Program Accreditation Procedure

1 Purpose

To outline the requirements for developing and accrediting new programs.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all Award Programs, including Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs.

For approvals related to Non-Award pathways, including new offerings and changes to existing offerings, refer to the Non-Award Pathways Schedule.

3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure outlines the process for the development and accreditation of new programs at the University.

This Procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:* Standard 5.1 Program (Course) Approval and Accreditation

4 Procedures

All new programs are designed and developed in accordance with:

- the Australian Qualifications Framework and associated guidelines and principles
- any relevant standards for external recognition, registration or accreditation of the proposed program or for potential Graduates.

For Coursework Programs, this Procedure should be read in conjunction with the University's Coursework Curriculum Design Policy and subordinate Procedures.

4.1 New program development timelines

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All new programs are developed collaboratively and include consultation with all relevant stakeholders. Program approval submissions must be progressed to allow sufficient time for informed consideration of, and decision-making based on, the merit and academic integrity of program developments and their associated resourcing and other implications.

4.2 Accreditation timelines

4.2.1 Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) timelines

For all QTAC listed programs, the following accreditation timelines will apply:

- programs offered in the first half of the year - accredited by 31 August of the previous Academic Year
- programs offered in the second half of the year - accredited by 30 November of the previous Academic Year.

4.2.2 Direct entry timelines

For programs not offered through QTAC where Students are admitted to the University via direct entry applications, accreditation timelines are determined by Students and Education in consultation with the Dean (Students), taking into account program offer details and the proposed date to begin taking program applications.

4.3 New program approval

Program approval is a two-stage process consisting of program proposal approval and program accreditation approval.

New program accreditation also includes proposals to create a Double Degree and proposals to establish a Coursework Dual or Joint Award in conjunction with one or more partner institutions.

4.3.1 Stage 1: Initial program proposal

A proposal for a new Coursework Program is developed by the relevant school in the University's curriculum management system.

Only new programs in new disciplines or study areas require development of a Stage 1 Initial Program Proposal. Exit-only Awards added to an existing program, and entry or exit Awards added to an existing program to form a Nested Qualification, do not require the development of a Stage 1 Initial Program Proposal. The addition of such Awards to existing programs will be managed as part of a program change proposal - refer to the Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure for details of this process.

In the case of Double Degrees, the school responsible for the component program that is

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professionally accredited completes the new program proposal. Where neither or both programs are professionally accredited, the school responsible for the component program appearing first in the Award title completes the process.

All new program proposals must demonstrate that adequate consultation has taken place with all relevant stakeholders.



4.3.2 Stage 2: program accreditation

A new Coursework Program accreditation submission is developed by the relevant school in the University's curriculum management system.

The design of a new Coursework Program is informed by:

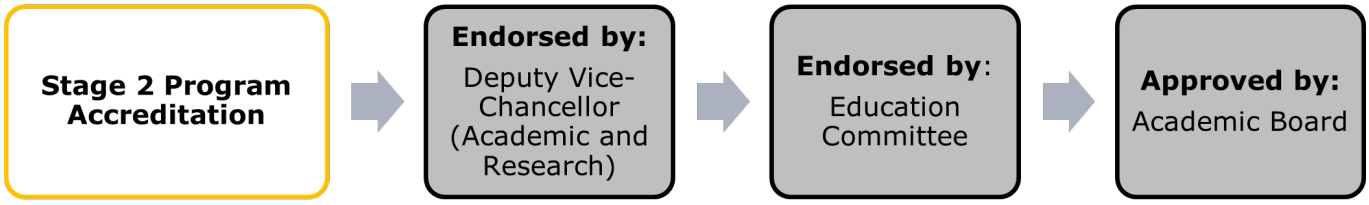
- the Coursework Curriculum Design Policy and subordinate Policy Instruments
- the Assessment Policy and subordinate Policy Instruments
- the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*
- the latest pedagogical and professional developments in the specific discipline field(s) relevant to the program
- program-specific benchmarking or external referencing.

