

Realising our Potential Implementation Plan Template for the Program Portfolio Review & Renewal Project – Faculty of Sciences

1. BACKGROUND

As part of the *Realising Our Potential* initiative, a comprehensive review of USQ's academic profile was undertaken in 2007. The review was led by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Scholarship, with a dedicated Project Executive Officer, and involved the engagement of external consultants, Phillips KPA. The project examined the current and potential future configuration of the University's academic profile and developed a full set of recommendations. The details were incorporated into a finalised Blueprint in December 2007. The final Blueprint established:

1. the development of a USQ Degree Framework;
2. the establishment of thresholds for program and course viability;
3. a complete detailed review and analysis of all programs into three categories:
 - a. those to continue
 - b. those to discontinue (with timelines)
 - c. those to be reassessed and possibly repackaged; and
4. the identification of areas of study for possible introduction to USQ.

For the purposes of detailed ongoing consultation prior to any decisions being made in relation to the proposals outlined in the Blueprint, each of the five Faculties has been required to provide a draft implementation plan that considers proposed changes to their individual academic profile and the rationale behind these changes.

It is important to note that this is a draft plan to facilitate consultation. No decisions have been made in relation to implementation activities, and no decisions will be made until employees have been consulted with, feedback collated and incorporated into implementation plans, as appropriate.

An email from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to the commencement of consultation on this project was released to all staff Monday 17th March 2008. The consultation period commences the 17th March and concludes the 9th April. Further information in relation to the ROP Project can be found at: www.usq.edu.au/a-rop/default.htm

2. IMPLEMENTATION SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The scope of the Program Portfolio Review & Renewal Project (**Project**) includes all Academic and supporting Technical employees across the five Faculties.

Objectives

The objectives of the Project are to:

- align optimally with the University's mission, the missions of its campuses, its research profile, current and emerging student and employer demand, and market opportunities; and
- provide savings, some of which can be re-invested in the development of the new academic profile.

In order to achieve these aims, the project needs to address both rationalisation of the existing profile of programs and courses, and potential areas for development in the future.

Desired Outcomes

The desired outcomes for the Project are to consolidate our current profile and to be able to fully resource and foster the core programs of the Faculty and, to develop a new and exciting portfolio to align USQ to its mission of professional education.

As part of this Project, the University has undergone a process to rationalise and consolidate its programs and courses. The rationalisation process has left a set of strong and defensible programs but which are themselves a reflection of the existing academic organisational structures.

The project also identified a number of possible areas of opportunity for expansion or development of USQ's academic profile. Work is currently being undertaken to investigate further the possibility of introducing a suite of new and exciting Programs that will offer our students clarity, flexibility in their study and professional career pathways.

Rationale for Change

The recommendations from the rationalisation phase of the Project included to:

- (a) reduce the number of degrees from 353 to 93 (approximately); and,
- (b) to reduce the number of courses by around 751 from the current number of 1592.

A reduction in academic staff is obviously a possibility as a result of budget constraints. However, no decisions about positions have been made and no decisions will be made before the Vice Chancellor makes a final decision in relation to the draft implementation plans on or after 18 April, 2008 and affected individuals have had an opportunity to provide comment and feedback on program rationalisation. The consolidation phase in fact revitalizes the portfolio and delivers opportunities for staff in improved quality in teaching and research.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Internal stakeholders

Academic employees

Corporate Services staff

Student Services staff

Student Body

External stakeholders

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Education Queensland

Accreditation bodies

Unions – these stakeholders have formal representational roles on behalf of employees who are members of a union.

Media – these stakeholders have an interest in reporting on how the implementation of the project may impact upon the social and economic aspects of the communities in which USQ operates.

4. TIMEFRAMES AND RESOURCES

Key milestones/deliverables for completion *(including HR implementation phases and activities)*

- a. Phasing out low enrolment program streams
- b. Introducing new program and program streams to pursue higher enrolments
- c. Staff re-profiling according to shifts in demand and program innovation
- d. Introducing service-oriented technical support organisation.

Timeframes for achieving each milestone/deliverable

- a. Mostly during 2008 with some course teach out beyond 2008.
- b. Major effort completed 2008 and 2009 then standard program and course review and revision.
- c. Substantially completed by July 2008
- d. Completed during 2008

Resources required to achieve milestones/deliverables

- a. The possible use of casual and contract staff to support teach out.
- b. The possible use of casual/contract staff to support development efforts; marketing advice; promotional support
- c. Resources required are in accordance with the HR Change Management Principles and Implementation Framework (support for affected staff; HR advice)
- d. Support for staff development

Monitoring/reporting on achievement of milestones/deliverables

- a. Successful changes with minimal student complaints and other negative reactions.
- b. Indicators of positive response in market assessed against prevailing trends.
- c. Re-profiling to be completed in advance of 2009
- d. Successful service provision under new arrangements

5. CURRENT STAFFING STRUCTURE

Current 'in scope' FTE employee effort for project

Table 5 (a) provides the profile for the Faculty's academic fixed-term and continuing positions up to the current point. The proposal considers only substantive positions. Hence the cross faculty positions identified in the ORMP are not considered in the proposal.

