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Subject Guides  
for Higher Education

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at

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RMIT

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*A Handbook*

**RMIT**  
UNIVERSITY

*Teaching & Learning Strategy Committee*

March 1999

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## *Preface*

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Student-centred learning is a key theme of the RMIT Teaching and Learning Strategy. It represents a shift of focus from our activities as teachers to the experiences of our students and how their experiences shape their learning. Student-centredness means being attentive to the learning goals, activities, tasks, resources and environment of students. It means asking questions like: how do students make sense of this setting? What are they aiming to learn? What do they do when they strive to learn?

The subject guide potentially plays a key role preparing students for learning. Preparing a subject guide can help us orientate our teaching to the students' learning experiences. Once prepared, the guide can encourage colleagues teaching in the subject to adopt a student-centred orientation.

It is with these goals in mind that the RMIT Subject Guide Proforma and this handbook have been prepared. They present a framework, explanations, suggestions and examples for helping all course and teaching teams in both sectors prepare subject guides.

We welcome suggestions for improving the Proforma and handbook. If you have comments or examples of student-centred subject guides you would like to share please contact EPI Group on 9925 3733.

**Professor Helen Praetz**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor  
(Teaching and Learning)

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## *Acknowledgements*

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This handbook was conceived and written by the Committee of Directors of Teaching Quality with the support of the EPI Group. It is seen as a key initiative in supporting student-centred learning at this university.

Contributors include Robyn Lines, Gary Hough, Ralph Green, Monica Engelhard, Derek Henry, Marie Sierra, Paul Kennedy, Malcolm McCormick, Ern Reeders, Grace Lynch and John Milton.

Particular thanks must go to Gary Hough and Ralph Green who provided the sample subject guides for the first edition.

Thanks go to Grace Lynch who has ensured this handbook has consistency and coherence. Thanks, too to Denise Jacobs for the desktop publishing.

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## *Purpose*

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This handbook will help all course teams prepare subject guides to conform with the RMIT policy and proforma. The experiences of students and teachers at this university as well as research on student learning have shaped the structure of the subject guide and the advice in this handbook. It reflects and embeds current RMIT policy and strategy, notably the Teaching and Learning Strategy. This initiative of the Committee of Directors of Teaching Quality recognises the critical role subject guides play in the development, communication and interpretation in practice of curriculum. The handbook has been endorsed by the Teaching and Learning Strategy Committee.

SECTION 1 describes the purposes of subject guides with suggestions addressing a range of issues which will influence student learning and their enjoyment of the subject.

SECTION 2 includes the RMIT subject guide proforma with explanations of key parts.

SECTION 3 notes assistance available to your course team. Some useful references are included.

SECTION 4 presents two examples of subject guides with commentary pointing out key features and suggesting improvements.

An electronic version of this document – including all updates – is located on the Course Information Data Warehouse and can be accessed through the EPI web site.

A list of amendments appears on page (iv). These guidelines originally published in March 1998.

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## *List of Principal Amendments*

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Original: March 1998

<i>Date</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
March 1999	2: Writing Subject Guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amendment of subject guide proforma in line with Academic Board decision of December 1998.</li><li>• Provision for augmentation of this proforma in faculties.</li><li>• Additional advice on assessment.</li><li>• Course Information Data Warehouse (CIDW) guidelines.</li></ul>
	3: Further Help and References	Updated
	4: Examples and Commentary	Both examples have been updated to conform to the new proforma.

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## SUBJECT GUIDE HANDBOOK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AT RMIT

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**This document is available on the web through the  
Course Information Data Warehouse [www.cidw.rmit.edu.au](http://www.cidw.rmit.edu.au)  
or the University Teaching and Learning Strategy web site  
[www.teaching.rmit.edu.au](http://www.teaching.rmit.edu.au)**

## SECTION 1: USING SUBJECT GUIDES FOR COURSE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT: IDEAS FOR COURSE TEAMS

Subject guides are a very important way of communicating with students (see Writing Subject Guides chapter). They are also, however, an extremely important tool for individual staff and course teams in developing and improving courses and the teaching and learning in each subject of a course.

Preparing the learning outcomes, learning experiences, assessment methods and criteria is a process which helps to collectively clarify the key purposes of a course and the subjects within it.

Subject guides in all subjects should be shared between and “owned” by the whole course team.

The subject guides, once accepted by teachers and students in each subject, become points of reference for subject evaluation, review and improvement. Review processes require a clear understanding and explicit statement about what we aim to achieve in terms of student learning. Carefully developed subject guides are also useful when seeking contributions to course development from Course Advisory Committees, academic peers in other universities or the profession more broadly.

Finally, subject guides serve as security, protecting the interests of both students and staff in their different but joint endeavour to promote learning.

This document canvasses some important issues for course team operation with regards to subject guides and suggests some ideas for your consideration in using the new proforma to effect real improvements in your courses.

It is not intended as a comprehensive document. Many books have been written on each aspect of teaching and learning outlined (see Section 3: Further Help and References). It is intended as a practical tool for getting started (or keeping going) on the task of reviewing current teaching and improving practice.

## IDEAS FOR COURSE TEAMS

It is important that the development of individual subject guides be well integrated into course team practices. The course team needs to consider the course as a whole and design an educational experience for students which embodies clear relationships between subjects, appropriate progression from one level to another, clear and balanced assessment tasks and achievable workloads (for staff and students). Teams need to develop explicit understanding of what the course sets out to achieve in terms of student learning (discipline knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes) and the vehicles through which this learning can be achieved. This course design needs to be evaluated, reviewed and further developed in an iterative process.

Courses operate in different ways depending on size, level of award, staff, etc. Some common course practices are outlined below. These are techniques and tools which have been developed by different course teams within the University as a means of approaching what can seem like a large and unmanageable task.

### Overview

Students experience a course as a whole. As staff, how much do you actually know about all of the subjects your students study? Do you know in some detail what students are doing and learning in the subjects which precede and follow on from yours? This also applies to studies undertaken prior to RMIT, e.g., VCE, studies in other countries, VET courses at other institutes, etc. Without a clear understanding of the knowledge and experiences students bring to your course as well as the current content and teaching practices in your program seen from the student's perspective, it is difficult to think about courses in a holistic or innovative way.

### *Ideas and Activities*

Some courses at RMIT have an annual teaching day for staff. On these days staff members present to other staff a brief overview of what their subject is about, what they expect students to learn and how they go about it. About ten minutes per subject is enough, followed by discussion. This is an easy and enjoyable way of finding out what is currently going on.

Subject presentation days for students can also be useful. These can be conducted at course level or across a number of courses where students are required to make informed subject selections from a range of options. Once again, about 10 minutes is enough time per presentation including time for students to ask questions. These days are as valuable for staff as they are helpful to students. They also reduce enrolment variations later in the semester.

Another useful approach is to involve staff members in interviewing one other staff member teaching in the course with the aim of recording the desired learning outcomes for his or her subject. This is more difficult than it sounds. Academics are often good at talking about what they do and what students do, but have more difficulty in articulating what it is they want students to learn. Good ideas often emerge through discussion. The combined results can be discussed by the whole course team and mapped in many ways to produce an overall matrix for the course.

## **Workload**

Research into teaching and learning consistently shows that students who are overloaded with work adopt a surface approach - that is, they stop trying to understand and connect their learning to their experience and just try to get through. (A similar thing can be said of staff). Most academics have had the experience of a poorly attended class because students are flat out working on a submission for someone else due the next day. In our own enthusiasm for our subject we must avoid the trap of asking just a bit too much of our students. The credit point value of the subject in HE courses should provide a guide as to the appropriate workload.

