous circle to the quality of the learning environment for students.

Students will acquire a broader knowledge base and more transferable skills in their undergraduate courses, opening a wider span of job opportunities in the global workplace and providing a better intellectual foundation for further professional study at a mature stage. They will also graduate with well-honed communication skills, and with a personal experience of service learning designed to develop their awareness of community needs and citizenship responsibilities.

Further, they will be able to move more easily, where appropriate, from one field to another after completion of the first-cycle degree. This will bring significant equity advantages through the availability of "second chance" specialisation for those students who have been hampered by social disadvantage or whose interests and capabilities develop as time goes by.

Instead of the frustrations that an over-packed undergraduate curriculum poses for students and staff, particularly in professional disciplines, there will now be more scope for developing a strong "graduate school" ethos, reflecting that fact that students at that level have been able to make a considered choice about their preferred vocational or academic specialisation.

All these developments will enable the University to sharpen its focus on producing graduates who are educated, enquiring, eloquent and engaged.

## **7 Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1**

That every undergraduate student be enrolled in one of the following six courses: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Design, Bachelor of Health, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons).

### **Recommendation 2**

That except for the BPhil, offered only as a four-year Honours degree, all the courses listed in Recommendation 1 be of three years' duration (or part-time equivalent), with a fourth year available for those students who qualify to proceed to an Honours course.

### **Recommendation 3**

That eligibility for admission to the three-year courses be subject to the University's usual entry standards (currently a TER of at least 80 or eligibility for a special entry scheme).

### **Recommendation 4**

- a. That the entry level for the BPhil (Hons) be a TER of at least 98, with an alternative admission pathway based on outstanding results at the end of the first undergraduate year;
- b. That the BPhil (Hons) be available in any discipline;
- c. That it include an especially intensive research focus;
- d. That it provide support arrangements for a Study Abroad experience;
- e. That development of the BPhil (Hons) course be generally consistent with the structural principles recommended for other undergraduate courses and with the guidelines indicated in Appendix 11 to this report.

### **Recommendation 5**

- a. That all three-year undergraduate degree courses offer end-on (fourth-year) Honours to qualified students;
- b. That a four-year course leading to the award of an Honours degree require a student to complete 32 units;
- c. That, except for the BPhil (Hons), integrated Honours be discontinued;
- d. That admission criteria for entry to end-on Honours be consistent across the University, and be based on the grade average (or equivalent) and successful completion of an identified and published set of units;
- e. That a uniform classification be adopted for Honours results, derived from the Weighted Average Mark in fourth-year units;
- f. That the University reaffirm and promote the value of an Honours course as a closely supervised yet independently managed research experience;

- g. That the University adopt the practice of designating an Honours qualification distinctively by the parenthetical use of (Hons) as part of the degree name, in recognition of the additional time expended and level attained;
- h. That only courses in which students undertake a sustained research project (equivalent in workload to at least two units) be permitted to use the title "Honours";
- i. That any discrete fourth year of study that does not meet the research requirement for Honours defined in clause 5 (h) be designated a Graduate Diploma;
- j. That Honours be available only in the same disciplinary field in which the student has completed an undergraduate major;
- k. That the University identify ways of better publicising and promoting its Honours courses, and particularly the value of their research-intensive component, to undergraduate students and to external stakeholders.

### **Recommendation 6**

- a. That the term "area of knowledge" be used to signify a basic cluster of associated disciplinary fields, corresponding to any one of the three-year undergraduate degrees that the University offers (Arts, Science, Commerce, Design and Health);
- b. That each degree be defined by a list of degree-specific majors that have been approved for this purpose by the Board of Coursework Studies (Recommendation 8);
- c. That any Faculty may, in principle, offer a major or any number of units in any undergraduate degree course;
- d. That all degrees be recognised as degrees of the University as a whole and not of a particular faculty or group of faculties, and be guided as far as possible by university-wide rules rather than course-specific rules.

