

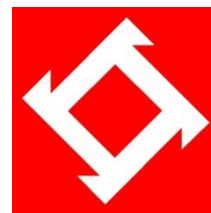
# ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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## **Association of Asian Studies of Australia (ASAA) submission on FOR codes**

The Association of Asian Studies of Australia (ASAA) is the peak body of academics engaged in the study of Asian societies in Australia. Along with affiliated organisations which focus on China, Japan, Korea, Mainland Southeast Asia, Malaysia, and Indonesia, we represent many hundreds of researchers at Australian universities. We appreciate this opportunity to provide input into the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) review, and have prepared the following submission after consultation with our members. In this brief submission we make three key recommendations:

- 1) To introduce a new Asian Studies four-digit code under Field of Research Division 20 (Language, Communication and Culture) to allow for the large body of inter-disciplinary research on Asia to be properly recognised through the ANZSRC.
- 2) To maintain most existing six-digit codes recognising Asian research content.
- 3) To introduce two new codes in Built Environment and Applied Economics.

## **Background**

Successive federal governments have recognised that a key to Australia's future economic, cultural, and security success lies in greater engagement with countries in Asia, a region of rapid economic, social, and cultural change. The 2012 Defence Department White Paper, *Australia in the Asian Century* (p. 1), for example, stated that "The Asian century is an Australian opportunity." A growing proportion of Australia's trade, investment, and migration links with the outside world occur with Asian countries. Australian governments have also prioritised the promotion of knowledge on Asian societies through Australia's higher education and research sectors. As the *Australia in the Asian Century* report (p. 111) put it: "Successive Australian governments have recognised the benefits of increasing Australia's knowledge and appreciation of Asian languages, cultures and countries."

Accordingly, since the 1970s, numerous universities across the country have created dedicated Asian Studies centres, departments, and programs. Many of the world's leading scholars of the history, politics, societies, cultures, and economies of Asian countries are located in Australia. Australia-based scholars produce a disproportionate share of the best research on Asia, and Australia produces several of the most highly ranked scholarly journals in the field of Asian Studies. The Asia-focused centres in leading Australian universities contribute positively to their research ranking as internationally competitive generators of critical knowledge on the Asia Pacific region.

While much of the Asia-focused research conducted in Australia takes place through a disciplinary framework, a large proportion of it is inherently inter-disciplinary, drawing on deep knowledge of

the history, politics, cultures, and, especially, languages of the region. Even a great deal of the research on Asia that occurs in a disciplinary context also makes critical contributions to the wider Asian Studies field, contributing not merely to theoretical or methodological advances within the discipline concerned, but also generating empirical knowledge that informs the expertise of scholars working on the same countries or sub-regions but in different disciplinary traditions.

At present, the Field of Research (FOR) codes under the ANZSRC system provide only patchy recognition of the inter-disciplinary research field that is Asian Studies. The system recognises Asia-focused research at the six-digit code level within several disciplines (notably under 1606 Political Science, 2002 Cultural Studies, 2003 Language Studies, and 2005 Literary Studies) but with numerous omissions. There is a catch-all six-level code “Studies of Asian Society”, which allows for the recognition of cross-disciplinary work, but the four-digit code under which this is located, Other Studies in Human Society, is a residual category and is often not assessed.

### **Recommendations**

In this context, the ASAA makes three recommendations:

First, we recommend the creation of a new “Asian Studies” four-digit code under Division 20, Language, Communication, and Culture. Such a code would allow for greater recognition of the inter-disciplinary field of Asian Studies at a level that could be captured by research assessment exercises such as that carried out through ERA. Such a code would also enable Asian Studies scholars attached to particular disciplines to cross-list their research (for example, in ARC research project applications) as encompassing both a disciplinary and Asian Studies dimension, and would better represent their scholarly orientation. Such a new four-digit code could replace 169903, Studies of Asian Society.

Second, we recommend the retention of all existing six-digit codes accommodating Asia content with the exception of 169903 (specifically: 160606 Government and Politics of Asia and the Pacific; 200202 Asian Cultural Studies; 200311 Chinese Languages; 200312 Japanese Language; 200313 Indonesian Languages; 200314 South-East Asian Languages (excl Indonesian); 200315; Indian Languages; 200316 Korean Language; 200317 Other Asian Languages (excl South-East Asian); 200516 Indonesian Literature; 200517 Literature in Chinese; 200518 Literature in Japanese; 200519 South-East Asian Literature (excl Indonesian); 200520 Indian Literature; 200521 Korean Literature; 200522 Other Asian Literature (excl South-East Asian); 210103 Archaeology of Asia, Africa and the Americas; Studies in Eastern Religious Traditions; 210302 Asian History). Members working in these fields have reaffirmed the relevance of these codes and state that abolishing them in favour of different means of organising their research contribution would unnecessarily de-emphasise their scholarship.

Third, we recommend the creation of two new FOR codes to capture research on the rapid economic and physical transformations in Asia:

- A new six-digit code within group 1402 Applied Economics: Economics of Asia and the Pacific. Such a code would provide a parallel function to that played by 160606 (Government and Politics of Asia and the Pacific), a code that is widely used by scholars of Asian politics. Such a code would allow for recognition of the wide-ranging, cutting-edge research on the economies of our region that is currently conducted across

Australian universities - research that is critical for Australia's economic future but which is difficult to place within the current FOR system.

- A new four-digit code, Asian Built Environments, under Division 12, Built Environment and Design. Colleagues working in this field in Australia have expressed the view that given the rapid urbanisation of the Asian region, and high numbers of postgraduate researchers focusing on this phenomenon, such a code would recognise the particular challenges and concerns of scholars working on the Built Environment in Asian country contexts, which often differ substantially from those working in Australia.

Thank you for this opportunity to highlight ways in which the research classification system could better accommodate Asian Studies research.

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