

Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure

1 Purpose

To outline the process to approve changes to an existing accredited program, including suspension or discontinuation.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all Award and Non-Award Coursework Programs and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs offered by the University.

3 Procedure overview

This Procedure outlines the process to approve changes to existing accredited programs, including suspension and discontinuation. Program changes are undertaken via the online accreditation portal.

4 Procedures

All proposed changes to a program must be designed to ensure that the program continues to meet all criteria for the accreditation of a program.

In the case of programs that are the responsibility of USQ College or the Graduate Research School, the respective Director or Dean replaces the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) in the approval processes detailed in this Procedure.

4.1 Approval timelines

4.1.1 Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) timelines

For all QTAC listed programs, the following approval timelines provide the University with sufficient time to request changes through to QTAC.

Program	Required Approval Date(s)
Changes to existing programs	Programs offered in the first half of the year - approved by 31 August of the previous Academic Year
	Programs offered in the second half of the year - approved by 30 November of the previous Academic Year

Discontinuation of existing programs	Approved by 31 August for implementation in the following Academic Year
Suspension of existing programs	Approved by 31 August for implementation in the following Academic Year

4.1.2 Direct entry publication

For changes to programs not offered through QTAC where Students are admitted to the University via direct entry applications, timelines are determined by the relevant faculty, in consultation with Student Services, to ensure sufficient time has been allocated for approval and publication.

4.2 Expedited pathway

4.2.1 Grounds for request

An expedited approval pathway enables existing programs to receive re-accreditation approval outside of the standard Committee approval processes. Grounds for requesting an expedited pathway are:

1. in response to Sentinel Indicator trends identified in curriculum quality reports, including University Course and program evaluation processes;
2. in response to recommendations related to program structural change from professional accreditation reviews;
3. in response to issues raised by Students enrolled in the program;
4. to avoid putting the University at significant risk and/or financial loss;
5. the result of changes approved to another program that impact directly on the program's structure; or
6. in response to a request from the University's executive.

4.2.2 Approving a request

An expedited pathway is made in writing by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) to the Provost for approval. The request outlines:

1. the reasons for requesting expedition;
2. the consequences if the expedited process is not followed; and

3. the anticipated accreditation or approval date.

The Academic Quality Unit informs the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) of the decision of the Provost regarding the request to expedite.