Following endorsement by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) and on the recommendation of Education Committee, Academic Board accredits the new Coursework Program including the Courses related to the program. The program will be subject to regular monitoring and review and, following successful comprehensive review at least every seven (7) years, will remain accredited - refer to the Coursework Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure for further details.

After endorsement of Stage 2 by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) may approve marketing of the program. In these cases, systems are provisioned for program marketing to proceed and applications to be received.

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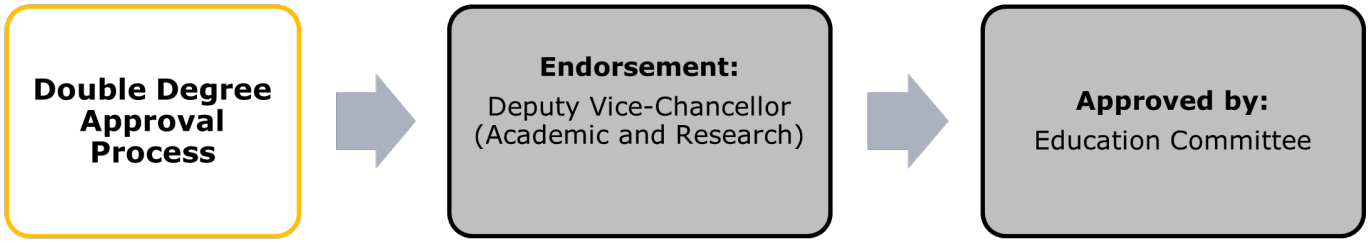
No offers into the new program can be made to Applicants until the program has been formally accredited by the University.



For details on the expedited approval pathway that enables new programs to be considered and approved in exceptional circumstances outside of the standard committee approval process, please refer to the Program Expedited Approval Pathway Schedule.

4.3.3 Double Degrees

Where both individual component programs are already approved for offer and the Core Courses remain the same, establishment of a Double Degree will require the following endorsement and approval steps.



The new program development and approval process applies to the creation of the proposed Double Degree where one or both individual component programs are not already accredited, or where the Core Courses to be offered in one or both individual component programs are changed in order to create the Double Degree.