### ***Ideas and Activities***

When preparing subject guides it is helpful to work through the study guide and jot down what the student will need to do between classes to be prepared for the next session. Estimate as carefully as possible how long you think each task will take. Remember, it will generally take students much longer than it would take you. Is the workload achievable in the designated non contact time or within the nominal duration of the module? Is the workload spread throughout the semester evenly or are there very heavy periods? Can you rethink the planning of the subject to achieve the desired learning outcomes with less work or more evenly spread?

The workload for each semester level for all the subjects a student takes can be considered by all staff teaching at that level. Are there ways of reducing workload by assessing the same assignment in more than one subject for different things? Are we building in learning to help students manage their own workload? Are submission dates staggered throughout the semester?

## **Assessment**

How and what we choose to assess sends the strongest message to students with regard to what the subject is really about. This will then strongly influence their approaches to learning in the subject. Is it possible to complete the subject by just memorising the content? If we really want students to develop higher order abilities like critical analysis are we designing assessments to test this learning? Is there a range of assessment tasks within and across subjects which enable students to reveal the full breadth of their learning? Are we building into our courses opportunities for students to gain all the abilities they need to be successful in assessment? Are we giving clear criteria regarding the basis upon which we will make judgements when grading work? Are we building in opportunities for useful feedback during the course?

### ***Ideas and Activities***

A useful first activity can be to draw up a matrix of assessment submission dates for all subjects a student will study in a semester. Different symbols can be used for minor assessments, major project assessments and exams, etc. This matrix will reveal at a glance what we are asking students to achieve, not only in terms of timing but also the range of assessment types. The course team, or relevant section of it, then has a basis for commencing a discussion and making changes to improve assessment. In many VET courses and particularly training packages, assessment tasks and standards will be set for the teacher within the course documentation.

It is important to realize that assessment can cover a very wide range of activities and is not confined to written work.

Preparing assessment tasks for students is difficult. Many academics have experienced receiving work in response to what seemed a clear brief and being surprised by some students' interpretation. There are opportunities in this area for peer review. It is helpful to ask another staff member to read your subject guide and assignment sheets and give you feedback on the clarity and appropriateness of your proposed assessment. Staff teaching outside your discipline area may be particularly helpful as they can approach your subject with no preconceptions and potentially from a student perspective.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The development and evaluation of learning outcomes is central to effective improvement of teaching and learning. It is necessary to have a clear view of the course aims and objectives while considering learning outcomes of a particular subject. A dialectical process which moves between the overall course aims (and learning practices) and the subject would be most helpful – reviewing what teams are currently doing can provide a valuable basis for discussion about revealed gaps and opportunities for change. A course team should evaluate learning outcomes for each subject on an annual basis against the criteria of course intentions, perceived student response and effectiveness of learning.

### ***Ideas and Activities***

Learning outcomes of a subject and course should be documented to enable all staff and students to clearly understand the expectations of the course. Clearly written learning outcomes are the most effective guide to establishing assessment tasks, methodologies and criteria. The availability of clearly described learning outcomes is an effective guide for a course team undertaking the evaluation of a subject or course.

Learning outcomes can be related to:

- discipline knowledge and skills,
- more generic abilities and attributes (based on the University's, Faculty's and Course's graduate attribute profile).

A matrix could be a helpful foundation for further development by the course team.

### **Student Centredness**

The University and Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategies emphasise student centredness as a desired attribute of all teaching at RMIT. There is a wide range of literature concerning student centred approaches which cannot be summarised here. At its simplest level, a student centred approach asks staff to consider their teaching as an interaction between staff and students where both parties listen, learn and are enriched through the experience. It can be contrasted to an information transmission approach where the staff member talks and students take notes.

### ***Ideas and Activities***

A mapping approach can be useful, with the focus on the way the subject is taught. With subjects on one axis and major teaching mode on the other it can quickly be established what mix of learning experiences are provided within the subject such as:

- lectures,
- tutorials,
- laboratories,
- team project work,
- student led discussions,
- computer based learning,
- workplace learning,
- research.

Course teams may then address whether the planned student learning experiences are the most appropriate ways to foster the desired learning outcomes.

### **Evaluation**

If we are to improve, we need feedback on how we are doing. Students and employers are just two important sources of information to assist us assess our teaching. Advice on evaluations can be found in *Evaluation Manual* (Martin, 1995). See the reference list in Section 3.

### ***Ideas and Activities***

Course teams should consider the following activities as ways of obtaining information:

- focussed discussions with student groups,
- student surveys, conducted at various points during the subject,
- analysis of students' performance on assessment,
- study of student completion rates,
- employer feedback gathered by consultation and questionnaire,
- peer feedback,
- research into similar subjects conducted at other institutions,
- formal graduate outcome surveys. (A number of these are being conducted by bodies within RMIT and externally. The EPI group can provide further information.)

A number of course teams at RMIT have found the following process helpful:

- Subject guides are prepared by staff in consultation with the course team.
- Throughout the delivery of the subject, information is sought using a variety of means (above) and collated.
- The responsible staff member prepares a short evaluation report analysing the information gathered throughout the delivery and outlines draft recommendations for subject improvement.
- The whole course team considers all evaluation reports and decides on actions.

- A new subject guide is prepared incorporating necessary changes. It is accompanied by a short report explaining the changes and their rationale.
- All documents are entered in the course log and the staff member's teaching portfolio.

It is important, whenever possible, to advise all those who gave you feedback on how you have used it to improve the subject.

### **Who writes the Subject Guides?**

The subject guide should be written by a person or persons with access to all available information, in consultation with the course team and for review by the whole course team. In the majority of cases the most appropriate person will be a full time staff member with some years of experience in teaching that subject. A number of strategies are outlined below for including new staff and sessional staff in this development process.

#### ***Ideas and Activities***

##### ***New Staff***

The course log is a useful starting point for a new staff member. He or she can read through the series of documents in the log – subject guide, evaluation report, new subject guide and report on changes – to gain a clear idea of previous teaching approaches in the subject.

Information booklets for new staff can be helpful in explaining the role and importance of subject guides and how they fit into broader University practices such as student progress counselling and appeals against results.

Nothing, however, is as effective as individual support. Some course teams have found mentor relationships to be valuable. An experienced staff member may be asked, as part of his or her annual work plan, to work closely with the new team member to discuss issues of teaching and learning and help construct the new subject guide.

##### ***Sessional Staff***

Many courses employ a significant number of sessional staff who bring unique professional abilities and experience to the program. Sessional staff are generally only paid for their contact time and may not have a very clear idea of the course structure and content outside their own subject area.

Sessional staff can be invited (and paid) to attend teaching presentation days where they can develop understanding of how their subject links to the student's overall learning experience.

Some teams have found concept mapping sessions of value. In these sessions all the major features of a course are established and represented visually and the links and interconnections drawn out. By participating in this activity, sessional staff achieve a better understanding of the course than by just looking at the same information in a diagram. It also gives them the opportunity to contribute ideas for improvement. All that is needed is a white board and marker.

Many course teams are structured so that an experienced full time staff member co-ordinates a number of sessional staff working in an area of the course. A couple of approaches can be used to ensure the development of good subject guides.

The co-ordinator with the course team may develop the first sections of the guide spelling out the needed learning outcomes and general description. This can be discussed with the sessional staff member and modified or developed in response to the discussion. The sessional staff member can then prepare the study guide outlining the semester's events, activities and process.

Alternatively, the subject guide may be developed collaboratively between co-ordinator and sessional staff member with the co-ordinator taking responsibility for writing the subject guide.

