

POLICY DOCUMENT

COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW POLICY

1 Purpose and Scope

This policy provides the framework for the design, development and review of courses delivered by the College within the context of continuous improvement and quality enhancement.

Scope:

- ACPE staff
- All courses

2 Policy Statement

ACPE is committed to providing students with a high quality, transformational learning experience leading to a professional degree which will:

- Provide students with an accredited qualification in their chosen field of study;
- Extend students' abilities to apply for and engage in a range of career options.

ACPE courses:

- Advance the College's mission and strategic goals consistent with the College's Strategic Plan;
- Are designed to produce high quality work-ready graduates who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the wider community and society in general and which promote life-long learning;
- Are supported by resources which facilitate the offering of quality learning experiences and educational outcomes;
- Are planned with advice from internal and external experts;
- Are consistent with internal policy;
- Adhere to regulatory and professional standards, and take account of current best practice; and
- Are aligned to the needs of industry.

2.1 Context

ACPE is unique in its philosophy, arena of expertise and professional orientation. Its educational programs are responsive to market demand, professional requirements, commercial imperatives and societal change. The expectation of students is that they master a rapidly growing body of specialised knowledge, develop generic, transferable skills for use in a global workplace and meet professional requirements for registration and practice. Accordingly, there is a strong commitment for new and existing courses to be attuned to the changing circumstances of the day, exhibit exemplary academic standards and be aligned to the objectives of the College's vision, mission and strategic plan.

ACPE is a *non-self-accrediting institution (NSAI)*; therefore all courses are accredited by the national regulatory body, Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA). The processes for accreditation by TEQSA are established by legislation and seek to create national consistency in accreditation standards and processes across all institutions.

In addition, some courses are accredited by external professional bodies such as the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA).

This policy provides the framework for aligning the College's internal processes with external accreditation processes, while enabling the College to successfully manifest their mission, values, and strategic goals.

This policy addresses the design, development, accreditation and review of higher education courses. It covers:

- a. Quality assurance and enhancement.
- b. Course design.
- c. Course development and accreditation.
- d. Review and continuous improvement (including re-accreditation).

The policy should be read in parallel with the associated set of procedures for the development and review of higher education courses. The procedures identify roles and responsibilities and the mechanisms for acquiring evidence to support quality assurance, course enhancement, risk management and strategic planning.

2.2 Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The College has an integrated governance and management strategy to ensure the quality, relevance and currency of its courses.

The strategy aims to promote the goals of: excellence and accountability in teaching and scholarship; quality in academic outcomes and service delivery; strategic academic planning; and positive and productive relationships with external educational, professional and community organisations.

Key elements of the strategy are:

- a. Design guidelines for courses and subjects.
- b. A clearly defined pathway and approvals process for the development of new courses and subjects.
- c. A systematic cycle of review for existing courses and subjects to ensure quality and to promote continuous improvement.

2.3 Governance Committees

Course development and review is governed through the Academic Board and two Advisory Committees comprised largely of independent members:

2.3.1 The Academic Board

It oversees and monitors academic standards, courses, activities and outcomes within a quality and academic risk framework.

2.3.2 Course Advisory Committee (CAC)

It is a mainly external body established by the Academic Board to ensure the quality, relevance and currency of a course. The CAC assists in identifying the need and demand for a course and assists the College with industry and content specific advice and guidance in the development and continuous improvement of courses.

CACs advise the Academic Board through the Dean and Operations Director or relevant Head of Department on matters pertaining to Courses in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

2.3.3 Subject Advisory Committee (SAC)

It may be established on a case-by-case basis by the Dean and Operations Director (or requested by another Committee of the College) in circumstances where specialist expertise is desired for the development of a new subject or for the review and/or major revision of an existing subject.

The SAC advises the relevant Party (Dean and Operations Director or relevant Committee) on matters pertaining to subjects in accordance with this Committee's Terms of Reference.

2.4 Course Structure

Courses and subjects are structured on a system of credit points.