4.2.3 Expedited pathway working group

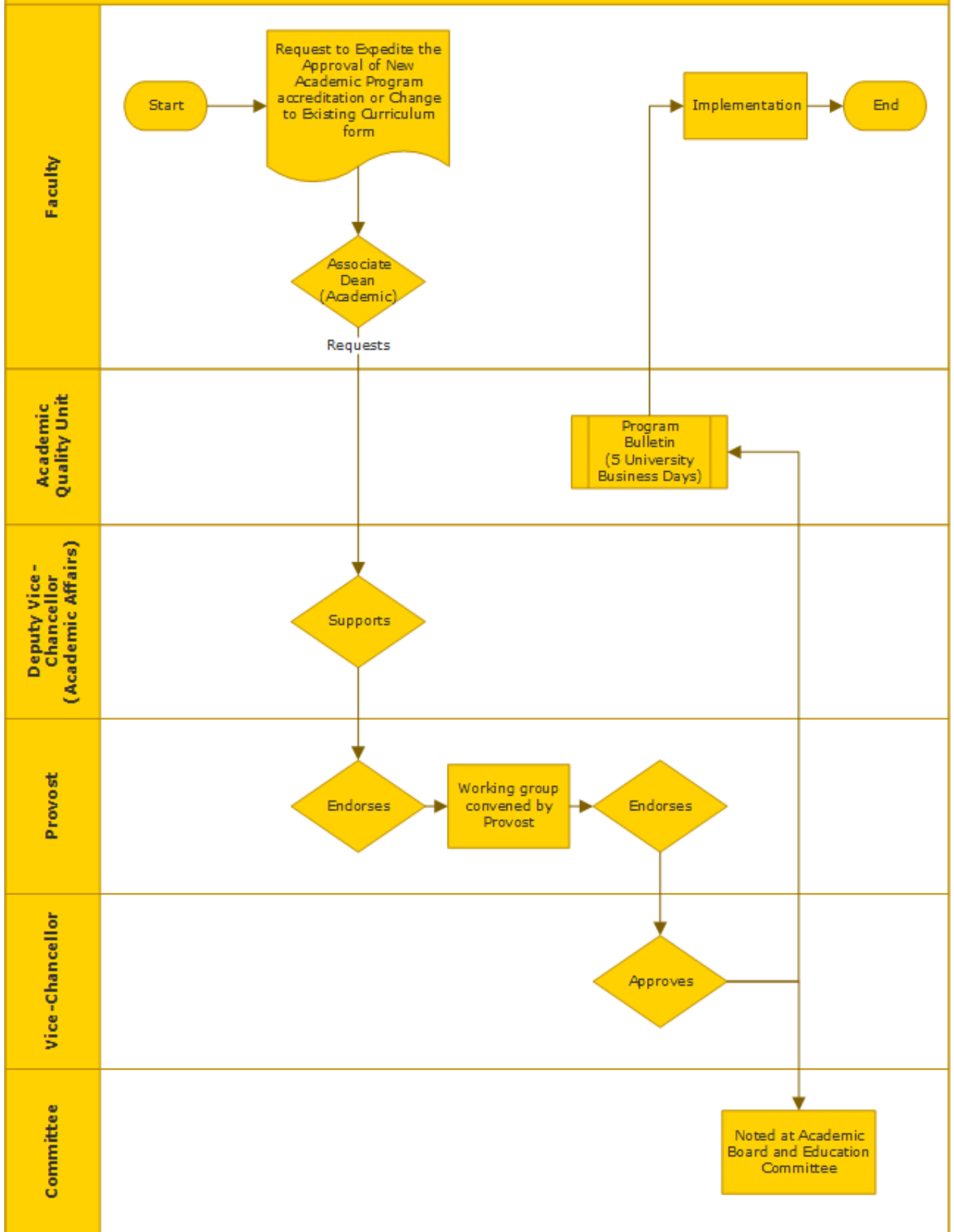
If approved, an expedited pathway requires the establishment of a working group. The working group comprises of the following members:

Chairperson	Working group members
Provost	Chairperson, Academic Board Chairperson, Education Committee Deputy Chairperson, Academic Board Deputy Chairperson, Education Committee Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) Other relevant staff as determined by the working group Chairperson.

The expedited approval process replaces step 3 in the table in section 4.4.7.

Any Decisions made will be reported to the next meeting of Education Committee and Academic Board for noting.

Expedited Approval Pathway



4.3 Program re-accreditation

4.3.1 Review cycle

The continuation of the accreditation of an existing program (or a suite of related programs) is an outcome of a successful five-year quality review. The quality review of the program is conducted in accordance with the Program Quality Assurance and Re-accreditation Procedure. A program can be re-accredited for a minimum of five (5) years and a maximum of seven (7) years, where an extension is approved by the Provost. Refer to the Program Quality Assurance and Re-accreditation Procedure for further details.

4.3.2 Review recommendations

If the outcomes of a program's re-accreditation review require changes to Learning Outcomes or the structure of the program, those changes are considered and approved through the program change process, as described below.

4.4 Program changes

There are three different categories of program changes:

1. substantial
2. limited
3. administrative.

The authority to approve changes to programs varies depending on the category of proposed change. Where changes to a program are not easily categorised according to the types of changes (listed in Table 1 below), the Chairperson of Education Committee will determine the appropriate level of approval required.

Changes to any of the following will initiate a new program accreditation process, in accordance with the Program Accreditation Procedure:

- category type or AQF level
- Credit value or volume of learning
- Honours type (end-on or embedded)
- Field of Education (FOE).

