Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure

1 Purpose

To outline the process for approval of changes to an existing accredited program, including suspension or discontinuation.

2 Scope

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

Refer to the Non-Award Pathways Schedule for information on the approval pathways related to changes to Non-Award pathway offerings.

3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure outlines the process to approve changes to existing accredited programs, including suspension of intake and discontinuation.

For Coursework Programs, the Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Coursework Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure.

For HDR Programs, the Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Higher Degree by Research Program Design and Review Procedure.

This Procedure aligns with:

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

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 the Graduate Research School, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) replaces the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) in the approval processes detailed in this Procedure.

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4.1 Approval timelines

4.1.1 Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) timelines

For all QTAC listed programs, the following approval timelines apply.

Program	Required Academic Board Approval Date(s)
Changes to existing programs	Programs offered in the first half of the year - approved by 31 July 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 programs	If offers have not already been suspended, approval by 31 August for implementation in the following Academic Year
Suspension of offers into existing programs	Provided no offers of Admission have been issued, suspension of offers may be approved at any time. If offers of Admission have been issued, alternate arrangement must be made

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 the Deputy Academic Registrar to ensure sufficient time has been allocated for approval and publication.

4.1.3 Expedited pathway

The Program Expedited Approval Pathway Schedule provides details on the expedited approval pathway that enables major changes to existing programs to be considered and approved in exceptional circumstances outside of the standard committee approval process.

4.2 Program change

Significant changes to programs are undertaken:

- as an outcome of an interim or comprehensive program review process or in response to an approved Course Action Plan;
- in response to recommendations related to program structural change from professional accreditation reviews;
- as a result of regulatory changes; or
- as a result of changes approved to another program that impact directly on the

program's structure.

4.2.1 Categories of change

There are four different categories of program changes:

1. major
2. minor
3. administrative and resource-related.

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 (Students and Education).

Table 1: Detailed Program Level Changes

MAJOR	**Following endorsement by:**	**Approval**
Changes to: • Category type of AQF level • Credit value or volume of learning • Field of Education (FOE) (excluding regulatory or administrative changes) • Admission requirements (excluding ATAR thresholds)	School Learning and Teaching Student Success Committee and Head of School	Education Committee
• Adding new Courses, Majors or Specialisations • Discontinuing Majors or Specialisations • New nested entry and exit and exit only Awards within an existing program		

Any other changes deemed major by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) and Chair of Education Committee		
Discontinuing a Coursework Program, including the Courses unique to the program	Education Committee	Academic Board
MINOR	**Following endorsement by:**	**Approval**
Changes in accredited programs to: • Program Learning Outcomes • Program title • Inherent Academic Requirements • Other program requirements, for example: ◦ professional accreditation status or requirements ◦ program articulation ◦ requirements to practice from professional accreditation body	School Learning and Teaching Student Success Committee	Head of School and reported to Education Committee
• Course discontinuation (separate to those discontinued following program review) • Suspension of offer into a program, Major or Specialisation		
• Adding existing Courses or removing Courses from programs	School Learning and Teaching Student Success Committee and Head of School	Dean (Curriculum and Quality) and reported to Education Committee
ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESOURCE-RELATED	**Following endorsement by *:**	**Approval**
Changes to:	Dean (Curriculum and Quality)	Deputy Academic Registrar

• Details on the Testamur (Majors listed) • Details on the Transcript (Study Components, Majors, Minors, Micro-credentials listed) • Description for AHEGS	* *Dean (GRS) for HDR programs)*	
Changes to: • Study Period (Academic Calendar layer or length of Study Period) • Program-level changes to mode of delivery (internal, external, multi-modal) • Funding type (e.g. Commonwealth-supported, full-fee paying) • CRICOS registration	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) * *Dean (GRS) or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) for HDR programs)*	Deputy Academic Registrar

4.2.2 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.

4.2.3 Program change proposal

The program change proposal details the case for making changes to the program. Proposals involving changes to Program Learning Outcomes, or addition or removal of Courses from the program, will include documented mapping of Course Learning Outcomes to Program Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes. 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.

Proposed changes to a program that affect a Student's enrolment pattern require a Transition plan - refer to Section 4.4.1 for details.

4.2.4 Study Component changes

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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.

Requests to approve, modify, suspend or discontinue a Study Component are made by the school or college that is the administering unit for the parent 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.

Proposed changes to a Study Component that affect a Student's Enrolment pattern require a Transition plan - refer to Section 4.4.1 for details.

4.2.5 Program Bulletin

Changes to a program, once approved, are published in the Program Bulletin. Implementation of the approved changes is overseen by the Deputy Academic Registrar and Dean (Curriculum and Quality).

