NOTES OF A MEETING OF
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLICATIONS
AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE HELD ON
25 JUNE 1997

Professor Michael Barber (Convenor)
Professor Barbara Chang
Associate Professor Laurie Paraske
Professor Peter Hartmann
Associate Professor Barry Madsen
Dr Barry Maund
Professor John McGeehan
Professor Paul Miller
Associate Professor Robyn Owens
Dr Dale Roberts

THE PUBLICATIONS COLLECTION

Discussion focused on the recently completed collection of 1996 publications and the ways in which the process could be simplified in future years. Although there were no clear outcomes arising from the one-and-a-half hour meeting, the following are some of the issues raised during the discussion.

(i) The collection of 1996 publications went more smoothly than the submission of 1995 publications, but it was still very labour-intensive and should be more automated.

(ii) The University of Western Australia needs to review the categories and points values, not only to simplify the process, but to encourage publishing practices that match UWA's objectives as an internationally-recognised research university.

(iii) Points values in the future should encourage research with international significance; research which is collaborative; and research which has an impact within the 'discipline'. The greater the range of objectives, the more likely it is that progress towards those objectives will be harder to achieve.

(iv) At present, UWA has four sub-categories within the A1 (book) category (in addition to A2, A3 and A4 books), but only one C1 (refereed article in a scholarly journal) category (in addition to C2, C3 and C4 articles). The quality of C1 articles can vary dramatically. It might be possible to have several C1 categories based on the ISI Impact Factor, to encourage publication in high-profile, high-quality international journals.

(v) The criteria and points value of A1.2 and A1.3 books should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect equivalent output in refereed journals.

(vi) There are occasions when publication in local or popular journals is necessary to achieve greater exposure, or to target specific readers.

(vii) It might be possible to build track record scores from ARC and NHMRC assessments into the output factor.

(viii) EI conference papers should be retained in the collection, because they reflect active participation in conferences of national and international significance.
(ix) The ISI Impact Factor is not perfect - it tends to discriminate against the humanities and Australian publications. There was also evidence that the quality and existence of refereeing of ISI journals varies greatly.

(x) Quality should be judged ideally on a case-by-case basis, but that is too labour-intensive and subjective.

(xi) The collection process must be simplified. It is reasonable to expect departments to maintain a record of publications, but there are difficulties in determining eligibility for DEETYA and UWA purposes. Issues that need to be considered include the use of by-lines, the possible removal of apportioning staff and students in collaborative publications, and how best to record staff and students with current or past attachments to more than one department.

(xii) One member suggested that the audit be undertaken in future by a competent librarian.