Table 1: Detailed Program Level Changes

Change	Final Endorsement	Approval	Type
<p>Changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Outcomes • Program structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ ratio of Core to Elective Course options; ◦ adding or removing Study Components; ◦ adding or removing Core Courses. • Mandatory professional placement • Details on Testamur (Study Components listed) 	Academic Board	Vice-Chancellor	Program change - substantial
<p>Changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title 	Provost	Vice-Chancellor's Executive	Program change - substantial
<p>Changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study Components • Nested Qualification programs (adding or removing exit or entry programs) • Admission requirements 	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	Vice-Chancellor	Program change - substantial

<p>(mandatory requirements)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availabilities (adding, changing or removing campus of offer) • Teaching Period • Delivery mode 			
<p>Changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible faculty or school • Fee type (e.g., Common wealth-supported, full-fee paying) • Student cohort (domestic or international) 	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	Vice-Chancellor	Program change - substantial
<p>Changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ adding existing Study Components ◦ adding or removing existing Elective Courses 	Head of School	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	Program change - limited
<p>Changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program handbook • Professional accreditation section • Requirements for 	Head of School	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	Program change - limited

professional experience placements			
<p>Changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QTAC information (undergraduate) • Description (for AHEGS) • Inherent requirements • Program rules • Professional accreditation status or requirements • Details on transcript (Study Components listed) 	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	Provost	Program change - administrative

It is recommended that for all substantial changes to an existing program, a Program Development Team is established (refer to the Program Development Team Schedule).

4.4.1 Grounds for program changes

The grounds for program change typically fit within one of the following:

1. responds to Sentinel Indicator trends in curriculum quality reports, including University Course and program evaluation processes (including requests from Boards of Examiners)
2. responds to recommendations related to program structural change from professional accreditation reviews
3. responds to outcomes of the three-year interim program review (refer to the Program Quality Assurance and Re-accreditation Procedure)
4. demonstrably increases Student demand for the program, for example, through the introduction of a new topical Study Component
5. makes the program more economically viable

6. results from changes approved to another program that impact directly on the program's structure.

4.4.2 Changes to Double Degrees

A structural change to a program that is also a component degree in a cross-faculty Double Degree requires the faculty owner to consult with the other faculty involved in the Double Degree to ensure that the requirements of both degrees are met in the revised structure. The consultation and outcomes should be included as part of the approval documentation.

4.4.3 Program change proposal

The program change proposal details the case for making changes to the program. A new program outline is required to document all program changes. The new program outline is the revised version intended to replace the current program outline.

Program change proposals requiring Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) or Education Committee approval are presented on the same template. A separate template is used for changes requiring Provost approval.

4.4.4 Study Component changes

Study Components are initially approved as part of the accreditation of a program deemed as the 'owning' program. A Study Component can be a requirement in multiple programs but is tied to the program for which the Study Component was specifically designed to support or extend that program's Learning Outcomes or to the program that has the most direct discipline relationship

Study Components are approved, modified, suspended or discontinued by the owning program. The consultation process for any changes to a Study Component should ensure that all other programs requiring the Study Component are informed of the proposed changes.

4.4.5 Program Director responsibility

The Program Director documents the proposed changes using the template appropriate to category of change and revises the existing program outline incorporating the proposed changes. Any new Courses or Study Components associated with the proposed change are documented using the Course Outline and Study Component Outline templates.

4.4.6 Changes requiring Vice-Chancellor approval (substantial)

The following table outlines the required steps in the process.

Step	Responsibilities

1. Consultation	<p>Prior to submission to Education Committee, program change proposals normally are considered by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee 2. Head of School 3. Associate Dean (Academic) 4. Faculty Academic Program Committee
2. Endorsement by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) considers and endorses the change proposal.
3. Endorsement by Education Committee	Education Committee considers the academic merit of the proposed changes to the program based on the documentation, by considering any transition or teach-out arrangements relating to the proposed changes. The Committee may also take into consideration the support of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).
4. Notification	If the proposal is endorsed by Education Committee, the Secretary of Education Committee sends the Committee minutes to the relevant faculty once they have been approved by the Chairperson.
5. Endorsement by Academic Board	Academic Board considers the academic merit of the proposed changes to the program based on the documentation, by taking into account any issues raised by Education Committee and recommends the program to the Vice-Chancellor for approval.
6. Approval authority	The Vice-Chancellor considers the academic merit of the proposed program based on the accreditation documentation and any issues raised by Academic Board.

4.4.7 Changes requiring Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) approval (limited)

The following table outlines the required steps in the process.

