Conceptions and Construction of Contemporary Australian Bachelor of Arts Programs

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ABSTRACT

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) is the oldest and largest undergraduate degree program in Australia, graduating thousands of students since 1856. Yet contemporary Australian BA programs are under pressure. Deans of Humanities, Arts and Social Science faculties report challenges in articulating the contribution that BA programs make to the preparation of a workforce suited for a knowledge economy. They describe declining enrolments in the BA and increasing attrition rates. They also note a systemic absence of reliable data required to judge the capacity of Arts programs to support and respond to national strategic ambitions.

This study maps and deconstructs planned curricula of BA programs offered in Australian universities between 2007 and 2011. The study draws on comparative historical analyses techniques supplemented with data collected and analysed using focused ethnography methods. This approach enabled a sector-wide scan and analysis of Arts programs at all 39 Australian universities, supplemented by a detailed, focused study of curriculum and processes at three institutions. Publicity materials, official curriculum documentation and personal perspectives were collected and analysed in an iterative manner across five stages of analysis using a framework of common curricula elements: purpose, content and sequencing.

As a result of the changing context, programs are increasingly pressured to meet the needs of a knowledge economy. This pressure results in explicit responses to marketization, managerialism and performativity imperatives requiring curriculum to be viewed from a whole-of-program perspective. Sustained system-wide curricula changes indicate a tendency among Australian Arts programs to embrace the discourse of preparing work-ready graduates, together with a narrowing of discipline offerings and increasingly more prescriptive curriculum structures. A further impact of the changing context is that curricula in generalist Arts programs are becoming increasingly operationalised and constructed at the level of program, rather than at the level of discipline or major.

However, changes made in response to the external and internal pressures did not follow a common trend. Instead, differences in the ways that institutions chose to respond to these pressures resulted in Australian Arts programs taking different forms and purposes across the sector. Despite having similar titles, four distinct models of Arts programs were identified through this research. These different models were also found to be in operation within single institutions. Individuals with different levels of responsibility for curriculum within the same institution were found to hold different views of the program. Despite these differences, those interviewed assumed a consensus of opinion within their institution and across the sector about the purpose and construction of Arts degrees.

This thesis contributes to curriculum practices in higher education by providing a sector-wide view of the contemporary Arts curriculum landscape. It addresses the need for empirical evidence and provides definitions to support the development of a verifiable evidence-base that can be used to inform future decision-making. It also offers models that can be used as heuristics to facilitate informed planning of Arts curricula. The study contributes to higher education curriculum theory by generating an understanding of the impact of the neoliberal milieu on curriculum planning in Australian Arts programs, tracing the decision-making paths in curriculum planning in generalist programs. Finally, it offers a research methodology that combines comparative historical analysis with focused ethnography as a useful approach to researching higher education curriculum.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Deanne Gannaway, March 2015

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Andi and Kaylee, quintessential BA students, who, despite the pressure to study something “sensible” that reflected their stellar school exit scores and would guarantee them a well-paid job on graduation, opted to follow their academic passion.

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GLOSSARY

KEY TERMS

Capstone	In-depth exploration of an area of the curriculum in final year of study. *"a course or experience that provides opportunities for a student to apply the knowledge gained throughout their undergraduate degree. This involves integrating graduate capabilities and employability skills, and occurs usually in the final year of an undergraduate degree"*(Holdsworth, Watty & Davis, 2009, p. 2)
Credit points	Number of points assigned to each unit of study that acts as an indicator of the amount of work required in that unit. Collective of credit points indicates successful completion of a program.
Discipline area	Focused study in one academic field or profession, or branch of learning. Also described as subject, topic or specialty.
Elective	Optional unit of study selected by student. Counts towards required number of credit points to be accumulated to complete a program, but is not a unit specifically stipulated for study.
Entry score	Required ATAR score to gain entry to be able to participate in a program of study. *"The ATAR is a rank that allows students who have completed different combinations of High School Certificate or similar courses to be compared. It is calculated for institutions to rank and select school leavers for admission to tertiary courses".*[1]
Field of Education	Hierarchical structure used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as a standard method to classify the subject matter of an educational activity. The ABS classifies 12 broad fields of education according to relationships according to *"similarity of subject matter, through the broad purpose for which the education is undertaken, and through the*

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[1] http://www.uac.edu.au/media-hub/atar/index.shtml

theoretical content which underpins the subject matter."[2]

Foundation level	Introductory level of study. Typically introduces beginning students to key concepts and core skill sets for further study in this area.
Level	Used in this profile to describe what has traditionally been conceived of as year of study.
Major	The primary field of academic specialisation. A sequence or group of units, typically in one or more related fields of study which are a specialisation within a program. A major denotes a concentration of a number of credit points in a specific subject.
Major convener	An individual or team with responsibility for coordination of the major sequence of study. Functions include planning, design and development, delivery, selection of educational resources and materials, assessment, monitoring students' learning outcomes and responding to evaluation and review. May include management and oversight of the units that contribute to the major sequence.
Minor	A secondary field of academic concentration or specialisation with fewer credit points than a major. Sometimes called a sub-major.
Program	Program is used in these documents to denote a course of academic studies. Sometimes referred to as a degree, award program, or course.
Program coordinator	An individual or team with responsibility for oversight of the program as a whole. Functions include planning, design and development or program rules, program learning outcomes and conducting review and evaluation; management of program delivery.
Required Unit	Unit of study required for completion of program.
Academic leader	Individual in a senior leadership position such as an executive dean, head of school or head of department. Person with resourcing responsibilities. Typically part of strategic leadership team of institution.
Sequence of study	Approved combination of a certain number of modules or units of study in the same or closely-related area of study. Includes majors and

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[2] ABS website http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs)

	minors.
Unit of study	The term “unit of study” has been used to describe a subdivision of a course, subject, or program of study or training. Different institutions may refer to a unit as a course, subject, topic or module.
Upper Level	Academic concentration in a particular subject requiring some grounding or basic understanding. Implies an increasing level of complexity or capacity to function at an advanced level.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank
ATN	Australian Technology Network (network of aligned universities)
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CHA	Comparative Historical Analysis
CHASS	Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. Promotes and provides advocacy services for the humanities, arts and social sciences. Coordinating forum for HASS teachers, researchers, professionals and practitioners.
DASSH	Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities. DASSH represents the executive deans of Faculties of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities in universities and higher education institutions across Australia and New Zealand.
DEEWR	Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations, restructured to form DIISRTE in 2011
DIISRTE	Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, previously known as DEEWR
EFTSL	Equivalent full-time student load. Used as measure to indicate how many students are enrolled in a unit of study
FOE	Field of Education
Go8	Group of Eight (network of aligned universities)
HASS	Humanities, Arts and Social Science disciplines
IRUA	Innovative Research Universities Australia (network of aligned universities)
OLT	Office of Learning and Teaching, previously known as Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) and Carrick Institute of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
RUN	Regional Universities Network (network of aligned universities)
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics disciplines
TAC	Tertiary Admissions Centre
TAFE	Technical And Further Education. institutions offering vocational tertiary education courses
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
VET	Vocational Education and Training

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) is the oldest degree program in Australia, (Pascoe, 2003, p. 8; Pascoe, McIntyre, Ainley & Williamson, 2003) graduating thousands of students since 1856. It is still one of the larger single degree programs in Australia with over 48,000 students enrolled in programs titled “Bachelor of Arts” in 2010 (Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013). Despite the longevity and continuity, BA programs are increasingly under pressure. At a time of widening participation in higher education, there has been a decrease in the number of students enrolling in BA programs (Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013). Deans of Humanities, Arts and Social Science faculties report challenges in articulating the contribution that BA programs make to the preparation of a workforce suited for a knowledge economy (Gannaway & Trent, 2008e). Simultaneously, there is a systemic absence of reliable data required to judge the capacity of Arts programs to support and respond to national strategic ambitions (Turner & Brass, 2014, p. 1). Government quality assurance mechanisms put increasing emphasis on employment outcomes (Rosenman, 1996; Barnett, 1997; Blackmore, 2001; Parker, 2003; Cunningham & Bridgstock, 2012; Bentley, Coates, Dobson, Goedegebuure & Meek, 2013b). The popular press is becoming increasingly dismissive of generalist programs, citing graduate employability (or a perceived lack thereof) as a measure of diminishing value of the program (Sorenson, 2007; Grimston, 2008; P. Cohen, 2009). In some institutions, programs are being closed down as a result of these perceived pressures (Wallace, 2007; Thornton, 2010). In others, major changes to the programs are proposed and implemented (O'Brien, 2007; Trounson, 2011).

1. BACKGROUND

Curriculum in higher education has been repeatedly identified as under-theorised (Trowler & Knight, 2000; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Brennan, 2004; Fraser, 2006; Scott, 2008; D’Agostino & O’Brien, 2010; Karseth & Sivesind, 2010). Studies of curriculum are generally grounded in school education (Marsh, 2004; Brady & Kennedy, 2007; Hicks, 2007) rather than higher education. When the term is used in Australian higher education, it tends to be used in an atomistic manner, focused on content or structure and tends to be used in conjunction with another issue such as “internationalising the curriculum”, for example (Hicks, 2007, p. 5). Curriculum is mainly investigated from the point of view of curriculum designers who are primarily focused on their discipline interests (Toohey, 1999). Studies conducted on curriculum in higher education tend to be focused on disciplinary learning (Entwistle, 2005; Lindbolm-Ylänne, Trigwell, Nevgi & Ashwin, 2006; Anderson & Hounsell, 2007) or on learning in professions-based programs (Stark & Lattuca, 1997; C. Yates, 2007). Few definitions can be found in the higher education sector that offer a conceptual or ideological understanding of curriculum, and almost none that could be applied to a broad generalist degree such as a BA.

In recent times, however, higher education curriculum has become a commodity sold on the international market (Blackmore, 2010). Universities are pressured to deliver a workforce suited to a knowledge-based economy (Saunders & Machell, 2000; Stensaker, 2007) in a time of declining commitment to public funding, increasing public scrutiny and increasing competition from a globalized world (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Typically described as the inevitable outcomes of neoliberal adherence to knowledge-based economics (Peters, 1999; Marginson, 2002; Churchman, 2006), these changes are seen to result in increased managerialism and marketization of universities. The view of the university as the “*custodian of culture, the seat of higher learning and the paradigmatic site of free enquiry*” (Thornton, 2010, p. 376) is perceived to be under threat. The increasingly neoliberal policies that have tied education more tightly to the national economy (Bentley, Coates, Dobson, Goedegebuure & Meek, 2013a) are evident in the post-Dawkin’s era in Australia (Blackmore, 2013, p. 28), the post-Dearing UK (Newton, 2003), in Norway (Stensaker, 2007), in the Netherlands (van der Wende, 2011) and in New Zealand (Roberts, 2007). Even though these policy changes have had a profound impact, “*this major transformation remains curiously under-researched and under-theorised*’ (Shore & Wright, 2000, p. 57). The impact of neoliberal policies on curriculum planning is not being examined despite a environment that is increasingly corporatized and performance-orientated that is “*reshaping academics’ conditions of work and behaviours*” (Newton, 2003, p. 428).

The humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) disciplines are viewed to be most threatened by this new world order (Zipin & Brennan, 2003; Phipps, 2010). They are increasingly seen to be beleaguered, marginalised in an unsympathetic environment. HASS disciplines have difficulty in quantifying and qualifying their contribution in a neoliberal paradigm (Paulsen & Pogue, 1988; Barnett, 2000a; M. Walker, 2009; Nussbaum, 2010). The challenges of proving the acquisition of skills suited to the workplace, in combination with concerns about rising costs and associated burdens of student loan debt, results in the questioning of the benefits of the liberal arts tradition "*on the grounds that its elements do not all contribute visibly and directly to near-term employment*" (Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2013, p. 32). In the contemporary context, the contribution of HASS disciplines to a development of workforce suited for the knowledge economy cannot be assumed. Instead, *"it has to be demonstrated and in terms other than those drawn up solely by the academic"* (Barnett, 2000a, p. 90). It is in this contemporary context that the Australian Bachelor of Arts program operates and this study is grounded.

If HASS disciplines are under threat, then so too are BA programs. The BA is the primary mechanism through which Australian students gain exposure to HASS disciplines. Every year, thousands of Australian undergraduate students enrol and graduate from Bachelor of Arts degree programs offered through most Australian universities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008; Gannaway & Trent, 2008g). Australian students wishing to engage with disciplines as diverse as history, sociology, anthropology, languages other than English, political studies, literature and philosophy generally do so through a program such as a BA.

Two national scoping studies have specifically examined the Australian BA in recent times. Both studies were funded by Commonwealth funding agencies in response to a sector-wide call for such investigations. The first, reported in 2003, aimed to "*clarify the changing historical context for Arts students and their teachers, and also to identify major shifts in teaching practice and learning outcomes for the Arts degree*" (Pascoe et al., 2003, p. 6). The report, "*The Lettered Country*", noted that the Australian BA has evolved towards educating students in skills associated with critical analysis and critique. This report's primary focus was the impact of teaching and learning humanities-based disciplines rather than understanding the nature of the BA program.

A second national scoping study, "*Nature and Roles of Arts Degrees in Contemporary Society*", was completed in 2008, and investigated Arts programs at 39 public Australian universities (Trent & Gannaway, 2008). This study gathered evidence of substantial changes to Arts programs between 2001 and 2008. During this period, Arts programs emerged and disappeared; others changed names and foci. Some universities closed their Bachelor of Arts program down, yet reinstated it a short time later (Gannaway & Trent, 2008). This inconsistency indicated a lack of clarity of the purpose and place of the contemporary Australian BA.[3] The common feature of these previous studies is that they were not specifically charged with interrogating the curriculum of the Australian BA.

There is a widely held view of the typical BA student as a dilettante (Begley, 2007), whimsically selecting impractical subjects with no practical employable purpose at a time when most governmental funding schemes focus on employability and training of a work-ready graduate (see, for example, "Transforming Australia's Higher Education System" Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). BA students typically experience highly individualised subject choices, flexible entry and exit points, a wide range of epistemological frameworks disciplinary offerings and pedagogies through which students appear to navigate at will. BA students experience. Professional pathways for graduates are also perceived to be highly individualised. The flexible nature of the BA suggests that the construction of a program of study is the onus of students, rather than the outcome of deliberate curriculum planning. The Australian BA curriculum has also been described as "*Lego-like construction*"; a "*smorgasbord*" approach (Trounson, 2011); a "*shopping trolley*" full of pre-packaged, unrelated modules chosen on a whim (Gannaway, 2010b).

Possibly because of these views of the curriculum, informants in the 2008 study identified challenges with articulating the value and contribution of the Bachelor of Arts programs (Gannaway & Trent, 2008f). Beyond a description of the BA as providing a "flexible pathway", informants struggled to describe the curriculum of the BA (Gannaway & Trent, 2008d). They reported critiques of the program that described the BA as "aimless" or "directionless" (Kuttainen, Lundberg, Wight & Chang, 2010). Informants described their struggle to justify retaining institutional funding for these programs or expansion in BA programs that were increasingly viewed as marginal and reported being called on to "defend" the program.

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[3] The most recent national study, "Mapping the Humanities and Social Sciences in Australia", conducted in 2014 (Turner & Brass, 2014) examines the current state of humanities and social sciences research, teaching and engagement with the public sector. BA programs are buried within these data, rather than forming a specific focus of investigation.

The challenges in articulating the value of the Arts program were attributed to an absence of evidence supporting the value and contribution of BA programs. This challenge was partly attributed to a lack of a clear definition of what constitutes an Australian BA degree (Gannaway & Trent, 2008e). The term ‘Arts’ is used interchangeably to describe *performing arts* such as drama and dance (Bridgstock, 2006), *creative arts* such as fine arts and media (Fourie, 2009), as well as *liberal arts* which is more generally defined as “*knowledge and inquiry about nature, culture and society”* (Board of Directors of the Association of American Colleges & Universities, 1998).

The purpose, relevance and the value of a Bachelor of Arts degree could be better articulated if there were better understandings of the curricula of Australian Bachelor of Arts programs. If it is unclear what the program curriculum is, then it is hard to justify and explain the continued existence or to evaluate and engage in deliberate changes. While earlier studies suggest that the BA is evolving and changing (Pascoe et al., 2003; Trent & Gannaway, 2008), these changes are difficult to trace because they have failed to gain much attention in the current body of related research. This study specifically addresses the following gaps in existing research identified in the literature review.

1.1. Impact of neoliberalism on Australian BA curricula

The contemporary context of higher education imposes increasing accountability measures on curriculum to ensure higher education meets the shifting economic and social needs of the knowledge economy. Yet there is an absence of systemic studies of how higher education curriculum in general - and the BA in particular - has adjusted to new imperatives and pressures to meet the needs of a knowledge economy. Despite increasing corporatized, performance orientation “*reshaping academics’ conditions of work and behaviours*” (Newton, 2003, p. 428) the impact of neoliberal policies on teaching and learning and curriculum is under-researched (Blackmore, Brennan & Zipin, 2010; Bentley et al., 2013b).

There is pressure on Arts faculties to provide evidence of the value and contribution of the BA to the emerging knowledge economy. Some might argue that a logical conclusion is that the BA has served its time and that the current curriculum practice is unsustainable.

1.2. Scope of existing investigations and arguments

Few studies or arguments evident in the existing body of literature are directly generalizable to the Australian BA program. The scope of many existing reports is either broader or narrower than the BA program. For example, arguments conducted in defence of HASS (Stokes, 1991; Haseman & Jaaniste, 2008) and in tracing the impact of the knowledge economy on HASS (Blackmore, 2001; Zipin & Brennan, 2003; Bullen, Robb & Kenway, 2004) tend to be conducted at the conceptual level. Such studies take into consideration the contribution of HASS disciplines to individuals and societies in the board sense, exploring private and public benefit. They tend to incorporate analyses of research and teaching activities from the view point of the discipline, rather than from that of the end-user. Arguments typically incorporate a range of discipline areas broader than those traditionally included in BA programs. Conversely, investigations that directly investigate the impact and benefits of HASS disciplines tend to be conducted at the level of individual discipline areas (Trudgill, 1977; Frank, Schofer & Torres, 1994; Turner, 1996; Bridgstock, 2006; Lipp et al., 2006; Phipps, 2010). Studies in higher education curriculum have tended to focus on the understanding the experience of individual teachers or students or discipline-based teams (see, for example, Fanghanel, 2007; Ramsden, Prosser, Trigwell & Martin, 2007; van Driel, Bulte & Verloop, 2007). The findings from these studies are not generalizable to understanding the curriculum of the BA on a program level.

1.3. Focus on the level of program

There is an absence of studies conducted in Australia that specifically interrogate the BA curriculum on a program level. Bachelor of Arts programs are generally described as curricula in multiple discipline fields rather than as a holistic program. It may well be perceived that the BA curriculum does not operate at the level of program in Australia; that generalist programs such as the Bachelor of Arts program operate at the level of the discipline (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Lattuca & Stark, 2009; Matthews, Hodgson & Varsavsky, 2013; Mårtensson, Roxå & Stensaker, 2014). However, the BA is marketed as a program. Students enrol into a program based on information profiled in marketing and publicity materials that provide a view of a program as a holistic entity (Gannaway, Berry & Sheppard, 2010) and complete the program by adhering to rules that operate on a program level.

1.4. An Australian focus

Studies have been conducted in the US and Canada investigating curriculum in generalist programs to meet employment and further study outcomes (Adamuti-Trache, Hawkey, Schuetze & Glickman, 2006; Goyette & Mullen, 2006), personal educational outcomes (Anderson, 1993; Seifert et al., 2008) and contributions to the development of a democratic citizenry (Nussbaum, 1997, 2010). However, the concept of the liberal arts education that is the cornerstone of these education systems is defined differently to that experienced in Australia (Blaich, Bost, Chan & Lynch, 2005). Consequently, the outcomes of these studies are unable to be directly translated into the Australian context.

1.5. A paucity of data

Further, there is a paucity of data that is specifically related to the Australian BA (Gannaway, 2014; Turner & Brass, 2014), partly due to the absence of clear definitions of what constitutes an Arts program(Gannaway & Trent, 2008e). In the absence of empirical data specific to the BA to inform decision-making, there is a danger of getting rid of something of value simply because evidence of potential benefit is unclear.

2. OVERVIEW

This research seeks to examine how curricula in Bachelor of Arts degrees in Australia are currently constructed and conceptualised**.** This study aims to provide a rich description of how Australian Arts programs are constructed and conceptualised in the present context. It interrogates the taken-for-granted assumptions associated with the Australian BA, a program that has been in existence throughout Australia's higher education history. It also aims to support practitioners of curriculum planning in large generalist programs such as the BA by providing a framework to interrogate Arts programs at a local level to inform future curriculum planning decisions.

2.1. Research Questions

This research is guided by the research question:

*"**How are Bachelor of Arts curricula constructed and conceptualised in contemporary Australia?"***

The data collection and analysis are guided by the following subsidiary questions:

1. How are contemporary Australian Arts curricula described?
2. How are contemporary Australian Arts programs curricula interpreted?
3. How are contemporary Australian Arts programs constructed and conceptualised in practice?
4. What do the changes in Australian Arts programs that occurred between 2007 and in 2011 indicate about how they are conceptualised and constructed?
5. Is there an explanation for how Australian Arts program curricula are constructed and conceptualised?

2.2. Research Approach

Curriculum has been noted to operate on multiple levels with each level interpreting curriculum differently (Knight, 2001; Prideaux, 2003; van den Akker, Kuiper & Hameyer, 2003; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Watty, 2006). These levels have been variously framed as *planned-enacted-experienced* (Lattuca & Stark, 2009); as *planned-delivered-experienced* (Prideaux, 2003); and *intended-implemented-attained* (van den Akker, 2003) conceptual models. In each model, the levels describe the curriculum as it is intended by curriculum designers, implemented by teachers, and attained by students. This study focuses on what is planned for the students rather than what is delivered to the students, or what the students experience.

The study draws on comparative historical analyses (CHA) techniques (Ruschemeyer & Mahoney, 2003; Mahoney, 2004) supplemented with data collected and analysed using focused ethnography methods (Knoblauch, 2005). This combined approach enabled a sector-wide scan and analysis of Australian Arts programs and a detailed, focused study of BA programs offered at three institutions.

CHA studies typically aim to explain social phenomena occurring over time, drawing on larger data sets including archival documentary sources and sources such as personal accounts. This research maps the curricula of BA programs (or equivalent) offered at all 39 Australian universities in 2007 and 38 universities in 2011[4]. Drawing on CHA methods, data were collected and analysed in an iterative manner across 5 stages of analysis. Elaborated descriptive data were generated for one program at each Australian institution. Publically available curriculum documentation such as program handbooks and marketing materials and secondary data[5] sourced from national government agencies were consolidated into a "program profile" for each university. Program profiles were supplemented by and triangulated with personal accounts from interviews with program coordinators conducted in 2007 and from a focused ethnographic study conducted at 3 sites in 2011.

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[4] One institution had ceased to offer an Arts program from 2008.

Differences and similarities were explored and an explanation for the phenomenon under investigation is ultimately proposed. Planned curricula were deconstructed using an analytical framework and techniques associated with grounded theory. Program profiles were compared horizontally across institutions and across time and analysed vertically within individual institutions. Possible explanations for trends and patterns identified in the stages were then identified. Finally, implications and interpretations of these explanations were considered in light of the context in which Australian Arts programs operate.

3. CONTRIBUTION

This study is a topic of national interest as most institutions make considerable investments in the teaching and learning of HASS disciplines. All Australian institutions have a program that can be categorised as a BA and there are large numbers of students that engage with the program. The proliferation of the studies conducted in defence of HASS disciplines indicates that these programs are viewed to be particularly threatened in the neoliberal world.

The thesis offers a perspective of the landscape of Australian Arts programs and identifies current trends in contemporary Arts programs, generating refined definitions and models of Australian Arts programs. It provides refined definitions of Australian BA programs based on empirical evidence that can be used as a framework to generate the data to address the recognised need for BA-specific data to inform future decision-making.

This study also provides empirical evidence of curriculum practices evident in curriculum design in large generalist programs at a program level, drawing on contemporary Arts curricula as a case in point. A framework is generated as an outcome of this study that can be used by those responsible for curriculum design and renewal of generalist programs, such as the Australian Bachelor of Arts degree programs. The framework supports deliberate planning in curriculum design in Arts programs by providing a mechanism to deconstruct existing curriculum, supporting curriculum review and renewal processes.

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[5] Secondary data is usually defined as data has been collected for a purpose other than the current research project but is relevant and can be drawn on to support the current project (Wiersma, 2000).

It is anticipated that two broad groups of higher education practitioners would be interested in the present study:

- Higher education curriculum theorists and practitioners interested in the processes of curriculum planning in higher education; and
- Practitioners in Arts program curriculum planning interested in the key findings related to the sector-wide conception and construction of the contemporary Arts program in Australia.

This study contributes to higher education curriculum theory by generating an understanding of the impact on curriculum caused by in a neoliberal milieu. It identifies how curriculum planners have addressed contemporary knowledge economy pressures, changing the process of curriculum planning in Australian Arts programs, including the BA. The study also offers models that can be used as heuristics to facilitate informed and more deliberate planning of Arts curricula. Finally, it offers a research methodology that combines comparative historical analysis with focused ethnography as a useful approach to researching higher education curriculum.

4. THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis draws on the staged approach typical of CHA as a structure to address the research questions. This chapter, Chapter 1, introduces the research and provides an outline to the whole thesis.

Chapter 2 provides a systematic review of existing research, offering an overview of the key areas underpinning this study and highlighting the issues that motivate the need for the current study. To begin, an overview of the literature relevant to establishing the context in which contemporary Australian Arts curricula operate is provided, outlining the international and national contexts in which Arts programs operate. Established research in contemporary higher education planning is then critiqued. The conceptual framework emerging from the literature review that guides this study is then outlined.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and provides a rationale for the choice of the methodological approach. The features of the adopted methods are then described and a justification for the selection provided. Chapter 3 also describes the stages of data collection and analysis. A schema of the research design for the study is provided and described, focusing on the steps used in each stage to generate and analyse the data. Finally, the strategies adopted to validate the research process are outlined. The ethical considerations and limitations associated with this approach and the steps taken to mitigate these considerations are presented.

The findings resulting from each stage of analysis of Arts curricula are presented over two chapters. Chapter 4 introduces the features common to all Arts programs and highlights differences in the way the curricula were described. The roles of those with responsibility for curriculum planning and management in Australian Arts programs are identified. Differences evident between the ways the curricula of programs offered in 2011 are described and interpreted. The chapter concludes with an outline of the models developed through the analysis of how Arts curricula were conceived and constructed in 2011. Chapter 5 examines the changes evident in Arts program curricula, comparing the programs available in 2007 with those available in 2011. The motivators and types of change evident in programs are explored to identify potential causes for how Australian Arts programs were constructed and conceptualised between 2007 and 2011.

Chapter 6 discusses these findings in light of the current higher education context to provide a view of how Arts programs are conceptualised and constructed in contemporary Australia. The impact of the contemporary context on curriculum planning is considered. The chapter concludes with strategies to support deliberate curriculum planning offered for consideration.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by presenting the overall outcomes from the research. It outlines the implications of these findings for theory and practice along with an overview of the study’s limitations and opportunities for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a systematic review of existing research, offering an overview of the key areas underpinning this study. To begin, the theoretical underpinnings and practices of developing higher education curricula are considered and critiqued. Next, the international and national contexts in which Arts programs operate are considered and the pressures emerging from the contemporary environment identified. This literature review explores these areas and provides a foundation for this research. The challenges specific to the contemporary Australian Arts programs are described, and the gaps and assumptions evident in the existing research highlighted. The chapter concludes with the presentation of a conceptual framework drawn from the literature review that guides this research.

1. CURRICULUM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Curriculum in higher education is frequently described as under-researched and under-theorised (Donald, 1986; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Hicks, 2007). By contrast, how the curriculum is conceptualised and constructed in the school education sector is well theorised, documented and modelled (Nunan, 1988 ; D. F. Walker, 1990; Marsh, 2004; Pinar, 2004; Ornstein, Pajak & Ornstein, 2007; van Driel et al., 2007; Zeff, 2007; Schiro, 2008; Scott, 2008). The comparative lack of curriculum theory in higher education limits the development of evidence-based conclusions to inform curriculum development in practice (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Newton, 2003; Fraser, 2006; D'Agostino & O'Brien, 2010; Matthews, Divan, et al., 2013). Studies regarding the practice of higher education curriculum indicate that, despite the availability of theoretical frameworks, higher education curriculum designs tend to be atomistic, discipline-based and content-focused (Goodlad, 1979; A. R. Cohen, Fetters & Fleischmann, 2005; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Osberg & Biesta, 2007).

The study of curriculum is a highly contested space with many approaches and points of focus. Many definitions of curriculum are offered, in both the school sector and in higher education, as illustrated by the more than 120 definitions of the term identified by Portelli in 1987 (Marsh, 2004, p. 3). Some examples include:

> *"Curriculum is all the planned learnings for which the school is responsible (see Beauchamp (1981) and Posner (1998), for example)*
>
> *Curriculum is the totality of learning experiences provided to student so that they can attain general skills and knowledge at a variety of learning sites. Opponents to this view include Walker (1994), Cairns (1992) and Moore (2000)*
>
> *Curriculum is the questioning of authority and the searching of complex views of human situations (Slattery, 1995, Parker, 1997, Atkinson, 2000)" (Marsh, 2004, pp. 4-7)*

The notion of curriculum as used in higher education is particularly shadowy. The use of the term "curriculum" in higher education has, in itself, been noted as problematic (Ratcliff, 1997b; Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Barnett, 2005; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006). Some argue the word itself should be avoided in academic discussions because the numerous and varying meanings associated with it often result in miscommunication (Barnett & Coate, 2005), for example, Lattuca and Stark use the term "academic plan" rather than "curriculum design" (Lattuca & Stark, 2009).

Curriculum in higher education offers layers of contestability: pedagogical; ideological and disciplinary. Curriculum design in higher education typically reflects the power of the knowledge fields in higher education and the social context in which it is located (Barnett & Coate, 2005, pp. 39-40). An academic's view of curriculum is "*framed through the deep, underlying epistemological structures of the knowledge fields. Consequently, curricula will be shaped in significant degrees by the values and practices of the different knowledge fields"* (Barnett, Parry & Coate, 2001, p. 436). The academic's loyalty to the discipline is seen to be paramount (Goulder, 1979; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Neumann, Parry & Beacher, 2002; Lindbolm-Ylänne et al., 2006). Rather than a cohesive whole-of-program view,

> *"parts of the teaching and learning process are seen as discrete entities. The parts exist prior to and independent of any whole; the whole is no more than the sum of the parts, or even less. The college interacts with students only in discrete, isolated environments, cut off from one another because the parts - the classes - are prior to the whole. A "college education" is the sum the student's experience of a series of discrete, largely unrelated, three-credit classes". (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p. 19)*

Curricula such as these have been described as "junkyard curricula" that offer students little more than the opportunity to "*scrounge around the yard for four years, picking and* *choosing from among the rubble in accordance with minimal house rules*" (Gaff & Ratcliff, 1997, p. 517).

The meaning of curriculum is further confounded by the perspective from which the stakeholder views the curriculum (L. Yates, 2005). Students, lecturers, course-coordinators and institutions all have differing perspectives of curriculum intention. Some of the voices that typically provide input and directly influence higher education curriculum are illustrated in Figure 1.

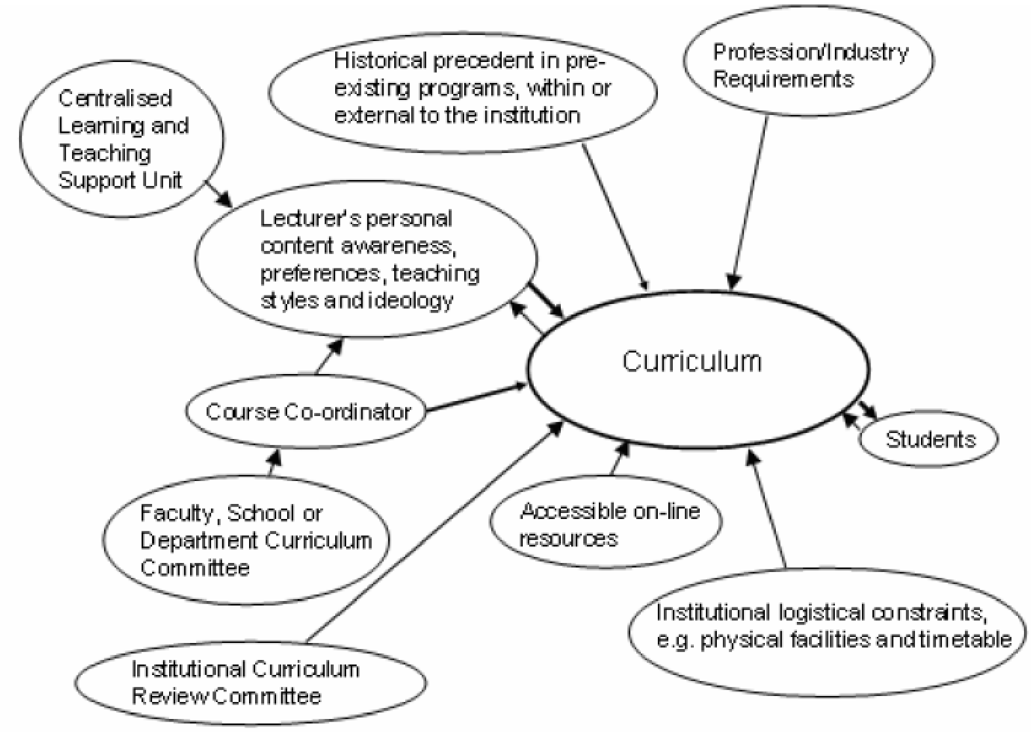
Centralised Learning and Teaching Support Unit
Historical precedent in pre-existing programs, within or external to the institution
Profession/Industry Requirements
Lecturer's personal content awareness, preferences, teaching styles and ideology
Curriculum
Course Co-ordinator
Students
Faculty, School or Department Curriculum Committee
Accessible on-line resources
Institutional logistical constraints, e.g. physical facilities and timetable
Institutional Curriculum Review Committee

Figure 1: Voices involved in higher education curriculum design (Hicks, 2007, p. 9)

Curriculum design in higher education can be likened to "*staff controlling a Ouija board where curriculum is seen as the product of a range of sources"* (Jenkins, 2003, p. 62) Figure 2 illustrates the range of complexities academic staff juggle in making curriculum decisions.

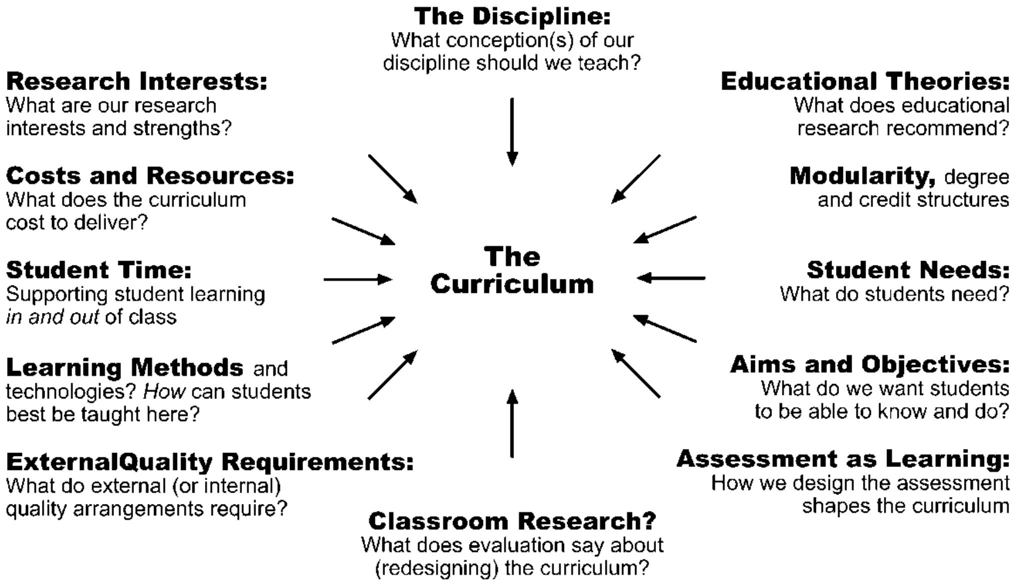
The Discipline:
What conception(s) of our discipline should we teach?
Research Interests:
What are our research interests and strengths?
Educational Theories:
What does educational research recommend?
Costs and Resources:
What does the curriculum cost to deliver?
Modularity, degree and credit structures
Student Time:
Supporting student learning in and out of class
The Curriculum
Student Needs:
What do students need?
Learning Methods and technologies? How can students best be taught here?
Aims and Objectives:
What do we want students to be able to know and do?
ExternalQuality Requirements:
What do external (or internal) quality arrangements require?
Assessment as Learning:
How we design the assessment shapes the curriculum
Classroom Research?
What does evaluation say about (redesigning) the curriculum?

Figure 2: Curriculum design through the analogy of an Ouija board (Jenkins, 2003, p. 163)

The multiple voices, influences and actions evident in curriculum indicate that curriculum planning is a socially constructed process (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998; Brady & Kennedy, 2007; Ornstein et al., 2007; Osberg & Biesta, 2007). Rather than an intangible abstract concept existing outside of the human experience, curriculum design is a "*'people process' with all the attending potentialities and obstacles associated with humans engaged in social interactions. The interests, values, ideologies, priorities, role functions, and differentiated responsibilities form the contours of the interactional and dynamic context in which curriculum decisions are made*" (Gay, 1986, pp. 471-472). Curricula are developed *"within a wider social order and, as such, an understanding of the curriculum cannot be easily accomplished without recognition of the social world in which it has been shaped"* (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 39).The impact of cultural and social perspectives highlights the importance and influence of the context on curriculum planning (Bourdieu, 1996; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Margolis, 2001; Prideaux, 2003; Marsh & Willis, 2007; Lattuca & Stark, 2009).

Consequently, this study adopts a Heideggerian view that an object of inquiry cannot be viewed as context-free (Susi & Ziemke, 2005, p. 10). Therefore, in a study focusing on contemporary Australian Arts program curricula, it is important to gain an understanding of the context in which the curricula are developed and refined.

2. THE CONTEXT

Australian higher education has its origin in the evolution of European higher education. Yet it is also heavily influenced by the international experience, possibly more so in the contemporary context as the world shrinks in response to the increasingly globalised economic, political and social milieu (Marginson, 1999, 2002, 2004). Higher education has traditionally reflected the economic and social needs at particular points in time, changing to reflect broad historical and social needs, new trends within higher education or paradigmatic discipline shifts (Halliburton (1977) in Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 19). This section of the chapter explores the roots of the contemporary Australian Bachelor of Arts, highlighting the changes that occurred in higher education to address the economic and social needs

2.1. Evolution of Higher Education

From the 12th and 13th centuries, early European higher education students were expected to review their Latin (then the language of instruction), acquire the tools of scholarly disputation (Rhyn, 1999), and learn the rudiments of medieval science and mathematics in preparation for professional training (Barnett, 2000a). Institutions with particular specialisations provided postgraduate professional training, for example law at the University of Bologna, theology at the University of Paris and medicine at Salerno University. The sector experienced little change to the higher education paradigm until prompted by the technological innovation and social changes in the early phases of the Industrial Revolution in the latter 1700s. Higher education institutions of the Industrial Revolution had an increasing remit for knowledge generation through research as well as knowledge transmission through teaching. A model of higher education linking these responsibilities, the Humboldtian model, emerged from Germany (Pechar & Pellert, 2004; Wächter, 2004; Ash, 2006). This model linked research and teaching through a four-year generalist undergraduate degree which provided foundations for both postgraduate research and professional training (Bourque, 1999). This model largely shaped early higher education institutions in the United States (Ash, 2006). A further outcome of the social and economic transformation of the Industrial revolution was the emergence of discipline-based academic specialisation and the increasing specialisation of academic labour (Klein, 2004).

The use of the disciplines as an organisational entity began in this period and became more entrenched over time (Barnett, 2000a; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Barnett & Coate, 2005).

Between the 1850s and 1940s, the Western higher education sector adopted a binary approach. Institutions, generally state-funded, were established to provide vocational and professional training. For example, in the US, the Morrill Act of 1862 provided for state-supported teaching-only institutions with a focus on vocational training in agriculture and "mechanical arts" (Trow, 2007). In contrast, other institutions, generally privately funded in the US and by Crown funding in Europe, were established to prepare "*the elite to govern the nation*" (Jarvis, 2000, p. 43). Higher education institutions, such as Harvard and Yale, drew on the Humboldtian tradition of linking teaching and research. This preparation was seen to be of benefit not only to the individual, but also empowering for the state and society (Wilkinson, 2006). Similar purposes were identified in the United Kingdom, which aimed to provide an elite education that shaped *"the mind and character of a ruling class, a preparation for elite roles"* (Brennan, 2004). Similar institutions were established in European countries such as the Netherlands, France and Germany where the "utilitarian-professional" and the "research-dominated elitist" models (van der Wende, 2011) dominated until after World War Two.

Higher education in the post-World War Two era heralded a shift in focus from education of the elite to mass education (Trow, 1973). Exacerbated by the rate of growth in higher education (Trow, 2007), Western higher education institutions were increasingly seen to have the responsibility for the preparation of citizens, communicating a cultural inheritance and training of professionals (Anderson, 1993). The line between the two models in the European binary education system blurred as the system was collapsed into a single system (Bocock & Watson, 1994; Karseth & Sivesind, 2010). Higher education changed from reproducing a ruling elite (Bourdieu, 1996) towards providing "*transmission of skills; preparation for a broader range of technical and economic elite roles*" (Brennan, 2004, p. 22) on a massive scale.

Since the mid 1980s, knowledge production has emerged as a primary economic driver (Barnett, 2000a; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Thornton, 2010). Combined with advances in educational and communication technologies, the higher education sector has been pressurised to move towards providing a universal education supporting the "*adaptation of* *the 'whole population' to rapid social and technological change*" (Brennan, 2004, p. 22). The nature of academic work shifted to accommodate these transformations. Institutions drawing on the Western paradigm were increasingly *"...characterised by such a striking division of labour that one's identity was formed more in the individual units than through membership of the whole clan*" (Barnett, 2000, p. 16).

Further changes in higher education are anticipated in an increasingly globalised, technologically enabled world (Bokor, 2012) contributing to a view that "*the models of higher education that marched triumphantly across the globe in the second half of the 20th century are broken*" (Barber, Donnelly & Rizvi, 2013) and to calls for radical transformation of current higher education systems. The rise in importance of knowledge as capital is seen as the root for a transition towards neoliberalism in the twenty-first century (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 330).

2.2. The Contemporary International Higher Education Context

Contemporary higher education policies and management are influenced by the increase in neoliberal discourse evident in national policies (Zipin & Brennan, 2003; Schneider, 2004; Benneworth & Jongbloed, 2010). The role of the university has shifted to include being a producer of knowledge, but also a producer of workers for the knowledge economy, turning research and education into commodities (Anderson, 1993; Barnett, 1997; Biggs, 2003; Hammer & Star, 2004; Anderson & Hounsell, 2007; Trow, 2007; Thornton, 2010; Blackmore, 2013). Increasingly, neoliberal policy effects university management, funding and curriculum (Levin, 2005; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Stensaker, 2007; Thornton, 2010; Govers, 2011; McArthur, 2011), resulting in increased adoption of structures and processes influenced by marketization, managerialism and performativity.

2.2.1. Marketization

Grounded in the belief that market forces will dictate need in a Darwinian-like "survival of the fittest" paradigm, marketization's fundamental tenet is that the "*market will grow or shrink to accommodate the demand from self-interested, perpetually choosing individuals"* (Roberts, 2003, p. 497).[6]

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[6] This view is explored in detail in the literature review, p. 32

A core feature of neoliberalism is the focus on enabling and nurturing a free-market economy. This feature is based on a belief that "*free markets in both commodities and capital contain all that is necessary to deliver freedom and well-being to all*" (Harvey, 2003, p.201, as cited by Giroux, 2009, p. 30). A free-market economy is enabled by the marketization of entities previously viewed as state-enterprises which are pushed to operate under market pressures. The State's role then becomes one of

> *"…creating the appropriate market by providing the conditions, laws and institutions necessary for its operation…for neoliberal perspectives, the end goals of freedom, choice, consumer sovereignty, competition and individual initiative, as well as those of compliance and obedience, must be constructions of the state acting now in its positive role through the development of the techniques of auditing, accounting and management" (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 315)*

In a neoliberal construct, direct state influence through public funding is limited (Olssen, 2002). Instead, in the public sector, markets "*become a new technology by which control can be effected and performance enhanced"* (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 316). Although the assumption that the market is both a *"more efficient mechanism and a morally superior mechanism"* (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 314) has been widely criticised (Smith, 2003; Levin, 2005; Scott, 2008; Giroux, 2009; Blackmore, 2010; Thornton, 2010; McArthur, 2011), changes to policy structures governing higher education have consistently moved towards the commodification of higher education (Jarvis, 2000; Parker, 2003; Bullen et al., 2004; G. Davies, 2013). This world view encourages the view "*that students (and employers) know what they want and they have a right to get it*" (Blackmore, 2009, p. 860). A neoliberal government encourages competition by withdrawing public funding support and encouraging a user-pays paradigm (Peters, 1999). This process of commodification operates in tandem with a commitment to supporting free trade and laissez-faire. The state limits subsidies and restrictions or protection and encourages "user-pays" access to higher education (Hammer & Star, 2004; Churchman, 2006; Blackmore, 2010; Thornton, 2010). A consequence of limiting public funding of higher education is a closer link between institutional income and student enrolments (Teece, 2012; G. Davies, 2013; Norton, 2013), generating pressure for institutions, programs and disciplines to compete to ensure survival. This view heralds the arrival of what has been called "*the enterprise university*" (Marginson, 2000) and "*edu-capitalism*" (Blackmore, 2013).

2.2.2. Managerialism

Marketization is implemented through managerialism, ensured through accountability measures such as measurement of performance and guaranteed through encouraging competition under the belief that the market will allow the fittest and the worthiest to survive (Olssen & Peters, 2005). A number of contemporary researchers offer a view of "managerialized" higher education that is commercialised, bureaucratic and entrepreneurial (Lingard, Barlett, Knight, Porter & Rizvi, 1994; Barnett, 1997, 2000a; Jarvis, 2000; Marginson, 2001; Hammer & Star, 2004; Harman, 2005; Levin, 2005; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Thornton, 2010). Importing managerial structures and mechanisms directly from the corporate environment and imposed on the academy and curriculum reform in particular have not been found to be successful (Newton, 2003; Zipin & Brennan, 2003; A. R. Cohen et al., 2005). Management and governance in a neoliberal university instead adopts the discourse of public management, "*characterised by a devolution of management control coupled with the development of improved reporting, monitoring and accountability mechanisms*" (Govers, 2011, p. 296). Management structures and organisations are transformed to accommodate the new imperatives to support the knowledge economy. As management and monitoring processes in this system focuses on efficiency, outputs and accountability (Barnett et al., 2001, p. 436), universities are particularly "*vulnerable to consumer perception and satisfaction*" (Blackmore, 2009, p. 857).

The nature of academic work is changing under the pressures of meeting the needs of a globalised, commercially-focused higher education sector, driven by neoliberal policies (Marginson, 2000; Zipin & Brennan, 2003; Barnett, 2005; Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007). Expansion of new technologies requires academics to develop strategies to keep up with knowledge, learn new technologies and how to interact in new ways (Marginson, 2000; Barnett, 2005; Blackmore et al., 2010). Increasing competition caused by marketization sets expectations of heightened productivity for academic staff, yet maintain a disposition that is flexible, entrepreneurial, efficient and open to change (Jarvis, 2000; Haseman & Jaaniste, 2008; Blackmore et al., 2010). Increasing participation in higher education means that contemporary academics are also dealing with a changing student body with expectations of relevance, convenience and economy (Simons & Hicks, 2006; Deem & Lucas, 2007; Fanghanel, 2007). Expectations that study will lead to a job requires that modern academics know about learning-centred teaching, authentic, real-world assessment and strategies to support students to meet these expectations. (Gappa et al., 2007). Coupled with increasing societal expectations for accountability and demand for greater access, excellent research, community engagement, contributions to economic development cost-effectiveness there is an associated increase in bureaucratic tasks (Bentley et al., 2013b). Maintaining an exemplary research record (Barnett, 1997, 2005; Blackmore et al., 2010) further contributes to the increased casualization of teaching as teacher/research academics “buy-out” teaching hours to meet the expected standards in research output (Deem & Lucas, 2007; Southwell, Gannaway, Orrell, Chalmers & Abraham, 2010) and adds requirements for additional skills in managing teaching teams.

2.2.3. Performativity

In a neoliberal context, higher education shifts to being a system that manages and monitors the creation and use of knowledge as a resource to be exploited, rather than knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Knowledge generated, transmitted and stored in universities increasingly needs to be seen as meaningful and useful to the knowledge economy.

> *“Knowledge is no longer required for its own end … but now it is to be judged for the ‘performative’ competencies that it yields….Knowledge is now judged not on its power to describe the world but through its use value. Knowledge has to perform to show that it has an impact on the world”* (Barnett, 2000a, pp. 14, 35).

One such use is to meet the workforce needs of a knowledge economy (McArthur, 2011). Industry has increasingly applied pressure to universities to deliver a workforce and outcomes suited to a knowledge-based economy (Saunders & Machell, 2000; Stensaker, 2007). Learning has become goal-orientated rather than a transformational developmental activity (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Parker, 2003; Bullen et al., 2004) and increasingly vocationally focused (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak & Terenzini, 2004; Walters, 2004; Martín-Moreno, García-Zorita, Lascurain-Sánchez & Sanz-Casado, 2005). Higher education has also come to be seen as an exportable commodity (Sinclair-Jones, 1996) supported by degrees of standardisation such as in the Bologna Process (Pechar & Pellert, 2004; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2010). Students are increasingly viewed as consumers (Levin, 2005; Goos, Gannaway & Hughes, 2011) and the skills they acquire as commodities (Marginson, 2001;

Levin, 2005). The view of the university as the "*custodian of culture, the seat of higher learning and the paradigmatic site of free enquiry*" (Thornton, 2010, p. 376) is under threat.

2.2.4. Impact of neoliberal pressures on higher education

The externally imposed pressures described above result in a clash of cultures between traditional academic values and modern corporate imperatives, and the deconstruction of the academic profession (Stokes, 1991; Sinclair-Jones, 1996; Churchman, 2006; Blackmore et al., 2010; Bentley et al., 2013a). They occur at a time of declining commitment to public funding, increasing public scrutiny and increasing competition from a globalized world (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Lewis, 2008; Barber et al., 2013). As a consequence, the contemporary higher education context is a site of contestation and tension.

One such tensions is the gradual shrinking of the influence of the disciplinary department over the curriculum (Barnett, 1997, 2000a, 2000b; Knight & Trowler, 2000; Trowler & Knight, 2000; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Govers, 2011; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2011). In the recent past, "*the interests, slants and prejudices of the departments, rather than any central or unified sources, have shaped the curriculum*" (Bell, 1965, p25 as cited by Soldatenko, 2001, p. 194). Previously, the concept of 'curriculum' in higher education was foreign to many academics "*who developed and taught units and courses to reflect their own interests with little attention to ensuring coherence or identifying the aims and objectives of teaching*" (Candy, Crebert and O'Leary, 1995, p. 60 as cited by Hicks, 2007, p. 4). Barnett, Parry and Coat (2001) argued that supremacy of knowledge fields in higher education as not only a source of academic identity, but also a means of structuring curricula. Disciplinary loyalties have been perceived in many studies to dominate higher education resulting in curricula shaped by the values and practices of disciplinary fields of knowledge (Kember, 1997; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Lindbolm-Ylänne et al., 2006; Anderson & Hounsell, 2007; Fanghanel, 2007; Cornbleth, 2008).

Addressing the needs of the knowledge economy leads to a transformation of the role of the university in higher education (Bloomer, 1997; Waugh, 2001; Churchman, 2006; Carr, 2009; McArthur, 2011) as one in which the university is now seen as an input–output system (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 323) rather than a site of public benefit (Reading, 1996; Parker, 2003; Barnett, 2005). Ultimately, the knowledge economy, supported by neoliberalism embraces the commodification of higher education. Knowledge becomes, in essence, "*a 'thing' capable of being bought and delivered in module-sized chunks*" (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 10). Learning outcomes become the unit of currency (Trowler, 1998) and curriculum is implemented, controlled and monitored through managerialism rather than educational purpose.

However, in a neoliberal world, where value is measured in performativity, where outcomes need to be managed and assured, and where successfully competing for student enrolments ensures survival, it is no longer enough to teach that which satisfies personal interests. In the contemporary context, the dominance of the discipline in curriculum matters hardly seems possible. The transformation of academics' conditions of work and behaviours (Newton, 2003, p. 428) caused by an increasingly corporatized, performance-orientated higher education atmosphere surely influences teaching and learning practices and curriculum design processes. However, the impact of these changed conditions on teaching and learning and curriculum is not being examined. Instead, "*this major transformation remains curiously under-researched and under-theorised*' (Shore & Wright, 2000, p. 57).

It is in this world context of higher education that Australian universities operate. Australian universities experience similar historical and contemporary pressures to their international counterparts, yet display unique features shaped by Australia's history, geography and political contexts. These features are explored in the next section.

2.3. The Australian Higher Education Context

Higher education in Australia has a relatively recent history. The University of Sydney was the first Australian university, inaugurated in 1852 and graduating the first Australian citizen in 1856. Early Australian programs drew on the long history of European universities and British higher education traditions in particular, but were also instilled with a uniquely Australian flavour.

2.3.1. The origins of Australian Higher Education

Adopting the ethos of developing a classless, egalitarian society in the early colony meant that, although drawing on the elite Oxford and Cambridge traditions, institutions were faculty-based, secular and non-residential, ostensibly open to all (Markwell, 2007, p.

135). Australia broke with the practice imbued in the “OxBridge” model of admitting students on the basis of religion or social class, for example. Instead, Australian students were admitted on academic merit. Women were admitted on the same entry basis as men in 1881, far earlier than their UK counterparts (Sinclair-Jones, 1996). Despite these seemingly socially inclusive strategies, early Australian higher education served a similar purpose to those of universities in the UK and US of educating and shaping an educated elite suited for ruling and governing a colony. Australian universities began as British outposts taking their architecture, staff and curricula from Britain. As teaching institutions, their purpose was to civilise colonial Australians with a received higher learning (Pascoe et al., 2003, p. 21). Modelled on the traditional three-year UK undergraduate curriculum, early programs focused on Euro-centric versions of “traditional” disciplines of mathematics, classics, philosophy, and the “new” disciplines of political and social thought, experimental sciences and languages. While the early institutions borrowed heavily from the British models, they also experimented with research and technological interests and innovations typical of the German and US models (Stokes, 1991; Sinclair-Jones, 1996; Markwell, 2007). However, it was only after the Second World War that Australian universities expanded their intentions of knowledge generation and began to develop an antipodean perspective and flavour to research and creative work (Pascoe, 2003). This expansion was specifically the intention behind the development of the Australian National University (ANU) in 1946. Knowledge generation through research soon gathered momentum across the sector, having an impact on funding, institutional structures and philosophies and on the qualities and content of the programs taught by Australian institutions.

As student numbers grew in the post-war period, the university sector grew from the original six universities in the pre-war period to 39 full universities by 2000. Growth occurred in three main waves. The first group of institutions were founded between the late 1950s and 1970s, with some institutions established as entirely new entities, for example, Monash University. The next group emerged as a result of the amalgamation of colleges of advanced education and institutes of technology, mainly as a result of the Dawkins reforms in the 1980s (Stokes, 1991; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Curri, 2002; Blackmore et al., 2010). Examples of these universities include University of South Australia and Charles Sturt University. The most recent group of universities were established after 1990. Frequently described as “new generation universities”, these universities were founded in emerging regional centres.[7]

As a result of this history, Australian universities exhibit particular cluster characteristics, have particular grouped interests and have developed lobby groups and networks to promote those interests. These cluster characteristics are frequently used to distinguish between different types of Australian universities illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Types of Australian Universities (adapted from Moodie, 2012)

Cluster	Typical Cluster Characteristics	Affiliation
Sandstones	Established before the 1960s Oldest universities in their capital cities Biggest research budgets Biggest accumulations of academic, cultural and socio-economic capital	Generally aligned to the Go8 group
Gumtrees	Established from the 1960s to the mid 1970s Medium-sized research budgets Metropolitan –based	Generally aligned to the IRUA group
Technical	Originally established as technical institutes in a capital city Located in capital cities	Generally aligned to the ATN group
Regional	Established from amalgamations from local community colleges or technical institutes Mostly located in regional centres with a population of fewer than 250,000 people Strong link with TAFE or VET sector Strong distance education presence	Generally aligned in the RUN group
New generation	Designated as universities after 1980s Institutions based on former colleges of advanced education or private institutions Research described as is still developing Mostly located in cities of more than 250,000 people.	Generally non-aligned

Since the 1980s, the sector has seen the emergence of higher education providers other than universities. The tertiary education in Australia has evolved into two sectors: the vocational education and training sector and the higher education sector. The vocational education and training sector delivers government accredited vocational training opportunities through registered training organisations such as technical and further education institutions (TAFE). TAFE institutions are generally funded by state and territory governments, rather than the Federal Commonwealth government. The majority of higher education qualifications are obtained through 39 self-accrediting universities funded through public funding from the Federal Commonwealth government according to the

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[7] By 2014, there were an additional 5 higher education providers which had ‘University’ in their names. These providers include international universities with a presence in Australia. This thesis focuses only on the 39 full Australia-based institutions established through Parliamentary statute.

