Vision for Student Management

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Date	Name	Version	Change Description
August	S Weikert	draft	Drafted individual vision statements.
September	S Weikert	draft	Incorporated feedback from reviewers.
05/10/06	S Weikert	1 & 2 draft	Consolidated individual statements into one document and incorporated feedback from reviewers.
20/10/06	S Weikert	3 draft	Updated reviewers / contributors and incorporated feedback from reviewers

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1.   PURPOSE

This document attempts to depict the courses and students of the future at the University of Melbourne and capture the broad directions for the University in delivering administrative service to these students. For the sake of simplicity, this service is hereafter referred to as student management.

Its purpose is to inform planning for a variety of projects, including the new student administration system/s and other student service delivery initiatives. It is not a commitment to deliver any specific item discussed below.

2.   THE COURSES AND STUDENTS OF THE FUTURE

2.1   CONTEXT

Where we are now

The University currently teaches around 42,000 students, including 3,400 research students, in over 550 courses, and in approximately 5,000 subjects. The focus of the University is on providing a campus-based learning environment. Most teaching is conducted in the traditional two-semester model.

Where we are going

The University is currently enacting major changes to its course structures through the introduction of the Melbourne Model. The Melbourne Model involves a far-reaching curriculum reform aimed at creating an outstanding and distinctive 'Melbourne Experience' for undergraduate and postgraduate students. The first intake of students under the Melbourne Model will be in 2008.

The model is based on a small range of new generation undergraduate courses which have academic breadth as well as depth of content and which lead into professional graduate courses, postgraduate courses, research higher degrees, or employment.

The 'Melbourne Experience' will offer students opportunities for research as well as knowledge transfer outside the campus and through international exchanges (both traditional and shorter term).

The University will develop activities and events for student cohorts, to help students establish a stronger sense of identity as part of a specific learning community.

Students who commenced study prior to 2008 will be able to complete their courses under the existing conditions. This means that for many years to come the University will need to accommodate students enrolled under the existing curriculum.

2.2   VISION OF THE FUTURE FOR COURSES, CURRICULUM AND CALENDARS

Six new generation undergraduate courses offering breadth and depth

The six new generation undergraduate courses will have a structure that offers breadth as well as depth.

The breadth component will generally consist of six subjects usually taken over the three years of the course. Students will have some choice in the subjects they select. For example, a student in the Bachelor of Arts may do some subjects from Commerce, Science or Biosciences. The depth is provided through the requirement to complete a major within their course, which will normally be chosen in a student's second year of study.

These new courses will also include a 'knowledge transfer' component which could comprise a period of studying abroad, an industry placement, an online subject offered by another university or volunteer work. Organising, tracking and recording these activities will be increasingly important.

After 2007, there will be no further intake into undergraduate combined courses. Under the Melbourne Model, students who want to study two undergraduate degrees may do so sequentially (not concurrently), and they will receive credit towards their second degree for one year full time of study.

Specialised graduate and professional training and research higher degrees

In 2008, the University will introduce the first of its graduate schools in Law, Nursing, Education and Architecture, Building and Planning, and some others followed by the opening of additional graduate schools in other disciplines in subsequent years.

These new graduate schools will offer more intensive and better supported, highly specialised professional graduate training. The University will continue to offer many of its current range of graduate and professional courses. Although some Commonwealth-supported places will be transferred from undergraduate courses to graduate / postgraduate courses, most places will be available on a fee-paying basis.

The University is also reviewing its support for research higher degree students and considering ways to provide them with a broader range of skills and understanding to enter a changing, internationally competitive employment environment. For example, PhD courses may include up to 50 points of coursework subjects to provide this support and skills development.