Step	Responsibilities
1. Endorsement	All program change proposals must be considered and endorsed by the:

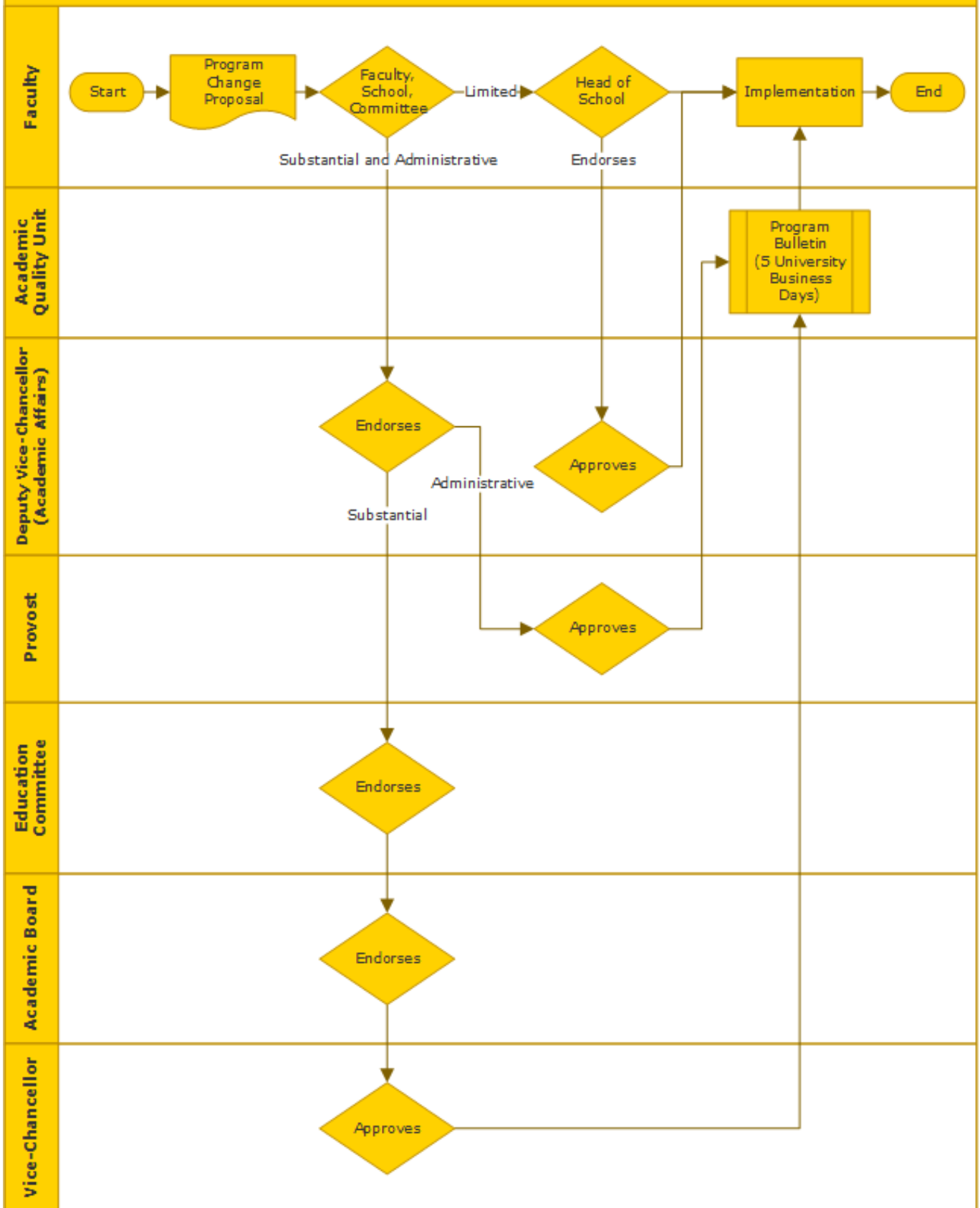
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee 2. Head of School 3. Associate Dean (Academic) 4. Faculty Academic Program Committee
2. Approval	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) considers the academic merit of the proposed changes to the program based on the documentation, by considering any transition or teach-out arrangements relating to the proposed changes. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) may also consider any resourcing impacts.
3. Notification	If the proposal is approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), the faculty advises the appropriate staff.

