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.

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 UniSQ College or the Graduate Research School, the respective Head of College 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	Approved by 31 August for implementation in the following

programs	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 Academic Affairs, 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 major changes to existing programs to be considered 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.
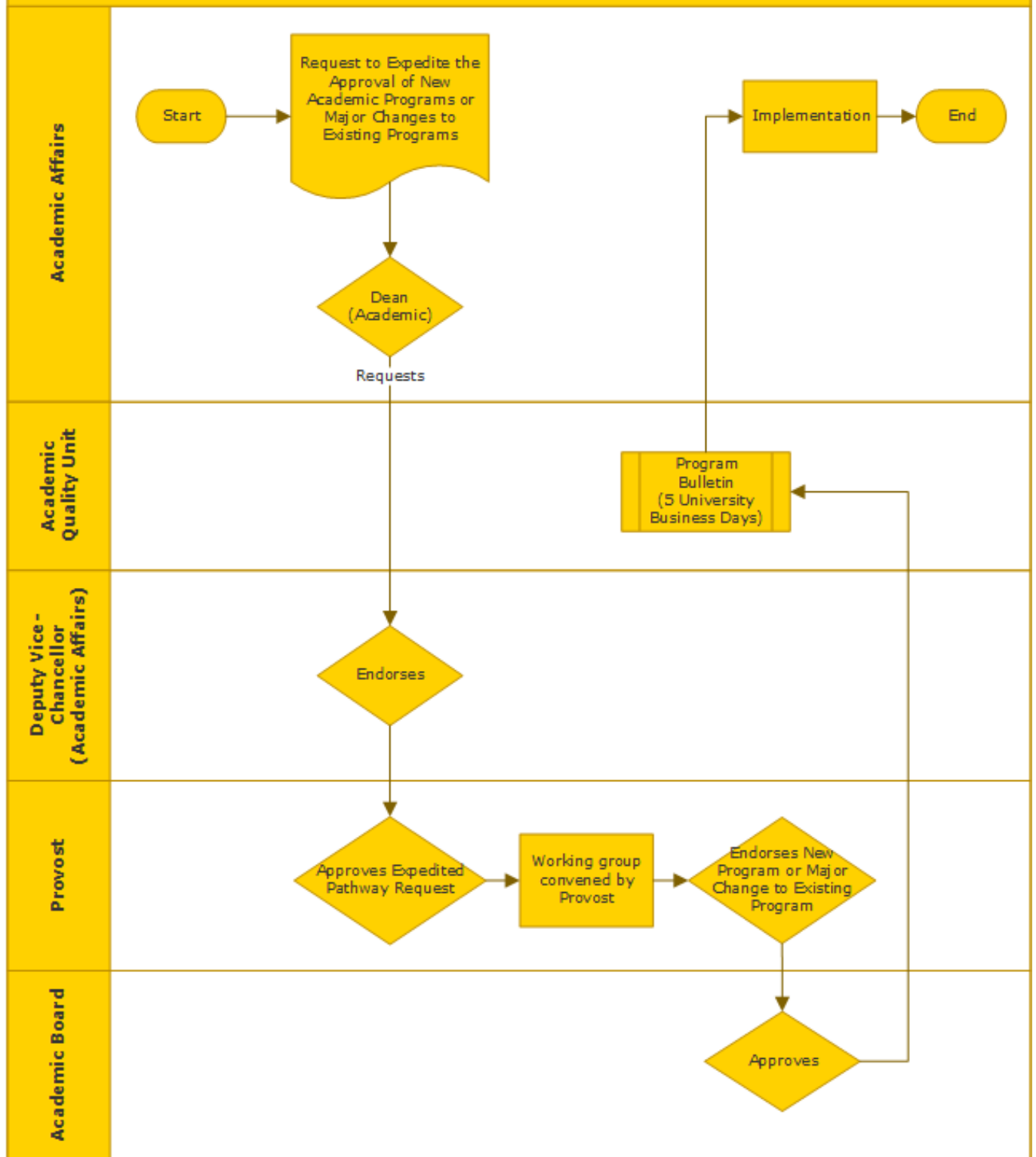
4.2.3 Expedited pathway working group

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 4.4.6.

Any decisions made by the working group to recommend a major change to an existing program to Academic Board for approval will be reported to the next scheduled meeting of Education Committee for noting.

