

Faculty of Arts undergraduate Student Forum
Meeting 1: Monday 31 March, 2025
Minutes taken by Olivia (Student Life)

Topic 1: Grading and feedback assessment (Anka to lead)

Question 1: Do you feel rubrics extensively cover what is expected of you?

- Essay-based assessments are vague
- Invisible boundaries between a H2A and a H1
- Subjective depending on who is marking
- Different levels of detail in rubrics across different disciplines – humanities vs language subject assessments
- Descriptions of a good answer are vague – “well presented,” “succinct,” “precise” are the general terms used but what does that mean for the subject itself?

Question 2: How would you like to feel more supported through feedback during the teaching period?

- Amount of feedback appears to depend on the type of assessment – but it is frustrating to receive simple, unconstructive comments on an essay (E.g. ‘This is great!’) and still only get a 75
- More examples of previous student answers that met the criteria of the rubric
- Tutors who are available to students to discuss assessments on an ongoing basis created a better experience leading to feeling more confident in expectations

Topic 2: Student networking (Dyumna to lead)

Question 1 and 2: Were there enough opportunities to network when you commenced your studies, and while studying? What sort of networking opportunities are valuable during your time as a student?

- Hard to make friends if you’re only seeing people once a week in class

- Students noticing subjects are being cut, not able to find subjects they want to take and being forced to take electives outside of major/interest area which is leading to less opportunity to see the same people following the same academic path/same interests
 - Hard to convince people to join existing opportunities (e.g. ALC, etc)
 - As a new student, it can be intimidating to get involved when overwhelmed by so much
 - Could opportunities to network/get involved be included in the Arts curriculum where they relate to the curriculum itself?
 - A lot of networking events are locked behind certain programs (e.g. ALC. etc)
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Topic 3: Mentoring in and across Faculties (Anka to lead)

Question 1: What is working well/not working in Academic Mentoring?

- Expectation of some advice on job-readiness and how subjects, skills etc. can lead towards a career
- Students want some kind of structure for the program and what to expect from it
- Option to change mentors – sometimes the relationship is not positive or constructive

Question 2: What is working well/not working in the Melbourne Peer Mentor Program?

- It's difficult to engage students, and very dependent on the group you have
- The program itself is OK for how it is being run, but room for improvement
- Some students are very academic and some are not and just want to socialise
- Mentors wanting more training on how to facilitate sessions – first session was not clear on how things should pan out for that session (O-Week)
- Mentors want to be assigned to their mentor buddy earlier than just a week before the first session
- Mentors would appreciate a workshop (e.g. pretend group) in training – training itself feels very theoretical and rushed

Question 3: What other types of mentorship programs are needed (e.g. mentoring for Honours students, etc.)?

- Honours students aren't automatically included but have expressed a desire to be mentored
- Some discussion on what other opportunities do already exist

Topic 4: Internships and career readiness (Dyumna to lead)

Question 1: Do you feel equipped to go into the job market locally and internationally?

- Enrolling in the Internship Subject the only way to access opportunities specifically for Arts students
- Formal internships are highly valuable, can understand why they don't want first year subjects but first year students are keen to gain experience from early on
- There is a desire to build soft-skills whilst as a student that are adjacent to and which would provide some experience that makes a student ready for an internship – especially in first year, so that you can get ahead and stand out from other students
- Other Faculties make it more obvious how skills being learnt in subjects will be helpful in future careers/skills tie themselves to careers and create job-readiness
- The stereotype of Arts not leading to employment is harsh – students need more awareness of how skills they are learning in Arts subjects will translate to job-readiness and give students confidence in their learning
- BA treated as a stepping-stone to a Masters, not to employment
- Students want to feel job-ready when attending Australia's No #1 University
- Assessments should develop soft-skills, not just critical thinking
- Hard to translate the skills (as laid out in the Handbook) that a subject teaches into specifically job-relative skills

Question 2: Do you have a strong understanding of how to pursue an internship during your studies?

- Faculty doesn't have a database of what internships are available
- Barriers for applying for internships as an international student - it is difficult to get work experience in Australia on a Student Visa that can boost an application or provide opportunities towards an internship
- Opportunities in Arts are very siloed – there is opportunity for cross-Faculty collaboration, especially for areas such as Economics or Psychology

