

**QUALITY ASSURANCE OF UNITS – 2008
FIRST SEMESTER**

BIO1AD (Animal Diversity, Ecology and Behaviour)

Unit Coordinator: Dr B.S. Malone

	Current mean	Last year's mean
Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this unit.	4.0	4.1

Unit outline

This unit provides an introduction to the biology of animals, including the origin of animals and an evolutionary approach to the study of the protozoa, sponges, cnidarians, and flatworms, as well as the two major lines of coelomata animals, the annelid-arthropod-mollusc line and the echinoderm-chordate line, including a treatment of the origin of our own phylum, the Chordate and of the vertebrate classes; and concepts in animal ecology, such as the ecosystem, community, food web, energy flow, predation, parasitism and competition. The study of animal behaviour covers instinctive behaviour, learning and memory, social behaviour and the development of behaviour in an individual.

Feedback to students

Students generally find the subject matter of BIO1AD interesting, and the consensus is that subject is well taught. Most find that the practical and lecture courses are particularly well integrated. The opportunities for hands-on experience in the practical course are considered invaluable and much appreciated. The requirement to submit two laboratory reports seemed well received and often leads to students improving their communication skills as a result of attending workshops offered by the Faculty's Language and Academic Skills Unit.

It appears that sometimes we may have a problem in effectively communicating with all students in order to make it clear what is expected of them. However, this is surprising given the information provided in the unit guide and the effort made to do this in orientation sessions. The amount of information which students are expected to know may be having an effect on the quality of learning.

All lecturers to be encouraged to place detailed lecture notes on LMS.
We have neither the staff nor the time to run tutorials for such a large class.

ZOO2AE (Animal Ecology)

Unit Coordinator: Dr M.F. Clarke

	Current mean	Last year's mean
Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this unit.	4.3	4.4

Unit outline

This unit examines the ecology animals at the level of the individual, the population, the community, and the ecosystem, within an evolutionary framework. Topics include ecological methods, predator-prey and host-parasite interactions, the concepts of niche and habitat, over-exploitation of natural populations, competition and disturbance and processes threatening Australian ecosystems.

Feedback to students

The LMS system greatly improved student access to class-gathered data, background reading, lecture and practical support material. LMS also helped address the issue of demands on demonstrators for out-of-hours assistance.

The potential to better integrate this unit with Entomology ZOO2ENT will be investigated in 2009, when the two units are combined into a single 20 point unit ZOO2AFE (Australian Fauna and Ecology). This will enable us to be more flexible and creative in the way the material in both these units is delivered.

ZOO2ENT (Entomology)

Unit Coordinator: Professor T.R. New

	Current mean	Last year's mean
Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this unit.	4.4	4.6

Unit Outline

This unit examines insect biology and evolution. Topics include aspects of insect morphology, classification, reproduction, ecology and the importance of insects in agriculture and medicine. The evolution of insects covers their origins and fossil record, the origin of flight, adaptive radiation and the relationships of the insect orders.

Feedback to students

No major problems raised. Variable quality of demonstrators is a continuing dilemma, and, even with increased pre-practical training, is largely inevitable. This unit is not to be taught in 2009, and has been amalgamated with ZOOAE to comprise a new second year Zoology unit

ZOO2VMP (Vertebrate morphology evolution and comparative physiology)

Unit Coordinator: Dr G.S. Posterino

	Current mean	Last year's mean
Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this unit.	3.9	3.6

Unit Outline

This unit is divided into two components. The first component (vertebrate morphology, evolution, and systematics) involves the study of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. The second component (comparative physiology) examines the way in which animals function and respond to environmental factors, such as oxygen supply, food and energy, temperature and water; mechanisms of animal movement, sensory systems and neural integration.

Feedback to students

This year I made substantial changes to the course structure. I firstly synchronized the morphology and physiology sections into 8 systems and substantially reduced the amount of evolutionary theory whilst expanding the physiology. Overall, this was well received although a few students had indicated that they were disappointed by the removal of the evolution component. A substantial change was to the introduction of journal article based tutorials. Students overwhelmingly rating this change very highly and found them to be challenging yet interesting and complimentary to the course. I noted last year the inadequate state of laboratory facilities and equipment. I was able to obtain a number of new powerlab teaching units that will be used this year in new practicals.

The course is marked for further change with in 2009 with the co-scheduling (amalgamation) of the 2nd year Agriculture Physiology component and ZOO2VMP. This will require the coordination of approximately 60 additional students, adjustments to the timetable and rescheduling the practical class arrangements. Further equipment purchases will be sought and identifying ways to improve on a number of the weaker parts of the 2008 evaluation will be examined.

CBE2IC (Issues in Conservation)

Unit Coordinator: Professor T.R. New

	Current mean	Last year's mean
Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this unit.	4.4	4.7

Unit Outline

This unit covers rationales for biodiversity conservation: moral, aesthetic and utilitarian.

Feedback to students

Generally very satisfactory reception, and enjoyed by most reporting students. Some changes will occur with changes in teaching staff, but major reorganisation not contemplated.

CBE3AC (Applications in Conservation)

	Current mean
Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this unit.	4.5

Unit Outline

This unit is an advanced study of conservation biology and ecology in practice, relating in particular to biodiversity assessment, species, and ecosystem management and conservation law.

Feedback to students

Generally high satisfaction and, with a considerable variety of interests among students, always difficult to satisfy everyone. Several parts of the unit were modified in relation to previous comments but no major problems were raised for attention.

This unit will be reviewed carefully for 2009, necessitated by retirements of Dr Whiffin and Professor New, so that their teaching will now be taken over by other members of staff.

ZOO3EPA (Zoology A)

Unit Coordinator: Dr R.A. Zann

	Current mean	Last year's mean
Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this unit.	4.3	4.4

Feedback to students

This was a successful unit with almost no failures. There were four important changes this year: a) the Kangaroo Island Field Course was omitted due to lack of participating staff; b) the Environmental Physiology component was omitted due to lack of teaching staff; c) a new component, Australian Fauna was introduced, and this included an innovative aspect, namely 20 hours community service with appropriate fauna organizations; and d) all online material for all teaching components was relocated to the LMS/WebCT platform.

Greater use should be made of the tools in the LMS/WebCT platform. Model answers will be provided for the SPSS assignment.