Expedited Approval Pathway

Academic Affairs

Start → Request to Expedite the Approval of New Academic Programs or Major Changes to Existing Programs

Dean (Academic)

Requests

Implementation → End

Academic Quality Unit

Program Bulletin (5 University Business Days)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

Endorses

Provost

Approves Expedited Pathway Request → Working group convened by Provost → Endorses New Program or Major Change to Existing Program

Academic Board

Approves

4.3 Program re-accreditation

4.3.1 Quality review cycle

The continuation of the offer 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 Coursework Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure. A program can be offered for a maximum of a further seven (7) years. Refer to the Coursework Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure for further details.

4.4 Program changes

If program changes are recommended as a result of a quality review of the program, those changes are considered and approved through the program change processes described below.

4.4.1 Categories of change

There are four different categories of program changes:

1. major

2. minor

3. administrative and resource-related

4. editorial.

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, in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

Table 1: Detailed Program Level Changes

MAJOR	On the recommendation of:	Approval
Changes to: • Category type of AQF level • Credit value or volume of learning • Honours type (end-on or embedded) • Field of Education (FOE) (excluding	Education Committee	Academic Board

regulatory or administrative changes)		
• Admission requirements (Award Program non-ATAR related)		
New Majors or Specialisations		
Adding or removing Majors or Specialisations		
Any other changes deemed major by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) and Chair of Education Committee		
MINOR	**On the recommendation of:**	**Approval**

Changes in accredited programs to:
 	
• Learning Outcomes since the last comprehensive program review
 	
• Program title
 	
• Inherent Academic Requirements
 	
• Program rules, for example:
 	
    ○ professional accreditation status or requirements
 	
    ○ program articulation
 	
    ○ requirements to practice from professional accreditation body
 	
• Ratio of Core to Elective Course options
	Academic Program Committee	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) and reported to Education Committee

Adding to or removing from accredited programs: • Minors or microcredentials • Core Courses • existing Courses in Majors/Specialisations		

Adding new Courses to accredited programs		
Course discontinuation (separate to those discontinued following program review)		
Suspension of intake into a program, Major or Specialisation		
ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESOURCE-RELATED	**On the recommendation of *:**	**Approval**
Changes to: • Details on the Testamur (Majors listed) • Details on the Transcript (Study Components, Majors, Minors, Micro-credentials listed) • Description for AHEGS	Dean (Academic) ** Dean (GRS) or DVC(R&I) for HDR programs*	Academic Registrar
Changes to: • Study Period (Academic Calendar) • Program-level changes to mode of delivery (internal, external, multi-modal) • Campus of offer • Responsible school/college • Fee type (e.g. Commonwealth-supported, full-fee paying) • CRICOS registration	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) ** Dean (GRS) or DVC(R&I) for HDR programs*	Provost
EDITORIAL	**On the recommendation of:**	**Approved by:**
Changes to correct typographical errors or as a result of approved changes to role/position titles or terminology	Associate Director (Academic Program Support Services)	Dean (Academic) or, where appropriate, Dean (Pathways Education)
Editorial updates where these are consequential to other approved changes; e.g. Credit, exit points,		

program rules etc.		

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

4.4.2 Changes to Double Degrees

A structural change to a program that is also a component degree in a cross-discipline Double Degree requires the program owner to consult with the other discipline 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.

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 Head of School/College responsibility

The Head of School/College is responsible for ensuring the proposed changes are documented using the template appropriate to the 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 Academic Board approval

The following table outlines the required steps in the process.

Step	Responsibilities
1. Consultation	Prior to submission to Education Committee, program change

	proposals normally are considered by:
	1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee 2. Head of School/College 3. Dean (Academic) 4. 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 and considering any transition or teach-out arrangements relating to the proposed changes.
4. Notification	If the proposal is endorsed by Education Committee, the Secretary of Education Committee sends notification of endorsement to Academic Affairs or, where appropriate, the Dean (Pathways Education) following approval of the committee minutes by the Chairperson.
5. Approval by Academic Board	Academic Board considers the academic merit of the proposed changes to the program based on the documentation and taking into account any issues raised by Education Committee.

4.4.7 Changes requiring Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

The following table outlines the required steps in the process.

