



Higher Education Courses Approval and Review procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Procedure was approved by Academic Board on 22 July 2014 and incorporates amendments to 27 February 2017.

(2) This Procedure is pursuant to the [Higher Education Courses policy](#) and includes the following schedule:

- a. [Schedule A: Major Course Reviews Panels Composition](#).

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This Procedure documents the University's higher education courses approval and review processes. (Refer to the Academic Programs Approval and Review website)

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to higher education award and non-award courses offered by the University.

Section 4 - Policy

(5) Refer to the [Higher Education Courses policy](#).

Section 5 - Procedure

Course Approvals

Strategic approvals

(6) The Course Strategy Group will provide advice to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education (DVCE) on approval of course proposals on strategic and business grounds, as required where they have a significant impact. A Course Reference group may also be established to assist the DVCE in evaluation of course proposals.

New award courses

(7) Approval of new award courses has two stages: strategic course approval and academic course approval. Strategic course approval is required before academic course approval is granted.

(8) Strategic course proposals will be:

- a. developed by faculties, using the approved strategic course proposal template

- b. endorsed by the Executive Dean
- c. endorsed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Training and Performance Enhancement (PVCRT&PE) in the case of higher degrees by research (HDR),
- d. approved by the DVCE on strategic and business grounds.

(9) Academic course proposals, incorporating course specifications, will be:

- a. developed by faculties using the approved academic course proposal and course specification templates
- b. endorsed by the Faculty Board
- c. approved by the Academic Board to ensure compliance with academic requirements of the University and the Higher Education Standards Framework.

New combined courses

(10) Proposals for new combined award courses created from existing approved award courses will be:

- a. developed by faculties using the approved new combined course proposal template
- b. endorsed by the Executive Deans
- c. approved by the DVCE on strategic and business grounds
- d. approved by the Academic Board to ensure compliance with academic requirements of the University and the Higher Education Standards Framework.

Course revisions

(11) The following revisions to existing award courses require central approval in accordance with clauses 12 and 13:

- a. changes to course specifications relating to:
 - i. course or award title
 - ii. admission and selection criteria
 - iii. course structure or duration
 - iv. arrangements for course delivery by or with third parties, including Deakin's controlled entities
 - v. place or mode of delivery
- b. changes that introduce new or revised course requirements that may disadvantage enrolled students.

(12) Proposals will be developed by Faculties, using the approved course revision proposal template and endorsed by:

- a. the Executive Dean of the Faculty
- b. the PVCRT&PE in the case of HDR.

(13) Proposals will be approved on strategic and business grounds by the DVCE. Where proposals relate to the course specifications listed in clause 11(a)(i)-(iv), approval on academic grounds is also required by the Academic Board.

(14) Faculty Boards approve proposals for:

- a. any changes to award course specifications not covered by clause 11
- b. new or revised non-award courses, units or modules, except those offered without charge which require approval by the DVCE
- c. new or revised units that result in credit towards an award course unless they result in a revision to a course covered by clause 11.

(15) The PVCRT&PE will approve any changes to award course specifications not covered by clause 11.

Partnerships

(16) Where a proposal for a new course or revision to an existing course involves an academic partnership relating to course delivery the academic partnership must be approved in accordance with the [Academic Partnerships procedure](#).

Course and unit reviews

(17) A tiered approach to reviews is implemented to ensure the ongoing viability, quality and strategic alignment of courses offered by the University. This includes:

- a. ongoing monitoring and review of the quality of units (under clauses 20-21)
- b. ongoing monitoring of course development and delivery by course teams
- c. annual reviews of coursework programs (under clauses 22-23)
- d. periodic comprehensive (major) reviews of coursework programs (under clauses 24-26) which are required before course continuation (under clauses 27-29)
- e. reviews of HDRs (under clauses 30-33).

Reviews may result in the discontinuation, suspension or revision of courses or units.

(18) Course teams will develop a plan for each coursework program or group of related coursework programs that includes course specifications, evidence of course performance and priorities for improvement. Course and unit reviews are conducted with reference to the course plan/s.

(19) The DVCE will provide an annual report to Academic Board summarising the outcomes of major and annual reviews and external professional accreditation of courses and actions arising from those reviews.

