Summary of the annual evaluation of the Research Mentoring Program

The meeting between Associate Dean (Research), new staff members, their mentors, Hub Coordinator and Mentoring Committee members was held on the 2nd of July 2007. At this meeting the Research Mentoring Program was reviewed and recommendations in relation to the induction and selection of mentors’ processes were made as follow:

1. Structure of induction process of the new staff into the Program.
   It was indicated that the time frame and the process of delivery of the Program’s information packages are one of the main concerns. Consequently, it was suggested that this process should happen in the first two weeks of the appointment and should be set up in the following steps:
   • Associate Dean (Research), Professor Jan Paterson, will notify the Hub Coordinator and the Mentoring Committee about a new appointment in the School;
   • the Hub Coordinator (Administrative support) will contact identified staff and introduce the Research Mentoring Program to the new staff member and familiarise her/him with the School’s research environment, and what could be expected from the School and University in terms of research support and services;
   • the new staff member will be advised to contact the Program Coordinator (Academic support), Ms Heather James, for information from the academia perspective (e.g. research teams in the School, candidates for potential mentors); and then
   • ongoing, annual meetings between new staff members, their mentors, Hub Coordinator and Mentoring Committee members will be organised to review the Program and induction process.

All of these steps are already outlined in the package in the form of the flow chart but to increase transparency of the induction process it was suggested to prepare a list of steps and add to the package. Additionally, inclusion of the information about the Program in the School’s current orientation package will be followed.

2. Selection of mentors’ process.
   Members discussed the issue and the following points were highlighted:
   • difficulties to choose a mentor in the initial period of the appointment – suggestions were made to have more time to select a mentor,
   • importance of a proper relationship with the mentor and supervisor back up,
   • list of names of the potential mentors in the School could be in advantage for a new staff member,
   • new researchers could choose to discuss the selection of an appropriate mentor with their supervisors as well as members of the Mentoring Committee.

Discussion arose around the possibility of novice researchers being invited to become a member of an existing project to gain research experience, it was felt that this idea had merit and further discussion was warranted.