Higher Education Support Act 2003. There are also a range of specialist privately funded higher education providers, with 129 registered with the national regulatory body, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) by mid-2014 (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2014). Unlike other providers, Australian universities co-produce research and teaching; are required to offer programs of study in at least three disciplinary fields; and are self-accrediting and self-governing communities, generally through entities called councils or senates (Norton, 2013, pp. 14-18). By contrast, other higher education providers can specialise in a limited range of fields of study and are required to be accredited through TEQSA.

2.3.2. Unique features of Australian higher education

Australian higher education exhibits characteristics unique to the Australian context that influence teaching practices and curriculum planning processes.

The vast expanse of the Australian landmass has been attributed to a number of the unique features of Australian higher education. The emergence of distance education, for example, has been attributed to the difficulties and expense of travelling over long distances. Australia was an early adopter of, and innovator in, distance education in higher education (West, 1998), initially drawing on print-based technologies, but also expanding into innovative use of community-style colleges and communication technologies such as radio and, more recently, the internet (Bradley, 2008; Steel, 2009; Narayan & Edwards, 2011). Australian students tend to choose to study in institutions close to the location of the family home (Krause, Hartley, James & McInnis, 2005), rather than travel to an institution with particular discipline strengths or specialisations. This tendency has been described as a feature unique to Australian higher education (Ross, 2011). This preference is illustrated by the student enrolment data provided by DEEWR in 2011, which showed that only 11% of students studied outside their home state.[8]

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[8] *"Interstate applicants (applications) were much less likely to accept an offer than home state applicants. This is consistent with what is known about interstate applicants, that many also apply in their home state (and perhaps in more than one other state) for admission to a limited set of high demand courses with very high entrance standards (such as Medical Studies, Dental Studies and Veterinary Studies). An applicant who applies in several states is more likely to receive an offer in several states but cannot accept all offers made. Hence, acceptance rates for interstate applicants are relatively low".* Undergraduate Applications, Offers and Acceptances 2011, http://education.gov.au/undergraduate-applications-offers-and-acceptances-publications

Despite numerous attempts to differentiate between Australian universities, they typically replicate many of their program offerings. For example, ANU was initially set up in the 1940s with a unique mission of engaging in research to address Australia's strategic needs. Yet, by the 1960s, ANU offered the same arts, science and professional programs as other Australian universities. Further examples are found in universities set up to be universities of technology and the "new" universities, such as Monash, established with focus on STEM[9] disciplines in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These universities soon ended up replicating the standard offerings. Due to legal and union requirements, universities are compelled to research in areas in which they teach (Norton, 2013, p. 8), meaning that the replication of teaching programs also replicates centres of research. The end result is that the Australian higher education is "*dominated by autonomous, professional, comprehensive, secular, public and commuter universities sharing very similar missions*"(G. Davies, 2013) and offering very similar programs. Market diversification and differentiation is not as pronounced in the Australian context as what might be experienced elsewhere and institutions tend to compete for student enrolments with other institutions in the same local area (Marginson, 2004).

A further unique feature of the Australian higher education system is that all Australian universities are shaped by direct influence from the State. Unlike the UK, where universities were established by royal charter, or the US elite institutions which emerged through private philanthropy, Australian universities were established through Parliamentary statute (Sinclair-Jones, 1996, p. 8). While these Acts of Parliament enabled universities to maintain a high degree of autonomy in terms of accrediting and curriculum development processes, it also fundamentally connected them to the State (Marginson, 2002). Unlike many US universities, Australian public universities do not have substantial alternative revenue sources. Approximately 60% of university income comes from government grants or loans (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2014, p. 3). Recurrent funding for teaching and learning is allocated according to formulas based on student numbers (Teece, 2012) [10]. The dependency on government funding means that the Commonwealth has considerable influence over university education in Australia and indirectly influences curriculum decision-making by forcing universities to make market decisions.

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[9] Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics disciplines

[10] There is pressure from the current Commonwealth government to make substantive change to funding arrangements. These issues are not yet resolved at the time of writing this thesis. Amendments are anticipated for further consideration in 2015.

2.3.3. Recent changes affecting the Australian higher education sector

Regardless of their history, all contemporary Australian universities are facing growing pressure to meet the demands from increasingly neoliberal government (Marginson, 1999, 2001; Zipin & Brennan, 2003; Bullen et al., 2004; Marginson, 2004; Olssen & Peters, 2005). In recent years, the Commonwealth government has progressively adopted neoliberal policies that promote and underpin a knowledge economy. As Marginson noted:

> *"almost every policy move from the mid 1980s …was powered by faith in markets and the business model of higher education. This was the faith that the three 'Cs' of competition, corporatism and consumerisms would lift efficiency, performance and rates of innovation; strengthen accountability to government, students and business; and provide fiscal relief"* (Marginson, 2004, p. 3).

The Australian higher education sector has been directly shaped by a series of Commonwealth reports that resulted in policies and actions on the part of the Commonwealth state (see, for example, DEET, 1993; Commonwealth of Australia, 2001; Bradley, 2008; Commonwealth of Australia, 2009; Australia in the Asian Century Task Force, 2012).

These policies have had a direct impact on the higher education sector, and on the 39 universities in particular, compelling the sector to act as producer of knowledge and of a workforce suited to the needs of the knowledge economy. In facing pressures to service the needs of the knowledge economy, Australian universities are increasingly seen as the suppliers of "*knowledge and knowledge workers - those capable of converting research and knowledge into economic commodities*"(Bullen et al., 2004, p. 3). They are under pressure to develop 'human capital ', that is, "*the knowledge, skills and motivations embodied in people in response to the growing reliance on knowledge and information-intensive industry outputs*" (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002, p. 17) Further, universities are increasingly required to meet demands from professions to ensure that graduates are "*work-ready*" and fully competent on graduation (Rosenman, 1996, p. 35).

The implementation of neoliberal policies and processes in Australian institutions appears to have been largely uncontested. Relatively little resistance to the introduction of neoliberal policies and processes is apparent (Zipin & Brennan, 2003; Blackmore et al., 2010; Bentley et al., 2013b). This is not surprising. Conformity and compliance are seen to typify the corporatized university (Thornton, 2010, p. 391). The absence of overt resistance to imposed change can be explained by individuals typically scaling down their aspirations and making the best of a bad situation, choosing what might be considered optimal given the available options and the lack of viable alternatives (Nussbaum, 2001). Changes are assimilated and adapted to the extent that they come to be seen as natural and inevitable. Instead of resisting change, "*teachers and managers are prepared to try new techniques which claim to help them meet their targets more easily*" (Coffield, Moseley, Hall & Ecclestone, 2004, p. 125). Examples of this accommodation evident in related research findings include the assimilation and gradual acceptance of raising student-staff ratios and the gradual invasion of the teaching space by quality assurance processes and protocols. Ironically, neoliberalism encourages assimilation, as Blackmore et al noted

> *"the individual whose ideals are in many ways antithetical to neoliberalism, and who is most vulnerable to it, is the one who will work at making neoliberal forms of government work, not through any love of neoliberalism, but through a love of what neoliberalism puts at risk"* (Blackmore et al., 2010, p. 13).

2.3.4. Need for this study

There is an absence of understanding of the long-term, large-scale impact of neoliberal policies on Australian higher education curricula, particularly on a whole-of-program scale (Blackmore, 2001). The impact of neoliberalism on university governance (Barnett, 1997; Zipin & Brennan, 2003; Blackmore, 2010; Blackmore et al., 2010) and the nature of academic work (Trowler, 1998; Trowler & Knight, 2000; Gappa et al., 2007; Blackmore et al., 2010; Bentley et al., 2013a, 2013b) have been the subject of inquiry for many studies. Studies of restructuring addressing the needs the knowledge economy in curriculum and leadership and responding to neoliberal imperatives have been conducted in the Australian K-12 school sector (Blackmore, 2004). The transition of student to consumer (Griffin, 2006) and the shift from teacher-driven to student-driven pedagogy (Barnett et al., 2001) suggests a paradigm shift from a transmission mode of curriculum to a focus on designing curriculum for learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

However, little information is available on how curriculum changes implemented in response to increased managerialism and marketization have actually affected teaching activities and student outcomes (Harman, 2005) in large-scale generalist programs such as the BA. Those studies that are conducted are generally single institution exercises (Markwell, 2007; Kreager, 2013) or trace the impact on a subsection of HASS disciplines (Phipps, 2010; Bridgstock, 2013). It has been argued that this status quo opens up the level of control that the federal government has to compel universities to accept policy criteria such as adhering to new quality assurance regimes through *"threatening or actually cutting funding provision"* (Zipin & Brennan, 2003, p. 361). This pressure also introduces " *a new logic into the choice of disciplines, selection criteria for entry, even the economics of commuter versus residential students*" (G. Davies, 2013). Universities find themselves determining the disciplines that contribute to teaching and learning in response to market forces rather than national priorities (Turner & Brass, 2014, p. 37). What impact these market forces have on the processes of curriculum planning is currently unknown.

The impact of this contextual shift on Australian generalist programs is currently under-explored. As one of the largest Australian generalist programs, the Australia Bachelor of Arts provides a suitable subject for investigating the impact of the shift to neoliberalism on curriculum planning.

3. THE AUSTRALIAN BACHELOR OF ARTS

Historically, the Bachelor of Arts (BA) has been the main manner in which students engage with HASS disciplines. On the surface level, it appears that Arts programs are successful. Numbers of students engaging with the Society and Culture field of education are constantly growing (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2014; Turner & Brass, 2014). Student enrolment numbers in the Society and Culture field of education are consistently second only to enrolments in the Management and Commerce field of education (DEST, 2007; DEEWR, 2008). Yet, seemingly contradictorily, Australian Bachelor of Arts programs are described as existing in a state of crisis (Begley, 2007; Sorenson, 2007; Wallace, 2007). Data appears to contradict reports from academic leaders of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities faculties across Australia that enrolments in BA programs are declining (Gannaway & Trent, 2008g). These difficulties are explored further in this section of the literature review.

3.1. Value of Australian BA programs

The value of the BA has been repeatedly questioned. Articulating the value and contribution of the Bachelor of Arts programs in the contemporary context is challenging (Bérubé, 2003; Mather, 2007; Gannaway & Trent, 2008f). Informants in an earlier study reported being called on to “defend” the program, and acknowledged an absence of evidence supporting the “value” of BA programs (Gannaway & Trent, 2008e, p. 10). Informants described struggling to justify retaining institutional funding for these programs or increase in “marginal” degree programs (Haseman & Jaaniste, 2008). BA programs are described as no longer relevant to the contemporary Australian context (Cunningham, 2004), students struggle to articulate their learning as relevant to prospective workplaces (Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013), a clear sense of the public benefits associated with the study of social sciences and humanities is absent (M. Walker, 2009) as are clear direct pathways to employment from study in HASS disciplines (Waugh, 2001). As HASS disciplines have difficulty in quantifying and qualifying their contribution in a neoliberal paradigm, they are increasingly seen to be beleaguered, marginalised in an unsympathetic environment.

In the increasingly neoliberal context of contemporary Australian higher education, HASS disciplines are particularly vulnerable. This vulnerability might be due to the fact that the humanities and creative arts are conspicuously absent in Australian knowledge economy policies and statements. For example, the 2001 *Backing Australia’s Ability* Commonwealth position paper calls for the development of a workforce suited to providing an innovative contribution to the knowledge economy (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001, p. 8). But the concept of “innovation” is largely defined in these documents as a techno-economic construct (Bullen et al., 2004) with a greater focus on science and technology as crucial to the supporting the knowledge economy. Policy documentation related to creativity such as *Creative Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011a) centres on the impact of the Creative Arts and Creative Industries. Consequently, creativity is seen as the preserve of the Creative Arts and innovation the preserve of science and technology. The influence and potential for humanities and social sciences to act as a producer of innovation or creativity is largely ignored. This view is reflected in the reductions in research funding for humanities and social sciences in Australia in the early 1990s are perceived to demonstrate the Commonwealth government’s “*attitude towards the ‘uselessness” of the humanities, and its* *intention to increase funding to more economically "useful" areas such as biological science, engineering and applied science*" (Stokes, 1991, p. 1). By contrast, UK policy has adopted a socio-economic definition of innovation. Public benefit and contribution of applied arts such as media to the knowledge economy are highlighted in documents such as the British *Creative Industries Mapping Document* generated for the Blair government where there is a link made between innovation and HASS disciplines (Bullen et al., 2004). A socio-economic definition places a higher value on social sciences and the humanities and the development of a socially responsible citizen (Marginson, 2001; Bullen et al., 2004; Kenway, Bullen & Robb, 2004; Nussbaum, 2010; Thornton, 2010; van der Wende, 2011).

Despite the studies highlighting the public and economic potential of graduates of HASS disciplines, outcomes from Arts have been found not to be valued by prospective employers, who tend to value the employability skills expressed in vocational programs over those acquired in HASS based programs (Lin, Sweet & Anisef, 2003; Adamuti-Trache et al., 2006; Carr, 2009). This preference occurs despite there being found a "*surprising lack of difference*" between the skills sets exhibited by graduates from liberal arts programs and vocation-based programs (Lin et al., 2003, p. 16). Similar findings emerged from similar studies conducted in Australia (Waugh, 2001; Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013).

This perception is perpetuated by the current Australian quality assurance processes which include publication of the results of a Graduate Destinations Survey (GDS) administered to all Australian graduates within 6 months of graduation. This survey "*collects information regarding graduates' employment and salary outcomes, continuing study and labour market status, job search behaviour, previous education history and other key respondent characteristics*"(Graduate Careers Australia, 2012). The results are disseminated as reports across secondary schools nationwide[11] and are published on the MyUniversity website, designed to provide students with information to inform program selection (Australian Commonwealth Government, 2013). When viewed in the user-pays context of the contemporary Australian university sector, the value of the humanities as a return on investment may also impact the valuing of the program. Data collected in the graduate destinations surveys indicate that students of HASS disciplines are identified as lowest earners post-graduation (Lewis, 2008). They are also least likely to get a job in professional or managerial employment (Norton, 2013, p. 70). Yet, Australian domestic humanities students pay the second highest percentage towards their education, averaging 52% of the cost of their education in comparison to medicine where students pay an average of 30% of their education. While law and commerce students effectively pay 83% of their education (Norton, 2013, p. 52), their return on investment is generally larger as they are more likely to be employed in higher salaried positions earlier than humanities students (Lewis, 2008; Daly & Lewis, 2010; Norton, 2013).

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[11] For example, http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/GCAGradStats2013.pdf

While there is an indication that the contemporary BA is evolving to meet the needs of the knowledge economy in response to pressures, it is difficult to trace because of gaps in the current body of related work. Internationally, there is a long history of defending HASS-based programs such as the BA. Investigations examining the contribution of HASS disciplines tend to include the contribution of HASS to the world of research, to public policy and public good (Bigelow, 1998; Cunningham, 2004; Harpham, 2005; Simons & Hicks, 2006; Haseman & Jaaniste, 2008; Parker, 2008; Benneworth & Jongbloed, 2010; Bate, 2011; Looseley, 2011; Benneworth, 2014; Turner & Brass, 2014). This defence occurs on many different levels, from stating the contribution of HASS to developing a socially responsible citizenry and democratic, empathetic world citizens (Plumb, 1964; Nussbaum, 1997; Seifert et al., 2008; Nussbaum, 2010) to articulating the importance of the contribution of HASS skill sets to the economy and to particular vocations (Adamuti-Trache et al., 2006; Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2013) to stipulating the contribution of HASS to individual’s capacity to innovate and to create (Simons & Hicks, 2006; Fourie, 2009; Phipps, 2010).

The foremost mode of contact that HASS academics have with the public is through teaching in programs such as the BA, yet studies defending HASS disciplines tend to focus on attempting to convince government agencies of the public benefit of HASS through contributions to policy, to developing an educated citizenry, to the public good (Fish, 2008). The value of HASS disciplines has been described in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic worth and their contribution to the knowledge economy, for the public good, and for individual benefit. Studies investigating the contributions of studies in HASS to developing crucial skills suited to the knowledge economy include the development of crucial skills in innovation and creativity (Phipps, 2010); critical thinking (Bassnett, 2002); interpretation of human activity (Bérubé, 2003); the understanding of cultural differences (Griffin, 2006) and the contribution of HASS to the sciences (Council for the Humanities Arts and Social Sciences, 2012). Some researchers claim that study in HASS contributes to the public good through providing a space to challenge and surface societal problems (Giroux, 2009; Mulcahy, 2010). Others highlight the value of HASS to enabling questioning what it means to be human (Summit, 2012), arguing for the intrinsic value in the qualities of mind and intellect (Carr, 2009), based on "*assumptions about the individualised rather than collective benefits"* (Marginson, 2004, p. 3). Still others describe value in terms of contributing to the development of the "*necessary communicative and critical skills that are so invaluable to the socially and politically engaged citizen*" (Hammer & Star, 2004; Griffin, 2006). Regardless of the focus, rather than HASS disciplines being viewed as a valuable service or public commodity, they have to justify their value and demonstrate that they value-add and contribute to society, as "*the added value cannot be assumed: it has to be demonstrated and in terms other than those drawn up solely by the academic*" (Barnett, 2000a, p. 90)

The perceived importance of demonstrating this value is evident in the increase in number of studies recently commissioned by a range of national bodies. Key studies conducted over the last 15 years are outlined in Table 2. The proliferation and the range in focus of the recent studies indicate that the sector is under pressure to explain, explore and justify the value of HASS disciplines. Commissioned studies have investigated social, economic and political contributions of HASS disciplines in Australia. Other studies have been conducted drawing on competitive funding from national funding sources such as the Australian Research Council (ARC) grants and the Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) and its predecessors[12].

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[12] Innovation and development in teaching and learning in Australia has been funded by a series of national bodies, each with different structures, programs and budgets providing public funding on a competitive basis. Most recently, investigations of teaching and learning in Australian higher education have been funded by the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC) 2002- 2005; Carrick Institute of Higher Education 2005 – 2008; Australian Learning and Teaching Council (2008 – 2011) and Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) 2011 - present

Table 2: Recent studies regarding the value and contribution of HASS disciplines in an Australian context

Funding source	Year	Title	Focus
Academy of Humanities	1992	Knowing ourselves and others: the humanities in Australia into the 21st century (Vol2 & 3) (Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1998)	Vol 3: Research and research training in the Humanities in the Universities Vol 2: Survey of Humanities disciplines
Council for the Humanities Arts and Social Sciences	2004	The humanities, creative arts and the innovation agenda(Haseman & Jaaniste, 2008)	Exclusion of Arts in Australian Government innovation policy development
	2008	The arts and Australia's national innovation system 1994-2008: (Cunningham, 2004)	Relationship of creative arts to the innovation agenda and the knowledge economy
Deans of Humanities, Arts and Social Science	2012	Benchmarking the Australian Bachelor of Arts: A summary of trends across the Australian Bachelor of Arts Programs (Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013)	Trends in uptake across Arts programs between 2008 and 2012
Academy of Social Sciences	2008	The Labour Market, Skills Demand and Skills Formation(Lewis, 2008)	Formation and use of skills and future skills requirements in the contemporary labour market
Academies of Social Sciences & Humanities	2014	Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia	Positioning of HASS disciplines and potential impact on Australia
Australian Research Council	2002-2005	Knowledge/economy/society: a sociological study of an education policy discourse in Australia in globalising circumstances (Bullen et al., 2004)	Understandings of the knowledge economy and knowledge society informing current education policy and educational practice in Australia
Office of Learning and Teaching (and predecessors)	2001	The Lettered Country(Pascoe et al., 2003)	Review of historical context and outcomes of HASS teaching and learning
	2008	Nature and Roles of Arts Degrees in Contemporary Society (Trent & Gannaway, 2008)	Review of the nature and roles of BA programs between 2001- 2008
	2013	Employability of graduates of BA degrees (Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013)	Investigate strategies and impact of strategies designed to affect employability of BA graduates

As illustrated in Table 2, comparatively few studies have specifically focused on BA programs. "*The Lettered Country*" (Pascoe et al., 2003) traced the evolution of Arts programs over the last 150 years. This evolution is summarised in Table 3. This study was completed in 2000, before the ramifications of the impact of the neoliberal changes implemented in the 1990s were really evident. It also focused on HASS disciplines in the broader sense rather than on curriculum adjustments in the BA.

Table 3: Evolution of the focus of the Australian Bachelor of Arts (adapted from Pascoe et al., 2003)

Era	Focus
1860s - 1930s	Preparation of a colonial elite
1930s - 1960s	Construction of an Australian perspective
1960s - 1990s	Development of social and individual awareness

The "*Nature and Role*" (Trent & Gannaway, 2008) focused on identifying broader trends surrounding BA programs rather than identifying aspects particular to the curriculum. It highlighted the gaps in current understandings of BA degrees (Gannaway & Trent, 2008b) and formed the ground work on which this current study is built. Further multi-institution investigations building on the findings from the "Nature and Roles" project were commissioned. These investigations include the "*Employability of BA graduates*" (Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013) funded by the ALTC and the follow-up study to "*Nature and Roles*" study commissioned by DASSH "*Benchmarking the Australian Bachelor of Arts*" (Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013).

The most recent study, the "*Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia"* project (Turner & Brass, 2014) is a collaboration between the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. It is intended as a companion volume to the STEM focused report, **"***Health of Australian Science: Mathematics, Engineering and Science in the National Interest*", instigated by Australia's Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb. The STEM report resulted in the Government funding a $54 million program focussing on maths and science, including in teacher training at university, in the 2012 budget. The *Mapping the Humanities* report has the Chief Scientist as its patron and aims to raise awareness of the contribution of HASS and anticipates similar investment as the previous report. The combined Academies are currently engaged in other projects focused on developing an understanding of the place and role of Arts to inform the current "Inquiry into Australia's Innovation System" instigated by the Senate Economics References Committee indicating a sector-wide interest in understanding the value and contribution of Arts programs.

While the BA is still the program through which the majority of students encounter HASS disciplines (Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013), it is no longer enough to argue that the BA exists because it always has. Yet no studies were identified during this review of the literature that provided a systemic study of how Bachelor of Arts curricula have adjusted to new imperatives and pressures to meet the needs of a knowledge economy. The absence of a comprehensive study of the BA curriculum makes it difficult to trace what adjustments have been made to the BA to accommodate the transition to a knowledge economy.

3.2. Understanding what constitutes a BA program in Australia

A possible reason for the lack of studies on the BA evident in the literature could be due to the absence of a clear definition of what constitutes a BA degree in Australia. Discussions related to the value and contribution of the Arts cannot be held, unless there is some degree of clarity by what is meant by “Bachelor of Arts”.

The lay understanding encompasses and focuses on Arts as a creative, practice-based enterprise, as illustrated by this graduate’s observation in an interview asking for reasons for choosing to engage in BA : “*I did a BA (International Studies) as part of a double but my studies had nothing to do with Arts because I can’t draw. I did Modern History and Politics*” (Gannaway et al., 2010). A shared understanding is assumed amongst those responsible for curriculum decision-making, but deeper examination of both academic literature and policy documents reveals that an understanding is not necessarily universal (Belfiore & Bennett, 2007, p. 136). The term ‘Arts’ is used interchangeably to describe *performing arts* and *creative arts* such as dance, fine arts and music (Belfiore & Bennett, 2007; Fourie, 2009; Phipps, 2010); *applied arts* such as studies with direct vocational application such as media and journalism, marketing, public relations and communication studies (Bridgstock, 2006; Cunningham & Bridgstock, 2012); and *academic arts* such as those disciplines traditionally associated with liberal arts programs such as classics, philosophy, history and languages (Pascoe et al., 2003; Adamuti-Trache et al., 2006; Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013; Gannaway, 2014).

The nature and roles of the BA in Australia (Gannaway & Trent, 2008d) developed a working definition to guide the scope of the project. In developing this definition, it was noted that that there were programs captured in the definition that were not called “Bachelor of Arts”. There were also instances where the program with the title “Bachelor of Arts” did not meet the definition. These findings confirmed an increasing trend of offering programs extracted from the generalist Bachelor of Arts program noted previously (Pascoe et al., 2003). These programs were specifically ‘named’ or ‘tagged’ with the specialisation in the program title, for example Bachelor of Psychology and Bachelor of Arts (Journalism), Bachelor of Archaeology or Bachelor of Arts (Archaeology) Some programs were professional programs with input from professional associations and accreditation requirements and highly structured pathways, while others were generalist degrees.

Because of the absence of a clear understanding of what constituted an Arts program, however, it was difficult to decide whether these types of programs should be categorised as transformations of BA curricula.

Longitudinal large-scale studies tracing the impact of transformation of curricula in the HASS disciplines do exist (Blaich et al., 2005; Adamuti-Trache et al., 2006; Seifert et al., 2008; Mulcahy, 2010; Nussbaum, 2010). However, these were generally conducted in Canada or the US and tend to focus on the contribution of a general education, liberal education or the liberal arts. These notions are not generalizable to the Australian context because, while the Australian BA incorporates many features of the US model, it also incorporates features of the UK model. The Australian BA is distinct from the liberal arts model entrenched in the US higher education sector and also prevalent in Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Korea and Japan (Nussbaum, 2010). Liberal arts programs are generally considered a preliminary program providing a generalist education prior to engaging with professions-based postgraduate study. By contrast, while many Australian students do engage in professional postgraduate study after the BA, the BA is not generally required as precursor to professional study. In most institutions, Australian students engage with study in the professions in an undergraduate program. Australian BA students are also not required to complete units emphasising citizenship and democratic social responsibilities (Klassen, 2013), a typical requirement of US liberal arts programs. Nor are they expected to engage in both science and humanities based disciplines in the first two years of study (Nussbaum, 2010, pp. 17-18), a further distinction from the US experience.

The Australian BA is closer aligned to the UK model where a substantial portion of students enter the workforce after three years of undergraduate study (Trow, 2007). Australian BA programs have similar program structures to the UK and contemporary European models of generalist Arts degrees. They generally require the successful completion of 24 modules, frequently called “units of study” or “subjects”. Study is generally conducted over a 12-week semester or trimester, with the expectation that a full-time study load could be concluded in 3 years. Content, learning activities, pedagogies and assessment are linked together as a sequence of study such as a major. However, unlike the UK experience, Australian BA students are generally not compelled to identify a major pathway, such as geography or history, prior to enrolment, although they are expected to "declare" a major later in the program. Rather than the focused study of a single subject typical of the UK experience, Australian students are generally required to engage in a range of subjects, similar to the US liberal arts model (Latzer, 2004).

Australia lacks a clear consistent vision of the intention and purpose of the BA. This absence is expressed in the questions of the value of the degree (Begley, 2007; Sorenson, 2007) and the disquiet expressed by academics interviewed in the national scoping study (Trent & Gannaway, 2008). While it has been noted that there is very little systematic study of liberal arts education in the US (Short, 2002, p. 145) there is evidence of attempts to define what is meant by the terms such as general education, liberal education and liberal arts education. For example, statements such as the Association of American Colleges & Universities "Statement on Liberal Learning" provide an overview of the intention behind the liberal arts program.

> *It is an education that fosters a well-grounded intellectual resilience, a disposition toward lifelong learning, and an acceptance of responsibility for the ethical consequences of our ideas and actions. Liberal education requires that we understand the foundations of knowledge and inquiry about nature, culture and society; that we master core skills of perception, analysis, and expression; that we cultivate a respect for truth; that we recognize the importance of historical and cultural context; and that we explore connections among formal learning, citizenship, and service to our communities.* (Board of Directors of the Association of American Colleges & Universities, 1998).

Similar statements about what constitutes a generalist Arts program are absent in the Australian context. The lack of a definition means that those responsible for curriculum decision-making

> *"talk about "curriculum" with the untested assumption that they are speaking a shared language (Conrad & Pratt, 1986). This illusion of consensus becomes a problem when groups with different views come together to work for curricular improvement. In such circumstances, participants often argue from varied definitions and assumptions without spelling them out, particularly in working groups that include many disciplines"* (Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 3)

A consequence of the lack of a clearly articulated common definition is a paucity of suitable data to address the increasing demands for accountability and assurance of standards and outcomes typical of a neoliberal context (Roberts, 2007; Fourie, 2009; Cunningham & Bridgstock, 2012; Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013; Turner & Brass, 2014). The absence of a consistent set of data generates flawed views of the Australia BA making it difficult for the BA to provide data that provides an accurate account of the current status of the BA. As a consequence, decisions are made on "*ad hoc, anecdotal evidence*"(Turner & Brass, 2014, p. 6).

The reason for this opacity lies in the inconsistency of the parameters used to draw the data to describe the state of the Arts. In Australia, the "Society and Culture" field of education (FOE) is usually used to describe Arts programs. All data related to student participation, satisfaction and outcomes in BA programs are reported on a national level according to this field of education categorisation rather than on a program level. However, the use of the field of education (FOE) of Society and Culture as a placeholder for BA programs is flawed. The Society and Culture FOE includes professions-based disciplines that are not generally associated with the BA such as Law, Psychology, Sport Science, Tourism and Hospitality, Police Studies and Social Work, yet excludes disciplines such as Communication and Media, a core component of many Australian BA programs. Actual data related to the BA is buried within the Society and Culture FOE. The BA is lost in the noise. For example, data such as that illustrated in Figure 2 suggest that the proportion of students enrolling in Arts programs has remained relatively constant between 1962 and 2011. The apparent consistency in student enrolments illustrated in Figure 2 hides increased competition between universities to attract students. Student enrolments are distributed across a larger number of programs and institutions in 2011 which have grown from 10 programs offered by 10 universities in 1962 to 454 programs offered across 39 universities in 2011.

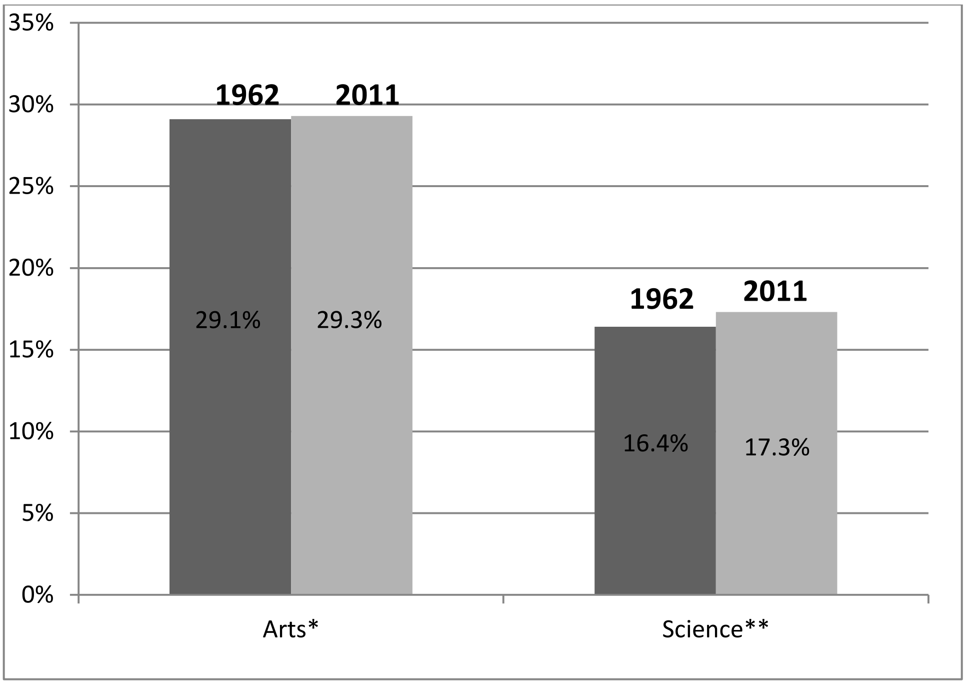

Figure 3: Domestic bachelor-degree enrolments for arts and science, as a percentage of total enrolments (Norton, 2013, p. 26)[13]

This study addresses these limitations through identifying key characteristics of Australian Arts programs, based on empirical evidence generated by deconstructing and analysing current program offerings. From these characteristics, a series of evidence-based definitions are generated and used to guide an understanding of curriculum planning in Australian Arts programs. The processes for guiding this analysis emerging from the literature are considered in the next section of this chapter.

4. ANALYSING AUSTRALIAN BACHELOR OF ARTS CURRICULA

The literature associated with curriculum design was considered to guide the analysis of the Australian BA curricula. Curriculum can be understood as *"decisions regarding the aims, outcomes, content and pedagogical relationships of a course or unit, about the relationships between theory and practice, between experiential and abstract learning, about epistemology and methodology, ethics as well as sequencing"* (Blackmore, 2013, p. 32). Similar definitions are found in other literature (see, for example, Toohey,

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[13] Notes: *2011 Arts includes the ABS categories 'Society and Culture' (minus sub categories law and economics) and 'Creative Arts', ** 2011 Science includes IT (which makes up 3% of students) Sources: Macmillian (1968) measured by faculty, DIISRTE (2012) measured by EFTSL.

1999; Prideaux, 2003; Marsh, 2004; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). At its most basic level, curriculum can be described as the content, structure, purpose, activities and outcomes of a program of study (see, for example, D. F. Walker, 1990; Marsh, 2004) drawn together as a planned activity (Lattuca & Stark, 2009). The planned activity aspect of curriculum is often referred to a curriculum design (Ratcliff, 1997b; Barnett et al., 2001; Prideaux, 2003; Barnett, 2005; Hicks, 2007; Lattuca & Stark, 2009).

Curriculum planning is defined in this study as the range of activities and processes that define and organise "*curriculum elements into a logical pattern*" that promotes desired student learning outcomes (Prideaux, 2003, p. 268). Curriculum planning can refer to the development of a new curriculum, sometimes referred to as curriculum design (Moreno, 2007), or to the refinement of an existing curriculum, also referred to as curriculum review or curriculum renewal (Narayan & Edwards, 2011).

4.1. Considering contemporary higher education curriculum planning

Considerations of how curriculum in higher education is conceptualised and constructed draw heavily on theories developed for school-based education, largely caused by the void in the theoretical understandings in higher education described earlier in this chapter. Multiple theories and models have been developed in K-12 school education research. Models have been developed that provide an understanding of curriculum design dependent on the focus of the curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998), such as those illustrated in Table 4.

In general, these models can be translated into the higher education context, and have been used to describe a number of different curriculum designs used in higher education. For example, studies in Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in higher education tend to follow "life-situation design" types (Barrett & Moore, 2014), while process design is often used in engineering programs (Rehman, Said & Al-assaf, 2009).

Table 4: Models of curriculum designs adapted from Ornstein & Hunkins (1998, p. 264)

Focus	Types	Features
Subject-Centred Designs	Academic Subjects Design	**Separate subjects or courses**
	Discipline Based Design	**Use structure of the discipline; Approach physics as a physicist; Use inquiry methods of the discipline**
	Broad Fields Design	**Interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary e.g. Integrated science, whole language**
	Correlation Design	**Relate one subject to another with each keeping its identity** **Thematic approach or Team teaching**
	Process Design	**Teaching thinking processes such as critical & creative thinking, problem solving; Metacognitive training**
Learner-Centred Designs	Child-Centred Design	**Child's interest, need and experiences are emphasised e.g. project method**
	Radical Design	**Learning is reflective and not externally imposed** **Society is flawed and curriculum should emancipate the learner**
	Humanistic Design	**Stress development of self-concept of students** **Uniqueness of individuals and importance of self-actualisation**
Problem-Centred Designs	Life-Situations Design	**Life situations design** **Subject matter focuses on pressing social issues and solutions**
	Core Design	**Social functions core** **Students work on problems crucial in today's society**
	Social Problems Design	**Social problems and reconstructionist designs** **Analyse severe problems confronting humankind**

The processes associated with designing curriculum have also been modelled in K-12 school education research and translated to the higher education sector. The most influential models are summarised in Table 5[14]. The prevailing model adopted in contemporary higher education tends to be objectives-based (Barrie, 2006; Rowland, 2006; M. Walker, 2006; Barrie, 2007). Most program approval processes for new courses in Australian universities focus on learning objectives and alignment of content and objectives to graduate attributes and assessment (Barrie, 2007). The typical process of developing used in Australian higher education is to identify and set learning objectives, draw up and implement a curriculum plan, and then measure outcomes (Barnett, 2000a).

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[14] There have been a number of other models of design developed in more recent years (see for example the Wiggins and McTighe "Understanding by Design" models and the Saylor, Alexander and Lewis model), but these models tend to draw on the models outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Models of curriculum design processes

Type	Principal Theorists	Procedural steps	Criticisms	Support
Objectives-based/ rational Models	Tyler (1949)	Based on 4 central questions: 1. What educational purposes are to be served? (objectives) 2. What educational experiences can be provided to attain these purposes? (content) 3. How can they be organised? (method) 4. How can we determine whether these purposes are attained? (evaluation or assessment)	not theoretically grounded behaviouristic viewed to be impractical to attain	Encourages explicit reflection on the teacher's intentions behind day to day dealings focused on improvement
	Taba (1962)	1. Diagnosis need 2. Formulate objectives 3. Select content 4. Organize content 5. Select learning experiences 6. Organize learning experiences 7. Determine what to evaluate and ways and means to evaluate.	may result in a contrived curriculum links are artificially made the absence of recognising objectives as starting point could be detrimental	Implies that behaviour can be objectively, mechanistically measured Can end up looking like a set of atomistic competencies resembling shopping lists
Cyclical Models	Stenhouse (1975) Bruner (1966) Wheeler (1974)	1. Determine content is to be learned and taught 2. Decide how it is to be learned and taught. 3. Decide sequencing of learning 4. Determine how to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and how to differentiate the general principles 1, 2 and 3 above, to meet individual cases. 5. Decide how to evaluate the progress of students. 6. Decide how to evaluate the progress of teachers. 7. Consider feasibility of implementing the curriculum in varying school contexts, pupil contexts, environments and peer-group situations. 8. Consider variability of effects in differing contexts and on different pupils and an understanding of the causes of the variation. 9. Formulate intention or aim of the curriculum which is accessible to critical scrutiny.	Not a curriculum package designed to be delivered almost anywhere Difficult to develop uniform measurement the uniqueness of each classroom setting, it means that any proposal needs to be tested, and verified by each teacher in his/her classroom	Outcomes not central and defining feature. Student centred – students are not objects to be acted on Teachers and students have to work together. Focus is on interactions.
Dynamic/ interaction model	Walker (1971) Skilbeck (1984)	curriculum practice emerges through deliberation that occurs within the social and political context 1. Platform (Development of a common grounding set of principles, values and beliefs from which the curriculum designers will operate.) 2. Deliberation (Movement towards more practical concerns, with an emphasis on how beliefs might be used to identify issues with existing curricula and how new curricula may address these issues.) 3. Design (Consensus is reached and a curriculum can be designed)	Can be difficult to implement as it requires a high degree of interaction	recognises the variety of beliefs, aims and intentions of all stakeholders emphasis on the development process instead of the design product

Curriculum has been noted to operate over multiple levels. Each level describes curriculum slightly differently: as it is intended by curriculum designers; as it is implemented by teachers, and as it is attained by students. These levels have been variously described as *planned-enacted-experienced* (Lattuca & Stark, 2009), *intended-implemented-attained* (van den Akker, 2003) and *planned-delivered-experienced* (Prideaux, 2003). Barnett and Coate offer a binary distinction: '*curriculum as it is designed'* and '*curriculum as it is enacted'* (Barnett & Coate, 2005). Knight critiques the transmission-based language of most descriptions and instead describes these forms as *planned-created-understood* (Knight, 2001). The van den Akker model provides a more detailed explanation as to how these levels are operationalised in curriculum practice as illustrated in Figure 4 below.

INTENDED	*Ideal*	Vision – the rationale or basic philosophy underlying a curriculum
	Formal/Written	Intentions as specified in curriculum documents and/or materials
IMPLEMENTED	*Perceived*	Curriculum as interpreted by its users , especially teachers
	Operational	Actual process of teaching and learning (also: curriculum-in-action)
ATTAINED	*Experiential*	Learning experiences as perceived by learners
	Learned	Resulting learning outcomes of learners

Figure 4: Curriculum representations (van den Akker, 2003, p. 3)

Existing studies in higher education stress a particular need to develop a shared vision between the planned, enacted and experienced levels of curriculum (van den Akker et al., 2003; Porter, 2006; Watty, 2006; Anderson & Hounsell, 2007; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). The development of a shared vision of program purposes and intentions is identified as an important factor in planning curriculum (see, for example, Casey & Wilson, 2005; Fraser, 2006; Anderson & Hounsell, 2007; Brady & Kennedy, 2007; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2011; Parsons, 2012). Curriculum design processes for new curriculum typically presuppose opportunities for discussion and deliberation; space where curriculum designers share views, resulting in a "*set of more or less intentional strategies*" (Barnett, 2000b, p. 258).

However, discussion or deliberation of curriculum is rarely a topic for professional discussion within Australian universities (Hicks, 2007, p. 3). Goal setting and establishing a shared conception of espoused curricular goals has been identified as an often neglected exercise in higher education curriculum development (Barrie, 2006; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 3). Despite this need for developing a shared understanding, "*when a committee, a dean, or a department chair contemplates changing the curriculum, it is dangerously easy to make an assumption that everyone agrees on what the curriculum is*" (Ratcliff, 1997b, p. 5). There is a further assumption evident that the act of engaging in curriculum renewal is sufficient to develop a shared, common understanding across a program (Casey & Wilson, 2005; Anderson & Hounsell, 2007; Barrie, 2007). However, there appears to be little time devoted in standard curriculum practices that specifically aim to develop a shared understanding of program intentions in an existing program.

Developing a shared understanding in Australian generalist higher education programs such as the Bachelor of Arts is particularly problematic. BA programs are generally not "owned" by a single discipline or school or even a faculty (Gannaway & Trent, 2008c). Nor are BA programs the product of one individual who has autonomy over decision-making (Gannaway & Trent, 2008d). BA programs in Australia are self-regulating. But they are by no means uniform or standardised across the sector. Instead, the BA is the intersection where multiple disciplines come together. Each constituent discipline has a "*particular sense of curriculum content: about what needs to be taught in order to understand the nature of the paradigms and key concepts that inform any field in specific contexts*" (Blackmore, 2013, p. 32). Curriculum in higher education is dominated by personal research and disciplinary interests (Toohey, 1999). This emphasis is possibly even more prevalent in the Australian BA which, by its very nature, includes a diversity of disciplinary fields.

4.2. Critique of current higher education curriculum literature

Current higher education research tends to reflect the focus on discipline and unit-level curriculum innovation and intervention. Studies that have investigated curriculum in HASS tend to focus on particular disciplines such as, for example, history (Frank et al., 1994); psychology (Wilson & Provost, 2002; Lipp et al., 2006); creative arts (Simons & Hicks, 2006; Phipps, 2010); archaeology (Beck & Clarke, 2008) and economics (Daly & Lewis, 2010). Other studies with a focus on HASS disciplines tend to be small-scale, single-institution studies (such as those conducted by Trudgill, 1977; Frank et al., 1994; Fitzsimmons, 2001; Waugh, 2001; Tarpey, Acuna, Cobb & De Veaux, 2002; Wilson & Provost, 2002; Kuttainen et al., 2010). Studies are often limited to describing particular initiatives or innovations, such as the implementation of work-integrated learning (J. Stevenson & Yashin-Shaw, 2004) or the use of educational technologies (Lefoe & Albury, 2006).Even studies that do aim to promote an inclusive and shared vocabulary as a basis for curriculum development only do so from an individual perspective on a unit level (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006, p. 270; Fanghanel, 2007; Ramsden et al., 2007; van Driel et al., 2007). It is not clear what happens on a program level.

Academics have been noted to generally referring to curriculum construction on a unit or major level (Ruthven, 1998; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Fraser, 2006; Lindbolm-Ylänne et al., 2006; Matthews, Divan, et al., 2013). Reasons for this focus include the domination of knowledge fields in higher education, not only as a source of academic identities, but as a means of structuring curricula (Trowler, 1998; Barnett et al., 2001; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Trowler, Saunders & Bamber, 2012). Curriculum is viewed to be governed by personal research and disciplinary interests (Toohey, 1999). Students too have been noted as tending to view themselves as students of particular disciplines, identify themselves in terms of their major, rather than the program, declaring *"I'm majoring in Political Science",* rather than *"I'm doing a BA."* (D'Agostino, 2005; D'Agostino & O'Brien, 2010, p. 143).

While there are studies conducted on a programmatic level in engineering (Prince, 2004), physics (Beichner, 2007) and medicine (Marlowe, 2012), very few studies exist in HASS disciplines. Studies that are conducted on a program level are predominantly in those programs that are professional in nature and tend to have to meet requirements stipulated by profession-based accreditation agencies (see, for example, Kennedy, 1984; Barnett et al., 2001; A. R. Cohen et al., 2005). There are even fewer studies conducted in the Australian higher education context that focus on academic planning of curriculum in response to the challenges of meeting the needs of the knowledge economy.

Rather than the result of a response to a single critical point, curriculum change has been noted as incremental, accumulative and multidirectional, rarely instigated by a single factor (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Barnett et al., 2001; Fullan, 2001, 2006; Goodson, 2007; Parsons, 2012; Fullan, 2013). Yet, few studies were identified through the review of literature that focused on change in higher education and the forces and drivers that influenced them. An example of these reactions can be found in the movement away from year-long courses. The change was not a simple or spontaneous decision taken at a particular moment in time. Nor was it in response to a single directive. Instead, it was provoked by multiple drivers, including competition between subsections of disciplines in the discipline wars (Turner, 1996; Pascoe et al., 2003), issues related to administrative constraints of timetabling and the move to computerised timetabling systems (Casey & Wilson, 2005; D'Agostino & O'Brien, 2010; Govers, 2011), the movement towards allowing a mid-year intake making university study more accessible to more students (Trow, 2007; Kuttainen et al., 2010), and the increasing modularisation of the curriculum (Barnett et al., 2001; Knight, 2001; Pechar & Pellert, 2004)

A frequently cited outcome of a focus on the disciplines rather than a whole-of-program approach is the fragmentation of a modularised curriculum. While fragmentation of curriculum has been described as a consequence of neoliberal pressures for efficiencies and economy (Knight & Trowler, 2000; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Parker, 2008; Blackmore, 2013), it has also been described as the consequence of a myopic focus on disciplines (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Ratcliff, 1997a; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Latzer, 2004; Perkins, 2006). The impact of modularisation and fragmentation of curriculum and assessment been well recorded and observed in K-12 school-based education (see, for example, works such as Fogarty & Pete, 2009; Wraga, 2009; Priestley & Biesta, 2013; Krogh & Morehouse, 2014). Such research has led to the development of strategies to integrate the curriculum and encourage opportunities for students to make sense of their learning. Similar exercises have been implemented and investigated in higher education programs associated with professions-based disciplines, such as nursing (Garanhani, Vannuchi, Pinto, Simões & Guariente, 2013); business (Englehart & Weber, 2011; Taylor, Sinn & lightfoot, 2012), engineering (Rehman et al., 2009) and medicine (Bandaranayake, 2011; Griesbacher, Holzer, Smolle, Heinemann & Peskar, 2011). No such similar studies are evident in the generalist Arts programs, despite regular calls for such studies to be conducted across all higher education programs (see, for example, Jenkins, 2003; Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2004; Huber & Hutchings, 2004, 2005; Huber et al., 2007).

The emphasis in the existing literature is skewed toward a focus on the implemented curriculum (Latzer, 2004; Fraser, 2006; Lefoe & Albury, 2006; Griesbacher et al., 2011; Parsons, 2012; Garanhani et al., 2013; Lattuca, Bergom & Knight, 2014). A number of studies were also identified that examined the attained or experienced curriculum from the student's perspective, with a particular emphasis on student attained outcomes evident (Pascarella et al., 2004; Adamuti-Trache et al., 2006; Bridgstock, 2006; Adnett & Slack, 2007;

Klassen, 2013; Matthews, Divan, et al., 2013). Few studies have been conducted into the processes of planning curriculum and even fewer in generalist programs.

A number of handbooks and guides exist to support the novice academic in engaging with the processes associated with curriculum-making (see, for example, Ratcliff & Gaff, 1997; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Toohey, 1999; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Ramsden, 2005; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). However, guidance tends to be focused on at the level of discipline (Grundy, 1987; Toohey, 1999; Barnett, 2000a; Becher & Trowler, 2001) and therefore at the sequence of study (Entwistle, 2005; Lindbolm-Ylänne et al., 2006; Anderson & Hounsell, 2007). Where guidance is offered for whole-of-program design, it tends to focus on professions-based programs (Gaff & Ratcliff, 1997; Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Toohey, 1999; Billett, 2003; A. R. Cohen et al., 2005; Lipp et al., 2006; Bandaranayake, 2011). Few of these guides address the challenges typically experienced in large-scale generalist programs. Most BA programs fit a model that is not addressed by these guides.

The narrow focus reflected in the studies described above is carried through to the methodologies adopted to explore curriculum. Research studies tend to be categories as either idiographic and emic or nomothetic and etic in nature(Morrow, 2005, p. 252). That is, studies have tended to either adopt approaches that focus on the experiences of few individuals to establish categories of experience, for example, coming to an understanding of curriculum design from the actors/individual's view point; or they have focused on "*standardised methods of obtaining knowledge from large samples of individuals, using categories take from existing theories and operationalised by the researcher"* (Morrow, 2005, p. 252), surveying large groups to understand a generalizable experience. Examples of the individual studies include those conducted by Barnett and Coate (2005), Fraser and Bosanquet (2006), Steel (2009) and Roxå & Mårtensson (2011). The large-scale studies include those by Atkin and House (1981), Blaich et al (2005), Lindbolm-Ylänne etal (2006) and Priestley and Biesta (2013). The consequence of adopting one of these approaches is that an understanding can only be reach from one particular view point. The process of curriculum planning is highly complex and requires an understanding from multiple points of view.

In brief, the critique of the literature identified in this review established that very few studies refer to curriculum planning in generalist Arts programs such as the BA. No studies were identified that examined the BA on a whole-of-program basis. Perhaps Arts programs are perceived to be too commonplace to warrant investigation and change or are seen to be too complex and disparate to address. It could be argued that the nature of the BA is that it does not operate on a whole-of-program basis, that the program structure is simply the mechanism by which students engage with disparate disciplines. However, in contemporary times, while academics teaching in higher education may focus on units or disciplines, the mechanism by which students engage with the institution is through a program. It is the program curriculum that is "*one of the most important products that higher education institutions offer to their customers*" (Barnett et al., 2001, p. 435). It is the program that is branded and marketed, resourced and funded, accredited and accounted for against external measures such as the AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013). As described earlier in this chapter, higher education curricula in the contemporary neoliberal context are increasingly exposed to external scrutiny. Generalist programs are largely ignored by guidance offered by curriculum design researchers and practitioners to those responsible for curriculum, making the contemporary Australian BA landscape a fertile field of inquiry. The time is right to examine what impact these contextual pressures have on how the Australian Art programs are conceptualised and constructed.

4.3. Conceptual framework

The landscape of Arts programs in the contemporary Australian context is a fertile field for inquiry because it has so many inherent complexities. This literature review highlighted some of these complexities and provided a foundation for this research study. It has also signalled some important gaps that are relevant to this study:

- There is an absence of a clearly articulated commonly held understanding of what is meant by BA programs in Australia. This absence results in a paucity of data that can be used to defend and justify the program.
- The contemporary context of higher education imposes increasing accountability measures on curriculum to ensure higher education meets the shifting economic and social needs of the knowledge economy. There is pressure on Arts faculties to provide evidence of the value and contribution of the BA to the emerging knowledge economy. Yet there is an absence of systemic studies of how higher education

curriculum in general - and the BA in particular - has adjusted to new imperatives and pressures to meet the needs of a knowledge economy.

- Few studies or arguments were evident in the existing body of literature were directly generalizable to the curriculum of the Australian BA program. The scope of many existing reports is either broader or narrower than the BA program.
- Studies conducted in the US and Canada investigating curriculum in generalist programs are unable to be directly translated into the Australian context.
- At a time when increasing accountability measures focus on the level of program, the literature reflects a focus on curriculum planning within a discipline rather than as a whole-of-program design. Bachelor of Arts programs are generally described as curricula in multiple discipline fields rather than as a holistic program. There is an absence of studies conducted in Australia that specifically interrogate the BA curriculum at a program level.
- Studies focused on higher education curriculum have tended to focus on the understanding the experience of individual teachers or discipline-based teams or pm student experience. Limitations evident in methodological approaches that examine curriculum planning as from either a personal individual experience or as large-scale sector-wide experience

With these gaps in mind, this study aims to investigate the following research question: “How are curricula in Bachelor of Arts degrees in Australia currently constructed and conceptualised?”

To limit the scope of this study, a conceptual framework was developed from understanding of curriculum identified in the literature review. This conceptual framework deconstructed the curriculum of the BA to test commonly held assumptions of what constitutes an Australian BA and to understand the processes of construction, enabling an identification of the forces and drivers that influenced the process of curriculum planning.

Curriculum in higher education has been noted to include a range of curriculum elements (Lattuca & Stark, 2009). These elements are purpose; content; sequencing; instructional resources, instructional processes (or pedagogy); and assessment and evaluation. These elements are considered crucial to the planning curriculum process, referred to as academic planning, offered by Lattuca and Stark and illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 5: Academic Plans in Socio-cultural Context (Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 5)

Figure 5 illustrates the intentional or unintentional processes identified by Lattuca and Stark that academics use to plan curriculum. Path A illustrates an insular process, focused on changes to a unit, sequence or even a program, which adjusts the curriculum as a result of information feeding back into the educational environment. Path B considers the educational outcomes, such as graduate satisfaction, employment and industry expectations, back into the educational environment. Path C changes reflect potential external and internal pressures. All these paths occur within a sociocultural context that further shapes the ways that the paths are traversed by those engaged with curriculum planning.

Curriculum elements identified in the Lattuca and Stark Academic Plan model had been combined with the *planned-enacted-experienced* levels of curriculum to generate a conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 6 used in a recent study to investigate the curriculum as it is experienced by students (Matthews, Divan, et al., 2013). This conceptual framework initially appeared to be useful as an analytical framework that could be used to deconstruct the planned BA curriculum.

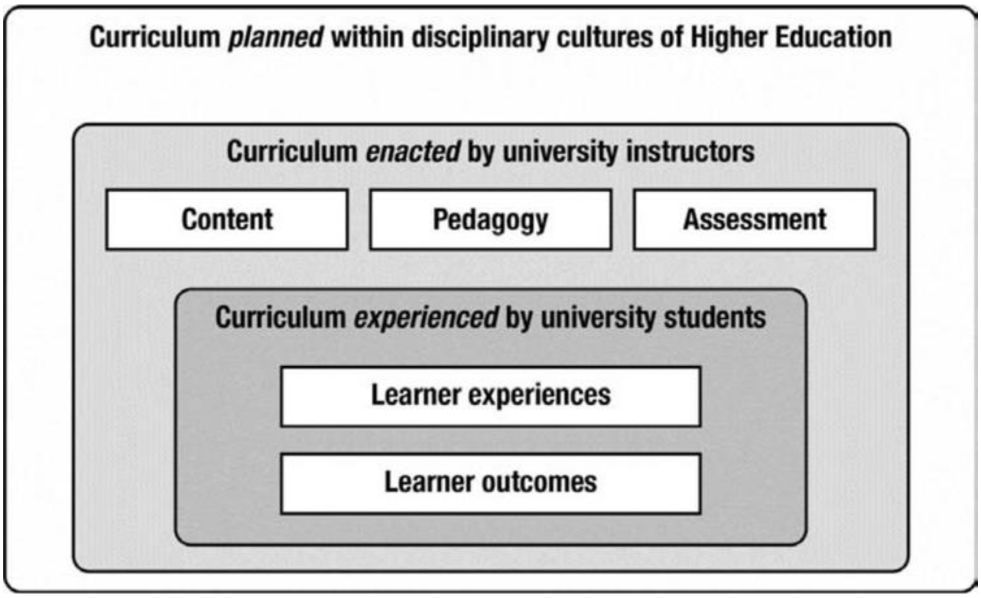
Curriculum *planned* within disciplinary cultures of Higher Education
Curriculum *enacted* by university instructors
Content
Pedagogy
Assessment
Curriculum *experienced* by university students
Learner experiences
Learner outcomes

Figure 6: Conceptual framework of curriculum experienced by university students (Matthews, Divan, et al., 2013)

However, the context in which curriculum is planned had been omitted in this conceptual framework. The socio-cultural context within which curriculum is planned or designed, evident within the Lattuca and Stark model illustrated in Figure 5, was omitted in the Matthews framework. This omission was in spite of researchers indicating that it was a crucial element of curriculum design planning (Bourdieu, 1996; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Margolis, 2001; Prideaux, 2003; Marsh & Willis, 2007; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). This framework also only included a few of the curriculum elements evident in the Lattuca and Stark model. A review of studies examining the strategies used to plan curriculum in higher education indicated that program coordinators were unlikely to have influence over the choice of resources, pedagogy and assessment and that control of these were more likely to be considered in the enacted curriculum than in the planned curriculum (Gay, 1986; Grundy, 1987; Brady & Kennedy, 2007; Moreno, 2007; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). While teachers enacting the curriculum had influence over the content, purpose, and sequencing, these elements were more likely to be found in the planned curriculum, giving shape to the decisions made to the enacted curriculum. Lattuca and Stark define these elements (Lattuca & Stark, 2009, pp. 4 -5) as follows:

Purpose	*"knowledge, skills and attitudes to be learned"*
Content	*"subject matter selected to convey specific knowledge, skills and attitudes"*

Sequencing	*"arrangement of the subject matter and experiences intended to lead to specific outcomes for learners"*

The conceptual framework developed by Matthews et al (2013) was further refined to reflect these observations. These varying embedded layers of focus and engagement within higher education program curricula are illustrated by Figure 7. The curriculum elements attributed to the planned level of curriculum in this framework and how they were influenced by the context in which they operated formed the focus for the investigation.