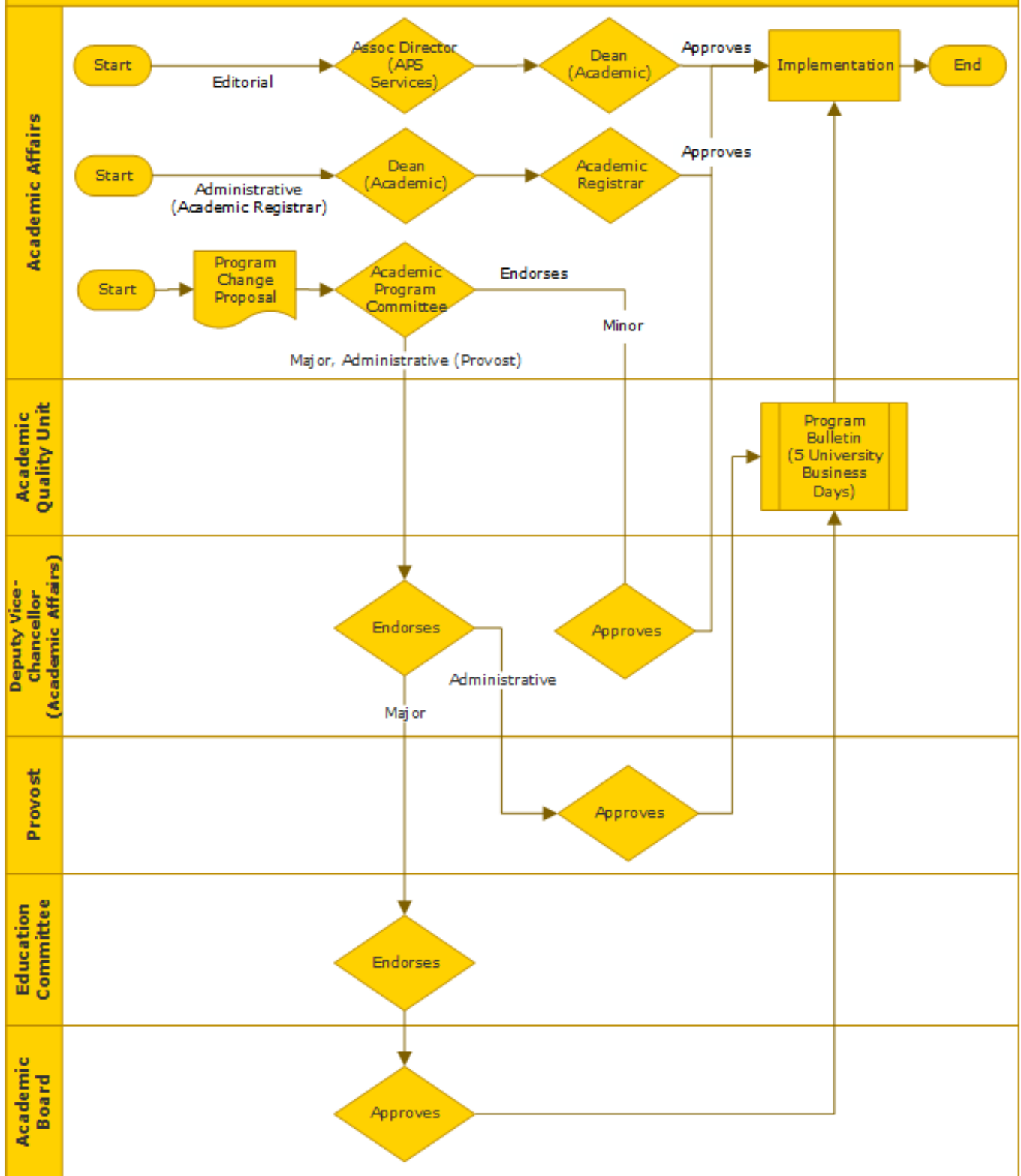| Step	Responsibilities
1. Endorsement	All program change proposals must be considered and endorsed by the: 1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee 2. Head of School/College 3. Dean (Academic)

	4. 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, including 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), advice is provided to the appropriate staff. A report of approved changes is provided semi-annually to Education Committee.

4.4.8 Changes requiring Provost approval

The following table outlines the required steps in the process:

Step	Responsibilities
1. Consultation	Proposed changes are submitted by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs), following consultation with Heads of School/College and other relevant stakeholders.
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) or, where appropriate, the Dean (Pathways Education).