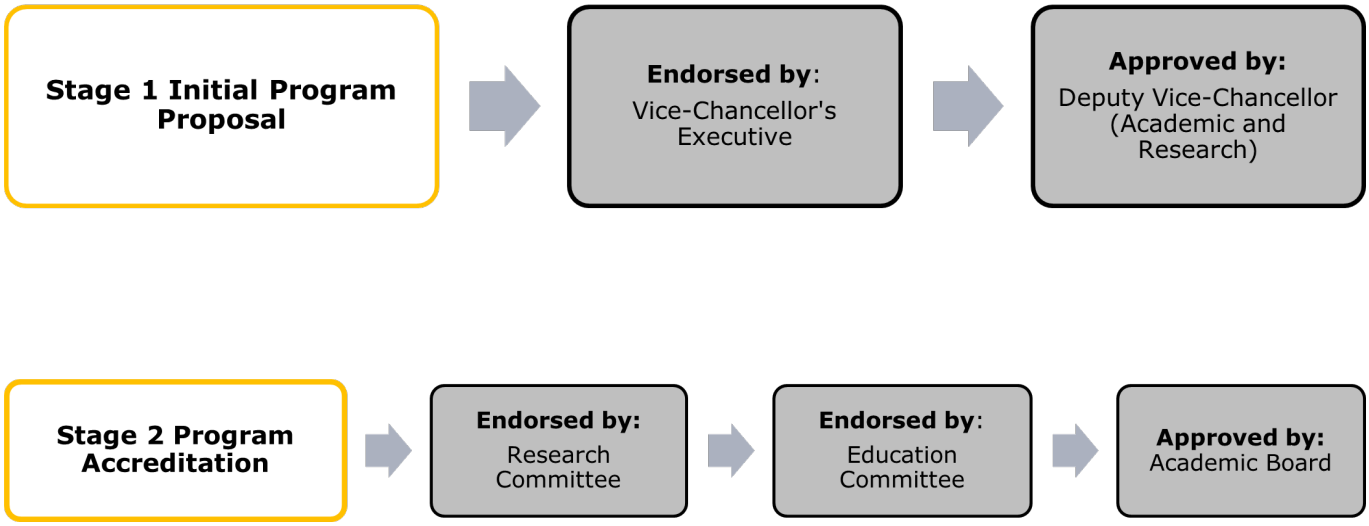
4.3.4 Coursework Dual and Joint Awards

Schools proposing a Coursework Dual or Joint Award arrangement must follow the steps for new program development and the Educational Partnerships - Coursework Dual and Joint Awards Procedure.

4.4 HDR programs

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For HDR programs, the steps described in Section 4.3 of this Procedure are followed with the inclusion of an additional step: all documentation is considered by the University's Research Committee before endorsement by Education Committee and approval by Academic Board. Stage 1 Initial Program Proposals are approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research), following endorsement by the Vice-Chancellor's Executive.



The design and review of HDR programs is managed in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Program Design and Review Procedure.

4.5 New programs annual summary report

An annual summary report of all new programs approved in the previous calendar year is provided to Academic Board and Council for noting at the first meeting of the calendar year.

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)

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Responsible Officer	Dean (Curriculum and Quality)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy
Subordinate Schedules	Course Nomenclature and Coding Schedule Course Specifications Requirements Schedule Non-Award Pathways Schedule Program Development Team Schedule Program Expedited Approval Pathway Schedule Program Nomenclature Schedule
Approved Date	2/1/2026
Effective Date	2/1/2026
Review Date	22/4/2029
Relevant Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Admissions, Enrolment and Graduations Policy Assessment Policy Coursework Curriculum Design Policy Marketing and Brand Policy
Related Procedures	Admissions Procedure Assessment Procedure Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Procedure Coursework Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure Educational Partnerships - Coursework Dual and Joint Awards Procedure Higher Degree by Research Program Design and Review Procedure Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure

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	Website Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Australian Qualifications Framework Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Schedule Program Expedited Approval Pathway Schedule
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Academic Year A period of time consisting of Semesters and Study Periods that all commence in the same calendar year. Admission The process of submission and assessment of applications for entry to study at the University. Applicant A person who applies for any program or Course of study offered by the University whether the application is made through the Queensland Tertiary Admission Centre (QTAC) or directly to 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 . Award Program A sequence of study which leads to an academic qualification granted by the University and conferred by 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.

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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.

Dual Award

A jointly conceived program between the University and an educational partner, where each institution is responsible for its own Award, however the two components together form a single educational experience. Dual Awards are approved according to the University's program accreditation procedures. There is usually cross-transfer of Credit to allow Students to complete both Awards in a shorter time than if they were completed separately. On completion of all program requirements, Students receive two separate Awards, one awarded by the University and one awarded by the partner institution, each with its own Testamur. A Dual Award is conferred under a legally binding arrangement and typically includes reciprocal Student mobility.

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.

Joint Award

A joint program between the University and an educational partner involving close cooperation in the design of the program, program delivery, assessment of Learning Outcomes and requirements for completion. Joint Awards are approved according to the University's program accreditation procedures. On completion of all program requirements, Students receive one single Award, with a single Testamur jointly conferred by the University and the educational partner. A Joint Award is conferred under a legally binding arrangement and typically includes reciprocal student mobility.

Nested Qualifications

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	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. Policy Instrument A Policy Instrument refers to an instrument that is governed by the Policy framework. These include Policies, Procedures and Schedules. 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. 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. University The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
Keywords	Accreditation, Higher Degree by Research program, Award Program, Curriculum Design, Dual Award, Joint Award, Coursework Program, quality assurance, expedited pathway, Double Degree
Record No	19/694PL

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