4.4.8 Changes requiring Provost approval (administrative)

The following table outlines the required steps in the process:

Step	Responsibilities
1. Consultation	<p>Prior to submission to the Provost, program change proposals normally are considered by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee 2. Head of School 3. Associate Dean (Academic) 4. Faculty Academic Program Committee
2. Approval	The Provost considers the merit of the proposed changes to the Program based on the documentation
3. Notification	If the proposal is approved by the Provost, written advice is provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) by the Academic Quality Unit.

Substantial, Limited and Administrative Program Change



4.4.9 Program bulletin (program change approval)

Following approval of changes to a program, the faculty drafts a program bulletin (program change approval) using the relevant template and submits it to the Academic Quality Unit for approval to publish by the Provost.

4.4.10 Reporting

An annual summary report of all limited, substantial and administrative changes approved in the previous year are submitted for noting to the first meeting of the calendar year of Academic Board.

4.5 Suspension of intake into a program or Study Component

Summary of program or Study Component suspension steps	
Steps	Approval authority
Step 1: Proposal to suspend a program or Study Component	Provost in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor
Step 2: Program bulletin	Provost

4.5.1 Intake suspension

Suspension of intake means that:

1. there can be no new intake of Students into that program or Study Component for a specified period (normally one calendar year) from a specified date; and
2. at the end of the specified period, the program or Study Component is reinstated, or the suspension will be extended or the program or Study Component will be discontinued.

