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Foreword from the Vice Chancellor

With the Murdoch University Strategic Plan 2012-2017, the University has adopted the 21st century vision of Murdoch as an international university pursuing excellence in select areas of knowledge production and dissemination. In this context, the work of the Curriculum Commission is a key element in achieving our goal of providing a rich and diverse academic learning experience with a curriculum integrally linked to quality research and up-to-date pedagogy; equipping students with life-long learning skills; and the capacity to successfully engage in a globally-connected world.

The Commission has undertaken a thorough analysis of our courses, degrees and degree structures and examined the current and future needs of our students, as well as national and international trends and impacts in higher education, educational technologies and pedagogy. The Commission’s recommendations propose streamlining our undergraduate bachelor offerings to seven degrees, with strengthened majors that are supported by greater emphasis on research skills acquisition and inter-disciplinary breadth studies, reflecting Murdoch’s long-standing commitment to inter-disciplinarity. These recommendations support the renewal and re-focusing of our undergraduate and postgraduate coursework offerings, with a view to enhancing Murdoch’s reputation for high quality teaching and learning, providing clear pathways for students beyond the undergraduate degree, and strengthening the teaching-research nexus.

It is important to recognise the hard work and commitment of all the people who contributed to the Commission and its outcomes, especially the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and the Commissioners but also the many other colleagues across the university who have made inputs into its development. Indeed, the work of the Commission has been underpinned by intensive and widespread consultation and collaboration within the University community. The Commission itself has met more than 20 times and has undertaken significant work out of session. The high level of engagement from the University community has been invaluable to achieving the outcomes of the Commission and I thank all staff who invested time and effort in providing submissions. The passion and the commitment of all those who responded (even those not convinced of all elements of the Commission’s agenda) is a real and enduring strength of Murdoch and will carry us through what is a time of great challenge but also of considerable opportunity for our future.

I am pleased to commend the Murdoch University Curriculum Commission White Paper to you. The recommendations of the Commission are an important step towards achieving our vision and continuing to build our reputation and resilience as a high-quality university.

Professor Richard Higgott
Vice Chancellor
Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Murdoch University Curriculum Commission (the Commission) was established to review and make recommendations on courses, degrees and degree structures as part of an overall strategy to position Murdoch as a competitive and sustainable research university in a global setting.

The recommendations presented in this White Paper reflect the overriding objectives of the Commission, which set out to explore the current and future education needs of Murdoch’s students, with special attention to equipping them with the skills for life-long learning. The Commission also set its sights on forging closer connections between the core activities of the university – teaching and research – for the benefit of students and academic staff alike.

The vision of developing and enhancing Murdoch’s educational principles, especially in relation to depth and breadth of learning and to inter-disciplinary knowledge, drove the impetus to simplify and streamline our degrees and courses and to provide clear pathways from our undergraduate degrees to employment, postgraduate coursework, or research. Refining our offerings in this way will enable resources to be shifted to research, postgraduate teaching, and higher degree research supervision.

The Commission’s recommendations have been developed through a highly consultative process involving Murdoch staff and students. The large number of formal responses to the Discussion Paper and the Green Paper has been both impressive and enlightening, demonstrating staff commitment to and enthusiasm for innovative teaching and learning approaches and practices at Murdoch. Staff contributions have conveyed strong support for the modification of our degrees and curriculum, within the context of Murdoch’s history, identity and future plans. As a result, some of the proposals outlined in the Green Paper have been strengthened and reaffirmed while others have been reviewed and revised accordingly.

We are optimistic that you will see the various contributions reflected in the recommendations below. We look forward to your endorsement of the White Paper and to working together to realise the full potential of its recommendations for Murdoch students, staff and the University community.

Summary of Recommendations

The Commission recommends:

1. That Murdoch University offers seven undergraduate degrees:
   - Bachelor of Arts
   - Bachelor of Business
   - Bachelor of Science
   - Bachelor of Education
   - Bachelor of Engineering
   - Bachelor of Laws
   - Bachelor of Nursing

2. That Murdoch University has a degree structure that permits students to combine a Bachelor of Arts, Business or Science with a Bachelor of Education, Engineering, Laws or Nursing.
3. That each of the seven undergraduate degrees has a Standing Committee that enables the University to have shared and collegial processes for the development and review of curriculum in the undergraduate degrees.

4. That Part I of every undergraduate degree at Murdoch has a compulsory transition unit that introduces students to the degree-specific skills that are necessary for success at university. Normally this will be completed in the first semester of study.

   Students who enter Murdoch with advanced standing up to and including 24 points will be required to complete the requisite transition unit in their degree unless they can demonstrate that they have achieved the transition unit’s learning outcomes.

5. That all new coursework students at Murdoch be required to complete an online module on Academic Integrity during their first semester/trimester of study, as a condition of being able to continue in their degree in the following semester/trimester.

6. That every undergraduate major at Murdoch be designed to promote increasing levels of depth and sophistication in student research skills. The promotion of research skills acquisition will be demonstrated in curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment tasks.

   The promotion of research skills will also be supported by the inclusion of compulsory research skills units at 2nd and 3rd year level, designed for groups of cognate majors or for single degrees. These units will complement and reinforce the skills acquired in the course of a major.

7. That a major is defined as an integrated and sequential course of study that:

   o Introduces students to a discipline and its key themes, theories, concepts and boundaries;

   o Introduces students to research strategies and methods that are appropriate to the discipline;

   o Features progression of learning, such that the major becomes more specialised and exclusive at each year level;

   o May include a work-integrated learning experience; and,

   o Concludes with a capstone experience that pulls together disciplinary learning and/or prepares students for the next step, whether that is to employment, Honours study or postgraduate coursework.

8. That all bachelor degrees incorporate a sequence of inter-disciplinary breadth studies to the value of nine points in total, commencing with a degree-based unit at 1st year, a university-wide breadth unit at 2nd year, and an applied breadth unit at 3rd year.

9. The standardisation of unit values in coursework degrees at Murdoch at 3 credit points.
10. All bachelor degrees are expected to conform to the degree structure as described in this White Paper. Where accreditation requirements prevent full compliance it is expected that the principal degree elements of transition units, research skills units and breadth units are included to the greatest extent possible without compromising accreditation.

11. That all Honours programs should include coursework components that are designed to deepen the theoretical, cognitive and technical skills of students in support of their thesis projects. All Honours programs should therefore include a unit on research design in which students design and develop their thesis proposal.

12. That all undergraduate majors be able to demonstrate a clear progression of study opportunities beyond the bachelor degree (AQF Level 7). These opportunities should include higher degree research study via the Honours or Masters (Research) degree pathway as well as professionally-oriented postgraduate qualifications.

13. That all Schools review their postgraduate coursework offerings with a view to developing new qualifications in proven and emerging areas of demand.
1. Introduction

University education is rapidly evolving. Murdoch faces more complex and challenging conditions than at any previous time in its history. The University operates in a locally, nationally and globally contested market, where other universities are creating strong academic programs in order to gain competitive advantage. Constraints in public funding, escalating costs, the deregulation of undergraduate places, the expansion of participation, increasing competition from other public and private providers in Australia and overseas, rapid technological and social change, and shifting demands in student and employer expectations of university education put enormous pressure on our capacity to provide high quality academic programs.

In this context, the Murdoch University Curriculum Commission (the Commission) has been given the responsibility to review and make recommendations on courses, degrees and curriculum as part of an overall strategy to position Murdoch as a competitive and sustainable teaching and research university in a global setting. This review and revitalisation of our academic coursework programs is part of a larger project of renewal, as outlined in the University’s Strategic Plan 2012-2017.

1.1 Aims, Objectives and Membership

The Commission was established in February 2012 with the following aims:

1. To strengthen Murdoch’s reputation for high quality teaching and learning in all of its academic programs (majors and degrees, undergraduate and postgraduate) and among all its student cohorts (internal and external, on-shore and transnational).

2. To ensure that our majors and degrees meet national and international standards, in terms of curriculum design and delivery, and learning outcomes.

3. To promote a stronger relationship between teaching and research and to strike a better balance between our teaching and our research.

4. To ensure that our academic programs operate on a financially sustainable basis.

5. To make these changes internally self-sustaining.

See Appendix 1 for the Commission’s full terms of reference and its membership.

Members of the Commission met on a regular basis for a total of 23 times prior to the release of the White Paper. Significant volumes of work have also been undertaken out of session.

The Commission also undertook extensive consultation with university staff and students, as outlined in the following section.
The work of the Commission was assisted by the Working Group on Embedding Research in Teaching, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, Professor David Morrison.

See Appendix 2 for the Working Group’s terms of reference and its membership.

1.2 Consultation Processes

Throughout the review, the Commission has undertaken extensive consultation with Murdoch students, academics and professional staff. The Chair of the Commission has also provided briefings to meetings of the University Senior Leadership Group, the Academic Council, School Deans, and Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning.

The Commission released a Discussion Paper in April 2012 for discussion and response within the University community (all staff and the Student Guild). Over 50 submissions were received in response to this Discussion Paper, with all feedback considered during the work program of the Commission. A separate meeting was also held in May with representatives of the Student Guild and student associations.

See Appendix 3 for the list of submissions in response to the April Discussion Paper.

In early September 2012, the Commission released a Green Paper with draft proposals and options for future degrees, degree structures, and curriculum at Murdoch University. This paper provided the basis for consultation with the University community regarding the draft proposals and options. During the consultation period, the Commission held two Town Hall meetings with the academic and professional staff and a meeting with representatives of the Student Guild and School Student Associations. In addition, members of the Commission met with School Deans as a group and with several individual Schools at their request.

More than 60 written submissions in response to the Green Paper were provided to the Commission.

