Arrangements for Third Party Delivery of Coursework Programs Procedure

1 Purpose

To provide a framework for arrangements relating to Coursework Program delivery by Third Party Providers that aligns with the University's strategic objectives and is quality assured.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to contractual agreements, including any changes that may need to be agreed by other Third Party Providers, that allow a Third Party Provider, on behalf of the University, to deliver some or all of a UniSQ Coursework Program that leads to the award of an Australian regulated higher education qualification.

This procedure does not apply to:

- Coursework Dual Awards and Joint Degrees;
- Licensing and other commercial arrangements;
- International and domestic Research and Research training partnerships;
- Study support centres located both within Australia and offshore; and
- Student mobility programs.

3 Procedure Overview

This procedure sets out the processes for assessing, establishing, monitoring and reviewing arrangements for Coursework Program delivery between Third Party Providers and the University.

4 Procedures

University programs and Courses may be offered onshore and offshore in collaboration between the University and a Third Party Provider, or programs and Courses may be offered independently by the University.

4.1 Stage 1 - Due Diligence

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4.1.1 Initiating a proposal

Proposals may be initiated by any staff member using the Education Partner Application form, available from the UniSQ Hub, which sets out the minimum requirements appropriate and proportionate to each prospective Third Party Arrangement. For this process, this staff member acts as the Proposal Initiator.

4.1.2 Consultation

As part of the initiation process, consultation must take place as set out in the table below, and with all academic units expected to be involved in teaching and/or service delivery under the Third Party Arrangement.

Type of Proposed Arrangement	Initial Consultation
Proposed international arrangements	• UniSQ International (UniSQI) • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) • Dean (Academic) • Heads of School/College
Proposed domestic arrangements	• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) • Dean (Academic) • Heads of School/College

4.1.3 Scope

The Proposal Initiator is responsible for the due diligence process and must complete the relevant section of the Education Partner Application form.

The due diligence process will consider a range of issues, including:

1. capacity to enter into a contract with the University;
2. ownership, governance, financial and legal structure and probity of the proposed Third Party Provider;
3. the Third Party Provider's capacity to deliver programs, Courses and/or services to an

appropriate standard and to fulfil obligations under the proposed Third Party Arrangement including appropriate staff qualifications and experience, if relevant, physical resources and facilities, Student support services, risk management and internal quality assurance processes;

4. ability to comply with all applicable laws, regulatory requirements and University policies in the provision of services;

5. financial sustainability and regulatory status of the Third Party Provider;

6. alignment of the proposed arrangement with the University's vision, values and strategic priorities;

7. the extent to which the arrangement is likely to enhance the domestic and/or international reputation of the University;

8. benefits to the University from the proposed partnership arrangement; and

9. possible impact on existing Third Party Arrangements.

Stage 1 partnership requests must be endorsed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) prior to submission to ensure all aspects have been adequately considered and appropriate consultation has been undertaken.

4.1.4 Review

Proposals will undergo a documentation review process before progressing to the next stage. The Proposal Initiator is responsible for providing any requested additional documents and evidence to assist those undertaking the review to assess potential risks and make informed decisions.

For international arrangements, offshore and onshore, review of the information provided in the Education Partner Application form is conducted by UniSQ International Partnerships, in consultation with the Dean (Academic).

For domestic arrangements, review of the information is conducted by the Dean (Academic), in consultation with Heads of School.

If any facilities and/or learning resources provided by the Third Party Provider are to be used in the delivery of University programs and Courses, a site visit will be coordinated by UniSQ International Partnerships at this stage unless there are exceptional circumstances. The purpose of the visit is to establish the appropriateness of facilities and resources and the equivalence of standards compared to University facilities and resources.

4.2 Stage 2 - Approval

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Following completion of all reviews, documentation will be collated and forwarded to the International Partner Operations Committee (IPOC) by the committee services officer.

Following consideration of the proposal by IPOC, the committee services officer will advise the Proposal Initiator of the outcome. If in-principle approval is conveyed to the Proposal Initiator, the Proposal Initiator may proceed to preparing a detailed business case for a potential Third Party Arrangement. Where the proposal involves development of a new academic program, an academic proposal is also required.

The Proposal Initiator is responsible for the development of the business plan and where required, the academic proposal.

4.2.1 Business Plan

The business plan must be fully costed and include a risk analysis for new Third Party Arrangements and for significant changes to an existing Third Party Arrangement.

The business plan must outline an exit strategy, i.e. appropriate teach-out arrangements for its own Students if the Third Party Provider ceases operations, the agreement is terminated or when the agreement comes to an end.

For guidance on developing a business plan, refer to Finance and Business Solutions.