### **Recommendation 7**

- a. That each undergraduate course require a student to complete 24 units, of which no more than 12 will be at Level 1 and at least four will be at Level 3;
- b. That each three-year undergraduate course include a "degree-specific major", consisting of 8 units (two at Level 1, two at Level 2, and four at Level 3), which provides the rationale for the nomenclature of the degree – for example, in order to be awarded a BA, a student must have completed a major from a list of approved degree-specific majors for the BA;
- c. That the degree-specific major be supplemented by no more than four further units taken from within the same area of knowledge as the degree-specific major, which meet any prerequisites and/or co-requisites and ensure that all the UWA Educational Principles are embedded in the course;
- d. That, in addition to the degree-specific major, each undergraduate course may include another major (thus constituting either two majors or a double major) and/or other units from the same area of knowledge as the degree-specific major;
- e. That, in addition to the degree-specific major, each undergraduate course may include another major and/or other units from a different area of knowledge;

- f. That faculties wishing to expand their specialisation beyond the eight-unit degree-specific major and four complementary units be able to offer a double major, but that it should remain possible for a student to graduate with a single major in any discipline;
- g. That each three-year undergraduate course meet the requirements for broadening units, communication skill development and research skill development specified in Recommendations 9, 12 and 13;
- h. That the concept of a “minor” not be included in the new course structures.

### **Recommendation 8**

- a. That a Board of Coursework Studies be established with responsibility to receive and consider proposals from faculties for the introduction of (or significant changes to) first-cycle and second-cycle coursework units, majors and courses, and make recommendations to Academic Council on these and associated policy matters;
- b. That its constitution be as indicated in the draft document attached as Appendix 12 to this report.

### **Recommendation 9**

That every undergraduate course include four “broadening units” – that is, units taught outside the area of knowledge in which the student’s degree-specific major is taught\*, and comprising at least one unit from Category A and three more chosen from either category:

Category A: This comprises units approved by the Board of Coursework Studies that have as their main focus some aspects of the globalised and culturally diverse environment in which graduates will be living and working.

Category B: This comprises potentially all other first-level units and some second-level units (without specific prerequisites) that faculties are willing to offer to students from across the University, and that are approved for this purpose by the Board of Coursework Studies.

\*Note: In the case of languages other than English (LOTE), the general rule that broadening units be taken from areas of knowledge other than the one that teaches the student’s degree-specific major is waived: that is, someone studying for a BA degree may also count LOTE units towards the broadening requirement, provided that these units do not form part of the disciplinary field of the major.

### **Recommendation 10**

That units suitable for the broadening categories (Recommendation 9) be identified through the following approval process: all faculties nominate units that they regard as appropriate in relation to the given categories; these nominated units undergo an independent and transparently rigorous review, managed by the Board of Coursework Studies; the Board of Coursework Studies then refers to Academic Council/Board for ratification of the units that meet agreed criteria; and for units that do not yet meet the criteria, their nominators are given feedback and support to help them meet the criteria in a later review.

**Recommendation 11**

That the only names of undergraduate degrees (apart from Honours degrees) be as stated in Recommendation 1; and that no variations or parenthetical additions be permissible, since degree certificates will list majors and academic transcripts will convey the more specific information that employers and others may need.

**Recommendation 12**

That every undergraduate major include at least one unit with an explicit focus on oral and written communication skills.

**Recommendation 13**

That every undergraduate major include a demonstrable emphasis on inquiry-based learning and research skill development through direct engagement with the research culture of the relevant discipline.

**Recommendation 14**

- a. That every undergraduate course include engagement with the wider community through a structured unpaid service learning experience with a not-for-profit organisation;
- b. That each student be required to devote a minimum of 20 hours, at some stage during the period of undergraduate enrolment, to this kind of community engagement;
- c. That, in association with the Student Guild, the University establish a Student Community Engagement office to liaise with community organisations, coordinate placements, and supervise the operation of the scheme;
- d. That no formally assessed assignment work be required as part of the service learning activity and that no credit be granted for it towards any unit, but that it be cited on the student's academic transcript.

**Recommendation 15**

- a. That the present list of UWA Educational Principles (Appendix 10) be reviewed for the Board of Coursework Studies by the Teaching and Learning Committee, and that this include considering the applicability of those Principles to postgraduate courses;
- b. That all UWA Educational Principles be demonstrably embedded in every undergraduate course;
- c. That each faculty be accountable to the Board of Coursework Studies for determining what opportunities the Faculty is providing to link specific graduate attributes with objectives, learning experiences, professional requirements and assessed outcomes of the units and majors for which it is responsible;
- d. That the Board of Coursework Studies ensure that the structure of every undergraduate course will permit the possibility of at least a semester of study abroad.