Major, Minor, Administrative and Editorial Program Change

Academic Affairs

Start → (Editorial) → Assoc Director (APS Services) → Dean (Academic) → Approves → Implementation → End

Start → Administrative (Academic Registrar) → Dean (Academic) → Academic Registrar → Approves

Start → Program Change Proposal → Academic Program Committee → Endorses

Minor

Major, Administrative (Provost)

Academic Quality Unit

Program Bulletin (5 University Business Days)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

Endorses → Administrative

Major

Approves

Provost

Approves

Education Committee

Endorses

Academic Board

Approves

4.4.9 Program bulletin (program change approval)

Following approval of changes to a program, Academic Affairs 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 minor and administrative changes approved in the previous year is compiled by the Academic Quality Unit and submitted for noting to the first meeting of the calendar year of Academic Board.

4.5 Suspension of intake into a program, Major or Specialisation

The table below sets out the approval authority for suspension of intake into a program, Major or Specialisation.

ACTION	On the recommendation of:	Approved by:
Suspension of intake into a program, Major or Specialisation	Academic Program Committee	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

4.5.1 Intake suspension
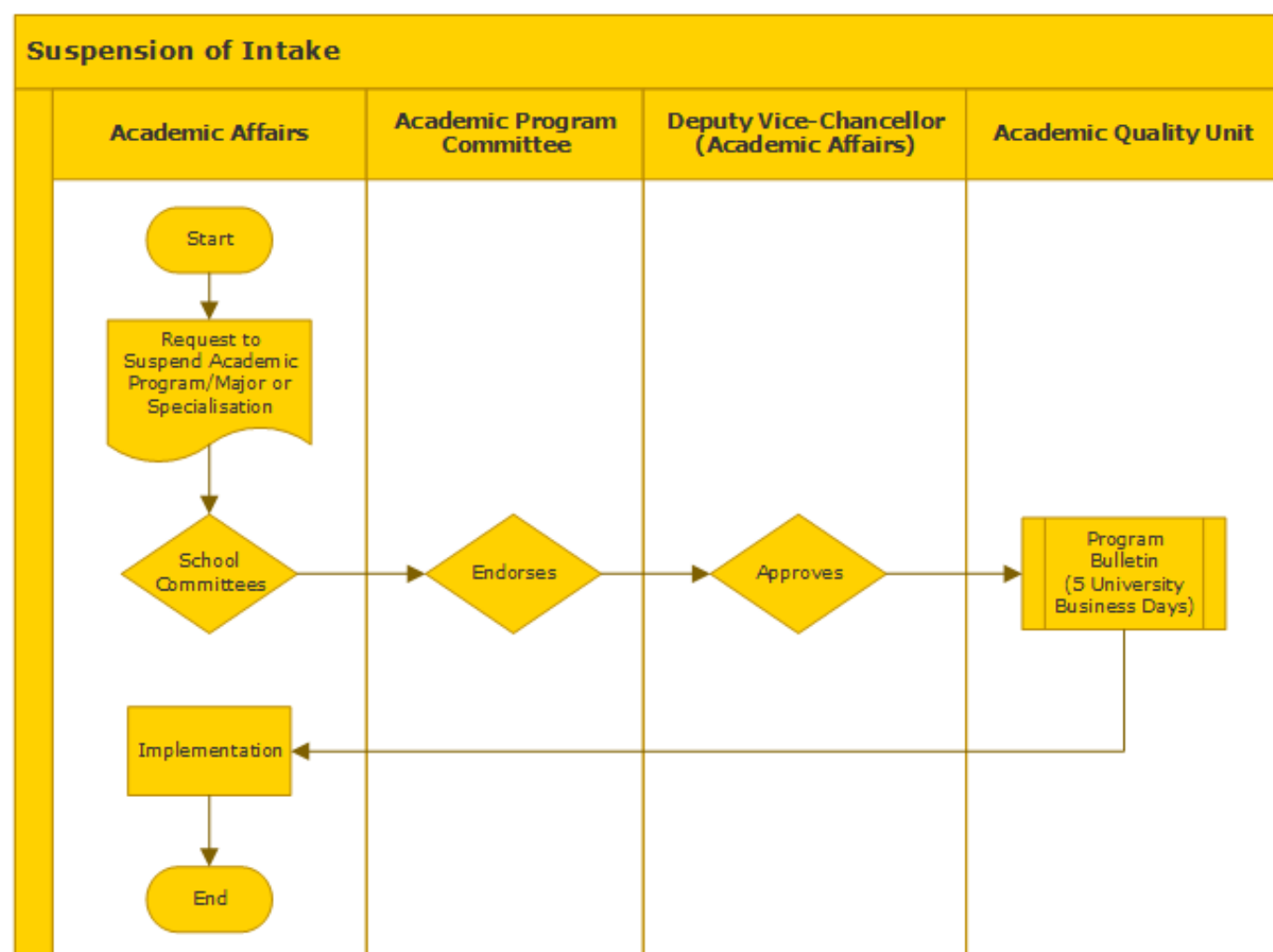
Suspension of intake means that:

1. there can be no new intake of Students into that program, Major or Specialisation for a specified period (normally one calendar year) from a specified date; and

2. at the end of the specified period, the program, Major or Specialisation is reinstated, or the suspension will be extended or the program, Major or Specialisation will be discontinued.

4.5.2 Head of School/College responsibility

The Head of School/College is responsible for ensuring the proposed changes are documented on the appropriate template. The following table outlines the required steps in the process.

Step	Responsibilities
1. Consultation and Endorsement	Prior to submission to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), proposals to suspend a program, Major or Specialisation normally are considered by:

	1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee
	2. Head of School/College
	3. Dean (Academic)
	4. Academic Program Committee.
2. Approval	Following endorsement by the Academic Program Committee, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) decides whether to approve the suspension of intake and signs the relevant section of the proposal.
3. Program bulletin	Following approval of the program, Major or Specialisation suspension, Academic Affairs drafts a program bulletin using the relevant template and submits it to the Academic Quality Unit for Provost approval of its release.

Suspension of Intake

Academic Affairs	Academic Program Committee	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	Academic Quality Unit