Flexible entry and exit points

An important element of the Melbourne Model is the creation of flexible pathways between courses, offering explicit opportunities to enter and exit with an appropriate qualification. For instance, a PhD student may exit along the way with a Masters degree. Refer to http://melbournemodel.unimelb.edu.au/template-assets-custom/images/editable-images/career_pathways.gif

Flexible study calendars

In addition to its standard academic study calendar of Semesters 1, 2 and Summer, the University is considering alternate calendars to enable students to accelerate their progress through their course should they desire. This would involve adopting one or more of the following calendar options currently under discussion:

- Three-term calendar (Trimesters 1, 2, 3), with or without an intensive term (Summer)
- Two-term calendar (Semesters 1 and 2) with two intensive terms (Summer and Winter)

2.3   VISION OF THE FUTURE FOR STUDENTS

Undergraduate students

There will be heavy competition between universities to attract a steadily declining number of school leavers over the next 20 years to undergraduate study, assuming no change to the participation rate.

The majority of undergraduate students will be full-time school leavers. A large minority will be international students. All will want options to accelerate their study as it suits them, for example by studying intensively. Undergraduate students will engage in co- and extra-curricular activities that extend on their university experience and enhance learning and individual development. Students will connect with their fellow undergraduates through cohort-based activities and events. Upon finishing their study, undergraduates will move into employment or articulate to further tertiary study as a postgraduate or research higher degree student.

Postgraduate students

There will be heavy competition between universities to attract predominantly fee-paying postgraduate students. Those universities that cater to the distinctive requirements of postgraduates as outlined below will be the most successful in attracting and retaining their custom.

Postgraduate students are already sophisticated, demanding consumers with high expectations. They aspire to a distinctively postgraduate experience by connecting with other postgraduates, distinguished and engaging teachers and researchers, and industry leaders. They want their study to be flexible, practical and offer value for money. While some of these students are full-time, a large proportion are part-time, and all want options to accelerate or defer their study as it suits them, for

example by studying intensively. Finally, postgraduate students expect to be treated as a customer, enjoying service that meets or exceeds the standards they experience in other industries, and is responsive and accessible at times and in ways that suit them.

Research Higher Degree students

RHD students will continue to have a unique experience targeted to their individual program of research, and will commence study at any time of the year. Academic supervisors will continue to provide the counsel and advice to support RHD students through their research training. Students make connections with other RHD students and eminent researchers through discipline-based seminars and skills training and development activities.

3.   IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT MANAGEMENT

3.1   STUDENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1.1   Context

Where we are now

Administrative service for students is provided as an adjunct to other activities. Most Faculties and other student-related administrative units typically have between 1 and 10 staff in frontline service roles. Some units are very good at it. The University advertises hundreds of contact points for various services and issues. Fast and effective service is generally provided if the student can identify the correct service point and if the service is discrete enough to be delivered without crossing departments. Otherwise service can be poor and fragmented.

Many students undertake study in modes which may not require them to attend campus for teaching purposes, or they may be in remote locations or distant to the campus because of research or clinical placement requirements. Students are forced to attend campus to access some key services.

Students complain of 'uni spam' – many messages sent to them from the university in an unplanned and confusing way. Contact with students is sometimes recorded locally, but is not systematically tracked across the university.

Much high quality information is published in print and online, but its poor organization makes it difficult to locate or even be sure that it exists.

Where we are going

Like any other consumer, students desire options for accessing service. This includes the option for face-to-face service as well as quality alternatives, although not all services can be delivered using remote methods.

Many current initiatives, for example the Student Portal and Student Directories, are attempting to organize information for students and deliver it more usefully.

The Shared Services Review, Learning Hubs project and other initiatives associated with the Melbourne Model create an almost unprecedented opportunity to positively reform the way service is provided to students.

Service can be usefully categorized as generic (to all or most students), specialised (to a subset), and customized, and this variable can and should affect considerations about delivery models and mode.

3.1.2   Vision for the Future

Students use the quality service of their choosing

Students are provided with service options as specified below. The University's processes no longer **require** the student to physically attend campus to access the vast majority of services.

Face-to-face service

Students can drop in to a contact centre for face-to-face advice and support. Staff are trained and use support systems that enable them to field and resolve a wide range of requests. Complex issues are forwarded to specialist operational groups for resolution. Appointments can be arranged in advance if desired, for example for course advice.