### **Recommendation 16**

- a. That the practice of assigning credit point values to units be discontinued;
- b. That a unit, as defined in clause 16 (c), be indivisible, so that courses cannot include fractions of units;
- c. That 1 unit be deemed equivalent to 150 hours of student workload per semester (including contact hours, personal study time and examinations), and that 4 units be regarded as normally requiring 1 semester of full-time study;
- d. That the student workload required for all units be reviewed by faculties to ensure that they comply equally with the new guideline of 150 hours per unit, and that the outcomes of this review process be considered by the Board of Coursework Studies.

### **Recommendation 17**

- a. That the total number of undergraduate units offered across the University be reduced substantially;
- b. That the Board of Coursework Studies work with faculties to achieve progress in this matter.

### **Recommendation 18**

That rules of faculties or of courses be prevented from restricting the number of credits that can be transferred, except in relation to the degree-specific major, when students change their course enrolment.

### **Recommendation 19**

That, normally, courses designed to meet professional accreditation requirements be offered only at the postgraduate level.

### **Recommendation 20**

- a. That combined (concurrently studied) first-cycle courses leading to the award of two Bachelor degrees be discontinued;
- b. That, instead, the University provide sequential pathways for undergraduate and postgraduate course combinations in professional fields (e.g. Law, Medicine, Engineering), so that suitably qualified applicants can be offered, at the point of initial undergraduate enrolment, assured entry into the postgraduate professional course following completion of the first-cycle degree, subject to meeting course and progression requirements;
- c. That places also be available to students who compete for them following completion of the first-cycle degree.

### **Recommendation 21**

That the University seek approval for the transfer of the maximum possible number of Commonwealth-supported (HECS) places into the new professional postgraduate degrees, along with income support eligibility.

**Recommendation 22**

That the University provide transitional funding to those professional faculties whose courses need to move from undergraduate to postgraduate level, and that it give particular consideration to the costs of continuing to provide an uninterrupted supply of graduates to the market while some courses are being phased out.

**Recommendation 23**

That a glossary of terms be issued to assist with the standardising of structures, rules and definitions, and with the publicising of new arrangements.

**Recommendation 24**

- a. That the University's introduction of new course structures be accompanied by a vigorous program of outreach to under-represented groups, linked with a large-scale Centenary Scholarship Drive;
- b. That the University work closely with the School of Indigenous Studies and the faculties to ensure that intensive support continues to be provided and further developed (e.g. through appropriate access pathways to professional courses, quota allocations, generous financial arrangements and special tutoring assistance), so that the new structures open new opportunities to Indigenous students.

**Recommendation 25**

That, during the period of transition, the University give special consideration to the educational needs of undergraduates not enrolled in the new degrees.

**Recommendation 26**

- a. That Master degrees normally require 16 units to be completed after the three-year Bachelor degree, or 8 units after either the Graduate Diploma or the four-year Bachelor degree with Honours;
- b. That any proposed exceptions to the preceding rule must be argued, in submissions to the Board of Coursework Studies, on the basis of national and international best practice;
- c. That Graduate Diploma courses require 8 units to be completed at graduate level after the three-year Bachelor degree;
- d. That Graduate Certificates require 4 units to be completed at graduate level after the three-year Bachelor degree.

**Recommendation 27**

That the Board of Coursework Studies be guided in its deliberations by Appendix 7, the recommendations of the Working Party on Postgraduate Coursework as endorsed with amendments by Academic Council in February 2008.

**Recommendation 28**

- a. That existing postgraduate courses consisting entirely or predominantly of undergraduate units be reclassified as diplomas;
- b. That, except in cases endorsed by the Board of Coursework Studies and Academic Council, credit not be granted in postgraduate courses for Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 units undertaken as part of undergraduate courses;
- c. That postgraduate courses comprise units at Level 4 or above, but may include introductory content provided that it is taught and assessed at graduate level.

**Recommendation 29**

That existing skills-based undergraduate diploma courses comprising eight units equivalent to a major (e.g. Diploma in Modern Languages) continue to be offered, provided that they can be undertaken only if the student is enrolled concurrently for an undergraduate degree or is a graduate.

**Recommendation 30**

That all research masters degrees eligible for RTS (Research Training Scheme) funding be designated as MPhil (Master of Philosophy).

**Recommendation 31**

That the Vice-Chancellor establish an Implementation Committee charged with supervising the necessary changes and ensuring that they are made in a systematic, timely and appropriate manner, with adequate notice to all stakeholders including secondary schools and prospective students.

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