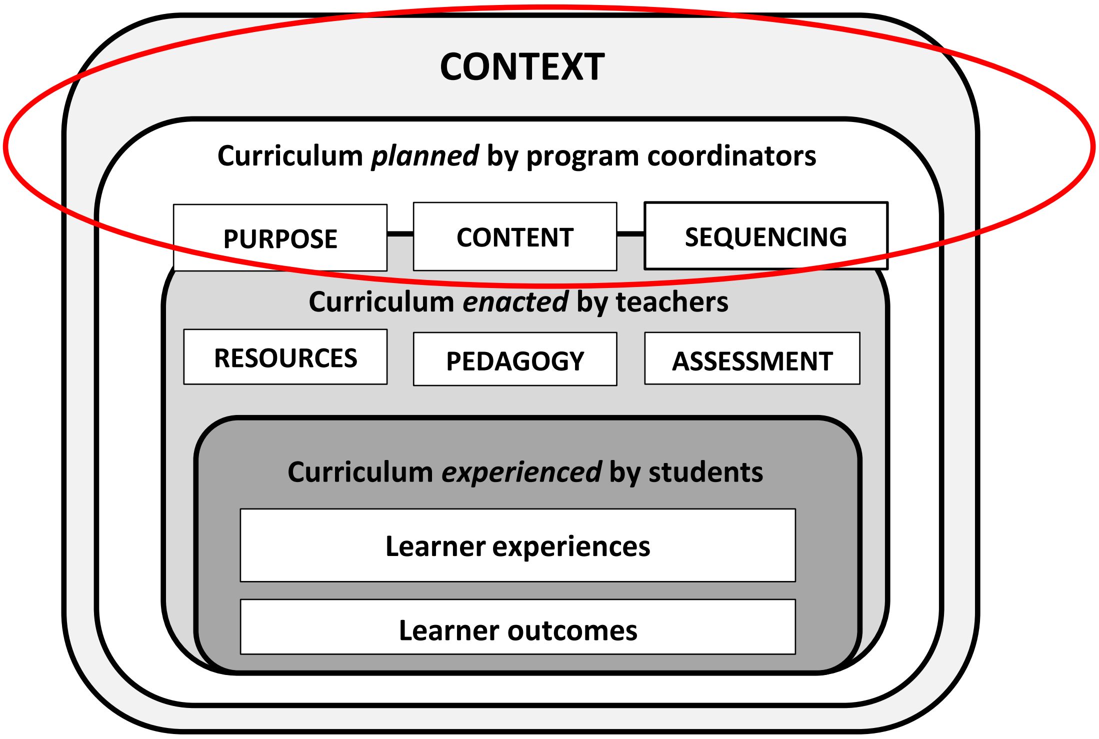
CONTEXT
Curriculum *planned* by program coordinators
PURPOSE
CONTENT
SEQUENCING
Curriculum *enacted* by teachers
RESOURCES
PEDAGOGY
ASSESSMENT
Curriculum *experienced* by students
Learner experiences
Learner outcomes

Figure 7: Conceptual framework for analysing program curricula in higher education (adapted from Lattuca & Stark, 2009; Matthews, Divan, et al., 2013, p. 77)

This study used the section of the framework circled in red as an analytical lens for a detailed examination of BA programs offered across the whole of Australia. It was also used to focus the scope of this study.

5. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The landscape of Arts programs in the contemporary Australian context is a fertile field of inquiry because it has so many inherent complexities. Curriculum planning in the Australian BA appears to remain isolated within individual disciplinary fields at a time where increasing accountability measures focus on the level of program. While there is an indication that the contemporary BA is evolving to meet the needs of the knowledge economy in response to pressures, this evolution is difficult to trace because of gaps in the current body of related work.

The emphasis in the existing literature is skewed toward:

- a focus on curriculum planning within a discipline rather than as a whole-of-program design
- a focus on the implemented or experienced curriculum rather than on curriculum intention and planning; and
- limitations evident in methodological approaches that examine curriculum planning as from either a personal individual experience or as large-scale sectoral experience.

This literature review has highlighted some of these areas and provided a foundation for this research study. It has also signalled some important gaps that are relevant to this study. There is an absence of a commonly held understanding of what is meant by BA programs in Australia resulting in a paucity of data that can be used to defend and justify the program. No studies were identified that provided a systemic examination of how Bachelor of Arts curricula have adjusted to new imperatives and pressures to meet the needs of a knowledge economy.

With these gaps in mind, this study aims to investigate the following research question: “How are curricula in Bachelor of Arts degrees in Australia currently constructed and conceptualised?” In the following chapter, the methodology for this study will be considered in relation to this research question.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins by outlining the research questions guiding this research. The research approach adopted to address the research questions is then explained and a rationale offered. This study combines the strategies and techniques associate with comparative historical analysis with those associated with focused ethnography to capture individual perceptions and sector-wide generalisable practices. Justification for the selection of this approach is offered and the features of the both methods outlined. The data generation and analysis strategies used to investigate these questions are then described. A schema of the research design for the study is provided and described, focusing on the steps used in each stage to generate and analyse the data. Finally, the strategies adopted to validate the research process are outlined. The ethical considerations and limitations associated with this approach and the steps taken to mitigate these considerations are presented.

1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The review of the literature raised questions about what constitutes contemporary Australian Arts curricula. It also raised questions about how and why these programs have come to take their current form. This investigation is directed by the research question: "How are curricula in Bachelor of Arts degrees in Australia currently constructed and conceptualised?" Answers to this question are established through the examination of the following subsidiary questions:

1. How are contemporary Australian Arts curricula described?
2. How are contemporary Australian Arts programs curricula interpreted?
3. How are contemporary Australian Arts programs constructed and conceptualised in practice?
4. What do the changes in Australian Arts programs that occurred between 2007 and in 2011 indicate about how they are conceptualised and constructed?

5. Is there an explanation for how Australian Arts program curricula are constructed and conceptualised?

These questions not only aim to describe what constitutes contemporary Australian Arts curricula, but also seek to explain how and why these programs have come to take their current form.

2. RESEARCH APPROACH

Thomas noted that most of us live in a

> *"…taken for granted reality that a particular level of experience presents itself as not in need of further analysis. This taken-for-granted work often seems to confusing, too powerful or too mysterious to slice beneath appearances, and it is not always easy to see clearly, let alone address, the fundamental problems of social existence that we confront daily....“* (Thomas, 1993, p. 3)

This thesis aims to "*slice beneath appearances*" to interrogate the taken-for-granted reality of the Australian BA. BA programs have become such a ubiquitous part of the Australian higher education landscape that they hardly seem to warrant focused investigation. The program is so familiar, so well-known that it is almost ritualised, a taken-for-granted part of everyday life.

Research studies investigating the everyday typically adopt a qualitative interpretative paradigm. They interpret individual actions and artefacts in the context of a broader social practice to understand the motives and actions of individuals and organisations (Brinkmann, 2012, p. 21). The interpretive paradigm rests on the belief that reality is constructed by society and that society is made up of people with free will, diverse purposes and goals and who are active in constructing their own meaning of the world (Angen, 2000; Denzin, 2000); that reality is socially constructed and fluid, that is, negotiated within cultures, social settings, and relationships (Babbie, 1999). Social inquiry investigations are capable of multiple, sometimes contradictory, interpretations and require inductive analysis of data and derivative theory generation (L. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, pp. 137 – 139).

As described in the previous chapter, curriculum is the product of multiple voices and actions, potentially influenced by contextual drivers such as economic forces, political decisions and disciplinary cultures (Margolis, 2001; Brady & Kennedy, 2007; Lattuca et al., 2014). As an object of inquiry cannot be viewed as context-free (Susi & Ziemke, 2005, p. 10), to understand how contemporary Australian Arts programs are constructed and conceptualised, it is important to gain an understanding of the context in which the curricula are developed and refined. These multiple viewpoints and points of interaction required a research design that would generate data exposing contextual factors as well as individual responses, revealing both beliefs and actions. To gather a fulsome picture, the adopted methods needed to enable observation of the alignment between espoused beliefs and actual practice (Kane, Sandretto & Heath, 2002). In addition, previous studies indicated that the nature of Arts programs change over time (Pascoe, 2003; Gannaway & Trent, 2008e). The research methods adopted therefore needed to examine and compare Arts programs over time. Finally, in order to provide an accurate account of programs as they are currently available, there was a need to reduce the impact of the research processes on the normal curriculum processes. Data needed to be collected in a manner as unobtrusive as possible so as to not influence the experience of the thousands of students who enrol in Arts programs in Australia each year. Studies into everyday life are typically conducted in natural, unconstrained real world settings with as little intrusion from the researcher as possible (Creswell, 2007; Brinkmann, 2012).

Noblit and Hare argue that three forms of interpretation underpin investigations into everyday activities: *"(1) Making the obvious obvious; (2) Making the hidden obvious; and (3) Making the obvious dubious"* (Hare & Noblit, 1988, p. 16). Brinkmann explains that the third form, making the obvious dubious, requires the researcher to take a deconstructive stance. Studies into the everyday life of this form are therefore

> *"attempts to question what we take for granted, not to uncover hidden mechanisms, but rather to show that meanings and understandings are unstable and endlessly ambiguous. Deconstruction is the art of bringing these differences to light"* (Brinkmann, 2012, p. 23)

The topic of investigation, conceptions and constructions of contemporary Australian Arts programs therefore indicated the need for a research design that would:

1. provide a scaffold that could **deconstruct** the program to highlight commonalities and differences in understandings;
2. limit the study to a particular **time and place** yet take into account unfolding of the phenomenon over time and in the **context** in which the programs operate;

3. account for **large-scale social patterns** rather than rely exclusively on individual behaviour and experience yet also gather **individual's beliefs or perception** of reality; and
4. allow for an explanation for the phenomenon under investigation to emerge from data while **minimizing** the researcher's influence on the observed phenomena.

3. METHODS

To address the needs described above, techniques and methods typically associated with comparative historical analyses (Ruschemeyer & Mahoney, 2003; Mahoney, 2004) were combined with focused ethnography methods (Knoblauch, 2005). The combined approach enabled both a sector-wide scan and analysis of all Australian Arts programs and a detailed, focused study of BA programs offered at three institutions.

3.1. Comparative Historical Analysis

Comparative historical analysis (CHA) is described as "*a field of research characterised by the use of systematic comparison and the analysis of processes over time to explain large-scale outcomes*" (Mahoney, 2004, p. 81), a process to understanding the way in which "*social forms are created, reified, taken for granted, and come to reality while limiting other possible realities*" (DellaMattera, 2006, p. 54). Typically a cross-sectional comparison of cases across particular time periods, CHA provides explanations of socially constructed phenomena occurring over time (Babbie, 1999; Rohlfing, 2013). CHA is highly flexible supporting the articulation of emerging themes from the start, but also allowing themes and patterns to emerge across the various stages of analysis (Skocpol & Somers, 1980). Table 6 illustrates how the features of CHA meet the needs of this study.

Table 6: Requirements met by CHA analysis features (adapted from Schutt, 2012).

Requirements	CHA Feature
Focuses on the subject studied as a whole rather than parts of the whole in isolation	Case-orientated
Enables examination of the context and the inter-relationships among different events	Holistic
Limits study to a particular time and place	Specific
Takes into account unfolding of the phenomenon over time	Temporal
Accounts for large scale social patterns rather than exclusively individual behaviour and experience.	Nomothetic
Allows for an explanation for the phenomenon under investigation to emerge from data	Inductive
Minimizes researchers influence on observed phenomenon	Unobtrusive

CHA studies typically collect data across multiple sources. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods is used to generate and analyse these data. Data is collected and analysed in an iterative manner over four steps, as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Steps typically conducted in CHA studies (Schutt, 2012)

Steps of CHA	Details
1. Identify features that may help explain a phenomenon	The researcher identifies features that may help explain the subject under study. This first generation of data generation and analysis stage requires the researcher to identify core features, samples and definitions that will govern future research activities.
2. Select cases to examine	The researcher examines the selected cases. This second generation analysis informs the findings generated.
3. Analyse data to explore similarities and differences	The researcher explores similarities and differences across all data. using typical historical interpretive analysis methods such as document and narrative analysis and secondary data analysis.
4. Propose a casual explanation	The researcher offers possible explanations for the phenomena based on the results of a systematic and contextualised comparison across all data.

Most historical analyses draw on archival records, documents, quantitative data from running records such as on-going statistical data collections and qualitative data collected through ethnographic techniques, oral histories or diary and journal records (Schutt, 2012). In addition to secondary data and documents, comparative historical analyses typically draw on personal accounts of historical events, such as oral histories or diary entries or similar (Pagnini & Morgan, 1996).

3.2. Focused Ethnography

CHA provided the mechanism to examine curriculum planning materials developed for Arts programs. However, what is espoused does not always correspond to practice (Fullan, 2013), necessitating the capture of perceptions of participants in addition to the artefacts developed in order to generate a more fulsome picture. Focused ethnography (Knoblauch, 2005) was used in this study to gather personal perceptions, accounts and lived experiences. Similar to conventional ethnography, focused ethnography has a multi-layered data collection strategy that enables a deep understanding of lived experiences, as well as providing useful mechanisms and strategies designed to prevent bias and reduce the influence of the researcher (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995; Carspecken, 1996; Foley & Valenzula, 2005; Madison, 2005). Focused ethnography is distinct from conventional ethnography in that it focuses on "*small elements of society*" (Knoblauch, 2005, p. 5), rather than providing a broader view of a society as a whole. Ethnographical data collection focuses on a specific point of interest. In this case, the conception and construction of

Australian Arts curricula by those who design and manage the program is the point of focus, rather than the lived experience of the Arts program in its totality. Focused ethnography has particularly been used in studies that aim to understand a workplace or organisational practices, such as nursing (Smallwood, 2009; Higginbottom, 2011) and allied health care (Manns & Chad, 2001), but is also used to examine processes in education (Little, 1982).

Focused ethnography requires some level of insight on behalf of the researcher into the phenomena studied to ensure efficiencies in selecting and limiting the precise elements on which to concentrate at particular points of time. These understandings enable observations to be more targeted and short term than the sustained immersion undertaken in conventional ethnography. Focused ethnography typically collects data over a short-term, intensive immersion drawing on multiple sources. Using focused ethnography therefore enabled the capture of both “front stage” data in the form of interviews and promotional materials and “backstage” data (after Goffman, 1956) in the form of observations and official documentations that are not necessarily shared with the public.

3.3. Combining CHA with focused ethnography

The adoption of CHA in combination with focused ethnographic is a novel approach to exploring curriculum design. Analysis techniques typically associated with CHA are inductive and grounded in the data. In this study, rather than applying an external theoretical framework to the data to test a hypothesis, themes in the data were identified through a process of coding and categorising to create a theory of how Australian Arts programs are conceived and constructed. Once categories and conceptual maps were generated through this inductive process, a systematic comparison across cases and across time was conducted (Rohlfing, 2013) to develop a hypothesis of possible explanations for the current state. This comparison draws on the methods of agreement and difference developed by John Stuart Mill in the 1870s which contrasts similarities and differences in cases in order to offer a possible explanation for the observed phenomena (Skocpol, 1979).

The combination of CHA with focused ethnography in this study enabled a holistic approach to identify trends affecting all Australian Arts program, capturing both the perceptions and experiences of those individuals involved in curriculum design as well as providing a large sector-wide analysis. This combination of approaches within the one methodology enables a more fulsome picture to emerge of how curricula of Australian Arts programs were conceived and conceptualised. Ethnographic data was also used triangulate the analysis of the sector-wide data, ensuring the trustworthiness of the study.

The highly complex nature of the topic for this study requires an iterative, layered approach. The research design used the stages typically associated with CHA but did not follow a direct linear path, instead adopting an iterative staged approach (Eisenhardt, 1989; Kerssens-van Drongelen, 2001) with phases of data collection, analysis, theory building and reflection. Each stage built on the findings of the previous stage. Figure 8 illustrates the research design adopted in this study.

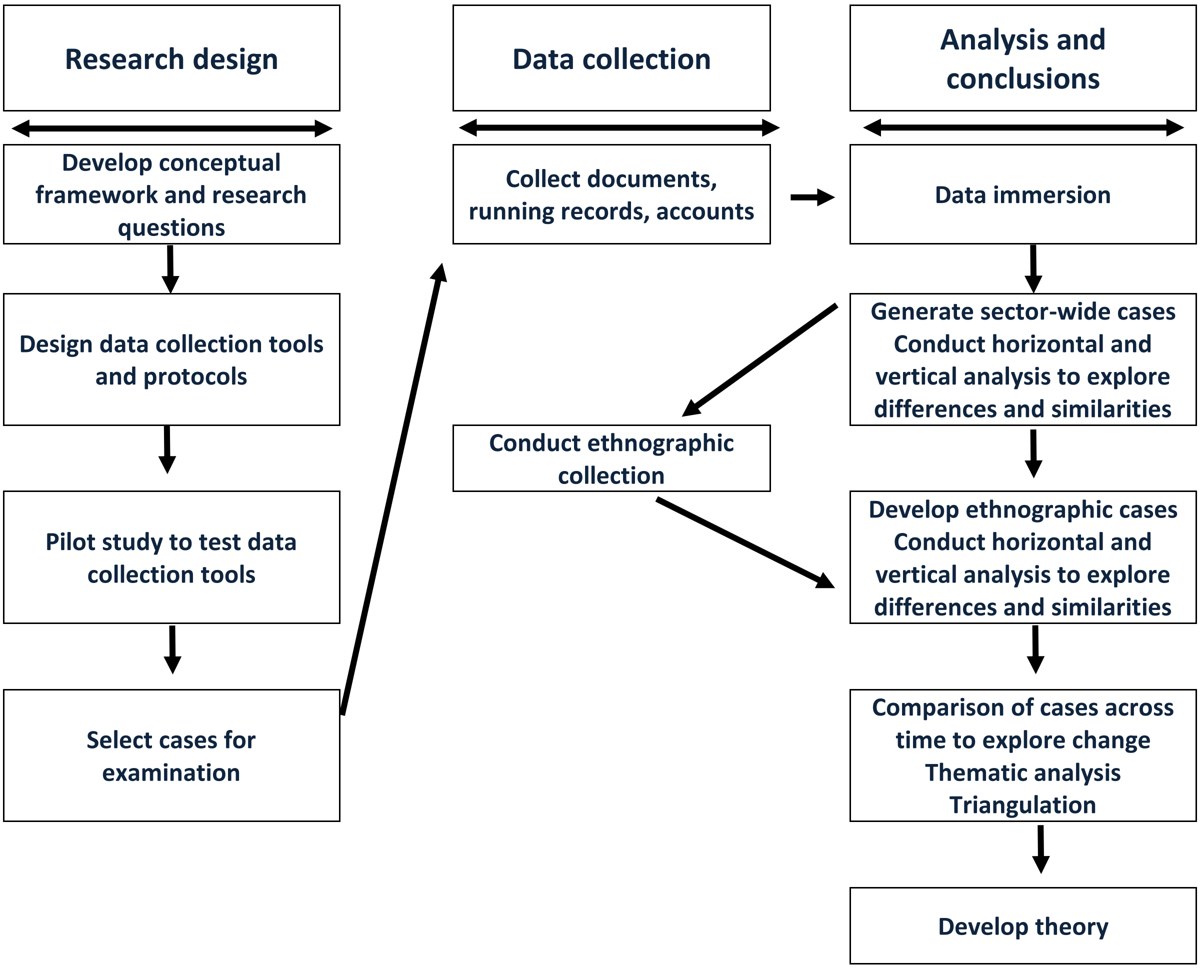
Research design
Data collection
Analysis and conclusions
Develop conceptual framework and research questions
Collect documents, running records, accounts
Data immersion
Design data collection tools and protocols
Generate sector-wide cases Conduct horizontal and vertical analysis to explore differences and similarities
Conduct ethnographic collection
Pilot study to test data collection tools
Develop ethnographic cases Conduct horizontal and vertical analysis to explore differences and similarities
Select cases for examination
Comparison of cases across time to explore change Thematic analysis Triangulation
Develop theory

Figure 8: Research Design (adapted from Yin, 2009; Schutt, 2012)

4. DATA GENERATION

This section of the chapter outlines the collection and reduction strategies (Greene, 2007) used to generate the data for both the sector-wide analysis and the focused ethnography. Table 8 provides a summary of the data sources used to explore the research questions.

Table 8: Research sub-question mapped to data sources

Research Question	Sources of Data
1. How are contemporary Australian Arts curricula described?	• DIISRTE student enrolment data (2001 – 2011) • Web sites of Arts programs available in 2007 and 2011 • Publicity information gathered from institutional websites and handbooks • Graduate satisfaction and employment survey data • Interviews conducted with program coordinators in 2007 • Written commentary received from program coordinators in 2011
2. How are contemporary Australian Arts programs curricula interpreted? **3. How are contemporary Australian Arts programs constructed and conceptualised in practice?** **4. What do the changes in Australian Arts programs that occurred between 2007 and in 2011 indicate about how they are conceptualised and constructed?**	• Media, government reports related to policy changes • Ethnographic data captured in observations and interviews at case sites • Detailed curriculum documentation collected at case sites • Formal curriculum documentation for 39 arts programs • Publicity information gathered from institutional websites and handbooks for 39 arts programs • Formal curriculum documentation for 39 Arts programs • Ethnographic data captured in observations and interviews at 3 case sites
5. Is there an explanation for how Australian Arts program curricula are constructed and conceptualised?	• Institutional characteristics for the 39 Australian institutions • Ethnographic data captured in observations and interviews at 3 case sites • Publicity information gathered from institutional websites and handbooks for 39 Arts programs • Formal curriculum documentation for 39 Arts programs

The rest of this section of Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of the steps used to generate these data.

4.1. Sector-wide Cases

4.1.1. Time span

Studies investigating the Australian Arts programs indicated that there had been substantial changes in the scope, focus and outcomes of Arts programs over a relatively short period of time (Pascoe, 2003; Gannaway & Trent, 2008c). The time spans and processes associated with curriculum design and renewal processes including institutional approval processes (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Lefoe & Albury, 2006; Barrie, 2007; Southwell, 2008) prompted a view that a 5-year gap was appropriate to capture any curriculum changes. A snapshot of the Arts programs was captured in 2007 and then again in 2011. These were convenient points in time rather than points in time that were significant on any other account. The data collection strategy also collected informants' perceptions of anticipated changes and recommendations for changes from program reviews for 2008/9 and 2012/13.

4.1.2. Selecting cases

The *Nature and Role* study reported in 2008 had identified difficulties in defining what programs could be considered as Bachelor of Arts programs in Australia as different nomenclature strategies had been adopted (Gannaway & Trent, 2008d). Reliance on program title was an insufficient strategy. To determining which programs to include and exclude as cases in this study, the categorisation method adopted by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE)[15] was used as a strategy. DIISRTE collects data related to higher education programs coded to 10 broad fields of education. Bachelor of Arts programs were mostly found in the field of education codes “Society and Culture” and “Media and Communication”. Data for all programs offered across all Australian Universities between 2001 and 2010 in these fields were identified (N=1780) and reviewed against program descriptions. Using this method, Australian Arts were classified as programs that:

- were not accredited or dependent on a professional organisation for benchmarking;
- appeared to have originated in the historical BA;
- had a relationship with the corpus of knowledge that is humanities and social sciences; and
- displayed similarities to other programs that are called a BA in Australia.

Programs classified in the Society and Culture Field of Education (FOE) with these characteristics were coded as “Arts”. Programs classified in the Society and Culture FOE without these characteristics, such as Bachelors of Law, Economics, Psychology, Social Sciences, Theology, Creative Arts, Visual Arts, Performance Arts (including Music), Police Studies, and Social Work, were designated as “Other”. This process meant that programs with program titles such as Bachelor of Arts (English) and Bachelor of International Studies could also be included in the study, as could double degree programs. This refinement resulted in identifying 259 single degree programs and 195 double degree programs across 39 Australian institutions that could be classified as “Arts” programs. The full list of programs classified as Arts programs is available as Appendix 1.2 *Arts Programs Included in This Study*, p.264.

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[15] A full explanation of the DIISRTE coding scheme and the data capture, cleaning and synthesis strategies adopted is available in Appendix 1.1, p. 262.

Following standard CHA practices, a small sample of cases was selected from the larger population that could be compared in a cross-sectional analysis. To this end, one program from each of the 39 Australian universities was selected.[16] For 32 institutions, programs titled "Bachelor of Arts" were selected as the case. For the remaining 7 cases, a program closest to definition of Arts developed above was selected. As these programs had titles such as "Bachelor of Arts (Humanities and Social Science)" and "Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Social Inquiry)" from hence forth the term "Arts program" is used instead of Bachelor of Arts to refer to the programs studied.

4.1.3. Data sources and generation of program profiles

The same data was sourced and captured for all 39 programs for both 2007 and 2011. One university offered a program with the title "Bachelor of Arts" in 2007 but by 2011 no longer offered a program that fit the definition developed for this study. A case was developed for this institution and data collected for 2007, but not for 2011. The multiple data were collated into one document for each case, hereafter referred to as a "Program profile", according to the template available as Appendix 2 (p.273). The development of the program profile reduced complex and varied data to a common structure and manageable format to facilitate cross-institutional comparison and further analysis (Bowen, 2009). The data allocated to the different sections of the program profile is illustrated in Table 9.

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[16] The Australian higher education sector listed 41 self-accrediting Universities in 2011, 2 of which are private universities and 2 of which were branches of international universities. As the branches of international universities were considered outside of the scope of this study, a case was selected for each of the 39 Australian universities and not for the 2 international branches.

Table 9: Data allocated to different sections of program profiles

Section of Program Profile	Data collected	Origin
• Program purpose • Program Rules o Core Units o Program Structure o Work integrated learning o Graduate attributes • Recommendations from previous reviews	• **official documents such as program handbooks and review reports** • **institutional course planners** • **institutional program databases**	• **Institutional web-based archives**
• Program Rules o Core Units o Program Structure o Work integrated learning o Graduate attributes • Student cohort o Alternative entry pathways • Local Context o History of program o State o Campuses and location o Institutional characteristics • BA Management o Program Faculty and School Owner o BA management structure	• **brochures** • **websites, publicity documentation, institutional annual reports and media stories**	• **faculty or school websites** • **program information brochures**
• Program purpose • Anticipated changes for 2012/3 • BA Management o Program Faculty and School Owner o BA management structure	• **semi-structured interviews**	Interview transcripts of interviews conducted with program coordinators in 2007, collected as part of the "nature and roles" 2008 study.
• Program purpose • Anticipated changes for 2012/3 • BA Management o Program Faculty and School Owner o BA management structure	• **written commentary**	program coordinators written commentary collected in 2011 submitted at point of verification
• Competitor programs o Cohort size in contrast to others o Double degrees o List of other Arts programs	• **Student enrolment and completion numbers**	**DIISRTE[17] national higher education data repositories on a national level**
• Student cohort: Entry Score	• **Minimum ATAR scores**	**state-based Tertiary Access Centres**
• Student outcomes o Average salary Arts vs other o Student study type o Student Satisfaction	• **nationally administered student satisfaction and graduate destination surveys**	**Graduate Careers Australia**

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[17] These data were limited to 2001 - 2010 as data warehouse validation processes have a delay on release and data beyond 2010 was not available at the time this study was conducted.

Once the program profiles were developed, a copy of the completed profile was sent via email to the program coordinator in both 2007 and 2011. Program coordinators were requested to verify the profile as an accurate reflection of the program and to provide written commentary regarding future plans and amendments to the program or to the context anticipated in the next 2 years (i.e. for 2008/9 for the 2007 profile and 2012/3 for the 2011 profiles).

4.1.5. Data sets

Extracts from the profiles were also collated into data sets as MS Excel pivot tables. The data sets developed and their sources are listed in Table 10. These data sets facilitated quick sorting, summarising and cross-tabulation of relevant data to institutional characteristics such as affiliation, size and location. Data sets were generated to enable comparison and exploratory data analysis using frequency testing and histograms.

Table 10: Data sets, details and sources

Data Set Title	Details	Source
Required units	Units of study required for completion; no unit credit points; year level	Program profile
Disciplines	Disciplines listed in institutional websites for programs	
Program Structure	Programs in 2007 and 2011 listed by institution; institutional grouping; state; nature of sequencing; requirement for major; no. Required units	
Graduate Attributes	Programs in 2007 and 2011 listed by institution; attributes	
FOE data set	Undergraduate enrolments, completions and load for 2001 to 2010 by institution; institutional grouping; state; double or single degree	DIISRTE data
Graduate Destinations	Graduate destinations for 2001 to 2010 by institution; employment sector, employer, full-time and part-time employment / study, salary	GCA data[18]
Satisfaction	Graduate satisfaction for 2001 to 2010 by Year; Institution; State; Field of education; CEQ-Overall item score	GCA data[19]
Entry scores	Eligibility score for 2001 to 2011 by Admissions Centre; institution; institutional grouping; state; program title; campus	Tertiary access centres[20]
Total Enrolments	Total number of students by institution; institutional grouping; state; measure (completions, number, EFTSL); year	DIISRTE data

Full details regarding the format and details of data contained within these data sets is available as in Appendix 3: Pivot table Code Books (p. 281).

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[18] Graduate destination, satisfaction, salary and employment type for the same period were sourced from the Australian Graduates Survey (AGS), conducted nationally 6 months after graduation. Data for all respondents in the Society and Culture FOE for 2001 – 2010 was purchased from the agency Graduate Careers Australia.

[19] Student satisfaction is collected in the AGS using the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). Data related to response to the Overall Satisfaction item was provided listed according to respondent narrow FOE.

[20] Data for entry scores for all programs identified as Arts programs was received from the tertiary access centres (TACs) and cross-checked against data presented on the TAC websites and by the program convener validating the profiles. As each TAC provides data in a different format and different measures, it was decided to focus on eligibility ATAR score, i.e. the minimum required score advertised on course program outlines and are based on the previous year's minimum score needed by the majority of applicants.

4.2. Ethnographic Cases

4.2.1. Selecting cases

Three case sites were selected from 3 different states to collect detailed ethnographic data. These institutions were selected using sampling methods typically used in ethnographic studies (Carspecken, 1996; Denzin, 2000; Madison, 2005) and sampled for diversity rather than representativeness. From this point forward, these institutions are referred to by their codes names: Sandstone University, Modern University and Regional University.

Table 11 outlines the differences between the cases selected for detailed examination.

Table 11: Differences between institutions used as cases in focused ethnography

Characteristics	A	B	C
Code name	**Sandstone University**	**Modern University**	**Regional University**
Location	City centre	City suburbs	Rural
Size	large total student cohort (over 30,000)	mid-sized total student cohort (over 20,000)	small total student cohort (over 10,000)
Campus type	Single campus	Single campus	Multiple campuses
History	Established before 1930s	Established before 1960s	Established 1990s

There were some similarities between the three institutions:

- All offered a Bachelor of Arts program and similar suites of other Arts programs.
- All institutions had BA programs under review at the time data was collected.
- All institutions placed a high premium on research output, but had varying success rates.
- All institutions offered similar fields of study within the Arts program.

4.2.2. Timing

Each site was visited in 2011 for total of 2 weeks intensive focused observation for the purposes of collecting data. These visits occurred on 2 separate occasions for one institution, 3 occasions for another and 5 occasions for the third. On these visits, the researcher observed participants in everyday activities such as standard administration office activities, program meetings, school or faculty teaching activity meetings. Individual and group-based interviews were also conducted on these visits. Instruments, schedules for interviews and observations, and field notes were generated in situ and derived from observation and ethnographic enquiry. Multiple documents related to institutional strategic directions and institutional policies related to program management and review, program marketing, program management and review of programs relevant to the discussions and observations were also collected.

4.2.3. *Sources of ethnographic data*

A total of 22 interviews and 19 observations were conducted across the various visits. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrative staff, executive deans, heads of school or department, program coordinators, and major conveners at each of the institutions. Table 12 below illustrates the activities conducted at each case institution.

Table 12: Ethnographic data collection at each case institution

Type	Source	Sandstone University	Modern University	Regional University
Observation	Teaching and learning committee meetings	8	0	3
Observation	Administrators office / meeting	3	3	1
Interview	Program coordinator	2	2	2
Interview	Major convener	2	2	2
Interview	Academic leader (executive dean/ head of school)	2	3	2
Interview	Administrative staff	1	1	1

Interviews were conducted at a time convenient to the interviewees. Interviewees were given an information sheet outlining the interview and a consent form to sign. Interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and transcribed using an external transcription service. Transcripts of interviews were verified through listening to recordings and reading the transcriptions to ensure transcription. Participants were asked to reflect on their own situations, circumstances and actions.

An interview guide (available in Appendix 2, p. 276) was used to focus the semi-structured interview. The interview guide was developed following Patton's interview model (Patton, 2002). It uses a broad range of questions based on 4 of the 5 types of questioning recommended by Patton. Specifically, the interview guide asks *behaviour and experience questions* which address concrete human action, conduct or ways of doing things and are designed to get more information on action or behaviour; *opinion or value questions* which address conviction, judgement, belief; *knowledge questions* which draw a range of information or learning that a participant holds about the subjects as well as where this knowledge is perceived to have come from and how it is attained; and ba*ckground or demographic questions* which draws out specific information related to the research population.

The questions were informed by the Stage 1 data generation and analysis and aimed to

- understand the perspectives of the various roles played by the interviewees, their understanding of the term “curriculum” and process by which curriculum design might be enacted in the Arts program;
- discover procedural activities such as establishing new degrees/majors/units; and
- identify any possible influences, forces and drivers that might impact on the program curriculum.

Observations of meetings and work activities were held in situ. These records provided a deeper understanding of the development and application of curriculum rules and regulations. The researcher was a passive observer in each of these instances, sitting outside of any activity. All observations were recorded in a field journal (Knoblauch, 2005; Madison, 2005; Flick, 2007). Observations were recorded in a standard template (Appendix 2, p. 280) immediately after the observation drawing on notes made in the field journal. Observed activities were cross-checked and confirmed during interviews. Interviews and observations were reviewed against documents and any anomalies clarified with either the program convener or program administrator.

Documents collected at each of the case sites are listed in Table 13.

Table 13: Documents collected at case sites

Type	Documents
Institutional documentation	• institutional strategic plans • program reviews policies • institutional change/ renewal process
Program related materials	• program brochures • posters
Program management documents	• policies and procedures regarding the development of new majors/ units of study and elimination of majors; • program review reports and implementation plans; • outlines of committee organisation with input into teaching and learning, including nature of committees and organisations that manage, review and refine the program • descriptions, terms of reference and minutes or agendas of meetings.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Nvivo (version 10) was used as a data management and data analysis tool for this study. All profiles, datasets and analytical memos were entered into Nvivo as Word, PDF or Excel documents. Nvivo query tools were used to ascertain connections, patterns and relationships between the coded elements. The Nvivo framework matrix tool was used to trace and review themes across the program profiles. Commonalities and differences emerged through this process. Techniques such as cross-tabulations were used in the data sets, along with tools associated with exploratory data analysis such as frequency distributions and histograms to identify patterns and develop a coding scheme (see Appendix 3, p. 281).

5.1. Stage One: Identifying Commonalities

This stage sought to answer the subsidiary research question "How are contemporary Australian Arts curricula described?" In keeping with processes typical of CHA, this stage of analysis involved familiarisation with the data and the identification of potential patterns considered worthy of further investigation. All program profiles and transcripts and observation records were coded and categorised drawing on grounded theory techniques (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The first pass through the data focused on the program profiles generated. This iterative coding and categorising process enabled the refinement and identification of interpretations of the common features identified in Stage 1, developing a baseline view of how Arts programs were conceptualised and constructed.

Three categories of program descriptions were determined at this stage, outlined in Table 14. These categories were built on in further stages of analysis.

Table 14: Categories of program descriptions

Category	Sources	Origin
Publicity materials	• **Brochures and leaflets** • **Tertiary access centre websites** • **Institutional publicity webpages**	**Institutional marketing divisions** **Student administration offices**
Official documentation	• **Program rules** • **Listing of majors** • **Program handbooks**	**Authorised by institutional program accreditation and approval processes**
Personal perceptions	• **Transcripts of interviews** • **Records of observed meetings** • **Meeting documents such as minutes and agenda**	**Described lived experience and beliefs**

5.2. Stage Two: Exploring Interpretations

The research question for this stage explored how contemporary Australian Arts programs are interpreted across the different types of data collected. To manage the number of potential variables, only programs offered in 2011 were included in this stage of analysis. This limitation resulted in 38 of the 39 institutions being included in the Stage 2 analysis as one institution had ceased to offer an Arts program from 2008.

A coding framework was developed in order to deconstruct the curriculum described in various sources of data. The initial framework centred on the curriculum elements identified in the conceptual framework[21]:

- purpose *"knowledge, skills and attitudes to be learned"*
- content *"subject matter selected to convey specific knowledge, skills and attitudes"*
- sequence *"arrangement of the subject matter and experiences intended to lead to specific outcomes for learners"* (Lattuca & Stark, 2009, pp. 4-5).

The mapping of the framework to the sources of data is illustrated in Table 15.

Table 15: Curriculum element mapped to data source

Curriculum Element	Sources of data captured in program profile
Purpose	• Descriptions of programs • Program overview • Program aims or purpose as described in promotional materials and program descriptions • Graduate outcomes or attributes listed in study guides.
Content	• The scope and range of disciplines available for study in the Arts program • Titles, numbers available and disciplinary scope of sequences of study, such as majors and minors; and program rules and requirements related to the need to study a range of disciplines • Disciplinary scope of elective and required units of study operating outside the sequences of study • Program rules dictated students' engagement with elective or required units of study
Sequencing	• Study plans • Program rules dictating requirements for completion of particular units of study • Progression requirements across year levels • Accommodation of double degrees within the structure of the program.

First, all documents, transcripts and records were coded and categorised drawing on grounded theory techniques (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). All data captured in the program profiles were coded using this coding framework. This process of coding involved "*linking, breaking up and disaggregating the data so that once coded, the data look different, as they are seen and heard through the category rather than the research event*" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 115).

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[21] see p. 68 for details

The coding framework was further refined to include the common features identified in Stage 1. A second pass through the data using this refined framework enabled deductive coding, capturing variations in interpretations of curriculum elements and program features evident in Australian Arts programs. Data were initially read, re-read, grouped and categorised using *in vivo* techniques and deductive coding. Instances of variations in the interpretation of the common features were categorised as into “dimensions” and “sub-dimensions”. This coding process led the refinement of the coding regime and the generation of the initial themes. The refined coding framework that was developed through this process is available in Appendix 4, p. 288.

5.3. Stage Three: Exploring Patterns

This stage of the research sought to understand how contemporary Australian Arts programs are constructed and conceptualised. This stage built on the analysis conducted in Stage 2, drawing on the same data set of programs available in 2011. Matrices were developed using the Nvivo matrix tool. Instances of codes attributed to program purpose, content and sequencing in the program profiles were consolidated to highlight emergent patterns. The Nvivo matrices were exported to MS Excel pivot table tools to manage cross-tabulations of institutional characteristics and codes and categorisations. MS Excel pivot tables are particularly useful for managing of complex and large data sets and conducting simple cross-tabulations (Dierenfeld & Merceron, 2012). The matrices developed consolidated the data and facilitated the identification of patterns of spread and density of coding, enabling frequency analyses and identification of emerging themes. Themes were named, defined, tested and corroborated (Charmaz, 2006). These themes and patterns were used to generate visual representations or models of how Australian Arts programs were constructed and conceptualised in 2011.

5.4. Stage Four: Exploring Change

This section identified and examined changes in Australian Arts program curricula between 2007 and in 2011 to address the research question “What do the changes in Australian Arts programs that occurred between 2007 and in 2011 indicate about how they are conceptualised and constructed?”

This stage of analysis drew on

(a) the findings derived from the common features identified in the Stage 1 analysis;

(b) the coding framework developed in Stage 2 from mapping curriculum elements dimensions and sub-dimensions; and

(c) the models of construction and conceptualisation developed in Stage 3.

Data captured in the program profile for 2007 was coded and categorised using the coding framework developed in Stage 2. The matrix developed in Stage 3 was further refined to include all data captured for both 2007 and 2011. An extract of the refined matrix is available in Appendix 5, p. 289.

All data captured in the matrix were subjected to the same frequency analyses conducted in Stage 3 to identify evidence of change between 2007 and 2011. Patterns of change in curriculum elements, construction models and conceptualisations of programs over time were identified through frequency analyses and histograms.

5.5. Stage Five: Explaining Change

This stage sought to answer the question “Is there an explanation for how Australian Arts program curricula are constructed and conceptualised?”. The previous sections identified the diverse ways that Australian Arts programs are constructed and conceptualised. This section aims to explain variations in interpretation and practice.

A document summary outlining national events that may have some impact on programs was developed. The document summary was developed from media releases and media commentary, transcripts of television and radio announcements and interviews; relevant policy documentation and reports and annual institutional reports recording changes in government policy and action for both Commonwealth and State governments. These documents were captured and summarised using Endnote (Bowen, 2009).

Both the ethnographic data and the document summary were subjected to a thematic analysis to identify factors external to the program and factors internal to the program that might prompt change. The factors that were evident in the most programs were then considered in light of approaches taken to implement these changes. The themes that were identified through the thematic analysis of the ethnographic data were also triangulated against the matrix generated in Stage 3. Drawing on these analyses, this stage aimed to interpret the findings to understand what influences to program changes were at play and to establish what impact they had on shaping conceptions of Arts programs in 2007 and 2011.

An overview summary of the research design is available in Table 16.

Table 16: Overview of Research Design

Stage	Question	Activity	Data source	Outcome
Stage 1: Identifying commonalities	How are contemporary Australian Arts curricula described?	Data immersion	• DIISRTE enrolment data (2001 – 2011)	• Working definition of Arts programs
			• Web sites of Arts programs available in 2007 and 2011	• Identification of 39 cases, one for each Australian institution
		Data collection: documents, running records, accounts	• Institutional websites, handbooks, • Government data • Program interviews coordinators 2007	
		Data generation	• Program coordinators commentary 2011 • Development of program profiles for 39 cases	• Verification of program profiles by program coordinator
		Data analysis: Horizontal and vertical analysis		• Common features • Roles in curriculum design
Stage 2: Exploring interpretations	How are contemporary Australian Arts programs curricula interpreted?	Data immersion	• Program profiles 2007 and 2011	• Development of ethnographic guides • Development of data sets
		Data generation	• Media, government reports • Observations, interviews, documents	• Document summary of context • Ethnographic data from 3 case sites
		Data analysis: deductive coding	• Program profiles 2011 • Ethnographic data 2011	• Coding framework
		Data Analysis: thematic analysis using inductive techniques	• Program profiles 2011 • Ethnographic data 2011	• Refined coding framework
Stage 3: Exploring patterns	How are contemporary Australian Arts programs constructed and conceptualised in practice?	Data Analysis: cross tabulations and frequency analyses	• Program profiles 2011 • Ethnographic data 2011	• Models • Matrix
Stage 4: Exploring change	What do the changes in Australian Arts programs that occurred between 2007 and in 2011 indicate?	Data Analysis: Comparison of cases across time thematic analysis using inductive techniques	• Program profiles 2007 and 2011 • Ethnographic data 2011 • Interviews 2007	• Evidence of change
Stage 5: Explaining change	Is there an explanation for how Australian Arts program curricula are constructed and conceptualised?	Data Analysis Thematic analysis	• Program profiles 2007 and 2011 • Ethnographic data 2011	• Motivators for change • Types of change

6. VALIDATING THE RESEARCH PROCESSES

This section outlines the ethical considerations, particularly with regard to the collection of the ethnographic data.

6.1. Ethical Considerations

The research project was approved by the Flinders University’s Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (approved as SBREC Project 4669) on the 11 December 2009.

The researcher was unrelated to any of the Bachelor of Arts programs and had no direct contact or influence on any of the programs under consideration.

6.1.1. Ethnographic data considerations

The personal identification of the individuals interviewed was constituted a low risk issue. To alleviate this risk, participants were invited to contribute anonymously and/or not comment on particular issues that might result in identification. Invitations to participate in interviews included the notification that interviews would be audiotaped. Assurance was given that the tapes will be destroyed after the research has been conducted and any documents would be stored in a de-identified manner. Audio recordings were transcribed by a third party, a professional organisation. The selection of the organisation was dependent on their assurance of confidentiality and secure data management.

Meetings and activities observed were recorded in a hard copy and then transposed into the Field Notes template (see Appendix 2: Data Collection p. 280). Transcripts, audio recordings and field notes were de-identified and stored electronically on a password protected computer in a locked office at the researcher’s place of work. This computer was subjected to a routine back-up regime onto a secure, password protected server.

Gatekeeper approval to participate was gained from the executive deans in the participating case study cases prior to site visits. Participants in all ethnographic data collection activities were informed of all arrangements and their consent to the arrangements was sought prior to the data collection activity. (See Appendix 2: Data Collection Materials, p.276). Gatekeeper approvals and permissions were also received from the Board of DASSH for the use of the transcripts and secondary data sourced for the

"*Nature and Roles of Arts Degrees in Contemporary Society*" study (Trent & Gannaway, 2008).

6.1.2. Personal identification in national data sets

Data received from the national archive collections hosted by DIISRTE automatically suppress data in cells which have fewer than 5 individuals included in the dataset. This limitation is the standard practice for DISSTRE data sets as per the following policy published on the higher education statistics website:

> *"The data cube allows customised tables to be produced with cells containing very small counts. Therefore, to avoid any risk of disseminating identifiable data, a disclosure control technique called input perturbation has been applied to the data, whereby small random adjustments are made to cell counts. These adjustments (otherwise known as noise) allow for a greater amount of detailed data to be released, and, as they are small, do not impair the utility of the tabular data at broad levels. However, the relative impact of perturbation is larger for small cell counts, therefore small cell counts should be used with caution."* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011b)

6.2. Ensuring Trustworthiness

Comparative historical analysis is a matter of judgment and interpretation, categorised as a qualitative mode inquiry (Babbie, 1999), as ethnographic studies (Hare & Noblit, 1988; Denzin, 2000). Qualitative analyses do not adhere to the conventional standards for measuring validity and reliability typically associated with quantitative studies (Krefting, 1991; Wiersma, 2000). Instead, qualitative researchers refer to the "trustworthiness" of the study (Guba, 1981; Morrow, 2005; Brinkmann, 2012). In most qualitative research, "trustworthiness" addresses the question of whether the research is appropriately designed to achieve the purpose of the study (Babbie, 1999). Guba provides a conceptual model for ensuring the rigor and trustworthiness of a study grounded in the interpretivist paradigm by ensuring that the study has steps to address the criteria of credibility, transferability, conformity and dependability (Guba, 1981).

Table 17 outlines the steps to mitigate concerns related to the trustworthiness of the study.

Table 17: Strategies to ensure trustworthiness

Criteria	Need	Strategy used
Credibility *Internal consistency*	Tests for reliability and validity not feasible	• Analytical memos and code books used as reflexive journaling and incorporated into the data analysis phase (Morrow, 2005) • Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to gain a more fulsome "thick" picture (Howe, 1992) • Data and themes identified in the document analysis phase triangulated with those established in the focused ethnographic data and running data from external sources through data integration and cross-analysis (Greene, 2007)
Transferability *Capacity to transfer findings to another study*	Situational uniqueness – the experience could be unique to the context	• Provision of dense information about context to allow others to evaluate whether this study is transferable to other contexts (Krefting, 1991) • Comparison of sample used in ethnographic study to demographic data (Guba, 1981)
Conformability *Acknowledge of potential biases*	Biased sample caused by undue emphasis	• Triangulation with other data sets. • Documents and sources of data used in the research are subjected to a consistent evaluation strategy and potential bias recorded (Schutt, 2012) including o verification of the accuracy of the program profiles as a true reflection of the program by program coordinators o Regular "check-in" meetings with researchers external to the project (Carspecken, 1996). A separate report "*Benchmarking the Australian Bachelor of Arts: A summary of trends across the Australian Bachelor of Arts Programs"(Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013)* was developed for DASSH based on some of the data and the analytical feedback. That report was reviewed by executive deans
Dependability *Findings as explicit and repeatable as possible*	Issues of consistency of data across all cases	• Any gaps in data and limitations of data were openly identified**.**(Ruschemeyer & Mahoney, 2003; Schutt, 2012, p. 393) • Instances where estimates for missing data were used to fill in gaps (Zaret, 1996 in Schutt, 2012) are identified

In addition, the research approach and findings from this study have been subjected to peer review across the life of the study. They have been presented at 6 international conferences (Gannaway, 2008, 2009, 2010a; Gannaway et al., 2010; Gannaway, 2013b, 2013a) and published in 2 highly rated international peer-reviewed journals (Gannaway, 2010b, 2014).

6.3. Limitations of the Research Design

Limitations are noted regarding the choice of the CHA method with regards to establishing causality and the comparatively limited scope of this study.

6.3.1. Establishing causality

There are limitations in establishing causality in social sciences and in interpretivist studies in particular. Determining actual cause and eradicating any plausible alternative explanations is challenging (Skocpol, 1979; Babbie, 1999; Schutt, 2012), particularly in attributing direct cause and effect to sequencing of events (Rohlfing, 2013). Rather than adhering to strict cause-effect conclusions, this study aims to explore and speculate about possible associations as they were viewed by participants. It follows the CHA intention to demonstrate association and suggest possible linkages, rather than rule out plausible alternative explanations of the observed effects (Schutt, 2012).

6.3.2. Scope of study

In comparison to studies that traditionally utilise this methodology (Skocpol, 2003; Mahoney, 2004), the object of inquiry of in this study has a limited scope and time span. Typically, the CHA approach is used in large-scale sociological or political investigations of historical events. CHA studies are usually associated with analysis of major historical events in which a comparatively small number of instances of a phenomenon within a particular context are compared. Most CHA studies are large-scale investigations conducted at a nation-state level tracing sequences of events over extended periods of time (Wiersma, 2000; Schutt, 2012) supporting researchers in developing *"major breakthroughs in conceptualising the kinds of factors that drive macro processes of change"* (Ruschemeyer & Mahoney, 2003, p. 6) to explain social processes. Examples include Max Weber's comparative studies of world religions, to government-funded studies of pensions across the US and UK between the 1880s and 1940s; to doctoral studies to understand the rise of democracy in South East Asia in the 1900s.

A precedent has been set by other studies for the use of techniques associated with CHA rather than the strict adherence to the scope typical of the CHA method. This approach has been previously used for comparatively short time-spans (see, for example Southwell et al., 2010) and also for comparatively narrow foci (Goodson, 2007). Although CHA has many features that make it a useful tool for understanding curriculum processes, it is an under-utilised methodological approach for studying curriculum processes in higher education. Curriculum-based studies drawing on CHA found in the research literature were mostly were focused on school-based education (DellaMattera, 2006; Moreno, 2007; R. B. Stevenson & Evans, 2011).

7. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter has outlined the interpretive approach taken in this study and has provided a rationale for the use of the two primary methods of data generation and analysis, namely, comparative historical analysis (CHA) and focused ethnography. It has provided a definition of what is considered an Arts degree in this study and explained the selection of program cases used in this study. The process of generating program profiles for Arts programs in 39 universities and detailed case studies at three universities has been described. It has also outlined the five discrete stages of data analysis that will be reported in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS – CONSTRUCTIONS AND CONCEPTIONS

This chapter introduces the findings from the first three stages of analysis in three sections. The first section reports the findings from Stage 1, which identified features common to all Arts programs, highlighted differences in the way the curricula were described and identified the roles with responsibility for curriculum planning and management in Australian Arts programs. Section 2 explores the differences evident between the ways the curriculum elements of purpose, content and sequencing are described and interpreted in the various data sources. Section 3 reports the patterns of similarity that were evident in the multiple interpretations of Arts programs.

1. COMMON FEATURES

This section outlines the first stage of analysis addressing the research sub-question "How are contemporary Australian Arts curricula described?" Program profiles and ethnographic data were subjected to a vertical and horizontal analysis using the strategies (outlined on p. 85). This stage of analysis highlighted patterns of similarity and difference that existed across all Arts programs. Patterns identified included

(1) common features across all programs;
(2) differences in descriptions of Arts curricula; and
(3) variation in the roles of those responsible for developing and managing Arts curricula.

These patterns are explored in detail in this section of the chapter.

1.1. Common Features of Arts Curricula

Descriptions of Australian Arts programs indicted that there were features common to programs across the sector. These commonalities are illustrated in the following extracts from program marketing documents:

> [The program] *offers a multidisciplinary, liberal education in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The program prepares graduates for* ***careers*** *in the public and private sectors including Personnel, Management, Education and Social Research. It also provides a basis* ***for further study*** *including postgraduate training and higher programs. The program can be* ***flexibly*** *and individually* ***tailored*** *to meet student's* ***interests****, and it provides for* ***breadth*** *and* ***depth*** *of study in at least one coherent, multidisciplinary* ***major****. (*University of Ballarat, 2007 TAC program statement)

> *The Bachelor of Arts is a* ***flexible*** *degree that allows students to match their academic* ***interests*** *with their career goals to* ***tailor*** *their ideal course. Arts provides a set of general, portable and lasting skills vital to any* ***career****… There are no compulsory units. Students choose from a* ***wide selection*** *of studies and complete at least one* ***major****, one minor and a first-year sequence in arts.* (Monash University, 2011 program leaflet)

The extracts come from the two different time periods (2007 and 2011) and very different institutions: one a small, single-campus regional institution and the other a multi-campus institution with campuses in major city centres. Yet, as highlighted in bold font in the extracts above, they use similar terms to describe the program.

These marketing descriptions were similar to the descriptions offered by program coordinators interviewed in 2007, as illustrated in the following interview extract:

> [The BA at this institution is] *a distinctive degree in that it has a wider* ***depth*** *than others offered in this state in terms of the* ***number of majors*** *offered. It is unique in terms of some of the majors are only offered at* [this institution] *and not in the other institutions. It is also* ***flexible*** *and versatile****. Students have the option*** *of completing 1 to 3 majors. … The BA can be combined with 5 other degrees in double degree programs. The BA has both a research and* ***professional*** *focus. Over ½ of BA graduates go onto* ***further study****.* (Program coordinator Interview, 2007)

These similarities indicate that there were commonalities in the ways that Arts programs are described across the sector. A thematic analysis conducted across all program descriptions established that programs exhibited the following common features, listed in order of frequency.

Australian Arts programs were described as

- preparing students for future employment (N=35)
- providing opportunities for skill development (N= 34)
- enabling students to pursue academic or discipline-based personal interests (N= 31)
- enabling students to engage with a breadth of disciplines (N= 31)

- focused on Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) disciplines (N= 29)
- providing a diverse range of disciplines in which students can engage (N= 25)
- enabling students to specialise in a particular discipline area (N= 25)
- providing a flexible program structure that accommodated student choice (N= 23)

1.2. Differences in Planned Curricula Descriptions

While the features above were common to descriptions of Australian Arts programs, a horizontal analysis conducted across programs offered by all 39 universities also indicated that there were differences in the ways that some of these key common features were interpreted. For example, the word “flexibility” was used to describe:

- the range of discipline areas that could be studied as part of the Arts program;
- the absence of a prescribed study plan, enabling students to complete units in any order;
- the number of units of study within discipline areas;
- the capacity to study a single or a double degree;
- the capacity to study one or more than one major;
- the mode of delivery used to deliver materials in a distance education, face-to-face or online mode; and
- the points of access and articulation into the program.

Similar findings were established in the vertical analysis conducted within each of the 39 universities. This analysis indicated that the common features of Arts programs were interpreted differently across the publicity materials, official documentation and personal perspectives.

1.3. Roles and Responsibilities in Curriculum Management

Organisational information such as policies related to program approval processes and program management roles collected from publically available institutional webpages were included in the program profiles. This data collection captured information about approval processes and management roles for 30 of the 39 programs profiled[22]. Thematic analysis of these data identified multiple roles with varying responsibilities for, and influence over, the design and management of the planned curriculum. The range of roles and responsibilities was categorised according to the focus of activity. Roles were categorised to be either providing

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[22] Nine institutions had information about program approval processes and program management roles in password protected website that were inaccessible to the public.

- *strategic* oversight of the program’s place in the institutional and broader contexts ;
- *operational* management and administration; or
- *discipline expertise* in terms of content knowledge and awareness of the place of the discipline in local, national and international research and professional contexts.

The categorisation of the level of operation, key tasks and examples of local titles according to the level of focus are illustrated in Table 18.

Table 18: Roles and responsibilities in Arts curriculum management

Key Tasks	Level of responsibility	Examples of local role titles	Focus
Marketing **Resource management** **Quality assurance**	Institutional/ faculty/ school level	Executive deans, Associate Deans, Heads of School, Pro Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors	Strategic
Program review **Accreditation** **Approval for changes** **Program design**	Program level Major level	Associate deans, program coordination group or management committee, program management team; administrative team	Operational
Discipline expertise **Liaison with industry and disciplinary stakeholders**	Major level Program level	Major convener, individual academics, teaching teams	Discipline

The role of program coordinator varied in terms of the level of authority and influence over curriculum. In some institutions, program coordination was conducted by a single person, in some instances with complete authority over all aspects of curriculum. In other institutions, program coordinators had limited input and the role was described as a facilitator and coordinator. Some institutions had a committee coordinating the program, rather than a designated individual.

2. DIFFERENCES IN INTERPRETATIONS OF COMMON FEATURES

The Stage 2 analysis focused on the differences in interpretation identified in the Stage 1 analysis, identifying and exploring where these differences lie to address the research sub-question “How are contemporary Australian Arts programs curricula interpreted?”.