4.2.2 Academic Proposal

For Coursework Programs, the development, consultation and approval process of the academic proposal is set out in the Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy, the Program Accreditation Procedure and the Program Development Team Schedule.

Articulation or Credit Transfer Arrangements that form part of an academic proposal will be managed in accordance with the Credit and Exemption Procedure.

4.2.3 In-principle Approval

Once development of the business plan and, where required, academic proposal is completed, the Proposal Initiator forwards all documentation to Partners@usq.edu.au.

Following consideration of the proposed new partnership or proposed significant change to an existing partnership by UniSQ International Strategy Committee (ISC), the ISC committee services officer will either return documentation to the Proposal Initiator to make revisions, or forward the proposal to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) for in-principle approval before contract negotiation can begin.

In the case that revisions to the proposal are necessary, the Proposal Initiator must resubmit documentation to Partners@usq.edu.au for reconsideration by ISC.

Following in-principle approval from VCE, ISC reports the decision to commence contract

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negotiations to Academic Board and Council for noting.

4.3 Stage 3 - Establishment

4.3.1 Agreement content and approval

Legal agreement templates approved by the Legal Office are the basis of all University-initiated Third Party Arrangement contract negotiations and all contracts will managed through the University's centralised contract management system.

The nature of the partnership and the level of risk exposure will determine the scope of the agreement.

As a minimum, the agreement will set out:

1. the scope and extent of the functions being undertaken by the Third Party Provider and the rights and responsibilities of the University and the Third Party Provider in respect of the agreement;
2. mechanisms enabling monitoring, evaluation and quality control for the arrangement (including the use of comparative data and appropriate moderation processes) that ensure the University retains responsibility for academic standards and quality of the outcomes involved, and that the expected Student Learning Outcomes are equivalent to those for a program delivered solely by the University;
3. staffing arrangements, where relevant, including required qualifications and/or professional experience in the relevant discipline;
4. arrangements for the regular review of deliverables pursuant to the agreement, including performance measures;
5. marketing and promotional activities, and ensuring that representation of the University's educational offerings and charges is accurate and not misleading;
6. arrangements for amendments to the agreement, renewal and termination of agreement including provisions for teach-out; and
7. the dispute resolution process.

Agreements will be prepared and negotiated as set out in the table below.

International Agreements	
Agreement prepared by UniSQ International Partnerships in consultation with:	• Legal Office • Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)

	• Provost • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), or nominee
Agreement negotiated with potential partner by:	• Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), or nominee
Domestic Agreements	
Agreement prepared by UniSQ International Partnerships in consultation with:	• Legal Office • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), or nominee
Agreement negotiated with potential partner by:	• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), or nominee

Once the Vice-Chancellor and the Third Party Provider have signed the Third Party Agreement, UniSQ International Partnerships will notify ISC that the agreement is fully executed and of the commencement date, as stated in the agreement.

The Vice-Chancellor will advise Academic Board and Council at the next scheduled meeting of the execution of the partnership agreement and the commencement date.

4.4 Stage 4 - Management

As part of governance arrangements, the University and the Third Party Provider will appoint a representative at senior management level to liaise regarding operation of the agreement.

For international agreements, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) may nominate a staff member who will be the key liaison with Academic Affairs for all matters related to international partnerships. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) may nominate a staff member to act as the key liaison with UniSQ International Partnerships for all matters related to international partnership management.

For domestic agreements, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) may nominate a staff member who will act as the key liaison for all matters related to domestic partnerships.

In consultation with Academic Affairs liaison staff, UniSQ International Partnerships will collate data from relevant units and develop an Annual Activity Schedule for each Third Party Arrangement, setting out key activity, training and/or information session dates and responsible officers to facilitate regular contact and effective collaboration between the parties.

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4.5 Stage 5 - Monitoring

4.5.1 Quality Assurance

In accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework, the University:

1. is accountable for the quality of education and any services delivered by a Third Party Provider on behalf of the University where these are related to the issue of an Australian qualification; and

2. must ensure that the Third Party Arrangement meets and continues to meet the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework.

The University will conduct financial audits and quality assurance reviews of programs, Courses and/or services as part of the University quality assurance cycle, as specified in the agreement. The purpose of these reviews is to assure academic and business quality in the programs being delivered by Third Party Providers and to monitor any performance improvement activities.

4.5.2 Joint Management Committees

A Joint Management Committee (JMC) will be established for each Third Party Arrangement to provide advice and recommendations and will meet at least three times each calendar year, or as per the relevant Agreement. Semester by semester quality assurance reports and issues identified by the relevant Academic Affairs and/or UniSQ International Partnerships are to be tabled in a timely manner for discussion at the respective Provider JMC meetings.