See Appendix 4 for the list of submissions in response to the Green Paper.

The written responses to the Green Paper proposals closely informed the White Paper and its final recommendations. In particular, feedback on foundation units, interdisciplinary breadth studies, and degree models contributed to the revision and advancement of proposals in these areas. In cases where this feedback has led the Commission to revise the Green Paper proposals, this is explained in detail in the White Paper.

The White Paper will be considered at the 21 November 2012 meeting of the Academic Council and the 5 December 2012 meeting of the University Senate.

Implementation of the White Paper recommendations will commence with the academic planning cycle in 2013 for implementation of the first year of the new degrees, degree structures and curriculum in 2014.
2. Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees

2.1 Undergraduate degrees

There has been broad support within the University community for the proposal to revert to a simpler system that would enable undergraduate students to enrol in a degree that reflected their broad area of interest, academic orientation and professional aspirations. There was strong support for the proposal to offer three broadly based undergraduate degrees – Arts, Business and Science – that accommodates both those students who are certain about their chosen majors from the outset of their studies and those who are uncertain about their preferred pathway. Both cohorts are provided with the benefits of an undergraduate degree that includes specialist study in one or more majors, and keeps open multiple career possibilities and professional destinations. These three degrees – the Bachelor of Arts (BA), the Bachelor of Business (BBus) and the Bachelor of Science (BSc) – would consist of 72 points (the equivalent of three years of full time study).

Given Murdoch’s particular student cohort, there was also widespread support for the proposition that the University would continue to offer undergraduate students the opportunity to train as a nurse, teacher, engineer or lawyer, rather than shifting these to postgraduate-only qualifications.

Moving to a smaller number of degrees will also strengthen the student cohort experience and the adoption of the curriculum principles for degrees and majors (as outlined in Part 3) will strengthen the intellectual coherence of each student's course experience.

Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that Murdoch University offers seven undergraduate degrees:

- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Science
- Bachelor of Education
- Bachelor of Engineering
- Bachelor of Laws
- Bachelor of Nursing

Many existing courses and degrees will become majors within the Bachelor of Arts, Business or Science in 2014. These are identified in Appendix 5.

Some existing undergraduate courses will be converted to professional graduate programs. For example, the clinical degrees in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery and in
Chiropractic will be shifted to the Masters level, provided that the Commonwealth government agrees that their Commonwealth-supported places can also be shifted with those degrees.

Other courses, or indeed some of their components, currently offered at the undergraduate level could be more appropriately offered at the postgraduate level to students seeking advanced professional qualifications. In some cases that shift is already under way (e.g. Public Policy, the Juris Doctor). In other cases, such as Environmental Science and Marine Science, the optional fourth year of undergraduate study in courses can be redesigned and offered as a postgraduate diploma for Bachelor of Science graduates seeking additional professional skills and training. This caters for a larger and broader group, including recent graduates, those who have been in the workforce for a longer period, and international as well as domestic students.

It should be noted that the recommendation to retain the degrees in Education, Engineering, Nursing and Laws at the undergraduate level at present does not imply a view on the part of the Commission that these qualifications should not be moved to the postgraduate level in the future. With a view to international and national trends, it may be desirable to review the positioning of these degrees at a future date.

2.2. Combined Degrees

The Commission recognises that many students enrolled in Education, Engineering, Law or Nursing would benefit from being able to complete a more broadly based degree at the same time (in Arts, Business or Science).

It therefore recommends that the University retain a joint degree structure that enables students to combine a broad degree (Bachelor of Arts, Business or Science) with a specialised degree (Bachelor of Education, Engineering, Law or Nursing) within a single course of study. An advantage of the combined degree structure, which is especially relevant for Murdoch’s student cohort, is that it allows domestic students to access a Commonwealth Government Supported (CGS) place for both courses.

Other undergraduate degree combinations would not be available. Instead, students who complete a bachelor degree and wish to continue with university study would be encouraged to move on to deeper, broader, or more advanced learning at the Honours, graduate diploma or masters level.

| Recommendation 2 |
| The Commission recommends that Murdoch University has a degree structure that permits students to combine a Bachelor of Arts, Business or Science with a bachelor of Education, Engineering, Laws or Nursing. |
2.3 Governance arrangements for undergraduate degrees

At present, there is a relatively high degree of congruence between Schools and undergraduate degrees. This will change with the creation of larger multi-disciplinary Schools and the slimming of our undergraduate profile and there will be a need to adopt a collegial, coherent and integrated cross-School approach to the development and review of degrees and their majors.

The need for new forms of collegial interaction will be especially great in the case of the Bachelor of Arts, which will have majors offered by the Schools of Arts, Law, and Management and Governance, and the Bachelor of Science, which will have majors from the Schools of Veterinary and Life Sciences, Engineering and Information Technology, Health Professions, and Psychology and Exercise Science. In addition, the development of degree-specific transition units and inter-disciplinary breadth units will need to be underpinned by collaborative and supportive decision-making processes.

The Commission recommends the development of a Standing Committee for each of Murdoch’s seven undergraduate degrees and it notes the example of the Joint Schools Courses Committee for Sustainability as a possible model. Recognising that there will also be benefits from encouraging coordination and cooperation among these committees – particularly in cases where a large number of students take combined degrees – it is desirable that each degree Standing Committee has at least one representative from another degree standing committee. For example, the Bachelor of Education Degree Standing Committee should include at least one representative from the standing committee for the BA or the BSc.

The Academic Council, through the Academic Courses Committee and other relevant committees, will continue to have a central role in approving and monitoring the quality and coherence of Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees.

Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that each of the seven undergraduate degrees has a Standing Committee that enables the University to have shared and collegial processes for the development and review of curriculum in the undergraduate degrees.
3. Undergraduate Degrees: Curriculum Elements

Much of the work of the Commission has been devoted to a consideration of how best to enshrine Murdoch’s educational principles and aspirations within its undergraduate curriculum and degree structures. During the course of the Commission’s consultations and deliberations, we began to shift our focus from the requirements of majors to the design of our degrees as a whole – a shift in thinking that was enabled by the widespread support within the University community for returning to a smaller number of bachelor degrees with high quality majors within them. Thus the recommendations that follow address the curriculum of the bachelor degrees in their entirety, with the major being only one element (albeit a central element) in the degree. The Commission believes that this shift in emphasis represents a profound shift in the way we think about our bachelor degrees that will strengthen our approach to undergraduate education at Murdoch and help us to deliver on our graduate attributes.

In developing recommendations for the core characteristics, curriculum elements and structures of our undergraduate degrees, the Commission has paid close attention to trends in curriculum renewal and transformation at other research universities in Australia and abroad. We have also been very mindful of Murdoch’s own educational traditions and academic strengths, including its commitment to inter-disciplinarity and its strong record in applied or ‘translational’ research. We have sought to express these as a set of educational principles to guide the design of Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees, as follows.

Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees should:

- Introduce students to the academic skills that are necessary for success at university study in their chosen area of study;
- Equip students with the skills necessary for life-long learning, including research skills;
- Ensure that every student acquires depth of knowledge in at least one discipline or profession;
- Expose students to inter-disciplinary studies, as well as to knowledge and ways of knowing outside of their ‘home’ degree;
- Instil Murdoch’s graduate attributes, through the overall design, structure and content of the degree and its constituent parts;
- Provide clear pathways beyond the bachelor degree to employment, research training, or postgraduate coursework; and,
- Have distinctive elements that reflect Murdoch’s values and its research strengths.

The specific recommendations that follow, relating to foundation skills for transition to university, research skills, inter-disciplinary breadth studies, and the design of majors, are intended to give expression to these educational principles. The Commission
recommends that these elements should be a defining feature of all of Murdoch's undergraduate degrees.

The ability to incorporate these curriculum elements into our degrees depends in large part on the adoption of 3 credit point units as the norm in Part II of our undergraduate degrees, mirroring the structure that currently exists in Part I. Thus, these proposals are underpinned by a recommendation to adopt 3 credit point units as the standard building block for Murdoch's degrees at every year level.

### 3.1 Foundation Units for Transition to University Study

There is growing emphasis in higher education worldwide on the importance of foundation studies that introduce students to the range of academic skills that they need in order to be successful in university study. This view was widely supported in the responses to the April Discussion Paper, with a large number of submissions supporting the proposition that foundation units that introduce students to the skills necessary for success at university should be a required part of the first year of undergraduate degrees. Among these responses, there was wide agreement on the generic transitional skills necessary for success at university, including literacy, numeracy, and information technology skills; the ability to collect, analyse and evaluate information; the ability to think clearly, critically and creatively; and academic and discipline-specific skills in scholarly research, communication and ethical practice.

The Green Paper noted that Murdoch's current approach to ensuring that students acquired academic foundation skills was relatively minimalist. Students are required to take a single first year university-wide Foundation unit from a menu of choices. This requirement is generally waived for students entering Murdoch with 24 points or more of advanced standing (which includes a large proportion of our TNE students).

The Green Paper also observed that the foundation units presently carry a heavy burden as they are tasked with the dual role of introducing students to the academic skills for success at university learning as well as providing students with an inter-disciplinary introduction to themes and problems of contemporary relevance. A similar conclusion was reached by an Academic Council Learning and Teaching Committee review of foundation units.

These observations led the Commission to propose a different way of thinking about foundation units – one in which these units would bear the primary responsibility for introducing students to the academic skills necessary for success at university, but would no longer carry the weight of also providing students with an introduction to inter-disciplinary knowledge. Instead, the latter objective would be achieved through a separate first year breadth unit that would be part of a breadth sequence in every undergraduate degree. The Green Paper illustrated this proposed separation of the academic objectives of foundation skills and inter-disciplinarity by situating the foundation unit as the first year unit in the skills sequence of the degree models and creating a new first year breadth unit located in the proposed breadth sequence.