To manage the number of potential variables, only data available in 2011 were included in this stage of analysis. This limitation resulted in 38 of the 39 institutions being included in the Stage 2 analysis as one institution ceased to offer an Arts program from 2008.

A coding framework was developed building on the common features identified in Stage 1. This framework is outlined in Table 19.

Table 19: Coding framework

Curriculum Element	Common features identified in Stage 1	Sources of data captured in program profile
Purpose	Preparing students for *future employment*	• Descriptions of programs • Program overview • program aims or purpose as described in promotional materials and program descriptions • graduate outcomes or attributes listed in study guides.
	Providing opportunities for *skill development*	
	Enabling students to pursue *personal interests* that are academic or disciplinary in nature	
Content	Enabling students to engage with a *breadth* of disciplines	• the scope and range of disciplines available for study in the Arts program • titles, numbers available and disciplinary scope of sequences of study, such as majors and minors; and program rules and requirements related to the need to study a range of disciplines • disciplinary scope of elective and required units of study operating outside the sequences of study • program rules dictated students' engagement with elective or required units of study
	Focusing on *HASS disciplines*	
	Providing a *diverse range of disciplines* in which students can engage	
Sequencing	Enabling students to *specialise* in a particular discipline area	• study plans • program rules dictating requirements for completion of particular units of study
	Providing a *flexible* program structure that accommodated student choice	• progression requirements across year levels • accommodation of double degrees within the structure of the program.

Categories grouping types of program descriptions were developed based on the nature of the sources of the descriptions. These categories included:

(1) publicity documentation
(2) official documentation; and
(3) personal perceptions

This framework was refined through the process of coded and categorised all documents, transcripts and records, drawing on grounded theory techniques (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), facilitating exploration of the different interpretations of the previously identified common features. Instances of variations in the interpretation of the common features were categorised as "dimensions" using *in vivo* techniques. The analysis of each of these sources of description is reported in this section.

2.1. Analysis of Publicity Documentation

Publicity materials used in this analysis included materials commonly provided to inform student enrolment decisions. These sources included program synopses in promotional materials on faculty websites, brochures and leaflets and in tertiary access centre (TAC) materials.

2.1.1. Purpose

A clear, explicit educational philosophy or statement of educational intent was absent in publicly available documentation. This finding does not mean to say that such explicit statements do not exist, rather that these statements were not publically available. For this study, therefore, educational purpose was largely inferred from common features identified in the Stage 1 analysis, i.e. future employment possibilities; skill development; and personal interest.

The most frequently mentioned purpose publicised in Australian Arts program promotional materials were, in order of frequency, to

(1) prepare graduates for a wide spectrum of workplaces;
(2) provide a broad liberal arts education; and
(3) enable students pursue their interests and passions.

(1) Graduate employment

Promotional materials for 35 of the 38 programs described Arts program as leading to graduate employment. Only three programs specifically mentioned that the program would lead to a particular named profession. All other programs claimed that the knowledge, skills and capabilities acquired through the program could be applied to a wide spectrum of employment opportunities, as illustrated by the following example:

> *"Arts opens up a variety of career and further study opportunities allowing you to continually adapt to a rapidly changing global workplace."* (Curtin University, program leaflet)

Promotional materials claimed to prepare students for employment through the acquisition of generic employment skills. While literature related to curriculum design refers varyingly to terms such as graduate capabilities, capacities, attributes and dispositions, promotional materials typically used the term “skills” rather than any of these other terms. Typical statements related to this feature are illustrated below:

> “[The Bachelor of Arts] *will give you …skills and knowledge relevant to employment in the modern workforce.”* (Deakin University, TAC information website)
>
> *“As an arts graduate, you have highly developed research, communication, creative, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, and the capacity to think outside the square. These are the skills that employers look for when making recruitment choices.”* (University of Newcastle, program information brochure)

The most commonly mentioned skills in the promotional materials and interviews were the development of critical thinking and communication skills.

(2) Broad liberal arts education

The term “liberal arts”, “liberal education”, “liberal arts education”, “broad education” and “traditional education” were used by 22 of the 38 institutions to describe the program as illustrated by the following extracts from very different institutions.

> *“This program offers a* ***liberal education*** *while preparing graduates for careers in a range of vocations”.* (Bond University, program leaflet)
>
> *“Students become aware of the combination of personal and cultural understandings, ethical attitudes, and (where appropriate) the physical and aesthetic appreciations that underpin the* ***traditional liberal arts education*** *provided by the faculty”* (Monash University, publicity materials)

These documents, however, do not explain further what is meant by these terms.

(3) Interests and passions

The notion of student choice and capacity to choose discipline areas on the basis of personal interest was identified by 18 institutions which specifically use the words “*passion”* and “*interest*” in their promotional materials. A further seven programs draw on other affective qualities such as “*enjoyment*” and “*stimulating*”. Examples include statements such as University of Newcastle’s statement that “*A Bachelor of Arts degree enables you to study what you are passionate about in life.”*[23] and Macquarie University’s challenge to “*Find topics that both challenge and concern you…[and] gain highly developed skills .. while studying the disciplines that interest you most*.”

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[23] University of Newcastle faculty website

2.1.2. Content

Content elements evident in publicity materials centred on offering a:

(1) broad range of disciplines offered; and

(2) focus on humanities, arts and social science discipline areas.

(1) Broad range of disciplines offered

Promotional materials for 31 programs claimed that the program exposes students to a "*diversity of disciplines*" and a "*broad range of disciplines*" as illustrated in this example, which claimed that the program

> *"…offers a comprehensive range of challenging and innovative study programs, the **diversity** of which reflects both the continuing strengths of the traditional disciplines and the dynamism of emergent areas of critical inquiry. Arts students can follow their personal and professional interests across a **broad range of disciplines**."*
> (University of Notre Dame, Australia, TAC information)

Promotional materials for most of these institutions did not explain or define what was meant by "*broad range*" or "*diversity*". Closer examination of all 38 programs established that only four institutions defined what might constitute as "broad" in their promotional materials. For example, University of Sydney's faculty program website stipulated that they "*…offer more than 15 languages at beginners or advanced level, along with a choice of over 45 subject areas, each of which offers several units of study."*

(2) Humanities, Arts and Social Science Focus

Twenty-four programs made explicit statements describing the program as grounded in the humanities and social sciences. Twelve of these programs included creative and performing arts in their statements. Sixteen programs described the possibility of participating in study of disciplines outside of the humanities and social sciences. Widening the program to areas outside of HASS was typically described as the capacity to engage with "*disciplines from a full range of discipline areas offered by the university. These choices can include cross-Faculty disciplines*." [24] or as a specified number of "*electives from any other program in the University*."[25]

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[24] University of the Sunshine Coast, program information website

[25] Central Queensland University, handbook

2.1.3. Sequencing

Sequencing is defined here as *arrangement of the subject matter and experiences intended to lead to specific outcomes for learners"*(Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 5). Sequencing was predominantly described in publicity materials as

(1) enabling a high degree of **student choice** due to the flexible nature of the program;
(2) the capacity for students to choose to engage in **deeper study or specialisation**; and
(3) the capacity for students to **combine** degree programs.

(1) Student choice

Student choice was described as the capacity for students to have some degree of control over some aspect of the program. In addition to choosing which discipline areas to study, students were also described as having the capacity to have some ***control over how to progress*** through the program; ***change*** discipline focus without penalty; and ***transition*** into other programs. Each of these interpretations is explored in detail below.

- ***Control over progression***

Publicity materials described Arts programs as offering a high level of student control and student choice over program progression. The capacity to control program progression was typically described as "flexibility". Twenty three institutions claimed students "*are not locked into a particular path*"[26], implying that students have the capacity to change disciplinary focus without having to change programs. Students are offered "*many ways to structure your degree*"[27], the ability to *"tailor a unique degree to suit your individual interests and strengths*[28]*"* because the program " *is structured in a way that offers maximum flexibility…to pursue your own interests and design courses of study that suit your needs*."[29]

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[26] Bond University, program information website
[27] University of Sydney, program information leaflet
[28] University of New England, TAC website
[29] Deakin University, program website

- ***Change***

Programs were described as enabling students to change majors or focus of study easily during the degree. Students were not generally required to identify a clear preference for a discipline area for study, such as geography or history prior to enrolment. No publicity materials were identified that indicated that students were required declare their intention to specialise in a particular discipline area at the onset of the program.

- ***Transition***

Publicity materials suggested that Arts programs could be used as a pathway to other programs, suggesting that students consider enrolling in the Arts program "*if you are unsure about the career path you wish to pursue"*[30]. This suggestion is supported by supplementary materials and information leaflets published on 24 institutions' webpages and accessible from promotional materials. These supplementary materials provided procedural information about how to transfer from the Bachelor of Arts into other programs, such as stipulating which units of study students could be credited in when transferring to a preferred program. Six of these institutions used the term "upgrade" to describe this transition process in these pages, which created a view of the Arts program as a lesser program that could be used as a launch pad to a "better" program.

(2) Depth

The notion of particular specialisation in a particular area of study was found in 25 of the 38 program's publicity materials. Programs described in-depth or specialised study, promising students opportunities to engage with "*extensive subject knowledge from at least one field of study"*[31]. This promise was primarily achieved through study in a major sequence of study where students could develop "*a sound understanding and appreciation of … specialized discipline areas*"[32].

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[30] University of Sydney TAC information website

[31] Flinders University, program information leaflet

[32] University of Southern Queensland, TAC website

(3) Combining programs

Students could engage with research-based or professional study ***sequentially***, in the form of honours or postgraduate programs; or ***concurrently***, in the form of a combined or dual degree program.

- ***Sequential***

The following extracts illustrate of promotion materials describe Arts programs as the basis for preparing students for sequential study in postgraduate professions-based and research programs:

> *"Create pathways into further postgraduate study in professional Arts Masters courses, and with the completion of an Honours year, entry into research higher degrees in Arts"* (University of Melbourne, program website)
>
> *" The Bachelor of Arts will also enable students to gain entry into a variety of postgraduate and vocationally-oriented programs such as a Master of Clinical Psychology or Master of Business Administration"* (CQUniversity, program website)

- ***Concurrent***

Concurrent study allowed students to study two different programs of study at the same time, making it possible for students to enrol in completely different degrees simultaneously, even across different institutions. This category of program effectively combines two programs together to create one "dual" or "double" degree program. Combining programs in this manner allowed students to complete two undergraduate degrees or an undergraduate degree and a diploma within a shortened time period. Many dual programs in 2011 combined an Arts program with professionally focused degree programs. Government running data recorded the most offered dual Arts degree programs between 2001 and 2010 as Bachelor of Arts/Laws; Bachelor of Engineering/Arts; and Bachelor of Arts/Commerce.

In 2011, seven institutions actively publicised the capacity to engage in concurrent study usually through a combined or dual degree program.

> *"Graduates from these double degree programs will complement their professional skills with a broad range of generic communication and research skills, and more in-depth knowledge of the social context of their profession, all of which can give a distinct employment advantage."* (University of Canberra, program website)

2.1.4. *Coding scheme emerging from the analysis of publicity documentation*

This section has described the identification of curricula elements evident in the publicity documentation. There was evidence in the publicity documentation of instances where common features were interpreted differently. The differences in interpretation were described as "dimensions". Dimensions were used to refine the coding scheme developed. The codes and their explanations are listed in Table 20.

Table 20: Coding framework summarising interpretations of curriculum features evident in publicity documentation

Element	Feature	Dimension code	Explanation of dimension
Purpose	***Approach***	**Liberal arts**	Broad education
	Future employment possibilities	**General**	Preparation appropriate for multiple possible future employment prospects
	Skill development	**Generic**	Capacities and skill sets appropriate for multiple professional fields, identified as leadership, problem solving and team work
	Personal interest and career goals	**Personal interest**	Pursue academic interest and passions in particular disciplines
Content	***Diversity of choice in disciplines***	**Wide range of disciplines offered**	Inference that there were many disciplines available for study, although "many" not specified
		Broader than HASS	Open to disciplines other than HASS
Sequencing	***Depth***	**Specialisation**	Deeper study in a particular area.
	Facilitating student choice	**Change**	Students able to change majors or focus of study within the program
		Control Over Progression	Student capacity to develop individualised study plan
		Transition	Students able to transition to another program
	Combined degrees	**Sequential**	Undergraduate program undertaken prior to a professions-focused postgraduate or research degree
		Concurrent	Students combined 2 programs as double degree

2.2. Analysis of Official Curriculum Documentation

This section reports the results of a detailed examination of the official curriculum documentation, that is, documents authorized by the institution through formal internal accrediting processes. Formal official documentation included formal program descriptions, rules and documentation made available in the public domain as handbooks, calendars and program planners.

2.2.1. *Purpose*

The most frequently mentioned purposes, in order of frequency, are

(1) preparation **for future employment possibilities** that were either generic in nature, or specific to particular industries, or suited to adapting to changing career paths;

(2) development of **skills and attributes**; and

(3) meeting student academic goals and **personal interests.**

Each of these purposes are explored further below

(1) Future employment possibilities

Prospects for future employment were identified as a key feature in 29 of the 38 programs examined, as illustrated in the following example:

> *"…wide choice of careers is possible by combining study in various disciplines — Community Welfare, Sociology and Anthropology to prepare for a career in community aid abroad, Archaeology and History to work in cultural heritage and environmental management, History and English are classic combinations for teachers, Political Science and Journalism are a popular combination, as are Sociology and Education, Political Science and Psychology for a career in public life…."* (James Cook University, program handbook)

Three categories of future employment possibilities were identified. These categories are outlined and described in Table 21. The numbers of programs categorised as exhibiting these features are also provided.

Table 21: Preparation for generic or specific employment or adapting to changing career paths

Dimension	Definition	Example	No.
Specific	Provide training specific to particular careers	*".. courses place a high value on creativity and production, with many graduates emerging to become outstanding practitioners across the media and communication fields."*[33]	7
Generic	Provide generic prospects appropriate for multiple possible future employment; stress the application to a wide range of possible employment options	"[the BA provides]…*preparation for many kinds of employment in both the public and private sectors*."[34] *"In addition to the command of their chosen disciplines, graduates develop cultural awareness, intellectual rigour, critical thinking and communication skills in a way that integrates creative practice and theory. This is ultimately of benefit to the graduate's future workplace and lifelong learning, whether they choose to work in service to the public, in education, as a writer, or to build their own career."*[35]	23
Adaptive	Prepare students to adapt to changing future career paths and changing employment contexts Develop capacity to adapt to multiple career paths in the future	*"It also gives you skills for life – critical analysis, research, written and oral communication – skills that are being increasingly recognised by employers as providing them with their greatest assets – employees who can adapt to and help shape change, who can think laterally, apply knowledge and express themselves clearly. Your Arts degree will give you the necessary flexibility to adapt your knowledge and keep ahead of the changes that all of us face in our careers."*[36]	8

(2) Skills and attributes

Program descriptions typically mentioned generic employment skills that graduates could acquire through engagement with the program, for example,

> *"As an arts graduate, you have highly developed research, communication, creative, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, and the capacity to think outside the square. These are the skills that employers look for when making recruitment choices".* (The University of Newcastle, program handbook)

Skills and attributes mentioned in the program descriptions were analysed in order to identify skills and attributes associated with Arts programs. Skills and attributes identified were categorised as either **generic graduate skills** or as **specialist graduate skills**.

- ***Generic graduate skills***

Generic skill sets aimed to develop skills appropriate for a wide range of employment prospects. Thirty institutions explicitly described the development of generic skills suited to a wide range of workplaces and career pathways. The most frequently mentioned skills were (in order of frequency):

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[33] University of Technology, Sydney, program handbook 2011

[34] University of Canberra, program handbook 2011

[35] South Cross University, program information website 2011

[36] Australian National University, program handbook 2007 and 2011.

- critical thinking
- communication skills (verbal and written)
- research skills
- cultural awareness
- problem solving
- capacity to collaborate
- leadership
- ethical behaviour

- ***Specialist skills***

In addition to generic graduate skills, seven institutions listed specialist discipline or professional skills as outcomes of the program. An example illustrating this category is the Griffith University program which aimed to build the skill sets appropriate particular to working in a "social enterprise". Social enterprise skills were described as *"voluntary and community organisations, local community partnerships, charities, mutual organisations such as co-operatives and the social responsibility departments of large businesses such as banks and insurance companies"*[37]. The other six programs categorised as developing specialist skills focused on developing the skills and knowledges relevant for professions requiring a global/international perspective, professions in the media and communications industry, or those relevant to a career in the creative arts. The distribution of each category is illustrated in Table 22.

Table 22: Number of programs offering specialist or generic skill sets

Dimension	No programs	Description
Generic	31	Capacities and skill sets appropriate for multiple professional fields, identified as leadership, problem solving and team work
Specialist	7	Specific to particular careers or the skill set for particular discipline areas, such as language skills, skills in using particular graphics technologies and media skills

(3) Student goals and interests

The capacity of the Arts program to appeal to students' affective goals and interests such as disciplinary interests or future career aspirations was identified in 27 programs.

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[37] Griffith University. Program handbook 2011

These capacities were categorised as either catering to student's **personal interest** in a particular disciplinary field or for student's interest in pursuing **potential career goals**.

- ***Personal interest***

Personal interest was described by 12 programs as being met by the opportunity to study a particular discipline, for example:

> *"A Bachelor of Arts degree enables you to study what you are passionate about in life, and convert this learning into a career. You have the flexibility to choose from a broad range of courses, and to tailor the program to match your specific interests."* (University of Newcastle, program handbook)

- ***Career goals***

Fifteen programs referred to program outcomes that might appeal to student aspirations. An example is illustrated below:

> *"You will have a unique opportunity to design a cross-disciplinary course according to your personal interests, perhaps in creative writing from the perspective of a deep commitment to ecological issues, or a future in political journalism, underpinned by expertise in a second language such as Japanese".* (Edith Cowan, program website)

A thematic analysis identified two categories of anticipated career directions, illustrated and explained in Table 23.

Table 23: Numbers of programs addressing personal interest outcomes

Category	Definition	Example
Global experience	Prepares students for a career in the global context	*"The program is for students interested in international affairs, communicating in a global environment, and internationalising their life experience."*[38] *Strong emphasis is placed on the importance of language studies for global careers, with options in Asian and European languages which range from introductory to advanced levels.* [39]
Creative Industries/ Creative Arts	Provides training suited for a career in creative industries	*"Dance, drama, film, media, writing, visual arts and visual communication design: this rich diversity of experience helps prepare you for creating outstanding works of art in your chosen field."*[40]

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[38] University of South Australia, program handbook

[39] University of New South Wales, program handbook

[40] Deakin University, program handbook

2.2.2. Content

The Stage 1 analysis had identified that that content of Arts programs commonly offered

(1) **diversity** in disciplines through multiple discipline areas made available for study;
(2) **breadth** of study requiring students to engage more than one discipline area; and
(3) content knowledge particular to **humanities, arts and social sciences.**

The Stage 2 analysis of official curriculum identified variation in the ways that these terms were interpreted. These variations are explored in further detail below.

(1) Diversity in disciplines

Thirty-one program descriptions from the 38 programs available in 2011 claimed that the programs offer students an opportunity to engage with a "*diversity of disciplines*". To establish how "*diversity of disciplines"* was interpreted across the sector, disciplines were coded using the discipline ranges nominated by the Australian Academy of Humanities and Academy of Social Sciences[41]. Frequency analysis conducted across the coding revealed that 'diversity' was interpreted differently in official curriculum documents across the sector, specifically in the number of discipline areas, the number of majors and the range of fields of education offered. For example, the most number of discipline areas offered in one program was 28 different discipline areas; the program that offered the least included only three discipline areas. Seven programs offered fewer than 8 majors and 5 programs offered more than 50 majors. Some programs offered majors only in humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) disciplines, others interpreted diversity as including disciplines outside of HASS[42] such as chemistry, sport science and health education while others restricted offerings to HASS only disciplines. To examine the variation in interpretation of diversity in content across the sector, a series of categories, illustrated in Table 24, were developed. Programs were then coded according to these categories.

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[41] Social Sciences disciplines were coded to the disciplinary range associated with the Australian Academy of Social Sciences. Instances of where disciplines were attributed to both Academies (specifically, the disciplines of philosophy, history and linguistics) were coded to Humanities. This attribution was based on the observation that numbers of fellows within these disciplines listed on the Australian Academy of Humanities website were greater than those listed on the Australian Academy of Social Sciences. Instances where disciplines did not fit into one of these two areas were coded as 'Other'.

[42] By using the DIISRTE field of education (FOE) coding scheme to code disciplines in Australian Arts programs offered as majors, it was possible to see that some programs offered majors in fields of education broader than HASS. Full details about the DIISRTE coding process are available in Appendix 1, p. 262

Table 24: Diversity of disciplines categories

Diversity in	Category	Definition
Discipline areas	Limited	fewer than 10 discipline areas
	Wide	more than 10 discipline areas
Number of majors	Few	offered fewer than 20 majors
	Many	programs offered more than 20 majors
Range of fields of education (FOE)	Only HASS	majors offered only in “Society and Culture” or “Creative Arts” FOE
	Outside HASS	majors offered included discipline areas from FOE other than “Society and Culture” or “Creative Arts” FOE

Figure 9 illustrates how many programs were identified in each category. As a result of this analysis, it is evident that the view of Arts programs as offering a “diversity of disciplines” is interpreted differently across the sector. Some programs offered a wide range of discipline areas from which students could select, while others offered a comparatively restricted program, although the program was still described as “offering a diversity of disciplines”.

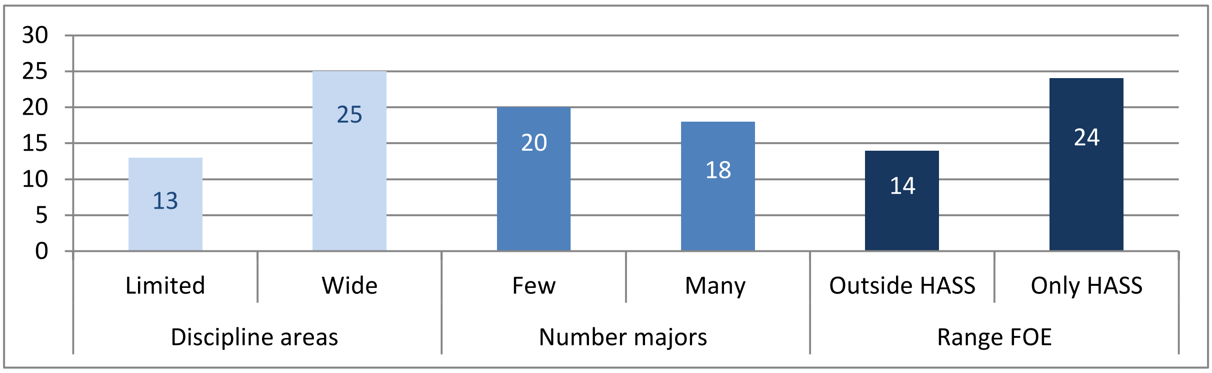

Figure 9: Interpretation of what is meant by “diversity of disciplines” across the sector

By comparing the numbers of the discipline areas coded as humanities, creative arts, social sciences and disciplines other than HASS, it was evident that Australian Arts programs primarily offer majors in HASS disciplinary fields. While 14 programs offered majors in disciplines coded outside of HASS, these sequences only accounted for 8% of the total number of sequences offered in 2011. The distribution of discipline fields of education is illustrated in Figure 10. Only one institution offered more social science major sequences than humanities-based majors. The official curriculum documentation records available in 2011 indicate, therefore, that Australian Arts programs were more focused on humanities-based subjects than on social sciences.

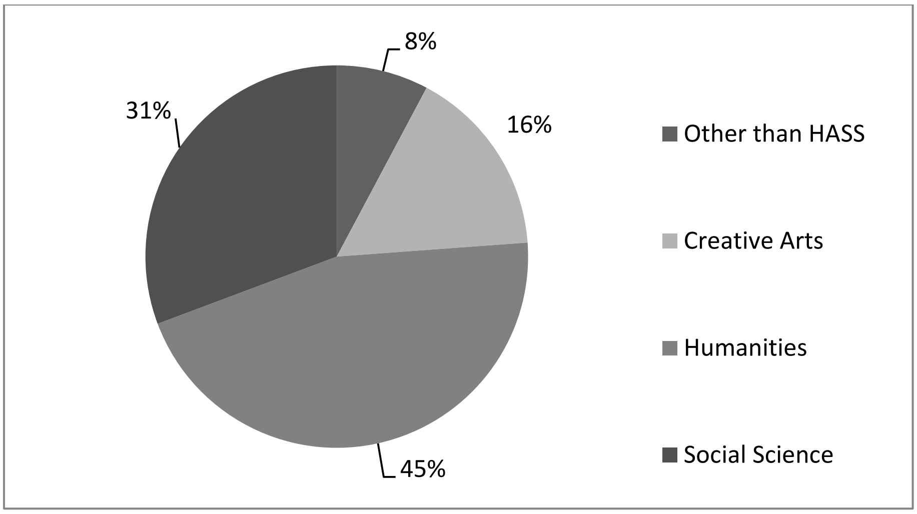

Figure 10: Majors by discipline area as a percentage of the total sequences of study offered across programs studied

(2) Breadth

Breadth is defined in this study as the requirement for students to engage with more than one discipline area across the whole program of study. The requirement for students to engage in a breadth of study was highlighted in the official documentation of 34 programs. This requirement evident in the official documentation, however, was interpreted and enacted in one of 4 different ways. Students were required to

- study more than one **sequence of study**[43] in different discipline areas;
- complete multi-disciplinary **thematic units of study;**
- participate in units of study identified as **"breadth" units;** or
- study **elective units of study** from different discipline areas.

Some programs required students to engage with more than one of these requirements.

- ***Sequence of study***

In 2011, 25 programs ensured exposure to a breadth of disciplines by requiring students to engage with more than one sequence of study. Sequences of study included majors or minors. These sequences had to be in different disciplines. Nine programs that required students to engage in only one sequence had rules in place requiring students to engage with broader study. Students were prevented from “filling” their study plan with one discipline area. For example: *A maximum of* [14 units of study] *may be taken from any single field of study in the faculty*.[44]

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[43] Sequence of study is taken to mean an approved combination of a certain number of modules or units of study in the same, or closely-related, area of study over the designated period of study for a program.

- ***Breadth units of study***

In 2011, there were 7 programs that required students to study “breadth” units. These units typically required students to select at least 1 unit from a selected list of units that included disciplines outside of HASS. For example, in 2011, Macquarie University required students to engage in both “People” and “Planets” units.

> [People and Planet units] *enable students to achieve the breadth of understanding required by today's graduates by requiring them to study outside their primary discipline. People and Planet units enable students to understand the challenges and issues facing the world at present and develop the capacity to be engaged and ethical local and global citizens. In essence, People units are designed to give students an understanding of what it means to live in the social world, and to develop cultural or social literacy. Planet units enable students to develop scientific literacy and to understand what it means to live in the physical world.* (Macquarie University, Handbook)

- ***Multi-disciplinary thematic units of study***

Fifteen programs exposed students to breadth through a requirement for enrolment in core units of study multi-disciplinary and theme-based in nature. Examples include *“Australia, Asia and the World”* and *“Our Space: Networks, Narrative and the Making of Place.* An example of this type of unit is illustrated below:

> *The subject explores changes in the representation of war and conflict across different cultures and different genres of writing, film and art. Beginning with the epic poetry, the art and the religion of archaic Greece, it moves through a number of periods of European and non-European history, and a number of different genres, to ask questions about how narrative is built around war and conflict, about the different ways in which words and images construct stories, and about the cultural construction of gender.* (University of Melbourne, Details for foundation unit MULT10004 From Homer to Hollywood, handbook)

Units such as the above claimed to expose students to a breadth of discipline areas because they integrated multiple disciplinary content knowledges, epistemologies and skill sets.

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[44] La Trobe University program handbook

- ***Elective units of study***

The final mechanism identified to ensure breadth of study was study in “elective” or “free choice” units. These units were taken outside of the sequences of study. All programs offered elective units, although the rules for interacting with electives varied. While all 38 programs offered electives, 23 of the programs emphasised that electives provided students with exposure to a breadth of educational experiences through engaging with electives. Students could choose electives from

- a restricted set of units, usually from units within majors offered in the Arts program (N=6 programs) ;
- any units offered within the host faculty (N=12); or
- any units from any discipline offered across the whole university, assuming any prerequisites could be met (N= 20).

(3) Content knowledge

Content knowledge of Arts programs were examined to determine whether there were any unique core content knowledges for an Australian Arts program that might be common to all and might distinguish an Arts program from other programs offered in Australia. Discipline knowledge is taken to mean the facts, concepts, theories, and principles related to a discipline, such as History, Chemistry or Economics, rather than the skills or outcomes associate with a particular discipline (after Shulman, 1986). The codes and categories developed drawing on the Academies of Humanities and Social Sciences lists and descriptions of disciplines described earlier were examined to identify commonalities and differences and histograms developed.

Somewhat surprisingly, this process established that Australian Arts programs did not have one discipline area that was common to all 38 institutions, suggesting that there is not a common discipline knowledge base for Australian Arts programs. There were some disciplines common to the majority of programs, as illustrated in Table 25. Seventy percent (N=26) of Arts programs available in 2011 offered at least one major in each of the discipline areas of history, politics and languages other than English (LOTE)[45]. These majors could therefore be considered to constitute disciplines central to most Arts programs in 2011.

Table 25: Most common discipline areas offered as a major in 2011

Discipline area	Number of institutions
History	**33**
Politics	**32**
LOTE	**31**
Psychology	**28**
Sociology	**27**
Philosophy	**23**
Communication & Media	**21**
English	**21**
Indigenous studies	**18**
Writing	**18**

2.2.3. Sequencing

All Australian Arts program rules require the successful completion of 24 units of study. In 2011, only one institution had structures in place that facilitated a 2-year completion period. It is expected that full-time study of the 24 units would be completed over a three year period.

It is primarily through sequences of study that programs describe students' engagement with disciplines. A substantial sequence of study within a discipline area is usually defined as a major, while "minor" is the term most often used to describe a smaller sequence of study within a discipline area. As described earlier, students complete additional or "elective" units to complete the required 24 units.

Program rules were the main mechanism governing students' patterns of study. Although programs rules were generally found on program websites and in handbooks, the manner in which these rules were conveyed to students varied considerably. Some institutions had highly detailed instructions. For most institutions, however, students are required to interpret the rules and construct their own pathway through the 24 units of study. The way in which these 24 units are organised in these rules differs across institutions.

Variations in approaches to sequencing were identified in:

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[45] Languages Other Than English (LOTE) encompasses all language study outside of English, and includes languages as diverse as French, Korean and Urdu.

(1) the **depth of study** possible in a single discipline;

(2) the approach adopted to **incremental learning;**

(3) the degree to which a program **accommodated student choice**; and

(4) how programs were **combined** with other programs.

Each of these variations is explored further below.

(1) Depth of study

Twenty-five program descriptions claim that the programs offer students an opportunity to engage with deeper study. At its most basic level, depth of study could be interpreted as a major sequence of study. However, depth was commonly interpreted as the number of units of study students completed in a particular discipline. There was no measure evident of what might define depth as a uniformly attainable outcome.

Even on the basic pragmatic approach of counting the number of units of study required to complete a major, across the sector, the structures of majors varied considerably. The maximum number of units that could be counted towards a single major was 12 units and the minimum 6. Table 26 illustrates the categories developed to capture the variations in requirements.

Table 26: Number of units required to complete a major by number of programs

Category	Number of Units in major	No Programs
Limited	Fewer than 8 units	9
Standard	8 units	20
Specialised	More than 10 units	5
Variable	No uniform requirement to complete a standard number of units	4

“Double” or “extended” major sequences required students to engage with more units of study in a particular discipline area, between 12 and 16 units of study. Majors in psychology often had unique completion rules that were different to other majors, possibly to meet professional accreditation requirements. Nine institutions dealt with this difference by only offering psychology as a ‘double’ or ‘extended’ major.

(2) Incremental learning

Incremental learning is used here to describe the anticipated increase in complexity as students progress through a series of units of study within a discipline. Incremental development in students learning presumes building on prior knowledge and incremental development of core concepts, terms and skills. Three different categories of approaches to incremental learning were evident in the analysis of official documentation, as illustrated in Table 27.

Table 27: Dimensions of incremental study

Dimension	Description	No programs
Limited	Few or no requirements for incremental study	6
Major	Incremental study requirements within the major	22
Program	Highly restricted study plan across the whole program	10

By 2011, six programs had no requirements for incremental study. Program rules in these programs defined a major as completing a particular number of units. No program rules were evident regarding the order in which units were required to be completed.

Thirty two programs required students to complete majors that had some form of incremental complexity. This complexity generally developed from an introductory level at first year to greater complexity at third year level. The manner in which the incremental learning occurred varied across the sector.

- Twelve programs adopted a two-tiered structure, typically referred to as "introductory and advanced units".
- Twenty institutions adopted a three-tiered structure, typically referred to as "introductory, intermediate and advanced" levels.

The assumption is that, in the advanced level units in both the 2 and 3 tiered structures, units build on earlier units in some manner and that there is incremental development of skills and knowledge within the major sequence of study. Testing this assumption was beyond the scope of this project as this level of data was not publically accessible for many institutions.

(3) Accommodating student choice

Twenty-five programs described the Arts program in official handbooks as accommodating "*student choice*" through "*flexible*" structures. There were varying ways that programs interpreted a flexible structure that facilitated student choice. Choice was described in terms of

- enabling students to choose from a range of **elective** units of study;
- enabling student **control over progression** through the absence of a prescribed study plan and the ability to complete units in any order; and
- providing access to the program through **multiple modes of delivery.**

Each of these is described further below

- ***Flexibility in electives***

The degree of choice that students could exercise in the programs offered in 2011 is illustrated by the portion of the program that students choose to fill with elective units. As described earlier, elective units are those units of study that are unrelated to major sequences of study, that students can choose from in order to meet program requirements. Figure 11 illustrates the variations in the portion of programs that students could use to complete electives.

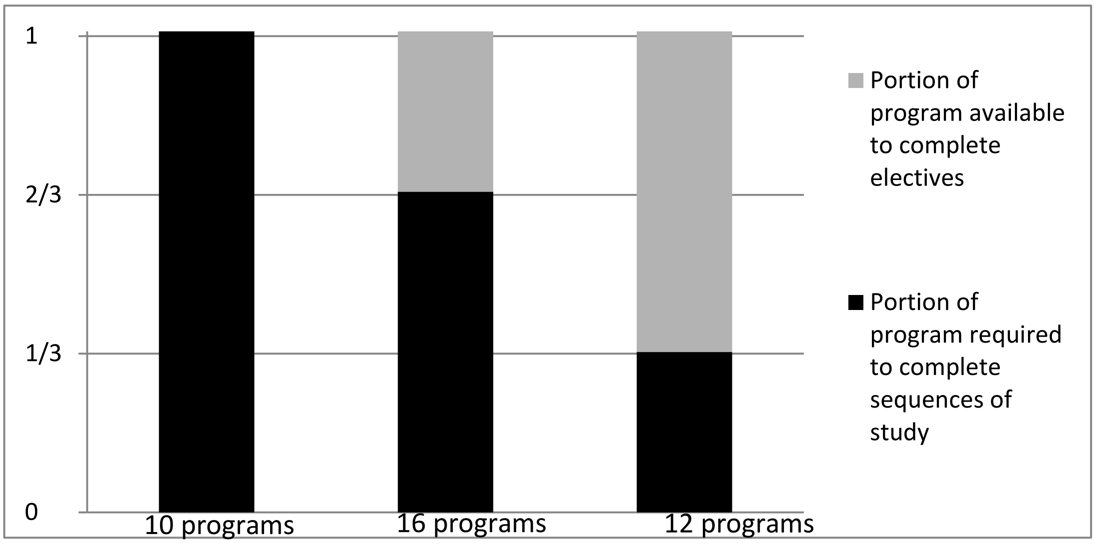

Figure 11: Portion of program available for student choice in electives

Ten institutions effectively limited students' capacity to engage with electives. All or most of the possible 24 units in the program structure were consumed by meeting majors, minors and core units of study requirements. Where electives were evident, choice was limited and tended to be within the same discipline areas as the majors offered. Sixteen programs allowed 1/3 of the program structure (i.e. 8 of a possible 24 units) to be used as elective units of study. These programs generally required students to choose from a restricted list of units or units offered by the Faculty. In instances where there was capacity to choose from units offered across the institution, students were limited to between 1 and 4 units, meaning that the program focus was still constrained to HASS disciplines. Twelve institutions allowed 2/3 of the program structure (i.e. 16 of a possible 24 units) to be used as elective units. This interpretation of the use of electives meant that students could feasibly study more units from disciplines outside of the identified majors than those within the disciplines offered as majors in the Arts program. Elective units of study were governed by rules that required that units be at completed at particular levels of complexity. In ten of the 12 institutions, elective units could come from any units offered at the institution.

- ***Control over progression***

In many programs the term “flexibility” was defined as students having control over how they would engage with units of study, majors and electives. Programs using this definition provided capacity for students to choose the order in which they would engage with units across the life of the program.

For 16 programs there was evidence of a degree of **free choice** as there were few restrictions, if any, on the order in which units were completed. Successful completion of the program was measured by the accumulation of a specific number of units. This approach meant that students in third year could participate in first year units and that a student did not necessarily need to complete a second year unit before completing a third year unit. This type of scaffolding was particularly evident in the programs that were structured on 2 levels, that is, introductory and advanced units.

By contrast, 10 programs in 2011 that offered a more **prescribed progression**. These prescriptive programs stipulated the exact order students needed to study units each semester. All units, including electives, followed a progressive pattern of increasing complexity. They often offered a small selection of majors available for study. They also compelled students to complete core units.

Core units are units of study outside of a major sequence of study that are required for successful program completion. Core units frequently focused on teaching core skills related to humanities and social sciences and had titles such as “*Academic Writing”*; *“Introduction to Ethics”*; and *“Understanding Communication”.* As all programs required students to complete 24 units of study, requirements for completion of a large number of units in addition to the units required for the completion of majors effectively limited students' capacity to control both the units they could study and the order in which they did so. Table 28 illustrates the number of core units in each year level required by programs categorised as prescribed programs. Programs are organised by institution.

Table 28: Number of required units of study in 2011 outside of major sequences

Institution	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	core total
RMIT	6	4	6	16
Charles Darwin University	8	2	2	12
University of Western Sydney	4	2	2	8
University of Technology, Sydney	4	2	2	8
Griffith University	2	2	2	6
James Cook University	4	0	1	5
Victoria University	2	0	3	5
Bond University	4	0	0	4
Curtin University of Technology	4	0	0	4
Edith Cowan University	3	0	1	4

- ***Multiple modes of delivery***

Flexibility was also interpreted as enabling students to choose from multiple modes of delivery for how they wished to engage with the program. Modes of delivery were described in official documentation as internal or external. The "external mode" was usually described as online asynchronous study. Internal mode was generally conducted in face-to-face traditional on-campus classes. Most programs mentioned the use of blended learning, which is taken to mean that some of the learning environment makes use of online learning environments. Only nine programs explicitly stated in official curriculum documentation that particular majors were offered in an "external" mode. Not all disciplines included in the suite of majors offered were offered in an external mode. Instead, a limited sub-set of the total number of majors offered in the mainstream program was available in an external mode. It was also not clear from the curriculum documentation whether adjustments had been made to the manner in which learning material were presented to accommodate an online mode of delivery. The remaining programs indicated that units of study may be offered in multiple modes of delivery. However, it was not clear from the documentation what precise mode of delivery was used; whether majors were available solely online, as blended learning or through using other technologies such as print-based distance education.

(4) Combining degree programs

As described in the analysis of publicity material, programs were described in official documentation either as:

(1) a double or dual degree, where students engaged combined 2 programs studied **concurrently,** generally combining a generalist program of study with a professional-focused program e.g. a Bachelor of Arts/ Engineering; or

(2) a **sequential** program where a generalist program was undertaken prior to a professions-focused postgraduate or research degree.

- ***Concurrent study***

Eighteen of the 26 institutions that specifically mentioned offering these programs facilitated concurrent programs by exchanging elective units of study within the Arts program for units in another degree. For example:

> *Where students in a single degree have the option of taking elective units from other faculties, students in double degrees will have units from each course counted as elective units towards the other course. This cross counting allows double degree students to meet the requirements of both degrees in less time (usually 1 -2 years less) than it takes to do them separately.* (Monash University, Program information website)

There was another way of accommodating concurrent degree programs through "combined" degrees, a more prescriptive combined program. This single entity effectively became a new degree program and was often not available as two single degree programs. Four institutions were found to offer this type of concurrent program, all combining Arts with Education.

- ***Sequential programs***

Twelve programs were found to explicitly limit the capacity for students to engage in a double degree program. For 10 programs, this limitation was primarily due to the prescriptive nature of the program limiting the capacity of the program to integrate another program. The remaining two institutions had adopted a university-wide curriculum policy that specifically removed the option of enrolling in a double degree, forcing students to study programs sequentially.

2.2.4. Coding scheme emerging from the analysis of official documentation

The coding scheme emerging from the analysis of the publicity documentation (described in section 2.1.4, p. 107) was further refined as a result of the analysis of the official documentation of the 38 Arts programs offered in 2011. Variations in interpretations of the features common to Arts programs established in Stage 1 were captured as dimensions and sub-dimensions. These codes are outlined in Table 29.

Table 29: Coding framework summarising interpretations of curriculum features evident in official curriculum documentation

Feature	Dimension Code	Explanation of dimension	Sub-dimension Code	Details
Future employment possibilities	**Specialist**	Specific to particular careers or the skill set for particular discipline areas		
	General	Preparation appropriate for multiple possible future employment prospects		
	Adapting	Preparation for capacity to adapt to changing future career paths		
Skill development	**Specialist**	Specific to particular careers or the skill set for particular discipline areas		
	Generic	Capacities and skill sets appropriate for multiple professional fields		
Personal interest and career goals	**Personal Interest**	Pursue academic interest and passions in particular disciplines		
	Career goals	Potential future career paths related to particular career aspirations	***Global***	Contribute to a global world
			Creative	Skills in creative industries
Diversity of choice in Disciplines	**Disciplines**	Number of disciplines offered	***Wide range***	More than 10 discipline areas offered as majors
			Limited range	Fewer than 10 discipline areas offered as majors
	Majors	Number of majors offered	***Few***	Fewer than 20 majors
			Many	More than 20 majors
	Fields of education	Range of fields of education offered	***HASS only***	Majors restricted to HASS
			Outside HASS	Includes majors outside of HASS
Breadth	**Sequence based**	Required to study more than 1 major in different discipline areas		
	Breadth units	required to participate in units from disciplines outside of HASS		
	thematic units	required to complete multi-disciplinary thematic units of study		
	Elective	engage with units outside of majors		
Depth	**Limited**	Students required to complete a limited number of units in one disciplinary area		
	Specialised	Students complete more than 8 units of study in one disciplinary area		
Incremental study	**Limited**	Limited requirements for incremental study		
	Major	Incremental study requirements within major		
	Program	Restricted study plan across whole program		
Facilitating student choice	**Electives**	Structure enables students to engage with elective units outside of the	***Limited***	No or limited capacity to chooses electives
			Restricted	Up to 1/3 of program electives
			Wide	Up to 2/3 of program electives
	Control over progression	Student capacity to develop study plan	***Free choice***	complete units in any order
			Prescribed	prescribed study plan
	Mode of delivery	How students could engage with the learning environment	***External***	Multiple modes of delivery
			Face-to face	On campus
Combined degrees	**Sequential**	Undergraduate program undertaken prior to a professions-focused postgraduate or research degree		
	Concurrent	Students combined 2 programs as double degree		

2.3. Analysis of Personal Perspectives

The next phase of the Stage 2 analysis focused on the ethnographic data gathered at the 3 case sites to understand personal perceptions of Arts programs. These data included

- Semi-structured interviews with 6 program coordinators, 7 academic leaders and 8 major conveners;
- Records from observations of school, faculty and program management meetings; and
- Related observation documents, such as meeting minutes and reports.

Responses to the questions "*How the term 'curriculum' might be considered in the program offered at your institution and how it applies to the BA in particular?*" and "*What do you think the purpose of the BA is at your institution?*"[46] were subjected to close scrutiny.

The case sites are referred to in this section by their aliases (Sandstone University, Modern University and Regional University) to distinguish between the cases. These aliases are described in detail in Table 11, p. 82.

2.3.1. Purpose

Those interviewed identified the purpose of the Arts program as providing

(1) a liberal arts education;
(2) the opportunity to develop the capacity to adapt to changing career paths; and
(3) generic workplace skills.

(1) Liberal arts education

Program coordinators and major conveners interviewed indicated that a core purpose of the Australian Arts program was to provide a "*liberal arts*" program or "*liberal education*".

> *"The program is committed to the basic importance of the liberal arts and social sciences for the enrichment of social, cultural and individual life"* (Major convener, Regional University)
>
> *"it was liberal arts, it's knowledge for knowledge's sake."* (Program coordinator, Modern University)

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[46] Further information about the interviews conducted in the 3 case institutions is described in Chapter 3, p 83.

"Liberal arts" was used interchangeably with the term "liberal education" in interviews and in observed meetings and discussions. When pressed for an explanation of what was meant by these terms, interviewees referred to

- study unrelated to specific vocational, technical or science-based purposes;
- providing students with experience in a broad range of discipline areas including fields outside of humanities and social sciences; and
- exposing students with opportunities to learn to think and argue critically; gain some understanding of cultures other than their own; and be aware of social justice issues.

(2) Flexibility and adaptability

Both major conveners and academic leaders described the "*flexibility*" and "*open to student choice*" aspects of Arts programs as fundamental to developing the skill sets for Arts graduates.

> *"You major in some of the traditional subjects like sociology or history or English literature, you are going to acquire a whole lot of practice in very high level skills that are valuable in the job market – so you are going to learn how to read things, interpret things, evaluate what you are reading, put together what you are reading with something else you are reading or doing. Or somebody tells you do a work of synthesis, you are going to develop creative skills in expressing and analytical skills and evaluation."* (Program coordinator, Sandstone University)

The flexible nature of the program and need to choose from the range of disciplines offered was described as the means by which students could develop the capacity to be adaptable, a capacity described as core to navigating future career paths:

> *"One of the things that has been said frequently about the Bachelor of Arts is that it allows students to develop this chameleon-like nature that is required for going into multiple careers, [to prepare] for a future that we don't even know exists."* (Academic leader, Modern University)

(3) Preparation for diverse workplaces

The Arts program was viewed by interviewees as generic preparation for a non-specific career path and diverse workplaces.

> *"…we know the Bachelor of Arts students end up employed. The dirty little secret about Arts students is that most of them are going to end up employed in tall buildings working for large organisations pushing paper around – and it's a dirty little secret because it's not a glamorous job described in that way. I mean… I don't*

> *work in a tall building, but I work pushing paper around and I enjoy it and I feel fulfilled, feel that I am making a contribution to the functioning of the organization that I work for and it's a job that in the knowledge economies that BA graduates are going to be doing. And that's what they're going to be doing …. They are going to be just as well equipped as a journalism graduate; as well equipped as a law graduate for doing those kinds of generic knowledge economy jobs that where your opportunities really depend on what happens in the organization and what you make of it."* (Academic leader, Sandstone University)

All 6 program coordinators interviewed described a tension between maintaining the integrity of Arts programs as providing a broad and flexible degree program that prepared students for an unknown future or for further study and the need to be seen to have professional or vocational outcomes:

> *"There is a need to take note of what graduates need to have to get them employed, but a fine line between being focused on vocational education, particularly in face of evidence of large numbers of students going onto further study"* (Program coordinator, Modern University)

An academic leader at Regional University expressed a view that the program should not be vocationally orientated, instead describing the program as primarily focused on "*preparation for research and writing*", and a "*meld between the general and the specific".*

All case sites offered a generic BA in addition to a series of "tagged" degree programs, some of which had intended professional outcomes such as a Bachelor of Psychology or Bachelor of (Arts) Journalism and others which provided a focused study plan with set pathways through majors and units of study. The generic BA programs at all 3 institutions offered the same majors and units for study in the BA as in the tagged programs. Major conveners and program coordinators were questioned about what were the distinctions between the tagged programs and the BA program. Interestingly, in all 3 institutions, it was possible to replicate the most tagged programs within the BA. Only psychology-based tagged programs offered units that were unique to the program and not available to BA students. Yet, all those interviewed struggled to articulate any distinctiveness between the tagged and generic BA programs other than the entry score required, for example

> *"There is a different grade point entry… normally the Bachelor of* [discipline] *has higher entry…some students if they want to do it, but don't get the marks might do it as an arts degree. Almost all the* [discipline] *units are offered in the Bachelor of Arts and ... and then in our named degree we specify the electives we think match with our subjects …whereas in the Bachelor of Arts they can be doing an* [discipline]

> *major and then doing electives or minors in completely different disciplines"* (Major convener, Modern University)

2.3.2. Content

The contemporary Australian Arts program was described in interviews as offering a broad range of disciplines within HASS disciplines:

> "[The BA at this institution is an] *undergraduate degree that provides the students with some breadth and depth in study across the humanities and social sciences. That's the way I would describe it. And I think you know, we are thinking of it as a sequence of study that would build capacities around knowledge, in-depth knowledge of humanities and social sciences"* (Program convener, Sandstone University)

All interviewees described the breadth and diversity of disciplines as a distinctive feature of the "*brand*" of the program. This feature was confirmed in observations of meetings where the main topic of discussions revolved around the need to develop strategies to maintain the scope or spread of discipline areas described as the "distinctiveness" of the program.

Interviewees at Modern University and Sandstone University described the capacity for students to choose from a range of disciplines aligned to their own interests rather than being compelled to follow focused study, as a unique feature of their program. In contrast, interviewees at Regional University described the unique feature of their program as providing students with focused progression through discipline-based units along an explicit theme:

> *What distinguishes us ... is the, the focus on the* [x discipline] *approach so that's how we teach* [y discipline] *too* (Major convener, Regional University)

There was, however, no mention in any materials from the three case studies of any view of a common set of content knowledge. All program coordinators interviewed described their program as offering something unique in terms of discipline scope:

> *"It is unique in terms of some of the majors are only offered at [this institution] and not in the other institutions."* (Program coordinator, Modern University)

Despite this perception of uniqueness, closer examination of the disciplines offered at each institution showed that each offered very similar subjects, with Regional University simply offering fewer majors within the same set of fields of study as those offered at Sandstone and Modern universities.

2.3.3. Sequencing

Interviewees typically referred to the means by which students could engage with subjects through sequences of study such as "*majors*". Interviewees did not describe majors as providing a capacity for students to specialise in a particular discipline. When the word "*specialisation*" was used, it was used to describe specialist degree programs such as the "Bachelor of Journalism" or "Bachelor of Archaeology".

Program coordinators and major conveners described planning study in terms of dealing with logistical issues, rather than in terms of curriculum development. Rather than the challenges of ensuring that there was continuity and expansion of skill or knowledge development through the major sequence, they described the challenges of unit conveners not being available to teach a unit due to ill-health, workload issues or sabbatical leave.

When specifically asked about planning incremental study, major conveners in Sandstone University and Modern University referred to progression as ensuring that students could accumulate "*enough*" credit points to meet program rules to ensure completion rather than as integrating learning across the major. Program progression was described in terms of program rules that compelled students to engage with advanced level units.

> *"We do kind of prescribe course progression; they can't really do 10 First Year units."* (Major convener, Modern University)

By contrast, participants at Regional University were more aware of incremental learning and curriculum coherency. Participants in the meetings observed at Regional University discussed the need to ensure that students progressed through units in a particular pattern. The discussion also considered coherence across the units of study to ensure that students could make holistic sense of the program and the majors, rather than a series of atomistic experiences. The need for coherency was described in an interview as the central aim behind the recent implementation of curriculum changes. The changes to curriculum had been made to address challenges identified in the previous curriculum:

> *"I think at the end of it* [the previous curriculum], *students couldn't make sense of it – it was like "What do I know about international studies"? Well, they just know these little pockets but there was no common unit to bring together any principle, there was no capstone for them to bring something into a research project together or any of that. It was a disaster for us."* (Major convener, Regional University)

The revised program was based on a central, unifying theme that was described by all those interviewed at this site as a centralising spine for the program.

> *"I think primarily [the BA at this institution] is embedded in the humanities, but it is based on. …this idea that it is about the stories we tell about ourselves …. I think one of the things that might be a little bit different that we've worked hard to think about that as a unifying theme for us"* (Program coordinator, Regional University)

Further features of sequencing in Arts programs; flexibility and the capacity for students to exercise choice, were also found to be interpreted differently across the various sites and the roles within those sites of variations in interpretations of "*flexibility*" and "*student choice*". *"Student choice"* was primarily used by major conveners and program coordinators to describe modes of delivery rather than describing student capacity to tailor or change the program.

> *"Certainly it's flexible in that you can do it online, you can do it in the back of the car, in a plane … So you know there is a flexibility in that kind of sense"* (Program coordinator, Regional University)

However, coordinators were aware of the tension between offering variety as choice and genuine flexibility:

> *"For some people flexibility is choice and I sometimes go to the supermarket and I think there is a whole aisle of breakfast cereal and there's lots and lots of choice, but in fact it's all really just more of the same. I don't know whether more always provides flexibility."*(Program coordinator, Modern University)

Academic leaders were the only interviewees who described choice in terms of the students' capacity to tailor and change programs. While the program could be "*to figure out what they are interested in and good at, connected enough with to pursue with vigour, if not passion"*[47]*,* the capacity to change was typically described by this group as students seeking to move to a "*better*" program or "*improve*" their options, that the "*general BA degree seems to be used by students who are testing the waters… while planning to 'upgrade' to another program"*[48]. The capacity to change was noted as area of concern in terms of attrition, as illustrated in the following extracts:

> *"A lot of the attritions consists of students who come into the BA not knowing what they want to do and then work out what they want to do and then they go to another degree or because BA's typically have a lower entry score. It's a pathway*

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[47] Academic leader, Sandstone University

[48] Academic leader, Regional University

> *degree so that they enrol, pass the first year and then … transition into a program which they weren't qualified to get into straight from school"* (Academic leader, Sandstone University)
>
> *"50% of the attrition rates is accountable to students "upgrading". About half of these students stay within the institution but the other half move to other institutions. Many students who move elsewhere are seeking a more vocational degree"* (Academic leader, Modern University)

2.3.4. Coding scheme emerging from the analysis of personal perspectives data

This section of the chapter has described the personal perspectives of those responsible for the curriculum. These perspectives had them captured in the ethnographic data. As with other materials analysed and reported in this section, variations were evident ways that the common curriculum features identified in Stage 1 were interpreted. The variations in interpretation apparent in the ethnographic data confirm the variations evident in the official documentation. The variations of interpretations identified in this phase of analysis are summarised in Table 30 below. The dimensions found were used as a coding scheme to conduct the later stages of analyses. The analysis also indicated that there was evidence of variation in interpretation by those with different roles in curriculum planning.

Table 30: Coding framework summarising interpretations of curriculum features evident in ethnographic data

Element	Feature	Dimension	Explanation of dimension
Purpose	***Approach***	**Liberal arts**	Broad education
	Future employment possibilities	**General**	Preparation appropriate for multiple possible future employment prospects
		Adapting	preparation for capacity to adapt to changing future career paths
	Skill development	**Generic**	Capacities and skill sets appropriate for multiple professional fields
Content	***Diversity of disciplines***	**Wide range of disciplines offered**	Inference that there were many disciplines available for study. "many" not specified
		Broader than HASS	Open to disciplines other than HASS
Sequencing	***Depth***	**Limited**	Students complete fewer than 8 units of study in one disciplinary area
	Incremental study	**Limited**	Limited requirements for incremental study
	Facilitating student choice	**Change**	Students able to change majors or focus of study within the program
		Modes of delivery	Multiple modes of delivery and access to program elements
		Transition	Students able to transition to another program

2.4. Comparing Curriculum Descriptions

The Stage 1 analysis revealed that there were features that were common to all Australian Arts programs. The Stage 2 analysis revealed that there is variety in the ways that these common features are interpreted and described. These variations were captured as a coding framework using inductive techniques. The variations in interpretation reveal that that there is not a common understanding of what constitutes an Australian Arts program curriculum. Instead, there are multiple interpretations with evidence of variation in interpretation occurring within institutions across the different curriculum planning roles and types of descriptions of programs. The curriculum elements, common features in Arts programs and the dimensions that emerged through the Stage 2 analysis were consolidated into a matrix, illustrated in Table 31 below, which highlights the variations in interpretations identified in Stage 2 analysis.

Table 31: Comparison of program elements, features, and dimensions identified in different data sources

Element	Feature	Dimension	Publicity	Personal Perspectives	Official
Purpose	***Future employment possibilities***	Specialist			X
		General	X	X	X
		Adapting		X	X
	Skills	Specialist			X
		Generic	X	X	X
	Personal interest and career goals	Personal Interest	X		X
		Career goals			X
Content	***Diversity of choice in disciplines***	Wide disciplines range	X	X	X
		Limited discipline range			X
		Few majors			X
		Many majors			X
		Only HASS FOE			X
		Broader than HASS FOE	X	X	X
	Breadth	Sequence	X		X
		Required unit			X
		Breadth units			X
		Elective	X		X
Sequencing	***Depth***	Limited	X	X	X
		Specialised			X
	Incremental study	Limited	X	X	X
		Major			X
		Restricted			X
	Combined degrees	Sequential	X		X
		Concurrent	X		X
	Facilitating student choice	Mode of delivery		X	X
		Transition	X	X	
		Change	X	X	
		Electives			X
		Control over progression	X		X

While some variation might be expected between the different types of descriptions as they are created for different purposes and different audiences, it is important to note that these descriptions concern the same programs. The vertical analysis conducted within a single program offered by a single institution exhibited multiple descriptions of the same program. There were points where these descriptions contradicted each other, generating an incongruous, inconsistent view of what constitutes an Arts program.