Unit monitoring and review

(20) The quality of units in coursework programs or HDRs will be monitored through the administration of an approved student survey in accordance with the [Evaluation of Teaching and Units procedure](#).

(21) Schools and relevant course teams will review the outcomes of the student survey and evidence of unit performance each time a unit is offered and the Unit Chair will develop and implement a plan to address issues identified with reference to criteria stipulated by the DVCE and faculty. Where negative outcomes are sustained, the unit may be discontinued or intakes into the unit may be suspended until issues are addressed to the satisfaction of the DVCE.

Annual course reviews – coursework programs

(22) Course teams will conduct annual reviews of courses or groups of related courses and provide to Faculty Boards a brief response to any negative change in viability or quality, including proposals for revisions to the course plan.

(23) Faculty Boards provide a summary of areas for attention or action in accordance with criteria stipulated by the DVCE. Repeated negative annual course review outcomes may trigger a major course review or course discontinuation.

Major course reviews – coursework programs

(24) Faculties will conduct major reviews of each course and prepare reports in accordance with an approved template, usually every five years. The reviews will be informed by:

- a. recommendations from panels convened for the purpose (in accordance with [Schedule A: Major Course Reviews](#))

[Panels Composition](#))

- b. external referencing of the success of student cohorts and student satisfaction against comparable courses
- c. external referencing of assessment methods and grading (under clauses 35-37)
- d. strategic priorities of the University
- e. the results of regular interim monitoring of the quality of teaching, student progress and unit delivery.

(25) The DVCE in consultation with faculties will prepare annual schedules for major course reviews. The DVCE may grant a full or partial exemption from a major course review where a course has undergone a review by a professional accreditation body in the previous 12 months or in other exceptional circumstances.

(26) Major course review reports will include proposals and timelines for changes to course specifications and other actions to improve course quality where issues have been identified.

Course continuations

(27) All existing courses must be approved for continuation before the expiry of the previous approval period (normally five years). Faculties will develop applications for course continuation in accordance with an approved template. Applications will be accompanied by a major course review report developed in accordance with clauses 24 and 26.

(28) Proposals for course continuation require endorsement by Faculty Boards and approval by the DVCE on strategic and business grounds. Applications for course continuation, accompanied by course specifications for the upcoming period, also require approval by the Academic Board on academic grounds.

(29) Interim course continuations may be granted in exceptional circumstances by the DVCE.

Reviews of higher degrees by research

(30) The Research and Research Training Committee (RRTC) will monitor the performance of HDRs and conduct periodic quality assurance reviews as appropriate.

(31) The RRTC will review the research training activities of Faculties and Institutes annually in accordance with a process approved by Academic Board.

(32) The RRTC will report annually to the Academic Board in relation to the performance of HDRs, the outcomes of quality assurance reviews and research training reviews.

(33) Comprehensive reviews of HDRs will be conducted every five years. The reviews will be informed by:

- a. recommendations from panels convened for the purpose by the PVCRT&PE that include members external to the University
- b. external referencing of the success of student cohorts and student satisfaction against comparable courses
- c. strategic priorities of the University
- d. the results of regular interim monitoring as set out in clauses 30 and 31.

Reviews by professional accreditation bodies

(34) Faculty Boards provide to the DVCE annual reports on new or continuing courses that have undergone a review by a professional accreditation body in the previous 12 months.

External referencing of assessment – coursework programs

(35) During the period for which a course has been approved, faculties will:

- a. externally reference assessment methods and the grading of student achievement using a methodology approved by the Faculty Board (or nominee) which meets or exceeds the requirements set out in clauses 36-37) and
- b. report on the outcomes and resulting improvements to assessment in the next major course review report.

(36) The methodology adopted for external referencing of assessment will meet the following requirements:

- a. Sufficient units will be selected from the course or suite of related courses to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes related to discipline knowledge, problem solving, critical thinking and communication (in line with the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#) specifications.
- b. External reviewers will be selected who are suitably qualified and have current knowledge and skills in the relevant discipline and experience of course leadership.
- c. The reviewers will evaluate the validity of assessment tasks and level of achievement demonstrated in de-identified samples of student work with reference to nationally agreed external standards (including the [AQF](#) and discipline standards where applicable).
- d. The reviewers will be provided with necessary contextual information, including the learning outcomes, the University's grading schema and marking criteria/rubrics.
- e. The review will involve the verification of student grades or the remarking of work with grades and marking removed.

