NTEU NOTES ON CLASSIFICATION PROCEDURES AT CURTIN UNIVERSITY
(Tabled 17/7/2012)

The procedures which accompany the current clauses on classification are flawed in a number of areas:

1. The definition of work value is inconsistent with that applied by Fair Work Australia and introduces an additional element of “the relative worth of the position in achieving an organisation’s objectives.” Work Value exists and can be objectively measured without reference to the organisation’s objectives. This definition would have employees who were doing work of identical work value, classified differently according to their relative strategic significance to the University at any point in time.

2. The definition of Work Value includes the observation that “Work Value Principle requires that there be a significant net increase in the work value of a position before an increase in classification level would be warranted. It is not sufficient that there be a mere change in the work. The value of that change must be significant.” This presupposes that the original classification of a position is correct, and appears to prevent reclassification on the basis of cumulative change over time.

3. The definition of Substantive Incumbent “Substantive occupant is a staff member who has been appointed to the position under review on a continuing basis or a fixed term staff member whose appointment is to a vacant position” precludes a fixed term employee from pursuing a reclassification on the basis that either the original classification was incorrect or there have been changes to the duties that warrant reclassification.

4. The capacity for a line manager to submit an application for reclassification of a position with an amended PD and without the knowledge or approval of the incumbent is open to abuse and could result in employees finding that their position has been changed such that it is effectively no longer the position to which they were appointed, and/or requires skills and abilities that they do not possess. This is small scale change without any consultation and could be wide scale where a line manager unilaterally chose to reconfigure the jobs of a group of employees. This provision also allows managers to “creep up” the duties of a position such that no single change later identified by the employee as a reason for application meets the test referred to in point 2 above.

5. The prohibition on application within 24 months of a prior application may lead to an employee working at a significantly higher work value for a period of close to two years without appropriate compensation.

6. The use of Decision Tree/JEM is inconsistent with classification according to the descriptors as required by the agreement.
7. The process involves the University using “Valid comparable positions to ensure equity and consistency in measurement of work value;” but precludes an employee using “Anomalies and inequities in terms of other positions within the University.” This is both inconsistent and unfair.

8. Where the PD is not agreed the incumbent is required to provide evidence of where they have been required to perform the disputed duties. Given that most instructions are issued verbally it will be very difficult for an employee to produce evidence of a direction to undertake work.

9. The requirement that an incumbent has been performing 100% of the duties of a position which has been reclassified in order to receive pay appropriate to the new level is open to abuse and is inconsistent with the salary of the individual being determined by the work value of the position that they occupy. Addition of a single new duty, despite the balance of the work being of a higher level would render a person unable to receive the correct payment for the work value provided for 12 months.

10. The internal review of a decision is by the nominee of the Director of Human Resources, and while it must be by a different nominee to the person who determined the original outcome, it is in effect an appeal to the Director of HR against a decision that s/he has made.