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**CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE – MAJORS, SUB-MAJORS AND STREAMS**

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**Approved by:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor

**Approval date:** 30 August 2006

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**1. Background and context**

This document is one in a set of documents (being developed progressively) that will provide information on UTS approved principles and operational practices in relation to curriculum and course-related matters.

**2. Purpose and scope**

The purpose of this document is to define UTS standard practice in the utilisation of majors and sub majors and to provide guidance to faculties when proposing new or revised courses and course structures.

**3. Definitions and Terminology**

'majors' and 'sub-majors' are groups of subjects in a specified discipline or area of study that form part of a course requirement and satisfy the following conditions:

- (a) the specialisation is one of a number available
- (b) the specialisation is to be shown on the student's transcript
- (c) in a course with both majors and sub-majors, majors have the greater credit points
- (d) in a course with sub-majors only, the sub-major is no more than 24 credit points
- (e) in a course with majors only, the major has at least 24 credit points.

'streams' are any group of subjects that form part of a course requirement that fail to meet one or more of the conditions required for a major or sub-major.

For all three sub-structures (above) there may be a recommended order in which the subjects should be attempted which may be enforced with requisites. Any of the sub-structures may include one or more choices from lists of subjects along with compulsory subjects.

'electives' are choices of subjects which are not part of the core subjects of a course, but which may be undertaken as prescribed by the specific requirements of the course i.e. At UTS electives may be taken from a list prescribed for the specific course or as free electives chosen from all subjects offered across the University.

'CASS' means the UTS Curriculum and Student System.

'ASCED code' means the Australian Standard Classification of Education code.

'UAC' means the Universities Admission Centre (NSW and ACT).

**4. Principles**

- (a) Majors are the preferred way of offering students a choice of specialisation within a broad disciplinary field or area of study. The alternative of having separate course codes and course names for each specialisation should only be used in exceptional circumstances.
- (b) Majors typically consist of between 1/3 and 2/3 of the total credit points of a course and apply only to courses of one year duration (48 credit points) or more. For a Bachelor degree, a 24 credit point specialisation is usually called a sub-major, not a major.

- (c) Majors are most usually components of three or four year bachelor degrees and master's degrees by coursework.
- (d) Majors are not generally used with graduate diplomas as these courses are usually designed and named for a particular specialisation. In a small number of cases where the graduate diploma is generic, then majors may be relevant (e.g. C07074v3 Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies which has 7 possible majors).
- (e) Majors are not used with graduate certificates as these courses do not meet the minimum credit point requirement as defined above (3).
- (f) All majors within the same course should be of the same credit point value.
- (g) All sub-majors within the same course should be of the same credit point value.
- (h) A bachelor degree can have majors and sub-majors; or just majors; or just sub-majors; and can also have sub-majors within a major.
- (i) When a course has majors and/or sub-majors all remaining sub-structures that define the completion requirements of the course should be taken in common by all students admitted to the course, whatever their choice of major and/or sub-major.
- (j) A course may be designed to allow students to choose between undertaking a major and undertaking the course without a designated specialisation. In this case the course structure will contain a stream of the same credit point value as the major with a designation such as 'No specified major'.
- (k) If a course supports sub-majors it should also permit as an alternative that a student undertakes the equivalent number of credit points in the form of electives drawn from a list covering subjects from all specialist areas.
- (l) Where a major is less than 50% of the total credit points for a course provision may be made for students to qualify for two majors. This is permissible only if there are no common subjects between the two majors (e.g. C10026 Bachelor of Business is a 144 credit point degree which supports two 48 credit point majors or a single 48 credit point major and two 24 credit point sub-majors).

## 5. Practical issues

- (a) Majors that contain subjects owned by other faculties need to be signed off by those faculties.
- (b) UAC preference codes can be used to specify particular majors within a single course and thus admission quotas and cut off scores etc for that major.
- (c) Majors and sub-majors are allocated a specific ASCED code on CASS. The University is often required to report on 'specialisation' studies (e.g. how many graduates are expected to graduate majoring in Accountancy) and this is obtained from the ASCED code attached to the major. This 'specialisation' code is also part of the data collection reported to DEST.
- (d) Students should not be required to make a choice of major or sub-major until the enrolment period covering the year during which they will be ready to enrol in the first subject of the major or sub-major. At this time and only at this time, the major or sub-major should be expanded onto the student's study plan. Note also 5(f)

- (e) Where a student has chosen a set of electives that (after the fact) corresponds to the subjects required for a sub-major, the Faculty may add a comment recording that fact to the student's transcript. Majors and sub-majors expanded onto a student's study plan will automatically appear on the academic transcript.
- (f) It is recommended that courses containing majors also include some electives and the recommended minimum elective requirement for a 3 or 4 year Bachelors degree is 24 credit points. By providing electives in this way students can "try out" subjects in more than one major as electives before committing to their final choice of majors. They can also have choice to broaden their field of study.
- (g) A major *can* be included in the award (testamur) title for a course award, however, at the time of approving the course completions for a group of students the faculty will need to select the correct award (testamur) title for the particular specialisation on a student-by-student basis. (NB This option is generally not recommended for courses with large enrolments as it eliminates the possibility of automated processing of course completions.)

Approval of a major as part of an award (testamur) title is a part of the standard nomenclature approval process and initially completed as part of the course approval process. Once approved, the use of a major as part of an award (testamur) title applies to the course as a whole and is not available as an optional requirement on an individual student basis.

- (h) If a major is advertised as being available for commencement in a particular year then it must be possible for a commencing student to complete that major in the normal time to complete the course i.e. subjects must be offered with sufficient frequency and requisites must be such that there is a standard full-time program that students can follow that would lead to completion of the course and major in the number of semesters of study determined by: total course credit points/24.

## **6. Authorities and accountabilities**

Communication of this document: Manager, Academic Programs Office.

Implementation: Associate Deans (Teaching & Learning); Faculty Curriculum Managers

## **7. Specification of related UTS and other relevant documentation**

This document is one in a set of documents being developed in order to provide a single source of authoritative advice on a range of curriculum-related principles, practices and issues.

**8. Approval and Revisions Tables**
**8.1 Approval**

<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Approval date</b>
Professor Peter Booth, Deputy Vice-Chancellor	30 August 2006
<b>Effective date</b>	<b>Review date</b>
30 August 2006	1 September 2008
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	
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N/A	N/A

**8.2 Revision/modification history**

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