Any resulting advice and recommendations from the JMC will be included in the annual partner report to IPOC and will be taken into account in agreeing on operational Key Performance Indicators and targets in relation to the Provider's delivery of the services for each calendar year of the agreement.

Where a Third Party Provider breaches the terms of a Third Party Arrangement, the Provider must investigate the reasons for the breach and provide the University with a detailed plan for rectifying the issue. Failure to comply with an agreed rectification plan may result in termination of the Agreement, in accordance with the terms of the contract.

4.6 Stage 6 - Reporting

The University may request reports from the Third Party Provider at any time during the term of the agreement in order for the University to satisfy itself that the Provider is performing its obligations under the agreement.

At a minimum, UniSQ International Partnerships and the relevant Academic Affairs will

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coordinate annual reporting to examine the extent to which each party has fulfilled their contractual obligations for the previous academic year and to inform continuous improvement. This may include:

Information	Responsibility	Reporting Activity
Load and enrolment data	Academic Quality Unit	IPOC reviews annual partner reports and makes recommendations, if any, to ISC
Student academic performance data	Academic Affairs	
Student Grievances and Appeals	Academic Quality Unit	
Student support processes	Students Portfolio	
Financial data	Finance and Business Solutions	
Feedback/issues	JMC	
Provides annual reports to ISC on Third Party Provider performance	IPOC	ISC reviews IPOC recommendations, if any, and endorses to VCE
Provides annual summary report to the Vice-Chancellor, through VCE, on overall Third Party Provider performance	ISC	VCE reviews Third Party Provider performance
Reports to Council and its standing committees, as required	VCE	Council reviews Third Party Provider performance
Reports annually to Academic Board, via Education Quality Committee, by the date specified in the Academic Board Business Schedule	ISC	Academic Board monitors academic quality assurance of Third Party Arrangements
Reports annually to Council by the date specified in the Council Business Schedule	Academic Board	Council monitors academic quality assurance of Third Party Arrangements

Where there are International Students on Student visas accepted or studying in a program delivered by a Third Party Provider, any changes to the agreement with the Third Party must be approved by TEQSA prior to the changes being made.

4.7 Stage 7 - Review and renewal of agreement

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Decisions regarding renewal of Third Party Arrangements will be informed by regular semester and annual partner reviews and any audits conducted or authorised by the University regarding the performance of the Third Party Provider's obligations under the agreement, and the benefits of the Arrangement to the University and the Provider.

Where a final review prior to renewal of a Third Party Arrangement is a contractual requirement, this must commence no later than nine months before contract expiry.

Responsibilities and authority to approve renewal of an agreement are the same as for initial establishment, outlined in section 4.3 of this procedure.

4.7.1 Termination of an agreement

Third Party Arrangements may be terminated in advance of the expiry date of an agreement according to the termination or exit clauses incorporated in the agreement.

Termination of an agreement is approved by the Vice-Chancellor, on the recommendation of ISC.

Where an agreement is terminated in advance of the agreement's nominated expiry date, appropriate advice, support and transition arrangements must be initiated for currently enrolled Students, as outlined in the agreement.

4.8 Roles and Responsibilities

The key stages and steps for a Third Party Arrangement are set out in the flowchart below.