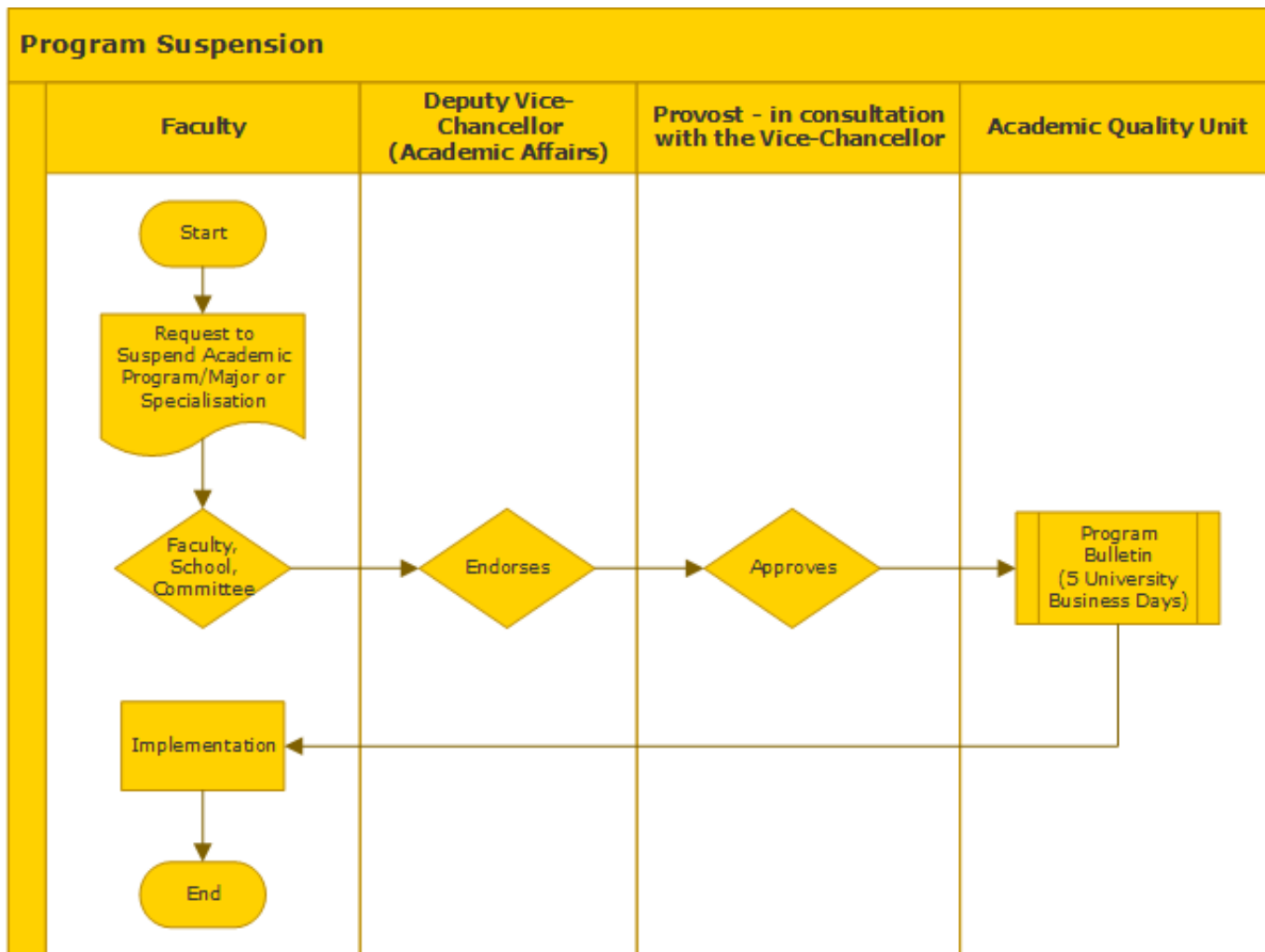
4.5.2 Timeframes and consultation

If it is proposed that there be a suspension of intake into a program or Study Component, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) initiates the process for approval to suspend intake and consults all interested parties as soon as possible.

4.5.3 Program Director role

The Program Director completes the proposal to suspend a program or Study Component template. The following table outlines the required steps in the process:

Step	Responsibilities
1. Consultation	<p>Prior to submission to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), proposals to suspend a program or Study Component normally are considered by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee 2. Head of School 3. Associate Dean (Academic) 4. Faculty Academic Program Committee
2. Endorsement	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) considers and endorses the suspension proposal.
3. Approval	Following endorsement by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), the Provost decides whether to approve the suspension of intake and signs the relevant section of the proposal.
4. Notification	Written advice is provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) by the Provost of the decision concerning the proposal for suspension of intake.
5. Program bulletin	Following approval of the program or Study Component suspension, the faculty drafts a program bulletin (program/Study Component suspension) using the relevant template and submits it to the Academic Quality Unit for Provost approval of its release.



4.5.4 Reporting

A report on any suspension of intake decisions by the Provost is compiled by the Academic Quality Unit for noting at the next scheduled meeting of the Education Committee.

4.6 Discontinuation of a program or Study Component

Summary of program or Study Component discontinuation steps	
Steps	Approval authority
Step 1: Proposal to discontinue a program or Study Component	Provost in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor
Step 2: Program Bulletin	Provost

4.6.1 Preliminary step to suspend intake

Normally, the first step in the discontinuation of a program or Study Component is approval of

suspension of intake into the program or Study Component. Refer to section 4.5 of this Procedure.

4.6.2 Program or Study Component discontinuation

Discontinuation of a program or Study Component means that:

1. there can be no new intake of Students into that program or Study Component from a specified date;
2. the program or Study Component can no longer be advertised or marketed as available to Students; and
3. the program or Study Component is to be eventually removed from the suite of programs or Study Components available to Students.

4.6.3 Teach-out and transition requirements

This section of the Procedure should be read in conjunction with the University's Curriculum Discontinuation - Teach-Out and Transition Requirements Procedure (*under development*).

