

# Coursework Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure



## 1 Purpose

To outline the process for monitoring the quality of the University's Coursework Programs.

## 2 Scope

This procedure applies to all Coursework Programs and non-award programs leading to Admission into Award Programs offered by, or on behalf of, the University.

## 3 Procedure Overview

This procedure sets out the monitoring cycle used to assure the quality of the University's Coursework Programs.

This Procedure aligns with the:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021: Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement*

## 4 Procedures

All accredited Coursework Programs are subject to regular monitoring and review, External Referencing or other benchmarking activities, and Student feedback to ensure the ongoing viability, quality and strategic alignment of programs offered by the University. Results are used to guide and evaluate improvements in program design, teaching, supervision, learning and academic support and to mitigate future risks to the quality of the program.

All Nested Qualifications and Study Components (Majors, Minors, Specialisations) are included in the review of the program.

Program reviews are not required for:

- Double Degrees which are reviewed via their individual component degrees
- discontinued programs that are being taught out. The University considers that the program will continue to meet the requirements of this procedure for the approved teach-out period.

## 4.1 Program quality cycle

Following new program accreditation, programs are quality assured via an ongoing cycle of monitoring and improvement, informed by academic quality threshold indicators and detailed program performance data.

The program quality cycle consists of:

1. annual quality assurance activities in Years 1, 2 and 4 of the program quality cycle
2. interim program review in Year 3 of the program quality cycle
3. comprehensive program review, normally in Year 5 but not later than Year 7 of the program quality cycle.



An out-of-cycle comprehensive review may be conducted where determined as necessary by the Provost or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), or where directed by Academic

Board.

Interim and comprehensive reviews include External Referencing or other benchmarking activities of the success of Student cohorts against comparable programs of study, including:

- analyses of progression rates, attrition rates, completion times and rates and, where applicable, mode and location of delivery
- the Assessment methods and grading of Students' achievement of Learning Outcomes for selected Courses within programs of study.

## **4.2 Quality assurance threshold indicators**

Program quality assurance threshold indicators are endorsed by Education Committee and approved by Academic Board.

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) may recommend alternative discipline-level threshold indicators to Education Committee for endorsement and Academic Board for approval.

Quality assurance threshold indicators are reviewed at least every three (3) years to ensure alignment with strategic, operational and reporting requirements.

## **4.3 Annual program quality assurance - Years 1, 2 and 4**

1. Heads of School/College are responsible for overseeing the annual quality assurance activities, including:
2. monitoring program performance against the quality assurance threshold indicators using the program quality data packs provided by the Academic Quality Unit
3. contextualising the data to guide the development and implementation of quality improvements to curriculum and teaching.
4. Academic Affairs Learning and Teaching Committee, or College equivalent, is responsible for:
  - a. identifying significant issues for academic quality such as Academic Integrity and Assessment patterns and practices
  - b. monitoring the effectiveness of any steps taken to address previously identified quality assurance issues.

## **4.4 Interim program review - Year 3**

The responsible School/College undertakes the interim program review in Year 3 of the program quality cycle.

Using program quality data packs provided by the Academic Quality Unit and any other quality assurance and monitoring outcomes, an assessment against the quality assurance threshold indicators is made.

The interim review process also takes into consideration the market and financial performance of the program within the context of University strategic priorities.

The review process must be completed by the end of the Calendar Year and, for programs in their first quality cycle, a summary report on review outcomes is provided to Education Committee. For programs in their second or subsequent quality cycle, the summary report also details progress towards implementation of recommendations from the previous comprehensive review.

## **4.5 Comprehensive program review - Year 5**

Responsible Schools/Colleges facilitate a comprehensive review of each program normally during Year 5 but no later than Year 7 of the program quality cycle, unless program discontinuation is proposed.

Preparation of the comprehensive program review submission for consideration by Education Committee and Academic Board is informed and supported by program quality data packs produced by the Academic Quality Unit and external evidence sources, such as Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), available since the last submission.

Any costs and resources associated with the review are the responsibility of the relevant School/College.

Where it is logical to do so, groups of programs in the same discipline area may be included in one review process and submission.

### **4.5.1 Submission content**

The comprehensive review submission for continued offer of programs in their second or subsequent quality cycle includes the following:

1. a summary of improvements recommended as a result of the last comprehensive review and details of how these have been developed and implemented
2. changes and improvements made since the last comprehensive review submission, as a result of the annual quality assurance monitoring activities and interim review process, including:
  - a. quality assurance indicator data captured, monitored and acted upon

- b. outcomes based on recommendations made by Industry Advisory Boards, or equivalent
- c. outcomes of External Referencing or other Benchmarking activities
- d. improvement-focused changes to the teaching or other delivery aspects made
- e. Student performance outcomes by cohort, including partner cohorts.