Table 31 illustrates that official documentation displayed a greater variation in curriculum dimensions than was evident in the other descriptions. Information in the official documentation that was at odds with the view of the Arts program offered in personal perception and publicity descriptions centred on

(1) the range of disciplines offered;
(2) how learning was incrementally structured; and
(3) how student choice was facilitated.

These variations in interpretation are considered further.

2.4.1. Range of disciplines offered

The analysis of the official documentation reveals that the discipline base of the Arts program is different to that described in the publicity documentation and in the ways that the program was perceived by those interviewed. Both publicity documentation and ethnographic data described Arts programs as offering a broad range of disciplines, including disciplines outside of humanities and social sciences. The official documentation suggested, however, that while this description was true for some programs, fewer programs offered majors outside of HASS disciplines than anticipated by the expectations set in the publicity materials.

The breadth of offerings within HASS evident in the official documentations was also narrower than the publicity documentation alluded to, or was perceived to be by those interviewed. Of the disciplines offered by institutions as part of the BA program prior to the 1930; that is, religion, classics and maths and philosophy, only philosophy has continued to be offered in Arts programs by a substantial number of institutions (N= 25). The interdisciplinary subjects of the 1970s and 1980s; i.e. Gender Studies, Development Studies, European Studies, Australian Studies and General Studies had also largely disappeared from most institutions' official documentation by 2011. Further, despite a perception of those interviewed, that their program offered a “unique” range of majors, the range of disciplines expressed in the official documentation was found to be relatively similar across the sector. Despite the similarities, there were no core discipline knowledge areas that can be described as quintessential to or definitive of the Australian Arts program.

2.4.2. Incremental study

Publicity documents and ethnographic data provided few insights into how study might be incrementally scaffolded, other than describing the Arts program as open and flexible and suggesting that students can choose their own pathway through the program. Yet, the official curriculum indicated that 10 Australian Arts programs stipulated a prescribed pathway through a limited suite of disciplines. A further 1/3 of programs exhibited a structure that limited student's capacity to choose by dictating incremental study across all levels of study. These findings contradict the descriptions offered in interviews and in publicity materials of programs as being open and flexible.

2.4.3. Facilitating student choice

The capacity for students to transition into other programs and to move between major sequences was noted as an area of concern in ethnographic data and was identified as a significant feature of the program in publicity materials. However, official materials showed that the incremental study requirements limited the capacity of students to change easily between programs and majors. The narrowing of discipline offerings to HASS disciplines also limited student capacity to replicate other programs and transfer at a later stage. Despite these limitations, publicity materials and personal perspectives maintained a view that these types of transitions were easy and a cornerstone of the program's “flexibility”.

The term “*flexibility*” was interpreted differently across the sector. To illustrate, how programs from the University of New England, the University of Melbourne and James Cook University interpret the term is offered. These three very different institutions in different states cater to different cohorts. All institutions highlighted “flexibility” as a program feature in their promotional materials. Differences in how “flexibility” is operationalised are illustrated in Table 32.

Table 32: Example of 3 programs described as flexible offered in 2011

	UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND	JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY	UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Number of majors offered	32	19	35
Number of discipline areas available as majors	22	15	21
Minimum completion requirement	one 8-unit major	one 6-unit major	one 8-unit major
Specific requirements for major	2 units required	Choice of 1 of 2 foundational units	1 capstone unit (from a list of 17 possibilities)
Prescribed plan through major	No	No	Yes
Core or required units on program level (outside majors)	no core units	3 level 1 core units 1 level 3 core unit	2 foundational unit 4 "breadth" units
Number of units available to be used as electives	16	14	10
Number of electives that can be chosen from across the university	10	8	2
Number of electives that can be chosen from Arts list	6	6	8
can use electives to complete additional major/minor	Yes	Yes	yes
Able to change majors or focus of study during the degree	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access	distance and face-to-face	face-to-face with limited majors at distance	Face to face only
Articulation	wide articulation	wide articulation	limited articulation

This table illustrates that the term "flexibility" was used at each institution to describe some aspect of the program, but the interpretation varied widely. James Cook University offered fewer disciplines for students to choose from. Yet, James Cook University also displayed limited requirements for majors, the capacity to choose units from across the university and provided different modes of access. These features make this program more flexible than the University of Melbourne program which has greater limitations on student capacity to choose, despite offering a wider range of disciplines. Despite these differences, all three institutions used the term "flexible" to describe their program.

The term was also used differently across the different description sources. Publicity documentation and ethnographic data tended to use the term "*flexibility*" to describe the choice of discipline, capacity for students to control progression through the program and to describe how students might gain entry to the program. Official documentation tended to emphasize the multiple modes of delivery and the capacity to choose from a range of electives.

The variation in the ways that Arts programs are described could be due to the absence of a common language across the sector to describe curriculum features. This absence has the potential to create tensions and apparent contradictions in understanding what constitutes an Australian Arts degree. Interviews conducted with program conveners in 2007 and again in 2011, appeared to assume a shared understanding of common terms such as "flexibility", "breadth" and "liberal education". Most participants used these terms to describe their program, yet closer examination established localised nuances that were possibly unappreciated.

2.4.4. Variation in descriptions of Arts programs

A vertical analysis of the ethnographic data indicated that Arts programs were interpreted and described differently within the same program in the same institution. Three categories of roles with some degree of responsibility for curriculum planning had been identified in the Stage 1 analysis. Differences in interpretation were aligned to the different roles in the curriculum planning process. These categories are described in Table 33.

Table 33: Interpretations of Arts programs according to curriculum planning responsibilities

Category	Role	Nature of Role	Terms used	Alignment
Strategic	Academic leaders	oversight of the program's place in the institutional and broader contexts	"*work-place preparation*", "*broad*" and "*flexible*".	consistent with the descriptions in publicity documentation.
Operational	Program coordinators	management and administration responsibilities	"*core units*", "*spine*" and "*framework*" made very few references to the need to provide workplace preparation skills	consistent with those found in the official documentation.
Discipline expertise	Major conveners	content knowledge and awareness of the place of the discipline in local, national and international research and professional contexts	Focused on the discipline preparation for further study	Inconsistent with other descriptions

While it may be anticipated that there would be different perspectives of the Arts program based on the point of responsibility and engagement with the program, the vertical analysis indicated that the same program offered at the same institution was described in contradictory terms. Academic leaders ascribed to a view of the Arts program as preparing for future employment, while all major conveners interviewed were openly resistant to work place preparation which was described in disparaging tones as a move towards "*vocational training*", as indicated in the statements below.

> *"A BA ought to be diverse and ecumenical… the BA allows you as a first year and even as a second year to move around and put together the majors that make it up that fit your interests …. That, that seems to the simplest, strongest selling point."* (Major Coordinator, Politics, Sandstone University 2011 interview)
>
> *Just get them through, give all of them a degree. That's what their parents want and that's they want, and they've nothing else to do, they may as well come to uni and we'll do our best to teach them, but the ones that do really well offer them grad school and arguably if they've got this choice as a young person, they'll find those majors they'll do really well in, not qualify for grad school and then they can have more of the experience I had at uni in the '70s and '80s where you were rubbing shoulders really with people who really wanted to be there.* (Major Coordinator, Sociology, Modern University, 2011 interview)

Program coordinators tended to view the program from a whole-of-program view, as a distinct program with a coherent purpose, content and sequence, major conveners expressed a view of the Arts program's purpose as providing access to a range of discipline areas expressing scepticism about the curriculum of the Arts program as having a structured framework.

> *The suggestions seem quite ludicrous to me, of a capstone unit within majors. I certainly believe it is great if you can get a group of enthusiastic staff to run a capstone in a degree, certainly it's right and proper for a degree program to have a capstone. However, with the BA it's more difficult than any other degree... I'm a little bit sceptical about that and I'm certainly more sceptical about the notion of introducing a capstone so that you compel students to do it. That worries me, that some of [academic leaders and program coordinators] are thinking of capstones in the BA, plus the other thinking that majors should have capstones...to end up with a capstone at the end …I, I just see as again as foolhardy thinking. (*Major Convener, Philosophy, Regional University, 2011 interview)

Interviews conducted at Regional University illustrate these differences. Initial review of the data suggested that those interviewed subscribed to a common vision and intention. The management structure of the program by a small, cohesive team that met frequently and regularly appeared suited to generating consensus. The perception that there would be a shared interpretation of the program under a new management structure where the group of 6 major conveners is managed by the program coordinator is illustrated in the following extract:

> *" we have discussions as a BA team … we wrote the program change submission together, and so it wasn't just on a whim because all of those things have to be rationalised so why poetry, and who else is offering poetry and is poetry something that every course has, and what did* [the major convener] *say about the associate degree in terms of poetry – that sort of thing...So in the end it comes to school board as a combined joint authored document…. It's rare that our* [team members] *would bring something to the board for approval without consulting with the rest of the team"* (Program coordinator, Regional University, 2011)

However, Table 34 illustrates the challenges in developing a shared understanding for the program. All extracts are from the interviews conducted at Regional University. All describe the same degree program in response to the question "*What do you think the purpose of the BA is at your institution?*". Yet, all interpret the program slightly differently.

Table 34: Conceptualisations of Arts programs by role

Role	Category	Extract
Major convener	Discipline expert	***…"it was a straight BA which a bit more like Sydney uni. You know, you could do things on everything. It's become a lot more focused on the three areas of …. We wanted to make it have a very distinct identity … it's a much more deliberate BA. It's a much more designed bachelor of arts in the sense that we are asking students to be quite conscious thinkers. [Students] are funnelled in certain disciplines."***
Senior executive	Strategic	***"Our BA provides a really good general grounding. People leave university with very little general knowledge. Graduates must at the least have a basic understanding of civil society. Ideally they should be informed members in their society and in their communities as well as an active participant."***
Major convener	Discipline expert	***"… [people enrol in the degree] because they wanted to cross transfer and go into those other areas, or they wanted to combine music and writing, which they wouldn't have a chance to do in a music degree"***
Program Coordinator	Operational	***"I think primarily [the BA at this institution] is embedded in the humanities, but it is based on ….this idea that it is about the stories we tell about ourselves …. I think one of the things that might be a little bit different that we've worked hard to think about that as a unifying theme for us"***

These differences were surprising as interviews conducted at Regional University initially suggested that those interviewed subscribed to a common vision and intention. The management structure of the program by a small, cohesive team that met frequently and regularly appeared suited to generating consensus. The perception that there would be a shared interpretation of the program under a new management structure where the group of 6 major conveners is managed by the program coordinator is illustrated in the following extract:

> *" we have discussions as a BA team … we wrote the program change submission together, and so it wasn't just on a whim because all of those things have to be rationalised so why poetry, and who else is offering poetry and is poetry something that every course has, and what did* [the major convener] *say about the associate*

> *degree in terms of poetry – that sort of thing...So in the end it comes to school board as a combined joint authored document…. It's rare that our* [team members] *would bring something to the board for approval without consulting with the rest of the team"* (Program coordinator, Regional University, 2011)

While this institution appeared to have a shared vision in terms of sequencing and content of the planned curriculum amongst the team, there was an indication of diversity in the ways that those involved in the program conceptualised the **purpose** of the Arts program.

Challenges identified in establishing a common understanding amongst all those with some responsibility for the program regarding the purpose of the program were also evident in the interviews with academic leaders at both the Modern University and the Sandstone University. All interviewees described the challenges of developing a uniform approach within the institution, yet they also struggled to explain the purpose of the Arts program at their institution. Observations of committee board meetings at the case sites provided an opportunity to observe how the absence of shared understanding played out in practice. For example, a meeting at Sandstone University about the implementation of changes to the curriculum introduced a rationale for introducing a change to the sequencing of the curriculum. Ensuing discussion indicated that, for whatever reason, participants at the meeting had not engaged with the concept of curriculum change. Instead, they described a process of cobbling existing units together to develop new sequences of study. The rationale described in the meeting for sequencing changes was as a response to perceptions of what public reactions might be and to a potential reduction in personal research interests rather than from consideration of potential benefits to the program as a whole.

This diversity was also evident at Modern University, where the program management structure was very different; in this instance, a large committee negotiating input from a large number of major conveners, discipline heads and heads of school from three faculties. The interviews at Modern University highlighted that, like at Regional University, there was diversity in the way that the Arts program was conceptualised and interpreted. The program was viewed as

- supplementing the education program;
- replicating other programs offered at the same institution so students could "upgrade";

- preparing social scientists for a specialised workplace such as archaeology or psychology; and
- providing specialised discipline-based training for future research-based study

3. DIVERSITY IN CONSTRUCTION AND CONCEPTIONS OF ARTS PROGRAMS

The third stage of analysis addressed the research question "How are contemporary Australian Arts programs constructed and conceptualised in practice?"

This section reports the results of the analysis of the curriculum elements identified in the Stage 2 analysis. The Stage 3 analysis consolidated data generated and analysed in Stage 2 into a series of matrices of Arts programs' purpose, content and sequencing. The dimensions identified in the Stage 2 analysis were re-examined and consolidated into a single coding framework, available as Appendix 4: Australian Arts Curricula Elements Coding Framework, p. 288. These codes assigned to program profiles in previous stages were reviewed and refined.

The Nvivo matrix tool was used to consolidate all the data collated and coded in the separate institutional program profiles. In keeping with processes typically used in grounded theory, a process of categorisation (Charmaz, 2006) was established. The matrix was used to group codes attributed to 2011 program profiles into categories, illustrated in Table 48, p. 289. The matrix was exported into MS Excel pivot tables to enable complex cross-tabulations and frequency analyses over multiple codes and categories. Patterns were then sought across the frequencies of codes and categories to develop themes (Charmaz, 2006).

3.1. Diversity in Construction of Australian Arts Programs

Using the categorisation process explained above established that Art programs in operation in Australia in 2011 used one of two design architectures: the Generalist Arts or the Specialist Arts design. Key features of each Arts curriculum design model are summarised in Table 35 and described in detail below.

Table 35: Features of Curriculum Designs used in Arts programs in 2011

ELEMENT	GENERALIST ARTS	SPECIALISED ARTS
Purpose	Aimed to develop a broad general knowledge base and generic, transferable skills suited to a range of professions	Aimed to develop particular skill sets or specialist or professional outcomes skills in addition to transferable skills.
Content	Offered a high degree of student choice including capacity to choose from a broad range of disciplines	Offered a narrower range of content through a limited number of disciplines in a specific field of education
Sequencing	Exhibited a more flexible structure enabling students some level of control over program progression and choice over the order in which to engage with units or majors	Exhibited a prescriptive structured study plan across the whole program, offering limited scope for student choice

3.1.1. Features of "Generalist" designs

Generalist programs aim to develop generic skills with an emphasis on critical thinking, communication and research skills that would enable graduates to adapt to multiple career paths. They offered a broad range of disciplines and a large number of majors, offering units of study in disciplines beyond the traditional HASS disciplines, often from all those offered across the whole university. Program rules generally required students to engage in study of multiple disciplines generally through elective units and majors and minors from a large range of disciplines. Graduates were expected to transition into further study.

Progress through the program was not prescribed. Students could usually choose any of units offered, in any order, collecting enough credit points to ensure completion requirements. Some programs prescribed progression within majors but left units outside of majors open to student choice. Some program rulings required a specified number of advanced units or limited the number of introductory units. Units outside of the major did not necessarily align with the curriculum of the major. Credit points outside of the major were either structured to accommodate another major, an extended major or used to combine this program with another degree. Few, if any, core units of study were required. Capstone requirements or foundation units, when they existed, were determined by the rules of the discipline major rather than program rules.

3.1.2. Features of "Specialist" design

Specialist programs aimed to provide undergraduates with opportunities to build skill sets and experiences, providing training for a specific workplace or a specialist knowledge area through work experience activities and research projects.

These programs offered a narrow range of major offerings, typically restricted to HASS disciplines. They generally offered fewer than 20 majors in fewer than 10 discipline areas. Elective units, where they existed, were restricted to a limited list rather than offering elective units from across the whole university. Particular core units of study outside of the majors were required for successful completion. These programs typically had a highly prescriptive structure across the whole program. Units were sequenced to fit together in a particular order to facilitate curriculum coherence. Program rules typically required the completion of two majors, completion of core units of study and offered a limited list of electives units.

Examples of Arts programs that ascribed to the Generalist Arts and Specialist Arts models that were available in 2011 are provided in Table 36 overleaf.

Table 36: Examples of program rules and study plans for Specialist Design and Generalist Design architecture

	GENERALIST DESIGN	SPECIALIST DESIGN
RULES	*A student must pass 24 units of study comprising.* • *at least 8 units of an Approved Arts major as set out in the list of Approved majors, of which no more than 2 units should be at first level, and at least 4 units must be at 3rd level;* • *at least 8 units of a second Approved Arts major as set out in the list of Approved majors, of which no more than 2 units should be at 1st level, and at least 4 units must be at 3rd level.* • *up to 8 units of elective courses. Elective units can be taken from any Faculty of the University, except courses that are restricted by enrolment for students in a particular program. Students may undertake some electives from "Approved Courses"* • *A student may count a maximum of 10 units at 1st level.* **The University of Newcastle, 2011**	*Candidates fulfil the requirements for the course by completing 24 units from:* • *Common Units (2 units)* • *Compulsory Core (10 units)* • *Specialist Electives x2 (12 units). Has to include one of History, Political Science, Indigenous Knowledges Systems (IKS).* • *Can also include Languages (Greek, Indonesian, Chinese), Creative Arts and Industries, Communications, Psychology, Economics, Marketing, Creative Writing or General Electives selected from other undergraduate units offered by the University or Open University Australia (OUA) ONLY IF a student has not selected a Second Specialist elective.* **Charles Darwin University, 2011**
STUDY PLAN	• Year 1 ○ 2 x Major 1 level 1 Units ○ 2 x Major 2 Level 1 units ○ 4 x Electives level 1 units • Year 2 ○ 2 x Major 1 level 2 units ○ 2 x Major 2 level 2 units ○ 2 x Electives level 1/2/3 units ○ 2 x electives level 2/3 units • Year 3 ○ 4 x Major 1 Level 3 units ○ 4 x Major 2 Level 3 units	• Year 1 ○ CUC107 Northern Perspectives ○ CUC100 Academic Literacies (for Humanities/Social Sciences students) ○ CIW100 Foundations of Creative Writing ○ HIS142 Fundamentals of Australian History ○ POL101 Fundamentals of Australian Political Science ○ SOC140 Sociological Perspectives, ○ BCO104 Fundamentals of Economics ○ CAI101 Introduction to Multimedia ***OR*** LAN102 Introduction to Language Studies • Year 2 ○ CAH210 Influential Critical Thinkers ○ BCC202 Culture Communication & Technology ○ 3 x Major 1 level 2 units ○ 3 x Major 2 level 2 units • Year 3 ○ BCO201 The World of Work ○ BCO301 The Global Future ○ 3 x Major 1 Level 3 units ○ 3 x Major 2 Level 3 units

3.1.3. Categories of Australian curriculum designs

Figure 12 provides a representation of the categories and characteristics underpinning curriculum design architectures used to construct Australian Arts programs. These categories were used in further stages of analysis as a heuristic tool.

Figure 12: Australian Arts Curriculum Design Architectures

FEATURE	GENERALIST DESIGN	SPECIALIST DESIGN
Career options	General	Work ready
Skills	Generic	Specialised
Breadth	Choice	Prescribed
Disciplinary focus	Broad	Narrow
Depth of study	Limited	Specialised
Incremental study	Major or Unit	Program or Major
Student choice	Flexible	Prescribed

3.2. Diversity in Conceptions of Arts Programs

A closer analysis of the distribution of dimensions indicated that there were differences evident within the Specialist and Generalist designs architectures. These differences tended to be mutually exclusive, that is, programs tended to fall into different sub-categories within the generalist or specialist design architectures. Four patterns were evident in the distribution. These patterns are illustrated in Table 37 overleaf.

Table 37: Diversity evident between conceptions of Australian Arts programs

Curriculum Element	Curriculum Dimensions	GENERALIST DESIGN		SPECIALIST DESIGN	
		Pattern 1	Pattern 2	Pattern 3	Pattern 4
PURPOSE	Preparation appropriate for multiple possible future employment prospects	X			X
	Developed capacities and skill sets appropriate for multiple professional fields	X			X
	Pursue academic interest and passions in particular disciplines	X	X		X
	Specific to particular careers or the skill set for particular discipline areas			X	X
	Gain skills suited to professional employment			X	X
	Contribute to a global world			X	X
	Enhance skills in the creative arts			X	X
CONTENT	Open to disciplines other than HASS	X	X		
	More than 20 majors offered	X			
	More than 10 discipline areas offered as majors	X			
	Required students to study in different discipline areas to ensure breadth	X			
	Students able to study elective units of study from different discipline areas	X	X		
	Fewer than 10 discipline areas offered as majors			X	X
	Fewer than 20 majors offered			X	X
	Students required to complete multi-disciplinary thematic units of study			X	X
	Majors associated with professions			X	
SEQUENCE	Required to complete fewer than 8 units of study in one discipline area		X		
	Able to complete more than 8 units of study in one discipline area		X	X	X
	Able to engage with a wide range of electives from across the university		X		
	No prescribed study plan		X		
	Incremental study requirements within the major	X		X	X
	Highly restricted study plan across the whole program			X	X
	Able to change majors or focus of study	X	X		X
	Undertake undergrad program prior to a professions-focused postgraduate or research degree		X	X	X
	Option of combining 2 programs as dual degree	X			

These variations indicated that Australian Arts programs were conceptualised as four distinct models.

3.2.1. General education Arts

The first of the program adopting a generalist design focused on the values associated with a broad-based education, such as exposure to multiple ways of thinking and different cultures. They aimed to develop critical thinking, communication and research skills. They prepared students for multiple workplaces with an expectation that students would change career paths.

These programs required students to engage with a breadth of study across disciplinary boundaries. Depth of study tended to be explained as engagement with at least one major sequence of study. A wide range of discipline areas are offered as majors (typically 20 to 40) usually in HASS. If internship or research activities were included, they occurred within the discipline.

These programs had few, if any, core units of study. Curriculum was designed at the level of major rather than at the program level. Study plans were largely constructed by students within boundaries dictated by rules related to the majors, including capstone and foundation unit requirements. Students could construct majors from units offered according to program rules. These programs tended to follow a 3-level program structure.

3.2.2. Pathway Arts

Other generalist design model, pathway arts provided pathways to other programs, allowing students to "test" an interest area in different disciplines while they worked out what they wanted to study. They enabled students to replicate another program offered by the same institution or by a competitor. Where skills were mentioned, they were described in generic terms.

These programs offered a wide range of discipline areas as majors (typically 20 to 40) including those outside of HASS disciplines. Students were able to choose units of study from disciplines offered across the whole university. Program rules provided a generic framework with a large number of elective units. This meant that it was possible in some institutions to study a minimum of 6 units in a HASS discipline as a major sequence to meet completion requirements, and the remaining 18 units in STEM disciplines, yet graduate with a Bachelor of Arts.

In the Pathway Arts model, curriculum was designed at the level of unit, rather than at the level of major. Program study plans were open with few requirements that students could populate with selected units. These programs tended to adopt a 2-level program structure, requiring students to collect enough unit points at advanced and foundational level to fulfil program completion requirements.

3.2.3. Professional Arts

The first model adopting a specialist design provided training in a specific professional field. The focus was on the utility of what was learned and the application of what was learnt in a practical context. Examples include creative arts or creative industries such as game design, public relations and journalism; psychology; or work in public service, such as security and counter-terrorism.

These programs offered a smaller suite of majors, typically 8 to 15. Majors tended to be Inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary in nature. These programs also enabled students to develop and practice specific skill sets required for the workplace through work experience activities and projects organised on a program level, rather than within the major.

These programs were highly prescriptive with a limited scope for student choice. Study plans were set across the whole programs with required units of study across multiple levels. Limited numbers of elective were available and generally offered within the same discipline areas as the majors.

3.2.4. Focused Arts

The last of the models drew on a specialist design to support students in developing mastery of a single discipline area through focused study. Rather than developing generic skills or work-place specific skills, they provided opportunities to acquire skills and core knowledge particular to specific disciplines. They emphasised specialisation rather than a breadth of knowledge.

Study in these programs was restricted to particular discipline areas such as international politics or international relations; visual or performing arts that were not vocations-based; archaeology and anthropology programs. There were fewer majors available (most had under 20 majors available with the average of 11) and a high number of majors that were multi- or interdisciplinary in nature.

These programs were highly structured, with study plans set and a limited number of units available with limited scope for students to exercise choice. Study plans included a number of core units outside of the units required to complete majors. Units that made up majors were incrementally sequenced across the whole program

3.3. Patterns in the Distribution of Categories across the Sector

The spread of each category across the sector in 2011 is illustrated in Figure 13. This figure illustrates that, in 2011, there was a small majority of programs that were categorised as "general education" than other categories.

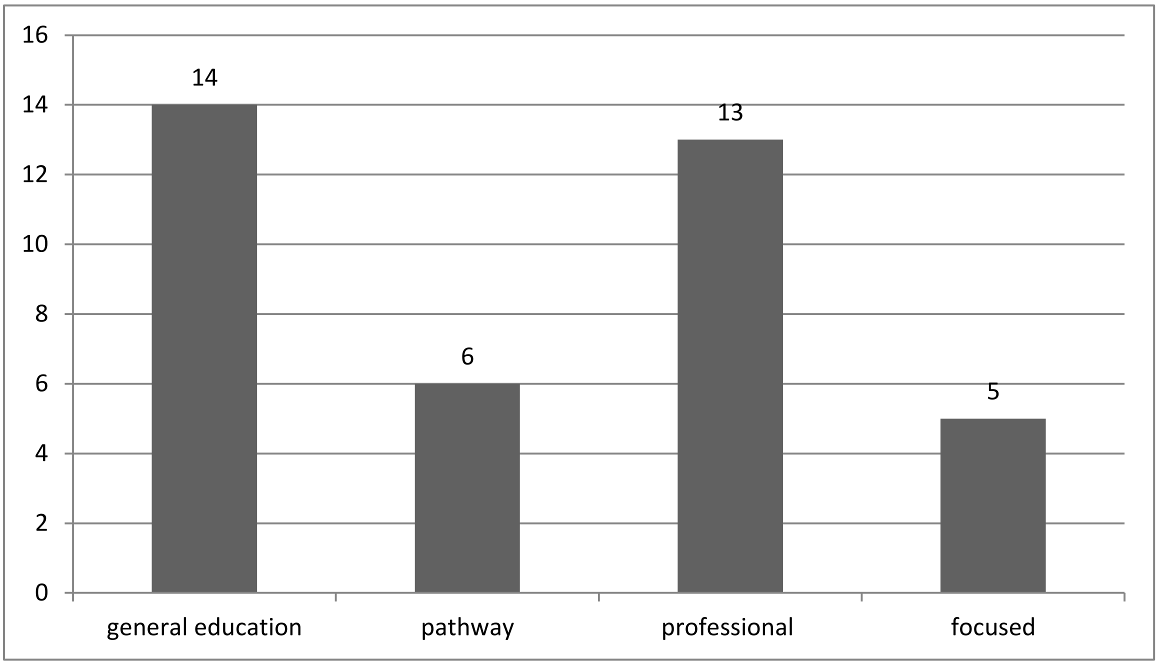

Figure 13: Spread of models across sector in 2011

Frequency analyses and cross tabulations were conducted to identify correlations between institutional types and models of Arts programs adopted across the sector. Common institutional characteristics such as institutional history and mission, affiliation to networks and lobby groups, size, location, and organisational structures had been noted in the program profiles.[49] The following institutional characteristics were used to determine whether there were any correlations between institutional characteristics and the model of Arts program adopted:

- the state in which the institution was located;
- whether the program was offered in a regional or metropolitan location;
- the size of institution in terms of total student enrolment;
- the type of institution in terms of history, location and research emphasis; and

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[49] Further details related to the coding process for these characteristics is available in Chapter 3, p. 85 and in the Pivot Table Code books in Appendix 3

- the type of institution in terms of institutional grouping or affiliation.[50]

These institutional characteristics were cross-tabulated against the conceptualisation categories. This process established that:

1) Different conceptualisations of the program were found to be in operation concurrently. For example, multi-campus institutions had the Specialist Arts designs in operation at their regional campuses while the Generalist design was in operation at a metropolitan campus.
2) There was a higher tendency for programs offered on a regional campus to be categorised as a "focused" model. Location of programs offered by regional centres or RUN affiliated institutions however, was not a predictor of programs being "focused" in nature.
3) Programs offered at institutions affiliated in the Australian Technology Network (ATN) illustrated a higher propensity towards programs categorised as "professional" programs. "Professional" programs were, however, not exclusive to this group.

No other significant trends were evident for any of the other institutional characteristics identified, suggesting that the choice of curriculum design and curriculum models is not associated with institutional characteristics, but rather local decision-making processes. This suggestion was tested in later stages.

4. SYNTHESIS

This chapter has reported the findings from the first three stages of analysis. Stage 1 examined all data across all programs offered in all 39 Australian universities in 2007 and 2011. A horizontal analysis indicated multiple interpretations of these common dimensions across the sector. A vertical analysis of the profiles indicated there were multiple interpretations evident of how a single program was described with institutional documentation and descriptions. These apparent anomalies were investigated further in Stage 2. The Stage 2 analysis focused only on the 38 programs offered in 2011 and focused on exploring the variations in interpretations of the common features identified in Stage 1. The third stage of analysis sought to identify patterns in the diversity of interpretations identified in Stage 2. Differences and similarities were considered in the context of program organizational structures, roles and processes.

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[50] As explained in the literature review, Australian institutions are affiliated in networks or groupings such as the Group of Eight (Go8) and Regional Universities Network (RUN). See Glossary, p. 11 for further details.

Australian arts programs exhibited common features described across the publicity documentation, the official curriculum and the personal perspectives of informants. They were

- preparing students for *future employment*
- providing opportunities for *skill development*
- enabling students to pursue *personal interests*
- enabling students to engage with a *breadth* of disciplines
- focusing on *humanities, arts and social science* (HASS) disciplines
- providing a *diverse range of disciplines* in which students can engage
- enabling students to *specialise* in a particular discipline area
- providing a *flexible* program structure that accommodated student choice

However, these features were interpreted quite differently across the 39 Australian Arts programs offered in 2007 and 2011. For example, the word “flexibility” was used to describe everything from program structure to whether students could study the program online to the capacity to choose multiple disciplines. Rather than common understandings of what constitutes an Arts programs in Australia, Arts programs were found to be conceptualised in quite different ways. These differences in conceptions were evident not only between programs and institutions but also within individual programs.

4.1. Evidence of Diversity

While some diversity might be anticipated across the sector as different institutions provide distinctive institutional flavours to program offerings, it would be reasonable to expect that programs that had similar titles would have some common features that were stable to all Australian Arts programs. This research, however, has provided evidence that this was not the case. Instead, multiple points of difference were evident.

Closer examination of the program descriptions of 38 Australian Arts programs offered in 2011 used a common analytical framework focusing on program purpose, content and sequencing established that Arts programs were constructed using either a Generalist

Arts or a Specialist Arts design architecture. Within these two major categories further conceptualised differences were evident. Four different models were identified, namely:

- a broad based, multi-discipline flexible program; the “general education” program;
- a generic framework through which students could transition to other programs, the “pathway” model;
- vocational training in a particular professional field, the “professional” model; or
- mastery of a specialist discipline area: the “focused” model

By the end of the Stage 3 analysis, it was not clear whether these models were evidence of a natural evolution to a new Australian Arts program or whether the differences evident across the sector are attempts by universities to provide distinctiveness in order to capture market share.

4.2. Evidence of Inconsistency

The stage 1 analysis also identified different roles within Arts program curriculum design and management, with different foci and varying responsibilities. Programs were found to be constructed by individuals with varying degrees of influence and responsibility, operating across at least three different levels of responsibility and points of view of the program. There are inconsistencies evident in the ways that those with different responsibilities in planning curriculum articulate and describe program intentions and structure; multiple interpretations of the same program were found to exist within the same institution. Individuals with different levels of responsibility for curriculum were found to hold different views of the program. These views were found to map to one of the four models. Despite these differences, however, those interviewed assumed a consensus of opinion within their institution and across the sector about the purpose and construction of Arts degrees. There was also evidence of all 4 models in operation at the same time in some institutions with similarly titled programs are offered simultaneously. Units and majors extracted from the traditional program to create ‘tagged” programs remained in the traditional BA as well.

The fourth and fifth stages of analysis sought to explore these differences in interpretation across the sector and within institutions. The results of these analyses are described in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS - CURRICULUM CHANGE

This chapter addresses the research question "What do the changes in Australian Arts programs that occurred between 2007 and in 2011 indicate about how they are conceptualised and constructed?" It examines changes in Australian Arts program curricula between 2007 and in 2011 established in the fourth and fifth stages of analysis. These stages drew on the findings derived from the common features identified in the Stage 1 analysis, the curriculum element analytic framework developed in Stage 2 and the models of developed in Stage 3.

The first section of this chapter compares the programs available in 2007 with those available in 2011 to identify and explore program changes. The matrix of all data captured in 2007 and 2011 was refined to identify patterns of change in curriculum elements, construction models and conceptualisations of programs over time. Thematic analyses of the ethnographic data were triangulated against this matrix. All data generated were then reconsidered to identify the factors, external and internal to the program, which influenced the program changes evident between 2007 and 2011. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the factors that resulted in the diversity of Australian Arts programs.

1. CHANGES IN ARTS CURRICULA EVIDENT IN THE HORIZONTAL ANALYSIS

Changes were evident across the sector within the curriculum elements of content, purpose and sequencing. By 2011, Australian Arts programs were

(1) embracing the rhetoric of preparing work-ready graduates;
(2) narrowing the range of disciplines offered for study; and
(3) becoming prescriptive, restricting students' capacity to make choices.

1.1. Preparing Work-Ready Graduates

Program structures and descriptions were interrogated to ascertain strategies that specifically prepared students on a program level to be “work-ready graduates”. The content and learning experiences offered within majors were not examined. Various strategies were identified to explicitly support students in developing suitable skills, content knowledge and experience, with some programs adopting more than one of these strategies. These strategies supported student employability in a wide range of professional settings soon after graduation. As a result of the increase in these strategies as program level requirements, more Australian Arts programs in 2011 were described as preparing graduates to be “work-ready” in comparison to 2007, increasing from 17 programs in 2007 to 34 programs in 2011.

1.1.1. Required units of study

Some institutions required students to complete credit bearing, structured units of study focused on work-place skills, for example

> ***“The World Of Work (BCO201)*** *The unit outlines the theoretical pillars of morality and ethics while treating the influence of both the micro and macro environments of organisations. The unit focuses on decision-making that is informed by ethics and most importantly how moral and non-moral judgements are made. The importance of corporate social responsibility and governance is also covered as an integral activity for organisations operating in an ethical and moral framework”*[51].

These units explicitly exposed students to work-skills such as report writing, minute-taking or job seeking strategies, such as writing job applications. The increase is particularly noticeable in final year levels, shifting from 5 universities offering 7 units in 2007 to 18 units being offered at 11 universities in 2011.

1.1.2. Combined degrees

These programs enabled students to combine an Arts program component combined with professionally focused program. For example,

> *“The dual degree provides students with an understanding of the business environment and its relevance to the international hotel and tourism industry. This*

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[51] Charles Darwin University, 2011, program information website

> *training is complemented by the studies of society and culture and analytical and communication skills offered in the Bachelor of Arts."*[52]

The number of programs explicitly promoting this possible path rose from 10 in 2007 to 19 in 2011.

1.1.3. Work place learning opportunities

The various strategies of integrating workplace learning into the program on a program level are illustrated in Table 38. In 2007, there was only one institution which coordinated an internship-based unit on a program level as a requirement for completion prior to graduation. In 2011, this has extended to five institutions.

Table 38: Strategies to offer workplace learning opportunities

Strategy	Description	Example	2007	2011
Voluntary experiences	Not assessed or credit bearing, In industry or community activities	**ARTS232 Learning in the Community** *In this unit, students in the Bachelor of Arts program are required to complete a Volunteer Experience unit to meet graduation requirements. Volunteer Experience requires the completion of a total of 15 days service to a community organisation usually completed by the end of 2nd year.*[53]	16	22
Simulated or actual work-oriented experiences	Capstone activities or research based experiences conducted at the home institution rather than in the workplace.	**HMN3111 BA Preparation for Professional Life** *Completion of this 'capstone' unit at the end of the Bachelor of Arts course will enhance the BA graduate's employability, ensuring a successful transition from University to professional life. In this unit students will reflect critically upon their Arts programme and learn to frame their graduate capabilities in preparation for securing employment in a range of careers. A series of related projects, including reflective essays and CVs, lodged in an open-ended e-portfolio, will showcase individual strengths and promote meaningful connections between tertiary education and employment..*[54]		
Internships	Work experience conducted in an on-site or placement setting Assessed and credit bearing	**3700HUM: Social Enterprise Placement** *Social Enterprise Placement includes time spent at a Professional Placement with an Industry Partner from the community sector. Students will come to understand how the enterprise is organised, the social problems and/or benefits it addresses, and how it goes about achieving its goals in relation to the service it provides to the community. The experience enables students to develop and practice skills which they have gained from the Social Enterprise core stream, as well as making community contacts.*	1	5

1.1.4. Work-ready BA programs

Some institutions adopted a more radical approach and moved their Arts program away from the traditional generalist program to explicitly adopt a professional Arts model linked to professional outcomes: a "Work-ready BA". In 2007, two institutions implemented a new Arts curriculum specifically marketed as a "Work-ready BA" replacing existing, more traditional programs. A further institution indicated an intention to implement a "Work-ready BA" in 2012, designed to teach skills suited to generic workplaces rather than specific.

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[52] Bachelors of Arts/International Hotel and Tourism Management University of Queensland, 2011, program information website

[53] Australian Catholic University, 2011, program information website

[54] Edith Cowan University, 2011 program information website

Other institutions restructured their general education Arts programs to provide a focused Arts model that had a loose affiliation to professional outcomes rather than a particular profession. Examples include the Bachelor of Global Studies where discipline-specific skills and some professional skills (e.g. diplomacy) were explicitly taught and scaffolded through sequences of study. The key features of programs included offering core units that explicitly taught skills suited to specific professions and workplaces. Students were able to participate in work experience in a work-place or in simulated work experiences on campus. They were also engaged with a limited set of discipline content areas, all of which prepare for employment in a particular workplace. These programs were typically highly prescriptive programs of study with limited capacity for students to exercise choice. An example of the structure offered in 2007 at UniSA[55] is offered below

- *Year 1*
    - *2 Core compulsory units*
    - *2 units Professional Major in either Communication and Media Management; Communication, Media and Culture; Professional and Creative Communication*
    - *2 units General Studies Sub-major*
    - *2 units electives*
- *Year 2*
    - *2 units Professional Major*
    - *2 units General Studies Sub-major*
    - *2 units Cognate ("Cognates support the vocational study provided by the professional major ")*
    - *1 unit Elective*
    - *1 unit core compulsory "COMM 2060 Communication, Culture and Indigenous Australians"*
- *Year 3*
    - *4 units Professional Major (included internship)*
    - *2 unit General Studies Sub-major*
    - *2 unit Cognate*

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[55] University Of South Australia, 2007, program information website

Interestingly, there was a decline in the numbers of these types of programs offered between 2007 and 2011, with numbers reducing from 10 in 2007 to 7 in 2011.

1.2. Narrowing Range of Disciplines Offered

The prevailing change over the period 2007 – 2011 was the rationalisation and reduction of the number and spread of majors offered. This change resulted in a narrowing of the range and the number of disciplines offered in Australian Arts programs. Comparing the range of disciplines offered in 2011 with those offered in 2007 indicates that Arts programs were becoming restricted to humanities and social sciences disciplines. Fewer majors were offered in 2011 in fields of education outside of the Society and Culture FOE (coded as "Other")[56]. Majors with titles such as "*Logistics & Supply Chain Management*", "*Nutrition*", "*Atmospheric Science*"; and "*Physical Education*" were absent from 2011 majors listings, when they had been present in 2007. The greatest reduction appears to be in performance-based discipline areas such as dance, drama, visual arts and music. In 2007, 26 institutions offered these Creative Arts disciplines as a component within the Arts program. By 2011, this had been reduced to 16 institutions.

Despite this overall narrowing of disciplines, Australian Arts programs in 2011 still maintained a claim to expose students to a breadth of disciplines. As major offerings narrowed by 2011, institutions implemented multiple alternative strategies to enable programs maintain the feature of breadth, namely by requiring students to engage with **multiple sequences of study**; to engage with **breadth units** or to complete **interdisciplinary core units**. These strategies were identified and described in detail on p. 114. The shift in uptake of these strategies between 2007 and 2011 is illustrated in Table 39.

Table 39: Strategies adopted to meet breadth feature as evident in 2007 and 2011

Strategy	Definition	2007	2011
Sequences	Students required to study more than one sequence in different disciplines	20	23
Breadth units	Required students to select at least 1 unit from disciplines outside of HASS	2	7
Interdisciplinary core units	Multi-disciplinary and theme-based core units required for successful completion of the program	9	15

1.3. Increasingly Prescriptive Structure

Arts programs in 2011 initially appeared to be more prescriptive than those offered in 2007. Closer examination of program structures as they were available in 2007, however, indicated that there was a much higher degree of prescription in 2007 Arts programs than was possibly appreciated by those responsible for curriculum planning. Program coordinators interviewed in 2007 perceived Arts programs as highly flexible with a great capacity for student choice. Interviewees perceived this flexibility as problematic; describing this type of curricula as “shopping basket” or “smorgasbord” curriculum. Examination of the 2007 official curriculum, however, established that only two of the 39 programs available allowed students to choose to study any unit in any order. All other programs had program rules that required students to comply with some form of progression in their study; engage with units that increased in complexity; and complete advanced levels after completing particular pre-requisite units. Requirements for progression are listed in Table 40, which illustrates that the level of prescription in Australian Arts programs had increased by 2011.

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[56] See p.78 for an explanation of FOE and coding as Other

Table 40: Incremental study requirements within majors

Level of requirement	Definition	2007	2011
No requirements	• Students required to participate in a particular number of introductory units and advanced units from any units • Progression pathway not specified	2	0
Limited requirements	• Students required to take a particular number of introductory units and advanced units within a major sequence. • Progression pathway not specified	17	14
Restrictive requirements	• Students required engaging with particular units of study at each level within major including program-level core units • Progression pathway specified	13	20

The level of prescription had also increased with the shift from the 2-level approach towards the 3-level approach apparent by 2011. Students were required to engage in study in a particular discipline on an introductory level and at an advanced level, generally chosen from a limited list of units, at a minimum. Figure 14 overleaf illustrates that the 2-level sequence was prevalent in 2007, but was largely replaced by a 3-level approach by 2011.

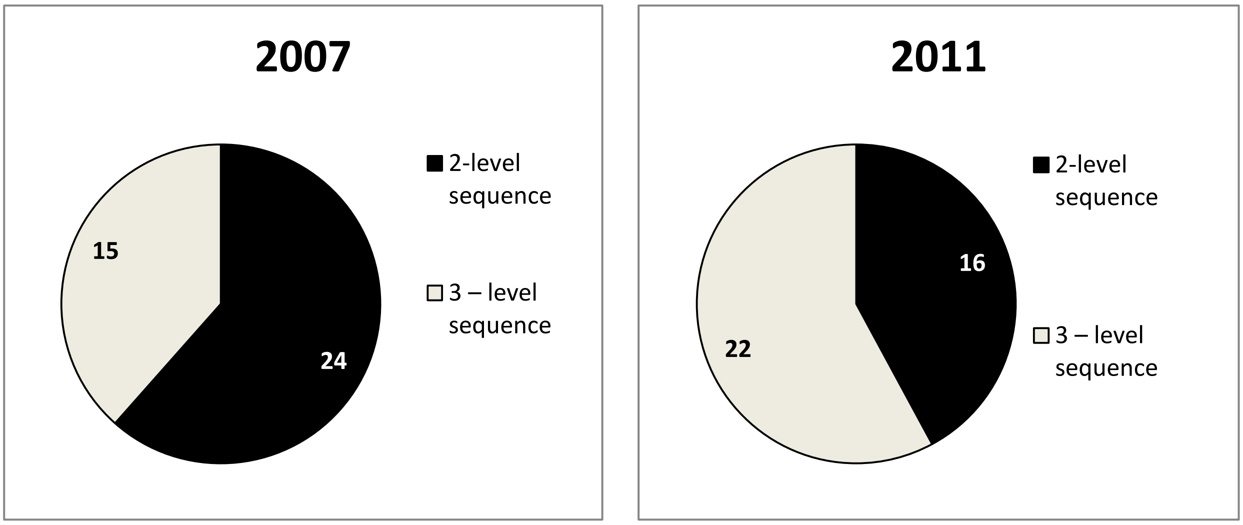

Figure 14: Distribution of sequencing of majors as 2-level or 3-level in 2007 and 2011

The adoption of a 3- level sequence of study further restricted the number of units available at each level from which students could choose to include in their program, either as units with in the major or as electives. The adoption of a 3-level approach consumed a sizable portion of the total number of units available in the study plan (24 units) for required units in the major sequences.

The adoption of the 3-level approach had a further impact on limiting student choice by limiting the number of units on offer from which students could choose. The number of units offered within majors had reduced by 2011 for most institutions. Case site interviews suggested that the reason for the reduction was associated with challenges in resourcing units outside of those required to meet minimum program and major rule requirements.

> *I've been seeing majors drop off. You're seeing some of, a number of the electives being reduced and probably a bit more structure going into the majors, perhaps reducing choice a bit.* (Academic leader, Regional University)

The capacity for students to exercise choice was further limited by the introduction of core units of study. By 2011, 25 institutions specifically required students to engage with at least one core unit of study, listed in Table 41. Note that 14 institutions did not require the completion of any "core" units to satisfy program completion rules. These institutions have not been included in the table.

Table 41: Increase in number of Core Units required for completion of program

	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
	2007	2011	2007	2011	2007	2011
Australian Catholic University			1	1		
Bond University	4	4				
Central Queensland University		2				
Charles Darwin University		8		3		1
Charles Sturt University	1	1				
Curtin University of Technology	8	4				
Deakin University	2	2				
Edith Cowan University	4	5		2		3
Griffith University	2	2	2	2	2	2
James Cook University		2				1
Murdoch University	7	6				
Southern Cross University		4				
Swinburne University of Technology			1	1	1	
The University of Melbourne		6				
The University of New South Wales					1	
The University of Notre Dame - Australia	3	4				
The University of Western Australia	1	1				
University of Ballarat	3	4				
University of Canberra		2				
University of South Australia	4	9	1			
University of Southern Queensland	3	2		2		
University of Technology, Sydney		3		2		1
University of the Sunshine Coast	3	3				
University of Western Sydney	4	4		2		2
University of Wollongong		1				
Victoria University	2	2			1	3

Twenty-five programs required core units in 2011. This increase is not a substantial increase from the 23 programs that required a core unit in 2007. However, the number of core units that were required in 2011, across all year levels, had increased substantially. This increase is illustrated in Figure 15 overleaf.

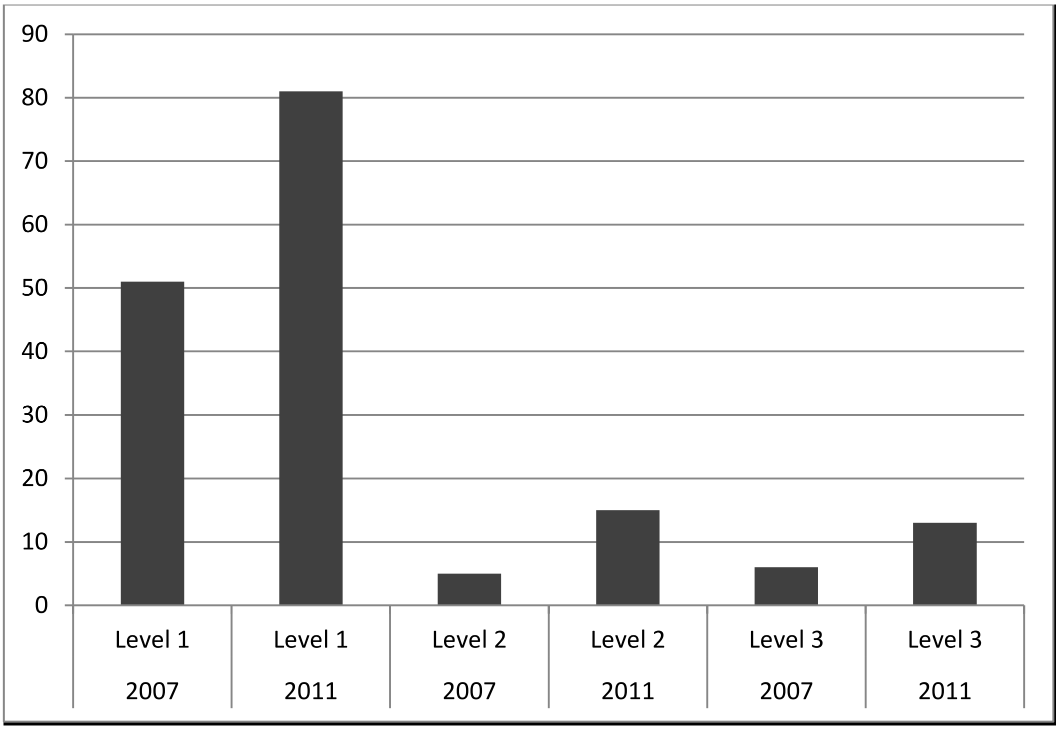

Figure 15: Total number of core units required for completion of program

Certainly, as a consequence of increased levels of prescription, by 2011, there were no instances where students had completely free choice and were able to self-construct a tailored program, despite impressions created by publicity materials. At an absolute minimum, by 2011, all Australian Arts students were compelled to study at least one major. All majors in 2011 required, at a minimum, that students choose from a restricted list of foundational units (usually 2 or 3). The days of open slather unit selection were certainly over by 2011. If they had ever existed, that is. There is a disjunction between the perceptions of Arts programs in 2007 as highly flexible, while the reality was that the program had a fair degree of prescription. This disjunction indicates that the disconnect between the descriptions of Arts programs offered by publicity documentation and personal perceptions and the official documentation evident in the Stage 2 analysis is not a phenomenon particular to 2011. These perceptions further highlight the need for empirical evidence on which to base future decision-making.

1.4. Synthesis of Changes Evident in the Horizontal Analysis

There were more programs that had features associated with a specialist curriculum design in 2011 than in 2007 as illustrated in Figure 16.

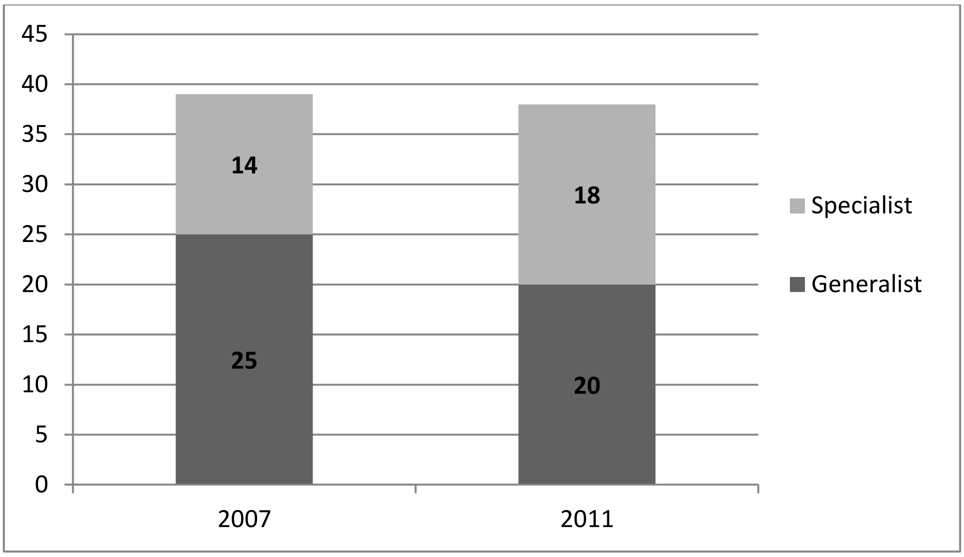

Figure 16: Spread of Specialised and Generalist Designs in 2007 and 2011 at main campuses

Figure 17 illustrates a small shift away from pathway and general education models of Arts programs by 2011, with more focused programs evident in 2011 than in 2007.

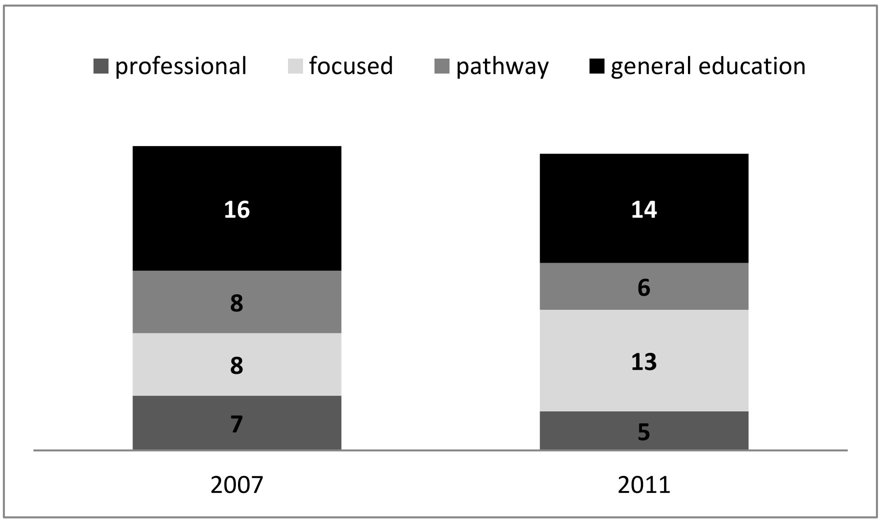

Figure 17: Spread of models of Arts programs in 2007 and 2011

The horizontal analysis of changes across the sector between 2007 and 2011 appears to indicate that Australian Arts curricula are trending towards adopting a Specialist design rather than the traditional education model.

1.5. Curriculum Review Processes

During the data collection verification process, program coordinators were invited to indicate proposed program changes and offer any information about the history of reviews.

The provided information showed that 12 of the 39 programs offered in 2007 had not previously experienced a program review, although seven of the 12 indicated that a review of the program was either occurring later in 2007 or was anticipated for 2008. Rather than a review Arts program, schools or faculties had previously been subjected to internal or external review. A further 6 programs indicated that the program was reviewed in 2007 or in 2006 for the first time, suggestion that that prior to 2007, periodic reviews of the Arts program were not the norm for many institutions.

By 2011, this situation had changed and all programs were now subjected to periodic review, generally over a 5 or 7-year period. Program coordinators for 30 of the 38 Arts programs available in 2011 indicated in the program profiles that anticipated changes for 2012/13 or changes recently implemented had directly resulted from the review recommendations as illustrated by the following extracts:

> *"Implementing changes as result of review includes changing the offerings of majors such as education and reviewing the group of tagged degrees. Changes implemented in 2011 are the result of cross-institutional curriculum review including introduction of common core course in communications"* (2011 profile)
>
> *"Changes and actions resulting from the recommendations from the 2011 external review of the Bachelor of Arts:*
>
> *A major will consist of 80 units of courses with 20 units at 1000 level, 20 units at 2000 level and 40 units at 3000 level. A minor will consist of 40 units of courses with 20 units at 1000 level and 20 units at 2000 level. Courses that have not been on offer in the last 3 years have been identified and will be deleted. The Bachelor of Arts Program Management Group will now be responsible for overseeing the consistency of course documentation. Due to the size of the Bachelor of Arts, the Faculty have appointed a Deputy Program Convenor The Program Management Group has been formalised and includes representation from every discipline teaching into the Bachelor of Arts. The Faculty have set criteria on what constitutes a sustainable major and the Program Management Group will use these guidelines to monitor performance of majors. Chinese will be offered as a minor only from 2012. There will be some combinations of majors from 2012 onwards. There will be some renaming of majors from 2012 onwards. The disciplines of French, Chinese, Japanese and German will combine and form the disciplinary grouping of Modern Languages Philosophy, Religious Studies and Theology will form the one disciplinary grouping"* (2011 profile)

As evident in the above extracts, the program review has become the vehicle for implementing structural changes on a program level, but also had implications for content and purpose.

2. CHANGES IN ARTS CURRICULA EVIDENT IN THE VERTICAL ANALYSIS

The horizontal analysis described in the previous section outlines a trend towards Australian Arts programs taking on the following features:

- embracing the rhetoric of preparing work-ready graduates;
- narrowing the range of disciplines offered for study; and
- becoming prescriptive, restricting students' capacity to make choices.

These features are associated with the professional and focused Arts models, which use the Specialist design of curriculum. There appears to be a tendency towards the focused curriculum as illustrated in Figure 16 and Figure 17 above.

The term "trend" suggests that there is a general tendency to move in a particular direction over time. Based on the evidence provided in the previous section, one might assume that the evidence pointed towards a trend for Australian Arts programs adopting a Specialist design and becoming either programs providing focused study in a specialist area in HASS disciplines or providing skills and experiences suited to particular professions, that is, moving away from General Education and Pathway Arts models towards Professional and Focused Arts models.

However, the vertical analysis within each of the 39 program profiles indicates that this trend is not as clear cut as the horizontal analysis suggests. Not all institutions were following the same general trend. Some institutions changed the scope of the program and then changed it back again over the short 5-year time period investigated in this study. Given that interviewees described internal administrative requirements for program approvals as taking a minimum of 3 years to go from conceptualisation to delivery, program decision-making occurred quickly.