In the context of this proposal, the Green Paper asked whether there was a preference for degree-specific foundation units or university-wide foundation units. Responses to the Green Paper indicated strong support for degree-specific foundation units that were specifically designed to assist students with transition to university study, by introducing them to the academic skills needed for success within their chosen degree.
The Commission recognises that there are units in some degrees that could serve this purpose; for example, LAW120 Legal Research and Writing introduces law students to legal research and writing. The Commission proposes that this approach be emulated across the University and recommends that each undergraduate degree develop and mandate a degree-specific unit or a unit that is required for a group of cognate majors that introduces students to the transition skills that are necessary for academic success.

The Commission is sensitive to the impression that this may create that we will no longer have foundation units at Murdoch; in fact, our purpose is to strengthen the foundation experience at Murdoch by ensuring that the transition units and an interdisciplinary breadth units comprise key elements of the first year for Murdoch’s undergraduate students.

Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that Part I of every undergraduate degree at Murdoch has a compulsory transition unit that introduces students to the degree-specific skills that are necessary for success at university. Normally this will be completed in their first semester of study.

Students who enter Murdoch with advanced standing up to and including 24 points will be required to complete the requisite transition unit in their degree unless they can demonstrate that they have achieved the transition unit’s learning outcomes.

The Green Paper noted that a number of universities have successfully implemented online competency-based modules that introduce students to the principles and practice of academic integrity and the skills of scholarly referencing. These not-for-credit, self-paced activities ensure that all students are aware of their responsibilities in relation to issues of academic integrity. Several respondents reported research that has shown a decline in plagiarism cases at universities that have made on-line Academic Integrity modules a requirement of their degrees.

Responses to the Green Paper indicated strong support for the requirement that all coursework students entering Murdoch for the first time at any level of study (undergraduate and postgraduate) should be required to complete an on-line module on academic integrity (including referencing, plagiarism and collusion).

The Commission believes that this should be required of all students including the undergraduate students who bypass first year studies at Murdoch, by dint of articulation agreements or advanced standing.¹ Students will need to successfully

¹ A large proportion of Murdoch’s TNE and international students are granted advanced standing on commencement, usually because they have completed post-secondary studies that articulate to university degrees. Across our entire undergraduate cohort, approximately one-third of all of our students come to Murdoch having had previously post-secondary study, either as completed TAFE awards or completed or incomplete university studies elsewhere.
complete this module within their first semester or trimester of study, as a condition of being able to continue in their degree in the following semester or trimester.

The Commission notes the range of support services for students already provided through the 3 point credit-bearing TLC units:

- TLC120 – Introduction to University Learning;
- TLC121 – Writing Academic English; and,
- TLC123 – Rocket Science: Academic Skills for Science Students

While these units are of benefit to students who only require a brief period of additional support, the Commission proposes that a set of not-for-credit modules should be established, commencing with the Academic Integrity module, but ultimately addressing academic English language proficiency, advanced writing skills, numeracy, etc. These modules could be offered in the Winter and Summer terms to avoid overloading students who are already fully committed to their studies. Our purpose here is to provide those students who would benefit from these modules with an opportunity to improve their generic skills beyond the learning that already occurs within their degree and major.

**Recommendation 5**

The Commission recommends that all new coursework students at Murdoch be required to complete an on-line module on Academic Integrity during their first semester/trimester of study, as a condition of being able to continue in their degree in the following semester/trimester.

**3.2 Embedding Research in Teaching: Research Skills**

Universities have a dual mission for teaching and research. Among the best and most important things that we can do for our students is to instil in them a passion for discovery and equip them with the skills to be lifelong learners. In recognition of the importance of teaching research skills to our students, the Commission established a Working Group on Embedding Research in Teaching, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, Professor David Morrison. The Report of the Working Group can be found in Appendix 6 and it should be read in conjunction with this discussion.

The Commission supports the Working Group’s claim that ‘research skills “future proof” student qualifications and provide a set of highly marketable skills that give students competitive advantage when seeking to win their first graduate position’.

The Working Group argued that research should be a fundamental part of student education in every degree and that students should be exposed to research training beginning in the first year of their degree. It defined research-embedded curriculum as including being exposed to the latest research; learning research skills; undertaking a research project; and communicating the results of that project.

Drawing on the Working Group’s suggestions, the Commission recommends that all of our undergraduate degrees be designed to promote the acquisition and progressive
development of research skills by our students, so that they are able to work at an increasing level of autonomy as they advance through their studies. These skills involve:

- The identification and generation of research questions and hypotheses;
- The finding or generation and recording of information or data, using appropriate methodologies;
- The critical evaluation of information or data;
- The organisation of information or data and the management of the research process;
- The interpretation, synthesis and analysis of information or data; and,
- The communication of research findings in discipline-specific language and in context-appropriate ways.

The Green Paper proposed that the acquisition of these research skills should be achieved in two ways in Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees:

1. Through the design of individual units and majors (and their curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment tasks); and;
2. Through the inclusion in degree structures of stand-alone research skills units.

The majority of respondents to the Green Paper were strongly supportive of both approaches to embedding research training in the undergraduate curriculum. Many disciplines had already begun to think about ways in which they might implement these proposals into their curriculum. There were two broad schools of thought:

Some disciplines believed that there would be considerable value in developing a sequence of discipline-specific research skills units that were closely allied to individual majors or groups of cognate majors (or professional training). This approach was seen as having multiple benefits including:

- The deepening and consolidation of research skills acquisition relevant to a student’s first major; and,

- Relieving pressure on the first major, thus strengthening both individual majors (including disciplinary ‘content’) and research skills development.

By contrast, other disciplines could see merit in research skills units that were specific to a degree rather than a major or group of cognate majors. These two differing approaches tended to reflect differences between degrees that encompassed many and diverse disciplines and those that consisted of only a small number of disciplines or a single professional outcome.

The responses to the Green Paper also included many lively discussions about proposed content and pedagogy in the designated research units, reflecting both commonalities and differences in disciplinary practices across the University.
The Commission has deliberately refrained from being prescriptive about design or content of these designated research units. There is no 'one size fits all' approach and it believes that these decisions are appropriately made by groups of academics with responsibility for the design of majors and degrees.

Nevertheless, responses to the Green Paper raised a number of points where the Commission believes that it would be beneficial to clarify further its thinking. It proposes that the research skills units at 2nd and 3rd year flow on from the transition unit at 1st year, so that students progress from 'skills for success at university' to skills for 'life-long learning'. These 2nd and 3rd year research skills units would complement the student's first major and they would be developed for groups of cognate majors or for entire degrees, as academically appropriate. The Commission recognises that in some cases existing units may be able to fill these spots in our degree structures and it encourages a refreshed and renewed approach to these research units and/or the development of new units.

For students undertaking a double major, only the research skills units attached to their first major would need to be completed.

**Recommendation 6**

The Commission recommends that Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees be designed so as to promote increasing levels of depth and sophistication in student research skills within the major area of disciplinary or professional study. The promotion of research skills acquisition will be demonstrated in curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment tasks.

The promotion of research skills will also be supported by the inclusion of compulsory research skills units at 2nd and 3rd year level, designed for groups of cognate majors or for single degrees. These units will complement and reinforce the skills acquired in the course of a major.

### 3.3 Depth of Knowledge: The Major

All students are required to complete at least one major as part of their undergraduate degree study at Murdoch. The design and composition of majors at Murdoch varies widely across disciplines, ranging from a series of discrete units loosely connected by a common topic through to a carefully planned, sequenced and coherent course of study.

The Green Paper argued in favour of the development of a more rigorous set of criteria for the major and it proposed that the following definition be agreed and adopted:

A major should be an integrated and sequential course of study that:

- introduces students to a discipline and its key themes, theories, concepts and boundaries;
- introduces students to research strategies and methods that are appropriate to the discipline; and,
• Concludes with a capstone experience that pulls together disciplinary learning and/or prepares students for the next step, whether that is to employment, Honours study or postgraduate coursework.

The responses to this proposal were uniformly positive with many respondents noting the myriad educational benefits that would accrue to students.

The Commission has noted that some majors do not currently differentiate between 2nd and 3rd year level units. While this design feature ensures ‘volume’ of learning, it does not ensure ‘progression’ of learning: if students can complete a unit at either year, the curriculum cannot be designed so as to promote progressively deeper, more specialised or more demanding knowledge and skills.

This lack of curriculum progression in Part II of some majors will need to be addressed as part of the re-design of our degrees. The Commission has refrained from recommending rules to govern the design of curriculum at Part II, preferring instead to recommend that academics review their offerings so as to ensure that through the progression of a major, the curriculum would become more specialised, deeper and more challenging.

Similarly, the Commission considered several options for addressing the problem of undifferentiated majors – that is, cases where two or more majors have a large number of common units, and/or majors that have relatively few exclusive units. Again, the Commission has not recommended the establishment of new rules to address this problem. Instead, it notes that the strengthened definition of a major entails a reasonable expectation that by the third year of study in an undergraduate major, there would be a high degree of exclusivity of unit offerings. Moreover, the specific learning outcomes of the major would also serve to signal the distinctiveness of individual majors.

**Recommendation 7**

The Commission recommends that a major is defined as an integrated and sequential course of study that:

- Introduces students to a discipline and its key themes, theories, concepts and boundaries;

- Introduces students to research strategies and methods that are appropriate to the discipline;

- Features progression of learning, such that the major becomes more specialised and exclusive at each year level;

- May include a work-integrated learning experience; and,

- May conclude with a capstone experience that pulls together disciplinary learning and/or prepares students for the next step, whether that is to employment, Honours study or postgraduate coursework.
3.4 Breadth

Although an important feature of Murdoch’s identity is its commitment to breadth of knowledge as well as depth of knowledge, the Commission noted that unlike many other universities, Murdoch does not require students to study from outside of their major.