There is a resource issue. Course teams may need to consider the approach they wish to use and allocate funds to allow sessional staff to participate in adequate preparatory sessions, attend occasional workshops on such things as evaluation, and participate in review meetings with a co-ordinator.

### **Documentation**

Specific documentation for individual subject guides will be covered in the next section. The kinds of activities outlined in this document are all part of a quality improvement process and as such would be included in the course log. Such entries might include the mapping matrices, minutes of meetings on issues such as assessment or attribute development. An annual overall review document would be included with a report on changes to be made in response to the review. Documentation does not have to be elaborate, it can be generated during the activities outlined and represents an aspect of the real improvement work of the course team.

## SECTION 2: WRITING SUBJECT GUIDES

Subject guides are a way of documenting your experience, knowledge, understanding, approach and intentions in teaching a subject area *and* communicating this to students. You should reflect, in ways which focus on students' activities and learning outcomes, your consideration of what is important in the subject area and the best ways of learning, within the framework of the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

**The main audience of the Subject Guide is the students enrolled in the subject**, although there are other audiences (people teaching in the course, Course Advisory Committee, etc). It is important to keep this in mind as the language and structure of the document should suit your audience and the ways you plan to interact with students. It can range in approach from a more formal style to one that is conversational. You should ensure that you use gender inclusive language and consider students from a non-English speaking background. A key tenet of the RMIT Teaching and Learning Strategy is student-centredness, and the subject guide should embody and communicate this.

The Subject Guide must be handed out and discussed with students before or in the first scheduled class. It is an important tool for students and staff for a number of reasons:

- It helps the students understand how the subject contributes to their achievement of the overall course goals and to appreciate how their learning relates to professional practice.
- It helps students become aware of how the subject builds on what they have previously learned and provides a foundation for future learning.
- It provides a framework for students to understand how the learning will occur within the subject.
- It describes what students can expect to have learned upon completion of the subject.
- It provides a basis for planning their learning activities for the semester. It provides a degree of certainty of process and serves as the basis for discussions amongst students and teachers to ensure the program has maximum effect for all participants.

### Teaching and Learning Strategy

At the level of the University, the Faculty and the Course, there are explicit Teaching and Learning Strategies, which embody thinking about priorities in teaching and learning. As subjects are developed you should consider how the subject responds to key areas of your strategy. This should be implicit rather than explicit. You do NOT have to write that specific aspects of the subject relate to specific points in the Faculty's Teaching and Learning Strategy however you should be able to demonstrate their inclusion where appropriate. For example: Is there a student centred learning process? Is there an international focus? In what ways does the learning process of the subject facilitate the development of RMIT's graduate attributes?

**For staff**, the subject guide becomes a powerful tool for planning and managing learning. The subject guide should not be written in isolation from your colleagues. It should relate to the other relevant areas of the course, and you should look at creative ways to integrate your subject with other subjects. (*Refer back to Section 1.*)

## SUBJECT GUIDE PROFORMA

**The subject guide must contain the information outlined below.** Faculties, Departments/Schools may augment this proforma by including additional information subject to approval processes (refer to the Responsibilities and Processes section below). Contact your Course Leader, Head of Department/School or Faculty Director of Teaching Quality, for further information.

The **header** to the document should include the Faculty(s) the subject is offered within, the University title (RMIT) and the site at which the subject is offered (City, Bundoora East and Bundoora West, if relevant) and the words Subject Guide.

### SUBJECT GUIDE PROFORMA

#### A. Subject Identification

1. Faculty;
2. Department/School;
3. Subject code & title;
4. Year and semester offered;
5. Staff member(s) name – contact details & consultation times (also details of tutor(s) and technician(s) where appropriate);
6. Duration & mode of delivery;
7. Credit points;
8. Contact hours;
9. Non-contact hours;
10. Pre-requisites, co-requisites and post-requisites.

#### B. Subject Description

An overall description of the subject and where it fits into the course of study. This should relate to and incorporate the relevant parts of the RMIT Teaching and Learning Strategy, eg vocational focus, graduate attributes, internationalisation, environmental literacy, access and equity.

#### C. Objectives / Learning Outcomes

The objectives are to be expressed as student learning outcomes. They should be limited to the subject description (above) and be keyed to graduate attributes. They can include links to staff development (eg to research or new techniques).

#### D. Planned Student Learning Experiences

This outlines how the learning will occur, what activities and experiences students will have to facilitate learning. Roles and responsibilities of students could be included. It should also include review and evaluation processes for the subject and the students' role in them.

#### E. Assessment

1. Assessment tasks and the percentage value of each task;
2. Assessment timeline (eg beginning, middle or end of subject);
3. Assessment submission dates, dates when students' work will normally be returned and feedback mechanisms;
4. Details of any negotiated assessment (if negotiation is a preferred teaching method);
5. Gradings available or competency achieved, including assessment criteria and lecturer's expectation;
6. Plagiarism statement;
7. Procedures for submission of assessable work including penalties for failure to submit or late submission;
8. Procedure for making variations to assessment tasks described.

#### F. Study Program

This should give an outline of the key events in the study of the subject. It may provide advice on preparatory work, references and topics. This can be presented in the mode which best suits the course team and the lecturer. A timetable could be included here.

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## Notes on Specific Sections of the Subject Guide:

### A. Subject Identification

Following the order as outlined in the proforma, give all the relevant details for the subject.

### B. Subject Description

An overall description of the subject and where it fits into the course of study. This should relate to and incorporate the relevant parts of the RMIT Teaching and Learning Strategy, e.g. vocational focus, graduate attributes, internationalism, sustainability, access and equity. Students should also understand the relationship of the subject to the overall course goals. They should know how the subject fits in with concurrent subjects, builds on previous subjects and leads them on towards forthcoming subjects (particularly where themes and issues are built on and extended in subsequent subjects). Connections to other modules or subjects should be highlighted here.

### C. Objectives / Learning Outcomes

The objectives of a subject help the student appreciate what the subject is about, the type and form of learning a student can expect to experience, and how learning in the subject contributes to the aims of the course. The objectives help provide a framework for students to engage with the subject.

The objectives should be expressed as student learning outcomes. For the majority of VET teachers these learning outcomes will be specified in your course documentation. All learning outcomes need to be linked to the Subject Description (above) and be related to graduate attributes.

In writing the learning outcomes, try to be clear about what you really want students to achieve in the subject in terms of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Go beyond description of the subject content and consider the attributes you want the student to gain, e.g., team-work skills, communication skills, analytical and critical thinking abilities.

In certain areas you may be able to provide some flexibility for students. Some outcomes are not negotiable since they are tied to industry needs, professional association requirements, educational progression as prerequisites, or graduate attributes, and are considered to be core or compulsory outcomes. Other outcomes may be classed negotiable, depending on students' needs, career paths, and goals. This can be an invaluable way for them to engage with the subject guide.

When evaluating the teaching and learning experience and the subject you should endeavour to use processes and measures which show how we are meeting the objectives that are set with the students.

## D. Planned Student Learning Experiences

This section should clearly describe how the learning will occur. It describes the various activities students will undertake. What will the students be *doing*? Are there opportunities to test the effectiveness of teaching and modify approaches? This section should demonstrate a student centred approach to teaching and learning as described in the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The ultimate test of the effectiveness of teaching is whether it has helped students to learn.

The planned learning experiences should demonstrate how teaching staff at all levels listen to students and learn from them; use a variety of teaching strategies carefully chosen to facilitate intended learning outcomes; continually improve professional practice through reflection, discussion and innovation; actively search for new ways to help students learn; and actively involve students in learning through methods such as case studies, discussion, group projects and problem-solving.

