Welcome

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Con Nikakis
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Associate Degrees at NMIT

A Case Study of Curriculum Design for Vocational Outcomes
NMIT’s higher education program - the early years!

• 2006 saw the introduction of four NMIT higher education courses:
  ➢ Bachelor of Applied Aquaculture
  ➢ Bachelor of Viticulture and Winemaking
  ➢ Bachelor of Equine Studies
  ➢ Bachelor of Australian Popular Music

• These degrees were focussed on the primary and creative industries

• NMIT senior management believed that it would be advantageous to enter the business/accounting higher education space

Options for the Faculty of Business pre 2005

• Not to develop any business higher education programs
• Work with an established University to develop a business higher education program
• Develop a business higher education program independently
• Develop Associate Degrees independently
### NMIT’s Higher education timeline

**Discipline area**
- **Education**
- **Business**
- **Creative**
- **Earth Sciences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Creative</th>
<th>Earth Sciences</th>
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</table>

### NMIT’s Higher education timeline

**Qualification level**
- **Diploma (HE)**
- **Associate Degrees**
- **Bachelor Degrees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Diploma (HE)</th>
<th>Associate Degrees</th>
<th>Bachelor Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
Why develop Business Associate Degrees and not full degrees?

- No established brand in higher education – especially for international students
- Competitive environment
- Desire to establish a smooth transition from VET qualifications to NMIT higher education and then to university qualification
- To provide a range of options for students - flexibility

Benefits

- Independence
- Purpose designed
- Development of internal capability
- Ability to develop curriculum and pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of the Institute and students
- Integrated and shared curriculum
- Moving into the future…
Associate degrees

- New to the AQF
- New to Australia
- Concern as to the relevance of existing VET Advanced Diplomas i.e. they will sit alongside at AQF 6
- Providing an exit point for degrees
- Able to provide students with more choice and flexibility in their higher education studies
- Lower delivery costs

Factors influencing the development of NMIT’s Business Associate Degrees

- Capability
- Graduate attributes
- AOF
- Legislative issues
- VRQA
- Pedagogy
- Resources
- Competitive environment
- International / domestic markets
- Stakeholder interests
- Industry requirements
- Budgetary requirements
- Curriculum
- Future possibilities
- Demand
- Quality
- Student needs
- Risk
- Market perception
- Strategic direction

Associate Degrees???
**Associate degrees**

AQF Characteristics of learning outcomes:

- Acquisition of the foundational underpinnings of one or more disciplines, including understanding and interpretation of key concepts and theories and how they are evolving within the relevant scientific, technical, social and cultural contexts;
- Development of the academic skills and attributes necessary to access, comprehend and evaluate information from a range of sources;
- Development of generic employment-related skills relevant to a range of employment contexts;
- A capacity for self-directed and lifelong learning.


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**Risks**

- Internal capability to develop and deliver higher education business programs – full fee for domestic
- Market acceptance and demand
- Budgetary issues including resourcing and return on investment
- Legislative and compliance issues
- “Sailing into unknown waters…”
The course development process

- Extensive research to determine industry relevance and requirements
- Business model development
- Course Development Advisory Committee (CDAC)
  - Academic
  - Industry / professional bodies
  - Government
  - Institute
- Review of curriculum and pedagogical requirements
- Review legislative requirements – domestic and international
- Investigate future developments
- Identify and focus on graduate outcomes

Course Development Advisory Committee (CDAC)

Critical to the development of the Associate Degrees with representation from:
- Flinders University
- University of Tasmania
- Victorian Airfreight Council
- My Freight Career Pty Ltd
- Richard Farrell & Associates
- National Institute of Accountants
**Secondary research**

- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- VTAC – demand levels for various courses
- University curriculum – domestic and international
- Professional bodies - accreditation requirements
- Employment data – Commonwealth Government as well as various commercial web sites
- AQF
- Legislation – state and federal

**Greenfields approach**

- Integrated curriculum
- Shared resources
- Common “look and feel”
- Faster development time
- Flexibility for students
- Ability to utilise existing resources and bring in additional resources as required
- Maximise existing knowledge capital and internal capability
The curriculum jigsaw

Focussing on:
- The overall course outcomes - “the BIG picture”
- Connectedness of course objectives, subject objectives, learning outcomes and assessment
- Subject purpose
- Reduction of curriculum redundancy
- Scaffolding of learning both inter and intra subjects
- The development of academic skills and knowledge

Articulation

- Pathways to and from the Associate Degrees were a critical part of the course development
- Providing opportunities for students
- Meeting AQF guidelines
- Working closely with NMIT VET departments as well as other institutes
University pathways

Collaborative approach

- Top down support
- Senior management willing to allocate resources
- Experience within the Research and Development Department
- Extensive collaboration with the Institute’s VET areas
- Degrees developed using a ‘green fields’ approach
- Focus on achieving degree objectives – keeping your eye on the ball regarding what you want the degrees to do
- Focus on graduate outcomes
- Extensive consultation with stakeholder groups
**NMIT’s key success indicators**

- Students – both domestic and international
- Manageable delivery costs
- Profitability
- Sustainable growth
- Platform for the development of other business degrees
- A strong vocational focus!

