

# Elective Policy

## Trinity College Foundation Studies Policy on the number of elective subjects that students may take

### 1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out the normal expectations regarding the number of elective subjects a student may take in Trinity College Foundation Studies (TCFS), the educational rationale and how that number might be approved for variation.

The core subjects of TCFS have been designed carefully to address many fundamental learning objectives which are essential to TCFS outcomes. It is therefore considered very important that students undertake the core with commitment to gaining best outcomes.

The TCFS elective subjects also are specially designed, with support from the University of Melbourne, to prepare overseas students to be successful at university. The elective subjects offered include the prerequisites for all university courses. The core plus three electives has been found, through experience, to be the optimal workload for achieving all the above for the vast majority of students.

In the past some students have taken 4 elective subjects with a view to strategically 'under investing' in the core and then banking on gaining better marks in elective subjects. This kind of 'strategic optimisation' – to gain better 'best 4' averages in elective subjects, circumvents the demands and intentions of the core and is educationally unsound and unacceptable.

Also unacceptable is the notion of taking four electives as a matter of 'try before you buy'. It is operationally highly inefficient for the College to permit students to enrol in and commence 4 electives, with a view to later dropping the one they least like or do worst at.

### 2. Procedure(s)

Therefore, *it will be assumed that all students normally take the core subjects and three electives only.* More than 3 electives, unless in exceptional circumstances or in the hands of an exceptional student, is likely to diminish overall learning and success in the program and, most importantly, likely to mean that the student does not achieve the best possible mastery of the language and academic skills addressed in the core.

Where a student can demonstrate outstanding ability and /or motivation, four electives may be permitted ***if the student meets all of criteria 1-3 and some or all of criteria 4-7:***

1. High English language ability - oral and written, as evidenced by a strong IELTS score *and/or* by our own TCFS English language diagnostic test,
2. Demonstrated prerequisites for 4th elective,
3. Exceptional prior academic record,
4. Excellent attendance (if any to date of application),
5. Some link between the chosen 4th elective and proposed University course that would enhance the University experience
6. Consistency in argument for 4th elective,
7. That the student would not be the worse for not doing 4 electives i.e.; likely to be under-engaged or under-challenged with/by TCFS.

Students will need to apply for permission to enrol in a 4th elective and present their case in writing, along with any necessary supporting documentation to a panel for consideration and decision.

### **3. Responsibilities**

The panel will comprise:

Mr Glen Jennings, Associate Dean (Academic Operations)

Dr Tan Hooi Cheng (Academic Administration), and

Dr Bernard Leigh (Timetable and Student Advice).

Panel decisions will be by simple majority. No other individuals may give permission for the student to enrol in a 4th elective subject.

### **4. Forms**

A copy of the student's application form with provision for the panel's decision and reasons to be recorded can be obtained during the Subject Selection session during Orientation program.

### **5. Status**

Policy established and implemented in May 2008 after consultation with the Academic Advisory Committee of TCFS (which includes all Lecturers in Charge).