Online service

Through the Student Portal, students can access information about all key aspects of their University experience in a way that is easy to find and appropriate for them as an audience. All key transactions (e.g. submission of assignments, payment of fees) can be done through the portal. Students can submit specific enquiries resulting in personalised, online responses from staff.

Telephone service

Students can telephone a single contact point for service. Staff are trained and use support systems that enable them to field and resolve a wide range of requests, or identify the appropriate referral point. Complex issues are forwarded to specialist operational groups for resolution.

Coordinated communication

Students receive a well planned and timely flow of information from the University. Careful thought has been given to what information needs to be sent directly to students to prompt some action, and what is available for them to browse at any time. The information they can browse is published in a way that is comprehensive, consistent, easily navigated and understood.

Emerging communication technologies

New and unforseen communication technologies will continue to emerge rapidly and be embraced by our students. Because our messages and communication tools are well planned and systematic, it will be easy to take advantage of new communication technologies where these are desired by students and are useful to the University.

Monitoring, tracking and analysis

The nature and volume of enquiries is systematically monitored to spot problems early and to plan ongoing improvement to our services. In addition, managers have access to data on response times and productivity to enable them to manage their operations day-to-day. Responses to individual requests are stored to help improve future service to individual students and to help resolve any future disputes.

Differentiate service to key groups

The University acknowledges that different student cohorts have different needs. In practice this means we may employ different administrative service models for different cohorts of students. Importantly, differentiation is based on student needs and expectations, rather than on the organisational structure of the university or traditional practices.

Priorities

The priority order for the following goals in the area of Service Delivery is:

1. Students have an improved experience of the University

2. Staff are released from low-value tasks

3. Management has improved information access and information flow

3.2   COURSE AND SUBJECT APPROVAL, AND HANDBOOK

3.2.1   Vision for the Future

Simplified document management for course and subject approvals

Staff can record their proposals for new and changed courses and subjects directly into the student system, right from the start (or other agreed point) of the approval process. As the approval process progresses, proposals are able to be tracked and amended as required.

This in turn has the capacity to significantly improve the timetabling and degree planning / handbook production processes by making course and subject information more accurate and available more quickly and efficiently.

Course approvals will also trigger related processes such as applying for CRICOS registration.

Different support for current students and prospective students

The University recognizes that current students have different information needs to prospective students, and that an all-purpose approach to a Handbook is outmoded.

To support enrolment and re-enrolment, students will use online, personalized degree planning tools that clearly show what major, subject and timetabling options they have in the context of their course requirements. Student-related services, policies and processes are published separately in the online Student Directories.

Prospective student needs will be supported by special-purpose tools and publications that guide them through various course and major options and allow them to explore detail.

3.3   ADMISSIONS AND CREDIT

3.3.1   Context

Where we are now

The University receives around 36,000 discrete applications each year plus many thousands more through VTAC. From these applications, we admit approximately 15,000 new students each year. About 6,000 come through VTAC, 4,000 through the International Admissions Office, with the remaining 5,000 admitted directly by Faculties.

Looking at application turnaround times as a marker for our current admission performance, it is clear that there are large differences between Faculties and between different applicant types. Some are quick, but the worst compare unfavourably with our competitors.

Although web applications exist for some applicant types, paper forms dominate the application process.

Where we are going

The international student market has matured and is now relatively stable and highly competitive. Just to stand still in this area, the University must keep improving. In addition to this, Growing Esteem calls for significant increases over time in local fee-paying students.

Students are now sophisticated consumers with expectations set by some of the best service organizations in the world. The University's direct applicants expect fast, accurate and personalized responses to their application for admission, without being transferred from person to person, and without waiting days or weeks for a response. Major gains will be driven by reform to systems, processes and responsibilities.