2.4.1 Credit Points

Each qualification has a specified number of credit points:

- Graduate Certificate – 24 credit points
- Diploma or Graduate Diploma – 48 credit points
- Associate Degree – 96 credit points
- Bachelor degree – 144 credit points (3 year FTE)
- Bachelor degree – 192 credit points (4 year FTE)

Subjects contributing to the degree are allocated 6 credit points (or credits). It is expected for each subject that students will be engaged in approximately 9 hours of study per week for 15 weeks. This includes:

- 3 hours face-to-face learning per week for 12 weeks or equivalent eLearning.
- 6 hours personal study per week for 12 weeks.
- 9 hours personal study during the study and exam weeks.

Note: Selected Dance subjects have 7.5 hours face-to-face with 1.5 hours personal study.

2.5 Course and Subject Design

2.5.1 Course Design

In designing and developing courses, the College adheres to:

- The standards and guidelines established by the national regulator, TEQSA,
- The standards and guidelines established by relevant professional bodies and peak industry associations,
- Recognised best practice arising from:
 - Academic research in relevant fields of expertise,
 - Aligned peer institutions of higher education.

The College's courses emphasise the centrality of the learner to the learning process and reflect the principles of adult learning. They are designed to:

- Provide a critically reflective theoretical and experiential learning context;
- Integrate theory and practice within a dynamic learning environment;
- Foster innovation, critical thinking, and ethical professional practice; and

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- Promote and foster personal and professional development.

Each course has a well-defined set of graduate learning outcomes which are aligned to the relevant graduate level outcomes as specified by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) in relation to knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills.

New courses that lead to a professional qualification will be reverse engineered based on approved Professional Threshold Learning Outcomes developed by the profession in question, or failing that, developed by the College in relation to the relevant regulatory agency template.

The volume of learning for each course will be commensurate with the relevant AQF level. Courses are comprised of a suite of core and (possibly) elective or major subjects which are sequenced to reflect the developing expertise of the learner. Where applicable, prerequisite and co-requisite subjects will be specified.

2.5.2 Subject Design

Each subject has a unique set of well-defined learning outcomes which are aligned to the graduate-level outcomes specified for the Course.

A variety of learning activities, resources, assessment methods and tasks are used in order to reflect the diversity of the subject-level learning outcomes.

Each subject will exhibit alignment between its learning outcomes, activities, resources and assessment tasks.

Alignment between AQF levels, course graduate learning outcomes, subject learning outcomes and assessment tasks will be maintained.

Subjects may be delivered in more than one mode with variations in design arising in relation to:

- The length of the semester: regular Semesters are 15 - 16 weeks in length. This incorporates 12 teaching weeks, 1 week mid-semester break, 1 study/practical exam week and 1 - 2 final exam weeks. Some subjects require student attendance in practical exam weeks to ensure the required practical hours are achieved, however this is clearly stated in the Subject Outline. Summer Semester (intensive mode) is 6 weeks in length.
- The mode of delivery: Subjects can be delivered in either or multiple of on-campus, online or intensive (summer school) modes.

Where a subject is offered in more than one mode, each mode will be custom-designed to ensure comparable outcomes even though the learning activities, resources and experiences may not be the same.

2.6 Course Development – New Courses

The development of a new course for accreditation is a major academic undertaking and is to be viewed as a long-term project requiring careful planning, management and resourcing. Accordingly, a clearly defined pathway and approvals process in place for the development of new courses and subjects to ensure:

- Compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements,
- Compliance with requirements for registration of graduates and/or membership of graduates with professional bodies,
- The outcomes of internal processes align with external requirements whilst conforming to College quality assurances processes.

The development pathway articulates a staged approach to the planning and development of new courses for accreditation which identifies key stages where approvals by the relevant governing bodies and/or senior management are necessary.

The Dean and Operations Director together with the Heads of Department are responsible for course development projects and have a quality assurance oversight role.

