Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure

University of Southern Queensland

1 Purpose

To outline the process for monitoring, reviewing and improving the quality of the University's programs.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to all Programs offered by, or on behalf of, the University

3 Procedure Overview

This procedure establishes the review cycle used to monitor, review and assure the quality of the University's programs.

This Procedure supports the University's compliance with the:

- *Australian Qualifications Framework*
- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*
- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:* Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement, Standard 5.4 Delivery with Other Parties, Standard 6.3 Academic Governance and Standard 7.3 Information Management
- *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*, where applicable
- *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*

In the context of Higher Degree by Research courses, the relevant line supervisor is the Dean (Graduate Research School).

4 Procedures

All accredited programs are subject to regular monitoring and review, external validation 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, learning, teaching, supervision, and academic support and to mitigate future risks to the quality of the program.

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All Nested Qualifications, Double Degrees and Study Components are included in the review of the program.

Program Directors are responsible for regular monitoring of discontinued programs to ensure timely student progression, completion and curriculum maintenance.

4.1 Program quality cycle

Following new program accreditation, programs are quality assured through an ongoing cycle of monitoring and improvement, informed by Course-level quality assurance activities, academic quality Sentinel Indicators and detailed program performance data.

The program quality cycle consists of:

1. Courses in context report in Years 1, 2 and 4
2. Comprehensive Program Review Phase 1 in Year 3
3. Comprehensive Program Review Phase 2, by Year 5 but not later than Year 6 of the program quality cycle.

An out-of-cycle Comprehensive Program Review may be conducted where determined as necessary by the Dean (Curriculum and Quality) or where directed by Academic Board.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 reviews include external validation, industry advisory boards, evidence from professional accreditation submissions and other benchmarking activities of the success of Student cohorts against comparable programs of study, including:

- analyses of progression rates, retention rates, completion times and rates, and mode and location of delivery
- consultation with internal teams to assure alignment with internal procedures
- the Assessment methods and grading of Students' achievement of Learning Outcomes for selected Courses within programs of study.

4.2 Quality assurance Sentinel Indicators

Program quality assurance Sentinel Indicators are approved by Education Committee and noted by Academic Board.

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

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4.3 Comprehensive Program Review Phase 1 - Year 3

The responsible School undertakes Phase 1 of the Comprehensive Program Review in Year 3 of the program quality cycle. Using program quality data packs and any other quality assurance and monitoring outcomes, an assessment against the quality assurance Sentinel Indicators is made.

Phase 1 of this process also takes into consideration the market and financial performance of the program within the context of University strategic priorities.

Outcomes of the review process may result in changes to the program which must be undertaken in accordance with the Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure.

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 noting. For programs in their second or subsequent quality cycle, the summary report also details progress towards implementation of actions from the previous Comprehensive Review.

4.4 Comprehensive Program Review Phase 2 - Year 5

Responsible Schools facilitate a Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Program Review by Year 5 but no later than Year 6 of the program quality cycle, unless program discontinuation is proposed.

Preparation of the Phase 2 Comprehensive Review submission for consideration by Education Committee and Academic Board is informed and supported by program quality data packs and external evidence sources, such as Environmental Scans, the findings of the External Review Committee and 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.

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

4.4.1 Submission content

The Phase 2 review submission for continued offer of programs in their second or subsequent quality cycle includes the following:

1. a summary of actions as a result of the last Phase 2 review and details of how these have been developed and implemented
2. changes and improvements made since the last Phase 2 review submission, as a result of the annual courses in context report and Phase 1 review process, including:

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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 validation, professional accreditation and/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 Phase 2 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 validation or similar of key Assessment Items in selected Courses
4. details of any Third Party Arrangements and Credit Transfer/Articulation agreements.
5. evidence of consultation with key internal teams including curriculum designers, Library, Learning and Teaching Innovation and First Nations Portfolio.