## E. Assessment

An adequate assessment statement needs to address the following areas:

1. Assessment tasks and percentage value of each task (include length of exams);
2. Assessment timeline (eg beginning, middle or end of subject);
3. Assessment submission dates, dates when students' work will normally be returned and feedback mechanisms;
4. Details of any negotiated assessment tasks (if negotiation is a preferred teaching method). You may consider negotiating assessment tasks with students particularly if it helps further the planned student learning experience;
5. Gradings available or competency achieved including assessment criteria and lecturer's expectations for all tasks: Are you looking for different skills and knowledge from each piece?
6. Plagiarism statement. You should refer to your faculty's regulation which will be accessible to students (possibly in Department/School handbook for new students);
7. Procedures for submission of work including penalties for failure to submit or late submissions (see Faculty or Course regulations);
8. Procedure for making variations to assessment tasks described. This should state that assessment tasks may be varied with the documented consent of seventy percent of students enrolled in the subject and approval of Head of Department/School. (Enrolled students will have received notice in writing of the proposed change: refer to University Regulation 5.4.1 at the web address in Further Help and Reference).

The assessment methods and criteria convey powerful messages to students about what learning outcomes are valued in this subject. Students are likely to align their approach to learning to what they see is being assessed. It is fundamental for effective learning to ensure that the assessment methods and criteria clearly address the planned student learning experiences and objectives.

You should ask yourself:

- Which of the stated learning outcomes does this task assess?
- Does this assessment help further the learning experience and in what ways?

- Am I clear about my expectations of the students?
- Have I clearly related my expectations to the students?
- Have the students had an opportunity to negotiate and clarify expectations?

Students do many subjects in a semester and may become overloaded, therefore their total workload must be taken into account when setting tasks and timelines in consultation with your course team.

Staff should also be aware that the Academic Board and Board of Technical Studies have recently approved a change to the RMIT grading for undergraduate degree subjects. This is in response to a recommendation from the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) to have all universities in line with the one national classification. It also optimises RMIT's graduate opportunities in a national and international market by giving employers a comparable set of grades. RMIT students will compete equally for employment.

The new classification is:

High Distinction	80 - 100	HD
Distinction	70 - 79	DI
Credit	60 - 69	CR
Pass	50 - 59	PA

## **E. Study Program**

This should give an outline of the key areas of study in the subject. It may provide advice on preparatory work, references and key events. This can be presented in the mode which best suits the course team and the lecturer.

It may list topic areas week by week or by modules.

This is a very important part of the subject guide for students. It should give them a clear idea of what the subject is about and how it will be conducted, linking very closely with your planned student learning outcomes and your objectives. It can be used to clarify what you as the teacher will do and what the student's role is in terms of preparatory reading, student presentations, exercises to be conducted in class, discussions, etc.

For staff, the study program can be a tool for teachers to monitor progression through the subject, so that appropriate changes can be made when the subject is taught in subsequent semesters (either by the teacher or someone else).

Above all, study programs should be seen as flexible tools for negotiation with the students. Teaching programs can develop and change during the subject in response to feedback from students, new opportunities, judgement of how learning is occurring and topical events. If from the onset you make it clear to students that this is a guide, it is then easy to modify the program as you go to better achieve the student learning outcomes.

### **A final suggestion:**

Despite the amount of material that needs to be covered, Subject guides should always be as brief and accessible as possible. Staff may need to revise and consolidate their subject guides and not add substantial amounts of new information or create extra work.

## SUBJECT GUIDES AND THE CIDW – RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCESSES

The RMIT Course Information Data Warehouse (CIDW) contains details of RMIT courses and subjects for students, staff, prospective students and other stakeholders.

Staff also use the CIDW to compile and edit subject guides from <http://www.cidw.rmit.edu.au>

The CIDW incorporates information from the Masterfile – the official corporate database of approved curricula of all RMIT awards. It includes approved subject curricula.

The following responsibilities and processes relating to the subject guide and CIDW apply to the higher education sector only. Processes to apply in the vocational education and training sector are being developed.

1. The Head of Department/School or Course Leader is responsible for ensuring that the information relating to subjects in the CIDW is correct and up-to-date. This responsibility may be delegated. The CIDW records the delegation for each subject.
2. Subject guides are produced automatically from the CIDW and are available for students from <http://www.cidw.rmit.edu.au/subjectguides/>
3. Faculties may augment the standard subject guide by the inclusion of additional required information as approved by the relevant Faculty Board. The Faculty Executive Officer or approved delegate is responsible for ensuring that the faculty system report used to generate the Faculty Subject Guide is approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).
4. Departments/Schools may further augment the Subject Guide and the Head of Department/School is responsible for ensuring that the system report used to generate the Department/School Subject Guide is approved by the Faculty Executive Officer who is responsible for ensuring its compliance with Faculty Board requirements.
5. The Head of Department/School or Course Leader is responsible for ensuring that students have access to subject guides in printed or electronic form, which were produced using the approved report from the CIDW prior to commencement of classes.

If you are given the task of preparing a subject guide for the first time:

1. The Course Leader or Head of Department/School will arrange for you to have editing rights of access to the subject on the CIDW as well as for instruction on its use (a training session may be arranged).
2. Contact your Faculty Director of Teaching Quality for a copy of your Faculty's course and subject review and improvement guidelines for flexible learning.
3. You edit such parts of the subject details as provided for by the CIDW interface. Your identification details and the date are recorded.

Contact your Course Leader, Head of Department/School or Faculty Director of Teaching Quality for further information.

## SECTION 3: FURTHER HELP AND REFERENCES

### A. Faculty DoTQ

You can get help preparing subject guides from your Faculty Director of Teaching Quality. Your DoTQ will also be able to suggest experienced staff who can share their experiences and advice. They can also provide you with a copy of the RMIT Teaching and Learning Strategy, the Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategy Implementation Plan and the Course and Subject Review and Improvement Guidelines.

### B. EPI Group

In addition, EPI Group staff are available to assist academics and teachers design their subjects and prepare subject guides. It can supply references which describe different methods of teaching/ planned student learning experiences. Finally, EPI can suggest experienced staff across the university. Contact EPI Group at 9925 3733.

### C. Some Relevant RMIT Web Resources

Teaching and Learning Strategy: <http://www.teaching.rmit.edu.au>  
Refer to this site to access faculty teaching and learning web sites.

EPI web site: <http://epi.aes.rmit.edu.au/epigroup/epi.htm>

Some relevant parts of the RMIT Academic Operating Procedures are noted below.  
Refer to: <http://www.rmit.edu.au/departments/aa/aoproc.htm>

Academic 7.20.1.3 – Gender Inclusive Language

Academic 7.29.1.1 – Subject Guides

Academic 7.29.1.4 – Implementation of Credit Points System

Academic 7.29.2.1 – Student Attendance Requirements

Academic 7.32.1.1 – Assessment – General

Academic 7.32.1.2 – Grades for Recording Student Performance in a Subject

Academic 7.32.1.3 – Special Consideration in Assessment

Academic 7.32.1.4 – Pass by Compensation

Academic 7.32.10.1 – Academic Progress (HE) – Unsatisfactory Performance

Academic 7.32.10.2 – Appeal Against Assessment Results

The University Regulation 5.4.1 pertains to assessment.