The development pathway commences when a proposal for a new course is put forward. Proposals can arise directly from members of the College Boards, Committees or senior management. The key stages involve:

- 2.6.1 Preliminary Proposal - developed for initial approval by the Head of Department for the Dean and Operations Director.
- 2.6.2 Preliminary Approval - the preliminary proposal is presented to the Board of Directors for approval and a preliminary commitment to funding.
- 2.6.3 Development Approval – the preliminary proposal is presented to the Academic Board for development approval.
- 2.6.4 New Course Proposal - after receiving preliminary funding approval and course development approval, the new course proposal is fully scoped and developed. Market demand, sector benchmarking, projected enrolments, projected staffing needs, proposed admission requirements / hurdles, facilities and resources needs, financial viability are all considered and included in the course business plan and full proposal. This proposal is presented to the Academic Board for project approval.

- 2.6.5 Project Management Plan – the project management plan providing details of the project structure and methodology is developed and presented to Academic Board at the same time as the New Course Proposal above for approval.
- 2.6.6 Development and Advisory expertise – An internal Course Development working group is established and works collaboratively to implement recommendations and advise from the Course Advisory Committee (CAC) in course review and development and to monitor the course once accredited. Where a relevant Course Advisory Committee already exists for another course, this Committee may be tasked with advising on the development of the new course. Where the course is proposed to include specialist subject/s, one or more Subject Advisory Committees (SACs) may also be formed by the Head of Department to provide input in to the course development process.
- 2.6.7 Sign Off - internal approval processes:
- On completion, the course structure and subject outlines are presented to the CAC for endorsement.
 - Once endorsed, the documentation is submitted to the Compliance team for compilation as a TEQSA submission.
 - The completed course and all relevant documentation to be submitted to TEQSA are presented to the Academic Board for review, feedback and approval.
- 2.6.8 Submission - the Compliance team makes final changes based on Academic Board feedback for approval of the Chair of the Academic Board and the Dean and Operations Director prior to lodgement with TEQSA. The preparation and submission of the final documentation to TEQSA is the responsibility of the Compliance team.
- 2.6.9 TEQSA feedback – professional experts are engaged by TEQSA to assess the course content and structure and may provide valuable feedback on the course through the TEQSA approval process. Any feedback provided by TEQSA experts will be considered and incorporated into the course throughout the accreditation process or immediately following accreditation through the normal internal governance course review process.
- 2.6.10 Professional bodies – where possible, relevant professional body accreditation will be sought at the same time as TEQSA accreditation is sought. Where a professional body requires approval processes to be conducted before or after TEQSA accreditation, the College will follow the guidelines of the relevant professional body relating to submission timelines.

2.7 Course Review and Continuous Improvement

The College conducts regular and cyclical reviews of all courses and subjects to ensure compliance, relevance, currency and the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes.

A range of quality assurance practices and mechanisms are used to inform the process of continual improvement to course content and delivery. These practices are formal and informal, internal and external.

Mechanisms for monitoring the quality of courses and subjects include:

- Academic Board
- Course Advisory Committees
- Subject Advisory Committees
- The Assessment / Examiners' Committee
- Moderation of assessment processes and outcomes
- Cyclical reviews of courses and subjects

Information and data is collected through a range of instruments including:

- Quality Feedback Monitor (QFM) – students and staff can submit their feedback and first stage of a grievance or complaint process to feedback@acpe.edu.au.
- Staff Feedback (through surveys and Course Reports) – staff satisfaction surveys, informal feedback to Heads of Department, annual Course Reports
- Student Feedback (through internal and external surveys) – internal surveys include end of Semester surveys for each subject specific to mode of delivery; external surveys include Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) surveys – Student Experience Survey (annually), Graduate Outcomes Survey (including course experience questions).

2.7.1 Student and Staff Feedback

As noted above, student and staff feedback is an important part of the course review process.

Data collected through formal feedback mechanisms such as surveys and the QFM is analysed by the Student Services and Learning Support Manager and escalated to the Dean and Operations Director as required. Regular reports are submitted to the Academic Board for review, along with recommendations for changes arising from student and staff feedback. Implementation of recommendations arising from reports is the responsibility of the Dean and Operations Director and relevant Heads of Department.

2.7.2 Cyclical Reviews

In reviewing courses and subjects, all reviewers (relevant academic staff and governing body members) will be provided with the Course Review Procedure and the Guidelines for Changing Higher Education Courses and Subject Outlines to assist in the monitoring and review process. These documents provide a framework for the review of data and the generation of critical issues for review purposes.

a. Subject Updates – Annual

The College is committed to annually updating each subject offered in accredited courses. Heads of Department may conduct these updates every Semester if deemed necessary.

The update will arise out of a review of the clarity of purpose of the subject within the course, alignment of learning outcomes with course outcomes, appropriateness and relevance of content and assessment items to meet the subject learning outcomes, grade distributions and student progress. The update is conducted by the Subject Coordinator in consultation with the Head of Department.

Student feedback is a large factor in these regular updates. Subject feedback is gathered every Semester and changes incorporated into the subject content through governance approval processes as considered timely by the Head of Department.

In cases of specific content, subjects may also be reviewed by a Subject Advisory Committee formed to monitor the relevance and appropriateness of the content of that subject. In such cases, the subject will be closely reviewed after every teaching period of offering for the first year, then annually in subsequent years.

b. Course Review – Annual

The College is committed to the annual review of accredited courses.

The objective of these reviews is to ensure that a particular course's aim, structure, subjects, learning objectives, assessment activities, resources, study modes and delivery methods are monitored and changed when and where necessary according to the principles of continuous improvement and quality assurance.

A system of individual Course Reports has been replaced by the Academic Operations Report, in which information concerning courses was aggregated and combined.

The Academic Operations Report includes collected data concerning course performance (including enrolments, retention/attrition, student academic performance, student evaluations

of courses). The report is disseminated to internal (Senior Management Team and Academic Board) and external (TEQSA) stakeholders.

It should be noted that if recommendations arising from the Academic Operations Report require additional resourcing, the report is presented to the ACPE Board of Directors for funding approval.

c. Benchmarking review

The College endeavours to form partnerships with similar higher education institutions to develop and implement ongoing benchmarking relationships.

A report with recommendations is presented to the Academic Board for approval. Recommendations arising from the review are to be implemented by the Dean and Operations Director in consultation with the relevant Head/s of Department.

2.7.3 In-Depth Review of Courses for Re-Accreditation

The College is committed to an in-depth cyclical review of its courses at least once every accreditation period in preparation for the submission of a re-accreditation application to TEQSA.

The review is conducted by the relevant Course Advisory Committee approximately 4 years for NESA accredited courses and 6 years for TEQSA accredited courses after accreditation has been granted.

The objective of these reviews is to ensure that a particular course is adhering to the principles of continuous improvement and quality assurance.

The review encompasses all aspects of the course including – its structure (graduate outcomes, subjects and learning outcomes), content assessment, resources and activities; delivery modes student outcomes teaching and scholarship.

The review report with recommendations is presented to the Academic Board for its approval as part of the re-accreditation process; this may include recommendations for re-accreditation for continuing teaching, or for teach-out purposes only. In some cases, this may include recommendation for non-re-accreditation.

Recommendations arising from the review are to be implemented by the Dean and Operations Director in consultation with the relevant Head/s of Department.

2.8 Course and/or Subject Change Process

If courses or subjects require changing, processes outlined in the Course Review Procedure should be followed and the relevant governing body approvals sought.

In addition, if a change significantly impacts on the course or students (including course outcomes), further regulatory guidance or approval may be required to ensure the course remains compliant with accreditation requirements. TEQSA's Material Change Notification Policy outlines the requirements of notifying TEQSA of a material change and how to identify changes requiring TEQSA notification.

If a course is to be changed, the Compliance team should be involved in discussions from an early stage to ensure TEQSA guidance is sought where necessary and TEQSA notification is provided in a timely manner to ensure minimal student impact.

2.8.1 Subject Outlines

Once Subject Outlines are approved as part of an accredited course, they are managed by the Dean and Operators Director and the relevant Head of Department. Approved changes to the Subject Outlines are only to be made upon direction from the relevant Academic Board or Dean and Operations Director (according to the Guidelines for Changing Higher Education Courses and Subject Outlines).

The process of changing subject outlines may include the requirement to form a specialist SAC. Any subject change recommendations arising from the SAC will require endorsement by the relevant Head of Department and approval by Academic Board.

2.8.2 Course Structures

Once Course Structures are approved as part of an accredited course, they are managed by the Dean and Operators Director and the relevant Head of Department. Approved changes to the Course Structures are only to be made upon direction / approval from the relevant Academic Board (according to the Guidelines for Changing Higher Education Courses and Subject Outlines).

3 Definitions

- **AQF** – is the Australian Qualifications Framework, which sets out the levels of education offered in Australia and outlines the expected skills, knowledge, application and volume of learning for each level of course.

- **Course** - A course is an entire program of study that spans several years and is made up of multiple subjects.
- **Postgraduate course** - any course offered at level 8 or above on the AQF. The following courses are considered to be postgraduate by the College:
 - Bachelor Honours Degree (Level 8)
 - Graduate Certificate (Level 8)
 - Graduate Diploma (Level 8)
 - Master's Degree (Level 9)
 - Doctoral Degree (Level 10)
- **Subject** - means the smallest stand-alone component of a student's award course for which a grade is assigned on a student's academic transcript. A subject refers to a 15 – 16 week unit of study centred around a specific theme or topic.
- **Student** – is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College's documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.
- **Undergraduate course** at the College means any higher education course offered at levels 5 to 7 on the AQF. The following higher education courses are considered to be undergraduate by the College:
 - Diploma (Level 5)
 - Associate Degree (Level 6)
 - Advanced Diploma (Level 6)
 - Bachelor Degree (Level 7)

4 Related Documents

- Course Development Procedure
- Course Review Procedure
- **Legislation:**
 - Higher Education Standards Framework 2015
 - Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
 - National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas

5 Policy Administration

Policy Name & Code:			Course Development & Review Policy (POL-05)
Document Owner:			Dean and Operations Director
Approval Authority:			Academic Board (ACPE)
Date for Next Review:			September 2023
Approval Date	Effective Date	Version	Summary of changes
01 Jun 17	2 Jun 17	1	Document fully revised and harmonised. Approved by Academic Board.
26 June 18	27 Jun 18	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document format changed in line with the new document template for ACPE policies, procedures and ToRs. • References to Director of Education have been replaced with Dean & Operations Director. • References to Executive Director replaced with Dean and Operations Director. • References to Associate Dean (Programs and Quality) have been replaced with Dean & Operations Director. • Changes made to document format include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document code, version and dates moved to 'Document Administration' section. - Paragraphs numbered. - Previous 'Further Information Section' with references to related policies moved to new 'Related Documents' section. This section includes a list of related policies, procedures, and other documents. - Policy Administration table reformatted. - Numbering system updated. - Footer updated to include document title, document code, and document version. • The following paragraph has been re-written in the <i>In-Depth Course Review</i> section, to include revision of TEQSA accredited courses: <i>"The review is conducted by the relevant Course Advisory Committee approximately 4 years for NESAC accredited courses, and 6 years for TEQSA accredited courses after accreditation has been granted"</i>. • The following statement has been included in the Course Structure Sections: <i>"Note: Selected Dance subjects have 7.5 hours face-to-face with 1.5 hours personal study"</i>. • The Course Review – Annual section has been updated. Since 2016, a system of individual Course Reports has been replaced by the Academic Operations Report.

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04 Oct 18	05 Oct 18	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy de-harmonised from other SGA brands. • Policy content reviewed to ensure it complies with relevant HES and providers' obligations with TEQSA. • Content revised to ensure it reflects current ACPE activities, including current job titles and departments. • Sub-title of <i>Section 2.3 Governing Bodies</i> has been replaced with <i>Governance Committees</i>. • <i>Section 2.3.2 Course Advisory Committee</i> has been updated to indicate that the CAC is established by the Academic Board. • <i>Section 2.4.1 Course Structure / Credit Points</i> has been updated and course duration has been removed. FTE has been added to differentiate between 3 year and 4 year Bachelor Degree.
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* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date.