Table 5(a). FoS Staffing Profile Contract and Continuing Positions

		2007 ORMP Oct-06	2008 ORMP Oct-07	Currently Identified Changes to 2008 ORMP Profile as at 29/02/2008		2008 ORMP plus Changes to date
Biological and Physical Sciences	A	3.5	2.00			2.00
	B	4	4.00			4.00
	C	7.75	7.80	-1.0	Resignation	6.80
	D	5.7	3.60			3.60
	E	1	2.00	+0.2	Resignation replaced with 0.2 transition during late 2008	2.20
Total		21.95	19.4			18.6
Mathematics & Computing	A	3	3.00	-2.0	Fixed-term contract expirations	1.00
	B	12	10.50	-0.5	Internal transfer to another Faculty	10.00
	C	13.25	13.00			13.00
	D	3	3.50	-1.0	Resignation	2.50
	E	1	1.00			1.00
Total		32.25	31			27.5
Nursing and Midwifery	A	3	4.42			4.42
	B	9	9			9
	C	6	3.92			3.92
	D	3	4			4
	E	1.1	1	0.5	0.5 externally funded position	1.5
Total		22.1	22.34			22.84
Psychology	A	1	1			1
	B	8.6	10.1	-1.0	Separation 2008	9.1
	C	5	4.6	-1.0	Retirement	3.6
	D	4	4	-1.0	Resignation	3
	E	3	2	1.0	Incumbent returned to substantive position in Faculty	3
Total		21.6	21.7			19.7
Cross Faculty	C	1.5	0.4			0.4
	D	0.5	1.9			1.9
Overall	A	10.5	10.42			8.42
	B	33.6	33.6			32.1
	C	33.5	29.72			27.72
	D	18.2	17			15
	E	6.1	6			7.7
Total		99.9	96.74			90.94

Table 5(b) below summarizes the recent ORMP technical staff profiles

Table 5(b). Technical Staff Profile

HEW	2007 ORMP	2008 ORMP
2	0.93	
3	0.81	1.67
4	1.74	1.00
5	8.01	8.33
6	5.00	4.83
7	2.00	2.00
8	1.00	1.00
9	1.00	0.00
10		4.00
	20.49	19.83

Current broad functions/activities and location of 'in scope' positions

Academic teaching, including development, delivery, assessment, moderation, review and revision, research and scholarships, service to university, profession and community where applicable.

Technical support for the delivery of teaching, the execution of student projects, research training and research.

Current budget allocated to 'in scope' project activities (eg employee costs, operating costs, other costs)

Estimated 2008 Academic (teaching and technical including casual) Salary Budget: \$11,617,355 (28/2/08 estimate)

6. PROPOSED STAFFING STRUCTURE

Proposed future 'in scope' FTE employee effort for project (target)

The proposals outlined below, including all proposed or potential changes in staff numbers, are subject to a detailed consultation and review process being undertaken and considered. Subsequent to consultation any changes are subject to the Vice Chancellor's approval of the draft implementation plan on or after 18 April 2008. No decisions have been made and no decisions will be made until the consultation process is complete and all feedback has been given detailed consideration.

There is no change to the overall structure of the Faculty.

There is a shift in resources within the existing structure to satisfy the University's budgetary requirements, to restore a more acceptable balance between demand and positions across the Faculty's disciplines and to establish a framework for on-going sustainability, responsiveness and ultimately additional growth. The proposed changes result in a potential reduction of 15 FTE academic positions.

The proposed restructuring of the teaching staff profile and the realignment of program offerings requires consideration of the associated technical staff profile. It is proposed that the technical support positions for the "general sciences" are to be reduced by 3.5 FTE positions to align with the proposed changes to the academic structure.

Proposed future broad functions/activities and location of 'in scope' positions

Table 6(b) gives details of the proposed changes.

Table 6b. Proposed Teaching staff position changes

Discipline	Overall position change	Comments
Plant Science	-3	3 academic positions in Plant Science potentially no longer required
Molecular and Cellular Biology.	+2	New broader area to replace Plant Science. Discussions will occur with staff from Plant science in relation to these positions in accordance with the HR Implementation Framework.
Ecology	-1	Potentially no longer required
Ecophysiology	-1	Potentially no longer required
Environmental Management	+1	New position to contribute to re-focus of climatology and sustainability programs
Chemistry	-2	Potentially no longer required
Biological Chemistry (medicinal/clinical)	+1	New position to support service teaching but also to better link into biomedical science areas.
Physics	-2	Two positions are potentially no longer required. Astronomy-based position to be retained.
Biomedical Sciences/Human Biology/Human Physiology	+2	Two new positions to address workload issues and also associated with strategic directions in medical science and allied health
Biological and Physical Sciences	-3	
Computing	-4	No current contract positions to be extended beyond 2008. Proposed that the 1.5 positions at Fraser Coast will be reduced to 0.5
Mathematics	-5	5 academic positions in Mathematics potentially no longer required
Statistics	-3	3 academic positions in Statistics potentially no longer required
Mathematics and Computing	-12	