3.3.2   Vision for the Future

Differentiate service to key applicant cohorts

Different applicant cohorts have different needs. We may employ different approaches to recruitment and admissions for different groups, for example:

- Continue to refer undergraduate applicants to VTAC for admission processing, and to run direct admission to the University for all other applicants.

- Manage postgraduate recruitment using a 'boutique' approach whereby the focus is on developing relationships between the University and its prospects.

An online, responsive applicant experience

Prospective students use information systems which guide them to the most appropriate course for their needs, identify potential credit for previous studies, and may register their interest or make course enquiries online where they want further detail.

Applicants apply online using an interface that is intuitive and easy to use. This includes scholarship application and credit application where relevant. Applicants can submit supporting documentation for their applications for admission electronically or in hard copy format. International agents are trained to certify and scan documents. The University receives Australian qualification data electronically from other Australian universities so that applicants with these qualifications don't have to submit transcripts.

Applicants receive regular updates on their application via their preferred communication method (including email), and can track the progress of their application online. Selection decisions are communicated to applicants within a specified turnaround time, and offer correspondence includes information about any credit granted. Applicants can also pay any application fee and tuition deposit online and accept or decline their offer online. Documents are verified upon acceptance of offer to reduce the application turnaround time.

These same functions and features are available to agents of international applicants.

The University maintains contact with international students in the period between their acceptance of offer and commencement of study, by delivering information relevant to preparing for their relocation and study.

Streamlined, efficient application processing

To reduce the turnaround time between application and communication of selection decision:

- Process applications online, to eliminate the need to circulate paper files around the University for most applications.

- Apply strict application turnaround time limits for all application cohorts. Applications not processed within agreed limits are escalated to relevant managers.

- Reduce the number of assessors for each application. Reform processes so that experienced administrative selection officers assess the vast majority of coursework applications, by applying strict selection criteria to standard applications and escalating only those which fall outside normal parameters to relevant academic staff.

Initial application assessment focuses on classifying applicants as either eligible or ineligible, to enable ineligible applicants to be removed from further selection processes including scoring for rank list purposes.

The collection of referee reports is handled with efficiency and courtesy.

Converting enquiries to enrolments

Staff identify applicants who do not accept their offer within a specified period to enable further follow up. In particular, high priority applicants (academic high achievers, target equity groups) are tagged to improve conversion of offers to acceptances.

Course coordinators and academic staff are released from application processing tasks and add value by consulting with enquirers and those applicants who haven't yet accepted their offers.

Monitoring, tracking and analysis

Admission managers and selection officers can see at a glance the progress of all applications, and aggregated performance figures such as turnaround times and load against target. Enquirer and applicant information (including reason for decline) is captured to facilitate analysis for planning and marketing purposes.

Priorities

The priority order for the following goals in the area of Admission is:

1. Students have an improved experience of the University

2. Staff are released from low-value tasks

3. Management has improved information access and information flow

3.4 ENROLMENT AND STUDENT TIMETABLING

3.4.1 Context

Where we are now

The University enrols nearly 15,000 new students every year and re-enrols around 30,000. A key component of enrolment is the provision of course and subject advice, allowing students to select subjects and plan their study in an informed way. The majority of this activity currently occurs face to face or using paper forms and printed material, supported by a limited use of online systems. No interactive course planning tool is available online.

Responsibilities for management are split between central and devolved units, fracturing the service provided to students.

Where we are going

To take advantage of interactive degree planning tools and improve service to students, the University needs to explain the rules in a much clearer and cleaner form that we do now. At present, the rules are overly complex, many rules are waived routinely, and many rules are undocumented, residing only in the heads of staff.

The shift to graduate schools separates the student body into two groups – a large body of undergraduates and a number of smaller and specialised 'boutique' postgraduate groups.

3.4.2 Vision for the Future

Online planning tools complement professional career and further study planning

Reform course structures so that the rules are well codified and well documented. Code these structures into the system. Students use online, personalized degree planning tools that clearly show what options they have in the context of their course requirements, and can be sure that the subjects they are choosing will lead to a successful course completion.