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**Curriculum and pedagogical objectives**

- Adherence to “Constructive Alignment” principles
  - Assessment alignment
  - Use of formative and summative assessment
- Graduate outcomes
- International focus
- Leveraging off existing VET courses
- Ensuring that the Associate degrees meet AQF guidelines
- Target markets – capability and employment outcomes
- Flexible learning options
- Integrated curriculum
Phase 1 - Curriculum and pedagogical considerations

- Common areas of learning in:
  - Introductory law (All)
  - Economics (All)
  - Management (All)
  - Quantitative methods (All)
  - ICT and knowledge management (All)
  - Financial management (All)
  - Budgeting (All)
  - Risk management, corporate governance and ethics
  - Contemporary issues (All)
  - Cross cultural communication

Phase 1 – As of 2008
1st Year curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate Degree in International Business</th>
<th>Associate Degree in International Business Management</th>
<th>Associate Degree In Accounting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to business law</td>
<td>Introduction to business law</td>
<td>Introduction to business law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management principles</td>
<td>Management principles</td>
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<td>Microeconomics</td>
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<td>Microeconomics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics and forecasting methodologies</td>
<td>Statistics and forecasting methodologies</td>
<td>Quantitative methods</td>
</tr>
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<td>Business environment – Asia</td>
<td>Business environment – Asia</td>
<td>Accounting information systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing principles</td>
<td>Marketing principles</td>
<td>Accounting 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting for managers</td>
<td>Accounting for managers</td>
<td>Accounting 2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Common subjects
**Phase 1 – As of 2008**

*2nd Year curriculum*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate Degree in International Business</th>
<th>Associate Degree in Business Management</th>
<th>Associate Degree in Accounting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional practice</td>
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<td>Professional practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>International business</td>
<td>Risk management and corporate governance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>International marketing and management</td>
<td>International marketing and management</td>
<td>Management accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary issues in business</td>
<td>Contemporary issues in business</td>
<td>Contemporary issues in accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International trade agreements, legislation and compliance</td>
<td>Change management</td>
<td>Company law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply chain management and e-business</td>
<td>International human resource management</td>
<td>Corporate accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International business law</td>
<td>Organisational behaviour</td>
<td>Taxation law and compliance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common subjects

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**Phase 2 - Evolution of the Associate Degrees**

2012 saw the introduction of 2 new degree level courses within the Faculty of Business as well as a revamp of the Associate Degrees

- Bachelor of Business with 2 majors
- Associate Degree of Business with 2 specialisations
- Bachelor of Information Technology with 3 majors
- Associate Degree of Information Technology with 3 specialisations

This introduced greater flexibility for students with an increased emphasis on providing vocational and academic skills especially at Associate Degree level.
Phase 2 - Evolution of the Associate Degrees

Features of the new qualifications

- Scaffolding approach to quantitative and academic research topics
  - 1st Year focussing on descriptive statistics, critical thinking, analysis and research skills
  - 2nd Year focussing on inferential statistics and hypothesis testing
  - 3rd Year focussing on financial and business analysis as well as undertaking an applied research project
- Emphasis on vocational outcomes with the opportunity to provide industry based projects in a number of subjects
- Extensive consultation with industry to ensure the qualifications are relevant
- Emphasis on providing employability skills to graduates
- Academic skills development for transitioning into the Associate Degree, Degree or post graduate studies.

