SUBMISSION TO SEG EDUCATION COMMITTEE

2 September 2013

REPORT ON OUTCOMES OF 2012 TEACHING STANDARDS COMPACTS

FACULTY ASSOCIATE DEANS LEARNING & TEACHING

SIMON BARRIE DIRECTOR TEACHING AND LEARNING, EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

Recommendation That SEG note the endorsed final reports on 2012 Compacts provided by faculties

Background The 2012 Teaching Standards Compacts were prepared by faculties using the SEG agreed University minimum standards for the quality of student experiences of learning and teaching in units of study. The compacts were endorsed by all Deans and SEG and all faculties have been working to implement the enhancement strategies agreed in the compacts. An interim progress report was previously provided to SEG. This final report on the 2012 compacts reports on faculties’ progress against the quality targets they set based on 2011 Unit of Study Experience (USE) data. Individual Faculty reports have been endorsed by the Faculty Dean. Links to faculty compacts and an overview of the compacts process are available at http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/projects/teachingstandards/.

Overview of Progress Each faculty’s achievements in relation to the specific targets they negotiated in their compacts are reported in the attached faculty reports. All faculties have made progress towards or exceeded, many of the improvement targets they set for both overall satisfaction and for specific aspects (teaching, assessment, feedback etc.) of the quality of units of study. Those achievements have resulted in improvements to the learning experience for many students. For the last five years the University has been showing a steady incremental improvement in the proportions of units of study that were exceeding the high quality benchmark of ≥80% student agreement with the overall satisfaction item. However for much of that time the proportion of poor quality units of study, where ≥20% of the students disagreed on ‘overall satisfaction’ had remained largely unchanged. Progress achieved over the first 18 month Compact round (to the end of first semester 2013), in relation to the University standards for ‘overall satisfaction’, is summarised in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

![Figure 1: Percentage of UoS with 20% or more overall satisfaction disagreement](image1)

![Figure 2: Percentage of UoS with 80% or more overall satisfaction agreement](image2)
While it is too early to draw significant conclusions on trends, and mindful of sampling variations in some faculties, looking at the university as a whole, there has been a decrease in the percentage of units not meeting the minimum standard (9% down 8%) and an increase in the proportion of units exceeding the high quality standard (67% up from 66%). Of particular note is the progress of Architecture Design and Planning, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Veterinary Science in bringing double-digit baseline figures for units of study not meeting minimum standard down to 9%, 9%, 11% and 9% respectively. Also of note is the success of several faculties over this first compact period in increasing the percentage of units of study above the high quality benchmark; Agriculture and Environment (62% up from 48%), Arts and Social Science (75% up from 70%), Dentistry (64% up from 18%), Sydney Nursing School (76% up from 38%), SCA (76% up from 68%) and Veterinary Science (76% up from 61%). Details on faculty strategies and the calculations of targets are available in the individual faculty Compact reports. Faculty trend data for all Compact USE indicators is available to Deans and SEG through the USE reports interface at http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/use/reports.htm

Key strategies supporting enhancement
In some faculties, the additional accountability mechanism of the Teaching Compacts has led to further improvements in the processes and governance mechanisms faculties use to assure and enhance quality. In smaller faculties in particular these improved accountability processes, coupled with targeted enhancement strategies, have led to significant improvements in the quality of the student experience. Achieving change in larger faculties with a greater number of units of study to work on is understandably slower. Key strategies identified in faculty compact reports include:

- Ensuring units of study not meeting the minimum standard are re-surveyed the next time they are offered to students
- Establishing or improving survey processes in faculties and ensuring USE results are discussed at meetings between faculty leaders (e.g. the Associate Deans L&T and Heads of School/Department), or in some cases establishing a new procedures for review of results
- Implementing new capacity building activities and collegial and team-based approaches to curriculum renewal and teaching innovation
- Establishing clear accountabilities and structures for teaching and curriculum quality assurance e.g. between Associate Deans Learning and Teaching, Heads of School/Department, program/degree coordinators, and unit of study coordinators and APD managers

Key challenges included the time required to roll out enhancement strategies and to see impact, particularly in the larger faculties. A lack of clear accountabilities and responsibilities for responding to identified teaching quality issues in some faculties. Difficulty engaging staff in teaching enhancement activities in department cultures where research is prioritised and valued over teaching.

Next Stage of Implementation of the Teaching Standards Compacts
The next round of 2014 Compacts is currently being developed and negotiated with Deans and will be presented for endorsement by SEG later in 2013. The Education Portfolio will support Faculty Associate Deans Learning and Teaching in preparing the faculty compacts.

To support the next round of Teaching Standards Compacts, guidelines to improve the consistency of faculty survey sampling, and the use of minimum response rates and sample sizes, have been endorsed by SEG Education to improve inter-faculty comparability.

The next round of Compacts will again address agreed University minimum standards for the quality of students’ experience of units of study and faculty strategic teaching and learning priorities. Some faculties have expressed an interest in including additional teaching and learning targets reflecting external and internal priorities, for example: assurance of learning outcomes and processes; student retention, progression and support; building sessional staff teaching capacity; implementing curriculum renewal. Where possible these areas of work will be incorporated by faculties in 2014 Compacts with baselines and targets drawing on additional existing data sources including the University’s new KPIs for teaching and learning.

The SEG Education committee has noted that as the Teaching Standards compact strategy continues to develop, it will provide additional opportunities for the University to consider how such work in faculties is prioritised and supported.