The April Discussion Paper asked whether breadth should be a compulsory feature of Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees. The responses were largely favourable, leading to a proposal in the Green Paper that all bachelor degrees include a sequence of breadth studies from first to third year. Seeking to enshrine Murdoch’s foundational commitment to the value of an inter-disciplinary education, the Green Paper went further in proposing that these breadth units be explicitly inter-disciplinary. It presented a range of different design options for breadth units and invited comments.

The responses to the Green Paper were cautiously supportive. There was considerable agreement for the proposition that all undergraduate students should be exposed to inter-disciplinary studies as a feature of their Murdoch degree. However, there was concern about the potential for breadth requirements to ‘squeeze’ majors, especially in the externally accredited degrees. There were also mixed views as to whether inter-disciplinary breadth subjects should be degree-specific or should involve contributions from across many degrees. There was strong support for a modularised approach so that students could ‘mix and match’ breadth units as they progressed through their degree, rather than being locked into a single sequence of breadth units. Finally, several of the Schools involved in teaching at locations other than South Street drew our attention to the challenge of providing a full menu of breadth units to our students at our regional and TNE locations, and provided constructive suggestions as to how that could be addressed.

The Commission has reflected carefully on these responses and it has sought to reconcile and accommodate this feedback through a refined set of recommendations on an inter-disciplinary breadth sequence. It recognises as well that there are a number of disciplinary issues that will need to be addressed over the next few years. These will be referred to the MUCC Implementation Steering Group.

The Commission recommends to the University that all bachelor degrees incorporate a sequence of breadth studies, characterised as follows:

Year 1: Degree-based Inter-disciplinary Breadth

At 1st year, each undergraduate degree offers one inter-disciplinary breadth unit that draws on and links the disciplines within the home degree. The purpose of such a unit is to provide students with an introduction to and appreciation of the key ideas, concepts and ways of knowing that characterise the disciplines within that degree. These first year inter-disciplinary breadth units would be designed to complement core disciplinary studies and majors within a degree.

It should be noted that there are already 1st year units that serve this purpose, e.g. SSH100 Ideas in Action. The Commission discussed a range of potential ideas for degree-based breadth units, such as a history and philosophy of science unit in the BSc.

One question that will need to be resolved during the implementation is whether these first year inter-disciplinary breadth units will be limited to students within that degree or whether they would be available as elective options for students outside that degree.
Year 2: University-based Inter-disciplinary Breadth

At 2nd year, it is recommended that there be a range of university inter-disciplinary breadth units, which would be open to students from any degree. Each breadth unit would be taught by a team of academics from a range of disciplines and Schools.

The idea is that students expand their inter-disciplinary awareness and knowledge of disciplines from outside of their home degree. These 2nd year units may address timeless themes, hot topics, or interesting contemporary problems. The Commission notes that many of the current foundation units may be adapted and offered as 2nd year university inter-disciplinary breadth units (minus their transition skills components). Amongst the responses to the Green Paper, there were other stimulating and interesting ideas for university breadth units.

These breadth units would need to be offered from 2015 onwards. The Commission recommends that the Academic Courses Committee of the Academic Council have responsibility for the consideration and approval of proposals for university inter-disciplinary breadth units, including both existing and newly proposed offerings. The MUCC Implementation Steering Group will propose a method for resourcing and distributing the income from the University inter-disciplinary breadth units. It should also be noted that the availability and choice of breadth units might be limited by the student’s study location (external, regional or TNE campuses).

Year 3: Breadth in practice

At 3rd year, it is recommended that the focus shift from inter-disciplinary study to inter-disciplinarity in practice, by providing all third year students with the opportunity to work on a project in an inter-disciplinary team. This unit would function as a ‘culmination’ to the inter-disciplinary breadth sequence. It is premised on the belief that by the third year of their bachelor degree studies, students will have a firm grounding in at least one area of study (i.e. their first major) as well as an appreciation of the benefits and insights that different disciplines bring to a common issue or problem. In this third year unit, students will be able to contribute their own disciplinary learning to a group drawn from many separate disciplines for the purpose of working on a common project. The Commission believes that this would be a highly distinctive element of the Murdoch bachelor degree and that it would allow students to demonstrate to employers their acquisition of many of our graduate attributes.

These third year breadth units would be designed to involve as many of the University’s academic staff as possible and to accommodate all third year students. A small number of units would be developed based on this model so as to cater for the different needs of third year students and in order to provide some level of choice. In this way we seek to replicate a truly inter-disciplinary approach to problem-solving, thereby setting our students on their path to breadth in practice.

The Commission recognizes that this proposal for a 3rd year ‘breadth in practice’ unit needs further development and that it may need to be piloted with a select group of students in the first instance. However, subject to the successful development and piloting of a ‘breadth in practice’ 3rd year unit, the Commission proposes to introduce this as a feature of the Murdoch undergraduate degrees.

The Commission recognises that the idea of compulsory breadth studies may not appeal to everyone. It notes in particular that some of the professionally-accredited majors and degrees argued that their students were practice-focused and would not be interested in
expanding their horizons to learn about and engage with disciplines outside of their chosen field of specialisation. Nonetheless, the Commission supports the principle that a university degree should expose students to breadth of knowledge across the sciences, social sciences and humanities. This is one of the attributes of a university education that distinguishes us from a professional or technical training college. Indeed, the Commission believes that the inclusion of breadth units in all of our undergraduate degrees would strengthen and enrich the Murdoch student experience and help to produce more well-rounded, knowledgeable and worldly graduates.

Recommendation 8

The Commission recommends that all bachelor degrees incorporate a sequence of inter-disciplinary breadth studies, to the value of 9 points in total, with a degree-based unit at 1st Year, a university-wide breadth unit at 2nd Year, and an applied breadth unit at 3rd Year.

3.5 Unit Values

In common with most universities in Australia and abroad, Murdoch requires students to undertake eight units of study (3 credit points each) in the first year of an undergraduate degree (full time). However, it departs from this common practice for the upper years of the undergraduate degree and postgraduate coursework degrees, reverting to six units of study (4 credit points each) rather than the conventional eight units (3 credit points each).

In both the Discussion Paper and the Green Paper, the Commission outlined the disadvantages of the 4 credit point unit structure in relation to curriculum design, student flexibility, student equity issues, and consistency with university practices in Australia and overseas. The Green Paper proposed that Murdoch adopt a structure in which a year of full time coursework study at any level would normally consist of eight 3 credit point units per year rather than six 4 credit point units of study.

The majority of responses to the Green Paper endorsed the return to 3 credit point units as the norm for Murdoch’s coursework degrees at all year levels, with the exception of many of the disciplines in the Bachelor of Arts. Notwithstanding their concerns about the transition costs of adopting a 3 credit point unit structure, the BA disciplines acknowledged and accepted the argument that the 4 credit point unit structure has been detrimental to student welfare, as it has prevented students who receive Centrelink benefits from dropping a unit if they are struggling with their study or juggling other responsibilities.

Mindful that Murdoch has rates for student success, retention and progression that are lower than the national average, the Commission believes that the 4 credit point structure is a significant disadvantage to our students, especially given the composition of our student cohort. Thus it sees two powerful arguments, relating to student welfare and curriculum design, to support its recommendation that the University adopts 3 credit point units as standard for all undergraduate coursework degrees. As the student welfare arguments also apply to postgraduate coursework students, the Commission
recommends that the 3 credit point unit structure applies also to postgraduate coursework degrees.

Recommendation 9
The Commission recommends the standardisation of unit values at 3 credit points in all coursework degrees at Murdoch.

3.6 The Undergraduate Degree Model

In seeking to give practical expression as to how these curriculum elements would ‘fit’ within Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees, the Commission proposed three different models in the Green Paper for consideration and comment by the University community.

Each of the models advanced the educational principles of Murdoch and the curriculum elements proposed in the Green Paper. But each model had distinctive features, especially in relation to the conceptualization and design of the first year, the total volume of the major, and the ability of a student to do a double major, or a major and a minor within a three year period. Each model was accompanied by a discussion of its benefits, its potential shortcomings, and issues that required further consideration.

Responses to the Green Paper conveyed a broad range of views about the merits of the three different models, with one notable exception: overwhelmingly, respondents preferred a degree model that maintained the option for students to complete a double major within the minimum time. The Commission has sought to give expression to this preference in its recommended degree model, while recognising that in some cases, external accreditation requirements demand a volume of discipline-specific content that prevents the ability of students to do a double major within the normal points of the degree (e.g. majors in Accounting, Psychology).

It is important to recognise that the shift to offering only seven undergraduate degrees at Murdoch creates opportunities to strengthen both the curriculum and the student experience by focusing on the design elements of the degree as a whole, not just the design and content of the major. In this new approach, there is a greater emphasis on the ‘whole of degree’ educational experience, with the following special features:

1. A refreshed approach to first year curriculum that is truly foundational through the inclusion of a degree-appropriate transition unit, an inter-disciplinary breadth unit that draws on the disciplines within the degree, and the possibility of foundational knowledge units that serve the degree as a whole as well as multiple majors within the degree (see below for further discussion).

2. The strengthening of the first major through the greater emphasis on instilling research skills into its core units, and through the addition of two additional units on research skills at Part II.

3. The strengthening of each degree as a whole through the inclusion of inter-disciplinary breadth units, which expand the knowledge, and range and depth of understanding of every graduate, regardless of her/his home degree.
4. The ability of students to complete a second major, a minor or a range of electives (in the majority of cases and where the required volume of the first major does not preclude this).