Start → Request to Suspend Academic Program/Major or Specialisation → School Committees → Endorses → Approves → Program Bulletin (5 University Business Days) → Implementation → End

4.5.3 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, Major or Specialisation

The table below sets out the approval authority for discontinuation of a program, Major or Specialisation.

ACTION	On the recommendation of:	Approved by:
Discontinuation of Award Program, Major or Specialisation	Education Committee	Academic Board
Discontinuation of a Non-Award Program (except microcredentials)		

4.6.1 Preliminary step to suspend intake

Normally, the first step in the discontinuation of a program, Major or Specialisation is approval of suspension of intake into the program, Major or Specialisation. Refer to section 4.5 of this Procedure.

4.6.2 Program, Major or Specialisation discontinuation

Discontinuation of a program, Major or Specialisation means that:

1. there can be no new intake of Students into that program, Major or Specialisation from a specified date;

2. the program, Major or Specialisation can no longer be advertised or marketed as available to Students; and

3. the program, Major or Specialisation is to be eventually removed from the suite of programs, Majors or Specialisations 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 Coursework Program Teach-Out and Transition Requirements Procedure *(under development).*

4.6.4 Head of School/College responsibility

The Head of School/College is responsible for ensuring the proposed changes are documented on the appropriate template. The following table outlines the steps in the process.

Step	Responsibilities
1. Consultation	In preparation for the discontinuation of a program, Major or Specialisation, the program, Major or Specialisation owner 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, Major or Specialisation. Prior to submission to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), proposals to discontinue a program, Major or Specialisation normally are considered by: 1. School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee 2. Head of School/College 3. Dean (Academic) 4. 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, Major or Specialisation.
4. Notification	If the proposal is endorsed by Education Committee, the Secretary of Education Committee sends the approved Committee minutes to Academic Affairs.
5. Approval	Academic Board considers the merit of the proposed changes to the program based on the documentation and taking into account any issues raised by Education Committee.
6. Notification	Written advice is provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) or, where appropriate, the Dean (Pathways Education) by the Secretary of Academic Board of the decision concerning the proposal for discontinuation.

7. Program bulletin	Following approval of discontinuation of the program, Major or Specialisation, Academic Affairs drafts a program bulletin using the relevant template and submits it to the Academic Quality Unit for Provost approval of its release.