Under this vision, it is the student's responsibility to choose from the available options based on their preferences. It is the course adviser's responsibility to add value by focusing on careers counseling and plans for further study, and making a record of this advice to inform future advising sessions with this student, instead of focusing on the technical structure and rules of the course.

Online administration

Every student can undertake all of their enrolment administration on line, e.g. initial enrolment, leave of absence, payment of fees.

Some students might complete it online whilst on campus in a lab, others might do it at home, and students can choose which way they want to complete this.

There may be a small number of exceptions to this model for high value customers (e.g. barristers), students with special needs, and corporate cohorts where the program and schedule is

predetermined, in which case the University employs a 'personal banking' type model to facilitate administrative requirements.

Student timetables

Students have significant work and family commitments that need to be juggled alongside their commitments to study. Assignment of students to classes cannot assume that students are available all day every day for study. Online tools will give students information and control over their individual timetable as they plan their enrolment in each subject.

Knowledge transfer

All new degrees at Melbourne will include a 'knowledge transfer' component requiring all students to undertake at least one activity outside the University. For example, this could include studying abroad, an industry placement, or volunteer work. Organising and tracking these activities will be increasingly important. The activities and learning outcomes are documented to permit their conveyance to prospective employers.

Priorities

The priority order for the following goals in the area of Enrolment and Student Timetabling is:

1. Students have an improved experience of the University

2. Management has improved information access and information flow

3. Staff are released from low-value tasks

3.5   STUDENT FEES

3.5.1   Context

Where we are now

The fee charging and collection of major student fees (tuition and HECS) involves well over $100M per annum collected in over 100,000 payments from about 50,000 sources. Currently, the key tools of this process are the paper invoice, which is printed and sent to all students, and the Australia Post BillPay system. The online invoice is used only as an adjunct to the paper system, and there is no e-payment facility or direct debit. Debt management is relatively crude, with students excluded from study as soon as they have failed to pay an overdue fee. Policy, practice and systems are rule-driven and rigid. Fee rates are usually set too late in the year to properly support recruitment or early enrolment.

Most ancillary student charges are currently not collected through the above system. These include library fines, bookshop purchases, gym membership, transcript fees, student loan repayments, etc.

Where we are going

As the University relies increasingly on private income, it will also rely increasingly on an efficient and effective fee charging and billing system. At the same time, other organizations continue to offer ever more sophisticated online fee services, and this drives up the expectations of our students.

Flexibility will become more important around policy, practice and systems. For example, the ability to pursue more commercial debt management practices such as case-by-case assessment, credit checks and variation to terms of payment.

As they compete for dominance in niche markets of fee-paying students, new Graduate Schools may push for more creative and entrepreneurial approaches to fee charging.

3.5.2   Vision for the Future

Online invoicing and payment

The paper-based invoice may never be replaced completely, but many organizations now routinely give their customers the option of totally online billing. The University will offer students a choice of

paper-based invoice or a link to their online invoice emailed to their nominated email address. In both cases, students will receive notice of an invoice through the student portal.

The online invoice will link to an e-payment system and deliver a receipt upon payment.

Direct debit
Students may elect to have their fees paid by direct debit.

Flexible fee collection practices
Reform the inflexible policies, processes and systems to allow fee collection staff to negotiate a much broader range of payment terms with students. This approach will maximise revenue by increasing students' ability to continue studying.

Introduce escalating sanctions on students who are tardy payers, rather than an all or nothing approach.

Ancillary fees
Collect all well defined and common fees through the central invoicing system, reducing duplication of staff effort and streamlining the student experience.

Fee arrangements and fee management
It is unclear exactly what fee arrangements will be in place for the postgraduate courses offered by the new graduate schools, although some greater degree of flexibility and entrepreneurialism is likely. What is clear is that Commonwealth Government HELP loans require fees to be managed within strict parameters. This may give rise to creative tensions that will need to be resolved as the future direction becomes clearer.