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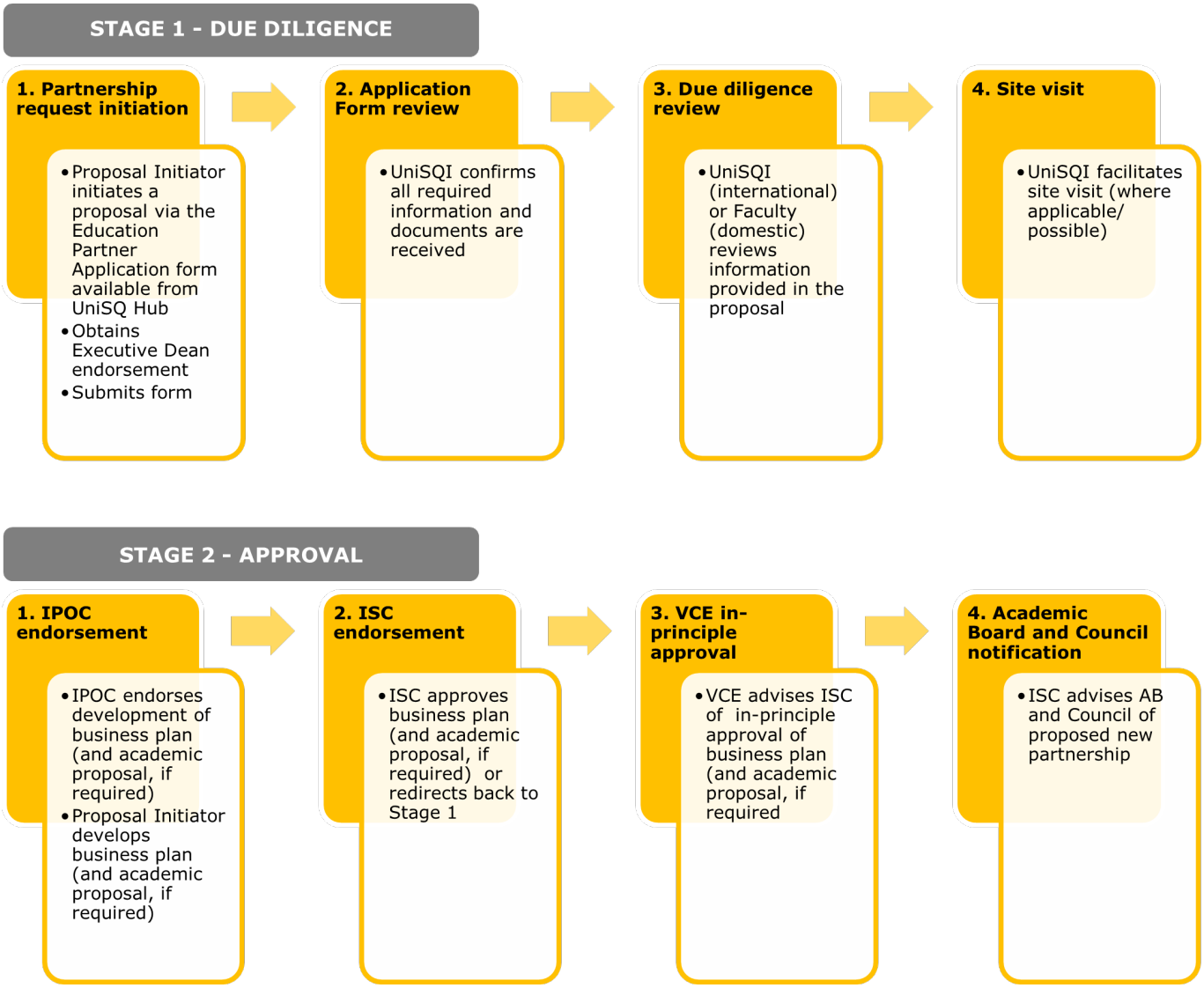

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STAGE 3 - ESTABLISHMENT

1. Agreement negotiation

- Agreement negotiated by UniSQI in consultation with relevant stakeholders

2. Agreement finalisation

- Agreement finalised using approved template and lodged via contract management system
- VC approves via system

3. Academmic Board and Council notification

- VC advises of commencement of agreement

STAGE 4 - MANAGEMENT

1. Appointment of liaison staff

- PVC(I) appoints UniSQI liaison and DVC(AA) appoints Faculty liaison for international partner management matters
- DVC(AA) appoints faculty liaison for domestic partnership management matters

2. Annual activity schedule

- UniSQI collates activity data from relevant units and assigns dates and roles to facilitate effective collaboration

3. Activities executed

- UniSQI/AA delivers activity training/ information as per schedule

STAGE 5 - MONITORING

1. Partner performance monitoring

- AA monitors academic KPIs; Financial Services monitors commercial KPIs
- UniSQI facilitates JMC meetings
- UniSQI/AA develops external and internal reports as part of quality assurance cycle