Refer to <http://www.rmit.edu.au/secretariat/stat.html>

**D. Print References:**

- Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) (1994) *User's Guide to Course Design for Competency-Based Curriculum*, Melbourne: ACTRAC  
– objectives, assessment tasks, assessment criteria and relationships between them
- Boyle P. and Trevitt C. (1997) *Enhancing the Quality of Student Learning through the use of Subject Learning Plans*, Higher Education and Research, Volume 16, Number 3  
– underlying principles of student centred learning plans, objectives, strategies for learning and assessment
- ERADU (now EPI Group) (1990) *Evaluation of Teaching and Courses at RMIT*, Melbourne: RMIT
- Martin, E. (1995) *Evaluation Manual*, Melbourne: EQARD (now EPI Group), RMIT
- Ramsden, P. (1992) *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*, London: Routledge  
– objectives
- Rowntree, D. (1981) *Developing Courses for Students*, London: McGraw Hill  
– objectives, planned student learning experiences, assessment and the relationships between them
- Rowntree, D. (1987) (2nd Edn) *Assessing Students: How shall we know them?* London: Kogan Page

## SECTION 4: EXAMPLES AND COMMENTARY

In this section you will find two annotated examples of subject guides currently in use at RMIT. The staff have been most generous in allowing their work to be used in this manner.

Both of these examples clearly follow the subject guide proforma as outlined in Section 2 of this handbook, and inform students of what is going to be happen in the subject, what they should be striving to achieve and how they are going to be assessed. Commentary can be found in square brackets, in ***(bold italics)*** embedded in the subject guides.

## EXAMPLE 1

RMIT  
FACULTY OF THE CONSTRUCTED ENVIRONMENT  
Department of Social Science and Social Work  
Introduction to Organisational Studies  
SEMESTER 1, 1997  
**SUBJECT GUIDE**

**A. Subject Identification**

1. Faculty of the Constructed Environment
2. Department of Social Science and Social Work
3. SW424, SS420 – Introduction to Organisational Studies
4. 1997, Semester 1
5. Staff – Dr. Gary Hough (Ph. 96602702) and Ms. Mary Draper (96603466). Consultation times will be announced in the first class.
6. Duration: one semester, offered on-campus.
7. Credit points: 12
8. Contact hours: 3 per week
9. Non-contact hours: 9 per week: reading and general preparation.
10. Pre-requisites: Nil. The subject is a pre-requisite for the subject SW443 which is a required subject for all students in the Bachelor of Social Work Course.

*[This section is short, concise and includes all the relevant information requested in the Subject Guide Proforma using the same order and numbering system.]*

**B. Subject Description**

This subject will enable students to develop their understanding of the organisational contexts in which their professional practice will take place.

Through formal lectures and guided reading, related group and individual exercises (including problem-solving tasks, case studies, and simulations), and a series of linked assessment tasks, students will develop analytical and practical skills relevant to working in human service organisations.

As well as exploring broad approaches to organisational theory, students will begin to practice skills in organisational analysis which will be further developed in subsequent subjects in the social policy area, in program planning and evaluation, and in community services management. The subject will also provide a preparation for understanding the organisational contexts in which students will undertake field-based learning during their courses.

***[This subject description clearly frames the subject within the course of study by indicating what areas the students will develop in further subjects. To this extent it outlines skills and attributes that students will develop in the course context. It is important to mention the key areas for student learning in the subject. This subject guide would, if appropriate, explain how it builds on prior learning.]***

### **C. Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

Note: The objectives below will be reviewed in the first class, and students may be able to suggest other objectives which are important for them. These can then be reflected in the content and learning process of the subject.

***[Provides an opportunity for students to have input into the development of some additional objectives. This will help customise the subject to the needs and interests of students. The process of discussion and negotiation will help the students appreciate the purpose of the learning and how it relates to course objectives.]***

At the completion of this subject students should:

1. Have a beginning understanding of the core literature on organisational theory, and of the sociology of organisations.
2. Be able to demonstrate a beginning understanding of core issues in analyzing organisations and of the strengths and limitations of common frameworks for understanding organisations.

***[These objectives are clearly linked to the subject description above.]***

3. Have developed some confidence in their ability to think and act organisationally, and be able to 'read' the relevant organisational issues in the organisations in which they subsequently undertake field based learning.
4. Have developed foundation knowledge necessary for subsequent study in subjects related to the planning, management, and evaluation of human service organisations.
5. Demonstrate familiarity with current debates about organisational change and management practices in human service organisations.

***[These objectives give expression to graduate attributes: knowledgeable, prepared for a working life, critical (part of the RMIT Teaching and Learning Strategy). The objectives are student centered and are written from the perspective of what students will be able to do upon completion of the subject – they are intended learning outcomes. It is easier to write learning outcomes if you always start your statements with, “At the completion of this subject students should ...”***

## D. Planned Student Learning Experiences

The subject will comprise of a mix of lectures, class exercises, and case studies. Because there will be a substantial amount of experiential learning, attendance at all classes is required. Students will be constantly challenged to relate their understanding of relevant theory to their developing practice in the human services.

Much of the learning will be based on set readings and linked class exercises, so active preparation and participation by students is essential. Feedback on students' experience of the subject will be welcomed, and students will be able to suggest changes to the balance and focus of the program. There will be a written individual feedback exercise in week 4, and the results will be discussed with the whole group in the first class after Easter.

***[Clearly indicates how teaching will happen and sets the framework for students' responsibility for learning. This section could be improved by describing how the different learning experiences fit together – including assessable exercises – to form a coherent learning program. Describes evaluation processes and students' role in evaluation highlighting the teacher's intention to act on the students advice.]***

## E. Assessment

Assessment options will be discussed with students during the first class and agreed options will be distributed in the second class, along with detailed criteria for grading.

### 1. Assessment Tasks

It is *proposed* that assessment should take the form of:

- a) A team-based exercise on *reading and understanding organisations* to be completed in class in week 4 (26 March). Value 20% of grade.
- b) A team-based exercise on *the dynamics of organisations* to be completed in class in week 10 (14 May). Value 20% of grade.
- c) An open book exam (of 2 hours duration) in class time in week 13 (14 June). Because of the foundational nature of this subject, this exam seeks to assess material across the entire subject. Value 60% of grade.

### 2. Assessment Timeline

Following agreement (a) will be handed to students in week 2. We will discuss the requirements in that class with submissions due in week 4. It is strongly advised that teams are formed quickly and commence work immediately. The same agreement applies to assignment (b) except of course for different dates. Please note that the exam (c) is being held in a teaching week.

The first two assessment tasks will cover some of the material which will be tested in the final assessment.

***[Clearly outlines assessment tasks, percentage value and timeline. Negotiation over assessment provides additional opportunities for students to tailor the learning to their context and interests. Section 2 could further explain how the learning for the assessment links or builds on class activities and the readings.]***

### 3. Assessment Submission Dates

Submission Dates and Feedback:

- a) Due 26 March
- b) Due 14 May
- c) Exam 14 June

As well as written feedback to groups (for the first two tasks) and individuals (for the final one), there will be feedback to the whole group (in the following class for exercises 1 and 2, and a written summary along with the individual feedback for the final exercise which will be returned to students two weeks after the class test).

***[Feedback is critical because it helps students learn by addressing their misunderstandings. It also conveys clear messages about what is important to learn in the subject.]***

### 4. Negotiated Assessment:

As noted above you have an opportunity to negotiate aspects of assessment in this subject. You may like to bear the following points in mind:

- A team-based (small group) assessment task has been chosen for the first two pieces because:
  - much of the active learning in the subject will be group based,
  - such an approach can facilitate students' developing understanding while lessening anxiety about performance tasks,
  - much work in organisations is undertaken in teams.
- The short-answer, open-book test format has been suggested for the summative assessment, because:
  - it is important that students become familiar with foundation knowledge across the material covered in the subject (rather than being able to write, say, an essay about a specialized or narrow aspect of it).
  - skills in clear, time-limited and task-focussed writing are central to successful organisational practice.
  - the exam is a way of helping you as individuals understand the key concepts and how they are interrelated in organisational studies.