The University simplifies the currently complex fees policy with respect to grandfathering, capping and other mechanisms, for example by adopting the principle that grandfathering will be avoided.

Clarity of advice to students
The combination and interaction of:

- various government assistance schemes,
- instalment payment options
- proliferating census dates, and
- subsidised or sponsored fee payment arrangements involving both the University and external sponsors

mean that providing advice to students on what to pay and when has become much more complicated in recent years. Particularly in relation to invoicing, the Project Team will work with students to find the simplest way to explain their choices, obligations and payment histories.

Lead time on setting fee rates
Fee rates are set by June for the following year. This allows students to plan their enrolment, and allows the University to plan ahead by removing the obstacle around waiting for fees to be approved for the following year.

Priorities
The priority order for the following goals in the area of Student Fees is:

1. Students have an improved experience of the University
2. Staff are released from low-value tasks
3. Management has improved information access and information flow

3.6 RHD STUDENT MANAGEMENT

3.6.1 Context

Where we are now

The University currently supervises over 4,000 research higher degree (RHD) students. Our large research output underpins our reputation, and RHD students contribute to this output.

A diverse and extensive range of scholarships is available to attract and support RHD students.

Policies and processes are highly variable and complex. Frontline resources are provided by academic departments and oversight is split between the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and Faculties, resulting in fragmentation of administrative service to students and supervisors. Shortcomings in Merlin exacerbate the use of sub-systems. All of these aspects combine to establish a reliance on paper-based processes and make both analysis and administrative reform in this area challenging.

Where we are going

The introduction of the Research Quality Framework (RFQ) by the Commonwealth Government is expected to further increase the measurement of various indicators in this area, although at this time the details are not known. The RQF will probably also link financial rewards and penalties to these new indicators. So both for financial and reputational reasons, there will be strong pressures to demonstrate performance against the future indicators.

The combination of reforms around the Curriculum Commission and Shared Services Project provides an opportunity to consolidate and streamline RHD student management.

Discussions about the future RHD study experience are just beginning but early indications are that all RHD students will engage in some form of practical, personal or professional development activity. Options include coursework and other development opportunities. The activities are documented to permit their conveyance to prospective employers. Supervisory panels may provide support and guidance to both supervisors and students.

3.6.2 Vision for the Future

An online, responsive applicant experience

Consistent with the vision for Admissions generally, RHD applicants apply online, facilitating rapid assessment of their application. The application for admission includes application for scholarship where relevant, and allows the applicant to monitor progress of the application.

Streamlined, efficient application processing

Again, consistent with the vision for Admissions generally, reduction in turnaround times is requires:

- Processing applications online, to eliminate the need to circulate paper files around the University for most applications.

- Applying strict application turnaround time limits. Applications not processed within agreed limits are escalated to relevant managers.

- Reduction in the number of assessors for each application. Use the *minimum* number of assessors needed to reach a good decision.

Online candidature

Students can monitor details about their candidature online, e.g. upcoming and achieved milestones, scholarship information, and potentially limited details of their thesis examination.

Supervisors and administrators have easy access to all relevant data about RHD students, including progress data (e.g. candidature consumed, milestones achieved and outstanding) to assist with monitoring progress and scholarship consumption.

Work plans agreed to by the student and their supervisor are stored electronically for progress review discussions.

Through the student portal, students can move seamlessly between administrative support (e.g. time left on candidature, Themis Research) and learning support (e.g. developing a portfolio).

Promoting and monitoring development

Facilitate analysis and monitoring of student engagement and achievement in development activities designed to support the RHD experience, by recording data on this engagement and achievement and by making this data accessible to students and supervisors.

Management information

Accurate and timely data is available to Heads, Deans and Managers to assess workloads and other performance measures associated with RHD students. The information appears as part of an overall picture of the University and its departments, not as a separate and unconnected object.

Thesis examination

Thesis examination processes are tightly monitored against specified timelines, with appropriate escalation for overdue examinations. Correspondence is electronic wherever appropriate. Final theses are lodged in the Library digital repository.