The number of changes to the Arts programs across the sector between 2007 and 2011 suggest that a state of flux exists, that the way that Arts programs are conceptualised is unstable. Not one of the 39 institutions offered a program in 2011 that was identical to that offered in 2007. Some of these changes that occurred within the 5 year time frame included:

- 55% of institutions across the sector narrowing the discipline range of majors, in the same time period as 15 programs (or 40% of all programs) broadened the range of discipline offerings, with 8 programs changing the scope more than once;
- 12 programs moved from a flexible to a prescribed structure at the same time that 7 shifted from prescribed to flexible structures;
- 3 institutions changed from offering a Generalist Arts design to a Specialised Arts design before reverting to a Generalist Arts design again;
- 9 institutions reduced the number of majors that drew on disciplines outside of HASS, or removed them entirely. However, in the same period 3 institutions increased the capacity for students to engage with majors classified as "Other", while a further 3, which had not previously offered these majors, now did so;
- Core units were added or increased in 15 programs but removed in 5;
- While 10 institutions adopted a 3-level approach to sequencing over this period from a 2-level, a 2–level approach was adopted in 3 programs. One of these programs later rejected the 2-level approach in favour of a return to the 3-level approach in the 5-year period.

In addition, nineteen institutions identified that further changes were scheduled or expected for implementation in 2012/3. Program coordinators were requested to supply information about anticipated changes intended for implementation in 2012/2013. This information was then also captured in the program profile.[57] The interviews and records of observation also provided information about anticipated changes in the near future. Examples of changes intended to be introduced in the near future included:

- *"Advanced Arts" programs*
  Programs aimed at attracting top students offering specialised units and research opportunities, and the panache of being in an "advanced" program
- *Concurrent diplomas*
  Programs offering students the option of studying an Arts major concurrently with other programs, for example, Diploma of Languages

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[57] Further details about the process for this request are available in the Methods Chapter, p. 81.

- *Opportunities for postgraduate coursework in HASS disciplines*
  As the honours Arts programs continue to dwindle, some institutions indicated an intention to develop professional graduate diplomas and masters programs drawing on traditional Arts subjects.

These findings indicate that, while there was an apparent overall trend towards leaner, more prescriptive Arts programs, this trend was not consistent across the sector. The changes described in this section indicate that there was a high degree of churn evident within programs across the sector over the 5-year time frame, suggesting that, across the sector, there exists a state of uncertainty about what should be done with the Australian Arts.

3. FACTORS INFLUENCING CHANGE

This section of Chapter 5 reports the findings of the fifth stage of analysis to address the research question "Is there an explanation for how Australian Arts program curricula are constructed and conceptualised?"

The previous chapter had identified the multiple ways that Australian Arts programs are constructed and conceptualised across the first 3 stages of analysis. The fourth stage traced the changes that occurred in how these programs were constructed and conceptualised between 2007 and 2011.

The fifth (and final) stage of analysis re-examined the data generated in light of potential motivators for changes to identify any external and internal factors that might influence curriculum planning of Australian Arts programs. The following data sets developed in the previous stages were re-examined

1) Case materials, specifically observation records, related documents such as minutes and reports and interviews
2) Contextual information in the form of institutional attributes such as
    a. location
    b. type of institution
    c. cohort size
    d. cohort entry scores

    e. program organisational structures; and
    f. articulation opportunities and pathways.

Key government and national activities with potential for affecting Australian higher education recorded in the field journal between 2005 and 2012.

These data were categorised as factors with the potential to influence program changes that were external to the program and factors internal to the program. These categories are illustrated in Table 42.

Table 42: Summary of factors identified as motivating change

Location	Factor
External to program	Institutional change Government drivers Market forces
Internal to program	Program partnership Nature of student cohort Program resourcing

Where and when these factors occurred was then cross-checked against program changes identified in the Stage 4 analysis to identify whether these factors might have influence over program changes or initiate any program changes.

3.1. Influential Factors External to the Program

Factors external to the program included forces and drivers internal and external to the institution offering the Arts program but were external to the program itself. These factors included

(1) Institutional change such as
    a. curriculum reform on an institutional level;
    b. institutional reorganisation;
    c. introduction of institution-level systems; and
    d. the nature of the student cohort
(2) Pressures caused by responding to government initiatives.
(3) Market pressures resulting from competition with
    a. programs offered at the same institution; and
    b. programs offered at by local competitors

These themes are described further below.

3.1.1. *Institutional change*

Three types of changes occurring within institutions that affected Arts programs were identified:

- Curriculum reform imposed across the whole institution
- Structural organisational change, such as amalgamation of faculties
- The introduction or reorganisation of institution-wide systems, such as implementing timetabling software.

Large-scale and radical institution-wide curriculum reform transformed all programs across the whole university, for example, the Curriculum 2010 project at Curtin University and the adoption of the Melbourne model at the University of Melbourne. The impact on the program change is illustrated in this extract from an interview conducted in 2007 related to an extension structural change.

> *The final outcome will be one Bachelor of Arts Degree with a series of majors. This will radically change the current structure of the Bachelor of Arts degrees. The program is currently under review in keeping the institutional change strategy…. The strategy aims to provide a more consistent shape, structure, standards and policy framework* (Program coordinator interview, 2007)

Institutional reorganisation was identified in interviews as a factor influencing program change. The period 2006 to 2011 also saw a number of institutions changing Faculty and School structure and organisation, as illustrated in Table 43. In the main, restructures consolidated the faculties that had previously offered majors or units in the Arts program into one larger faculty. A common result of institutional reorganisation was the closure of majors and the exclusion of majors from Arts programs.

Table 43: Number of institutions restructures affecting Arts programs

Year	Number of institutions restructuring Faculty/ School
2006 – 2007	14
2008 – 2011	8

This reorganisation of structures impacted program management. This period saw a substantial shift in program management of the Arts program from coordination via a committee structure with committee members representing all schools or facilities, towards program coordination by a single individual or a small team. Eighteen cross-faculty management committees existed in 2007, reduced to eight by 2011. The management processes and policies related to approving introduction of new units and majors, or governing substantial changes, were, for most institutions investigated, largely a form-filling exercise. This change was described by some program conveners and academic leaders as enabling a more responsive management structure, and allowing quicker changes to occur.

Curriculum planning and renewal was described by program conveners and program administrators as an administrative process where a series of forms are progressed through approval milestones managed by a hierarchy of committees. Few opportunities for interaction and engagement between the different roles to discuss curriculum intentions were observed.

Institutional system changes also affected the program. Examples included the adoption of a trimester calendar; the introduction of new timetabling systems that allowed students to self-enrol; and the introduction of educational technology enabled learning environment. Examples of the impact of these changes on the program were found in the 2011 commentary and 2007 interviews with program coordinators, illustrated in Table 44.

Table 44: Impact of institutional system changes

System Change	Impact
Student self-enrol timetabling systems	• Standardisation of unit credit points across all units feeding into majors • Limiting pre-requisite unit rules • Introduction of required units within majors • Limiting number of foundational units offered
Requirement for converged delivery through multiple delivery modes	• Units and programs previously available in face to face mode required educational learning design to be transformed into state suitable for online delivery and visa-versa
Funding allocations to faculties or schools	• Reduction in employment of tutors and casual staff resulting in increase in class size and adjustments to teaching from small class teaching to large class teaching resulted in narrowing of unit offerings and increasing prescription • Reduction in service teaching into other programs to retain funds within schools resulting in narrowing of disciplines offered
Introduction of trimester	• Reduction in number of units offered • Introduction of required units within majors

3.1.2. Government drivers

The period 2007 to 2011 saw a high level of government focus of higher education in supporting agendas such as widening participation and quality assurance processes[58] which resulted in implementation interventions and initiatives. However, these initiatives were seldom mentioned in any interviews or in observed meetings. Unlike the impact of student enrolment numbers, which was evident across all interviews, only academic leaders mentioned government initiatives, mostly as obstacles to be overcome rather than motivators for change, as illustrated in the following extract:

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[58] The Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley, 2008) was more commonly known as the Bradley Report. The response and implementation plan based on this report "Transforming Australia's Higher Education System" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009) presented a 10-year reform agenda for higher education.

> *"AQF[59] has seen some institutions scurrying but others not. I don't think we're scurrying. We're certainly not scurrying at an undergraduate level. I think where it would get in the way of what I would want to do is actually at the sub-degree level. One of the recommendations in the review was for the creation of Diploma and Associate Degree exit points. And I think they quite wanted to see them as the review thought we should be looking at them as entry points too. I think there's considerable reluctance certainly to do the latter and I think there's a fair amount of reluctance about creating exit points. So I'm not sure that that's going to happen, although it seems to me, I think this kind of blind Freddy territory isn't it."* (Academic leader, Modern University, 2011)

Another initiative arising from the Transforming Australia's Higher Education System implementation blueprint was the publication of data from the national surveys of graduates[60] on the My University website[61] as a means to inform student enrolment decisions. Running data from these surveys were analysed to identify any correlations with key changes in Arts programs between 2007 and 2011. Despite the potential for influencing the direction towards adopting the rhetoric of preparing work-ready graduates, these data sources were not mentioned in any of the interviews or in any meetings observed as motivating program changes. No direct correlations were established between the curriculum changes identified in Stage 4 analysis and government initiatives or quality assurance data.

3.1.3. Competition for market share

Competition for market share was the factor that was identified as the principal driver for changes to the planned curriculum in all interviews and observations. It was also evident in program review documentation. While reports from government agencies based on the Society and Culture Field of Education suggested that Arts programs were comparatively healthy (as explored in the literature review p. 54), these data effectively hide BA programs. Through a process of data cleaning and reduction, a data set of only those programs with the title of Bachelor of Arts was extracted from the Society and Culture Field of Education student enrolment data. These data support the view of academic leaders that student enrolment numbers in the BA was declining. At the lowest point, in 2008, Australian programs with the title "Bachelor of Arts" recorded a total of 42,057 students. Although enrolment figures improved after 2008, the number of students enrolled in 2010 (N=48,225) was only slightly higher than the numbers enrolled in 2001 (N=47,840), as illustrated in Figure 18.

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[59] One of the initiatives adopted by the Commonwealth Government in response to the Bradley review was the establishment of a quality assurance agency that would have oversight to develop a "robust quality assurance framework for Australian higher education, and to drive improved standards of teaching and learning for students" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p. 49). This initiative resulted in a major review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) which included the introduction of 10 levels of qualifications and "*revised qualification type descriptors based on a taxonomy of learning outcomes; revised policies; and a formal glossary of terminology*" (see http://www.aqf.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/History-of-the-AQF-PDF-2A-1b.pdf). At the time of the interviews, institutions were not yet required to provide overview of how programs offered mapped onto the 10 levels.

[60] There are two instruments, the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and the Graduate Destinations Survey (GDS) which are administered to participants 6 months after graduation in one survey called the Australian Graduates Survey (AGS). This survey is administered by Graduate Careers Australia, an independent national agency.

[61] http://myuniversity.gov.au/

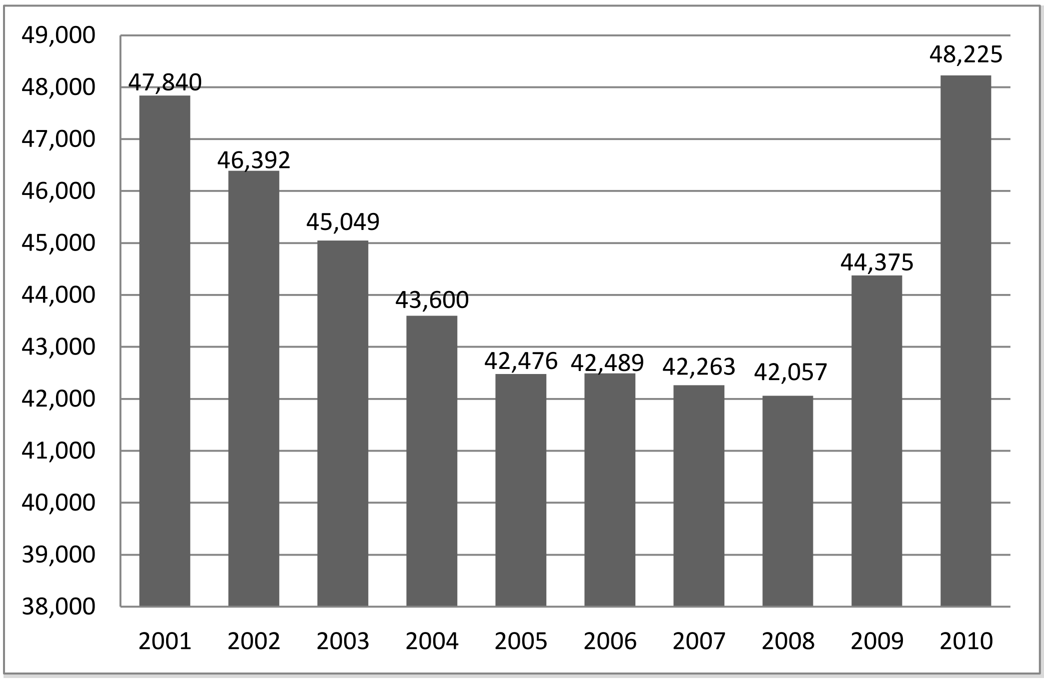

Figure 18: Student enrolments in Bachelor of Arts programs

When the relative decline in student numbers is viewed against the overall increasing of student participation in higher education during this period, student enrolment numbers in the BA are of concern. Although the increase by 2010 appears to indicate that the Bachelor of Arts is recovering, the proportion of enrolments in programs with the title "Bachelor of Arts" of the total Society and Culture field of education enrolments reduced from 32% in 2001 to 26% in 2010.

The thematic analysis of all the ethnographic data, including documents, interviews and observations, identified that market share directly influenced the program changes in the case studies. Interviewees across all roles perceived a root cause for implementing programs changes was to address perceptions of declining Arts enrolment numbers. The need to maintain a competitive edge to counter lower student enrolments in comparison to other programs meant that there was constant pressure to make changes to the program. Interviewees described this need in terms of competing with local institutions.

Program changes appear to be motivated by an ambition to capture market share from local competitor institutions. Different strategies were adopted by different programs; some chose to duplicate programs offered at local institutions as the quote below indicates:

> *"As student numbers drop across the sector, there is an increase in competition from across the field as other institutions duplicate programs to attract students. This means that there is a constant need to reinvent to maintain the edge, to address market forces".* (Senior administration 2007 interview)

Others attempted to rebadge the program, to make changes that would be likely to appeal to a non-traditional audience or to draw students away from other institutions.

> *"Drama and writing in particular were invisible to the marketplace… And so the former Executive of Dean of Arts had the idea we just need a way of getting something into that category and the Bachelor of Creative Arts was developed to get something into that category. And then it had a kind of a little life of its own, so wow, we should really try to differentiate and to not just make it a cut-down version of the BA, in order to have something interesting and unique about it. So we introduced a program gateway unit "Introduction in Creative Studies" and a program capstone unit"* (Program Coordinator, Sandstone University, 2011 interview)

While attracting students from other institutions may have been the intention behind program changes implemented between 2007 and 2011, analysis of the student enrolment data indicates a different picture. Rather than competition from other institutions, programs were more likely to compete with programs within the same institution than attract students from other institutions. For many institutions, the programs competing for BA student enrolments numbers were Arts-related programs offered at the same institution. The impact of this internal competition is illustrated in Figure 19 below.

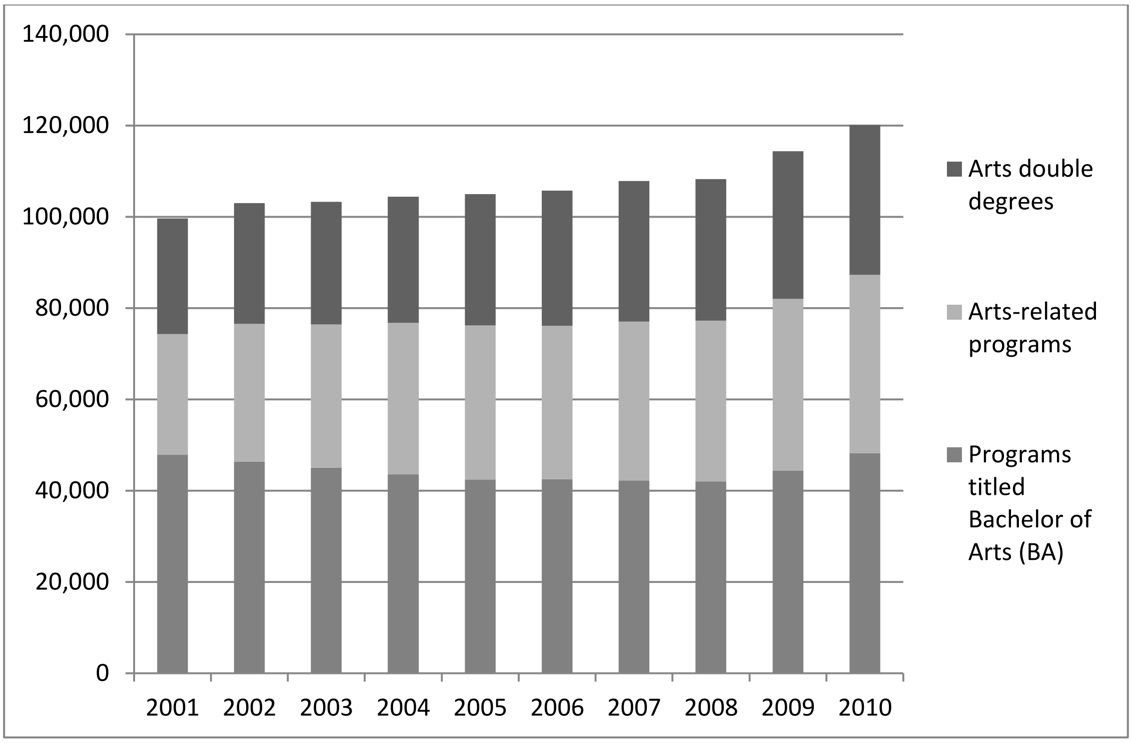

Figure 19: Numbers of students enrolled 2001 – 2010 across different programs (DIISRTE data sets)

Arts-related programs illustrated in Figure 19 are the tagged degree programs generally drawing on the same majors as BA programs offered in the same institution. Data related to BA programs also tends to be reported separately to double degree programs, which, as Figure 19 indicates, contributed to an increase in Arts programs across the sector over the period. By combining Arts-related programs with double degrees, which are effectively competing for the same pool of students, a different picture of the state of health in Arts enrolments emerges. Just as BA-only data suggests a decline, viewing all the programs together indicates that student engagement in Arts-related programs has been steadily increasing.

It could also be argued that the development of Arts-related programs, described by informants as mechanisms to increase student enrolment numbers rather than resulting in the desired outcome of attracting students from a wider pool, students were attracted to Arts-related programs at the expense of the BA. Effectively, a similar pool of students was spread across more programs.

3.2. Influential Factors Internal to the Program

Three drivers for change from within the program were identified:

1. Influence from partner schools and faculties
2. The nature of the student cohort
3. Program resourcing in terms of costs and teaching staff

Each of these and their influence on curriculum changes are explored further below.

3.2.1. Influence from partner schools and faculties

The broad discipline scope of Arts programs often meant that schools or faculties that ”owned” the Arts program had to work in partnership with other schools or faculties that contributed to the Arts program. This partnership was not necessarily an equal relationship. Program coordinators noted the difficulties associated with the absence of control over units offered within the program that were “owned” by other faculties and schools. Particular difficulties were noted regarding communication of changes in units. An example was given of the disestablishment of a unit central to a major in the Arts program that was “owned” by another school. The change was not communicated to the program coordinator, as is indicated in the following statement.

> *“I consistently have difficulties trying to get people from the other schools to communicate with me about the changes that they’re making in their course… so there’s always that sort of sense that if you make a change here that there might be* [consequences] *… you write a report, you find out where that unit is offered elsewhere and you can communicate with people about what it is that’s going on. But it doesn’t always happen that way. So we don’t always find out about it until it gets to one of those big committees and then it’s like “Oh! Well. We had that unit within our major.”* (Program coordinator, Regional University, 2011 interview)

The influence of other programs on the Arts program is illustrated by the link between the Education and Arts programs. Interviewees at all 3 case sites mentioned the influence of Education programs over the shaping of the Arts program, illustrated in Table 45.

Table 45: Impact on Arts program by education program

Site	Impact on Arts program
Regional University	As no English literature major was offered, those students needing a teaching subject in English have to complete the Writing major. While the writing major had a number of units that deal with literary works, they did not engage with Shakespeare's works. The school of education demanded that some aspect of the "Canon" resulting that the writing major was restricted to include some Shakespearean works.
Sandstone University	Developed a whole new major that existed solely for education students. Created by amalgamating two separate majors that continued to be offered for non-education students
Modern University	• National Curriculum[62] requirements identified In all interviews and observations as justification for keeping or restructuring majors. • Units have been combined to formulate new minors that fit into the BA/Ed structure e.g. minor in liberal arts. • The decision to drop some majors as core majors in the Education component meant that these majors viewed as potentially needing to be shut down.

Arts programs at Regional University and Modern University were particularly influenced by the schools of education and other contributors to the Arts program. The influence in both institutions extended to the point of changing the Arts program structure to meet the needs of the Education program

> *"A major is eight [units], yeah. So we currently have a minor at five, a major at eight, and an extended major at ten. But … there are various points in the B.Ed/BA where they need a specific number of [units] to meet the teaching registration requirements and so inside the B.Ed/BA but nowhere else, we have invented new sized things. So we have a teaching minor which is four [units], and a teaching major that is six."* (Academic leader, Modern University, interview 2011)

The multi-disciplinary nature of some Arts programs meant that the programs were influenced by different Faculty structures. For example, observations and interviews at Modern University and Sandstone University suggested an uncomfortable relationship between the two Faculties that contributed to the Arts program:

> *"A number of our students do majors [*in both Faculties] *… they do it within completely different structures and there's just no, well, on a personal level we get on really well, but there's no formal relationship between [X faculty] and [Y Faculty] at all at this university. They're seen as competitors"* (Program coordinator, Modern University, interview 2011)

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[62] The National Curriculum is the set of national requirements for school-based curriculum: *"The Australian Curriculum sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. It sets out, through content descriptions and achievement standards, what students should be taught and achieve, as they progress through school."* (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2014)

3.2.2. Nature of the student cohort

There was a perception raised in the 2007 interviews that the entry scores for Arts programs were lower as a result of trying to increase student enrolment numbers. Lower scores were viewed to lead to a higher rate of attrition.

> *"… they are the residual degree for a lot of students so there's a huge attrition from BA degrees all across the country because they're often the degree that has the lowest entry rank because entry ranks aren't determined by anything other than demand relative to supply. They're degrees that it is thought easy by senior executive of the central management to take extra students if you can in order to pay the overheads*. (Program coordinator, Sandstone University, 2011 interview)

However, a review of the minimum entry levels (ATAR scores) published by tertiary access centres across the period indicated that entry scores tended to stay relatively even for most programs between 2005 and 2012. While ATAR scores did drop on some regional and rural campuses, these campuses consistently had lower entry scores compared to metropolitan campuses throughout the whole period of investigation.

Further, Bachelor of Arts programs during this period tended to attract a higher portion of non-school leavers. Demographic data from DIISRTE shows that the portion of students aged over 20 (and therefore less likely to have just completed school) was much higher for Bachelor of Arts programs than other Arts programs or for other programs in the Society and Culture FOE. These students were more likely to enter the program via alternate entry pathways and were therefore less likely to be affected by ATAR minimum scores.

There was a perception that lowering of entry scores resulted in a change in the nature of the student cohort requiring changes in the Arts program. However, no evidence was found of any changes to programs to accommodate a changing student cohort. Most changes were attempts to slow attrition or to attract new students, traditionally not attracted to Arts programs, as the interview extract below indicates:

> *"Attrition in the form of students who start and never finish, or completion rates, are a shadow across the BA. Trying to get some vaguely professionally orientated minors might be a way forward but perhaps not." (*Academic leader, Modern University, 2011 interview)

3.2.3. Resourcing pressures

The thematic analysis of all the ethnographic data, including documents, interviews and observations, identified resourcing pressures as the other prime motivator for driving change to the program. Resourcing was frequently described in terms of a need to cut costs. Cost-saving measures are illustrated in the following interview extracts.

> "As *young students are shying away from the BA, we now need to cut down the number of majors*; *cut down the number of* unit *offerings within majors*; *throw in capstones* in the degree and in majors. I*n many respects it'll make them, the BA, more of a mirror to many other named degrees*… the named degree with its greater restrictions." (Major convener, Modern University, 2011 interview)
>
> *"Our majors have simply evolved from this set of units and majors that we've had. We've cut down the numbers and we've been left with the residual. Some people have gone so their units have been dropped. In many ways I suspect it hasn't been all that deliberate, the selection of certain subjects. Now that's not always true and is truer of some disciplines than others, but I don't think that it's been a terribly planned systematic development of the set of subjects."* (Academic leader, Sandstone University, 2011 interview)

Interviews and observations of meetings indicated that curriculum was also affected by the availability of staff to teach in particular units. The limited availability often resulted in units being offered irregularly. The availability of staff was limited by lecturers on sabbatical leave, restrictions due to workload allocations, pressures to maintain research profiles, or a lack of academics available with the required level of expertise. For example, decisions were made to close majors at 2 of the case sites, not because of decrease in student numbers or a shift in curriculum philosophy but rather because there was only one person who could teach any units in the discipline.

The influence of personal research interest on curriculum was also acknowledged as an unofficial driver for, or resistance to, curriculum change. There was evidence of a close alignment between the units on offer and individual academic interests, rather than units of study being made available to achieve a particular educational purpose. An example of this motivation is evident extract from recorded observation. The discussion recorded was a justification for the continued offering of a major identified as one that should be discontinued as the observation below indicates:

> *"Conveners of Major X noted they can't get students to enrol in the major, but offer an argument for the continued existence of the major because this major aligns with staff research and 2 or 3 of the academics teaching into the major are recognised as top researchers in their fields."* (Meeting observed, Sandstone University)

4. APPROACHES TO CURRICULUM CHANGE

Institutions adopted one of two approaches to curriculum planning to address the key pressures outlined above. The two key pressures identified through the analysis as the main instigating curriculum change in contemporary Arts programs were competition for student numbers and meeting the pressures of resourcing the program. Responding to these pressures resulted in:

(1) an experimentation approach designed to *increase revenue* by increasing student participation; or
(2) a reduction approach aimed at *reducing costs* by limiting the number of majors or disciplines available.

4.1. Experimentation Approach

The experimentation approach aimed to boost revenue through increasing student participation by experimenting with changing the Arts program curriculum. Nineteen institutions adopted one or more of these experimentation approaches to curriculum change. Some institutions engaged in curriculum innovation, attempting to redesign the Arts program as an entirely new entity. Examples include the development of the “work-ready BA”, and the development of creative industries as a replacement for traditional engagement with HASS disciplines. Other institutions added innovative elements to an existing program such as introducing required or “core” units reflecting contemporary trends or offering concurrent diploma programs and developing “advanced” Arts programs. Some institutions extracted popular pathways through units and majors and developed “tagged” programs. Examples include Bachelor of Arts (Community Development), Bachelor of Arts (Criminology & Criminal Justice) and Bachelor of Languages. These were not new programs, but rather programs developed from existing majors and units and marketed in a different way. They provided a particular focus and path through otherwise possible disjointed units.

Institutions replicated curriculum innovations developed at other institutions to maintain a competitive edge locally, as illustrated in this quote from an interview with a program convener in 2011: “*The advanced BA was very much centred around the fact that Adelaide’s got one, UTas has got one, and I think Sydney has got one too*”. Programs replicated were frequently niche or ‘tagged’ degrees, such as the Bachelor of Global Studies or Bachelor of International Studies that emerged between 2006 and 2008 often curricula cobbled together from pre-existing majors and units from the BA.

4.2. Reduction Approach

By contrast, rather than attempting to transform the Arts program, during the 2007/2011 period twenty institutions chose to reduce the number of majors or disciplines and increase the level of prescription within the program. Rather than increasing the number of students and therefore boosting income, this approach aimed to reduce costs to generate the same income. Curriculum changes following a reduction approach were mechanisms to meet fiscal pressures placed on schools and disciplines from cuts to internal resourcing in response to declining enrolment numbers. Institutions adopting a reduction approach displayed less program fluctuation and fewer iterations of Arts programs listed in program handbooks. Interviews and observations of meetings indicated that curriculum was also affected by the availability of staff to teach in particular units. Limited availability was perceived to be due to addressing pressures to maintain a research profile and the availability of staff with the required expertise, particularly in the regional centres.

5. CONSEQUENCES OF RAPID CHANGE

The constant change evident in the rather short time frame had consequences. The most frequent consequence noted was the multiple iterations of Arts programs available in the same institution during this period. There was also evidence of an absence of awareness of changes and evidence of resistance to change. Each of these consequences is discussed further.

5.1. Multiple iterations of Arts programs

Multiple iterations evident in institutions were due to requirements to “teach out” programs. There was also evidence of instances where “tagged” degrees duplicated Bachelor of Arts programs and of multi-campus institutions offering different programs on different campuses, albeit with the same program title.

There is a requirement to “teach out” a program that has enrolments and students are generally given the option to complete using the program rules under which they originally enrolled. This requirements means that, while students can opt to transition into new programs, for most institutions a change in program curriculum and program rules meant that “old” and “new” program rules had to be duplicated for a designated period of time[63] As a consequence, in 2011, 36 of the 39 institutions under investigation had at least 2 different sets of program rules in play.

Institutions were also found to offer “tagged” degrees that replicated Arts programs. For example, at Modern University, one student could choose to study a Bachelor of Arts with Archaeology major while another student could study a Bachelor of Archaeology. Both students advance through the majors in an identical manner, sharing classes and experiencing identical assessment and learning activities within the major. The Bachelor of Archaeology student selected elective units and minors from a limited listing outside the major, while the Bachelor of Arts student had a broader scope to choose outside of Archaeology in addition to those listed for the Bachelor of Archaeology student. Otherwise, the experience was identical and the numbers of students wishing to study Archaeology were split across the two programs.

Multi-campus institutions were observed to offer different versions of their Arts programs at their regional to their metropolitan campuses. Eleven institutions offered Arts programs on multiple campuses. Three of the 11 offered markedly different programs at the regional campus to that offered at the main campus. The differences were clearly evident through the use of different program titles and codes. The remaining eight institutions provided programs with identical titles, rules and espoused purpose. However, the regional campus programs and those offered in the external mode were different from those offered on the metropolitan campus in both content and sequencing. These differences meant that programs at regional centres were quite different to the programs offered in metropolitan centres. Programs offered at regional campuses or offered externally in a distance mode displayed similar characteristics:

- prescribed progress through the program;
- a higher number of interdisciplinary core units introducing HASS key concepts;
- focused on humanities and social sciences disciplines;

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[63] Eight institutions listed a ten year period as a period where an “old” program rule would be continued to be offered. Other institutions did not have this information in a publically accessible place.

- use “flexibility” as a term to describe the capacity to access the program via alternate pathways and the mode of delivery rather than a capacity to enable student choice;
- offered fewer major sequences in fewer discipline areas; and
- did not offer work experience or internship opportunities.

Yet, despite the differences described above, programs were still similarly titled and marketed as similar to the program offered at the main campus. Students graduated with identical testamurs. The co-existence of multiple programs and multiple interpretations of those programs make it difficult to articulate what it is that constitutes an Australian Arts program.

5.2. Absence of Awareness of Changes

Inconsistent descriptions of changes to a program were displayed by those interviewed. Triangulation of the program descriptions offered by program coordinators with the changes identified in program profiles showed that program coordinators easily identified and described program changes. Academic leaders also referred to these changes, although not with the same degree of understanding. Major conveners were more likely to be unaware of changes that had occurred. Their reference points were frequently associated with a program that was based in a previous iteration of the program with limited sequencing requirements and even different majors on offer. Major conveners interviewed at Modern University and Sandstone University described their understanding of the Arts program offered at their institution referring to program rules and ethos that predated even 2007. They appeared to be unaware of the changes that had occurred within the program between 2007 and 2011, tending to describe a program that was no longer in operation. These disparities in description suggest that there are gaps in communication of curriculum changes. It was not clear from the data whether the individuals in this group had

- chosen to ignore information about changes;
- were not made aware of changes due to communication failures; or
- were operating from an assumed state of practice transferred from another institution with the expectation that this institution was the same.

While it might be expected that there would be different foci evident across these different roles, multiple interpretations of the same Arts program were evident, despite informants in interviews and commentaries ostensibly were describing the same program. All those interviewed referred to the Arts program as if their interpretation were commonly shared. In response to the question "*What would you say the purpose of the BA is?*" respondents used the collective, using expressions such as

> *"The purpose is to activate knowledge, so* ***we*** *kind of started with that and have gone down that road"*[64]
>
> *"Organisational survival has, has been important, I think, in driving the way* ***we'v****e structured curriculum"*[65]
>
> *"So where* ***we*** *see it, it's as a career focused degree of flexibility and choice"*[66]

5.3. Influence of administrative staff in curriculum development

Professional staff administrators of the program were found to have a better understanding of the curriculum of the program than the academics interviewed. This understanding was acknowledged by an administrator in an interview in 2011

> *"Academics do not understand sequencing of the program as a whole. They only understand their bits. They are experts in their own majors and nowhere else….when academics were advising students* [about progress through the program and which units to take in what order]*, they were making mistakes""*[We don't] *have the academics participate in the information sessions anymore. They can get it all wrong which ends up confusing the kids".* (Administrator, Modern University, interview 2011)

As a consequence, by 2011, this institution had dispelled with requesting academic advice regarding progress and students could only get this information via the administration offices. Indeed, by 2011, there was no institution that described academics providing advice to students on progression at program open days, a feature that had been standard to many institutions prior to 2007.

The control of curriculum by professional staff was witnessed in observations conducted in the Student Administration offices and administrator meetings conducted in all 3 case studies. The administration staff closely examined program rules and knew the handbook descriptions in great detail. They were also very aware of program progression with discussions related to updating the calendar to accommodate changes a standing item on meeting agendas. Student progression advice given by administration staff was observed in two of the three sites. In each instance, the advice was focused on accumulating unit points rather than following any curriculum coherency or curriculum intention.

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[64] Major Convener, Regional University, Interview 2011

[65] Academic leader, Sandstone University, Interview 2011

[66] Program Coordinator, Modern University, interview 2011

5.4. Evidence of Resistance to Change

Rather than the result of planned, purposeful intention, the planned curriculum of Australian Arts programs emerged as a result of navigating diverse interpretations and iterations of Arts programs. The Arts planned curriculum was found to be a site of contestation and compromise. In some instances, there was evidence that staff members were openly resistant to changes to the program and expressed disagreement to the changes. This resistance was evident in rhetoric similar to the statement below:

> *"The emphasis on vocational issues is problematic. The trend that happens when there is an emphasis on vocations is that the* [ATAR] *sunk and the numbers declined. In addition there is a moral issue about what are the institutions obligations or philosophy about the degree offered. There is a need to take note of what graduates need to have to get them employed, but a fine line between being focused on vocational education, particularly in face of evidence of large numbers of students going onto further study".* (Major convener, Modern University, interview 2007)

Resistance was also evident in action in the observations of school meetings. Notes recorded at a school meeting at Sandstone University captured the general mood of the meeting that was called to review a discussion document outlining proposed changes to the program curriculum which included introducing core units in majors at a second-year level as well as potential cuts to majors and the introduction of stand-alone minors.

> *"Tone of the meeting aggressive. Definitely a sense of "us" vs "them" attitude – of school versus faculty. The chair outlines proposed changes to majors in the review document. Negative comments. Changes ignored for the rest of the meeting. Discussion turned away from discussion document to collaborative learning spaces in newly refurbished teaching spaces."* (School meeting, Sandstone University, observation 2011)

There was also evidence of blatant disregard for institutional directives such as a discipline in a partner faculty within Modern University, which ignored directives to change the unit weighting and structural requirements of their major. Instead they maintained a sequencing structure completely unique to the rest of the program. There was no evidence of any attempts during the period of investigation by the Arts management committee to compel the discipline to comply with requirements. The major continued to be offered under a separate structure in the Arts program, even though all other majors changed. This resistance presumed an Arts structure that was more accommodating to student choice.

Some staff appeared to accept and comply with changes, yet not necessarily embrace or implement them. Instead, they adopted a facade of compliance, and persisted with previous practices. Examples of instances were found in the ways that programs adhered to requirements to offer work-integrated experiences that were “plugged” in to existing activities rather than fully integrated into the curriculum.

6. SYNTHESIS

This chapter has reported the findings from the Stage 4 and 5 that analysed and tracked the changes in Arts programs across the sector over time. It examined the common features, curriculum elements constructions and conceptualisations reported in the in the previous chapter over 2 points in time, namely 2007 and 2011. Data were analysed horizontally across the sector and vertically within institutions.

Sustained system-wide curricula changes indicate a tendency towards Australian Arts programs embracing the discourse regarding preparing work-ready graduates. There was also a narrowing of discipline offerings and becoming more prescriptive in study program choices. The only feature identified as common to Arts programs that remained stable, unchanged and consistent across the two time periods was the intent of programs to develop students’ critical thinking and communication (oral and written) skills in order to prepare students for future employment. These features however are not distinctive to Arts programs, but are fairly generic, and could be used to describe many other different higher education programs of study.

While there was evidence of patterns of change, there was no clearly identifiable evolutionary direction for Arts programs. Instead there was evidence of churn and change. The ways that Australian Arts programs were conceptualised was more fluid than possibly anticipated, with evidence of multiple changes in conceptualisation of Arts programs within individual programs over the 5-year time period of this study. Close examination of the nature of the changes across the 5-year time frame found evidence of programs shifting from offering a narrow range of disciplinary content to offering a broad range and then back to a narrow range. Program structures were found to change from flexible to prescribed sequencing. Still others shifted from a Generalist Arts curriculum design to a Specialist Arts design and then back again. This fluctuating change within institutions and across the sector indicates a prevailing state of uncertainty about what should be done with Australian Arts programs across the sector. This uncertainty is exacerbated by an absence of a shared understanding of the purpose and value of the Australian Arts program. For example, the adherence to the notion of a "traditional" breadth and depth and flexibility of structure Arts program features in publicity materials and in the personal perceptions offered is contradicted by the official documentation that outlined changes narrowing disciplinary fields and increasingly prescribing an inflexible program structure with limited scope for students to exercise choice.

Changes over time found in this study were possibly not appreciated by those with responsibility for curriculum design. Participants in the study appeared unaware of the Arts program as conceptualised as achieving four distinct purposes, both across the sector and within participants' institutions. Informants were also found to describe the program operating at their institution using descriptions of superseded program rules or purposes. Despite evidence of variety and difference, the descriptions offered in the documentation and by participants assumed a shared, consistent understanding.

This study sought to identify possible forces and drivers external and internal to programs that could explain the reasons behind these curriculum changes. Participants interviewed described influential factors that were external to the program. These included institutional strategic changes, such as curriculum reform; structural re-organisation; the introduction or reorganisation of institution-wide systems to comply with government agency accountability and compliance measures, and competition for market share. Competition for market share and resourcing pressures were found to be particularly influential over curriculum decision making. Internal factors perceived by participants to be significant drivers of curriculum change included the influence of partner schools and faculties; the nature of the student cohorts and resourcing pressures in terms of the need to cut costs, the availability of staff to teach into the program and the pressure to pursue personal research interests. Responding to these pressures influenced how institutions approached curriculum change. Institutions were found to adopt one of two possible approaches in response to these pressures, namely either an experimental approach to increase student enrolment numbers or a reduction approach.

Of note is that decisions to adopt an experimental approach or a reduction approach occurred at the program-level. Many of the other changes identified across the time period investigated also occurred at the program-level. Changes occurring at the program-level include the increased emphasis on work skills across the program; the implementation of core units at the program-level; adjustments to the weighting and sequencing of units within majors; the introduction of breadth units, requirements to engage with breadth of disciplines; and decisions related to program purpose. These decisions all suggest a shift towards a whole-of-program approach to curriculum design in the Australian Arts program. Yet, a whole-of-program curriculum design approach to generalist Arts programs contradicts the emphasis on curriculum constructed at the level of unit or discipline evident in the literature reviewed for this study.

These opposing approaches to curriculum designed evident in the findings raise the following questions:

- To what extent does the constant flux in Australian Arts programs contribute to its failure to articulate its value in higher education?
- To what extent can the constant flux in Australian Arts programs be attributed to external contextual pressures?
- What tensions result from balancing a whole-of-program approach with a discipline-focused approach to curriculum design in Arts programs?
- What impact does the tension between balancing a whole-of-program approach with a discipline-focused approach to curriculum design have on the process of planning curriculum in the Australian Arts program?

These questions are explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

By deconstructing the curricula of Australian Arts programs, commonly held assumptions of what constitutes a BA in Australia were scrutinised and tested. This chapter seeks to consider the findings reported in Chapters 4 and 5 in light of the contemporary context to provide a view of how Australian Arts programs are currently conceptualised and constructed. It first considers the consequences of the changing landscape of contemporary Australian Arts programs. The next section considers the extent to which these shifts result from planned strategic responses to the various factors or whether they are unplanned reactions to external forces. It also considers the impact of the contemporary context on the conceptions and constructions of Arts programs in Australia. The final section of this chapter discusses the impact of these changes on the process of planning curriculum in the Australian Arts program.

1. THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN ARTS LANDSCAPE

This research established that there were commonalities evident across Australian Arts programs. Thirty of the 39 programs investigated had the title “Bachelor of Arts” and exhibited a range of common features in the program descriptions. The key strength was perceived to be the exposure to multiple disciplines. Participants in this study argued that this exposure would enable the development of skills suited to a range of workforce needs. While most Arts programs exposed students to multiple disciplines in their first year of study, Arts programs were increasingly found to require students to engage with multiple disciplines across their degree. This engagement took the form of program rules that require students to engage with more than one sequence of study; to limit the number of units that they could expend in a single discipline area; and to complete interdisciplinary core units of study and/or “breadth” units, that is, units outside of traditional HASS discipline areas.

Furthermore, sustained system-wide curricula changes observed in this study indicated a tendency for Australian Arts programs to embrace the discourse of preparing work-ready graduates. The analysis also identified a narrowing of discipline offerings and increasingly more prescriptive curriculum structures.

1.1. A Diverse Landscape

The sector-wide analysis established that there is not just one commonly held view of Australian Arts programs. Instead, Australian Arts programs were conceptualised in four different ways:

- a broad-based, multi-disciplinary with a flexible structure;
- a generic framework through which students could transition to other programs;
- vocational training in a particular professional field; or
- focused mastery in discipline area.

The variety in conceptualisations was evident in the ways that programs were described in official documentation, publicity materials and by those with responsibility for curriculum design. Patterns were evident in the curriculum design through the descriptions of the purpose, content and sequencing of the programs examined, making it possible to identify four different models of Arts programs. These models were

- General education Arts;
- Pathway Arts;
- Professional Arts; and
- Focused Arts.

Each model identified exhibited particular features of purpose, content and sequencing and resulted in different experiences of Arts programs for students. The four models can be used to characterize the differences among the various universities in how the BA is presented and structured. They can also be used to characterize different ways in which a student at a particular university can experience an Arts program within a particular institution. There were instances where institutions were found to offer all four models. For example, a student majoring in Psychology might experience her program as Professional Arts, whereas a student doing two History-related majors and electives might experience it as a Focused Arts program. Another student enrolled at the same institution studying a major in English Literature, a minor in Gender Studies, a minor in Maths and electives from disciplines offered across the University might experience the program as General Education Arts. If program rules at this institution allow it, yet another student with a lower entry score could use the electives to mirror the first year study plan of a Bachelor of Commerce, with the view to transition to that program at a later stage – the Pathway Arts model. These experiences are dependent on the scope allowed by the program rules within the planned curriculum.

This research also identified changes to Arts curricula through the detailed analysis of the content and sequencing of planned curriculum of Arts programs between 2007 and 2011[67]. This study established that two distinctly different approaches to change were adopted. In response to contextual pressures, one approach was to introduce *experimental* changes that substantively altered the original program. Another response was to opt for a *reduction* approach to curriculum change; reducing the numbers of disciplines offered and becoming more prescriptive in structure. As a consequence of these changes, there is evidence of a shifting landscape in Australian Arts programs.

1.2. A Shifting Landscape

Australian Arts programs in the period under investigation were not static: instead they were highly dynamic; constantly changing. They shifted from narrow to broad ranges of content and back again; some moved from flexible to prescribed structures while others shifted from prescribed to flexible. Closer examination of the nature of the changes identified that, rather than a predictive pattern indicating a clear trajectory towards a reduced program across the sector, there was evidence that programs oscillated from specialist to generalist curriculum designs and then back again. Instead of general trends, there was evidence of fluctuation, of continual change from one condition to another. Australian Arts programs were in a state of flux, suggesting considerable uncertainty about just what should be done with the Australian Arts in the contemporary setting.

Changes to the Australian Arts program continued beyond the scope of the initial research. Data explored in this thesis were collected in 2007 and 2011, but reported in 2014. An additional desktop audit of program information was conducted in October 2014 to bring in a 2014 perspective. This review established that the churn identified in the detailed analysis has continued post-2011. For example, programs categorised as adopting a Professional Arts model evident in 2007 had reverted to a General education Arts program by 2012 (Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013), and had largely disappeared by 2014. These changes are illustrated in Table 46.

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[67] Described in detail p. 153 to p. 164

Table 46: Numbers of institutions offering professional model of Arts program

Institution	2007	2011	2012	2014
Central Queensland University	X			
Curtin University of Technology	X	X		
Murdoch University	X			
RMIT	X	X	X	X
Swinburne University of Technology		X		
University of South Australia	X			
University of Technology, Sydney	X	X	X	X
Griffith University	X	X	X	
La Trobe University			X	
TOTAL	**7**	**5**	**4**	**2**

It is possible that these programs were less likely to be sustained in the long term as the experimental changes did not always result in resolving issues identified with the original BA program. For example, the BA at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) was closed in 2007 and replaced by the Bachelor of Creative Industries. That program is now reportedly experiencing similar challenges as those experienced by the original BA program where the program *“has acquired a deficit, there is a high attrition rate, and it has difficulty in meeting its marketing promise*" (Thornton, 2010, p. 392).

Unlike the 2007 scan which showed an increase in focused and professional models of Arts programs, the additional 2014 scan indicated a movement towards a re-introduction of the general education model of the Arts program. Possibly following the lead of the University of Melbourne, the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University have recently changed to offering a limited number of broad education undergraduate programs and sequential postgraduate professions-based programs. They have also removed tagged programs and limited double degrees. Students in these institutions can now choose to study from disciplines in any field offered across the whole university. This broadening of the program is not restricted to only those institutions which have adopted the “Melbourne model” of higher education curriculum. Other institutions such as Swinburne University, Curtin University and Griffith University, which previously offered a very narrow, professions-based program, have adopted a general education model since 2011 in preference to professional or focused models. By 2014, these institutions also increased the number of majors offered within the Arts.

This resurgence of the general education model may be attributed to the fact that the distinctive purpose of exposure of students to a range of disciplines is still integral to Australian Arts programs. Exposure to a breadth of disciplines was a fundamental and unique feature of the Australian Arts programs found in this study. The feature was evident throughout the sector-wide analysis of curriculum documentation and the ethnographic data. Interviews conducted in both 2007 and 2011 all described the intent for students to engage with multiple disciplines as a fundamental way in which Arts programs provided an opportunity for students to develop an interdisciplinary view of the world. It needs to be noted that inherent in this approach is a tacit assumption that exposure to multiple disciplines would lead to cross-disciplinary learning although there was no evidence that this learning was an actual outcome of the program.

It is important to note, however, that programs offering broadened disciplinary exposure and choice since 2011 still do not constitute a consistent trend. The churn continues. At the same time as the broadening of disciplinary offering is evident in 2014, there is also a group of institutions that are now adopting a reduction approach; reducing the numbers of disciplines offered and becoming more prescriptive. For example, the University of Queensland has reduced the number of majors offered from 50 in 2007 to 41 in 2014 and has imposed a required foundation, cornerstone, and capstone structure to each major.

There was also evidence of further experimentation; this time favouring General education models over Focused models. For example, the new Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Science program at the University of Sydney to be launched in 2015 broadens the program beyond the traditional HASS focus, but also provides a narrower, more prescriptive structure by introducing an integrated core “stream” focusing on developing communication, analysis and ethics skills. Still other institutions have adopted double degrees to provide broader discipline-based and profession-based learning experiences (Russell, Dolnicar & Ayoub, 2008). For example, the University of Technology, Sydney has recently launched a new program titled “Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation”. Designed to attract students with high entry scores from other institutions, this concurrent program combines skill sets traditionally associated with Arts programs, such as creative and critical thinking, with professions-based programs.

2. ARTS PROGRAM LANDSCAPE REFLECTING THE CONTEXT

The evidence of change to Arts curricula outlined above is not surprising. Program change, refreshment and renewal are expected aspects of curriculum design (Frank et al., 1994; Jarvis, 2000; Cornbleth, 2008; Fullan, 2013). What is notable is the rate of change in a relatively short time-frame of 5 years and the impact of this rate of change on curriculum design and the capacity for those with responsibility for curriculum design to articulate the value of Arts programs. Where a specific university oscillated back and forth, there is an indication that the changes were not intentional, planned and strategic, but were reactive responses to external pressures.

Chapter 5 records the external influences and pressures that were found to have affected the curriculum of the Australian Arts program (see p. 166 for details). These pressures align with the pressures typically associated with a neoliberal context. As outlined in the literature review chapter, internationally, higher education is increasingly seen to be operating in a neoliberal context (Peters, 1999; Roberts, 2007; Giroux, 2009; Blackmore, 2013). The review of the literature traced the contemporary discourse of neoliberalism in higher education but noted that systemic studies investigating the impact of neoliberalism on the design of Arts programs were not found. Changes to Australian Arts programs between the 1860s and 1990s were noted (see, for example, Pascoe et al., 2003). More recently, further transformations have been noted (Bridgstock, 2006; Gannaway, 2010b; Bridgstock, 2013). However, no studies were identified in the review of the literature which traced the impact of contextual pressures on Australian Arts programs curricula. This section considers whether the state of flux evident in Australian Arts programs reported in the findings chapters can be attributed to the neoliberal context of contemporary higher education.

In a neoliberal context, the role of education is seen to fulfil an economic production function, that is, designed to meet the needs of the knowledge economy (Marginson, 2001; Curri, 2002; Bullen et al., 2004; Kenway et al., 2004; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Thornton, 2010; van der Wende, 2011). The emergence of knowledge production as a primary economic driver (Barnett, 2000a; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Thornton, 2010) generates pressure to provide a universal education system that supports the "*adaptation of the 'whole population' to rapid social and technological change*" (Brennan, 2004, p. 22).

The Dawkins reforms of 1989 are generally seen to herald Australia's adoption of a knowledge economy and the beginning of a new era in higher education (Stokes, 1991; Sinclair-Jones, 1996; Marginson, 1999; Marginson & Considine, 2000). By 2007 - the initial data collection point for this study - government policy and the structures, organisation and work of the university had been transformed to accommodate changes to support the fundamental features of neoliberalism (Reading, 1996; Sinclair-Jones, 1996; Barnett, 1997, 2000a; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Short, 2002; Parker, 2003; Barnett, 2004; Pechar & Pellert, 2004; Barnett, 2005; Martín-Moreno et al., 2005; Blackmore et al., 2010; G. Davies, 2013). These transformations include the way that Arts programs are constructed. The diversity of conceptions, interpretations and construction processes explored in the previous sections of this chapter can ultimately be attributed to responding to contextual pressures imposed by neoliberal policies. Pressures affecting curriculum construction include those associated with marketization, performativity and managerialism. The impact of these pressures is explored in the next section.

2.1. Impact of Neoliberal Pressures on Australian Arts Curricula

Contemporary Australian Arts programs are shaped by the need to maintain program viability by competing for market share. Informants in this study indicated that a prime motivation for curriculum changes was to maintain and ultimately increase the numbers of students enrolling in Arts programs. They referred to the need to ensure "*increasing or retaining student numbers*". The challenges of "*dropping student numbers*" and "*appealing to Gen Y*" were consistently mentioned as "*incentives*" to consider "*viability of majors*", firmly linking completion for market share with resourcing implications as motivators for change. Maintaining student numbers was crucial to maintaining the viability of offering a breadth of program disciplines. Majors and units with small class sizes are considered unsustainable and face closure as a consequence, effectively reducing the breadth of offerings. This instability is illustrated in the following extract from an interview with an academic leader conducted in 2007

> *"As student numbers drop across the sector, there is an increase in competition from across the field as other institutions duplicate programs to attract students. This means that there is a constant need to reinvent to maintain the edge, to address market forces."*

However, the levels of enrolment in Arts programs are fairly static, as illustrated by findings from this study illustrated in Figure 18, p. 171. This finding confirms Norton's assertion described in the literature review that the proportion of students enrolling in Arts programs rather than other programs has remained relatively constant between 1962 and 2011 (Norton, 2013, p. 26). The consistency of enrolment is partly because fees for Australian domestic students are currently regulated[68], preventing price competition between universities (G. Davies, 2013). These features possibly account for why all Australian universities offer a very similar array of programs to domestic students. As a consequence of this captive market, competition for market share takes the form of attracting Arts students from other Arts programs offered within the same institution and by other institutions. Rather than attracting students away from other fields of education, there was evidence of Arts programs competing with each other within institutions. Some institutions offered all four models in operation at the same time. Programs had very similar titles and rules. Units and majors extracted from the traditional program to create "tagged" programs often remained in the traditional BA as well. These seemingly similar programs create competing marketing messages that confused even those with responsibility for program coordination. Interviewees consistently struggled to articulate the distinctive features of tagged programs as opposed to the generic Arts program. They also struggled to articulate the intent and purpose of the Arts program, offering conflicting descriptions of the same program.

The experimentation approach evident in Australian Arts programs between 2007 and 2011 can be seen as an attempt to capture market share and increase program viability through increasing student numbers. Strategies to capture market share identified in the analysis include marketing Arts programs as an "advanced" program or as having direct links to the creative industries *"specifically to improve competitive market positioning*" (M. Walker, 2009, p. 233). Other strategies included experimenting with badging the programs different to attract students enacting a belief that "... *a different badge is more attractive to the marketplace and plays to disciplinary strengths more clearly*" (Program Coordinator, Sandstone University, 2011 interview). Initiatives such as these tended to be replicated by competitors fairly soon after initially implemented. Examples identified in Chapters 4 and 5 include the adoption of tagged programs such as Bachelor of Creative Industries or programs focused on international studies such Bachelor of Global Studies (see p. 170 for further details). Replication of competitor's programs, therefore, becomes part of the strategy to address competition from local institutions.

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[68] At the point of writing this thesis, decisions about de-regulating university fees were still pending, as a result of a failure to pass legislation through the Senate at the end of 2014.

The potential to provide the competitive edge is required by a marketization ethos and emphasises the "performativity" of knowledge, where knowledge is valued for its use-value rather than its truth-value (Barnett, 2000a)[69]. To gain a competitive edge, Arts programs are increasingly marketed as meeting the demand for preparing work-ready, skilled prospective employees (Watty, 2006; Hicks, 2007; Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013) as a means to ensure future graduate employability. An example of this trait is illustrated in the following extract:

> *"Murdoch University is committed to preparing its students to be work-ready. The University provides an innovative, supportive and high quality learning experience which incorporates learning in both a formal education environment as well as in workplaces, communities and practical settings*." (Marketing materials, Murdoch University, 2011)

In the 'user-pays' economy typically associated with a neoliberal milieu, the performativity of a higher education program can also be considered as a return on investments, measured by future potential earning power (Looseley, 2011). Arts programs are challenged with providing evidence of this return on investment. Domestic Australian students all repay a portion of the cost of their education according to a 'relative funding' model which dictates the contribution of public funds to support students engaging in higher education (Teece, 2012). In 2013, students studying programs perceived to be of public benefit such as agriculture, nursing or education were expected to repay between 28% and 37% of the cost of their education (Norton, 2013, p. 52). Students studying law, accounting, administration, economics and commerce were the highest contributors, typically repaying 83% of the costs of their study in 2013, while the percentage paid by humanities students is 52%, the second highest percentage (Norton, 2013, p. 52). Studies drawing on data from graduate destination surveys and census statistics show that studying law and business is more likely to lead to high future earnings, unlike graduates from Arts programs who are generally the lowest earners (Lewis, 2008; Daly & Lewis, 2010; Graduate Careers Australia, 2012). More recent studies indicate that even professions-based Arts programs such as psychology are less likely to be engaged in full-time employment six months after graduation than graduates from other programs (Turner & Brass, 2014). Participation in Arts programs is, therefore, an expensive option with limited scope for a suitable return on investment, possibly making the program less appealing for parents and students in a user-pays context**.**

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[69] Further discussion of this theory is outlined on p.32

Quality assurance processes of the Australian higher education system are set up to measure vocational outcomes; further entrenching questions about the utility of Arts programs. The current quality assurance processes in Australia includes surveys rating graduate perceptions of their acquired generic skills and employability within six months of graduation. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that students and parents measure the value of the degree as associated with employability.

