Principles Governing the Structure of the Academic Year

(The amendments approved by R60/03 will be effective from 2006 onwards)

1. The University shall retain the semester system.

2. The first semester shall commence on the last Monday in February; the second semester shall commence no earlier than 18 July; and the second semester shall end no later than the end of the third week in November.

3. Each semester shall consist of at least 13 active weeks.

4. There shall be a break of at least seven weeks and, if possible, eight weeks between the end of Week 13 of Semester 1 and the start of Week 1 of Semester 2, comprising a week's study break, two weeks of examinations and at least four weeks of vacation.

5. At the end of the second semester there shall be a pre-examination study break of one week and an examination period of two weeks.

6. All faculties shall observe the same fundamental, standard timetable for the two semesters for those years of their courses when students take significant proportions of their loads in any other faculty.

7. (i) The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences shall be permitted to continue to use non-standard dates for years and courses when students take almost all their loads within the Faculty.

(ii) All faculties shall be permitted in accordance with Academic Council policy to offer individual units in non-standard semesters.

8. Non-teaching periods within semesters shall be timed to observe the following principles, which also shall guide the University in negotiating UA common weeks: The principles are listed in order of importance, beginning with the most important.

A. There shall be only one non-teaching period within each semester of one week's duration.

B. As far as is possible within the context of other constraints, the non-teaching period shall be approximately halfway through the semester.

C. There should be at least four weeks of teaching before and after a non-teaching break.

D. There should be a reasonable level of overlap of non-teaching periods with school holidays (i.e. at least two of the three breaks should overlap), as far as is possible without compromising the academic integrity of the semesters in each year.

E. The University should observe at least two of the three UA common weeks, as far as is possible without compromising the academic integrity of the semesters in each year.

9. The principles set out above are designed to guide the University's determination of academic year dates. Although strict observation of them may vary from year to year depending on the combination of circumstances in a given year, in all cases the University will seek to abide by the intentions underlying the principles.

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November 2007
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