4.4.2 Submission recommendations

The submission includes:

- a set of achievable and measurable actions to support the ongoing improvement of the program curriculum and delivery
- a plan and timeframes for implementation of the actions that must not extend beyond two (2) years from the date of the finalised submission.

4.4.3 Professionally accredited programs

Where a program is subject to professional accreditation requirements, the relevant School must ensure the program continues to meet the requirements and standards of the relevant professional accrediting body throughout the accreditation period. The School must maintain compliance with the professional body's accreditation cycle and complete all required submissions, reporting, monitoring and other accreditation requirements within the timeframe established by the accrediting body and the University.

The School must monitor and respond to any conditions, recommendations, reporting requirements or other matters arising from professional accreditation. Actions

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necessary to maintain accreditation must be implemented, monitored and appropriately documented.

Where a matter arising from professional accreditation may materially affect the program's curriculum, Learning Outcomes, Assessment, professional practice requirements, resources or delivery, the matter must be addressed through the applicable University Program and Course approval, change and quality assurance processes.

Professional accreditation does not replace the University's Program quality assurance and review requirements. However, professional accreditation submissions can be adapted and used as part of the Phase 2 review process, where the evidence demonstrates achievement of the University's review requirements. Any gaps between the professional accreditation standards and the University's quality assurance and review requirements must be identified and addressed in the Phase 2 submission.

The Phase 2 submission must include clear reference to the relevant professional body standards and the accreditation evidence relied upon, and note any conditions, recommendations, reporting requirements or other matters arising from accreditation, together with the actions taken or planned to address them.

Where a professional accreditation submission and Phase 2 review fall within the same or consecutive year/s, the School can seek approval in writing from the Dean (Curriculum and Quality) to either bring forward or postpone the Phase 2 review to better align with the professional accreditation requirements ensuring it does not exceed the six (6) year cycle.

Where a professional accrediting body does not mandate annual reporting, the School must still undertake and document an annual review of the program's continued compliance with applicable professional accreditation requirements, including any changes that may affect accreditation. The Annual Report must identify any changes made to the program during the reporting period, including changes that may affect compliance with professional accreditation requirements. This annual reporting supports the University's ongoing monitoring, review and continuous improvement of the program in accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, including Standard 5.3 (Monitoring, Review and Improvement), and provides assurance of the Program's continued compliance with applicable professional accreditation requirements.

4.4.4 Review and decision

The Phase 2 review submission is provided to Education Committee for endorsement of the actions 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 approves the review submission and the action plan, or requests resubmission.

The submission will be stored in the curriculum management system.

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The relevant Head of School 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. Approval of identified actions within Phase 2 is not an approval for curriculum actions and any changes must be undertaken and approved in accordance with the Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure.

Implementation of approved actions must be monitored and the effectiveness of those actions considered through subsequent Course and program quality assurance activities.

For the following two (2) years, or until all actions have been implemented, Curriculum and Quality will provide a regular summary report to Education Committee on progress towards implementing the program review actions.

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	
Approved Date	
Effective Date	
Review Date	
Relevant Legislation	*Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*

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Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Assessment Policy Curriculum Design Policy Educational Partnerships Policy Learning and Teaching Policy Student Academic Integrity Policy
Related Procedures	Assessment Procedure Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Procedure Educational Partnerships - Third Party Delivery of Coursework Programs Procedure Student Academic Misconduct Procedure Work Integrated Learning Activities Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Assessment Pattern Schedule Assessment Types Schedule Australian Qualifications Framework Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Schedule
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Admission Assessment Award Program Course Coursework Coursework Program Credit Transfer Double Degree Major

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	Nested Qualifications Sentinel Indicator Specialisation Student **Study Component (Amended)** A coherent set of Courses that develop a particular academic theme. This includes Majors, Extended Majors, and Specialisations. Third Party Arrangement University
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
	External Validation External Validation 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.
Keywords	Phase 1 program review, Phase 2 program review, quality assurance, benchmarking, external validation, Sentinel Indicator, professional accreditation
Record No	21/302PL

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