Phase 2 – As of 2012

1st Year curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate Degree of Business</th>
<th>Associate Degree of Accounting</th>
<th>Associate Degree of Information Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic and business research</td>
<td>Business research methods</td>
<td>Academic and business research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management principles</td>
<td>Management principles</td>
<td>Management principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to business law</td>
<td>Introduction to business law</td>
<td>Introduction to business law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Microeconomics / *Macroeconomics</td>
<td>Microeconomics</td>
<td>Foundations of information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting for managers</td>
<td>Accounting 1</td>
<td>Network communication concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing principles</td>
<td>Accounting 2</td>
<td>Business information systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>World business environment</td>
<td>Introduction to sustainability studies</td>
<td>Programming concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Quantitative methods</td>
<td>Elective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common subjects

*Depending on specialisation
Phase 2 – As of 2012
2nd Year curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate Degree of Business</th>
<th>Associate Degree of Accounting</th>
<th>Associate Degree of Information Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry practicum</td>
<td>Industry practicum</td>
<td>Industry practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative methods</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>Database systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Organisational behaviour / Business environment ASEAN&quot;</td>
<td>Risk management</td>
<td>Systems analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Risk management / Supply chain management and a business&quot;</td>
<td>Management accounting</td>
<td>Professional IT practice and ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Human resource management / International business&quot;</td>
<td>Commercial and corporations law</td>
<td>&quot;Enterprise resources / Java programming / Network design&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Quality management / Marketing research&quot;</td>
<td>Corporate accounting</td>
<td>&quot;Supply chain management and e business / Network and system threats / Object orientated programming&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Change management / International trade agreements&quot;</td>
<td>Accounting Information systems</td>
<td>&quot;IT and business fraud / Database programming / Web based systems&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Environmental law / Sustainable design</td>
<td>Elective</td>
</tr>
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Common subjects: *Depending on specialisation
Increased flexibility

Evolution of the Associate Degrees – Phase 3

This model provides graduates with the flexibility required in today’s multi skilled work and business environment.

Example: A student may undertake a vocationally focussed Diploma of Engineering – Technical, embedded within an Associate Degree of Business, leading to a Bachelor of Business majoring in International Trade.

Total Duration – 3 years

Subject to approval and accreditation requirements.
### Phase 3 – Proposed Associate Degree of Accounting curriculum with embedded VET Diploma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUS100 Academic and Business Research (core)</td>
<td>Work based learning subject – either Industry Practicum or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or accounting / business specialisation</td>
<td>Introductory accounting subject – either Accounting 1 or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or accounting / business specialisation</td>
<td>Introductory business law subject – either Introduction to Business Law or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or accounting / business specialisation</td>
<td>Statistics subject – either Quantitative Methods or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or accounting / business specialisation</td>
<td>Introductory management subject – either Management Principles or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or accounting / business specialisation</td>
<td>Accounting subject – either Accounting 2 or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or accounting / business specialisation</td>
<td>Management accounting subject – either Management Accounting or approved vocational studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or accounting / business specialisation</td>
<td>Macroeconomics or Microeconomics (core)</td>
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### Phase 3 – Proposed Associate Degree of Business curriculum with embedded VET Diploma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUS100 Academic and Business Research (core)</td>
<td>Work based learning subject – either Industry Practicum or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
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<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or business specialisation</td>
<td>Introductory accounting subject – either Accounting 1 or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or business specialisation</td>
<td>Introductory business law subject – either Introduction to Business Law or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or business specialisation</td>
<td>Statistics subject – either Quantitative Methods or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or business specialisation</td>
<td>Introductory management subject – either Management Principles or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or business specialisation</td>
<td>Marketing research subject – either Marketing Research or approved vocational studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or business specialisation</td>
<td>Introductory marketing subject – either Introduction to marketing or approved vocational studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic study based on vocational Diploma or Advanced Diploma or general elective from 1st or 2nd year elective list or business specialisation</td>
<td>Macroeconomics or Microeconomics (core)</td>
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</table>
Future trends?

• Associate Degrees bridging the vocational / academic nexus
• Industry providing greater input into curriculum and pedagogy especially at Associate Degree level
• Students wishing to have the flexibility offered by multiple exit points
• Reduction in demand of Advanced Diplomas
• Greater transition from VET Diplomas to Associate Degrees to Bachelor Degrees

NMIT Higher Education Subject Enrolments

![Graph showing enrolments over years]

- Associate Degrees
- Bachelor Degrees
Business Course Enrolments

Future Development Opportunities?
Staircasing Credit Chain

Bachelor Degree
Associate Degree
VET Diploma
VET Certificate
VET In Schools
Industry Short Courses
Private Provider Partnerships
Future Development Opportunities?

Sustaining Growth?

- Small Cohorts - Friendly
- Personalised Timetabling
- Cost Effective Courses
- “Niche” Curricula
- Multiple Delivery Options
  - Blended Mode
  - Online
  - Summer School
  - Weekend Workshops?
  - Auspicing?
- Engaging through VET Relationship linkages
- Building Vocationality
  - Industry Certification
  - In-Built WIL programs