As higher education becomes increasingly commercialised and entrepreneurial, higher education structures become increasingly managerial and bureaucratic (Lingard et al., 1994; Barnett, 1997, 2000a; Jarvis, 2000; Marginson, 2001; Hammer & Star, 2004; Harman, 2005; Levin, 2005; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Thornton, 2010). This study established that these pressures are manifested as the changing nature of academic work to accommodate the key aims of managerialism: *"economy, efficiency and effectiveness"* (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 13). These features have affected academic structures and processes, transforming and reorganising the nature of academic work (Marginson, 2000; Gappa et al., 2007; Blackmore, 2010; Blackmore et al., 2010; Bentley et al., 2013b) and, by extension, the processes of curriculum design in Australian Arts programs. Australian Arts programs responding to the efficiency pressures show evidence of a rationalisation of discipline offerings; an increase in service teaching and changes in pedagogy to those more suited to *en masse* teaching.

2.1.1. *Rationalisation of disciplinary offerings*

The breadth of disciplinary offerings is becoming narrower, despite frequently being presented as a key feature of Arts programs[70]. Interviewees referred to responding to "*continual*" resourcing pressures "*from on high to reduce units, to make teaching more efficient*". These pressures occur despite concerns about the effect on the capacity of the Arts curriculum to meet its purpose "*to provide depth and breadth*". There is a tension between maintaining the integrity of the Arts program as offering exposure to multiple disciplines in the face of the need to ensure some form of coherence and market value. Some programs have adopted strategies for dealing with this tension, at the same time as addressing efficiency, economy and effectiveness pressures. The strategies identified through this study include the use of multi-disciplinary majors, requiring engagement in multi-disciplinary core units, offering a wide range of electives and the inclusion of "breadth units" within a narrow, prescribed program.

2.1.2. *Service teaching*

Efficiencies gained through rationalisation such as service teaching into different programs and units in multiple programs further fragment the notion of curriculum purpose and intention. Service teaching refers to the "*delivery of compulsory courses or elements of a program by a discipline with specific expertise to students from a different faculty, department or discipline"* (Nankervis, 2008). A high degree of service teaching is evident in Arts disciplines, providing "*opportunities for people to add some more to their EFTSL load*" (Senior administrator, Modern University, interview 2011). While this strategy makes economic sense in that it increases cohort size for limited outlay, it also results in a cohort that is disjointed and pursuing different paths, further limiting opportunities for curriculum coherence.

2.1.3. *Pedagogical decisions*

Changes in pedagogy were frequently described as a cost-saving measure by those interviewed rather than as prompted by education needs, such as the following extract:

> *"…you might have a much higher student ratio…. But if you've got a seminar of thirty, we've got hardly any rooms. So, you get rid of tutorial, you go to… more seminars combining a lecture and breaking students into groups… So new*

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[70] As outlined on p. 155

> *methodologies of teaching and teaching efficiently and cost-effectively is to abandon the [tutorial model]" (*Major convener, Modern University, interview 2011)

Other examples of changes in pedagogy illustrated in the findings chapters included the introduction of work-integrated learning and blended learning pedagogies.

New norms encourage the adoption of an audit culture and verification rituals where the language of the auditor is internalised; a façade of compliance is created for the auditor and publicity rhetoric ultimately bears little relation to what is happening on the ground (Power, 1997). Audit compliance of this nature was evident in the discourse used by academic leaders and in the language used in the publicity materials. It was evident that some programs experimented with "plug-on" changes; superficial responses to external pressures rather than a true curriculum transformation. For example, the changes in some programs to comply with the need to produce work-ready graduates were atomistic in nature. Rather than making substantive changes, the existing program was "tweaked", usually by adding a module to an existing program. These small changes indicate a façade of compliance, the changes merely paying-lip service to the neoliberal discourse.

2.2. Impact of Neoliberalism on Curriculum Planning

The work of academics has been substantively altered by the need to comply with neoliberal directives evident in the higher education contemporary context. New forms of governance and power inherent in managerialism have been found to affect both *"academics' conditions of work and conditions of thought" engendering "new norms of conduct and professional behaviour"* (Shore & Wright, 2000, p. 57).

The neoliberal paradigm collapses the space and time available and dismantles opportunities for the informal collegial communication and sharing of ideas and identified by researchers as crucial to democratic governance and management (see, for example, Barnett, 1997; Giroux, 2009). The truncation of time is due to

- Reallocation and restructuring of physical spaces resulting from needing to address the increased scale of higher education. As a consequence of marketization and massification of education, staff common rooms have been reassigned as office or teaching space

- Performance measurement requires time to be spent on administrative tasks. Evidencing the effectiveness of programs has increased the amount of administrative tasks conducted by academics "*exacerbating trends to intensify and fragment academic work*" (Blackmore, 2009, p. 860). These tasks include student evaluations, completing materials required by accrediting and auditing systems, participating in audits and inspections, and participation in individual, school, faculty and institutional performance appraisals (Knight & Trowler, 2000, p. 110);
- Increasing pressures on proving excellence in research requires focused time on research rather than teaching. Maintaining an exemplary research record further contributes to the casualisation of teaching as teacher/research academics "buy-out" teaching hours to meet the expected standards of research output (Barnett, 1997, 2005; Deem & Lucas, 2007; Blackmore et al., 2010; Southwell et al., 2010; Bentley et al., 2013b) has resulted in the increasingly compartmentalised and casualised nature of academic work caused by the need to free up time to engage in these activities (Bentley et al., 2013b).; and
- Administrative strategies designed to increase student enrolments, such as the introduction of trimesters for teaching sessions (Knight & Trowler, 2000; Churchman, 2006; Blackmore, 2010).

All these impacts on academic work were evident in the ethnographic data, as illustrated in the following extract:

> *"in session three, we have had casuals doing* [curriculum management tasks] *mainly because with the introduction of the three teaching sessions that we have, there's no space to do any research. There's so much emphasis on research so if we were to have to do* [curriculum management tasks] *across all three sessions with* [limited full-time staff in this discipline]*, we'd never get a break to focus on our research". (*Major convener, Regional University, interview 2011)

The findings chapters indicate that these changes have impacted the processes associated with curriculum planning in two main ways: (1) to limit opportunities for curriculum discussions to take place; and (2) to change curriculum design processes into an increasingly administrative role. These effects are explored in further detail below

2.2.1. *Limited opportunities for curriculum discussions*

Ideally, curriculum planning processes should involve "*meaning-making and negotiation among different actors in different positions in the field of education*" (Karseth & Sivesind, 2010, p. 114). This statement assumes that curricula decision-making occurs as part of a collaborative exercise. This study, however, identified very few formal or informal opportunities where a collective decision could be made, on either a major level or on a whole-of-program basis. An investigation exploring how different disciplinary fields address the goal of curricular integration established that disciplines affiliated with professions-based programs were able to articulate a coherent, sequential progression of learning relatively easily (Lattuca & Stark, 1994). Disciplines in the social sciences, however, found the task more difficult. For example, the discipline specialist team responsible for considering the field of History expressed its vision of a coherent curriculum as follows:

> *"History is a discipline in which there is no standard content, no prescribed sequence of courses. The coherence of a history major depends upon the success that student and teachers, working together, achieve in developing clear organizing principles for their work"* (Lattuca & Stark, 1994, p. 410)

The underlying assumption in this statement is that the "organising principles" of this type would be developed in discipline meetings, or through informal contact; that discipline-based academics engage in backstage conversations where discipline-based curriculum decision-making takes place. "Backstage conversations" have been described as significant conversations which take place "*where we are private, or at least feel that we know who is watching, and we behave in a more unrestricted way than when we are 'front stage'*" (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2009, p. 555). While critical conversations related to curriculum design and the transfer of professional learning have been seen to occur in conversation with trusted experienced colleagues in informal spaces, in corridor conversations and collegial common rooms (Webster-Wright, 2009; Mårtensson et al., 2014), there is little evidence to support the assumption that they occur in the practice of curriculum planning in Arts programs. Opportunities for these types of conversations, if they did, in fact, exist, are lost in the busy-ness of modern higher education where there is limited time to engage in these informal curriculum discussions. The research reported in this thesis found few formal or informal opportunities where teachers could *'achieve clear organising principles for their work'* or development of a shared view of the program intentions and purpose. Informal places and spaces where curriculum-making may have occurred have since been lost and have not been replaced by formal mechanisms to encourage sharing and communication. Contemporary formal processes focus on quality assurance rather than transforming or maintaining the integrity of a curriculum design or providing opportunities for a shared understanding.

In the three case studies, decisions related to curriculum development at the level of major were conducted by individuals or small groups of individuals, apparently independently of those responsible for teaching in the units. It was only in the Regional University case study that all academics that represented all roles in curriculum construction and delivery were actively involved in curriculum planning. The nature of the institution, which had an ethos of partnership and collaboration, may have contributed to this level of involvement, but it was more likely that the smaller numbers of people involved was a factor, as the Arts team was smaller than teams at the other institutions. However, even in this small team, there was evidence of contradiction between the ways that the Arts program was described and interpreted (see p. 192 for details). Yet, all participants assumed that their conception of the Arts program at this institution was the commonly held definition.

2.2.2. Curriculum becoming an administrative task

Because of the increasingly administrative view and the separation of academics directly involved in program delivery from curriculum decision-making and planning, there is limited opportunity for academics from wide-ranging disciplines to discuss pedagogical choices, program rationale and curriculum integrity at a program level. Consequently, curriculum decisions in the Arts program default to "*program specialties or individual instructors. Faculty, who are organized into departments based on their field affiliations, may have little motivation to contribute time or resources*" (Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 191).

Work roles associated with curriculum planning process are also changing. Work that has traditionally been the preserve of the academic is increasingly being taken on by administrative staff. Academic staff specifically deployed to take charge of curriculum appeared to assume that other academic staff will not play any particularly significant role, but will fall in with the decisions of the program director or major convener. This assumption leads to a separation between the ordinary lecturer and the program coordinator or major convener cohort, creating a polarisation of curriculum responsibilities and additional workload implications.

The influence of administrative staff over curriculum was evident across the study. There were examples where academics were excluded from advising students on progression through the program (see p. 168). The influence of administrative staff was particularly evident in the two larger case studies where administrative staff were observed to act as translators and conduits of information between the different groups. Administrative staff appeared to have a better understanding of the program as a whole than the academics who taught in them and the academic leaders and program conveners who led them. For example, an academic leader in Modern University noted the administrators' power over the curriculum, citing an example of witnessing administrative staff actively dissuading students from taking a particular major. This experience led to the perception that the advice given by the student advisory administration team "*can kill a unit or a major*".

In particular, curriculum construction in the Arts appears as an increasingly administrative task. The sector-wide analysis indicated that contemporary program review committees are largely made up of academic leaders who are separated from the day-to-day educational concerns and experiences of implementing curriculum. Rather than a core academic activity, curriculum planning on the program level was described by informants in this study as a bureaucratic chore performed by academic leaders that enabled discipline-based experts to get on with the real work. Academic leaders, such as Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) Executive Deans and Pro and Deputy Vice-Chancellors, largely undertook the management of formal planning processes, such as program reviews.

Those who coordinate majors were largely divorced from curriculum planning at the whole-of-program level. The case studies revealed that, while major conveners could make submissions to the review panel, most submissions were developed by individuals in isolation rather than as part of curriculum teams. Major conveners were then informed by academic leaders and senior administrators such as Deputy Vice-Chancellors or Faculty Executive Deans of decisions already made, rather than be involved as active participants in the decision-making process. It was not clear in any of the case students what processes would be used to convey changes in order to inform teaching staff of decisions made regarding any program-level curriculum changes. The absence of critical conversations and communication of the outcomes of curriculum design activities with those responsible for ultimately implementing changes possible accounts for the different interpretations and understandings of the same program established in the findings chapters.

Interestingly, the adoption of a façade of compliance can also be construed as resistance to the neoliberal discourse. For example, by accepting limited reduction in major offerings and a more prescriptive structure, the fundamental feature of an Australian Arts program - exposure to a breadth of HASS disciplines – is maintained. This view would suggest that academics are not totally helpless at the mercy of economic forces. Instead, those responsible for planned curriculum are active participants with a degree of agency in resisting the changes imposed by answering to the pressures imposed by neoliberal policies.

The impact of contextual pressures on Australian Arts programs is not the result of a single event imposed by a single external or internal driver. Rather, these factors accumulate and combine to create a climate that influences curriculum planning. The sector-wide detailed analysis of the planned curricula and the discourse of the informants identified that the changing processes of construction are influenced by contemporary neoliberal context. Curriculum planning has shifted from being pedagogical decision-making and from the preserve of the academic towards being an operational, administrative task, largely in response to external pressures. The curriculum planning processes evident in Australian Arts programs are explored further in the next section.

The atomisation of the curriculum through modularisation; the casualisation of the teaching workforce that has emerged as a mechanism to respond to the pressures of the contemporary workload (Hammer & Star, 2004; Phipps, 2010; Thornton, 2010), and the scarcity of educational resources provides little in the way of motivation for academics to devote time and energy to curriculum coherence. Program changes as outlined on p. 155, therefore, are made to meet economic imperatives and are not prompted by deliberate curriculum planning. Instead, curriculum design is reactive, largely to accommodate these changes[71] rather than considered, purposeful development.

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[71] As outlined on p. 155.

3. HOW AUSTRALIAN ARTS CURRICULA ARE CONCEIVED AND CONCEPTUALISED

This study aimed to provide empirical evidence of contemporary understandings of Bachelor of Arts programs in Australia by mapping the planned curricula offered in 2007 and 2011 to explore ***how Bachelor of Arts curricula are constructed and conceptualised in contemporary Australia***.

The previous section highlighted a number of contextual changes, challenges and pressures associated with marketization, performativity and managerialism. These pressures resulted in substantial shifts in the ways Australian Arts programs are conceptualised and constructed. As a consequence of these contextual pressures, Arts programs were found to be increasingly conceptualised and constructed on a whole-of-program design. However, internal pressures result in tensions in curriculum planning, leading to conflicting views, a fragmented curriculum and difficulties in articulating the value of the Arts program to higher education. Each of these consequences is described in further detail below.

3.1. Whole-of-Program Curriculum Design

The findings reported in chapters 4 and 5 indicate that curriculum planning of Australian Arts programs in this period was shifting towards construction on a whole-of-program basis, rather than at the level of unit or discipline. This transformation is highly evident in the experimentation approach and the professional and focused models of Arts programs, but was also evident in the reduction approach to curriculum change. Both the experimentation and reduction approaches to curriculum changes showed evidence of planning decision-making on a program level, by program conveners, senior administrators, program committees or institutional level bodies. Decisions related to global content, sequencing and purpose were being made at the program level rather than at the level of unit and major as in the past. In the programs drawing on the specialist architecture, whole-of-program decision-making extended to pedagogy, learning resources and learning environments as well as the more global level of purpose, content and sequencing. Decision-making was therefore found to be occurring at the level of program rather than solely at the level of discipline as had been described elsewhere (Lattuca & Stark, 1994; Toohey, 1999; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). Examples of program-level changes included altering program purpose towards a more performative model encouraging student employability rather generalist education, a narrowing of the range of disciplines included within the Arts program and the imposition of an increasingly restrictive structure, communicated through a managerial program review process. These changes are described in detail on p. 153. Program level changes included logistic decision-making such as restricting the number of units offered and the year level at which they could be offered. Program level changes also include the introduction of breadth units, of core units, of learning activities that target the development of global experiences, of work place experiences, and of the development of workplace skills.

As a consequence, even in the general education Arts model, curriculum planning is no longer solely the preserve of the local academic, operating at the level of unit of study. The notion of “my” unit of study, as viewed from the perspective of the individual academic (or even “our” unit of study, from the perspective of a major) no longer seems to get much traction in programs that have “gateway”, “foundation” or “capstone” units of study. This shift in curriculum planning processes, away from that of the individual academic is explored further in the next section.

3.2. Curriculum Planning Processes

Tracing the curriculum planning processes evident in this study and the impact of contextual pressures on the processes generates a view of how Australian Arts programs are currently constructed. Curriculum planning refers to decision-making processes evident in both curriculum renewal or reform processes as well as to those processes used to construct a new program. Curriculum planning can be understood as

> *“decisions regarding the aims, outcomes, content and pedagogical relationships of a course or unit, about the relationships between theory and practice, between experiential and abstract learning, about epistemology and methodology, ethics as well as sequencing. Each discipline has a particular sense of curriculum content: about what needs to be taught in order to understand the nature of the paradigms and key concepts that inform any field in specific contexts…. selected on the basis of a curriculum rationale”* (Blackmore, 2013, p. 32)

Similar definitions are found in other literature (see, for example, Prideaux, 2003; Marsh, 2004; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). These definitions place curriculum decision-making at the centre of curriculum planning process.

The literature review identified guidelines and guidebooks to support the task of curriculum planning in higher education. These guidelines typically followed a Stenhouse-style cyclic model (see p. 58 for further information). Cyclic models build on existing program performance data and needs analyses and incorporate working from program level objectives and working back through the modules to place them in a hierarchically scaffolded sequence of study. This approach to curriculum design aims to ensure that students engage with skills and knowledges in an incremental manner. It is the approach adopted by a number of curriculum guidelines as an approach appropriate for higher education curriculum design (see, for example, Grundy, 1987; McBeath, 1997; Toohey, 1999; Prideaux, 2003; Hicks, 2007; Marsh & Willis, 2007) and is common to many professional program designs such as Engineering, Medicine, and Dentistry, where the program objectives are set externally and the programs are subject to accreditation review (Hussey & Smith, 2008; Gibbs & Dunbar-Goddet, 2009).

However, few guides that outlined a process to support curriculum planning in generalist programs such as the Arts program were found in the review of the literature. Where they did exist, processes were described as occurring at the level of discipline, rather than at the overall program level (Toohey, 1999; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Lattuca & Stark, 2009; Narayan & Edwards, 2011). Guidelines and schematics largely ignore curriculum design process for generalist programs, possibly because they are viewed as a highly individualised and complex curriculum ecology, too disparate to fit into a standardised set of guidelines (Reardon & Ramaley, 1997).

Lattuca and Stark (2009) offer a schematic that describes academic planning processes. The schematic emerges from their research that traced the curriculum planning paths followed by academics engaged in curriculum design. An overview of this schematic is offered in the literature review section of this thesis on pg. 66. The schematic places the curriculum planning paths within the socio-cultural context, tracking the forces and drivers that influence curriculum. However, this schematic was developed on the basis of detailed examination of the paths taken by curriculum designers in predominantly profession-based programs such as engineering. Similar to Lattuca and Stark's findings captured in their schematic, this research established that the processes of curriculum planning in Arts programs operate in a socio-cultural context. Also similar to the Lattuca and Stark findings, Arts curriculum planning operates in a series of decision-making paths. Each of these paths is a process of reflection, review and adjustment.

This research has established that while there were points of similarity with the Lattuca and Stark schematic evident in the planning paths adopted in Australian Arts programs, there were also significant points of difference. In particular, even though Arts programs were adopting a whole-of-program approach to curriculum planning, this research indicated a high level of autonomy in curriculum planning at the level of discipline. Disciplines were responsible for adjustments in response to the review and reflection of content, sequencing, purpose, learning resources and learning experiences at the level of the discipline, which were independent of program-level decisions. Further, the contextual drivers and forces identified at the program level did not directly influence curriculum planning at the level of discipline. Instead, these influences impacted program-level decision-making, with resulting decisions then imposed on disciplines through a program review process. Decisions to follow an experimental or a reduction approach to curriculum change were always made at the level of program and then imposed on the discipline environment.

As a result of the evidence generated in this study, the Lattuca and Stark schematic was revised to better map the curriculum planning paths evident in the contemporary Arts program. This revised schematic, offered in Figure 20, traces the curriculum planning processes of Australian Arts program evident in the horizontal and vertical analyses of sector-wide program curriculum and in the focused ethnographic analysis.

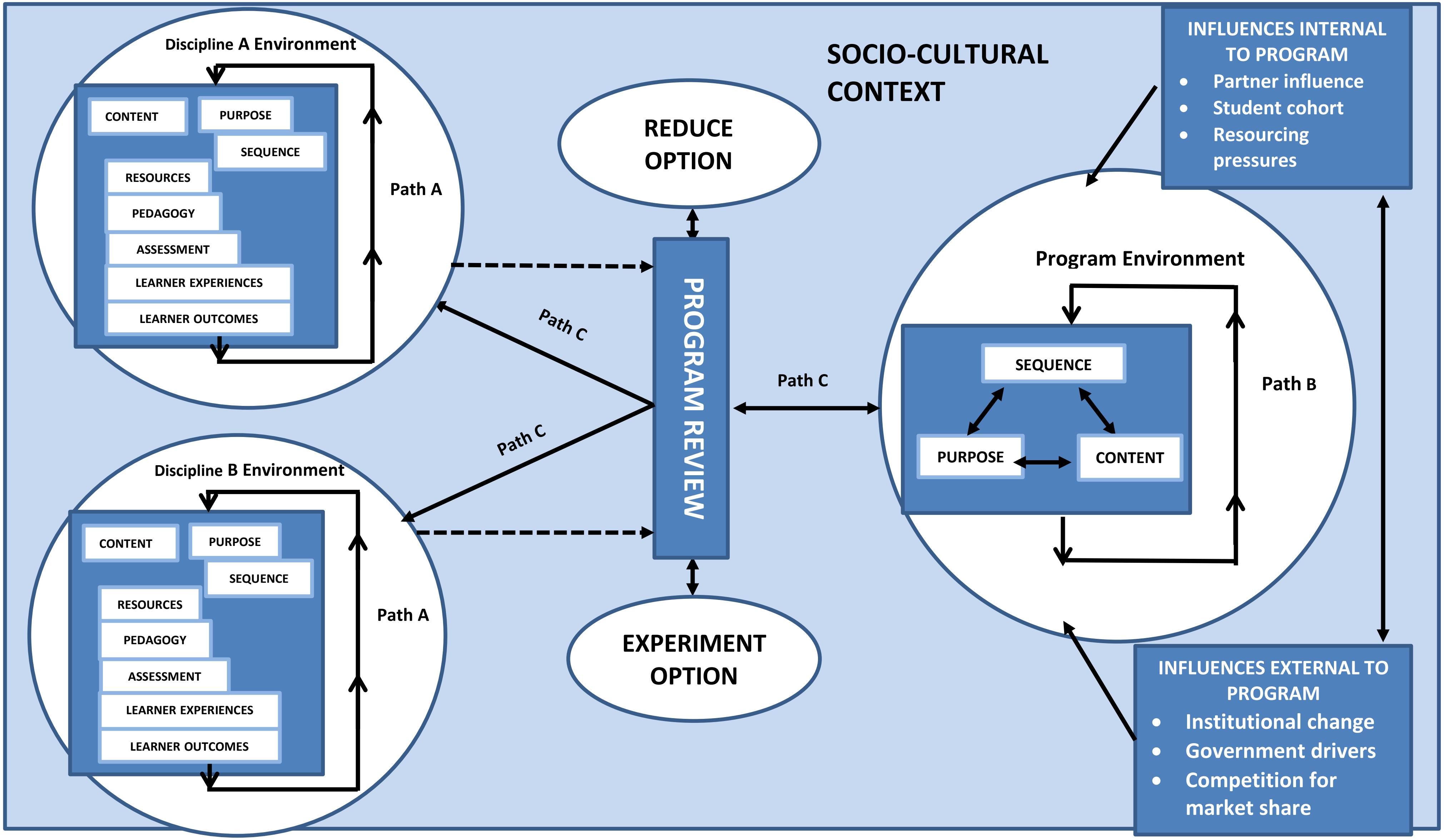
SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT
Discipline A Environment
CONTENT
PURPOSE
SEQUENCE
RESOURCES
PEDAGOGY
ASSESSMENT
LEARNER EXPERIENCES
LEARNER OUTCOMES
Path A
REDUCE OPTION
PROGRAM REVIEW
Path C
Path C
Path C
Discipline B Environment
CONTENT
PURPOSE
SEQUENCE
RESOURCES
PEDAGOGY
ASSESSMENT
LEARNER EXPERIENCES
LEARNER OUTCOMES
Path A
EXPERIMENT OPTION
INFLUENCES INTERNAL TO PROGRAM
Partner influence
Student cohort
Resourcing pressures
Program Environment
SEQUENCE
PURPOSE
CONTENT
Path B
INFLUENCES EXTERNAL TO PROGRAM
Institutional change
Government drivers
Competition for market share

Figure 20: Curriculum Planning Processes evident in Australian Arts programs

The level of autonomy of disciples over curriculum decision-making is illustrated by the Discipline A Environment and the Discipline B Environment. These environments could be replicated for as many discipline areas as included in the Arts program. **Path A** describes the decision-making and curriculum planning processes evident in each of these disciplines, describing the curriculum plan in majors, minors and units. Decisions made at this level are informally and sporadically communicated through to the program review process as illustrated by the dotted lines between the discipline environments and the review process. **Path A** decision-making paths operated independently of those in other discipline areas and the program-level environment, illustrated in Figure 20 as "Program Environment". Program-level curriculum planning processes are illustrated by **Path B**. The program environment has limited influence over other curriculum elements listed in the Discipline Environment. The student learning environment remains a primary point of focus for the Discipline Environment. **Path B** has input into decisions made on content and sequencing at a global level rather than at the level of what will be taught in each unit, module or class. For example, the global level directs which discipline areas, such as History or Creative Arts, will be included in the program. it also prescribes the generic structure of the majors, such as a 2-level structure or program-level core units. However, pedagogical, assessment and resourcing decisions are generally made at the disciplinary level within the boundaries set by the program-level decisions.

Unlike the Discipline Environments, program level decision-making is directly influenced by the forces and drivers that are both external and internal to the program. These forces and drivers were identified in the findings (see p. 166 for details). Conveners of majors interviewed in this study did not refer to these forces, other than to describe resourcing pressures which they perceived to be imposed by Central Administration rather by governmental drivers or market competition. Where discipline-level activities might feel the impact of some of the internal and external forces listed in Figure 20, they were only described by discipline-based academics as directly influencing curriculum planning processes as an outcome of the program review process. Influences were found to shape disciplines through program-level decisions imposed through the review process via **Path C** adjustments. Such decisions included adopting a reduction approach or an experimentation approach to curriculum change. These decisions then directed curriculum-planning in the discipline environment.

Changes to Arts curricula at program-level of program appear to be motivated by responding to external and internal pressures, rather than educational outcomes. Review processes for all models examined concentrated on student load and benchmarking, that is, market share at the level of program.

The disjunction between decision-making at the discipline-level and the program-level created a tension, largely due to a failure to communicate decisions made at each level. The limited communication of curriculum planning decisions accounts for the challenges with developing a shared understanding of the programs offered in each institution described on p. 181. It also accounts for the resistance evident at the discipline level described on p. 183 and the variation of interpretations of Arts programs between the different document sources and roles within curriculum planning reported throughout the findings chapters. These roles and documents reflected the different lenses and perspectives involved in the curriculum planning processes evident in Arts programs.

3.3. Tensions Shaping Arts Curriculum

The whole-of-program view described above was at odds with the view of the curriculum of Arts program as providing a scaffolding framework through which students could engage with a variety of disciplines. It was also at odds with the relative autonomy still evident in the curriculum planning processes in the disciplines. These alternate viewpoints results in an absence of a shared understanding of what constitutes Arts programs at each institution. The proliferation of interpretations regarding the ways the same programs were described by different people and different documents indicated an absence of a shared understanding of holistic, whole-of-program curriculum planning.

3.3.1. Balancing whole-of-program curriculum design with discipline-centred curriculum design

There is a tension between balancing a whole-of-program approach with the perception that the discipline is the focus of academic attention. The traditional emphasis on curriculum constructed at the level of unit or discipline is at odds with the models of Arts programs increasingly planned on a whole-of-program basis. For the most part, academics interviewed in this study indicated a strong focus on their discipline. This absence is in part attributable to the legacy of academic focus at the level of the disciplines and the major sequences of study evident in everyday academic practice. This is not uncommon and is in keeping with findings from other studies which observed that few academics operated in a programmatically focused manner (see, for example, Barnett & Coate, 2005; Trowler et al., 2012; Mårtensson et al., 2014). For example, the decision at Sandstone University to adopt a 3-level program structure put program-level considerations in conflict with discipline-based academics. Prior to the introduction of a foundation-cornerstone-capstone structure as part of a reduction strategy, discipline-based academics were used to having more or less complete autonomy when it came to defining the major and its constituent programs. There was evidence of adherence to the notion of a “traditional” breadth and depth and flexibility of structure Arts program features in publicity materials and in the personal perceptions offered by major conveners. This notion, however, was not supported by the official documentation that outlined changes that narrowed disciplinary fields offered and increasingly prescribed an inflexible program structure with limited scope for students to exercise choice. The disjunction between a whole-of-program approach and a discipline-focused approach to construction illustrates the lack of a shared understanding across the whole program. A shared understanding could be taken to mean a shared vision, where all subscribed to a common vision. It could also be taken to mean a common awareness of what currently constituted an Arts program at a particular institutions, regardless of whether one subscribed to the vision or not.

However, this study also established that the majority of Arts programs offered in Australia do not currently have an overview of a conceptualisation of the purpose of the program as a whole. Unlike the US context, where organisations have made public statements of intent and purpose for liberal learning (Board of Directors of the Association of American Colleges & Universities, 1998), liberal arts education (Blaich et al., 2005) and general education (Latzer, 2004), there is no such statement of the intention of Australian Arts programs. Unlike profession-based programs, Arts programs do not have industry-based or professional associations that can encourage the development of such definitions, or impose accreditation rules and requirements. The closest Australian Arts programs have to such organisations are the Academies of Social Sciences and Humanities. However, these organisations and organisations such as CHASS and DASSH, represent the constituent disciplines and organisations, providing opportunities to lobby for those involved in all HASS disciplines, rather than those working specifically on BA programs. Activities such as the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LATS) project (Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 2011) and the "*Nature and Roles of Arts programs*" conducted under the auspices of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council had the potential to develop such statements. However, the LATS project defined and described threshold learning outcomes in selected specific discipline areas rather than on holistic basis and the *Nature and Roles of Arts programs* project focused on mapping the diverse Bachelor of Arts programs on offer in Australia between 2001 – 2008 (Trent & Gannaway, 2008). This discipline focus can, in part, be attributed to the commonly held perception that of BA programs as an open scaffold through which students engage with disparate disciplines as it has been in the past. However, as this research has shown, this status quo is no longer the case.

3.3.2. Conflicting understandings of curriculum

This study found clear evidence that key stakeholders in the same program held quite different views of the purposes of the Arts curriculum. While it might be expected that a senior institutional leader would have views and expectations that differ from those with everyday responsibilities for the delivery and maintenance of the program, the views expressed by research participants did not map to the espoused curriculum evident in the formal curriculum documentation and publicity materials. Despite the variation in descriptions of Arts programs illustrated in Chapter 4 (p.137), there was evidence that those describing an Arts program assumed that their current interpretation was the commonly held interpretation. The absence of a common understanding of what constituted an Arts degree at the institution, therefore, accounts for the multiple interpretations and ways that programs were conceptualised by those involved in the program.

The focused ethnography component of this study revealed that different individuals with different roles and responsibilities for curriculum design viewed the Arts program at their institution as adhering to one or more of these models. Interestingly, there was not a consistent view of the model in use across the different roles. The same program within a single institution was described by different people as different models, as explored on p. 179. On the one hand, the perception of the program as filling different roles is not a problem. As described earlier, program rules enabled students to experience all four of these models within one program, depending on the majors and study plans selected. There is a problem however, when informants failed to appreciate that alternate models existed and described their view of the program as if it were the commonly held, and only, view of the program as offered at their university.

It is important to note that the development of a shared understanding does not automatically equate to consensus and uniform buy-in and acceptance of changes to curriculum. It is still possible, once a shared understanding has been developed, for individuals to have a principled disagreement to a curriculum change and to actively resist these changes (Gaff & Ratcliff, 1997; Knight, 2001; Schwartz, 2006).

The challenges of developing a consensus of understanding of Arts programs are illustrated in the following interview extract:

> *I think you will have those who will stress the skills based training and almost the vocational element pretty strongly; those also with a lot of nonsense, "it should be about sort of education broadening minds, developing critics" and so forth. I've got to say I see it as all those sorts of, you know. I can see all those things, but, I'm not sure how you'd define the purpose of the degree. It's a degree that can fulfil many purposes, I guess, for different students. Perhaps one of its features is that it is multipurpose. It's not just about training people for a profession... It's about educating a bit more broadly, I think, providing useful skills, developing discipline base for people, but I'm not sure where one would get consensus on that, to be honest*[72]

The multi-purpose view expressed in this extract was not universal. Most interviewees tended to view the program as serving either a narrow function and focused on either vocational or specialist views, or they described it as serving a broadening education function. The achievement of multiple purposes is not the issue here. It is entirely plausible that an institution might offer Arts programs that achieve multiple purposes. The issue is the absence of common understanding amongst the documentation communicating the purpose to students and the public and amongst academics and administrative staff.

The impact of the absence of a shared understanding is wider than that of institutional decision-making within a single institution. Recent studies have called for reform. They indicate a systemic absence of reliable data to judge the capacity of Arts programs to support and respond to national strategic ambitions to develop a knowledge-based economy (see, for example, Pascoe et al., 2003; Gannaway & Trent, 2008d; Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013; Turner & Brass, 2014). These investigations were hampered by the absence of a clear definition of what constitutes an Australian BA degree. The challenges in identifying what constitutes an Arts program are outlined on p. 51 and the process required to extract data related to Arts programs from the higher education data sets are outlined in Appendix 1.1 (p. 262)

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[72] Academic leader, Sandstone University, 2011

3.4. Consequences

Tracing how Australian Arts programs are conceptualised and constructed illustrates the limited opportunities for academics from different disciplines to discuss program rationale and purposes, curriculum integrity and pedagogical choices at a program level. While collective discussion might happen in Boards of Studies, Teaching and Learning Committees, and management committee's engagements with major conveners, these discussions inevitably included a limited, targeted group of individuals. There appears to be limited opportunity for the broader teaching community to engage with the decisions made in these discussions.

The absence of a shared common understanding of the program's purpose and value ultimately results in a fragmented curriculum. The diversity in interpretations evident within the same institution, the multiplicity of programs available, the difficulties in articulating the value and purpose of the Arts program all suggest an uncertainty about what is, and what should be done with, the Australian Arts. These tensions render the program unstable and susceptible to shifting forces and drivers and result in further fragmentation of the curriculum. The tensions and the conflicting views of the curriculum make it difficult to articulate the value of the contribution of Arts programs if proponents are talking at cross-purposes and from different viewpoints. These consequences are considered in further detail below.

3.4.1. A Fragmented Curriculum

Australian Arts programs explored in this study exhibited many of the features typical of a fragmented curriculum. A fragmented curriculum is described as a curriculum where knowledge is compartmentalised into discrete, exclusive learning experiences (Fogarty &

Pete, 2009), is highly modularised and atomistic (Ratcliff, Johnson & Gaff, 2004) and offers limited opportunities to transfer learning from one atomistic experience to the next (Priestley & Biesta, 2013), or to integrate different disciplines to form an interdisciplinary perspective (Ratcliff, 1997a). A fragmented curriculum is largely an abrupt transition from one idea to the next with few opportunities to formally integrate and assimilate new knowledge into existing frameworks (Wraga, 2009).

The sector-wide analysis of curriculum elements identified an absence of formal opportunities for Australian Arts students to develop coherence across the diverse disciplines involved. Instead, students are left to create coherence independently, integrating their learning across a program themselves. In some Arts programs, modules are construed both as units of study and also as segments within those units. Units of study serve multiple purposes; as electives, units contributing to a major and contributing to other programs. These modules are taught by many academics who use different pedagogies and texts, who are not necessarily part of a teaching or curriculum team and, as a consequence, default to disciplinary and specialist foci (Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 191). The atomistic focus on units and modules results in an approach to curriculum that organises content (Keesing-Styles, Nash & Ayres, 2013, p. 497), rather than that which organises learning. Curriculum design is "*understood as tasks of filling of various kinds (filling spaces, time and modules, not to mention minds) rather than the imaginative design of spaces"* (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 3). This approach was highly evident in the pathway and general education conceptions of Arts programs (described on p. 145).

While various theorists have pointed out it is the act of creating coherence between disparate disciplines is, in itself, "good learning" (Knight, 2001; J. Stevenson & Yashin-Shaw, 2004; Huber & Hutchings, 2005; Englehart & Weber, 2011), and that this type of curriculum works for some students, it leaves other students "*like flotsam in swirling waters"* (see, for example, Knight, 2001, p. 371).

There was evidence of recognition of this need to design curricula that would support students to integrate their learning in order to develop a coherent view of their learning. Between 2007 and 2011, Arts programs show evidence of unsuccessful attempts to address the curriculum fragmentation. These attempts include adopting a highly structured, aligned curriculum. Described by Knight as rational curriculum planning, this type of aligned curriculum typically includes the following features

> *"a systemic approach that begins with specifying goals, and proceeds to objectives, thence to curriculum, instruction, assessment of learning, evaluation and such revisions as are needed to make the system work better next time"*(Knight, 2001, p. 372).

However, reliance on alignment may not be appropriate for a generalist program (Johnson & Ratcliff, 2004, p. 88), particularly where curriculum coherence is

> *"an evolving social construct, not a linear framework into which all rational action and thinking must fit. In the search for a coherent curriculum, we must be wary of mechanistic attempts to impose constancy in the name of 'cumulative learning experiences' and maximising educational impact'. The goal of coherency can be defeated by slavish adoption of constancy across curricula"* (Ratcliff, 1997a, p. 147).

Arts programs that have been "*slavishly consistent*", (those programs that have reduced and tightened completion requirements, established and refined core units and sequences, and integrated units across a narrow field of disciplines) have not been found to be sustainable. Experimental programs such as the programs specifically constructed as Professional Arts programs closed relatively soon after release, as illustrated in Table 46. Closure examination of student enrolment numbers in these programs indicates that they failed to attract students over the long term. Each of these experimental programs revealed a decline in student enrolment numbers over the period, resulting in the eventual demise of programs.

A common core curriculum has been found to offer solutions to a fragmented curriculum in K-12 education (Pinar, 2003), but has been found to be less successful in higher education. The US experience shows that the common core program in a general education program[73] can be unwieldy (Ratcliff et al., 2004) with too many options, vague aims and goals and piecemeal curriculum revision (Johnson & Ratcliff, 2004; Latzer, 2004). The Australian Arts programs that have adopted this model, particularly the work-ready BA models, have found that they are less likely to attract and retain students, possibly because these programs are constrained by an overly prescriptive structure. These programs have offered a pre-loaded study plan that limited the scope for study outside of a prescribed sequence of units and majors, offering program level capstone activities and included required interdisciplinary units. The range of disciplines offered were limited and moved towards a curriculum that more explicitly developed workplace skills. These programs were also more likely to have clearly articulated program aims, objectives and graduate attributes, core units across the program across all year levels. They appear to have captured initial interest in the market place with numbers that spiked in early student enrolments, but then declined over time. Monitoring program uptake over the period indicated that the narrow programs tend not to maintain student numbers in the longer term, with most closing by 2014 as explored earlier in this chapter.

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[73] While not strictly an Arts program as has been defined in this thesis, the US general education model shares a number of similarities with the Australian Arts program in the exposure to multiple disciplines, combining breadth and depth of study, generalist and specialist knowledges, generally presented in a modular form.

Some program coordinators interviewed described adopting interdisciplinary majors as possible mechanism to support students make connections across disciplines they studied as separate units of study. However, closer examination of such majors indicated that rather than cohesive majors, many of them were simply units grouped together under a theme. Rather than explicitly developed majors drawing on pedagogies that encourage integration and connections between the disciplines, they were merely convenient groupings of thematically but otherwise unrelated units. Interdisciplinary majors were therefore sequences in name only, and rather units loosely connected by similar themes. Further, examples of such majors evident in the three case studies were attempts to ensure the continued survival of areas of academic interest, rather than attempts to develop truly interdisciplinary studies.

Similarly, this study found that developing new interdisciplinary majors, in essence, generate a new set of “disciplines” and are subject to the same pressures as existing disciplines, adding to the tribes fighting for survival. Finally, sector-wide analysis of the content of the planned curriculum indicated that the interdisciplinary majors have a limited appeal. As explored in Chapter 4 (on p. 134), the interdisciplinary subjects of the 1970s and 1980s such as gender studies, development studies and European studies have largely disappeared from most institutions’ official documentation by 2011. Attempts to manufacture and develop cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary sequences of study such as European Studies or World Literature did not appear to meet with much success in terms of sustained student enrolments.

Interestingly, one of the effects of marketization is increased competition between the disciplines. As explored earlier, the primary allegiance for academic staff has been ascribed as *“to their subject or profession”* (Healey, 2000, p. 173). This allegiance was evident in this study where informants tended to foreground their discipline affiliation, particularly in the larger, more generalist programs offered by both Sandstone and Modern University. Disciplines are generally represented by organisational structures such as schools or departments. These structures have been described as "*insular, defensive, self-governing, [and] compelled to protect their interests because the faculty positions as well as the courses that justify funding those positions are located therein*" (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p. 19). In the competitive user-pays market featured in a neoliberal context, disciplines are virtually set up in competition with each other; their continued survival measured in EFTSL[74]. Disciplines compete against each other to attract student enrolments to ensure their survival. These developments result in a proliferation of units on the basis of a false business model – a belief that more units of study means more EFTSL. In such an environment, instead of being an organisation of integrated coherent learning, the curriculum becomes the arena for a fight for survival. This internal competition results in further fragmentation of the curriculum as disciplines *“remain highly classified, separated from each other, so denying students the powers both to develop multiple perspectives and the powers of self-critique that such multiple perspectives could offer”* (Barnett, 2000b, p. 263). The impact of marketization on curriculum, therefore, controverts the move towards a whole-of-program approach to curriculum design described above, generating tensions between the constituent disciplines in Arts programs and the overarching program structure.

3.4.2. Challenges in Articulating Program Value

A consequence of the challenges described thus far in this chapter is that there is difficulty in articulating the value and contribution of Arts programs in a contemporary context. As outlined earlier in this chapter, performativity of Arts programs is questioned in the contemporary context. This questioning is exacerbated by the constant shifting landscape creating a sense of instability, indications of a fragmented curriculum and absence of shared understanding of what constitutes an Australian Arts program. These challenges conspire to make it difficult to make the case for the BA.

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[74] Equivalent full time student load.

Difficulties in articulating the value and contribution of the BA to higher education have been noted in previous studies (see, for example, Bassnett, 2002; Belfiore & Bennett, 2007; Gannaway & Trent, 2008a; Gannaway, 2010b). They reported critiques of the program that described the BA as “aimless” or “directionless” (Kuttainen et al., 2010). Informants described their struggle to justify retaining institutional funding for these programs or expansion of BA programs that were increasingly viewed as marginal and reported being called on to “defend” the program.

If the curriculum appears to be a collection of units with no common purpose, it is difficult to articulate when an Arts program ceases to be a program in its own right. For example, the influence of the discipline of Education has over the shaping of the Arts program, both as a double degree and as a sequential program as outlined in Table 45 (p. 175). The absence of a clear, coherent outline of the Arts curriculum results in Arts programs filling the needs of the Education program rather than meeting the aims and learning outcomes of an Arts curriculum. As a consequence, in some institutions, the BA is not seen as a program in its own right. Rather it is viewed as a supplementary component, an optional add-on to another program. This view of the BA appears to be an emerging model in changes noted in programs post-2011. Arts programs are increasingly becoming an optional add-on, “expansion packs” for professions-based programs. In this light, it makes it difficult to account for Arts programs as independent programs in their own right, and difficult to justify continued existence.

A consequence of the absence of a commonly held definition of Arts programs within institutions is to generate a view that engagement in HASS-based programs is wider or smaller than reality, generating misconceptions and confusion. This confusion can influence decision-making. This confusion is illustrated by the experience of an external program review process conducted at one of the case study sites. Data presented to the external review panel was related to enrolments in the BA only. These data presented a view of large teaching teams for what appeared to be small class sizes. The apparent level of engagement suggested that the program was not economically viable suggesting to the external review panel that program closure was a solution. Closer examination revealed, however, that numbers of students enrolling in Arts programs at this institution had increased between 2007 and 2011. Enrolments were divided across the 9 “tagged” programs and dual degrees, but were excluded from the reported data because these students were not defined as Arts students in institutional documentation. The tagged programs had been extracted from the original BA. The tagged programs essentially replicated common Arts pathways, sharing units and majors with BA students. These cognate programs accounted for substantial enrolments in Arts programs across the institution. When students enrolled in the cognate programs were taken into account, enrolments patterns more accurately reflected the reality. Because these tagged programs were not understood to be models of Arts programs, even though they offered the same majors as the general education model of the BA program, they competed with the BA. By broadening the definition of the BA at this institution, it was possible to take a different view of the success rate of the BA.

A further consequence of the challenges in articulating the value of Arts programs and their capacity to provide points of access to constituent disciplines is that, in the current user-pays, demand-driven higher education context, there is a real danger of losing key knowledge bases in favour of application-based disciplines. This danger was highlighted in the *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia* report:

> *… where the demand from the student market may not be high, but the subjects are nonetheless of national, strategic, or academic importance (for example, they may generate expertise in specific areas, or serve as enabling disciplines for further research development). As things stand currently, the responsibility for what is effectively an issue of national capacity is largely left to individual universities or groups of universities to address, when what is required is a more systemic approach that can address areas where the market is not delivering what the nation needs…. the specific institutional logics which drive rationalisation are not always going to be in the national interest, nor indeed in the interest of particular disciplines or fields of education. The Health of Australian Science (2012) report, as well as the DASSH report, has raised concerns about the importance of what have been called enabling disciplines—in STEM, the situation of mathematics is one example, and within HASS we could nominate, for example, History. Allowing the presence of such fields to decline to the point where it affects the national capacity is clearly not desirable. However, the demand-driven system does not encourage individual institutions to take responsibility for what is in the end a national capability* (Turner & Brass, 2014, pp. 16, 31)

This research confirms the challenges identified in earlier studies that the absence of a clear definition makes it difficult to identify the data specific to the BA and to generate a defensible stance supporting the BA. This study highlights that it is not simply the absence of a common definition, but also the absence of a shared understanding of its value in higher education that contributes to weak defence of the Arts program. Instead of a commonly held understanding that reflects current practices, personal indexicalities are evident and then discussed as if they were shared truths and commonly held constructs. These limitations make it difficult to articulate the value and contribution of Arts programs to the contemporary context. If a shared understanding of what constitutes an Arts program does not exist, it is difficult to argue and justify curriculum decisions. This disconnect is exacerbated in the contemporary context where there is increasing institutional and sector pressure for clarity on planning on a whole-of-program basis. The end result is a program that is marketed and measured on a program level, has key decisions made on a program level but which still is still conceptualised as operating at the level of the unit/discipline rather than as a whole deliberately planned program curriculum. These tensions are the result of a transformation of the processes of curriculum planning in Australian Arts programs that occurred in response to pressures imposed by the increasingly neoliberal higher education context. This transformation is explored in the next chapter.

4. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter has discussed the findings regarding the different ways that Australian Arts programs are conceptualised in the light of academic discourse and other research. It has traced instances of diversity evident across the sector as well as points of distinction with Arts programs offered elsewhere. It has explored the distinctive ways in which Australian Arts program curricula are planned, highlighting that contemporary curricula are adopting a whole-of-program view in response to the pressures generated by the contemporary neoliberal context of higher education in Australia. It outlines the impact of these pressures on the Arts program that give rise to a state of uncertainty about the Arts and challenges in articulating the value of Arts programs to the higher education sector.

A schematic was developed to capture the processes evident in curriculum planning in Australian Arts programs. The schematic captures the tensions evident in the shifting descriptions reported in the findings chapters and argues that they result from balancing a discipline-focused approach to curriculum design with a whole-of-program approach. The schematic visually demonstrates the separation of the discipline-based academics from program-level decision-making. The chapter concludes with the consequences of a fractured understanding of what constitutes an Arts program and highlights the dangers facing Arts programs in the absence of a common definition.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes the thesis by providing an overview of the key findings that provide an insight into how contemporary Australian Arts programs are conceived and constructed. It outlines the contribution of this research to understandings of the Australian Arts landscape; the impact of the context on the curriculum planning processes used by these programs; and to research approaches that can be used to understand complex higher education curriculum construction processes. Implications of the study for practice and research are then discussed and the limitations of the study considered.

1. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

The impetus for this study emerged from gaps identified by earlier studies investigating the nature of Australian Arts programs, specifically *"The Lettered Country*"(Pascoe et al., 2003) and *"The Nature and Role of BA in Contemporary Australia"* (Trent & Gannaway, 2008). These studies had noted a paucity in the data used to inform decision-making related to Arts curricula; an absence of a robust definition of what constituted an Arts program in Australia; and challenges in articulating the value and contribution of Arts programs to contemporary higher education needs. These issues have been confirmed as gaps needing to be addressed in subsequent studies, namely *"Benchmarking Australian BA programs"*(Gannaway & Sheppard, 2013) and *"Mapping the Humanities and Social Sciences in Australia"*(Turner & Brass, 2014)

This study aimed to address these gaps by providing empirical evidence of contemporary understandings of Bachelor of Arts programs in Australia. By mapping the planned curricula offered in 2007 and 2011, this thesis aimed to "slice beneath the appearances" and the taken-for-granted assumptions of the planned curriculum of the BA to explore ***how Bachelor of Arts curricula are constructed and conceptualised in contemporary Australia***.

The data collection and analysis were guided by the following subsidiary questions:

1. How are contemporary Australian Arts curricula described?
2. How are contemporary Australian Arts programs curricula interpreted?
3. How are contemporary Australian Arts programs constructed and conceptualised in practice?
4. What do the changes in Australian Arts programs that occurred between 2007 and in 2011 indicate about how they are conceptualised and constructed?
5. Is there an explanation for how Australian Arts program curricula are constructed and conceptualised?

This research mapped the curricula of BA programs (or equivalent) offered at all 39 Australian universities in 2007 and in 2011. Elaborated descriptive data were generated for one program at each Australian institution. Documentary data included publically available curriculum documentation such as program handbooks and marketing materials and secondary data sourced from national government agencies. All data were consolidated into a "program profile" for each university. The program profiles were supplemented by and triangulated with personal accounts from interviews with program coordinators conducted in 2007 and from a focused ethnographic study conducted at 3 sites in 2011.

This study focused on the planned curriculum in generalist Arts programs and has not attended to the enacted and experienced curriculum (Knight, 2001; Prideaux, 2003; van den Akker, 2003; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). Planned curricula were deconstructed using an analytical framework and techniques associated with grounded theory. Curricula were compared horizontally across institutions and across time and analysed vertically within institutions. Possible explanations for trends and patterns identified in the stages were then identified. Finally, implications and interpretations of these explanations were considered in light of the context in which Australian Arts programs operate.

1.1. Conceptions of Australian Arts Programs

This study established that BA programs described in publicity documentation, official documents and by those interviewed have a range of common features**.** However, this study established that while there were some expected commonly held views of what constitutes an Arts program, there was also diversity in how the common features were interpreted across the sector, in the ways programs are conceptualised and described within a single institution and in the ways that those responsible for curriculum design in a single institution describe Arts programs.

Two design architectures were identified; namely, the generalist and specialist design architectures which gave rise to four different models of Arts programs in operation during the time under investigation:

- a broad-based, multi-disciplinary with a flexible structure – the **General education model**
- a generic framework through which students could transition to other programs – **the Pathway model**
- providing vocational training in a particular professional field – **the Professional model**
- providing opportunity to develop mastery in focused discipline area – **the Focused model**

Initial investigations suggested that there was a trend towards Arts programs adopting professional and focused models in preference to the general education or pathway models. However, closer investigation revealed that conceptions of Australian Arts programs were more interchangeable than possibly anticipated, with evidence of rapid changes in program designs over time. No clear evolutionary direction for Arts programs was identified.

The use of the conceptual framework focused the investigation on the purposes, content and sequencing evident in the planned curriculum and made it possible to trace the changes in the ways Arts programs were constructed over the period under investigation. Programs in 2007 tended towards a focused or professional program that prepared students for careers in the global economy, creative industries or social enterprises. By 2011, there was further evidence of an emergence of a BA aimed at preparing graduates to be 'work-ready'. In addition, the Arts program was also described as an 'add-on' to professions-based programs through double degrees and concurrent diplomas.

There is evidence that these changes to the purpose of Arts programs has continued since 2011, with evidence of a further recent shift towards broadening the BA again. This broadening is in contrast to the changes to content between 2007 and 2011 which saw a narrowing of the numbers of majors and discipline areas available for study as the programs increasingly focused on discipline areas in the humanities, rather than social sciences or areas outside of HASS. In particular, programs with the title of BA reduced offerings in the Creative Arts which were sequestered into tagged degree programs. Most programs exposed students in their first year of study to multiple disciplines allowing students to ‘test’ discipline areas prior to committing to particular disciplines as a major sequence. Increasingly, programs required students to engage with multiple disciplines across their degree; in the form of rules requiring students to engage with more than one sequence of study and completion of interdisciplinary core units of study and/or “breadth” units; i.e. units outside of traditional HASS discipline areas. These changes in content and purpose were supported by program rules that imposed changes in sequencing or structure of the program. Arts programs demonstrated increased levels of prescription, with the 2-level sequencing model prevalent in 2007 being replaced by a 3-level sequencing with majors taking variations of a foundation, cornerstone and capstone incremental scaffolding of learning.

1.2. Construction of Australian Arts programs

The changes reported in detail in the findings chapters (Chapters 4 and 5) indicate a shift in the construction of Australian Arts programs away from curriculum design at the level of discipline or unit of study towards construction on a whole-of-program basis. This transformation is highly evident in the experimentation approach and in the professional and focused models of Arts programs, but was also evident in the reduction approach to curriculum change. Rather than the individual academic, as discipline expert, having autonomy over the design of learning experiences at the unit of study level, curriculum planning in Australian Arts programs has increasing become a domain of responsibility for professional staff and senior executive staff.

Different pathways of decision-making identified were traced in a schematic drawing on the Lattuca and Stark (2009) model of academic planning (see Figure 5 on p. 66). The revised schematic, available on p. 208, traces the decision paths associated with curriculum planning in Arts programs. It highlights the possible points of tension and conflicting points of view between the whole-of-program level and discipline level planning. The schematic also identifies the points of influence that shape the curriculum at a whole-of-program basis.

2. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ONGOING DISCUSSION OF CURRICULUM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This thesis contributes to curriculum practices in higher education by providing a sector-wide view of the contemporary Arts curriculum landscape. It addresses the need for empirical evidence by providing definitions to support the development of a verifiable evidence-base to inform future decision-making. It also offers models that can be used as heuristics to facilitate informed planning of Arts curricula.

The study contributes to higher education curriculum theory by generating an understanding of the impact of the neoliberal climate on curriculum planning in Australian Arts programs, tracing the decision-making paths in curriculum planning in generalist programs. Finally, it offers a research methodology that combines comparative historical analysis with focused ethnography as a useful approach to researching higher education curriculum.

2.1. Addressing the Need for Data

Recent studies indicated a systemic absence of reliable data to judge the capacity of Arts programs to support and respond to national strategic ambitions to develop a knowledge-based economy (see, for example, Pascoe et al., 2003; Gannaway & Trent, 2008d; Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013; Turner & Brass, 2014). The literature review detailed national and international reports that highlighted the need for investigation into HASS disciplines, yet few have considered the importance of curriculum planning in generalist degrees, such as the BA. The BA is still the means by which most students engage with HASS disciplines. This pervasiveness makes the BA a prime mechanism for scholars of HASS disciplines to interact with the world; to communicate the value and contribution of HASS to broader society and economy. Investigations are hampered by the absence of a clear definition of what constitutes an Australian BA degree. Instead, personal indexicalities are evident and discussed as if they were shared truths and uniform concepts. These limitations make it difficult to articulate the value and contribution of Arts programs to the contemporary context. As a result, Arts programs are increasingly seen by students and academics to be beleaguered by populist press and unfavourable anecdotes, marginalised in an unsympathetic environment (see, for example, Begley, 2007). By thoroughly mapping curriculum in contemporary Australian Arts programs, this study addresses this absence by providing empirical evidence of how the programs are current constructed and conceptualised,

This study confirmed a systemic absence of reliable data. This absence was due to the reporting system used by national agencies that conflated student participation and outcomes data in Field of Education codes which do not accurately reflect program-level data. These data were not reported on a program level, resulting in further potential inaccuracies in the form of flawed data related to enrolment trends to be presented. Using the cleaned and validated data, the curriculum of Arts programs were found to be subjected to influence from other programs, such as Education programs, dual degrees and tagged or named programs that had been extracted from the original BA programs.

By identifying the continued transformation of how Australian Arts programs have been conceived and constructed, the study has provided definitions and models of contemporary Arts programs that can be drawn on to enable future investigations and future decision-making. It has also tested a robust data delimitation and data reduction process that can be used to extract relevant data from national data collections to inform further sector-wide investigations as well as those at an institutional level.

The development of a more robust database and data definitions through the empirical study has enabled this study to provide evidence that confirmed the ‘gut feelings’, the impressions and perceptions, described by some informants in this and in previous studies. Research informants described challenges in articulating the contribution that BA programs make to the preparation of a workforce suited for a knowledge economy. They described a view that Arts graduates were often seen to be dilettantes unlikely to be engaged in meaningful, purposeful study employed in high paying positions. This perception was attributed to an undervaluing of HASS disciplines in the current neoliberal discourse shaping contemporary higher education. As a result of these challenges, enrolments in the BA are perceived to be under threat due to declining student enrolments and attrition rates deemed to be unacceptable. Informants indicated perceptions that declining numbers of students enrolled in BA might be attributed to the growth of “tagged” programs which split student enrolments across a number of programs. Tagged programs had been devised with the intention of attracting new students and increased student enrolments. This study provided evidence that instead, they merely attracted students from the BA where they were provided with remarkably similar sequences of studies. A broader definition of Arts programs was developed to include the tagged or named programs generally conceptualised as programs completely separate to Arts programs. The cleaned data and the refined definition that encapsulated both the BA and other related Arts programs revealed the numbers of student enrolling in Arts programs has remained relatively stable. In fact, proportionately, enrolments in Arts programs have remained relative stable since the 1960s. Consequently, it was evident that BA program enrolments “bleed” into tagged programs, suggesting that competition for market share is more likely to be internal than inter-institutional.

