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Monday 20 August 2007

Professor James McWha  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
The University of Adelaide  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5005

Dear Professor McWha

Re: Visit to The University of Adelaide

Representatives of The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and CPA Australia visited The University of Adelaide on Wednesday 13 June 2007. This visit was for the regular five-yearly review of the accredited Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Economics degrees (and of these degrees combined with the Bachelor of Laws), and the Master of Commerce (Accounting) and Master of Accounting and Finance degrees offered by the School of Commerce.

We thoroughly reviewed the major aspects of these courses and our report is attached. We were grateful for the efforts of the staff members who provided us with the considerable amount of information we requested both prior to and during the visit.

We are pleased to renew the accreditation of the above degree programs for a maximum period of five years. As the structure of the undergraduate degree programs will be changing next year, we wish to be advised of any variations from the pattern currently envisaged and also to see detailed outlines for new or revised courses as these become available. However, we do not expect that this will have any adverse impact on the accreditation of the programs.

We would also like to thank Associate Professor Barry Burgan and other members of the School of Commerce for the kind hospitality offered to our representatives during the visit.

Yours sincerely

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cc Professor Fred McDougall, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)  
Associate Professor Barry Burgan, Head of School of Commerce



The Institute of  
Chartered Accountants  
in Australia

**ACCREDITATION VISIT  
BY THE PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING BODIES  
FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF TERTIARY COURSES**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE**

**WEDNESDAY 13 JUNE 2007**

**BACKGROUND**

The visit was for the regular five-yearly review of accreditation of the Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Economics degrees (and of these degrees combined with the Bachelor of Laws) and the Master of Commerce (Accounting) and Master of Accounting and Finance degrees offered by the School of Commerce.

The report is based on:

Material supplied prior to the review visit (as detailed in Section B3.4 of the "Accreditation Guidelines for Universities)

Additional information supplied during the review visit

Discussions held and observations made during the visit

**MEETINGS HELD DURING THE VISIT**

Professor James McWha (Vice-Chancellor and President) and Professor Fred McDougall (Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Academic)

Associate Professor Barry Burgan (Head, School of Commerce), Professor Lee Parker (Associate Dean, Research), Associate Professor Bryan Howieson (School of Commerce) and Ms Kate Harris (Associate Dean, International)

Other academic staff members

Students in the accounting program

**KEY POINTS NOTED DURING THE VISIT**

**Quality of Teaching and Staff Accessibility**

Students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of teaching they receive and the accessibility of staff, including the prompt responses by staff members to queries made via email. It was accepted that sessional staff were not quite so accessible but they were also very prompt in replying to email queries. Staff members were also seen as being very willing to assist students, particularly overseas students, with any difficulties. The students felt that the library and computer resources were generally good, although they did suggest, not surprisingly, that they would like to have more computers available, mainly at peak usage times. They commented that they made use mainly of on-line library materials in their studies.



### **Generic Skills**

The ability to work effectively in small teams and to make oral presentations is highly valued by the employers of accounting graduates. Students and staff members confirmed that there is a considerable amount of group/team work and of class presentations and discussions, as well as written work, in many subjects.

### **Ethical Issues**

Ethical issues in accounting, and in business generally, are seen as increasingly important. Staff and students also assured us that ethical issues are addressed in a number of subjects.

## **AREAS OF CONCERN**

### **Staffing**

The student:staff ratio of over 50:1 in 2006 was acknowledged as being high. We were advised that several additional staff members have been appointed this year and that the ratio will be reduced to approximately 30:1 in the second semester of 2007. This is still a relatively high figure and the School has several more positions approved but not yet filled particularly more senior levels. While we acknowledge a growing shortage of well qualified academic staff in the accounting discipline, we encourage the School to continue its recruiting efforts and hope that the vacant positions will gradually be filled.

### **Staff Morale**

The staff we met articulated a strong commitment to the School and were proud of their efforts in maintaining and enhancing the teaching program, however they expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of the operations of the Faculty, and of the University as a whole. Whilst from our brief visit we are not in a position to comment on whether staff concerns are justified, we pass on in a spirit of constructive feedback the following issues raised:

- >Heavier direct teaching loads
- >Coordination costs associated with large number of tutors
- >Resourcing of classroom teaching facilities
- >Funding for research
- >Library resources to maintain the monograph collection and online journal subscriptions