



## Memo

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**TO: Members, VCA Board of Studies  
Members, University of Melbourne Academic Board**

**FROM: VCA Academic Registrar**

**DATE: 31 March 2005**

**SUBJECT: Quality of Administrative and Support Services: 2003 Evaluation Cycle**

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The following report is in response to the statistical findings derived from the Quality of Administrative and Support Services for Students 2003 survey as it applies to the VCA. These findings were based on a survey response of 14% of the student population of 946.

While the large majority of responding VCA students were satisfied with the range and quality of campus administration and support services, there were four areas where moderate to significant dissatisfaction was expressed, namely the availability and reliability of computing facilities, aspects of adequacy of the VCA Library's resources and hours of access, the provision of sporting and recreational facilities and the provision of student services. The following actions have or are being undertaken to address these areas of concern.

### Computer facilities

As from January 2004 the following student computing facilities have been established in the VCA's central Hub.

1. Hub Lab 1 - for teaching. This has been supplied with major software packages as requested by lecturing staff in the areas of Music, Design, Video and DVD production. High usage was experienced during 2004 with additional functions being available in 2005.
2. Hub Lab 2 - public access computing for VCA students. This facility has been running almost to capacity from the start. Initially set up with 10 computers this was increased by 2 later in 2004 to assist with demand. An additional printer was also added to help reduce waiting time for printing. This space is now full

from 11.30am through until 2.30pm and subject to heavy use during the remainder of the day.

3. Postgraduate Lounge – an area has been set aside within the Postgraduate Lounge for three computers and one printer for postgraduate use.

Additional public computers and a printer are planned for the VCA library area (complementing existing units) to assist with the high student demand for online computing.

The public computing areas are currently supervised by casual staff who are available to assist students with computing problems.

### Library

The VCA operates a library dedicated to the different art forms which it teaches. The Library has a staffing establishment of 5 (4.8 EFT). Its opening hours are from 9.00am until 6.00pm Monday to Friday.

The collection covers all the art forms taught within the College and comprises 57,000 books, 276 periodical titles, 52,000 scores, over 20,000 sound recordings and over 1000 laser discs and DVDs. There is also significant online journal access. The collection continues to grow each year and purchases are managed through a representative Library Committee which takes into account the requirements of any new courses and the expressed purchase requirements as approved by the Head of each of the six Schools and the Centre for Ideas.

If students of the VCA do not find the specific material they are looking for, they are eligible to borrow from the collections of the University of Melbourne and RMIT. On line catalogue searching is available.

In respect of hours, the Library has undertaken two different trials of extended hours during the week and over the weekend in recent years (2001 and 2004) but the demand did not justify the cost. A further trial of extended weekday hours into the evening is being undertaken in 2005. This has been designed in consultation with the teaching Schools and CFI to ensure that it relates closely to the peak assignment and assessment cycles.

The new Library building (opened in mid-2003) continues to be refitted in accordance with the refurbishment plan and available budget. Additional shelving and study spaces have been added in recent months, a second audio-visual viewing/listening room has been opened and study carrels for research students are planned.

An upgrade of photocopying facilities for student use within the Library has been costed and a proposal submitted for immediate implementation upon approval.

The Library staff have developed and implemented in 2005 a series of paper and on-line guides to assist students in their use of the Library's resources.

Given the less than positive feedback received in the 2003 survey, the Library has installed a suggestion box so that user issues can be considered in an appropriate and timely manner.

### Sporting and Recreational Facilities

The VCA does not provide any sporting and recreational facilities other than lounge and café facilities and the occasional student function organised by the VCA Student Union. There are no plans at this time to review this.

Criticism of the café food and prices is being addressed with the contract for operating the service being put out for tender during 2005.

### Student Services

The VCA provides privately contracted on-campus medical and physiotherapy services and also limited on-campus counselling and disability support services under contract from the University of Melbourne. At all times VCA students are also able to access counselling and medical services through the University of Melbourne's Parkville facilities. In the second semester of 2005 it is planned to offer the counselling service over two half days each week rather than one full day to address the issue of student access at times that best suit them.

The VCA also provides advice and assistance in respect of housing, employment and financial support. In addition students are able to access these services through the University. The VCA is increasing its commitment to employment advice through its Artists Booking Service and reviewing how it may provide more financial support by means of loans and more scholarships in addition to those it already has available.

### Conclusion

The above information is provided to indicate that substantial work has and is being done within limited resources to improve the quality of most student and academic support services within the VCA. This remains a process of constant monitoring and enhancement in accordance with plans for these areas within the VCA's budgetary framework.

Anthony Grigg  
VCA Academic Registrar