In a similar manner, other commonly held mythologies have been disproved. For example, perceptions that Arts programs are moving towards a professional model have been found to be inaccurate. This study has identified that Arts programs are, in fact, becoming more broad-based. Another commonly held belief - that the BA was a highly flexible program that students could exercise a high degree of choice - has also been dispelled. The evidence shows Arts programs are becoming increasingly more prescriptive, limiting students’ capacity to tailor their own pathway through the program.

A significant contribution of this thesis has been the framework developed to define components of the contemporary Arts program, available as Appendix 4, p. 288. This framework can now be used by those responsible for curriculum planning as a heuristic to categorise and map the existing curriculum of programs offered at individual Australian universities. Defining the models of Arts programs offered at each institution can support the systematic review, evaluation and critique of programs. This framework can also be used as a tool to frame discussions at local level assist. Discussions of this nature can be used to develop a shared view of Arts curriculum to establish what constitutes an Arts program at a particular institution. To facilitate such an activity on a program-level, the starting point for discussion should be to categorise and analyse the curriculum as it is currently manifested. The model facilitates the development of a common language and structure to frame curriculum discussion at planning days and retreats. It can be used as a benchmarking tool to categorise and analyse other programs within the same institution and offered by competitors.

2.2. Impact of Context on Arts Curricula

The thesis has generated an understanding of the impact on curriculum caused by meeting the needs of the knowledge economy. Rather than the result of a response to a single critical point (Goodson, 1984; Fullan, 2001; Goodson, 2007), curriculum change in higher education programs has been noted as incremental, accumulative transient and multidirectional, rarely instigated by a single factor (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Barnett et al., 2001; Pinar, 2004; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Lefoe & Albury, 2006; Parsons, 2012). In a similar manner, the curriculum changes described in this thesis are the consequences of multiple and dynamic forces at play. However, this study has also established that changes are not the result of deliberate curriculum design processes, but are rather reactions to ad hoc multi-faceted external and internal forces and drivers. This research has identified how Arts curriculum designers incrementally respond to contemporary pressures to address the needs of the knowledge economy to create a state of on-going flux in Arts curriculum purpose and design. This transformation of curriculum planning has been gradual and abstruse, the vague nature of which ultimately accounting for tensions and challenges evident in Australian Arts programs.

Curriculum changes identified in this research were often attempts to accommodate immediate social and economic contextual pressures from sources both external and internal to the program. These pressures were caused by marketization forces driving competition for student enrolments in an increasingly "use-pays" paradigm. At the same time, programs were also found to be compelled to provide evidence that the program would produce graduate outcomes suited to preparing a workforce for a global knowledge economy. Participants and the documents analysed indicated that, in response to these pressures, curriculum changes were adopted to either increase student participation or reduce costs. Australian Arts programs either adopted a reductionist approach (decreasing the range of curriculum offerings) or they engaged in experimental programs designed to attract more students. A reductionist approach reduced the program from the traditional broad-based program to a narrower, with more prescriptive program rules. The experimental approach included creating new types of Arts programs to include a vocational or specialist or professional focus. Experimental programs were not necessarily successful in increasing the number of students in the short term, nor where they sustained in the long term. Possibly as a consequence of the failure of experimental programs to thrive, broad-based programs have had a recent resurgence.

Contextual pressures were found to contribute to a high level of modularisation, proliferation of units of study and a fragmented curriculum, many of the features described as typical of generalist programs; the “junkyard curricula” (Gaff & Ratcliff, 1997, p. 517). This study argues that these features are the result of external pressures that set up competition amongst the disciplines as competitors. They also limited space to develop a shared understanding of the curriculum and a clearly articulated value proposition to attract market share.

As a consequence, the locus of curriculum design shifted from the unit of study or discipline basis to a whole-of-program basis. This shift was tacit and not necessarily understood or appreciated by informants and resulted in a curriculum planning process that polarised program-level decision-making from discipline-level decision-making. This tension results in conflicting viewpoints and an absence of an understanding of what constitutes an Arts program, both within individual institutions and across the sector.

2.3. A Research Methodology to Investigate Complex Curricula

This study has employed a different lens and methodological approach to that which contemporary curriculum theorists typically use; one that is under-utilised in higher education investigations. Prior to this study, research in higher education curricula has tended to focus on the experience of individual academics designing single units of study or working within single discipline sequences of study. The review of the literature identified studies that tended to be skewed toward a focus on the implemented curriculum in disciplines (Lattuca & Stark, 1994; Turner, 1996; Healey, 2000; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Klein, 2004; Entwistle, 2005; Fanghanel, 2007; Rehman et al., 2009; Trowler et al., 2012). Early studies (for example, such as those conducted by Tyler, 1949; D. F. Walker, 1971; Goodlad, 1979; Pratt, 1980; Gay, 1986) focused on holistic interpretation on curriculum renewal and design as a constructed artefact. More contemporary studies have tended to focus on participants’ perceptions of curriculum renewal and design as a process (Grundy, 1987; Toohey, 1999; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Barrie, 2007; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2011; Trowler et al., 2012) and tended to draw on personal perspectives of academics (Fraser, 2006; Barrie, 2007; Steel, 2009). The focus in the identified literature on discipline and unit level curriculum innovation and intervention has limited the generalisation of available research to understanding the planned curriculum of large-scale generalist program such as the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science. There is also limited understanding of the contribution of such programs to the education and future careers of graduates from such programs (Lin et al., 2003; Bridgstock, 2006; Purcell, Wilton & Elias, 2007; MacKay, 2010; McArthur, 2011; Harvey & Shahjahan, 2013). In addition, the limited scope of theoretical understanding of learning and curriculum in higher education has hindered the development of evidence-based conclusions to inform future curriculum development in higher education practice and to guide future research.

This study has combined these approaches by using a combination of comparative historical analysis (CHA) and focused ethnography. The use of comparative historical analysis enabled a sector-wide examination at two points of time and enabled a horizontal and vertical analysis of multiple sources and comparison across time, institutions and program descriptions. The CHA approach provided a macro-view of the curriculum, while the focused ethnographic data and analysis provided a micro-view of individual's practices and processes. This combination allowed for a blending of the findings from a sector-wide analysis with the analysis of personal perceptions enabling observations of both "backstage" and "front stage" views (after Goffman, 1956) of the processes and perceptions of curriculum planning. The combination offers a new viewpoint regarding how curriculum is planned in large-scale generalist programs in Australia.

3. IMPLICATIONS

The findings have implications for those responsible for generalist Australian Arts programs and for research conducted in curriculum in higher education in the contemporary context.

To enable a whole-of-program approach to Arts programs in Australia, this study indicates that there is a need to explicitly build coherency across the whole program. The only way to achieve this is through developing a shared understanding of the purpose of the Australian Arts program. The development of a shared understanding of program purposes and intentions is identified as an important factor in planning curriculum (see, for example, Casey & Wilson, 2005; Fraser, 2006; Anderson & Hounsell, 2007; Brady & Kennedy, 2007; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2011; Parsons, 2012); a necessary, but often neglected, precursory exercise in higher education curriculum development (Barrie, 2006; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Hicks, 2007; Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 3). The development of a shared understanding requires acknowledgement of the need for a shared space for communication and collaborative planning to take place; clarity of roles in curriculum planning; and a shared framework to categorise and analyse the curriculum as it is currently manifested.

Deliberate planning in the Arts requires a conceptual and cultural shift by those who are firmly committed to a paradigm where the discipline is dominant. It is currently difficult to prove that students have acquired the capacity to integrate and develop a cross-discipline view and skill sets. It is difficult to articulate the value proposition of the Arts program to prospective students explicitly when communication about the Arts program is seen as inaccurate or incorrect (Johnson & Ratcliff, 2004, p. 62). In an age of increasing competition, where discipline survival within the institutions is measured in EFTSL, the fact that enrolments are higher and attrition lower in programs which provide clear and consistent information (Tinto, 2002) might provide the motivation for discipline-focused academics to embrace a whole-of-program approach.

It is only by formal acknowledgment of the need to create a space for critical curriculum conversations that a shared understanding can be achieved. Conversations can be formalised through providing deliberate professional education in higher education (Lattuca et al., 2014) or by deliberately creating space for informal backstage development (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2009). Meeting the requirements of accountability measures such as AQF accreditation can provide a catalyst for such conversations, if they are not treated as an administrative chore, but rather an opportunity to ‘check-in’ and provide updates to the continued evolution of curriculum. These conversations should not be one-off events. It is important to initiate staff new to the program and to remind existing staff of any changes that have occurred.

Deliberate planning requires clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities for curriculum planning in a generalist program such as the Arts. Roles described in this study varied greatly across institutions, as might be expected. The case studies showed, however, that there were significant differences in understanding regarding what these roles were within the institutions. There was also an absence of clarity of who should be involved and evidence of the exclusion of key stakeholders from decision-making processes. Effective change in curriculum needs to have engagement across all stakeholders (Fullan, 2001, 2013). Various researchers identify the disengagement of the teachers from the curriculum development process as problematic (Rohrbach, D'Onofrio, Backer & Montgomery, 1996; McBeath, 1997; Schwartz, 2006) and attributed it to causing a disjunct between what is designed by the curriculum designers and what is actually implemented (van den Akker, 1988). It can be highly challenging to disseminate changes that encourage a shared understanding (Benneworth & Jongbloed, 2010; Benneworth, 2014). Those excluded from the curriculum planning process have no incentive or impetus to understand or to embrace change.

There are examples of successful engagement with this type of curriculum transformation described in this study: the implementation of the Melbourne model and the QUT creative industries are such examples. However, these examples were focused on implementing institution-wide or faculty-wide conceptual, transformational changes, rather than a program-level revision. The approach taken was similar to that described above: a space was created to enable critical conversations and a process developed to accommodate this; particular individuals were identified to take carriage for this transformation; and a process was developed to ensure that all involved were aware of intended changes and included in the process.

4. LIMITATIONS

The findings of this study are not without limitations. Although this thesis suggests that an understanding of the curriculum may contribute towards the argument about the value, purpose and public benefit of social sciences and humanities-based study in higher education, it does not aim to identify the purposes of higher education or the contribution of social sciences and humanities to that sector. It also does not attempt to draft a concept of an “ideal” Bachelor of Arts curriculum or to judge curriculum practices in higher education and in Bachelor of Arts in particular.

Increasing public scrutiny and demands for accountability and assurance of standards and outcomes has been recently manifested in national organisations such as Tertiary

Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). This scrutiny is anticipated to increase in the future with the introduction and expected conformity to a set of national threshold standards encapsulated in the Higher Education Standards Framework. The AQF began to be implemented towards the end of the data collection stage of this research. This framework and its regulatory requirements has possibly the highest potential for directly influencing curriculum, in that it requires institutions to match their programs to a set of benchmarking levels and standards, requiring institutions to re-examine espoused learning outcomes and map the points where these outcomes may be attained by students across the program curriculum. Anecdotal evidence gathered after the formal data collection processes indicates that institutions are addressing these requirements in different ways. Some are choosing to use this process as an opportunity to substantially review and renew curriculum adopting a whole-of-curriculum approach. Others are addressing compliancy requirements in a more administrative fashion, adopting a "tick-box" approach. The impact of these externally imposed regulations on curriculum is beyond the scope of this study, however.

Limitations related to the research design were outlined in Chapter Three, but it is reiterated that that the number of cases in the study which engaged ethnographically with the lived experience of curriculum planning and making, and with individual's beliefs and practices was small. Those interviewed were also selected purposively for their roles in curriculum planning processes. This selection meant they were not representative of all those with some degree of responsibility for curriculum planning. Furthermore, the nature of the study was quite obvious to the participants. Their awareness of the studies purpose could influence and shape their answers. Steps have been taken to mitigate these limitations as outlined in Table 17 on p.93

5. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this age of accountability and performativity, it is no longer enough for a curriculum plan to simply expose students to a range of discipline content in anticipation that they will learn something; that they will be able to acquire crucial skills, make interdisciplinary connections and make sense of their learning to translate them to the workplace. The combination of the neoliberal features of marketization, managerialism and performativity can generate highly planned, coherent curricula in disciplines that conform to a structured, scaffolded progression. Programs that fit these characteristics are typically professions-based programs, such as nursing and engineering (Ratcliff & Gaff, 1997; Toohey, 1999; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). Modularised curricula without a centralised focal point, however, can become atomistic and competitive, resulting in curricula that have *"evolved haphazardly with little purpose or focus on coherent learning experiences across a multi-year, progressively elaborated development of materials and skills"* (D'Agostino & O'Brien, 2010, p. 144) – a fragmented curriculum. This research generated a comprehensive examination of program level curriculum planning in the Australian Arts program in the contemporary context, a perspective that has been absent from the literature. Future research considering perspectives from other generalist degree programs such as the Bachelor of Science would offer comparative data and test the generalisability the findings. Research triangulating students' experienced curriculum with the planned curriculum of academics could lead to further understanding of the enacted curriculum.

The defence of the breadth of programs suggests that students' learning occurs in the act of integrating knowledge and skills from disparate disciplines and new, personalised learning occurs through generating the connections and forming coherence (Kreber, 2009). Learning in the spaces in between disciplines is fundamental to interdisciplinary learning, which aims to promote a heightened understanding of the complexities of the world and encourage students to learn ways to deal

> *"with particularity and imagination, with issues of identity and sensibility, with encountering the other. At the same time, the humanities' own complex interpretative narratives and ability to generate and cope with complexity are vitalizing and enabling in a fearful, complex and super-complex world"* (Parker, 2008, p. 83).

This research has indicated that a key strength and draw card of the Arts program is the capacity to engage with multiple disciplines. An investigation of the actual graduate attributes attained and sustained over time through this cross-discipline learning is now required. Of interest is the absence of appreciation in the marketing materials that the Arts program is often the only program through which students can engage with trans-disciplinary study in HASS disciplines that interest them. Marketing materials tended to list separate disciplines as distinct entities rather than the explaining how students can choose to combine study. Only two programs specifically described the benefits of integrating different disciplines through a program of studies. The capacity for Arts programs to provide the capacity for graduates "*to understand concepts across multiple disciplines*" *(A. Davies, Fidler & Gorbis, 2011, p. 11)*

Finally, given the dynamic nature of the Arts program, it is likely that more conceptions of Arts programs will emerge in the future, once again in response to socio-political and economic change. There are already substantial changes that have occurred to the Arts program evident in 2015. The curriculum element framework developed in this research could also be used as a tool to assist in the categorisation of programs offered by Australian universities to identify new and emerging conceptions of Arts programs.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The traditional view of the BA as an open choice of random units of study is fading. It is, however, leaving behind new breeds of BA that are leaner and meaner; clearer in purpose, content and sequencing. Shaped by the changes in student demand, economic and policy pressures and other contextual circumstances, the contemporary Australian Arts program is very different to that of even the very recent past. Many commonly held conceptions of what constitutes a contemporary Australian Arts program may, in fact, be misconceptions. It remains to be seen which of the models identified in this study survive new challenges and thrive; whether the traditional conceptions persist; or whether new versions emerge.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: Sample

1.1. *Process for identifying sample Arts programs*

The Department (DIISRTE) made available data for the period of 2001 to 2010 which recorded the number of students, the number of program completions, and the Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) values, within the Broad field of Education of Society and Culture and the narrow FOE in the Creative Industries FOE related to Communication and Media (FOE 1007). Student data were listed by institution; degree type (where a single or double degree); level (whether a Bachelor Pass or Bachelor Honours program); program title; and narrow and detailed Field of Education (FOE).

Since 2001, all running record data are categorised into 10 broad fields of education (FOE), which are further broken down into narrow FOEs and then to detailed FOEs. There is no one code for a Bachelor of Arts as programs titled Bachelor of Arts are split across a range of different detailed FOEs, depending on majors studied. The Field of Education code “Society and Culture” (FOE 09) is the FOE which mostly aligns to the disciplinary areas commonly associated with BAs. As this mechanism of coding also extends to the other national and state data sources such as graduate destinations and student satisfaction, extracting relevant data for this study from the FOE data set meant that it was possible to trace possible patterns in student participation, satisfaction and graduate destination to map onto curriculum information to determine whether these features could potentially influence and shape curriculum.

Initial review of the data established that there was no one uniform way of recording program titles in the data that was collected from each institution. The program titles in the data collected from DISSTRE was “cleaned” by using “parsing” techniques (Wiersma, 2000). This technique enabled checking the syntax of the program titles parsed to follow a uniform structure to enable sorting. This resulted in identifying 1780 programs that were offered in this broad FOE between 2001 and 2010.

Once the data had been cleaned, it was possible to sort them by title, narrow FOE code, and institution. Characteristics that were helpful to describing the institution, such as institutional affiliation[75], and state of origin were added. Programs that were obviously outside the scope of this study could then be identified by using a combination of sorting by narrow FOE and by program title.

Firstly, programs that mapped on to the detailed FOE codes 090000-090399,091100-091103,091107-091999,099900-099999,100700-100799 (Social Sciences, Arts, Cultural & Society Studies, incl. Economics, Languages, Media & Communication) were designated as "Arts_Humanities" programs and those with Field of Education codes 090500-090999,091105,092100-092199 (Society & Culture other than above, including Welfare, Behavioural, Law, Police Studies, Sport and Recreation) were designated “Other”. This separation into 2 groups enabled a process of cross-checking. The cross-checking process involved reviewing the programs identified as Arts programs not specifically called Bachelor of Arts with program descriptions on institutional websites and categorisation on tertiary access centre website. Programs that were not humanities and social sciences focused, or which were accredited by professional associations or which were obviously closer aligned with the “Other” category, were designated as “Other” in the spreadsheet. This process made it possible to refine the designation of “Arts” and “Other”.

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[75] These are the institutional groupings or networks that some universities align themselves to. They give an indication as to the type of institution. These groupings have been described in detail in the literature review

1.2 Arts Programs Included in Study

University	Program Title
Australian Catholic University	Arts
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Social Work
	Nursing / Arts
	Teaching / Arts
Bond University	Arts
	Arts / Laws
	International Relations
	International Relations / Commerce
	International Relations / Laws
	Journalism
	Journalism / Laws
Central Queensland University	Arts
	Arts / Business
Charles Darwin University	Arts
	Arts / Creative Industries
	Arts / Laws
	Education / Arts
	Indigenous cultures and Natural Resource Management
	Indigenous Knowledges
Charles Sturt University	Arts
	Arts (Communication)
	Arts (Television Production)
	Arts / Social Work
	Arts / Teaching (Secondary)
	Sport & Recreation / Arts (Communication Journalism)
	Teaching (Secondary) / Arts
Curtin University of Technology	Arts
	Arts (Asian Studies) / Commerce (Accounting)
	Arts (Asian Studies) / Education (Secondary Education)
	Arts (Communication and Cultural Studies) / Arts (Media and Information)
	Arts (Humanities)
	Arts (Languages and Asian Cultures)
	Arts (Media and Information) / Arts (Languages and Asian Culture)
	Arts / Commerce
Deakin University	Arts
	Arts (Arabic) / Commerce
	Arts (Chinese) / Commerce
	Arts (Indonesian) / Commerce
	Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (International Studies) / Commerce
	Arts (Media and Communications)
	Arts (Professional Writing)
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Management
	Arts / Science
	Criminology
	Criminology / Laws
	Education (Secondary) / Arts

	Health Sciences / Arts
	Laws / Arts (International Studies)
Edith Cowan University	Arts
	Arts (Education) / Arts
	Arts (Education) / Social Science
	Arts (Education) / Social Science (Home Economics)
	Arts (Psychology)
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Communications
	Arts / Education
	Business / Arts (Psychology)
	Criminology and Justice
	Laws / Arts
	Writing
Flinders University	Archaeology
	Arts
	Education (Early Childhood) / Arts
	Education (Middle School) / Arts
	Education (Primary) / Arts
	Education (Secondary) / Arts
	International Studies
	Justice and Society
	Languages
Griffith University	Arts
	Arts (Asian and International Studies) / Communication
	Arts (Criminology & Criminal Justice)
	Arts (Languages and Applied Linguistics)
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Commerce
	Journalism
	Laws / Arts
	Laws / Arts (Politics Government & International Relations)
James Cook University	Arts
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Journalism
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Science
	Arts / Social Work
	Education / Arts
	Education / Languages
	Indigenous Studies
	Journalism
	Languages
La Trobe University	Archaeology
	Arts
	Arts (Contemporary European Studies)
	Arts / Accounting
	Arts / Arts Education
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Economics
	Arts / Health Sciences
	Arts / Science
	Asian Studies
	Business / Asian Studies
	European Studies

	Health Sciences / Development Studies
	Health Sciences / International Relations
	Health Sciences / Media Studies
	International Relations
	Journalism
	Laws / Arts
	Legal Studies
Macquarie University	Arts
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Diploma of Education
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Science
	Business Administration / Arts
	Business Administration / Arts (European Studies)
	Business Administration / Arts (Japanese Studies)
	Engineering / Arts
	International Communication
Monash University	Arts
	Arts (Communication)
	Arts (English Language)
	Arts (Global) / Science
	Arts (Journalism)
	Arts (Journalism) / Science
	Arts (Languages)
	Arts / Business (Accounting)
	Arts / Business (Finance)
	Arts / Business (Management)
	Arts / Business (Marketing)
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Computing
	Arts / Economics
	Arts / Education
	Arts / Information Systems
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Music
	Arts / Science
	Arts / Social Welfare
	Arts / Social Work
	Arts / Visual Arts
	Engineering / Arts
Murdoch University	Arts
	Arts (Asian Studies)
	Arts (Australian Indigenous Studies)
	Arts (Community Development)
	Arts (English and Comparative Literature)
	Arts (Gender Studies)
	Arts (History)
	Arts (International Development Studies)
	Arts (Mass Communication)
	Arts (Media, Communication & Cultural Studies)
	Arts (Philosophy)
	Arts (Politics and International Studies)
	Arts (Psychology)
	Arts (Public Policy and Management)
	Arts (Security Terrorism and Counterterrorism Studies)

	Arts (Sociology)
	Arts (Sustainable Development)
	Asian Studies (Specialist)
	Criminology
	Education (Primary) / Arts (Indigenous)
	Education (Secondary) / Arts
	Education (Secondary) / Asian Studies
	Laws / Arts
	Laws / Asian Studies
	Laws / Communications
	Laws / Media
	Legal Studies
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	Arts (Creative Writing)
	Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (Journalism)
Southern Cross University	Arts
	Arts / Education (Secondary)
	Business / Arts
	Indigenous Studies
Swinburne University of Technology	Arts
	Business / Arts
	Commerce / Arts
The Australian National University	Archaeological Practice
	Arts
	Arts (Art History & Curatorship)
	Arts (Development Studies)
	Arts (European Studies)
	Arts (New Media Arts)
	Arts (Policy Studies)
	Arts / Asian Studies
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Economics
	Arts / Info Technology
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Music
	Arts / Science
	Arts / Science (Psychology)
	Arts / Visual Arts
	Asian Studies
	Asian Studies / Arts (Visual)
	Asian Studies / Commerce
	Asian Studies / Economics
	Asian Studies / Law
	Asian Studies / Science
	Development Studies
	Engineering / Arts
	Languages
The University of Adelaide	Arts
	Arts / Economics
	Arts / Music Education
	Arts / Science
	Development Studies
	Engineering / Arts
	International Studies
	International Studies / Arts

	International Studies / Economics
	Media / Arts
	Media / International Studies
	Teaching / Arts
The University of Melbourne	Arts
	Arts (Media & Communications) / Laws
	Arts (Media and Communications)
	Arts (Media and Communications) / Commerce
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Music
	Arts / Science
	Arts / Social Work
	Engineering / Arts
	Medicine & Surgery / Arts
The University of New England	Arts
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Science
	Arts / Teaching
	Asian Studies
	Criminology
	Criminology / Laws
	General Studies / Teaching
	Indigenous Studies
	International Studies
	Languages
	Professional Studies
	Languages / International Business
The University of New South Wales	Advanced Mathematics / Arts
	Advanced Science / Arts
	Art Theory / Arts
	Art Theory / Social Science
	Arts
	Arts (Media & Communications) / Laws
	Arts / Education
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Medicine
	Commerce / Arts
	Computer Science / Arts
	Engineering / Arts
	Fine Arts / Arts
	International Studies
	International Studies / Laws
	Music / Arts
	PV and Solar Energy / Arts
	Science / Arts
	Social Work / Arts
The University of Newcastle	Aboriginal Studies
	Arts
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Science
	Arts / Speech Pathology
	Development Studies

	Music / Arts
The University of Notre Dame Australia	Arts
	Arts (Politics and Journalism)
	Arts / Behavioural Science
	Arts / Education (Secondary)
	Arts / Graduate Diploma (Education (Secondary)
	Commerce / Arts
	Communication and Media / Arts
	Education (Secondary) / Arts
	Laws / Arts
	Laws / Arts (Politics & Journalism)
	Philosophy
The University of Queensland	Arts
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Education
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Medicine & Surgery
	Arts / Social Science
	Business / Arts
	Business Management / Arts
	Commerce / Arts
	Communication / Arts
	Economics / Arts
	Engineering / Arts
	Information Technology / Arts
	International Studies
	Music / Arts
	Science / Arts
	Social Work / Arts
	Arts / International Hotel & Tourism Management
The University of Sydney	Arts
	Arts (Languages)
	Arts (Media & Communications) / Laws
	Arts (Media and Communications)
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Science
	Arts / Social Work
	Commerce / Arts
	Education (Secondary) / Arts
	Engineering / Arts
	Global Studies
	Information Technology / Arts
	International & Global Studies
	International & Global Studies / Laws
	Liberal Studies
	Music Studies / Arts
	Science / Arts
The University of Western Australia	Arts
	Arts (Asian Studies)
	Arts (Asian Studies) / Commerce
	Arts (Asian Studies) / Economics
	Arts (Communication Studies)
	Arts (Communication Studies) / Commerce
	Arts (Communication Studies) / Economics

	Arts (Communication Studies) / Laws
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Economics
	Arts / Education
	Arts / Science
	Arts/ Computer Science
	Engineering / Arts
	Laws / Arts
	Laws / Arts (Asian Studies)
	Medicine & Surgery / Arts
	Music / Arts
University of Ballarat	Arts (Humanities & Social Sciences)
	Arts (International Studies)
	Arts / Diploma of Professional Writing & Editing
	Arts / Education
University of Canberra	Arts
	Arts (International Studies / Commerce
	Arts (International Studies / Communication (Media)
	Arts (International Studies / Management
	Arts (International Studies / Tourism Management
	Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (International Studies) / Journalism
	Arts (International Studies) / Laws
	Arts (International Studies) / Public Relations
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / Communication (Advertising and Marketing)
	Arts / Communication (Journalism)
	Arts / Journalism
	Arts / Management
	Arts / Science (Psychology)
	Cultural Heritage Studies
	Education / Arts
	Journalism
	Journalism / Laws
	Politics and International Relations
	Writing
University of South Australia	Arts
	Arts (Communication and Media Management)
	Arts (Indigenous Studies)
	Arts (Information Studies)
	Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (Journalism)
	Arts (Professional Writing)
	Business (International Business) / Arts (International Studies)
	Journalism / Arts (Writing and Creative Communication
	Laws / Arts
	Management / Arts (International Studies)
	Social Work/ Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (Languages & Intercultural Communication)
University of Southern Queensland	Arts
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Science
	General Studies

	International Studies
University of Tasmania	Arts
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Computing
	Arts / Economics
	Arts / Fine Art
	Arts / Laws
	Arts / Music
	Arts / Science
	Arts/ Laws
University of Technology, Sydney	Arts (Communication - Social Inquiry) / Laws
	Arts (Communication - Writing & Cultural Studies) / Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (Communication - Writing & Cultural Studies) / Laws
	Arts (Communication) / Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (Organisational Learning) / Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (Social Sciences) / Arts (International Studies)
	Arts in Communication (Social Inquiry)
	Biotechnology / Arts (International Studies)
	Business / Arts (International Studies)
	Construction / Arts (International Studies)
	Design (Fashion & Textiles) / Arts (International Studies)
	Design (Industrial Design) / Arts (International Studies)
	Design (Interior Design) / Arts (International Studies)
	Design / Arts (International Studies)
	Education / Arts (International Studies)
	Engineering / Arts (International Studies)
	Health Science (Traditional Chinese Medicine) / Arts (International Studies)
	Laws / Arts (International Studies)
	Management / Arts (International Studies)
	Mathematics / Arts (International Studies)
	Medical Science / Arts (International Studies)
	Nursing / Arts (International Studies)
	Property Economics / Arts (International Studies)
	Science (Information Technology) / Arts (International Studies)
	Science / Arts (International Studies)
	Sound & Music / Arts (International Studies)
	Arts (Communication - Writing & Cultural Studies)
University of the Sunshine Coast	Arts
	Arts (Communication)
	Arts (Creative Writing)
	Arts (International Studies)
	Arts / Business
	Arts / Business (Japanese & International Business)
	Arts / Business (Marketing Communication)
	Arts / Business (Psychology & Human Resource Management)
	Arts / Science
	Arts / Science (Psychology & Exercise Science)
	Education / Arts
	Journalism
University of Western Sydney	Arts

	Arts (Interpreting and Translation)
	Arts / Laws
	International Studies
University of Wollongong	Arts
	Arts / Commerce
	Arts / International Studies
	Arts / Laws
	Communication and Media Studies / Arts
	Creative Arts / Arts
	International Studies
	International Studies / Commerce
	International Studies / Laws
	Journalism
	Journalism / Arts
	Science / Arts
Victoria University	Arts
	Arts (Advocacy & Mediation)
	Arts (Community Development)
	Arts (International Studies) / Business(International Trade)
	Arts (Kyinandoo)
	Arts (Legal Studies)
	Arts (Multimedia Studies)
	Arts (Professional Writing)
	Arts / Diploma of Liberal Arts
	International Studies

Appendix 2: Data Collection Materials

1. *Program profile template*

<table>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th>2007 program</th><th>2011 Program</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Purpose/ Aim of program</td><td>Program overview from webpages</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Program overview from interviews/ validations</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Program Structure</td><td>Program Rules</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Required Units</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Structure</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Work integrated learning</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Graduate attributes</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Majors offered</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Modes of delivery</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Articulation</td><td>Recruitment into program</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Entry Score</td><td colspan="2">Trends in entry scores across years (2001 – 2012) and across campuses offering Bachelor of Arts
<table>
<tr><th>Type</th><th>2001</th><th>2002</th><th>2003</th><th>2004</th><th>2005</th><th>2006</th><th>2007</th><th>2008</th><th>2009</th><th>2010</th><th>2011</th><th>2012</th></tr>
<tr><td>UAI / ENTER / TER</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Student numbers</td><td>Student Load, Enrolment, Completion</td><td colspan="2">Student numbers of total enrolment by EFTSL, numbers, and completions
<table>
<tr><th></th><th>2001</th><th>2002</th><th>2003</th><th>2004</th><th>2005</th><th>2006</th><th>2007</th><th>2008</th><th>2009</th><th>2010</th><th>2011</th></tr>
<tr><td>TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE ENROLMENTS</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Total Student Numbers in BA</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Total EFTSL in BA</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Total BA Program Completions</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>
<i>Source: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Higher Education Statistics student and staff data collections</i></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">University Context</td><td>Local Context</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Double degrees</td><td colspan="2">Student numbers in combined or double degrees
<table>
<tr><th>Program Combination</th><th>2001</th><th>2002</th><th>2003</th><th>2004</th><th>2005</th><th>2006</th><th>2007</th><th>2008</th><th>2009</th><th>2010</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>
<i>Source: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Higher Education Statistics student and staff data collections</i></td></tr>
</table>

List of other Arts programs

Bachelor of Arts against related programs’ enrolment numbers

DEGREE PROGRAM	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE ENROLMENTS										
TOTAL ENROLMENTS SOCIETY AND CULTURE BFOS										
Bachelor of Arts										
Program a										
Program b										
TOTAL Arts related intake										

Source: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Higher Education Statistics student and staff data collections

Student outcomes

Average salary Arts vs other

Income of Arts versus other students in the Society and Culture field of study as reported in the AGS 2001 – 2010

Year	Average of Salary - Arts	Average of Salary - Other
2001		
2002		
2003		
2004		
2005		
2006		
2007		
2008		
2009		
2010		
Grand Total		

Source: The Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) dataset, *Graduate Careers Australia*.

Student study type

The percentage of Arts students in each type of study for each year, as reported in the AGS 2001 – 2010

Type of study after graduation	Type of work	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	Total respondents (N)										
Full time study	Full time work										
	Part time work										
	Not working										
Part time study	Full time work										
	Part time work										

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>
<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Not working</td></tr>
<tr><td>Not studying</td><td>Full time work</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Part time work</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Not working</td></tr>
</table>
Source: The Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) dataset, <i>Graduate Careers Australia</i>.
</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Student Satisfaction</td><td>
Arts students’ overall satisfaction with their program as reported in the AGS 2001 – 2010
(“Overall, I was satisfied with this course” – scale 1-5; 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)
<table>
<tr><th>Field of study</th><th>2001</th><th>2002</th><th>2003</th><th>2004</th><th>2005</th><th>2006</th><th>2007</th><th>2008</th><th>2009</th><th>2010</th></tr>
<tr><td><i>All other Australian universities</i></td><td>3.97</td><td>3.93</td><td>4.00</td><td>4.00</td><td>4.02</td><td>4.01</td><td>4.00</td><td>3.98</td><td>3.97</td><td>4.11</td></tr>
<tr><td><i>This University</i></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>
Source: The Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) dataset, <i>Graduate Careers Australia</i>.
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Organisational information</td><td>BA Management</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Program Faculty and School Owner</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Campus</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Review</td><td>History of reviews</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Changes planned for 2012/3</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

2. Ethnographic data collection

2.1. Interview guide

1. Could you please describe your role with regards to the BA?
    - Are there any particular responsibilities you have?
    - What are the typical decisions you might make in relation to the BA?
2. The following questions specifically relate to the BA at your institution
    - What do you think the purpose of the BA is at your institution?
    - Are there any major changes to the BA scheduled for the future?

      Prompts: If so, please describe. What has prompted these changes?

    - Can you please describe any adjustments to the BA *[prior to these changes if there are changes or instead of changes if there are none planned*] that have occurred over the last few years and the process that facilitated those adjustments?

      Prompts: How did they happen? When did they happen? Why did they happen? What prompted them? Who was involved?

    - Have there been any initiatives at your institution which may have impacted the BA?

      Prompts: Examples such Curriculum renewal initiatives; introduction of new timetable or enrolment software; changes to semesters; faculty or school restructure

    - Any issues on a regional or state basis that may have had an impact on the BA?

      Prompts: changes to schooling sector; state government initiatives, more private providers opening up, changes at local completion institutions; economic changes; even floods or fires!

3. I'd like to talk about how the term 'curriculum' might be considered in the program offered at your institution and how it applies to the BA in particular
    - *Prompts: Do you think that the BA has a curriculum?, What does the word curriculum mean to you?; Who develops the curriculum?*

2.2. Information sheet

Title: Australian Bachelor of Arts Programs: Curriculum by negotiation?

Investigator:
Deanne Gannaway
Flinders University
Tel: 0405194374
Supervisor:
Professor Janice Orrell
Flinders University
Tel: 0421809115

Description of the study:

This study is part of the project entitled '*Australian Bachelor of Arts Programs: Curriculum by negotiation?* This project will investigate how the curriculum in the Australian Bachelor of Arts (BA) program is currently conceived and constructed. This PhD project is supported by Flinders University School of Education.

Purpose of the study:

The research seeks to understand:

- what characterises the curriculum of the modern Australian Bachelor of Arts;
- how curriculum-makers engage in the process of curriculum-making; and
- what forces and drivers influence the process of curriculum-making.

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to attend a semi-structured interview with the researcher who will ask you a few questions about your role in the BA, an overview of any recent changes to the BA, what your perceptions are about curriculum in the BA and the processes associated with curriculum at your institution. The interview will take about 80 minutes. The interview will be recorded using a digital voice recorder to help with looking at the results. Once recorded, the interview will be stored as a computer file and then destroyed once the results have been finalised. The recording of the interview is voluntary.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The sharing of your experiences will go towards the development of a framework mapping the curriculum-making process. This framework could be used to inform future practices of curriculum-makers.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

We do not need your name and you will be anonymous. Once the recorded interview has been subject to analysis, the voice file will then be destroyed. Any identifying information will be removed. During analysis the audio file will be stored on a password protected computer that only the researcher (Deanne Gannaway) will have access to. Your comments will not be linked directly to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

Other group members may be able to identify your contributions even though they will not be directly attributed to you. The investigator anticipates few risks from your involvement in this study. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the investigator.

How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. You may answer ‘no comment’ or refuse to answer any questions and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without effect or consequences. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate please read and sign the form.

How will I receive feedback?

Outcomes from the project will be summarised and given to you by the investigator if you would like to see them.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 4669). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

2.3. Consent form

Flinders
UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH
(by interview)

Australian Bachelor of Arts Programs: Curriculum by negotiation?

I …..

being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the interview for the research project on the Australian Bachelor of Arts curriculum

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
    - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
    - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
    - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
    - I may ask that the recording be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.

Participant's signature……………………………………Date…………………..

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name…………………………………………………….................

Researcher's signature…………………………………..Date……………………

2.4. Field notes template

Location:	
Date:	
Activity:	
People:	
Context:	
Summary of discussion	
Observations:	
Close	

Appendix 3: Coding Processes

3.1. Pivot Table Code Books

1. Required Units

Compulsory unit of study required on program or institutional level, not on a level of major. Units of study required for completion in 2007 and 2011 by year.

Category	Code	Details
Location	Regional	Campus offered located in regional centre
	metro	Campus offered located in metropolitan centre
Year	2007	Year data collected
	2011	
Provider	Name of institution	Listing of all 39 institutions
Core Unit Title	Name of unit	
No. Unit credits	0	Required unit, but does not count towards credit points
	1	One unit towards program completion
	2	Two units to program completion
	n/a	Not applicable as program has no core units
Nature	Skills	Generic skills development
	Work integrated learning	WIL project
	Arts	Introduction to core humanities and social sciences concepts
	Breadth	Fulfilment of breadth requirement
Year level	Level 1	Completion in first year of study
	Level 2	Completion in first year of study
	Level 3	Completion in first year of study
	unknown	Completion level not stipulated
	N/a	Not applicable as program has no core units
Level of requirement	N/a	Not applicable as program has no core units
	Compulsory with a choice	Students must complete one of 2 or 3 units to complete program
	Core to program	No choice – required unit to complete program
	Choice of one from list program requirement	Students must choice one from a number of possible options to complete this programs
	Institutional requirement	All students at this institution must complete this unit

2. Disciplines taught

Category	Code	Details
Affiliation	ATN	Australian Technology Network of Universities
	Go8	Group of Eight coalition
	IRUA	Innovative Research Universities Australia
	Non Aligned	Not Aligned
	RUN	Regional Universities Network
Year	2007, 2011	
Institution	Name of institution	
State	Multi-State	Institutions with campuses in other states
		New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania Victoria, Western Australia
Size	large	< 20, 000 total enrolments
	medium	10 – 20,000 total enrolments
	small	> 10,000 total enrolments
No Campuses	multi	Program offered on more than one campus
	single	Program offered on only one campus
location of main campus	external	Program offered in distance education mode
	metro	Program offered in metropolitan centre
	regional	Program offered in regional centre
Campus	Name of city/town	Location of main campus
Sequence Title	Name of sequence	
Level	Extended Major	generally required students to engage with more units of study in a particular discipline area, between 12 and 16 units of study
	Major	A group of units, typically in one or more related fields of study which are a specialisation within a program. A major denotes a concentration of a number of credit points in a specific subject
	Minor	A secondary field of academic concentration or specialisation with fewer credit points than a major. Sometimes called a sub-major
Detailed FOE[76]	Sequences of study in Arts programs were coded to 104 detailed fields	Detailed fields are subdivisions of the narrow fields denoted by 6-digit codes and distinguished from other detailed fields in the same narrow field on the basis of methods and techniques, tools and equipment, and a stricter application of the criteria used for broad and narrow fields. There are 356 detailed fields.
Narrow FOE	Sequences of study in Arts programs were coded to 39 narrow fields	Narrow fields are subdivisions of the broad fields, denoted by 4-digit codes; and distinguished from other narrow fields in the same broad field on the basis of the objects of interest, and the purpose for which the study is undertaken. There are 71 narrow fields.
Broad FOE	Sequences of study in Arts programs were coded to 10 broad fields:	Broad fields are the broadest categories of the classification; denoted by 2-digit codes; and distinguished from each other on the basis of theoretical content and the broad purpose for which the study is undertaken. There are 12 broad fields.
Discipline area		Discipline area: Discipline most likely to be dominant area of study/ attribution for sequence of study
Discipline field	Humanities, social sciences, creative arts, other	

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[76] Definitions of the coding structures used by state departments available at http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/E7779A9FD5C8D846CA256AAF001FCA5C?opendocument

3. Type of program

Category	Code	Details
Institution	Institution	Name of institution
Title	Title	Title of program
Measure	EFTSL	Equivalent Full-Time Student Load
	Number	student enrolment (head count)
	Completions	successful completion of program and graduation
Degree Type	Double	combination of 2 degree programs
	Single	Single degree program
Arts programs	Arts	programs that map onto historical BA programs and meet the refined definition
	Other	Other programs within the Society and Culture Field of Study
Level	Bachelor Pass	3 year program
	Bachelor Honours	Optional 4th year research based
Institutional Grouping	Australian Technology Network of Universities; Regional Universities Network; Not Aligned; Innovative Research Universities Australia; Group of Eight coalition	
State	Australian Capital Territory; Multi-State; New South Wales; Northern Territory; Queensland; South Australia; Tasmania; Victoria; Western Australia	

4. Program Structure

Category	Code	
Institution	Institution	
Year	2007, 2011	
Institutional Grouping	Australian Technology Network of Universities; Regional Universities Network; Not Aligned; Innovative Research Universities Australia; Group of Eight coalition	
State	Australian Capital Territory; Multi-State; New South Wales; Northern Territory; Queensland; South Australia; Tasmania; Victoria; Western Australia	
no. required units	number of core units required	
Incremental learning	1	no or limited incremental study requirements for students to take a particular number of introductory units and advanced units
	2	incremental study requirements within the major, generally providing students with a range of choices of units of study which were demarcated as being at a particular level. Students fulfilled program requirements by completing a required number of units at relevant levels, but there was generally no prescribed order or restrictions, meaning that students in third year could participate in first year units and that a student did not necessarily have to have completed a second year unit before completing a third year unit.
	3	highly restrictive study plan which required students to engage in a particular pathway through a limited set of majors.
Structure	2-level	Students required to participate in foundational level programs and advanced level
	3-level	Students required to participate across 3 levels of study

5. Graduate Attributes

Category	Code
Institution	Institution
Year	2007, 2011
Institutional Grouping	Australian Technology Network of Universities; Regional Universities Network; Not Aligned; Innovative Research Universities Australia; Group of Eight coalition
State	Australian Capital Territory; Multi-State; New South Wales; Northern Territory; Queensland; South Australia; Tasmania; Victoria; Western Australia
Attributes	Critical thinking; Problem solving; Verbal and written communication; Work co-operatively with others; Research skills; Use a range of modern information technologies; Depth in 1 or 2 disciplines; Broad general knowledge (across disciplines); Liberal arts education; Acquisition of languages; Humanities and Social Sciences; Understanding of Australia and its international context; Leader; Aware of social justice issues; Culturally aware; Global; Socially aware; Ethical

6. Graduate Destinations

Category	Code
Institution	Institution name
State	Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia
Type of study	Full time; Not studying; Part time
Employer	Ed. Private; Ed. Public; Government Federal; Government Local; Government State; Non-profit; Other;
Sector	Private Sector; Public sector; Self-employed; Unknown
Type of work	Full time; Not working; Part time; Unknown

3.2. Thematic Analysis Code Book

Element	Category	Code	Sub-code
Influence	***Institution size (total students)***	Large (< 20, 000)	
		Mid (10 – 20,000)	
		Small (> 10,000)	
	Institutional Grouping	Australian Technology Network of Universities; Regional Universities Network; Not Aligned; Innovative Research Universities Australia; Group of Eight coalition	
	Location	Regional	
		Metropolitan	
		Both	
	State	Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia	
	Faculty structure	Arts in title	No
			Yes
		Number faculties	<5
			4-5
			>4
		Recent restructure	Yes

Element	Category	Code	Sub-code
			No
			Unsure
	Campus offering	Single	
		2 – 3 campuses	
		< 3 campuses	
	Competitor degrees within institution	No	
		Yes	Double
			Tagged
			Other
	Cohort	*Entry scores*	>60
			61 - 75
			<76
	BA as portion of undergraduate cohort	Substantial	
		Mid-range	
		Minimal	
	Management	Program Coordinator	Yes
			No
		Management committee	Yes
			No
		Ownership of Arts program	Cross-faculty
			Faculty
			School
	Numbers enrolments	Decreasing	
		Increasing	
		Remaining same	
	Demand (TER)	Decreasing	
		Increasing	
		Remaining same	
	Level of change	Major change	Review of vision or values/ educational philosophy
			Substantial revision of nature, scope of program offered
			Introduction of new programs/ closure of existing
			Institutional or organisational change
		Minor change	Restructuring on level of minors and majors
			Some changes in program rules, but in keeping with the existing philosophy
			Reduction/ increase in majors offered
		Limited change	Some revision of the number/nature of units offered
	Influences on academic work	fiscal pressures and increased completion	
		demand for accountability	
		changes in student body	
		shift in economy needs	
		expansion of new technologies	
		expectations about work and employment.	
Curriculum	***Breadth***	No	
		Limited to faculty units	
		Compelled to take units outside	

Element	Category	Code	Sub-code
		Faculty	
		Open choice	
	Depth	Extended major	
		Permissible to take electives in 1 discipline area	
	Work integrated learning	In capstone	
		In required unit of study	
		As part of course rules	
		Student motivated	
		Units within major only	
	Required units	Level unit offered	Program level
			University level
		Level of choice offered	Options available
			Restricted choice
		Credit bearing	No
			Yes
		Content	Skills based
			Content based
		Year level	1
			2
			3
		None	
	Range of disciplines available	1-5	
		6-10	
		11-15	
		16-20	
		21-25	
		26-30	
		31-35	
	Discipline scope	Humanities only	
		Social sciences and humanities	
		Communications	
		Outside of humanities and social sciences	
	Mode of delivery	Internal	
		Distance education	
	Progression Units	Capstone	yes
			no
		Foundation/ gateway	yes
			No
		Other	
	Double degree	Evident in structure	
		Evident in rhetoric	
		Specific identified	
		No	
	Study plan	Prescribed study plan	
		Open study plan	
	Focus of organisation	Major level	
		Program level	
	Incremental scaffolding	No	
		Upper/ lower	
		1/2/3	

Element	Category	Code	Sub-code
		other	
	Employment prospects	Mention of employment pathway/career outcomes	
	Manner in which "flexibility" is used	Single or double major	
		Choice in discipline areas	
		Choice in mode of delivery	
		Access points	
		Wide range of majors	
		Ability to do double degree	
		Ability to take majors outside of humanities and social sciences	
		No prescribed plan	
	Intellectual Outcomes	Skills	Problem solving
			Verbal and written communication
			Work co-operatively with others
			Critical thinking
			Research skills
			Use a range of modern information technologies
			Specific workplace skills
			Leadership
		Knowledge	Depth in 1 or 2 disciplines
			Broad general knowledge (across disciplines)
		Ethical Perspective	Civic Mindedness
			Aware of social justice issues
			Ethical
		Global perspective	Culturally aware
			Acquisition of languages other than English
			Understanding of Australia and its international context
		Lifelong learning	intellectual interest/passion
Roles and responsibility	***Nature of role***	conceptual level	Strategic
			Operational
			conceptual
		level of operation	Macro
			meso
			Micro
	Role	Senior management	
		Administration	
		Program coordinator	
		Major convener	

Appendix 4: Australian Arts Curricula Elements Coding Framework

Table 47: Coding Scheme

Element	Feature	Dimension	Explanation of dimension	Sub-dimension	Explanation
PURPOSE	***Future employment possibilities***	**Specialist**	Specific to particular careers or the skill set for particular discipline areas		
		General	Preparation for multiple possible future employment prospects		
		Adapting	Preparation for changing future career paths		
	Skill development	**Specialist**	Specific to particular careers or the skill set for particular discipline area		
		Generic	Capacities and skill sets appropriate for multiple professional fields		
	Personal interest and career goals	**Interest**	academic interest in particular disciplines		
		Career goals	potential future career paths related to particular career aspirations	***Professional***	skills particular to certain professions
				Global	global world skills
				Creative industry	creative skills
CONTENT	***Diversity of Disciplines***	**Disciplines**	Number of disciplines offered	***Wide range***	More than 10 discipline areas offered as majors
				Limited range	Fewer than 10 discipline areas offered as majors
		Majors	Number of majors offered	***Few***	Fewer than 20 majors
				Many	More than 20 majors
		Fields of education	Range of fields of education offered	***HASS only***	Majors restricted to HASS disciplines.
				Broader than HASS	Open to disciplines other than HASS
	Breadth	**Sequence based**	Students required to study more than one sequence of study in different discipline areas		
		Breadth units	Students required to complete multi-disciplinary thematic units of study		
		Thematic units	Multi-disciplinary “breadth” units of study		
		Elective	units of study outside of the sequences of study		
	Depth	**Limited**	Students required to complete a limited number of units in one disciplinary area		
		Specialised	Students complete more than 8 units of study in one disciplinary area		
SEQUENCING	***Incremental study***	**Limited**	Limited requirements for incremental study		
		Major	Incremental study requirements within major		
		Program	Highly restricted study plan across whole program		
	Facilitating student choice	**Electives**	Structure enables students to engage with elective units outside of sequences of study	***Limited***	no or limited capacity to choose electives
				Restricted	Up to 1/3 of the program structure electives
				Wide	Up to 2/3 of the program structure electives
		Change	Can change majors or focus within program		
		Transition	Students able to transition to another program	***Free choice***	no prescribed study plan
				Prescribed	prescribed study plan
		Mode of delivery	Modes of engagement	***Blended***	Multiple modes
				External	Off campus
				Face-to face	traditional lecture/ tutorial classes
	Combined degrees	**Sequential**	Undergraduate program prior to a professions-focused or research postgraduate program		
		Concurrent	Students combined 2 programs		

Table 48: Categorisation of dimensions evident in Arts programs

ELEMENT	FEATURE	DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY
PURPOSE	Future employment opportunities	*Adapting*	Preparation for capacity to adapt to changing future career paths	GENERAL
		Specialist	Specific to particular careers or the skill set for particular discipline areas	WORK READY
	Personal interest and goals	*Interest*	Pursue academic interest and passions in particular disciplines	GENERAL
		Career goals	Gain skills suited to professional employment on graduation	WORK READY
	Skill development	*Generic*	Capacities and skill sets appropriate for multiple professional fields, identified as leadership, problem solving and team work	GENERIC
		Specialist	Specific to particular careers or the skill set for particular discipline areas, such as language skills, skills in using particular graphics technologies and media skills	SPECIALISED
CONTENT	Disciplines	*Wide range offered*	More than 10 discipline areas offered as majors	BROAD
		Limited range offered	Fewer than 10 discipline areas offered as majors	NARROW
	Majors	*Many majors offered*	More than 20 majors offered	BROAD
		Few majors offered	Fewer than 20 majors offered	NARROW
	FOE	*Broader than HASS*	Open to disciplines other than HASS	BROAD
		HASS	Majors restricted to humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS)	NARROW
	Breadth	*Choice*	Students required to study more than one sequence of study in different discipline areas	FLEXIBLE
			Students capacity to engage with units of study outside of the sequences of study	FLEXIBLE
		Prescribed	Students required to complete multi-disciplinary thematic units of study	PRESCRIBED
			Students required to participate in units of study identified as “breadth” units	PRESCRIBED
SEQUENCING	Depth	*Diffuse*	Students required to complete a only limited number of units in one disciplinary area	GENERIC
		Specialised	Students complete a substantial portion of the total program units of study in more than 8 units of study in one disciplinary area	SPECIALISED
	Incremental study	*Limited*	Limited requirements for incremental study	UNIT
		Major	Incremental study requirements within the major	MAJOR
		Program	Highly restricted study plan across the whole program	PROGRAM
	Student choice	*Electives*	Structure enables students to engage with elective units outside of the majors	FLEXIBLE
		Free choice	Absence of a prescribed study plan and ability to complete units in any order	FLEXIBLE
		Prescribed	Evidence of a prescribed study plan	PRESCRIBED

Appendix 5: Extract from Stage 4 Exploring Change Matrix

Year	Institution	Campus	Affiliation	Cluster	Location	#Campus	State	Size	employ	skills	discipline range	#Majors	FOE
2011	Australian Catholic University	Strathfield	Non Align	New Gen	metro	multi	NSW	medium	adaptive	Generic	wide	Few	broader than HASS
2011	Australian Catholic University	Banyo	Non Align	New Gen	metro	multi	QLD	medium	adaptive	Generic	wide	Few	broader than HASS
2011	Australian Catholic University	Melbourne	Non Align	New Gen	metro	multi	VIC	medium	adaptive	Generic	wide	Few	broader than HASS
2007	Australian Catholic University	Strathfield	Non Align	New Gen	metro	multi	NSW	medium	General	Generic	wide	Few	broader than HASS
2007	Australian Catholic University	Melbourne	Non Align	New Gen	metro	multi	VIC	medium	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2007	Australian Catholic University	Banyo	Non Align	New Gen	metro	multi	QLD	medium	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2007	Bond University	Gold Coast	Non Align	New Gen	metro	single	QLD	small	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2011	Bond University	Gold Coast	Non Align	New Gen	metro	single	QLD	small	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2011	CQUniversity	Bundaberg	RUN	Regional	regional	multi	QLD	small	adaptive	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2011	CQUniversity	External	RUN	Regional	regional	multi	QLD	small	adaptive	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2011	CQUniversity	Mackay	RUN	Regional	regional	multi	QLD	small	adaptive	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2011	CQUniversity	Noosa	RUN	Regional	regional	multi	QLD	small	adaptive	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2011	CQUniversity	Rockhampton	RUN	Regional	regional	multi	QLD	small	adaptive	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2007	CQUniversity	Rockhampton	RUN	Regional	regional	multi	QLD	small	Specialist	Special	wide	Many	HASS
2007	Charles Darwin University	Casurina	IRUA	Regional	regional	single	NT	small	Specialist	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2011	Charles Darwin University	Casurina	IRUA	Regional	regional	single	NT	small	Specialist	Special	wide	Few	HASS
2011	Charles Sturt University	Bathurst	Non Align	Regional	regional	multi	NSW	large	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2011	Charles Sturt University	Wagga Wagga	Non Align	Regional	regional	multi	NSW	large	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2007	Charles Sturt University	Wagga Wagga	Non Align	Regional	regional	multi	NSW	large	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS

2007	Charles Sturt University	Bathurst	Non Align	Regional	regional	multi	NSW	large	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2011	Curtin University of Technology	Perth	ATN	Technical	metro	multi	WA	large	Specialist	Special	wide	Few	HASS
2007	Curtin University of Technology	Perth	ATN	Technical	metro	multi	WA	large	Specialist	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2007	Deakin University	Warrnambool	Non Align	Gumtree	regional	multi	VIC	large	General	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2011	Deakin University	Warrnambool	Non Align	Gumtree	regional	multi	VIC	large	General	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2007	Deakin University	Geelong	Non Align	Gumtree	regional	multi	VIC	large	General	Generic	wide	Few	broader than HASS
2011	Deakin University	Geelong	Non Align	Gumtree	regional	multi	VIC	large	General	Generic	wide	Few	broader than HASS
2007	Deakin University	Melbourne	Non Align	Gumtree	metro	multi	VIC	large	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2011	Deakin University	Melbourne	Non Align	Gumtree	metro	multi	VIC	large	General	Generic	wide	Many	HASS
2011	Edith Cowan University	Bunbury	Non Align	New Gen	regional	multi	WA	medium	General	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2011	Edith Cowan University	Perth	Non Align	New Gen	metro	multi	WA	medium	General	Generic	wide	Few	HASS
2007	Edith Cowan University	Perth	Non Align	New Gen	metro	multi	WA	medium	General	Generic	wide	Many	HASS
2007	Flinders University	Adelaide	IRUA	Gumtree	metro	single	SA	small	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2011	Flinders University	Adelaide	IRUA	Gumtree	metro	single	SA	small	General	Generic	wide	Many	broader than HASS
2007	Griffith University	Gold Coast	IRUA	Gumtree	metro	multi	QLD	large	Specialist	Special	limited	Few	HASS
2007	Griffith University	Nathan	IRUA	Gumtree	metro	multi	QLD	large	Specialist	Special	limited	Few	HASS
2011	Griffith University	Gold Coast	IRUA	Gumtree	metro	multi	QLD	large	Specialist	Special	limited	Few	HASS
2011	Griffith University	Nathan	IRUA	Gumtree	metro	multi	QLD	large	Specialist	Special	limited	Few	HASS
2011	James Cook University	Townsville	IRUA	Gumtree	regional	multi	QLD	small	adaptive	Generic	limited	Few	HASS
2011	James Cook University	Cairns	IRUA	Gumtree	regional	multi	QLD	small	adaptive	Generic	limited	Few	HASS