FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

Fees for Domestic Students in Postgraduate Coursework Courses

Proposed Policy Changes

Background

At its meeting on 28 July 2004 Academic Senate endorsed in principle the change from course-based to topic-based charging for domestic students in postgraduate coursework courses. At that time it was noted that proposals for policy amendment arising from this change would be put to a future meeting of Academic Senate before the end of 2004. Some amendments are also required as a result of the *Higher Education Support Act (2003)*. The purpose of this paper is to present recommendations from the Fee Monitoring and Approval Committee (FMAC) for amendments to:

- Policy on Fixing of Fees for Postgraduate Coursework Courses and the Distribution of Revenue
- Terms of Reference for the Fee Monitoring and Approval Committee

Proposals

*Policy on Fixing of Fees for Postgraduate Coursework Courses and the Distribution of Revenue*

A number of amendments to this policy are proposed. *Attachment 1* provides a copy of the existing policy and *Attachment 2* sets out the policy with the proposed amendments made. The changes are primarily related to updating the policy to reflect the change to topic-based charging. Changes have also been made to reflect a requirement of the new legislation relating to minimum fees. It is proposed that the existing clause 3 be deleted as consideration of strategic issues in relation to course offerings is dealt with as part of the University’s course approval process and is not a matter for this policy. Existing clause 4 has been amended to remove reference to minimum and maximum fee levels as this is referred to in the existing clause 5 (proposed new clause 4).

It is proposed that the final clause of the policy be deleted as the allocation of the central overheads component occurs as part of the annual budget process and may vary from year to year. Other more minor changes are proposed to clarify some clauses and to update the terminology used. The name of the policy has also been amended.

*Terms of Reference for FMAC*

*Attachment 3* sets out proposed amendments to the terms of reference for the Fee Monitoring and Approval Committee. An amendment to the name of the committee is proposed so that it more accurately describes the committee’s role. The committee has no approval authority and it is therefore recommended that its name be changed to the Fee Monitoring and Advisory Committee.

The amendments proposed to the committee’s terms of reference reflect the change to topic-based charging and clarify the role of FMAC under the new system. Minor amendments to terminology have also been made.
**Recommendation**

That, on the recommendation of FMAC, Academic Senate endorse the amended Policy on Fixing of Fees for Postgraduate Coursework Courses and the Distribution of Revenue, as set out in *Attachment 2*, and the proposed changes to the name and Terms of Reference of the Fee Monitoring and Approval Committee, as set out in *Attachment 3*, and refer them to Council for approval.

Prof Joan Cooper  
Chair, FMAC  
November 2004
Existing Policy

Policy on Fixing of Fees for Postgraduate Coursework Courses and the Distribution of Revenue

1. Fees for postgraduate courses must be established in compliance with relevant policies and guidelines issued by the Minister for Employment Education and Training and DETYA.

2. Fees for postgraduate courses will be recommended by Faculties and approved by Academic Senate on the advice of the Fee Monitoring and Approval Committee.

3. All courses to be offered on a fee basis need to be justified as a significant part of the offerings of the faculty and the university.

4. In establishing fee-levels, consideration will be given to the following criteria and benchmarks.

4.1 Where possible the full average cost of a course will need to be recovered, taking account of:

- an estimate of costs, including academic and other staff time, services, materials, equipment and facilities;

- modes of delivery;

- expected enrolments in the course.

4.2 Reference will need to be made to appropriate benchmarks, including:

- fees charged for other equivalent courses offered by Flinders and by other Australian universities;

- the fee for Overseas full-fee paying students for the same or a comparable course;

- the undiscounted HECS level for the relevant field of study;

- the nature and size of the potential market for the course, and expected competition for students from similar courses.

5. Fees will normally be set at a level above the undiscounted HECS for the relevant field of study (as a minimum) and below the fee set for a Flinders University full fee-paying overseas student undertaking a comparable course (as a maximum).

6. In certain circumstances (eg special strategic importance of the course to the University, significant benefit to the public, market competition or as a new venture) the fee may be set at a level below the normal minimum for a specified period.
7. Of the revenue received, 75% will be payable to the faculty or faculties to which the EFTSUs are credited, and 25% will be allocated to cover central overheads, except that the proportion allocated to cover central overheads may be varied as follows, subject to approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor:

- the central overheads proportion may be discounted for the first three years of a course, by negotiation, depending on the circumstances in each case;

- off campus award courses will be treated in the same way as on-campus courses with the proviso that in recognition that the cost structure and impact of offering off campus courses might be quite different to that which applies for on-campus courses, the period of any discount may by negotiation be extended beyond three years.

8. Revenue allocated to cover central overheads will be distributed between the following budget entities by the Vice-Chancellor:

- the Postgraduate Equity Assistance Scheme;

- Central Administration;

- the Library;

- equipment;

- Utilities and Central Services.
Proposed Amended Policy

Policy on Fixing of Fees for Domestic Students in Postgraduate Coursework Courses and the
Distribution of Revenue

1. Fees for postgraduate coursework courses must be established in compliance with relevant
legislation and guidelines issued by the Commonwealth.

2. Fees for postgraduate coursework courses will be determined on the basis of the fees
charged for the topics comprising the courses. Topics will be grouped into fee bands. A
standard fee per unit will be set for each band and will apply to all topics in each band. A
schedule of standard fees for each band will be approved by Academic Senate on the advice
of the Fee Monitoring and Advisory Committee. Academic Senate may approve, on the
advice of the Fee Monitoring and Advisory Committee, variations to the standard fee for
particular topics.

3 In establishing the fee level for a band, for all courses which include topics in that band,
consideration will be given to:

- fees charged for other equivalent courses offered by Flinders and by other Australian
universities;
- the nature and size of the potential market for courses, and expected competition for
students from similar courses.

Where possible the full average cost of each course will need to be recovered, taking account
of:

- an estimate of costs, including academic and other staff time, services, materials,
equipment and facilities;
- modes of delivery;
- expected enrolments in courses.

4. Fees will be set at a level not less than the full student contribution amount for the relevant
field of education (as a minimum) and below the fee set for a Flinders University fee-paying
international students undertaking a comparable course (as a maximum).

5. Of the revenue received, 75% will be payable to the faculty or faculties to which the EFTSLs
are credited, and 25% will be allocated to cover central overheads, except that the proportion
allocated to cover central overheads may be varied as follows, subject to approval by the
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic):

- the central overheads proportion may be discounted for the first three years of a course, by
negotiation, depending on the circumstances in each case;

- off campus courses will be treated in the same way as on-campus courses with the proviso
that, in recognition of differences in cost structure between the two, the period of any
discount may, by negotiation, be extended beyond three years for off-campus courses.
Fee Monitoring and Approval Committee
Proposed Amendments to Terms of Reference

Fee Monitoring and Approval Advisory Committee

1. To assess course fees, and conduct an annual review of course fee levels payable by domestic students for all postgraduate coursework courses, and make recommendations on these to Academic Senate.

2. To assess proposals for variations to the standard fee levels for postgraduate coursework topics, and make recommendations on these to Academic Senate.

3. To monitor, with advice from each Faculty and the Planning Services Unit, the:
   - enrolments of domestic students in each fee-paying postgraduate coursework course;
   - number of students receiving assistance through the Commonwealth’s FEE-HELP scheme, Postgraduate Equity Assistance Scheme (PEAS) and the Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme (PELS); and
   - enrolment of students in equity groups.

4. To provide advice to the Academic Senate on policies and procedures relating to the charging of fees payable by domestic students for postgraduate coursework courses.