

## CASE STUDY: CURRICULA STRUCTURES

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*The Issue: Ways in which Arts curricula have been structured or modified*

### Niche degrees

**Murdoch University's** niche degrees are possibly the most resilient as they have been in operation over the last 24 years with little changes having taken place. Murdoch offers a named degree in a structured program and a focused study in a particular area. The programs are structured so that they are all named and pathway degrees but follow either a traditional discipline area or a multidisciplinary course of study.

### Double degrees

**University of Queensland's** response to the problem of linking humanities education to student demands for vocational outcomes has been to establish generous cross-crediting arrangements for dual-degree programs. So the BA/B Education degree only takes 4 years, the BA/B Business 4.25 years, and the BA/Bachelor of Laws 5.75 years – in all cases approximately two years shorter than the two degrees taken separately. This has proved very successful with over 2000 students and a much higher tertiary entrance cut-off and median scores than the BA simple.

### Capstone programs

The **University of Ballarat** has made use of capstone programs in 3<sup>rd</sup> year students participate in an intensive research program. This capstone program is a year long program that provides in-depth research skills. Students are required to draft and conceptualise a project and then complete as a research project. These projects are required to be discipline- based, based on 1 of the units completed in the first semester and one in 2<sup>nd</sup>. The program culminates in a research conference exercise. As part of assessment, students are required to present poster in a conference style setting. The program takes the form of face-to face workshops and seminars that are discipline specific and projects are supported by a supervisor with structured meetings. While not as intense as an honours program, this model encourages interaction and skill development.

**University of New South Wales** offers both gateway and capstone courses as part of the new program design. When designing the program structure, there is a requirement for curriculum designers to provide rationale of how major sequences addressed the teaching-research nexus.

### Compulsory work integrated learning units

**Griffith University** has 20 credit points as a compulsory unit in each year level, called Social Enterprise. The unit provides a “signature experience”, has a different theme each level and concludes with a placement and project on level 3

A major institutional curriculum renewal at **Swinburne University of Technology** is progressing through Swinburne's Curriculum Framework Project. The project is cross-disciplinary in nature, focused on a model for Professional Learning emphasising real world learning experiences within a supportive environment, and is integrated with skills development in order to prepare graduates to make the transition to professional practice. The Swinburne Professional Learning model is based upon a conceptualisation of curriculum as purposeful, coherent, evidence-based and transformative, rather than additive. Curriculum design and implementation encompass the planned learning opportunities offered to learners, together with the experiences they encounter and the skills and expertise they develop when curriculum is implemented, and includes consideration all aspects of the learning environment designed to support learners.

## Pathways Curriculum

The Bachelor of Arts (General Arts) program offered on the **Murdoch University** Rockingham campus to provide students with an opportunity to test the waters to see what discipline areas they are interested in without necessarily expecting graduation from within this program. This program is seen as a pathway to the core programs offered by the university.

**Disclaimer:** The information described above emerged from interviews, discussions and observation of publicly available materials during the BA Scoping Project which commenced in March 2007 and concluded in August 2008. As a result, the practices described in this case study may not reflect current practices or institutional policy. They are a reflection of the understanding at the time the scoping project was in progress.



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