Priorities

The priority order for the following goals in the area of RHD student management is:

1. Management has improved information access and information flow

2. Students have an improved experience of the University

3. Staff are released from low-value tasks

3.7   SCHOLARSHIPS AND PRIZES

3.7.1   Context

Where we are now

Scholarships and prizes are key tools in attracting and retaining the brightest students. The University pays scholarships to over 1,000 undergraduate students and over 2,000 postgraduate students each year. A small number of high-volume scholarships are administered centrally, but the majority of scholarships and prizes are administered by Faculties without any system support. Many of these awards are administered from specific purpose trusts and donations. Relationships with the donors are managed in highly varied ways.

Most scholarships have enrolment and progression requirements. The fracturing of administrative responsibilities across the University makes administration of these requirements difficult and ultimately reduces the quality of service delivered to students. Comprehensive and coherent management information is almost impossible to assemble.

Reflective of this fractured administration, students usually have to apply for a scholarship as a separate exercise to their course application. Students may also need to apply separately for central scholarships and Faculty scholarships. Online application is available for a handful of scholarships, but most administration is paper-based.

Where we are going

Under the Melbourne Model, students will study much more freely across the University, and this will remove any rationale for administering scholarships at a Faculty level. However, some trust deeds are highly prescriptive about the awarding of benefits, and changing these may be a very difficult exercise.

The push for greater community engagement implies a more systematic approach to the management of individuals and organizations who donate to trusts for scholarships and prizes.

The implementation of a new student system and the review of shared services provide an impetus to streamline scholarship administration.

3.7.2   Vision for the Future

Single service point for scholarships

Under direction from appropriate committees, a central scholarships unit administers all scholarships and prizes. Students are able to browse, enquire and apply at a single point.

Relationships with donors

Relationships with donors are managed systematically by the Development Office in conjunction with the scholarships unit and discipline specialists from Faculties and Departments.

Online scholarship application

Expand the online scholarship application functionality to include all scholarship schemes. Provide a facility for students to monitor the progress of their application. Combine the course and scholarship application into a single application.

Increased reporting functionality

Management has access to comprehensive data showing such aspects as popularity, awards and progression of recipients for pipeline purposes.

Priorities

The priority order for the following goals in the area of Scholarships and Prizes management is:

1.   Management has improved information access and information flow

2.   Students have an improved experience of the University

3.   Staff are released from low-value tasks

3.8   ASSESSMENT, EXAMINATIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

3.8.1   Context

Where we are now

The University teaches around 5,000 subjects a year, each of which requires 2 or more assessment components, some of which are exams. Multiplied by the number of students enrolled in these subjects, this means the University is managing between half a million and one million individual assessment items per year.

Assignment submission is mostly paper-based, involving department pigeon holes and 'drop boxes' sometimes supported by sophisticated bar-coded tracking systems.

Some exams are timetabled centrally and others are organized by departments, resulting in information fragmentation for students. Systems for exam scheduling are outdated and unsupported.

Where we are going

The introduction of a learning management system (LMS) provides opportunities to modernize the approach to assessment submission and feedback to students and extend on the direct relationship students already have with their lecturers and tutors.

Quality assurance for results distribution and scaling may move from Faculties to a Board of Undergraduate Studies with the introduction of the Melbourne Model, resulting in a more consistent approach.

3.8.2   Vision for the Future

Online assessment management

Students carry out assessment tasks online and submit the majority of their assignments online, and where they do so, they are provided with a receipt confirming submission. Subject coordinators are easily able to monitor and track which assignments have been submitted online and which remain outstanding, and to communicate with students regarding outstanding work. These exchanges are retained and can be accessed for a period of time afterwards.

In some instances, assessment occurs in the field and is captured using remote devices. Paper-based examinations are gradually replaced by online versions.

Assessors can provide assignment feedback and results online.

Students can apply for and track the progress of special consideration online in a way that's integrated with the assessment submission and feedback mechanisms.