The comprehensive review submission for all programs includes the following:

1. evidence that the program complies with program design and structure rules, or has an approved exemption
2. evidence that the views of Students, professional associations, employer groups and other relevant stakeholders have been taken into consideration
3. evidence of peer review, External Referencing or similar of key Assessment Items in selected Courses
4. a statement from the Provost or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) supporting program continuation
5. details of any Third Party Arrangements and Credit Transfer/Articulation agreements.

#### **4.5.2 Submission recommendations**

The submission includes:

- a set of recommendations to support the ongoing improvement of the program curriculum and delivery
- a plan and timeframes for the development and implementation of the recommendations that must not extend beyond two (2) years from the date of the finalised submission, unless an extension of time is granted by the Chair, Education Committee.

#### **4.5.3 Professionally accredited programs**

Where a professional accreditation review is used as part of the comprehensive program review process, an analysis is conducted by the Dean (Academic) to identify any gaps between the professional accreditation standards and the University's quality assurance and review requirements. The comprehensive review submission must include clear reference to the external body standards and note any conditions applied to accreditation and how these have

been addressed.

Documentation required by professional bodies is prepared within the relevant School and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) before submission to the professional body.

#### **4.5.4 Review and decision**

The comprehensive review submission is provided to Education Committee for review of the recommendations and implementation plan, including whether the program continues to meet the applicable standards of the Higher Education Standards Framework.

Taking into account any advice from Education Committee, Academic Board considers and approves the review submission and the implementation plan, or requests resubmission.

The submission will be stored in the approved University system with a record maintained of:

- the year during which the program must undergo the next comprehensive review (typically the seventh year, or earlier if specified by Academic Board)
- the recommended year for the next comprehensive review (typically the fifth year, or earlier if specified by Academic Board).

The relevant Head of School/College is responsible for developing and facilitating approval for changes to programs and Courses aligned with improvements identified and recommended as a part of the submission, in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Any changes must be undertaken in accordance with the Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure.

For the following two (2) years, or until all actions have been implemented, Academic Affairs Academic Program Committee, or College equivalent, must provide an annual summary report to Education Committee on progress towards implementing the program review recommendations.

## **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

<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Provost
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)
<b>Policy Type</b>	University Procedure
<b>Policy Suite</b>	<a href="#">Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy</a>
<b>Subordinate Schedules</b>	
<b>Approved Date</b>	3/9/2024
<b>Effective Date</b>	3/9/2024
<b>Review Date</b>	2/8/2028
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</a>
<b>Policy Exceptions</b>	<a href="#">Policy Exceptions Register</a>
<b>Related Policies</b>	<a href="#">Assessment Policy</a> <a href="#">Coursework Curriculum Design Policy</a> <a href="#">Educational Partnerships Policy</a> <a href="#">Learning and Teaching Policy</a> <a href="#">Student Academic Integrity Policy</a>
<b>Related Procedures</b>	<a href="#">Assessment Procedure</a> <a href="#">Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Procedure</a> <a href="#">Educational Partnerships - Third Party Delivery of Coursework Programs Procedure</a> <a href="#">Student Academic Misconduct Procedure</a> <a href="#">Work Integrated Learning Activities Procedure</a>
<b>Related forms, publications and websites</b>	<a href="#">Assessment Pattern Schedule</a> <a href="#">Assessment Types Schedule</a> <a href="#">Australian Qualifications Framework</a> <a href="#">Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Schedule</a>

Definitions	Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary
	<p><a href="#">Admission</a></p> <p>The process of submission and assessment of applications for entry to study at the University.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Assessment</a></p> <p>The process of evaluating the extent to which Students have achieved the Learning Outcomes of a Course.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Award Program</a></p> <p>A sequence of study which leads to an academic qualification granted by the University and conferred by Council.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Course</a></p> <p>A discrete element of a program, normally undertaken over a single Study Period, in which the Student enrolls, and on completion of which the Student is awarded a grade.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Coursework</a></p> <p>A method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge and does not include a major research component.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Coursework Program</a></p> <p>A sequence of study consisting predominantly of Coursework.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Credit Transfer</a></p> <p>A process that provides Students with agreed and consistent Credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and Learning Outcomes between matched qualifications.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Double Degree</a></p> <p>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.</p>



### Major

A coherent set of at least eight (8) Units which provides depth of study within a specific subject area or discipline.

### Minor

A coherent set of at least four (4) Units which provides a sub-disciplinary focus and allows a Student to extend or complement their Major or Discipline Study Courses.

### 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.

### Specialisation

A coherent set of at least four (4) Units in a postgraduate program which provides a disciplinary focus for Student study.

### 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.

### 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.

### University

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

	<b>Definitions that relate to this procedure only</b>
	<p><b>External Referencing</b></p> <p>External Referencing is one method of monitoring for quality and means a process through which the University compares an aspect of its operations with an external comparator(s) e.g. comparing the design of a program of study or Student achievement of Learning Outcomes to inform improvements.</p>
<b>Keywords</b>	Comprehensive program review, interim program review, quality assurance, benchmarking, external referencing, threshold indicator, professional accreditation
<b>Record No</b>	21/302PL