***[This explanation helps the students appreciate the purpose and priorities of the assessments.]***

### 5. Assessment Criteria and Grading:

Detailed criteria for grading will be distributed in additional subject documentation, and held in the course log. A full range of grades from fail to high distinction will be used. Detailed criteria will clearly link to subject objectives, but since objectives will be negotiated with students, more detailed criteria will be distributed after these negotiations. Given that all assessment will take place in class time, and this is a foundational subject in the course, assessment criteria will include:

- Comprehensiveness of the answers, and time management. Students will need to complete all set tasks in the time available.
- Clear structure and coherent argument in all answers.
- Adequate reference to theoretical literature, and proper referencing (see Department policies). It is important to read as widely as you can.
- All answers should be well-written and there should be no (or very few) errors of grammar, punctuation or spelling.
- Demonstrated understanding of organisational theory and the sociology of organisations.
- Demonstrated understanding of organisations through analysis of strengths and limitations of common frameworks.

***[Criteria are critical in providing guidance to students on the key areas for learning in the subject.]***

6. Plagiarism – refer to: plagiarism provisions, and procedures for return of student work in the Department of Social Science and Social Work’s ‘Student Assignment Manual’.

***[The Department Manual is provided to all students, and thus the statements do not need to be repeated in the Subject Guide.]***

7. Submission provisions – refer to: the Department of Social Science and Social Work’s ‘Student Assignment Manual’.
8. Procedure for variations – refer to: the Department of Social Science and Social Work’s ‘Student Assignment Manual’.

## **F. Study Guide/Program**

Timetable: Bundoora campus Mondays 9.30–12.30. Building 212, Level 2, Room 17.  
City campus Tuesdays 9.30 -12.30. Building 8, level 8, Room 79.

It is expected that students will be prepared for each class by having completed the assigned readings.

### **WEEK BEGINNING:**

### **READING**

#### **3 March**

- Looking at organisations – through whose eyes?
- The use of paradigms and metaphors in organisational analysis. Lecture and class exercise.
  - Discussion and negotiation of final outline.
  - Formation of student workgroups.

Mills & Simmons  
Chapter 1

Burrell & Morgan  
Chapters 1 & 2

#### **10 March**

‘Schools’ of organisational theory - Part 1.  
Lecture and class exercises.

Morgan (1986)  
Chapters 1 & 2

*Note: Labor day holiday. No class on Bundoora campus on 10/3/97.*

#### **17 March**

‘Schools’ of organisation theory – Part 2.  
Lecture and class exercises.  
Rationality and organisational goals.

Jones & May  
Chapters 2 & 5  
Hasenfeld  
Chapter 1

**WEEK BEGINNING:****READING****24 March**

*Assessment exercise 1. Case study.*

Student feedback on subject focus. Clarification of program.

**31 March Easter Break – No classes****7 April**

People in Organisations:  
Owners, Managers, Workers, Members, Clients

Jones&May  
Chapters 8 & 9

**14 April**

Organisations, gender and ethnicity.

Mills & Simmons  
Chapters 3 & 5

**21 April**

Organisational culture

Jones & May  
Chapter 7

**28 April**

Structuring organisations

Jones & May  
Chapter 6

**5 May**

Power in organisations

Burrell & Morgan  
Chapters 8 & 9

**12 May**

Organisational auspice  
*Assessment exercise 2 – Case Study.*

**19 May**

Workers in organisations. Street-Level Bureaucrats.  
Professional work.

Jones & May  
Chapter 8

**26 May**

Context, Environment and Change in organisations.  
Student evaluation of the subject.

Jones & May  
Chapter 4

**2 June**

Feedback on student evaluation.  
Assessment exercise 3 – Open Book Test.

*[Outline of key events in the subject, planned student learning experiences, with assessment exercises dated. This provides students with a clear picture of the sequence of studies. It could be extended by an explanation of this structure demonstrating how early topics address foundational concepts building up to more complex understanding and skills. The weekly reading is clearly identified from the beginning of the semester. What should be included, though, is a statement that these readings are to be completed before each class. A detailed listing of recommended and reference texts and readings follows.]*

### Recommended Texts

- Mills, A.J. & Simmons, T. (1995) *Reading Organization Theory: A Critical Approach* Garamond Press, Toronto. RMIT Bookshop.
- Jones, A. & May, J. (1992) *Working in Human Service Organizations* Longman Cheshire, Melbourne. Bookshop and Closed Reserve.

### Other Key Texts and References

- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis* Heinemann, London. (Copies requested for Closed Reserve).
- Cousins, Christine (1987) *Controlling Social Welfare: A Sociology of State Welfare Work and Organization*, Wheatsheaf, Sussex.
- Handy, C. (1985) *Understanding Organizations* Penguin, Harmondsworth. (Closed Reserve).
- Hasenfeld, Y. (1983) *Human Service Organizations* Prentice-Hall, New Jersey.
- Morgan, Gareth (1986) *Images of Organization* Sage, London. (Copies requested for closed reserve)
- Morgan, Glenn (1990) *Organizations in Society*, Macmillan Education London.
- Probert, B. (1989) *Working Life: Arguments about work in Australian society* McPhee Gribble, Australia. (Closed Reserve)
- Robbins, S. & Barnwell, N. (1989) *Organization Theory in Australia* Prentice-Hall, New York.
- Watson, T. (1987) *Sociology, Work and Industry* (2nd Edition), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. (Closed Reserve).

*It is critical to your success that you make time to investigate journal articles relevant to the lecture topics and to your assessment. There are a range of journals that deal with 'Organizations' and 'Management'.*

### Additional Reading

***[Several pages of additional readings, clearly identified by topic headings have been omitted in this example. The teachers may refer students to some of these references in their discussions with students.]***

## EXAMPLE 2

ROYAL MELBOURNE INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGYFACULTY OF BIOMEDICAL  
AND HEALTH SCIENCESSUBJECT GUIDE  
ML432 IMMUNOHAEMATOLOGY  
(CITY CAMPUS)

## A. Subject Identification

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Faculty:                                 | Biomedical and Health Sciences   |
| 2. Department:                              | Medical Laboratory Science   |
| 3. Subject Code and Title:                  | ML432 Immunohaematology  |
| 4. Year and Semester:                       | Bachelor of Applied Science (Medical Laboratory Science)<br>Fourth year, both semesters<br>Graduate Diploma in Medical Laboratory Science<br>Second year, both semesters |
| 5. Subject Co-ordinator and Teaching Staff: | Associate Professor Ralph Green<br>Contact<br>Office: 9.2.59<br>Phone: 96602644<br>E-mail: ralphg@rmit.edu.au<br>Consultation: Fridays 2.30–4.30                         |

A number of guest lecturers from hospitals, Red Cross and CSL Ltd. will be involved in the second semester program.