The Commission believes that there are two additional and salient features of the recommended degree model that bear further discussion. These pertain to:

5. The ability of students in some cases to take a second major (or minor) from outside their home degree.

6. The idea of common foundational units in the first year of the degrees.

These ideas are elaborated in the discussion that follows.

**Double Majors**

The vast majority of Murdoch students who have completed double majors have done these in cognate disciplines within the same broad degree area. However, in recognition of the small minority of students who seek to pick up a second major outside their degree area, the Commission has recommended a degree model that will enable that to occur in many cases. Thus, a Public Relations student in the Bachelor of Arts has the ability to pick up a second major that is offered within the Bachelor of Business (e.g. Marketing). That student would graduate with a Bachelor of Arts, with majors in Public Relations and Marketing.

Of course, it must be recognised that this student is a Bachelor of Arts graduate, not a Bachelor of Business graduate. The student would not have completed the research skills units in Marketing that would qualify for admission to Honours or research higher degree studies in Marketing. Nonetheless, that student will have completed a major in Marketing that would equip them with useful complementary knowledge to work in the field of public relations.

In instances of double majors where the second major is from outside the degree, students may be required to complete additional units in Part I to satisfy the foundational knowledge requirements of the second major. This may be possible within the 24 points of Part I or, in some cases, may require additional units of study. It will be important to ensure that students who opt to enrol in a second major outside of their home degree be provided with appropriate course advice.

**First year foundational units**

In response to the April Discussion Paper, many respondents suggested that the rationalisation of our degree structures would allow the creation of a common first year—that is, a specified group of units within Part I of a degree that was designed to equip students with foundational and core knowledge to undertake a range of majors within the degree. Several submissions noted that such an approach would also generate significant efficiency gains, which would free up resources, creating more time for academic research, and postgraduate teaching.
A common first year is a set of units that would:

- Equip students with the foundational disciplinary knowledge relevant to their broad area of degree study as a whole, as well as, but regardless of their chosen major(s); and,

- Expose students to a broad range of disciplines within a degree so as to maximise flexibility to choose majors at the end rather than the beginning of first year

The Commission noted that several areas of study already have curriculum that is akin to a common first year, and it mooted the idea more generally in the Green Paper.

The responses to the Green Paper’s proposal for a common first year (also embodied in Model 2 of the degree models) were mixed. This was due partly to some degree of misinterpretation of the idea among several respondents. There was some enthusiastic support for the idea, while others were concerned that this model would not allow for sufficient discipline-specific material to be included in Part I.

The Commission’s purpose in making this proposal was to enable efficiencies to be achieved in Part I teaching and also to encourage the design of degrees with a broader coverage of foundational content. We saw the second of these as beneficial in its own right, but also as enabling students to sample broadly across their chosen degree before committing to their Part II studies.

In response to individual and School submissions, discussion with School Deans and extended debate among Commission members, it became clear that a single model that includes the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Science would be too restrictive. Thus the model shown at page 27 has been developed to achieve sufficient flexibility at Part I, while maintaining the Commission’s aspirations for the greater use of a foundational and shared structure.

We have already recommended a shift from foundation to transition units; here, each degree or group of cognate majors shares a single transition unit to focus on the provision of study skills for first year students. Inter-disciplinary breadth will be likewise provided through a Part I unit designed for each degree or group of cognate majors. This leaves six Part I units for allocation.

In the Commission’s recommended degree model, we have proposed a range of first year degree structures that vary from no foundational units up to a maximum of four. In all cases there is sufficient room to accommodate a similarly structured double major, noting that most students typically take up double majors from cognate disciplines.

As the model shows there is considerable flexibility in the design of first year. This is to accommodate the diverse ways in which individual majors within the different degrees may structure their offerings, both independently and in collaboration with other cognate majors. During Commission discussions it became clear, for example, that specific majors within the Bachelor of Science and the Bachelor of Business might best introduce students to their discipline through one introductory unit, which may be exclusive to the major, and up to four foundational units, which are shared by that degree or by a group of majors within it. By contrast, because several of the majors within the Bachelor of Arts proceed not only from different but also disparate foundations, at least one introductory unit exclusive to a given major, together with up
to two other core units, which may or may not be shared with other cognate majors, might offer the best foundation to a given discipline at first year.

The key distinction between the foundational units for the Bachelor of Business and Science and the possibly shared core units for the Bachelor of Arts is that in the first case a significant proportion of the content is required for the degree rather than the major. At present, there is less agreement among the Bachelor of Arts disciplines about what constitutes core knowledge for the degree. Nonetheless, that may change as the Bachelor of Arts considers the possibilities that lie ahead of it, in the context of both the Commission changes and broader societal developments. To provide one example, the recent Henry Review on 'Australia in the Asian Century' emphasises the importance of Asian cultural literacy among Australian graduates. Given Murdoch's strengths in Asian Studies, one could imagine units in this area becoming part of the 'foundational' knowledge required of Murdoch's BA graduates.
# Structure of the Undergraduate Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Elective or Major</th>
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<th>Elective or Major</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y:1</td>
<td>Transition Unit Skills unit for degree/group of majors</td>
<td>Y:1</td>
<td>Introductory unit, may be exclusive to major</td>
<td>Major 1 Core unit may be shared with other cognate majors</td>
<td>Major 1 Core unit may be shared with other cognate majors</td>
<td>Elective or Major 2</td>
<td>Elective or Major 2</td>
<td>Y:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y:2</td>
<td>Year 2 Research skills relevant for degree/group of majors</td>
<td>Y:2</td>
<td>Major 1</td>
<td>Major 1</td>
<td>Major 1</td>
<td>Elective or Major 2</td>
<td>Elective or Major 2</td>
<td>Elective or Major 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y:3</td>
<td>Year 3 Research skills relevant for degree/group of majors</td>
<td>Y:3</td>
<td>Major 1</td>
<td>Major 1</td>
<td>Major 1</td>
<td>Elective or Major 2</td>
<td>Elective or Major 2</td>
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The Commission has referred to the impact of its suite of recommendations being to shift our thinking from a focus on the requirements of each major with limited attention paid to degree-wide expectations to a new situation where the design elements of the degree as a whole are equally as important as the design and content of the major.

The significance of this profound change is perhaps best appreciated by reflecting upon its implications for academic planning. Both new proposals and the annual main amendment round will need to, separately but in an integrated fashion, consider the structure of the degree and of the major. For example, when a new major is proposed it will be necessary to also consider which transition unit, first year breadth unit and research skills units will apply. Likewise the degree-wide curriculum elements will need to be kept under review in tandem with the supported majors.

**Recommendation 10**

All Bachelor degrees are expected to conform to the degree structure as described in this White Paper. Where accreditation requirements prevent full compliance it is expected that the principal degree elements of transition units, research skills units and breadth units are included to the greatest extent possible without compromising accreditation.

### 3.7 Progression Rules

The Commission recognises that there will be a number of implementation issues arising, should the University adopt these curriculum recommendations.

In particular, there will need to be rules about progression across the different elements as a way of confirming student acquisition of knowledge and skills. This will be especially important in relation to the transition units, research skills units, breadth units and the compulsory units in majors, as students will need to be able to demonstrate successful mastery of skills and knowledge at one level prior to proceeding to the next. This work will need to be integrated with the recently revised University progression rules.
4. Pathways beyond Undergraduate Degrees

There was strong and widespread support across the University for the Green Paper’s proposals on the Honours degree and postgraduate coursework degrees. Thus the purpose of this section is simply to reiterate the Green’s Paper proposals and to frame them as recommendations.

4.1 Honours

The Green Paper proposed that the Honours degree be retained at Murdoch and strengthened as a stepping stone to research higher degree study, but it recommended that Murdoch’s approach to the Honours degree needed to be clarified and strengthened.

The Green Paper noted that there is presently too much variation in the Honours year, with some programs consisting entirely of a research thesis while others are mainly coursework. It noted that the thesis-only approach relies too heavily on the premise that students will gain the additional technical and cognitive skills that they need to successfully execute a major piece of original research through the actual process of undertaking the research project. The thesis-only approach is also at odds with the national trend to include coursework components in research higher degrees at AQF Levels 9 (Masters) and 10 (PhD).

By contrast, it was noted that the coursework-mainly Honours programs do not expose students deeply enough to the research skills and experiences that adequately equip them to advance to higher degree research. A heavily coursework focused program is more in the domain of graduate diplomas that are designed to enhance students’ professional skills. The Commission believes that there is an important role for these more professionally focused programs that follow the completion of an ordinary bachelor degree, but believes that they are more appropriately offered as graduate diplomas (AQF Level 8) and masters degrees by coursework (AQF Level 9).

To further add to the inconsistency discussed above, there are two different kinds of Honours degrees at Murdoch:

- Those that require an additional year of study (24 credit points) following the completion of a three year ordinary degree; and,
- Those that do not require an additional year of study following the completion of the ordinary degree and are embedded in the final year of study.3

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2 There is considerable variation in the design of the Honours course at Murdoch, including the amount of coursework (from 0 to 12 credit points) and the length of the thesis (from 12 to 24 credit points).
3 There is some question as to whether this second type of Honours is compliant with the AQF, which defines the embedded Honours degree ‘typically as an additional year’ of study. This is an area of debate among universities at present and the Commission does not propose to weigh into it, except to note that we may need to make structural adjustments to our embedded Honours degrees in the future.
The Commission believes that the wide variation of approach to the Honours degree at Murdoch is a consequence of the lack of consensus around the fundamental purpose of this specific academic qualification. Furthermore, the current diversity in the conceptualisation and design of Honours programs at Murdoch makes it difficult for the University to ensure that the Honours award produces standard and consistent graduate outcomes, including the AQF requirement that the Honours award provides students with ‘a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning’.  