(37) Variations to the requirements specified in clause 27 may be approved by the DVCE (or nominee) on a case-by-case basis. Professional accreditation may satisfy the requirements of clause 36.

Course discontinuations and suspensions of intake

(38) Proposals to discontinue a course may arise from annual or major course reviews or other faculty or University reviews. Faculties will develop proposals for course discontinuation in accordance with an approved template. Proposals require endorsement by Faculty Boards (and, in the case of HDRs, the PVCRT&PE) and approval by the DVCE (on advice from the CSG where requested by the DVCE).

Responsibilities to students affected by coursework discontinuations or revisions

(39) Students affected by course discontinuations or revisions include those enrolled in the course, on intermission from the course, who have been offered a place in the course or who have deferred an offer of a place in the course.

(40) Students affected by the revision of a course will be transferred to the revised version of the course at the earliest opportunity.

(41) Students affected by the discontinuation of a course will be provided with reasonable opportunities to complete the course, or to transfer to an equivalent or suitable alternative course. The period during which students must complete a discontinued course will be determined by the Faculty Board. This will be the time needed for enrolled part-time students to complete the course, up to twice the full-time equivalent duration of the course.

(42) The faculty will contact students affected by the discontinuation or revision of a course and advise them of available options and the maximum period for completion (in the case of discontinued courses), taking into account the University's obligations under the [Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act](#). Where these obligations are unclear, faculties should seek advice from the University's International Quality and Compliance Unit. Deakin International will contact international students who have not yet enrolled.

(43) Individual study plans will be developed for students enrolled in a discontinued course or whose progress may be affected by a course revision.

(44) When approval is granted for the discontinuation of a course, no new offers will be issued for places in the course after the date on which approval is granted for the discontinuation. The Executive Dean may make exceptions for students who are likely to incur significant costs as a result of the discontinuation of the course.

(45) Students who transfer to an alternative course will be granted credit for units that they have completed as part of the discontinued course, in accordance with relevant University policies and procedures.

(46) Students who do not wish to continue at the University will be refunded fees they have paid for the discontinued course, except for any units they have attempted.

Section 6 - Definitions

(47) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Combined course: approved combination of courses of the University that leads to the conferral of two awards in accordance with [Regulation 5.2\(2\) Higher Education Award Courses—General](#).
- b. Coursework program: a course of study excluding higher degrees by research.
- c. Course specification: a defined and approved set of course design and delivery elements required for each course under the Higher Education Standards Framework.
- d. Course team: a group of at least four continuing or fixed-term (term of three years or greater) academic staff members, including representatives from each campus on which the course is offered and at least one active researcher, appointed by the Faculty Board to coordinate the design, ongoing development and review of a course (with the exception of higher degrees by research).
- e. Executive Dean: includes any Institute Director.
- f. Faculty: includes any institute that is approved under University Regulations to offer specific categories of higher education courses.
- g. Faculty Board: includes any institute board of studies.
- h. Higher degree by research (HDR): a program of advanced study and research approved by the Academic Board.
- i. Higher education award course: a course that leads to a higher education award of the University.
- j. Higher education non-award course: a course, unit or module, offered by the University that does not lead to an award of the University.
- k. Joint course: a course offered by Deakin with one or more higher education providers in Australia or overseas, leading to the conferral of a single award in accordance with [Regulation 5.2\(2\) Higher Education Awards Courses - General](#).
- l. Unit: a component of a course (excluding HDR research projects) having a discrete designated code and title in which students enrol and complete specific work requirements. A unit:
 - i. is commonly a quarter of a trimester workload
 - ii. carries a specific value towards an award.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	22nd April 2016
Review Date	21st April 2019
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	21st April 2016
Expiry Date	4th December 2017
Implementation Officer	Paul Cardwell Academic Programs Manager +61 3 52278276
Enquiries Contact	Paul Cardwell Academic Programs Manager +61 3 52278276