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 6. Duration and Mode of Delivery: | Two semesters. Available for internal full-time and part-time study.   |
| 7. Credit Points:                 | 30   |
| 8. Contact Hours:                 | 7 hours per week including 2 hours of lectures, 4 hours of practical classes and 1 hour of tutorials.  |
| 9. Non-contact Hours:             | 8 hours per week. Students should devote at least an equivalent amount of time to private study, assignment and seminar preparation, practical report preparation and researching the literature as they spend in class. Prior to examinations and tests additional commitment of time may be required.  |
| 10. Pre-requisites:               | ML231 Introduction to Immunology and ML232 Haematology 1 or equivalent subjects must have been completed prior to enrolment in this subject. Students should also have completed a period of Professional Practice within a diagnostic or medical research laboratory before starting the subject. Alternatively this can be undertaken whilst studying the subject. |

*[This section follows the Subject Guide Proforma, using the headings and numbering system, in order to provide students with the relevant information. It is easy to read and the information clearly stands out for the student.]*

## B. Subject Description

This is a major subject for both courses and is designed to prepare graduates for a career in Immunohaematology/Blood Transfusion Science, or to pursue postgraduate research in the discipline. The syllabus is covered in a program of lectures, tutorials, seminars and practical exercises designed to facilitate the **acquisition of knowledge** which extends to the leading edge of the discipline. The practical program is structured to provide learning experiences which compliment the theory syllabus and allow the student to become **competent** in the testing and investigation of case studies which require a high level of analytical skill. Students are given practical problem-solving case studies during the subject which encourage them to be **creative** in their resolution but also **responsible** in their outcome. Throughout the subject students will be required to demonstrate a responsible and **mature attitude** to their work, especially as the consequences of 'sloppy' performance, if translated to the workplace, could have fatal consequences for a patient.

The syllabus is split between the two semesters to include in the first semester the knowledge, practical skills and attitudes which are required of graduates to work confidently and competently in a routine blood transfusion laboratory. In the second semester the syllabus includes theory and practical exercises which are at an advanced level and may only be applied in a reference or research and development laboratory. In addition the syllabus includes topics on management practices which are critical to the operation of a modern blood transfusion services. An **international context** is taken in presenting much of this material due to the universal applicability of many of the most recent blood transfusion practices. A number of guest lecturers from hospitals, the Red Cross Transfusion Service and CSL Ltd. participate in the presentation of course material and by so doing ensure that the subject is relevant to the workplace. At the same time, visits to the Transfusion Service ensure that students have an appropriate practical perspective of the discipline. In a similar fashion, engaging demonstrators/tutors with considerable hospital and transfusion service experience ensure that the course content is relevant to the workplace and thus enhances the **employability** of graduates.

Though the incorporation of seminars, essays and project based practical work students are encouraged to develop their **critical thinking** and **communication skills**. Students are able to nominate one of their seminar topics, to choose between a number of essay topics and to work as a small team in conducting and reporting on their practical project.

The combination of learning activities offered in this subject and the assessment program is designed to equip graduates with a range of attributes which will distinguish them as **potential leaders** in their field of endeavour.

The graduate attributes acquired by students as result of their learning and of the learning environment created in this subject are illustrated in the table below.

*[This subject description highlights how student learning is linked through this subject to the Teaching and Learning Strategy and graduate attributes. The description also clearly describes how students will build upon their learning during the subject from working routinely in a work setting, through to applying that knowledge and experience in an advanced research or development setting. Relevancy to the workplace is addressed through practical case studies, guest lecturers from industry, and on-site visits. One suggestion for improvement would be to explain what previous learning, skills and knowledge students need to bring to the subject for successful learning.]*

**Table 1: Graduate Attributes Acquired in ML432 Immunohaematology**

Course Structure		Graduate Attributes						
		knowledgeable	creative	critical	responsible	employable	lifelong learner	potential leader
4th yr	Advanced Academic and Discipline Specific Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3rd yr	Professional and Discipline Specific Skills							
2nd yr	General Clinical Discipline and Academic Skills							
1st yr	Basic Academic and core Discipline Skills							

*[It is possible to use a summarized tabular format as shown in this example, however, a detailed description is required to help students interpret the table]*

### C. Objectives

Having studied this subject, the student should be able to:

1. Outline the current concepts on immune response mechanisms involved in the transfusion of blood and blood products and the transplantation of bone marrow and solid organs;
2. Discuss the genetic factors, including gene interactions, influencing the expression of blood group antigens;
3. Describe the major immunogenetic systems found on erythrocytes, leucocytes, platelets and certain of the plasma proteins eg. C4 and IgG;
4. Describe and account for the in-vivo and in-vitro reaction characteristics involving antibodies and blood group antigens;
5. Discuss the pathophysiological mechanisms associated with blood loss and with blood and blood product replacement therapy;
6. Discuss the methods of collection and processing of blood and blood products and describe the biochemical and haematological changes which may occur during their subsequent storage;
7. Discuss the use of blood, artificial blood substitutes and of blood products in the treatment of chronic and acute blood loss;
8. Describe the basic principles of
  - 8.1 monoclonal antibody production,
  - 8.2 phage display technology
  - 8.3 production of genetically engineered proteins and discuss the impact of these in transfusion science and medicine;
9. Describe the adverse effects which may arise from the transfusion of blood and blood products, in particular the effects produced by infectious agents eg; Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Hepatitis and vasoactive substances;
10. Discuss the mechanisms underlying Haemolytic Disease of the Newborn and the investigation, prevention and treatment of this condition;
11. Discuss the laboratory investigation and treatment of donors and recipients of bone marrow and solid organ transplants;
12. Discuss the organisational and administrative procedures (including quality control and assurance) which are required to set up and maintain the orderly operation of a blood bank and which would satisfy current accreditation guidelines;
13. Competently perform laboratory techniques and procedures appropriate to the following situations, discuss their principles and explain why they are being used:
  - testing of donor blood
  - blood grouping
  - crossmatching
  - investigation of transfusion reactions
  - antibody investigations
  - ante- and post-natal investigations
  - investigation of auto- and drug-induced immune haemolytic anaemias
  - preparation and evaluation of “in house” and commercial reagents;

14. Perform some of the techniques involved in the investigation of:
  - immune related leukopenias and thrombocytopenias
  - the Major Histocompatibility Complex;
15. Describe in general terms the procedures and laboratory techniques, including those based upon DNA technology, required in:
  - forensic investigations involving the identification and determination of genetic markers of biological materials
  - disputed paternity studies
  - bone marrow and solid organ transplantation;
16. Evaluate new and modified techniques and their use in the field of Immuno-haematology;
17. Discuss legislative requirements and government regulations affecting the collection, processing, storage, testing and release of blood and blood products for transfusion purposes;
18. Critically analyse and discuss current literature in Immunohaematology, and
19. Communicate clearly, concisely and logically on any aspect of Immunohaematology including moral and ethical issues which affect the practice of transfusion and transplantation science in medicine.

***[It may be more appropriate to start the objectives with “Upon completion of this subject, the student should ...” The objectives outline what a successful graduate of the subject should be able to accomplish, not just anyone enrolled in the subject. The objectives are well-written and clearly describe the skills and attributes that a graduate of this subject would possess. The objectives could more explicitly address higher level functions that would be required in a research and development setting and noted in the subject description above. Negotiation of objectives is a feature of the other exemplar subject guide.]***

#### **D. Planned Student Learning Experiences**

The subject includes structured theoretical and practical components designed to provide students with comprehensive coverage of the current state of practice in Immunohaematology. The practical program is designed to develop a high level of competence in the performance of a wide range of laboratory techniques and procedures. By structuring most practical exercises as problem-solving case-studies, students are encouraged to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills. All practical sessions include a range of review questions which cover both theory and practical material and which form the basis of discussion in tutorial sessions. A student centered approach to the subject is adopted in the second semester by incorporation of the following activities:

- student seminars with students nominating topics of their choice;
- requiring students to research nominated lecture topics and to present their information back to the class (students work as small teams and are provided with some reference material along with an indication of the breadth and depth of the coverage expected of them);



The mid-year theory examination will be of three hours duration and consist of two sections. The first section will consist of a number of multiple-choice questions presented in different formats and should take 30–35 minutes to complete. The second section will consist of a number of essays questions from which you will be required to choose five (5) to answer.

The end of year theory examinations will consist of a 2 hour paper composed between 130–150 multiple-choice/limited response questions. The second paper will be of three hours duration and consists of a number of essay questions from which you will be required to answer five (5).