Moreover, consistent with the AQF, the Commission is of the view that the Honours award should be designed to deepen students’ ‘knowledge of research principles and methods’. This is most easily achieved through the establishment of threshold curriculum standards for Murdoch’s Honours programs, including the inclusion of coursework components that strengthen the research training experience for Honours students.

There are many ways that this could be achieved, including the inclusion of coursework requirements in research design and advanced research methods. Some universities commence the Honours year with an intensive unit on research design, during which time students frame their research puzzle and map out their research methods and their research plan. This is assessable work that enables students to get early feedback from their supervisors and ensures that they ‘hit the ground running’. An intensive unit of this nature also has the advantage of establishing a strong cohort experience for the Honours year, in what can otherwise be a lonely experience. There are other innovative models to achieve these aims.

Mandating research-focused coursework in the Honours year has other benefits as well. It will enable us to do far more things together at a broad discipline level and so enrich the experience for the students, e.g. joint Honours seminars across cognate discipline groups. This is consistent with the Commission’s emphasis on the whole of degree experience, in addition to the knowledge and skills that are acquired within a major. It will enable us to be more efficient in our teaching, through Honours coursework taught across broad cognate areas, e.g. advanced research methods for life sciences etc. The sharing of resources in this way may allow us to offer Honours programs in areas that we cannot currently service at present due to low student numbers that make it unviable to offer dedicated Honours level units. And most importantly of all, it will provide a better educational experience for Honours students, that is supportive and enriching; that strengthens their skills to successfully undertake their thesis within the expected timeframe; and that equips them with additional cognitive and technical skills that will enable them to undertake higher degree research, if they choose. A stronger Honours program may lead to better thesis results, thus boosting students’ competitiveness for Australian Postgraduate Awards and other scholarships.

Finally, it should be noted that the inclusion of a spine of research skills units in all of Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees will mean that the research design and methodology units at the Honours level can be offered at a higher level of sophistication than is currently the case.

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Recommendation 11

That all Honours programs should include coursework components that are designed to deepen the theoretical, cognitive and technical skills of students in support of their thesis projects. All Honours programs should therefore include a unit on research design in which students design and develop their thesis proposal.

4.2 Postgraduate Coursework Qualifications

Postgraduate coursework enrolments are the most rapidly growing area of on-shore enrolments at Murdoch. Postgraduate coursework programs include:

- graduate certificates (12 credit points, AQF Level 8).
- graduate diplomas (24 credit points, AQF Level 8).
- masters by coursework degrees (24 to 48 credit points depending on previous study and relevant professional employment, AQF Level 9).

This enrolment growth has mirrored national trends: at present nearly 25 per cent of all university students in Australia are enrolled in postgraduate coursework study. The most popular areas of postgraduate coursework study are business, humanities (including studies in human society), health and education.²

Students undertake postgraduate coursework for a variety of reasons including: i) the acquisition of entry level qualifications for professional practice; ii) the acquisition of advanced qualifications to assist in career development and promotion prospects; iii) to support a change of career direction; and iv) out of interest in the subject matter.

Postgraduate coursework programs are very popular among international students, many of whom are required by their home countries to acquire advanced qualifications as a condition of career entry or advancement. These students are typically supported by scholarships provided by AusAid and foreign government sources. Nearly half of the postgraduate coursework students in Australia are international students.

Provided that there is a thesis component in a masters coursework degree (this is not a requirement under the AQF), some students may also use a masters coursework degree as an alternative to the Honours or research masters degree pathway into doctoral studies. However, it should be noted that this is not common for the simple reason that masters coursework programs are designed primarily for the acquisition of professional qualifications. By contrast, the Honours and masters by research degrees are designed explicitly to deepen research skills and, unlike masters coursework degrees, they are

subsidised by the Commonwealth Government. For an explanation of the different types of masters degrees that may be offered, see Appendix 7.

Judging by the responses to the Discussion Paper and Green Paper, the Commission has concluded that there is significant potential for Murdoch to develop a range of professionally focused postgraduate coursework programs, particularly in the sciences, social sciences, health sciences and engineering.

However, in designing new postgraduate coursework qualifications, there needs to be a greater understanding of the different types of masters degrees and their specific purposes. Further, postgraduate coursework programs need to reflect the different needs and expectations of these students and their different patterns of engagement. They are already experienced university learners who expect a more intense, demanding, and student-centred learning experience. Most domestic postgraduate coursework students work full time and they seek programs that have a variety of flexible learning opportunities, including intensives and blended learning opportunities. The postgraduate coursework student cohort is also highly diverse; in Australia, nearly half are international students and many of these are highly experienced professionals in their own right.

There have been a number of positive developments this year aimed at promoting the design and delivery of high quality postgraduate coursework qualifications at Murdoch. Notable among these is the establishment of the Sir Walter Murdoch School of Public Policy and International Affairs and three new inter-disciplinary masters coursework degrees in the social sciences: Public Policy and Management, Development Studies, and International Affairs. These degrees have been developed after extensive market research and they combine training in core disciplinary knowledge and skills, professional skills, policy studies electives (in areas of Murdoch’s research strengths), and a capstone experience that includes options for a professional internship, a work-based research project, or a research thesis.

The Commission believes that there is great potential for Murdoch to deliver postgraduate coursework programs that are high quality, internationally competitive, and reflect the long-term needs of both students and employers. To that end, we believe that there would be considerable value in a review of our current postgraduate coursework degrees with a view to ensuring that their curriculum design, assessment, pedagogy and delivery methods are appropriate to meet the specific learning needs of students.

Recommendation 12

The Commission recommends that all undergraduate majors be able to demonstrate a clear progression of study opportunities beyond the bachelor degree. These opportunities should include higher degree research study via the Honours or masters (research) degree pathway as well as professionally-oriented postgraduate qualifications.
Recommendation 13

The Commission recommends that all Schools review their postgraduate coursework offerings with a view to developing new qualifications in proven and emerging areas of demand.
5. Implementation

The implementation of the White Paper recommendations will be a major task, involving academics and professional staff across the University, the Academic Council and its committees and sub-committees, and other University bodies as appropriate. While much of the work will be based in Schools and in professional services divisions, much of the curriculum adaptation and development will need to be undertaken in a cross-School collaborative fashion, through the Standing Committees for each of the new degrees. These new coordinating bodies will be especially important for the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees, where multiple Schools provide majors for these degrees.

The Commission acknowledges the feedback in the responses to the Green Paper that there will be transition costs associated with implementation. The Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic is working with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Professional Services and the School Deans to identify how these transition costs can be supported by the University. There will also be additional costs associated with the communication, promotion and marketing of the changes to our degrees and curriculum.

In recognition of the scale and importance of the curriculum change that is anticipated as a result of the White Paper recommendations, the Vice Chancellor has appointed Associate Professor John Bailey to chair the MUCC Implementation Steering Group for a twelve month period, beginning in late November 2012.

The Implementation Steering Group will be appointed shortly after the White Paper recommendations are adopted by Academic Council. It will consist of a small group of highly experienced academic and professional staff members. Working Parties will be established in the following areas:

- **Academic Planning:** to oversee the academic planning processes required to establish the new degree structures and curriculum and the conversion of units to 3 credit points.
- **Professional Services:** to plan for and manage teaching space and timetabling requirements, Callista support, examinations, and interface with the LMS/ECM project.
- **TNE and Peel/Rockingham and external students:** to plan for the management and delivery of specialised curriculum (such as breadth units) to campuses other than South Street. This Working Party will also oversee the impact on articulation agreements and manage amendments to articulation agreements, where necessary.
- **Transition:** to ensure robust and achievable timelines for the phasing in of new units, majors and degrees and to manage transition and/or teach-out processes for any currently enrolled students affected by the curriculum changes.
- **Governance:** to identify and recommend amendments to policies and procedures as a consequence of the White Paper.
Additional Working Parties may be required, and these will be established as needs are identified.

As noted in the Green Paper, the Commission does not expect that the proposed curriculum changes will have an adverse impact on undergraduate student demand as we propose to maintain the current range of offerings that are already available at the undergraduate level (except for a potential shift of the clinical training degrees in Veterinary Medicine and Chiropractic to the postgraduate level, pending the outcome of discussions with the Commonwealth government). Moreover, we believe that the proposed changes will make our undergraduate degrees more attractive to students and we would hope to see some increase over time in our market share of students at the undergraduate level as a result.

Similarly we do not anticipate any long-term decline in our TNE student load as a result of the proposed curriculum changes, because these will not compromise our ability to offer our current programs with our overseas partners. Indeed, in discussions with our TNE partners to date, the proposed curriculum changes have been welcomed. Thus it is the Commission's view that potential changes in TNE enrolments would be driven by other policy changes within the University such as a change in the teaching delivery model for TNE education, a recalibration of TNE student fees, or amendments to the admission requirements and articulation arrangements.

More generally, noting the rapid growth of student enrolments in masters coursework programs in Australia and abroad, the Commission expects that the expansion of Murdoch’s course offerings at the postgraduate level will bring additional students to the University, both domestic and international on-shore enrolments. The University is already taking steps to facilitate these enrolments through the design of new masters coursework degree programs in areas of proven student demand.
APPENDIX 1
MUCC Terms of Reference & Membership

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Murdoch University Curriculum Commission were to review and make recommendations on the following:

1. The development of a more focused undergraduate course profile in areas of existing and emerging research strength, which are in proven areas of student demand;

2. The development of a professional postgraduate coursework profile in areas of existing and emerging research strength, which are in proven areas of student demand;

3. The composition and structure of degrees, including major and minor courses of study, with particular emphasis on ensuring that they provide the acquisition of depth (discipline training) and breadth (inter-disciplinary training), and the acquisition of specific and generic learning outcomes;

4. The identification and articulation of clear pathways from undergraduate majors and degrees to professional employment, postgraduate coursework study or a research higher degree;

5. The development of a plan for strengthening the nexus between teaching and research in all of our academic programs, including the incorporation of research training and a research experience in all of our academic programs; and,

6. The identification and articulation of what is distinctive and special about study at Murdoch and how we can ensure that every program that we teach – at every location – reflects the Murdoch ‘student experience’.