Program Discontinuation

Academic Affairs	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	Education Committee	Academic Board	Academic Quality Unit
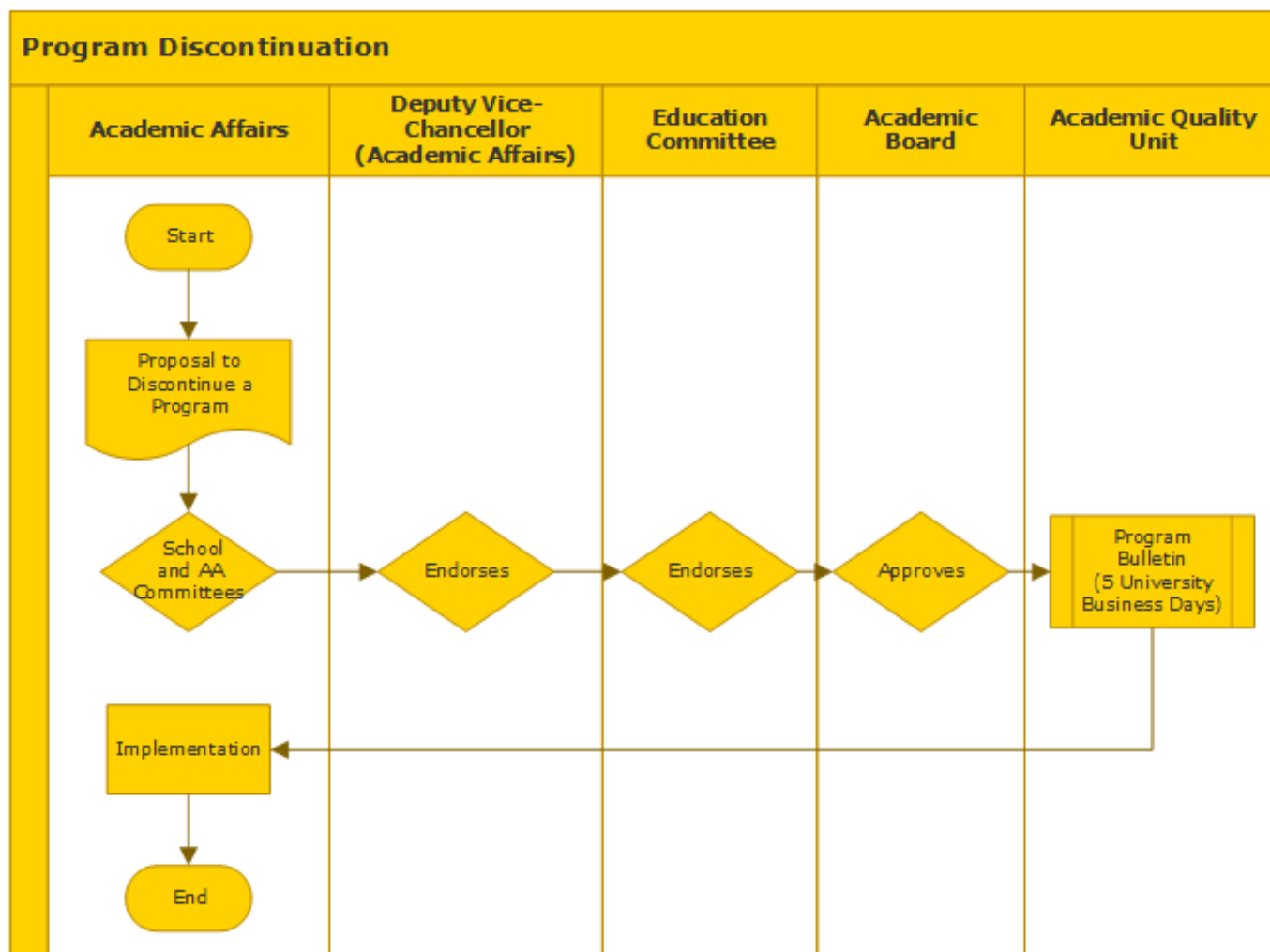
4.6.5 Reporting

A report on any discontinuation of program, Major or Specialisation decisions 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	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	[Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy](#)
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	31/7/2023
Effective Date	31/7/2023
Review Date	13/3/2028
Relevant Legislation	[Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021](#)
Policy Exceptions	[Policy Exceptions Register](#)
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](#) [Program Accreditation Hub](#) [Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Schedule](#)
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	[Academic Program](#) 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.

Admission

The process of submission and assessment of applications for entry to study at the University.

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 Study Period, in which the Student enrols, 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 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.
	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 'UniSQ' 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