4.2.6 Reporting

An annual summary report of all major, minor and administrative changes approved in the previous year is provided for noting to the first Academic Board meeting of the calendar year.

4.3 Suspension of offers into a program or Study Component

Suspension of offer means that:

1. there is no Admission of Students into that program or Study Component for a specified period (normally one calendar year) from a specified date; and

2. at the end of the specified period, the program or Study Component is reinstated, or the suspension of offer is extended, or the program or Study Component is discontinued.

4.4 Discontinuation of a program or Study Component

Discontinuation of a program or Study Component means that the program or Study Component is to be removed from the suite of programs or Study Components available to Students.

The discontinuation of a program or Study Component must:

- comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and meet any contractual

obligations between the University and Third Party Providers

- comply with advice on whether Commonwealth approval for the discontinuation is required, according to the Commonwealth funding agreement
- ensure there is adequate provision to meet the learning needs of Students impacted by the discontinuation so that they are provided a reasonable opportunity to successfully complete their studies.

A Teach-out plan must be included in proposals to discontinue programs or Study Components with active Student Enrolments or accepted offers of Admission. Where an alternative or replacement program or Study Component exists, a proposal to discontinue a program or Study Component must also include a Transition plan - refer to Section 4.4.2 for details.

All impacted Students must be notified in writing within 15 University Business Days of the approval to discontinue the program or Study Component and given reasonable time to consider their options. This includes those on deferment, Leave of Absence and academic Exclusion.

4.4.1 Teach-out requirements

A Teach-out plan includes recommended study sequences for groups of Students at similar stages of progression through the program or Study Component being discontinued.

The Teach-out plan may reduce or remove Student choice as it applies to Course offer availability or require Students to study a prescribed sequence of Courses.

The Teach-out plan must ensure that Students:

- are still able to meet the program's accredited program requirements
- are not required to complete more Courses than were originally required or be required to undertake a study overload, based on the program offer pattern, in any given Study Period
- do not experience increased Student liability for Course fees.

International Students must be able to complete all requirements of the program within the duration of their existing Student visa, on the proviso that the Student is successfully progressing towards completion of their program, in accordance with the ESOS Act. CRICOS requirements must be maintained for completion of study within the Teach-out timeframe.

The Teach-out period should be calculated after Student cohort analysis is completed and is normally no more than the standard full-time duration of the program plus one year, with exceptions approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education).

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Teach-out plans must continue to remain available throughout the Teach-out period and must be monitored and updated by the Program Director in alignment with the annual cycle of program reviews. Adjustments to the Teach-out plan may be required to accommodate specific Student cohort requirements, unforeseen changes to substitute Course availabilities or unforeseen complexities in study plan configurations. Student progression must be monitored and appropriately communicated at the end of each Study Period to ensure completion within the required timeframe.

During the Teach-out period, program quality assurance will continue to be maintained.

4.4.2 Transition requirements

Where the University proposes to offer Students enrolled in a discontinued program the ability to Transition to another program, the proposal must include a Transition plan that specifies:

- how Courses completed under the discontinued program will be credited towards the completion requirements of the new program
- a revised study sequence for each transferred entry cohort.

A Student offered a Transition has the option not to accept that Transition. If a Student wishes to remain in their original program, they are required to indicate this in writing by the date provided in the offer to Transition. Where a Student chooses not to Transition, they should follow the revised study sequence in the Teach-out plan to ensure they can complete the program requirements within the Teach-out period.

In some cases, it may be necessary to Transition Students to revised program completion requirements. For example, a program may be substantially revised to align with changes to external accreditation requirements which require Students to meet certain additional criteria for professional practice.

The impact of any Transition arrangements on International Students must be determined in consultation with the International Office.

4.4.3 Teach-out options

Students who do not complete their studies within the prescribed timeline for Teach-out will be managed on a case-by-case basis. Options may include:

- transfer to another program with full Credit, either with the intention to continue study or, if eligible, to be issued an appropriate exit Award along with their transcript recording the extent of their studies and the reason for their discontinuation
- cross-institutional study

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- Course substitution or recognition of Course equivalence.

4.4.4 Reporting

An annual summary report of all program and Study Component discontinuations approved in the previous year is provided for noting to the first Academic Board 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)
Responsible Officer	Dean (Curriculum and Quality)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy
Subordinate Schedules	Program Expedited Approval Pathway 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
Related Procedures	Admissions Procedure

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	Assessment Procedure Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Procedure Higher Degree by Research Program Design and Review 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

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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

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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.

Teach-out

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	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. 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. 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.
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
Keywords	Program accreditation, program change, suspension and discontinuation, 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

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