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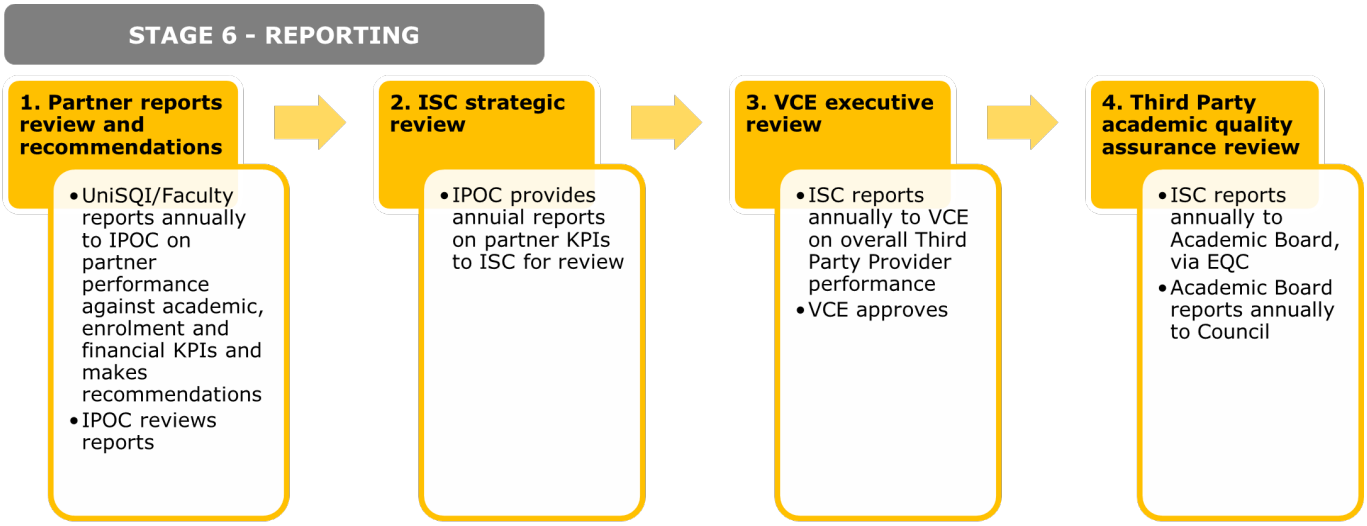

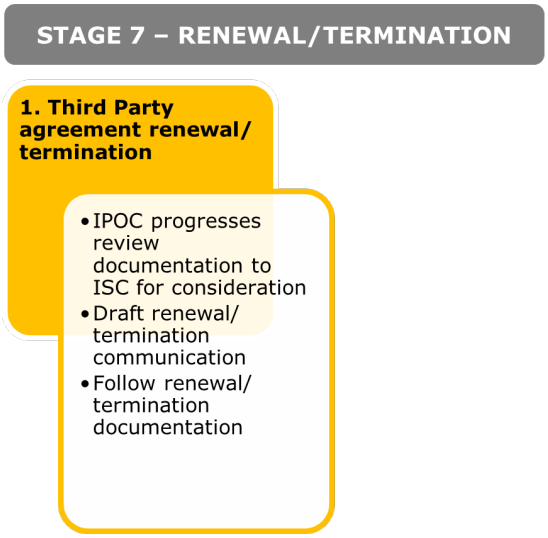

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Procedure Information

Accountable Officer	Provost

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Responsible Officer	Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Educational Partnerships Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	31/1/2022
Effective Date	31/1/2022
Review Date	20/1/2026
Relevant Legislation	*Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy Admissions Policy Enrolment Policy
Related Procedures	Admissions Procedure Credit and Exemption Procedure English Language Proficiency Requirements Procedure Enrolment Procedure Program Accreditation Procedure Transfer Between Providers Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Australian Qualifications Framework Education Partner Application form
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Articulation Arrangement A defined pathway that allows a Student to progress from a completed program of study with another education provider to a University

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program. Admission to the University program may be with or without Credit.

Course

A discrete element of a program, normally undertaken over a single Study Period, in which the Student enrols, and on completion of which the Student is awarded a grade.

Coursework Program

A sequence of study consisting predominantly of Coursework.

Credit

The number of units, up to a specified limit, granted towards a University Award on the basis of either previous Formal, Informal or Non-formal Learning. Credit reduces the number of Courses required to complete an Award Program.

Credit Transfer Arrangement

A negotiated agreement with another educational institution or accrediting authority that provides Students with agreed and consistent Credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes.

Dual Award

A partnership arrangement involving one or more Coursework Programs that leads to two separate Awards, one awarded by University and one awarded by the partner institution. There is usually a mutual recognition of Credit between the institutions to allow Students to complete both Awards in a shorter time than if they were completed separately.

International Student

A Student who is not an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen, an Australian Permanent Resident or the holder of an Australian permanent humanitarian visa.

Joint Degree

The awarding of a single qualification which is jointly conferred by the University and one or more partner institutions. In such arrangements, each institution delivers their own courses/content.

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	Key Performance Indicators The key measures of activities the University is undertaking to achieve the aims of the strategic plan. Research Research is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative. Student A person who is enrolled in a UniSQ Upskill Course or who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled. Third Party Arrangement An arrangement made by the University with another party (in Australia or overseas) to deliver some or all of a higher education program that leads to the Award of an Australian regulated higher education qualification. Third Party Provider A party with which the University has a Third Party Arrangement for the purposes of delivering some or all of a higher education program that leads to the award of an Australian regulated higher education qualification. University The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
Keywords	
Record No	19/1305PL

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