1. **Direct entry application form (postgraduate)**

As you are aware the SIMS team has been developing a direct entry application form that can be used by all Faculties for postgraduate studies - excluding Research only degrees.

In an email forwarded to you all on 14th July, Marjory Harvey indicates that “there are a number of factors that have had to be taken into consideration - these being HESA requirements, SIMS mandatory entries and the overall data entry process as well as the requirements of Faculties. The sequence that the form is in at present is aimed at speedy data entry to minimumise the turn-around time”.

Could you bring your feedback to Monday’s meeting please.

2. **Multiple semesters**

Harvey wants to speak to the group about the 96 semesters that are currently up and running in the University. He wants us to be aware that in planning for offshore programmes we are familiar with the current semesters and know the implications for us and Student Admin if we try to ‘reinvent the wheel’.

3. **Administrative workloads**

Christine Richardson, the Chair of the University Managers Group, has kindly agreed to attend Monday’s meeting to talk to us about the UMG’s submission on administrative workloads. Christine is particularly keen to have the submission considered by the FAO Group, as the “working party which developed the submission is largely drawn from schools and so the examples tend to be resource-oriented”. The submission can be viewed at [www.umg.uwa.edu.au](http://www.umg.uwa.edu.au)

4. **FAO Agendas/Minutes**

To assist in raising the Group’s profile, I have made arrangements to have the FAO Agendas/Minutes linked to the main University Committee webpage. This will be done sometime following 9th August when the person concerned returns from leave.

5. **New Layout for course rules**

At the June meeting, Sylvia Lang presented a preliminary sketch of a new layout for 2006 rules and we agreed to provide feedback by 21st July. As this date has passed, if you have any comments that you would like forwarded to Sylvia, perhaps you could bring them to Monday’s meeting.
6. **Approved leave**

The latest update from the Working Group on Approve Leave, indicates that progress is being made on the preparation of an application form, templates for responses, policy and procedures. It was recognised by the Group that a level of protection would need to be given to those students that had taken leave under the current University policy and these students were currently being identified.

7. **FAO Group website**

    Jannette has done an excellent job on the FAO website – [www.fao.uwa.edu.au](http://www.fao.uwa.edu.au)

    She would still appreciate feedback on the wording and overall presentation.

8. **FAO Executive Committee (carried over from June meeting)**

    Following a suggestion at the May meeting of the possible formation a strategic lobby group from within the FAO Group, members were asked to email the Chair indicating expressions of interest. Subsequent to the meeting, and with the benefit of hindsight, I emailed members and indicated that as well as expressions of interests for the Executive, comments were also invited about the suggestion itself. Comments are attached (A). The comments do seem weighted against the idea of an Executive group, and it seems we need to discuss this further with these comments in mind.

9. **Supplementary assessment uniformity**

    As you are aware, it was agreed at the June FAO/Sub-Dean’s meeting that a working party would be convened to consider the issue of standardising supplementary assessment policies. For those who couldn’t attend the June meeting, it would be helpful to have a brief discussion on this issue to get an idea of current thinking.

10. **Course/unit approval system**

    Judy Fetherston and I were invited to a meeting with Jackie Massey, Trudi McGlade, Rob McCormack and Jon Stubbs to discuss a proposal submitted by Jon Stubbs regarding the approval system of units and courses. In his proposal, Jon Stubbs indicated that he felt there was a need to refine current university processes and suggested that a private consultant be employed to conduct a review; others present did not necessarily agree. It was agreed that the issue should go to the FAO group for discussion.

    After the meeting, Jon Stubbs forwarded the following email to those who had attended the meeting:

    “There is enormous value in fully understanding and documenting the issues before looking for a solution. After labouring this point for a few lines I will then do exactly what I have argued against…suggest a solution.

    In this regard I would strongly recommend that if we move forward it is with a review of our business processes surrounding course and unit development, approval and publication (to discover where change should be made and just what such a system will need to support). The review should look at such things as:

    - what our current processes are (and how many versions of them exist)
    - how well they work - their weaknesses and strengths
    - how good (or bad) communication surrounding these processes is (both to people and systems)
- the extent to which there is redundancy of data across systems
- any places where the university is exposed - legally and otherwise
- the reliability, currency, completeness, consistency of published data (web and print)
- the appropriateness of published data to its purpose and the target audience
- the ease with which students (and others) can find the published information they are looking for

Once this is complete, we will know what we are looking for in a course and unit approval system.

Possible solution...

QUT and UNE (having completed their business reviews) have decided to undertake a proof of concept exercise with a product called ‘The Academic Database’ developed and marketed by Distinction Systems in the UK (see following link for a 4 page brochure: [http://www.distinction-systems.co.uk/Education/Higher%20Education/QLS%20HE%20Product%20Information](http://www.distinction-systems.co.uk/Education/Higher%20Education/QLS%20HE%20Product%20Information))

I understand the system can be sourced through Solidity Technologies ([http://www.solidity.biz/solidity/companyInfo/aboutUs.asp](http://www.solidity.biz/solidity/companyInfo/aboutUs.asp)) within Australia. Solidity sells Distinction’s QMS system in the Australian TAFE sector.

Ian McDonald at QUT is coordinating the proof of concept. I haven’t spoken with him directly with Ian at this stage but understand he would welcome UWA’s participation in the POF if we wanted to join in. I don’t know the terms but would be happy to find out if you are interested.”

For discussion.

11. **Best Practice**

12. **New Business**

**COMMENTS RECEIVED REGARDING FAO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- Would not like to see the FAO group split into another group, even though the thinking behind such a move is understood.

- A sub committee could be formed to lobby or deal with a specific issue when the time arises, dependent upon members’ availability/workload at that point in time. This approach would then allow for members who have a particular interest in the issue to be involved - or not volunteer
All items for discussion/lobbying etc should appear on the one FAO agenda/minutes and not have another group discussing an item without all members’ involvement.

If there are problems or issues that need to be discussed immediately, or if memberships of main uni committees are under discussion, we should involve the Secretariat in this matter. The relationship/understanding with the Secretariat since the introduction of the Sub Dean/FAO meetings is terrific and we could possibly use this forum more if required.

Really dislike a split of membership that looked like SFAO in an executive group and then FAO’s in another .... would the executive group look at the agenda for the FAO meeting and not come if the items were of routine nature?

Support the idea of having an executive group dealing with strategic matters only; would assume that each Faculty has one representative; this group could liaise with the University Secretariat, Student Services, SIMS etc on strategic issues, forward planning, etc.

being part of the current group is extremely beneficial; don’t want exclusion; the FAO group does seem a little small for an executive, however a strategic focus is a good idea.

Suggestions
- Is it possible to include this focus at the end of existing meetings?
- Make the meetings 1/2 hour longer
- People who are not interested could leave at that point
- Never close a meeting early. Always use the allocated time to focus on strategic issues
- Working parties can be set up as required
- Raise the profile of the group with a web site - but a poorly maintained or boring site is bad publicity

No need to set up a group separate to the one we already have. In its current form our group is working very well and our profile has certainly improved since we began to conduct our discussions in a more formal manner. Also unsure of the idea of an ‘executive’ group that looks at issues that are more important than the work we do in Faculties. Agree entirely that we should always look to involve ourselves in the bigger picture issues across the university but would imagine that this could be done just as well by discussing such issues within the FAO group and then perhaps nominate representatives, if the need arises, to act on our behalf in other forums.