MEETING OF THE 2003 PUBLICATIONS AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 19 AUGUST 2003

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Present: Professor Colin MacLeod in the Chair, Associate Professor Michael Burton, Dr Robyn Carroll, Dr Annette George, Dr Nicolaas Groenewold, Dr Murray Maybery, Associate Professor Tim Penttila, Associate Professor Gerald Watts, Associate Professor Dieter Wege, Professor Phil Withers

Ms Lorna Robertson as Executive Officer

1. Introduction and thanks

- Colin thanked all for their dedicated hard work auditing the publications – an important task which the University values and appreciates greatly.

2. How has this year’s audit gone and what if any problems arose?

- Errors - ref tables presented. Schools with lots of avoidable errors have received a letter asking for greater care. This has worked in the past.

- Ethical issue - ref PCVRI’s letter to Heads of School. Any cases of suspected questionable research practices (eg two or more publications containing substantial overlap without full acknowledgement) should be referred to PCVRI – auditors should not try to resolve this with school. This will be specifically stated in auditor guidelines – ACTION LR.

- Audit visit – departments having publications out of order and having incomplete verification data (no evidence of refereeing) caused auditors to spend extra time unnecessarily. For schools with many articles in same journals, a list of journals which are refereed, together with evidence of refereeing, could usefully be provided by school to assist auditors. This would be in addition to auditor requirement to look at all articles to check other points. Instructions to schools should again emphasize the importance of keeping publications in order and ensuring verification data is complete, plus suggest schools provide list of refereed journals where appropriate – ACTION LR.

- Co-authored publications with authors in > 1 department/school – some auditors found this took a fair bit of time to sort out. Lorna outlined guidelines (in Auditor Kit – pro rata unless agreed otherwise) and explained a couple of approaches underway to help with this (project with Computer Science to identify same-titled publications with typos, enhancement to web entry with checking for similar titles). Much manual data cleaning is already done by ACS and Research Services to reduce numbers auditors have to resolve.

3. What if any changes are needed to the UWA publications category definitions?

- Case studies and case reports – implicit in the UWA definitions for journal articles C2-C4 is the assumption that every refereed article in a refereed journal meets the DEST/UWA criteria for C1. Auditors found this was not the case as some failed to meet all of DEST’s “key characteristics of research publications.” To accommodate this a small change is needed in the UWA definition for C2 (other contribution to refereed journal), as follows:
Current definition of C2 (Other contribution to refereed journal):
Review article or commentary which may not itself be subject to a formal process of peer review, but which makes a contribution to the discipline beyond straightforward description of items reviewed.

Proposed definition of C2 (Other contribution to refereed journal):
Contribution to a refereed journal which does not meet the criteria for C1 and which may or may not be subject to a formal process of peer review, but which makes a contribution to the discipline beyond straightforward description. Review articles, commentaries, case studies and case reports may meet the criteria for this category.

- Text books – currently text books gain 2 points. It was suggested that a sliding scale might be more appropriate, although this would add to the load of auditors. Following discussion the subcommittee decided to leave the weighting for text books unchanged.

- Book reviews – currently book reviews are not included unless they meet the criteria for C2 as a review article in a refereed journal which makes a contribution to the discipline beyond straightforward description of items reviewed. Occasionally book reviews are entered as C4, Letter or Note. The question of whether to give credit for book reviews which do not meet the C2 criteria has been raised several times previously and each time the audit subcommittee and Research Committee have decided not to do so as book reviews are considered ongoing scholarly activity rather than research publications, and as the additional burden of data entry and audit would be significant for a minimal change in scores. The meeting confirmed the previous decision and agreed that the UWA Publications Manual should explicitly state that book reviews are not to be included unless they meet the criteria for C2 – ACTION LR.

4. What could we do to make it easier for auditors and schools next year?

- Standard letter re authorship where no UWA byline – link will be from publications entry database and also on publications web page with wording required by DEST, as below – ACTION LR.

  "This is to confirm that I undertook the research leading to the publications listed below in my capacity as a staff member/student in the School/Department of <Name> at The University of Western Australia in <year>.
  <List publications>
  <Name>
  <Signature>"

- Training for data entry staff – suggestion that given the turnover of school data entry staff and the importance of accurate data entry, a short training session would be useful for new and inexperienced data entry people. Experienced data entry staff could assist with this. Med Library staff member has offered help also. Lorna will pursue the suggestion – ACTION LR.

- Entries with zero UWA or DEST points – auditors suggested that the Publications Manual and instructions to schools state that publications gaining zero UWA or DEST points need not be entered in the database as these are not audited and do not generate any funding for the schools. Currently some schools do enter them while many choose not to. Zero scoring categories are E2 (non-refereed conference paper), E3 (published abstract or part of a conference paper), K2 (entry in a dictionary or encyclopaedia which is not a substantial research contribution to a scholarly publication), M (other public output eg newspaper or magazine article). These categories are not audited but are currently included in the UWA annual publication lists on the web. The subcommittee considered that only audited publications should be placed on the UWA web page under an explanatory heading. ACTION – RECOMMEND THIS TO RESEARCH COMMITTEE.
• Publications from UWA sections outside the faculties – while these earn UWA funding from DEST, such sections’ annual budget is not directly affected by their publications in the way that faculties’ budgets are. It was suggested that perhaps audit of non-DEST publications was therefore unnecessary. However, after discussion it was agreed to continue auditing all publications that were eligible for UWA points, as they would be included on the UWA web page. The numbers of publications from sections outside the faculties was in any case very small – **NFA.**

• Change to collection and audit at school (rather than former department) level - tables showing publication numbers by school and discipline subcommittee were presented and discussed. Publications would be collected at school level and it was agreed that audit by schools would be appropriate and workable using the existing three subcommittees, with the addition of two more members in the medical area to the Biological and Medical Sciences panel, which had a considerably heavier auditing load than the others. Associate Professor Watts offered to suggest some people – **ACTION LR.**