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## ASCED CLASSIFICATION OF UNIT (SUBJECT) DISCIPLINES GUIDELINES

The following principles may be employed in classifying and validating the disciplines of subjects.

### 1. Subject Name

The subject name gives some indication of the content of the subject and is often a reliable pointer to the correct ASCED code. However names are not infallible guides to subject classification. The correct classification of some subjects is apparently inconsistent with the subject name.

For example VIN41COM Wine Communication is not Communication (as technical communication usually is) but Wine Science, dealing with classification of wines and other technical issues relating to wine.

### 2. Subject Code

Subject code can be a useful indicator, but there are many examples where it is incorrect and/or does not match the discipline of the subject. This should not be used by itself to make a classification.

### 3. Subject Discipline

Subject discipline can be a useful screening mechanism. In single-discipline Schools or departments (areas of study), the classification of subjects is often not controversial. Thus subjects taught by English, Philosophy, Human Biosciences, Mathematics, Physiotherapy, Zoology and Sociology, etc. usually have an ASCED discipline which corresponds to a discipline in the Subject Database. There can still be odd errors, however – for example, with Gender Studies subjects in History.

There are other areas which largely come from one cluster – for example, Nursing, Business and Tourism – but still can have subjects from others such as Law, Management or Communication.

Finally, there are very multidisciplinary areas such as Agriculture, Public Health and Outdoor Education, where a range of discipline areas are involved. Classification problems arise most often with these multidisciplinary teaching areas.

### 4. Subject Code

This is the definitive determinant of ASCED classification. As this is the curriculum contract for students, it should not be misleading. However, some subjects have very brief descriptions, and some have important topics or emphases omitted. Negotiations with Faculties sometimes elicit more information, which can inform classification and lead to changes to the subject description in the *Handbook*.

Where a subject contains a broad range of subject material, covering more than one discipline, it is necessary to evaluate the emphasis on each discipline and choose the most appropriate ASCED.

The ordering of topics, emphasis and language can be significant.

For example a statement such as 'Legal aspects will also be considered' suggests lesser importance.

### 5. References

References can assist in determining subject disciplines.

For example NSG21MED – Medication Management for Nurses appears to involve Pharmacology, and this is confirmed by the two prescribed references.

### 6. Course

Descriptions of the courses in which subjects are prescribed can assist in the overall classification exercise.

For example the BA (Outdoor Education) has 'course content drawn from disciplines including education, social psychology, environmental studies, cultural studies and social studies of science'. It might be expected that subjects would show a similar range of disciplines.

Education courses (for registration) can be difficult for curriculum studies (e.g. Mathematics Education) as the ASCED classification is not particularly helpful; and a few isolated examples, such as the classification of Drama Education in Education ASCED codes, are confusing. Where teaching technique and organisation of material is emphasised, Education ASCED codes are generally most appropriate. Conversely, where discipline content is emphasised (secondary teachers require two

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years study in a discipline to teach it), a discipline ASCED may be appropriate; however, there are some anomalies, such as Drama Education.

Past review of ASCED coding has identified difficulties in classification in the following disciplines. Use particular care when coding subjects from courses in these areas.

- Agriculture
- Behavioural Sciences
- Communication
- Computer Science
- Education
- Engineering Management
- Environmental Science
- Gender Studies
- Law
- Legal Studies
- Management (in other disciplines)
- Nature Tourism
- Nursing
- Outdoor Education
- Planning
- Public Health
- Statistics
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Viticulture
- Wine Science

#### **7. Creation of new Disciplines [ASCED] on SIS and UDB**

In cases where an ASCED is identified which best suits a new subject, but the corresponding Discipline [ASCED] is not already available on SIS and the USDB, then a Faculty can directly request Academic Services to create a new Discipline [ASCED] to support the classification process.

These principles will be followed when creating a new Discipline [ASCED] on SIS and the USDB:

##### **7.1. Discipline does not match the desired ASCED**

A Discipline specifically named in the ASCED classification system from the Australian Bureau of Statistics will not be created with a different ASCED.

##### **7.2. Similarly titled Discipline already exists with the desired ASCED**

A new Discipline may not be created if a similarly titled Discipline already exists with the desired ASCED. This will be resolved via negotiations with the Faculty and Academic Services, taking into account existing subjects currently linked to that Discipline [ASCED].

##### **7.3. Discipline does not exist on SIS**

A new Discipline will be created with the appropriate ASCED. In some cases negotiations between the Faculty and Academic Services will be required if the desired discipline does not exist in the ASCED classification from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

#### **8. Revising an existing Unit's Discipline [ASCED] on SIS and UDB**

There is an expectation that once a subject's Discipline [ASCED] has been assigned and approved by the Director, Academic Services, then the following rules will apply.

- The Discipline [ASCED] will normally remain unchanged, if key subject curriculum attributes such as content, title, description and prescribed reading (references, texts etc.) are not amended for the period of time the subject is offered by the Faculty
- The Discipline [ASCED] may be changed if key subject attributes such as content, title, description and prescribed reading (references, texts, etc.) are amended during the period of time the subject is offered by the Faculty.