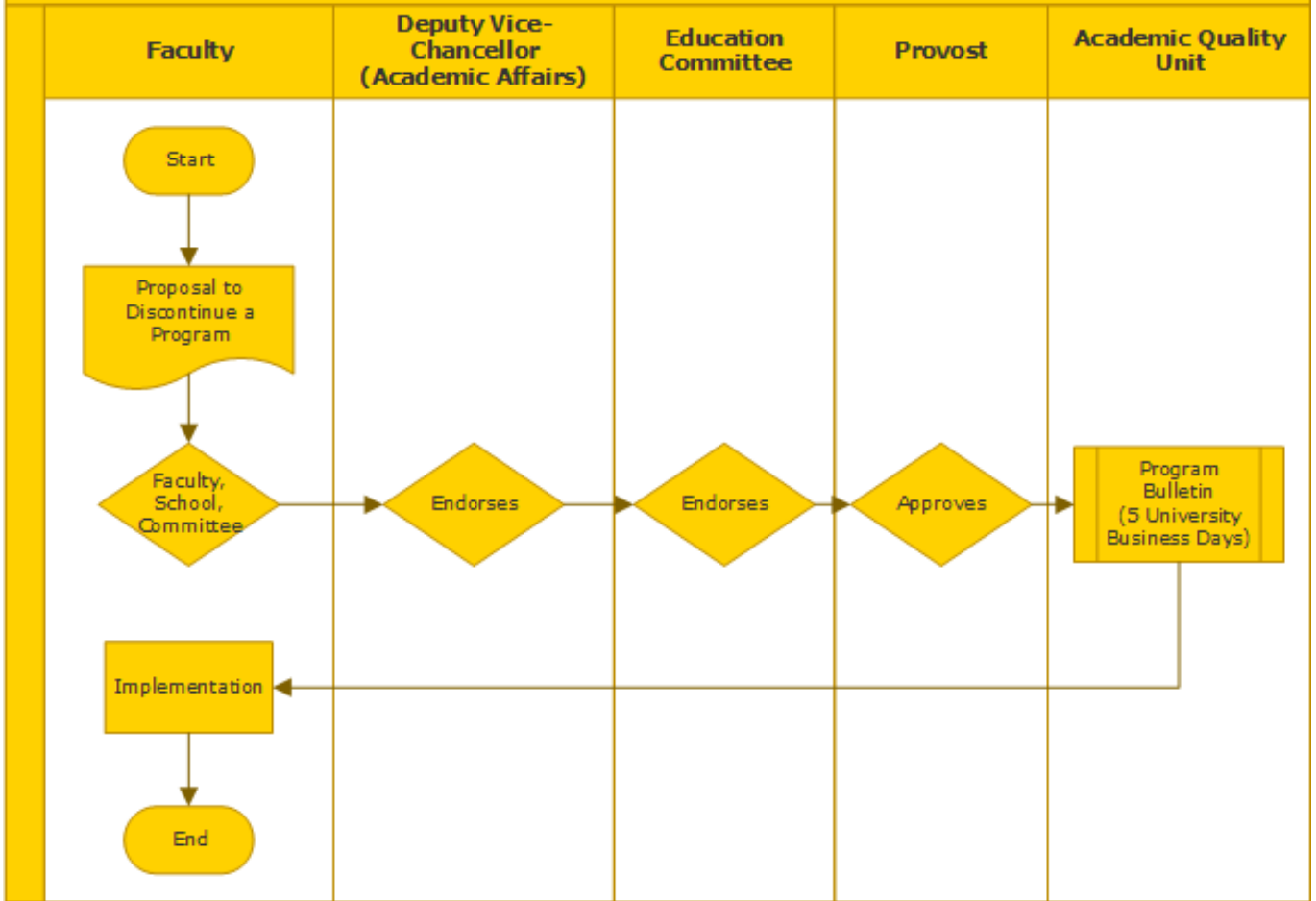
4.6.4 Program Director role

The Program Director completes the proposal to discontinue a program/Study Component template. The following table outlines the steps in the process.

Step	Responsibilities
1. Consultation	<p>In preparation for the discontinuation of a program or Study Component, the faculty consults all interested parties and arranges for development of a timetable for the discontinuation from the proposed date from which there will be no new intake up to the proposed date of permanent removal of the program or Study Component.</p> <p>Prior to submission to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), proposals to discontinue a program or Study Component normally are considered by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee2. Head of School3. Associate Dean (Academic)

	4. Faculty Academic Program Committee
2. Endorsement by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) considers and endorses the discontinuation proposal.
3. Endorsement by Education Committee	Education Committee considers the proposal, with particular attention to the impact on the Student experience and the quality of the teach-out arrangements and decides whether to endorse the discontinuation of the program or Study Component.
4. Notification	The Secretary of Education Committee informs the Academic Quality Unit of the outcomes of the consideration of the proposal at the Education Committee.
5. Approval	The Academic Quality Unit forwards the proposal to the Provost. The Provost considers the academic merit of the proposed program or Study Component discontinuation based on the documentation and any issues raised by the Education Committee.
6. Notification	Written advice is provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) by the Provost of the decision concerning the proposal for suspension of intake.
7. Program bulletin	Following approval of the program or Study Component discontinuation, the faculty drafts a program bulletin (program/Study Component suspension) using the relevant template and submits it to the Academic Quality Unit for Provost approval of its release.