Membership

In February 2012, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Higgott, invited members of the University community who wished to be considered for membership of the Commission to submit Expressions of Interest. From more than 40 EOIIs, nine Commissioners were chosen. The Student Guild provided a tenth member. It is important to note that the Commissioners are not representatives of Schools or disciplines. Rather, they have brought to the Commission a diverse range of professional experiences and ideas.

The Commission members are:

- Professor Ann Capling (Chair)
- Mr Tim Martin (Secretary)
- Professor Parisa Bahri
- Associate Professor Ian Mullaney
- Dr Jo Goodie
- Professor Rick Cummings
- Dr Anne Surma
- Dr Deanna de Zilwa
- Professor David Macey
- Associate Professor John Bailey
- Associate Professor Carolyn Jones
- Ms Charlotte Corbyn, Guild Education Vice President, replaced by Ms Bec Thompson, Guild President
- Ms Tania Palmer (Senior Project Officer)
- Ms Cat Bevan-Jones (Senior Project Officer)

Ms Stephanie Greige served as Minute Taker for Commission meetings.
APPENDIX 2

Working Group on Embedding Research in Teaching

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Working Group on Embedding Research in Teaching were:

1. to provide advice on the desirability of embedding research into the curriculum;
2. to specify the principles of research embedded teaching; and,
3. to make recommendations for promoting the acquisition of research skills within the degree structures proposed by the Commission.

Membership

- Professor David Morrison (Chair)
- Associate Professor John Bailey
- Professor Cassandra Berry
- Associate Professor Caroline Hughes
- Professor David Hampson
- Professor Jurgen Brohmer
- Professor David Butler
- Ms Bec Thompson (Guild President) replaced by Ms Charlotte Corbyn
APPENDIX 3

Submissions to the Discussion Paper

Personal submissions

Professor Andrew Taggart, Faculty of Arts, Education & Creative Media
Professor Glenn Albrecht, Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)
Dr Janice Dudley, SSH
Professor David Hill, SSH
Associate Professor Carol Warren, SSH
Professor Gary Wickham, SSH
Associate Professor Anne Pedersen, Psychology
Dr Guy Curtis, Psychology
Dr Helen Davis, Psychology
Dr Garth Maker, Biological Sciences & Biotechnology (BSB)
Dr Phil Stumbles, Veterinary & Biological Sciences
Dr Megan Paull, Murdoch Business School (MBS)
Mr Stephen Klomp, MBS
Associate Professor Bob Mead, BSB
Dr Damian Laird, Chemical & Mathematical Sciences (CMS)
Associate Professor Gamini Senanayake, CMS
Dr Joe Fontaine, Environmental Sciences (ES)
Dr Carol Lacroix, ES
Mr Peter Furzer, Exams, Results & Graduations
Miss Rosita Chan, Library Services
Dr Lucy Jarzabkowski, Quality Assurance
Mr Phil Hocking, Research & Development
Mr Frank White, Student Centre
Mr Jim Meckelburg, Faculty of Arts, Education & Creative Media
Ms Sarah Veitch, Office of Student Life & Learning Centre
Associate Professor Christine Daymon, School of Media, Communication & Culture (MCC)
Ms Kate Fitch, MCC
Dr Alex Jensen, SSH
Professor Judy MacCallum, School of Education
Concerned Murdoch Academic (anonymous)

Group submissions

School of Education
Learning & Teaching Committee, School of Social Sciences and Humanities
School of Chiropractic & Sports Science
School of Nursing
School of Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences
School of Chemistry
School of Mathematics & Statistics
School of Engineering & Energy
School of Environmental Science
Office of Corporate Communications & Public Relations
Office of Space Management, Commercial Services
Careers & Employment, Domestic Liaison & Recruitment
External Studies, Domestic Liaison & Recruitment
Domestic Recruitment, Domestic Liaison & Recruitment
Educational Development
Educational Technologies Committee, Academic Council
Secretariat team, Legal & Governance
Library Services
International Student Liaison & Recruitment
MUEnSA, Student Association
School of Biological Sciences and Biotechnology Working Party: Skills Acquisition
School of BSB Working Party: Research Committee
School of BSB Academic Chairs
APPENDIX 4

Submissions to the Green Paper

School and Discipline Submissions

School of Social Sciences & Humanities
School of Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences
School of Biological Sciences & Biotechnology – Research Skills
School of Chemical & Mathematical Sciences
School of Chiropractic & Sports Sciences
School of Environmental Sciences
School of Psychology – Postgraduate Counselling program
School of Social Science & Humanities – Tourism
School of Law
School of Education
School of Nursing & Midwifery
School of Information Technology
Murdoch Business School
Murdoch Business School – Economics
School of Media, Communication & Culture
School of Media, Communication & Culture – Sound & Radio
School of Media, Communication & Culture – Screen Production
School of Media, Communication & Culture – Digital Media
School of Media, Communication & Culture – Public Relations
Kulbardi Centre – Australian Indigenous Studies
School of Engineering & Energy – Engineering
School of Engineering & Energy – Physics & Energy Studies
School of Social Sciences & Humanities – Philosophy
School of Social Sciences & Humanities – English & Creative Writing

Professional Services Submissions

Student Learning Centre
Faculty Support Coordinators
Educational Partnerships
Library
Educational Technology Committee
Educational Development

Individual Submissions

Peter Furzer  Exams & Graduations
Garth Maker  School of Biological Sciences & Biotechnology
Wayne Greene & Bob Mead
Jeremy Northcote
Damian Laird
Robin Pascoe
Barry Kissane
Alexander Jensen
Susan Veitch
Nicolee Baxter
Lorraine Marshall
Gamini Senanayake & Aleks Nikoloski
Steve Johnson
Bev Thiele
Andrew Taggart
David Brown
Mark Jennings
Paul McDonald
Bonnie Barber
Renato Schibeci
Carol Warren
Guy Hall
Ian Gell
Howard Gill & Mike Van Keulen
Graeme Hocking
Glenn Albrecht
Louise Somerset
Madeleine Laming
Jim Trotter
Janice Dudley
Rob Phillips

School of Social Sciences & Humanities
School of Chemical & Mathematical Sciences
School of Education
School of Education
School of Social Sciences & Humanities
Student Learning Centre
Office of IT Services
Educational Partnerships
School of Chemical & Mathematical Sciences
Student Learning Centre
Pro Vice Chancellor
Pro Vice Chancellor
School of Social Science & Humanities
School of Social Science & Humanities
School of Psychology
Murdoch Business School
School of Social Sciences & Humanities
School of Law
Fees & Enrolments
School of Biological Sciences & Biotechnology
School of Chemical & Mathematical Sciences
School of Social Science & Humanities
Faculty Support Coordinator
Office of Student Life & Learning
School of Social Science & Humanities
School of Social Science & Humanities
Educational Development

Student Submissions

Student Guild
APPENDIX 5

Existing majors

This is an indicative list that locates existing Murdoch majors within their ‘parent’ degrees of Arts, Business and Science. In addition, the Commission does not presume that all of these majors will necessarily be offered in the future. The tightening of the specifications for a major and the desire to eliminate closely similar offerings is likely to lead to the reduction of the number of majors offered in the future.

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Existing Majors in BA

Asian Studies
Australian Indigenous Studies
Community Development
Education Studies
English and Creative Arts
General Arts
History
International Aid and Development
Philosophy
Politics and International Studies
Security, Terrorism and Counterterrorism
Sociology
Sustainable Development
Theatre and Drama
Theology
Tourism and Events Management

Named Awards that could move to BA

Applied Events Management
Asian Studies
Common Law
Communication and Media Studies
Criminology
Games Art and Design
Interactive Digital Design
Journalism
Legal Studies
Public Relations
Radio
Screen Production
Sound
Theology
Web Communication
Psychology

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS

Existing Majors in BBus

Applied Accounting
Sustainability

BCom majors that will move to BBus

Accounting
Banking
Business Law
Chinese Business
Entrepreneurship & Innovation
Finance
Hospitality & Tourism
Management
Human Resource Management
International Business
Management
Marketing

Named awards that could move to the BBus

Digital Marketing & Media Economics
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Existing Majors in BSc

Biological Sciences
Biomedical Science
Biotechnology
Business Information Systems
Chemistry
Chiropractic Science

Computer Science
Conservation and Wildlife Biology
Cyber Forensics, Information Security and Management
Environmental Science
Exercise Physiology
Games Software Design and Production
Games Technology
Internet Software Development
Internetworking and Security
Marine Science
Mathematics and Statistics
Mineral Science
Molecular Biology
Physics and Nanotechnology
Sustainability Science
Sustainable Energy Management (not available in 2013)
Veterinary Science

Named awards that could move to the BSc

Animal Science
Engineering Technology
Environmental Management
Environmental Science (4 year)
Extractive Metallurgy
Forensic Biology and Toxicology
Information Technology
Management
Marine Science (4 year)
Psychology
Sports Science

Status under Review

The Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery and the Bachelor of Chiropractic are currently awarded as second undergraduate qualifications that may be shifted to postgraduate level, consistent with national and international trends.