***[This description is clear on format but could provide additional guidance on the nature of the learning it is aimed at assessing.]***

Essay questions are designed to give students an opportunity to demonstrate their depth of understanding in the subject. Questions are mainly argumentative, analytical or comparative.

#### **Essay**

A 2,500-3,000 word essay is required to be submitted by no later than Monday 22nd September. Requests for extension of the submission date MUST be made in writing and be supported by documented evidence justifying the request. Extensions will only be considered where extenuating circumstances can be clearly indicated.

#### **Seminars**

Ten to fifteen minute seminars will be presented by all students in both the first and second semesters. The topics for the first semester will be nominated whilst you will have a free choice in the second semester topic. Dates and assessment criteria will be notified early in each semester.

#### **Practical**

Students will be required to maintain a practical workbook throughout the two semesters of the subject. This will be inspected periodically during the practical program and may be required to be submitted for overall assessment if practical marks in formal assessment tests and examinations are borderline.

***[More detailed feedback mechanisms would be beneficial for the students. They could be described under Section E.3 below.]***

Two practical reports will be required to be submitted during the subject, one in each semester. The nature and content of those reports will be advised at least two weeks before the practical exercises are conducted. Reports MUST be submitted no later than two weeks after the practical exercises have been completed. Later submissions will not be received, except where extenuating circumstances can be demonstrated.

All practical examinations and tests will be open book.

3. Assessment Submission Dates and Feedback:

Semester 1 test	19 April
Mid year exam	21 June
Semester 2 test	2 August
Mid year exam	21 June
Essay	22 September
Practical (if required)	25 October
End year exam	1 November

***[Feedback mechanisms would also be described.]***

4. Negotiated Assessment: *issues relating to assessment may be raised with the subject co-ordinator.*

5. Assessment Criteria and Grading:

Pass	PA	50 - 59
Credit	CR	60 - 69
Distinction	DI	70 - 79
High Distinction	HD	80 - 100

Students who obtain a final mark of between 45–49.5% may be offered the opportunity of supplementary assessment.

**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS**

If you have failed the subject and require a final assessment report you should apply in writing to the head of the department within one month of official notification of the result. The form of the report for this subject will be written report on each segment of the assessment program.

Students are encouraged to discuss their assessment with the subject co-ordinator where they are in doubt as to what is expected of them.

***[Assessment criteria need to be outlined, Example 1 illustrates assessment criteria]***

6. Plagiarism – plagiarism may occur in oral and written presentations. It is the presentation of the work, idea or creation of another person, without appropriate referencing, as though it is one’s own. Plagiarism is not acceptable. The use of another person’s work or ideas must be acknowledged. Failure to do so may result in charges of academic misconduct which carry a range of penalties including cancellation of results and exclusion from your course.
7. Submission provisions – late submissions will incur a 2% reduction in the final mark for this part of the assessment for each day late.
8. Procedure for variations – changes to the method of assessment as prescribed in the subject guide may be made on the approval of the Head of Department after consultation with the students, and the agreement of at least 70% of the enrolled students. Written notification of change will be provided to all students enrolled in the subject.

***[Clearly covers all aspects of assessment, from the outline of tasks through to grading. It could further describe how feedback would assist students in their learning and how the various assessment tasks develop the appropriate skills and attributes in the students.]***

## F. Study Program

### Timetable and Location:

Mon 9:30–11:30am, 12.10.02 (lecture); Fri 9:30–1:30pm, 9.1.7 (laboratory);

Fri 1:30–2:30pm, 9.1.24 (tutorial/lec)

### Lecture Series: First semester

1. Antigen antibody reactions, haemagglutination and serological techniques.
2. Immune response to “blood group” antigens. ABO, Lewis and secretor systems.
3. Clinical significance of blood group antibodies. Compatibility testing and group, screen and hold (GS & H).
4. Rh, Kell, Duffy and Kidd blood group systems.
5. Antibody detection and identification.  
Special techniques – absorption and elution, neutralisation, antigen modification.
6. I, P and MNS blood group systems. High-titre, low-avidity (HTLA) antibodies.
7. Polyagglutination. High and low antigen frequency systems.  
Pathophysiology of blood loss and indications for transfusion.
8. Donor selection, blood collection and testing.
9. Storage of cell products. Preparation and use of plasma products.
10. Haemolytic and non-haemolytic transfusion reactions.
11. Auto-immune and drug induced haemolytic anaemias.
12. Haemolytic Disease of the Newborn.
13. Quality assurance and the Blood Bank.

### The second semester program will concentrate on the following areas:

- Transplantation including the laboratory investigations conducted prior to and following transplantation. In addition the clinical aspects of transplantation will be covered.
- Advances in ‘blood group systems’.
- DNA technology in transplantation, disease susceptibility and paternity testing.
- Genetics.
- Investigation of allo and auto-immune leukopenias and thrombocytopenias.
- Blood products and component therapy.
- Principles and practice of Quality Assurance and Quality Control.

### Practical Program:

The first semester program will concentrate on serological techniques used in hospital blood banks. In the second semester practical exercises will be conducted in areas related to the theoretical aspects of the program eg: tissue typing, auto-immune cytopenias. During this semester an emphasis will be placed on the development of techniques and procedures which are in the process of being introduced into the field of Immunohaematology. A number of practical exercises will be conducted as mini-projects.

***[Outlines the topics that will be covered in each semester. If appropriate, the description could inform the students of what readings or tasks should be completed prior to each class and how each class builds upon the former in order to develop students knowledge and skills. The students are provided in the next section with a listing of required and recommended references and readings.]***

## **Textbooks and References**

### **Prescribed Textbooks:**

Harmening D., et al. *Modern Blood Banking and Transfusion Practice* 3rd ed. Philadelphia. F.A. Davis. 1994

Green R.E.B., Ford D.S., Condon Jennifer A. and Lowe Vivien A. *Basic Blood Grouping Techniques and Procedures* 2nd ed. Melbourne. Victorian Immunohaematology Discussion Group. 1992

Walker R.H. (ed). *Technical Manual* 12th ed. Washington. American Association of Blood Banks. 1995

### **Recommended References:**

Issitt P.D. *Applied Blood Group Serology* 3rd ed. Miami. Montgomery Scientific Publications. 1985

Petz L.D., Garratty G. *Acquired Immune Hemolytic Anemias*. New York. Churchill Livingston. 1980

Petz L.D., Swisher S.N. *Clinical Practice in Blood Transfusion* 2nd ed. New York. Churchill Livingston. 1988

Rutman Leanne C., Miller W.V. *Transfusion Therapy – Principles and Practice*. New York. Churchill Livingston. 1981

Mollison P.L., Contreras Marcella, Engelfriet P. *Blood Transfusion in Clinical Practice* 9th ed. Oxford. Blackwell. 1987

**Note:** more recent editions of a number of the publications listed above are available however they may not be in the RMIT library. Where prior arrangements have been made students may access the Red Cross Blood Bank library in South Melbourne.

Publications from the American Association of Blood Banks are issued following every one of their annual meetings. These are up to date reviews of current and future practices in the field of blood transfusion.

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Students should maintain a constant review of appropriate scientific journals during their studies in this subject. Appropriate journals for this purpose include:

- Transfusion
- Vox Sanguinis
- British Journal of Haematology
- Blood
- Lancet
- New England Journal of Medicine
- British Journal of Biomedical Science
- Australian Journal of Medical Sciences
- Immunology Today
- Transplantation Proceedings
- Transfusion Medicine
- Transfusion Medicine Reviews

February 1997 Associate Professor Ralph Green

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Co-ordinator/Leader

Date: