Educational Partnerships - Third Party Delivery of Coursework Programs Procedure

1 Purpose

To provide a framework for the establishment, management and quality assurance of arrangements relating to Coursework Programs delivered by Third Party Providers.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to arrangements with Third Party Providers where the provider delivers, on behalf of the University, some or all of a UniSQ Coursework Program leading to an Australian regulated higher education qualification. Any changes to a Third Party agreement are subject to this Procedure.

3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure outlines the processes for assessing, establishing, monitoring and reviewing arrangements for Third Party delivery of Coursework Programs. The processes ensure compliance with the University's obligations as a registered higher education provider and align with its strategic goals.

Provisions for Student participation and attainment, Academic Programs and Course quality, Intellectual Property and Records management are specified in the relevant University Policy Instruments.

This Procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HESF)*:* Standard 5.4 Delivery with Other Parties
- *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018:* Standard 2 Recruitment of an overseas student.

4 Procedures

The University may utilise Third Party delivery to support the delivery of Coursework Programs, facilitated through a formal contractual agreement between the University and the Third Party Provider.

The University will only enter into agreements with Third Party Providers that:

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- demonstrate alignment with the University's vision, values, and strategic priorities
- provide clear benefits to the University, including potential enhancements to the University's domestic or international reputation. Where applicable, the arrangement should consider whether the partner has similar agreements with other institutions
- will not negatively impact any existing Third Party Arrangements.

4.1 New Third Party Delivery Arrangements

4.1.1 Proposal

Proposals for new Third Party Arrangements are initiated via the online Education Partner Application form, available through the University's service management system. All proposals must include:

- evidence of consultation with all relevant academic areas
- a list of administrative divisions expected to be involved in the delivery of the proposed arrangement
- resourcing requirements.

Once all documentation has been collected, the proposal is submitted for assessment.

4.1.2 Proposal assessment

All proposals are assessed by the assigned relevant professional teams, in consultation with the Dean (Academic) and relevant Head/s of School and, where applicable, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International).

Assessment processes are tailored to the scale and nature of the proposal.

As part of the assessment, due diligence is conducted to evaluate the following criteria:

- capacity of the Third Party Provider to enter into a formal contract with the University
- proposed benefits to the University and alignment with the University's vision, values, and strategic priorities
- ownership, governance, legal structure, and probity of the Third Party Provider
- capacity of the Third Party Provider to deliver programs, Courses, and/or services to the required standard and fulfill obligations under the proposed arrangement. This includes

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appropriate staff qualifications, physical resources, Student support services, Risk management, and internal quality assurance processes

- compliance with all applicable laws, regulatory requirements, and University policies
- financial sustainability and relevant regulatory standards of the Third Party Provider
- management of Risks of foreign interference in line with the Guidelines to counter foreign interference in the Australian university sector.

Based on the assessment and due diligence findings, a recommendation is made to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) and, where applicable, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) for further consideration.

4.1.3 Decision

Upon receiving the recommendation, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) considers all proposals, in consultation with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), where applicable. The Decision-maker determines whether the proposal:

- proceeds to the next step;
- is returned to the proposal initiator for further consultation and development; or
- is deemed not viable or insufficiently aligned with University strategic priorities.

The outcome of the Decision is communicated to the proposal initiator, and if the proposal is deemed not viable, the request will be formally closed.

4.1.4 Negotiations and supporting documentation

If the proposal is supported by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) and, where applicable, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), a detailed business plan is developed.

The business plan must:

- be fully costed and include a Risk analysis for new Third Party Arrangements and for existing Third Party Arrangements requiring significant changes
- outline an exit strategy, including the need for appropriate Teach-out arrangements if the Third Party Provider ceases operations or the agreement is terminated.

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Third Party Arrangements are negotiated with the potential partner by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), or nominee, for domestic partners and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), or nominee, for international partners.

Where a new program needs to be developed to accommodate a new Third Party delivery, the program and any new offerings of existing programs delivered by a Third Party Provider must be submitted as a Stage 1 Initial Program Proposal, in accordance with the Program Accreditation Procedure.

Articulation or Credit Transfer pathways that form part of an academic proposal must be managed in accordance with the Educational Partnerships - Articulation and Credit Transfer Pathways Procedure.

Once negotiations with the educational partner have concluded and the business plan, along with any academic proposal (where applicable), has been developed, the proposal is forwarded to the relevant committees for in-principle endorsement and approval.

4.1.5 In-principle endorsement and approval

The business plan and, if applicable, the academic proposal, is added to the documentation submitted with the initial proposal. Once combined, this full set of documents is forwarded for endorsement to:

- the International Strategy Committee (ISC) for proposed arrangements with international partners; or
- the Vice-Chancellor's Executive for proposed arrangements with domestic partners.

Stage 2 Program Accreditation will be subject to approval by the Academic Board, in accordance with the Program Accreditation Procedure.

4.2 Establishment

Once a proposal has been endorsed, formal establishment of the Third Party Arrangement begins, including the development and execution of a contractual agreement that governs the partnership.

4.2.1 Agreement content

Contractual agreements for University-initiated Third Party Arrangements will be managed through the University's centralised Contract Management System, using templates approved by the Legal Office. Requests to the Legal Office for the development of a new agreement must include relevant due diligence reports, background on the proposed partnership, and full details on what has been agreed between the parties during the negotiation process.

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The scope of the agreement will be determined by the nature of the partnership and the level of Risk exposure. At a minimum, the agreement will set out:

- the scope and extent of the functions being undertaken by the Third Party Provider and the rights and responsibilities of both the University and the Third Party Provider
- mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance of the arrangement, ensuring that the University maintains responsibility for academic standards and quality of outcomes equivalent to programs delivered solely by the University
- staffing arrangements, where relevant, including required qualifications and/or professional experience in the relevant discipline
- arrangements for regular review of deliverables, including performance measures
- marketing and promotional activities, ensuring that representations of the University's educational offerings and charges are accurate and not misleading
- provisions for amendments, renewal, and termination of the agreement, including Teach-out arrangements
- the dispute resolution process.

The agreement must ensure that the University maintains adequate authority to comply with the HESF.

All agreements must specify the negotiated commencement and expiry date as well as exit arrangements that enable the University to meet its obligations to its Students.

4.2.2 Agreement execution

Once the agreement content has been finalised, the contractual agreement is signed by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the University. Fully executed agreements will be reported to the Provost via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) and, where applicable, to the ISC. The Provost will notify the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) of the establishment of a new Third Party Arrangement or significant changes to an existing arrangement.

The Vice-Chancellor will inform Academic Board and Council of the execution of the partnership agreement and its commencement date. If the delivery involves on-shore International Students, CRICOS registration must be initiated, and approval must be received before any International Student can participate in the Third Party Arrangement.

4.3 Review and outcomes

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Third Party Arrangements must undergo regular reviews throughout the life of the agreement, in accordance with University Policy Instruments and contractual obligations. These reviews include academic quality assurance monitoring activities and any audits or evaluations conducted or authorised by the University. The reviews will assess the Third Party Provider's performance in meeting their obligations under the agreement, as well as the benefits of the arrangement to both the University and the Provider.

The University will inform TEQSA of any material changes which may significantly impact compliance with HESF, including corporate monitoring and ensuring Student wellbeing and safety.

4.3.1 Renewal of an agreement

Renewal Decisions will be based on the outcomes of the agreement performance reviews. Where a final review is contractually required before renewal, it must commence no later than nine months before the contract expiry.

Agreement modifications which are proposed as part of the renewal of the delivery of the Coursework Program arrangement are subject to the applicable provisions in Section 4.1, including, but not limited to, changes to the business model, the Academic Programs or Credit arrangements.

The responsibilities and authority to approve the renewal of a Third Party Arrangement are the same as for initial establishment, as outlined in Section 4.2.

4.3.2 Termination of an agreement

Third Party Arrangements may be terminated prior to the agreement's expiry date in accordance with the termination or exit clauses specified in the agreement.

Termination must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor, following a recommendation from the ISC for international partners or the Vice-Chancellor's Executive for domestic partners.

Where an agreement is terminated before the agreement's nominated expiry date, appropriate advice, support and Transition arrangements must be initiated for currently enrolled Students, as outlined in the agreement and in accordance with the Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure.

4.4 Quality assurance

In accordance with the HESF, the University:

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

- must ensure that the Third Party Arrangement meets and continues to meet the requirements of the HESF.

The relevant Head of School must appoint an Academic Employee to serve as the academic coordinator for each program. The Third Party Provider must also appoint a coordinator for each program. The UniSQ coordinator and the Third Party Provider coordinator will serve as the primary points of liaison for all academic matters related to the partnership, including program/Course revisions and staffing updates.

The University will conduct financial audits and quality assurance reviews of programs, Courses, and/or services as part of the University's quality assurance cycle, as specified in the agreement. These reviews will ensure academic and business quality in the programs delivered by Third Party Providers and monitor any performance improvement activities.

Comparisons of academic outcomes for Students studying with the Third Party Provider will be undertaken to identify variability. Where necessary, adjustments must be made to future arrangements to address and reduce such variability.

A Joint Management and Academic Quality Committee will be established for each Third Party Arrangement, in accordance with the approved Terms of Reference. The UniSQ and Third Party Provider coordinators will be members of the 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	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education)
Responsible Officer	Dean (Curriculum and Quality)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Educational Partnerships Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	2/1/2026

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Effective Date	2/1/2026
Review Date	1/1/2030
Relevant Legislation	*Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy Admissions, Enrolment and Graduations Policy Marketing and Brand Policy
Related Procedures	Admissions Procedure Course Quality Assurance and Review Procedure Coursework Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure Educational Partnerships - Articulation and Credit Transfer Pathways Procedure Enrolment Procedure Program Accreditation Procedure Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure Website Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Australian Qualifications Framework Education Partner Application form
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Academic Employee As defined in the University of So u thern Queensland Enterprise Agreement 2023 - 2026 . Academic Program

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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.

Articulation

A method of progression from one completed qualification to another with guaranteed Admission or Credit in a defined pathway.

Contract Management System

The 'Open Windows' system approved by the University to facilitate contract initiation, registration and management activities.

Council

Council means the governing body, the University of Southern Queensland Council.

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.

Credit

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

Credit Transfer

A process that provides Students with agreed and consistent Credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified

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equivalence in content and Learning Outcomes between matched qualifications.

Decision

A determination made by an Employee, contractor or other authorised delegate in the course of their duties on behalf of the University.

Intellectual Property

The result of an individual's intellectual endeavours that is capable of being protected by legal rights. Examples include, but are not limited to: inventions and discoveries in relation to new products and processes that can be protected by a patent; Copyright in Teaching Materials; other works in which Copyright subsists including literary works (including computer programs), dramatic works, musical works, artistic works, films, sound recordings, broadcasts, published editions and certain types of performances; industrial designs, which protect the shape, configuration, pattern or ornamentation of a product, that is, what gives a product a unique appearance; plant breeders' rights, which protect varieties of plants and trees; trademarks, which protect the branding, reputation and goodwill of products and services; circuit layout rights, which protect the layout plans or designs of electronic components in integrated circuits, computer chips, or semi-conductors used in personal computers and computer-reliant equipment; and trade secrets and know-how, that is, knowledge about products, processes, and inventions and discoveries: prior to the time they are incorporated into a publication or become the subject of a patent or design application; or which are never made the subject of an application for Intellectual Property registration.

International Student

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

Policy Instrument

A Policy Instrument refers to an instrument that is governed by the Policy framework. These include Policies, Procedures and Schedules.

Risk

The effect of uncertainty on objectives.

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.

Suspension

Prohibition from enrolling in a Course or program for a specified period due to misconduct.

Teach-out

An arrangement that has been put in place for a prescribed period to provide a reasonable opportunity for Students to complete a discontinued program, without disadvantage.

Third Party Arrangement

An arrangement made by the University with another party (in Australia or overseas) to deliver some or all of a higher education program that leads to the Award of an Australian regulated higher education qualification.

Third Party Provider

A party with which the University has a Third Party Arrangement for the purposes of delivering some or all of a higher education program that leads to the award of an Australian regulated higher education qualification.

Transition

Refers to the whole of the Student journey across flexible pathways and programs, moving into University and out into the professional workforce, and the transitions in between. The University's transition pedagogy fosters Student success and engagement and supports Students on their journey as they transition within varied contexts of learning environments, study, diversity, community and work integrated learning.

University

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

Vice-Chancellor

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	The person bearing the title of Vice-Chancellor and President, or as otherwise defined in the University of Southern Queensland Act 1998 , including a person acting in that position.
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
Keywords	
Record No	19/1305PL

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