The availability of the Juris Doctor as an undergraduate award is currently under review.
APPENDIX 6

Report from the Working Group on Embedding Research in Teaching

The terms of reference were (i) to provide advice on the desirability of embedding research into the curriculum; (ii) to specify the principles of research embedded teaching; and (iii) to make recommendations for promoting the acquisition of research skills within the degree structures proposed by the Curriculum Commission.

There was unanimous agreement that research is a fundamental part of student education across the campus. There was also agreement that exposure to research as early as possible in a student’s university experience was highly desirable. Research skills 'future proof' student qualifications and provide a set of highly marketable skills that give students competitive advantage when seeking to win their first position.

Research and the use of research or inquiry-based methods in teaching and learning are increasingly important in a world that requires graduates to be lifelong learners. Research can take many forms, including:

- being exposed to the latest research;
- learning research skills; and/or
- undertaking a research project.

Whatever form research embeddedness takes, it was acknowledged that a large part of it should be taught in context as opposed to a de-contextualised delivery (e.g. statistics being taught by the maths discipline to all students irrespective of discipline), with this point being made particularly strongly by social scientists.

The benefits of an active research environment for student learning can include:

- developing an awareness of how knowledge is generated, the history and the current state of knowledge in a discipline;
- developing an undergraduate culture in which students see themselves as enquirers rather than simply as receivers i.e. developing students into intelligent consumers of information;
- developing research expertise – e.g. through critical analysis of publications; and,
- providing practical research experience (including methodology and technical aspects).

Core elements of the research process that cut across discipline boundaries are recognised as follows:

- Problem definition and question specification
- Information collection germane to the specified question
- Data analysis
• Data interpretation
• Communication (written and verbal) appropriate to an intended audience

Over the course of the degree it was expected that depth and sophistication in all of the above areas would be developed in the student and assessed appropriately.

We are not the first University to contemplate how research might be embedded into the curriculum. A number of documents were tabled in the course of discussion and we have relied on these in formulating our recommendations. In particular the frameworks considered by the University of Adelaide and the University Western Australia were influential in our thinking.

Table 1 below shows the research skills matrix developed by Adelaide University that we propose should be adopted at Murdoch. We do not expect that graduates of a three year bachelor degree will achieve Level 5 competencies but levels 1 to 4 should be achievable within all of our undergraduate degrees – the end point of which will be signified by students being able to claim they can ‘think like a...biomedical scientist, economist, historian’ etc.

The working group was, by and large, in agreement that the proposed models of curriculum commission should include degree-specific research skills units at Year Levels Two and Three in the undergraduate degrees. We were also of the opinion that a broadly based research-focused first year unit would highly appropriate.

A template for the audit of degrees and degree content might look something like that illustrated in Table 2.

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6 This is based on a concept by John Willison and Kerry O'Regan, design by Peter Murdoch and Nik Cornish, Centre for Learning and Professional Development. Facets derived from ANZIIL (2004) standards, reworked using the Bloom, et al (1956) Taxonomy and implementation trials by Eleanor Peirce and Mario Ricci. The University of Adelaide, October 2006.
Lecturers and teachers determine scope of inquiry and standard required; student achievement determines the Level their research actually attains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curious</th>
<th>Determined</th>
<th>Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Students embark on inquiry and so determine a need for knowledge/understanding.</td>
<td>B. Students find/generate needed information/data using appropriate methodology.</td>
<td>C. Students critically evaluate information/data and the process to find/generate this information/data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to questions/tasks arising explicitly from a closed inquiry.</td>
<td>Collect and record required information/data using a prescribed methodology from a prescribed source in which the information/data is clearly evident.</td>
<td>Evaluate information/data and the inquiry process using simple prescribed criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to questions/tasks required by and implicit in a closed inquiry.</td>
<td>Collect and record required information/data using a prescribed methodology from prescribed source/s in which the information is not clearly evident.</td>
<td>Evaluate information/data and the inquiry process using prescribed criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate questions/aims/hypotheses framed within structured guidelines.</td>
<td>Collect and record self-determined information/data from self-selected sources using one of several prescribed methodologies.</td>
<td>Evaluate information/data and the inquiry process related to the aims of the inquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate questions/aims/hypotheses based on experience, expertise and literature.</td>
<td>Collect and record self-determined information/data from self-selected sources, choosing or devising an appropriate methodology based on self-structured guidelines.</td>
<td>Evaluate information/data and the inquiry process rigorously using self-generated criteria based on experience, expertise and the literature.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF STUDENT AUTONOMY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students research at the level of a closed inquiry* and require a high degree of structure/guidance.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* closed = lecturer specified
*open = student initiated

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Table 1
Table 1, continued

Table 2: Sample Framework for demonstrating that research is embedded into a major.

Each row must have at least one non-blank entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element A: Curious (refer Table 1 for the definition)</th>
<th>Level 1 Unit</th>
<th>Level 1 Unit</th>
<th>Level 2 Unit</th>
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<th>Level 3 Unit</th>
<th>Level 3 Unit</th>
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APPENDIX 7

Masters Degrees by Type

**Masters Degree (Research):** ‘qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning.’

- a research-intensive degree with the primary focus being a thesis
- may include some research-related coursework
- funded by the Commonwealth Government Research Training Scheme
- typically 1-2 years duration, depending on level and cognacy of previous qualifications

It should be noted that enrolment numbers in the Masters Degree (Research) in Australia have been static over several years, as the Honours pathway to PhD studies is much more common among domestic students.

**Masters Degree (Extended):** ‘qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice and as a pathway for further learning’

- a postgraduate coursework degree for professional practice in specific fields, e.g. Medicine, Law
- may include a research or professional project but primary focus is coursework
- CGS places available in some degrees
- typically 3 – 4 years duration, following bachelor degree

**Masters Degree (Coursework):** ‘qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship and as a pathway for further learning’

- a postgraduate coursework degree primarily for professional practice in a broad range of occupations, e.g. management, government, etc
- may include a research or professional project but primary focus is coursework
- primarily fees-based with very few CGS places available in these degrees
- typically 1 – 2 years duration, depending on level and cognacy of previous qualifications, and relevant professional experience
Accreditation
Recognition of the University’s qualifications by an external professional body.

Advanced Standing
Entry to a course at an advanced level due to prior learning which is recognised through the granting of credit and/or the awarding of exemptions.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualification from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive qualification framework.

Award
An award is granted to a student who has completed the requirements of the course in which they were enrolled, and includes all degrees, certificates and diplomas awarded by the University.

Breadth units
Specially-designated units that provide students with inter-disciplinary knowledge.

Commonwealth Government Supported (CGS) place
A higher education place for which the Commonwealth makes a contribution towards the cost of the student's education.

Combined Degree (previously known as joint degrees)
A combined degree comprises a combination of two individually approved courses into a new single course. A combined undergraduate degree consists of one transition unit and at least two majors. The combined degree award will include both component course qualifications. Combined degrees are undertaken concurrently.

Core Unit
A Core Unit is a compulsory unit in an approved course, major, minor or specialisation.

Course
A combination of coherent units approved by Academic Council that leads to a particular award.

Credit
Points granted in recognition of previous studies and other relevant prior learning that may be able to be used towards the satisfaction of requirements for courses of the University.

Credit Points
The value attributed to a unit.

Double Major
Two separately approved majors undertaken while the student is enrolled in a single course for which the student receives a single testamur on graduation. The requirements of the course in which the student is enrolled and the requirements of each major must be completed.

Exemption
A unit a student does not have to complete because the student can show that they have satisfactorily achieved its objectives and mastered its content by means of prior learning.

**Full-time Study**
A normal full-time study load is 24 credit points in an academic year. For many enrolment purposes, a study load of 9 or more credit points in a semester satisfies full-time requirements for domestic students. International students must be enrolled in at least 12 credit points in a semester to be regarded as full-time.

**General Elective Unit**
A General Elective unit is a unit of a student's free choice.

**Graduate Attributes**
Graduate Attributes are the generic capabilities and qualities that all undergraduate students are expected to develop during their studies. Murdoch University has adopted a set of nine Graduate Attributes that are further divided into sub-attributes. These Attributes reflect the vision of the University and are considered important for enhancing lifelong learning, social awareness and employability in its graduates.

**Honours Degree**
A Bachelor honours degree is a research training degree involving an additional year of study following a three-year Bachelor degree or may be embedded in the fourth year of a four-year Bachelor degree, and requires a research dissertation of at least 12 credit points.

**Major**
A major is an integrated, sequential and academically coherent course of study, approved by Academic Council.

**Minor**
A recognised set of academically coherent related units, approved by Academic Council, of lesser volume and depth than a major.

**Part I**
The first academic year of an undergraduate course. Part I is designed to provide a basis upon which studies in Part II are built and, where the course structure is not fully prescribed, to allow students to develop their interests before finally deciding their course of study.

**Part II**
The second and subsequent academic years of an undergraduate course.

**Postgraduate**
Relates to a student or study beyond the Bachelor's degree level.

**Qualification**
The title of the degree, diploma or certificate granted to a student who has completed the requirements of their chosen course.

**Research Skills unit**
Units at 2nd and 3rd year level designed for groups of cognate majors or for single undergraduate degrees supporting the promotion of research skills.
A basic organisational unit of academic and supporting general staff that is responsible for teaching and research in one or more disciplines.

**Specified Elective Unit**
A Specified Elective unit is a compulsory elective unit in an approved course, major, minor or specialisation. A student may be required to select a specific number of Specified Elective units from an approved list.

**Thesis**
Supervised independent study leading to an independently examined piece of work with a value of at least 12 credit points.

**Transition Unit**
A compulsory unit that introduces students to degree-specific skills that are necessary for success at university.

**Unit**
The basic element of a course that delivers educational material prescribed in the curriculum. A combination of units make up the structure of a course, major, minor or specialisation.