Online, coordinated exam scheduling

Students access comprehensive exam scheduling information for all their exams in one place, regardless of who coordinates them.

All departments have access to a single, modern exam scheduling system.

Priorities

The priority order for the following goals in the area of Assessment and Examinations is:

1. Students have an improved experience of the University

2. Staff are released from low-value tasks

3. Management has improved information access and information flow

3.9   PROGRESSION, UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, COMPLETIONS AND GRADUATIONS

3.9.1   Context

Where we are now

Staff manually identify students making unsatisfactory progress through their course.

The University approves course completion for over 12,000 students per year. Staff manually check student records to assess course completion requirements.

Over 7,000 and students attend graduation ceremonies per year, spread across approximately 30 ceremonies. Graduation ceremonies are staged for students completing undergraduate degrees, masters degrees, and doctoral degrees. Most of these ceremonies are coordinated and produced by a central graduations unit. A few units and campuses continue their tradition of staging their own ceremonies and receive varying levels of assistance from the graduations unit. The ceremonies occur in March for a large number of students completing at the end of Semester 2.

There is a tension between the need to run an efficient, cost-effective event and the need to produce a quality celebration filled with the traditional pomp and ceremony expected by graduands and their guests, and scheduled with sufficient frequency to enable students to graduate directly following course completion.

Where we are going

The advent of interactive degree planning tools will allow students and staff to assess progression and completion requirements as the student progresses through their course. These tools will also make it easier to identify students making unsatisfactory progress and apply sanctions should this be appropriate.

The University's graduands are sophisticated consumers with high expectations of their graduation experience reflecting the significance they place in their educational experience. There is an increasing desire to adopt a more focused approach to ceremonies reflective of the student's distinctive affiliations with a Faculty, campus, course or student cohort and to use the opportunity to strengthen the ties with industry and important external stakeholders. This may evolve into a differentiated approach to ceremony design and production for different student groups.

3.9.2 Vision for the Future

Earlier intervention for students making unsatisfactory progress

Explore options for earlier intervention for students making unsatisfactory progress, which may reduce the number of unsatisfactory progress cases and may have a significantly reduce the number of sanctions and appeals.

Automated course completions

The vast majority of course completions become automated once course structures are reformed and coded in the student system's degree planning tools. Students are identified as 'provisionally complete' in their course before their final semester of study, facilitating earlier planning and preparation for graduation ceremonies. This identification also facilitates the delivery of targeted careers and employment services for students.

Graduation closely follows course completion

Graduation ceremonies occur as soon as possible following course completion.

Differentiate postgraduate and undergraduate graduation ceremony design

The University provides a graduation ceremony event consistent with the nature of the study experience and unique to the aspirations of the particular group, for example:

- Large undergraduate ceremonies reflecting the course 'breadth'. These would permit increased attendance and parental and Faculty involvement. These are not, however, MCG-size crowds.

- Smaller, more focused 'boutique' ceremonies involving opportunities for networking, for postgraduate and non-Parkville-campus student groups.

The graduations unit will continue to play a role in coordinating and providing quality assurance for all ceremonies, even the smaller, 'boutique' ceremonies.

An online, responsive self-service process

Through online self-service, students can:

- accept or decline their offer for an invitation to a ceremony

- book into an alternate ceremony

- arrange tickets for visitors

- hire academic regalia and dress and make all payments

Extend the services delivered

The University provides podcasts of graduation ceremonies to allow friends and family offshore or unable to attend, to view the ceremony and feel part of the experience.

In addition, graduands and their families and friends may:

- purchase memorabilia

- purchase graduation photographs

- contribute to online congratulations year books and similar services

Verification of qualifications available to the public

Members of the public, employers for example, can verify the status of qualifications completed by University of Melbourne graduates.

Priorities

The priority order for the following goals in the area of Completions and Graduations is:

1. Students have an improved experience of the University

2. Staff are released from low-value tasks

3. Management has improved information access and information flow