Nursing and Midwifery	+2	To address workload issues and to support new strategic initiatives.
Total Nursing and Midwifery	+2	
Psychology	0	Resignations and pre-RoP separation will reduce staffing by 2 from RoP census staffing profile.
Total Psychology	0	
Total Faculty	-13	-15 if 2 in Psychology included

Table 6(c) details the proposed changes in the Technical staff profile. Appendix 1, Figure 1, shows the restructured profile within the revised technical staff organisational structure. The positions with the dashed border are the only ones affected by the proposed changes. These are the general sciences technical support positions.

Table 6(c). Technical Staff Profile

HEW	2008 ORMP	Target number of positions
2		0
3	1.67	1
4	1.00	
5	8.33	9
6	4.83	3
7	2.00	1
8	1.00	2
9	0.00	
10	1.00	1
	19.83	17

Proposed budgetary savings (eg employee costs, operating costs, other costs)

There may be no direct savings in 2008 due to the proposed transfer of any salary savings to the funding for staffing transitions. During the transition period and extending into the duration of teach out, there may be an increase in casual/contract teaching expenditure but this should not be substantial relative to the on-going salary savings.

In 2009, if the indicated changes are achieved, the budget saving will be of the order of \$1.5 million assuming the pay rates applicable January 1, 2009.

Interdependencies of positions in this structure with other RoP project outcomes

Through these position changes, the Faculty will have addressed the budgetary constraints imposed on it by the University. It therefore expects and proposes minimal further losses to be required of its resources. *The Faculty expects that any savings additional to the target, such as indicated by an academic salary margin less than the target 33%, will be used for teaching and technical staff to support its strategic directions in allied health, service teaching and professional technical education.*

7. HR TRANSITION PROCESSES

Refer to the Human Resources Change Management Guiding Principles and HR Implementation Framework. For specific Faculty transitions the following processes may occur:

1. Release of academic plan for consultation
2. Review consultative feedback and consider in finalising implementation plan.
3. Finalise the implementation plan including structure, programs, positions required in relation to future requirements and submit for approval.
4. Consistent with agreed HR Implementation and Transition Processes, commence discussions and consultation with any affected employees.

8. IMPACTS ON WORK ALLOCATIONS AND BUSINESS AS USUAL

Impact on employee workloads during implementation

It is not anticipated that any of the proposed changes will contribute to significant changes in workload. Activities such as the development of new programs, program streams and courses are academic 'business as usual' workload.

'Business as usual' activities to continue during implementation

'Business as usual' will continue during the implementation phase. Casual or contract staff will be used to cover any contingencies.

9. COMMUNICATION* and EMPLOYEE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Internal stakeholder consultation activities

- a. Departmental meetings and other meetings with internal groups such as technical staff during the consultation period.
- b. Faculty Assembly, Faculty Board
- c. Dean available at scheduled times for appointments with individuals and groups.
- d. Appointments by phone available for staff at other campuses.
- e. Dean to visit the other campus for "in person" consultation
- f. Written communication via email, Faculty newsletter as required

External stakeholder consultation activities

Communication about strategic initiatives via a range of events at which the Faculty interacts with schools, teachers and the general public.

Avenues for providing feedback and responding to feedback

Internal – avenues arising from the range of consultation activities indicated above.
RoP feedback via USQ email.

An alternative option for giving and receiving feedback will be established where there are sensitivities associated with the individuals involved or the issues being discussed.

ROP website

Utilise existing channels (e.g. Faculty Assembly, Faculty Board meetings).

Identification of training, development and support needs

Staff will be reminded of the various support services offered by Human Resources and encouraged to access these.

Other support will be coordinated through USQ HR as needed

**It is important that extensive consultation occurs with employees during the implementation phase of the Project. No decisions have been made in relation to implementation activities, and no decisions will be made until employees have been consulted with, feedback collated and incorporated into implementation plans, as appropriate.*

10. EVALUATION

Methodology for evaluating outcomes

- Timely completion of change process.
- Budget situation
- Staffing situation – retention of staff and successful attraction of new staff
- Multi-faceted indications of positive staff morale.
- Stabilisation of student numbers
- On-going invitation to engage with external stakeholders especially schools, professions, community and industry because this will indicate the retention of a positive perception and reputation.

DRAFT - Appendix 1

Figure 1. Proposed restructured technical staff profile organisational chart

