



monash
postgraduate
association

To: Faculty of Business and Economics - Faculty Education Committee
From: Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA)
Contact: Zuzana Quinn, Senior Advocate
Date: April 3 2019
Re: Submission on Discipline Panels and Responsible Officers, 2019 Agenda item E15

The MPA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the above item, working together with the student representatives on the Faculty Education Committee and specifically the circulated proposal. (*Section E, Item 15, and Appendix E7*) The item is tabled for discussion at the forthcoming meeting (03-2019) of the said committee.

The MPA supports a system which allows discipline cases involving examination misconduct to be referred to a Responsible Officer in some circumstances. (recommendation **A2** of paper - Appendix E7).

The MPA is concerned about the proposed delegation of Responsible Officer ("RO") duties to the *Manager, Academic Governance* (recommendation **A3** of Appendix E7) for the following reasons:

1. The RO role across the University has always been filled by academic staff. Academic staff have grass roots contact with students and understand the cohort and student circumstances. Administrative staff, by virtue of their 'arm's length' roles, lack this immediate connection.
2. Examination misconduct is retained by the faculties for the very reason that it is primarily academic in nature and has many academic nuances. Otherwise it would be treated as general misconduct, which ought to be referred out of the faculty to the ROGM. It is therefore not appropriate to have a member of professional staff determine matters of an academic nature.
3. The *Manager, Academic Governance* is the person to whom academic (including examination) misconduct is initially referred by the examinations branch. As such the role administers the matter and processes it, whether directly or by way of delegation. The *Manager, Academic Governance* decides which documents are relevant (in the sense of being admissible) and which are not. The position has ancillary, collateral and potentially prejudicial knowledge concerning each case. Certainly, the *Manager, Academic Governance* may have access to information which is not relevant for the

decision making process but may be prejudicial to the student. (For example the student facing cheating allegations may have been reported to Academic Governance by security in an unrelated matter. This type of information cannot be expunged from the RO's mind. Further the matter will not be made known to the student so that an objection based on perceived bias can't be made.)

4. The governance team oversees the process and compliance aspect of disciplinary matters in the faculty. By having the *Manager, Academic Governance* take on RO duties, the RO would, in effect, be approving his/her own process, being both judge *and* jury.
5. The appropriate time for a RO to make a decision about an examination discipline matter is when all documents are presented and the matter is dealt with *prima facie*.
6. It may be argued that Chief Examiners (CEs) already have collateral knowledge of a discipline matter and yet deal with it in a meeting with the student. However, the CE's penalty options are limited for this very reason, and CEs are academic staff.