Program Discontinuation



4.6.5 Reporting

A report on any discontinuation of a program or Study Component decisions approved by the Provost is compiled by the Academic Quality Unit for noting at the next scheduled meeting of the Education Committee.

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
Responsible Officer	Dean (Academic Transformation)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	5/4/2022
Effective Date	5/4/2022
Review Date	5/4/2025
Relevant Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Related Policies	Admissions Policy Assessment Policy Coursework Curriculum Design Policy
Related Procedures	Admissions Procedure Assessment Procedure Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Australian Qualifications Framework Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Schedule Program Accreditation Hub
Definitions	<p>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</p> <p>Academic Program</p> <p>An approved Higher Education Award of the University, consisting of a combination of Courses the successful completion of an offering of which, together with any credit transfers and Exemptions in accordance with the relevant requirements, will fulfil the prescribed requirements for that particular Award.</p> <p>Admission</p> <p>The process of submission and assessment of applications for entry to study at the University.</p>

[Award](#)

The qualification conferred upon a Student following the successful completion of an Academic Program. The categories of Award are listed in the Program Nomenclature Schedule.

[Core Course](#)

A Course that combines introductory discipline knowledge with enabling students to gain skills and knowledge for successful tertiary study and lifelong learning, and provides a foundation for the Graduate Attributes. A Core Course must be passed to fulfil the requirements of the program.

[Course](#)

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

[Coursework](#)

A method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge and does not include a major research component.

[Coursework Program](#)

A sequence of study consisting predominantly of Coursework.

[Double Degree](#)

Two individually approved programs undertaken concurrently. The requirements for each program and Major or Specialisation must be completed but by cross recognition of Courses and content between the two programs the two degrees can be completed more quickly if the necessary program structure is determined from the outset. Students receive two degrees and two Testamurs.

[Elective](#)

A Course chosen by Students to add value to their degree, either from a list of recommended Courses, or from a range of Courses offered from programs across the university.

[Field of Education](#)

A classification of programs, specialisations and courses of study, with

the same or similar vocational emphasis or principal subject matter.

[Head of School/College](#)

An academic staff member responsible for the administration of the Course offerings in one or more discipline areas.

[Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\)](#)

A Research Doctorate or Research Masters program for which at least two-thirds of the Student load for the program is required as research work.

[Learning Outcomes](#)

The expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

[Nested Qualifications](#)

A set of programs of study that are offered sequentially and which allows a Student to progress from a lower level qualification into a higher level qualification to enable multiple entry and exit points. Programs at the lower qualification levels are described as 'nested' within the programs leading to qualifications at the higher levels.

[Non-Award Program](#)

A sequence of study which does not lead to an Award.

[Policy](#)

A high level strategic directive that establishes a principle based approach on a subject. Policy is operationalised through Procedures that give instructions and set out processes to implement a Policy.

[Procedure](#)

An operational instruction that sets out the process to operationalise a Policy.

[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.

Sentinel Indicator

Within the learning and teaching ecosystem a Sentinel indicator would suggest the need for investigation to determine the nature of the quality of the student experience.

Student

A person 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.

Study Component

A coherent set of Courses that develop a particular academic theme. This includes Majors, Extended Majors, Minors and Specialisations.

Testamur

A certificate issued by the Council of the University to signify that a Student has satisfied the requirements of a specific program and has graduated.

University

The term 'University' or 'USQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.

Definitions that relate to this procedure only

Keywords	Program accreditation, program change, suspension and discontinuation, re-accreditation, Study Component, Higher Degree by Research Program, Award Program, Non-award Program, curriculum design, course outline, intake suspension; quality assurance; Sentinel Indicator
Record No	21/132PL