Program Development and Professional Accreditation Procedure

University of Southern Queensland

1 Purpose

To outline the requirements for developing and accrediting new programs.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all programs.

3 Procedure Overview

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

This Procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:* Standard 3.1 Course Design, Standard 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation and Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement,

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 Curriculum Design Policy and subordinate Procedures. For Higher Degree by Research programs this Procedure should be read in conjunction with the University's Higher Degree by Research Program design Procedure.

4.1 New program development timelines

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

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and academic integrity of program developments and their associated resourcing and other implications.

4.2 Accreditation timelines

Considerable time and resourcing is required to develop a new program in readiness for delivery to Students. This includes:

- timely appointment of a suitably qualified Program Director
- curriculum development and mapping
- internal/external consultation
- market analysis
- learning materials development and implementation
- acquisition of learning resources and equipment
- resourcing to support the program such as laboratories or other specialised spaces
- professional accreditation submissions, including consideration of accrediting body requirements such as provision of a notice of intent to submit an application within required timeframes and meeting site visit obligations
- CRICOS registration and international market consultation
- domestic and international marketing plans

For all new programs, the following accreditation timelines will apply:

- 12 months to develop, approve and implement the program prior to delivery

And must be approved internally at Academic Board by 31 May of the previous Academic Year.

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 Award 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 or Higher Degree by Research Program is developed by the relevant school in the University's curriculum management system.

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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.

All new program proposals must demonstrate that adequate consultation has taken place with all relevant stakeholders including response to the following criteria:

Where a Stage 1 proposal is not required, the following markers of Program viability must be addressed in the Stage 2 Program Accreditation documentation:

- Resources - infrastructure and staffing costs
- Costs of delivery – Business Advisory Report
- Load - income (capability and sustainability)
- Applicable TEQSA requirements or guidance, where these have prompted the proposed change
- Community identity
- Servicing the regions
- Potential partnerships (industry or stakeholder groups)
- Research connections – research informed teaching

Stage 1 Governance Approval Pathway

4.3.2 Stage 2: Program accreditation

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

The design of a new program is informed by:

- the Curriculum Design Policy and subordinate Policy Instruments
- the Assessment Policy and subordinate Policy Instruments
- the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*

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- the latest pedagogical and professional developments in the specific discipline field(s) relevant to the program
- program-specific benchmarking and external validation.

Once the requirements in sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 have been met, and endorsement has been obtained from the School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee (LTSS), Head of School, Dean (Curriculum and Quality), and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research), the proposal is submitted to Education Committee for recommendation to Academic Board.

Academic Board accredits the new Program including the Courses related to the program. Following accreditation, the Program is subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic comprehensive review in accordance with the Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure.

4.3.3 Early marketing

School/program teams may submit a request for early marketing of a proposed new program within their Stage 2 proposal. The request must be supported by evidence of consultation with the Marketing team and requires approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research).

The approval will be subject to regulatory, CRICOS, or professional accreditation requirements for advertising.

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

Stage 2 Governance Approval Pathway

4.3.4 Double Degrees

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

Double Degree Governance Pathway

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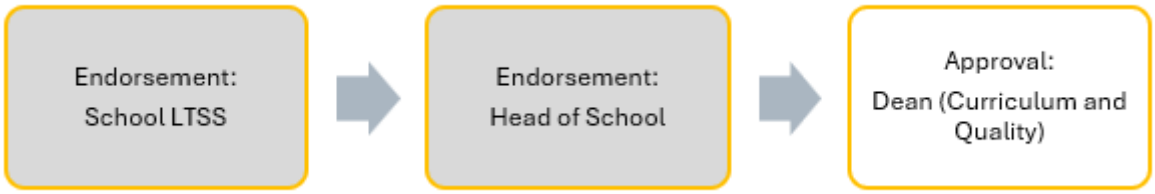

4.3.5 Coursework Dual and Joint Awards

Schools proposing a Coursework Dual or Joint Award arrangement must follow the Educational Partnerships Procedure and the applicable program accreditation or change process.

4.3.6 Professionally accredited programs

Where a new program requires professional accreditation, documents will be prepared by the School with support from Curriculum and Quality and must be approved by the Head of School, Dean (Curriculum and Quality) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) prior to submission to the professional body.

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring the academic team is adequately resourced to support the accreditation activities, including the timely engagement of a suitably qualified Program Director, to ensure agreed submission timelines can be met and for meeting all associated costs including campus site visits and student participation.

Professional accreditation outcomes must be formally recorded in the University curriculum management system to identify both the status and currency including the professional body name and dates of accreditation.

Following initial professional accreditation, ongoing compliance with professional accreditation requirements must be managed in accordance with the Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure.

4.4 Non-Award Pathways

Non-Award pathways are programs offered by the University that do not result in an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) award. Once endorsement has been obtained from the School Learning, Teaching and Student Success Committee (LTSS), Head of School, Dean (Curriculum and Quality), the proposal is submitted for approval to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research).

All Non-Award pathway offerings:

- are planned with advice from relevant internal and external experts
- demonstrate a sound educational rationale for their content and structure
- comply with University Policies and Procedures, external standards and requirements

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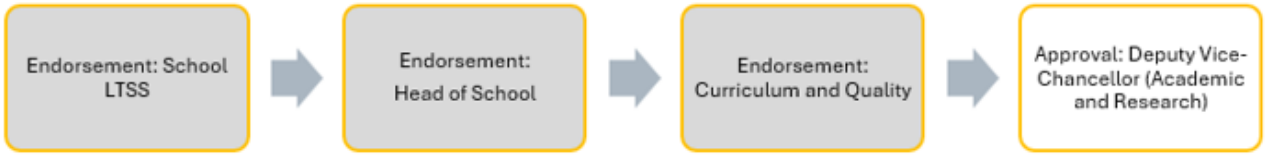
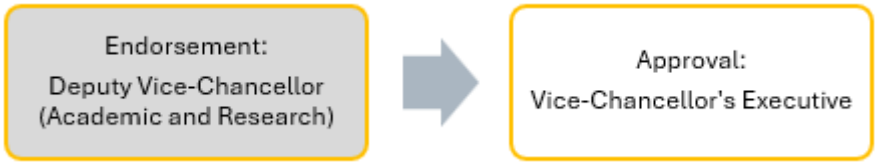
- draw on curriculum resources already available within the University, where applicable
- take account of current best practice in the area and are aligned to the needs of industry, community, Students and the professions
- equip Students with knowledge and skills that will be of value to the community and which promote lifelong learning.



4.5 Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs

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 Vice-Chancellor's Executive following endorsement by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research).

Stage 1



Stage 2

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

4.6 Program Nomenclature

Table 1: Program Nomenclature

AQF Level	Qualification Type	Qualification Title	Abbreviated Qualification Title

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5	Diploma	Diploma of (Field of study/discipline)	Dip (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
5 - 7	Undergraduate Certificate	Undergraduate Certificate of (Field of study/discipline)	UG Cert (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
6	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma of (Field of study/discipline)	Adv Dip (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
6	Associate Degree	Associate Degree of (Field of study/discipline)	Assoc Deg (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
7	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor of (Field of study/discipline)	B (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
8	Bachelor Honours Degree	Bachelor of (Field of study/discipline) (Honours)	B (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated) (Hons)
8	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate of (Field of study/discipline)	Grad Cert (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
8	Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma of (Field of study/discipline)	Grad Dip (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
9	Master Degree (Coursework)	Master of (Field of study/discipline)	M (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
9	Master Degree (Research)	Master of (Field of study/discipline)	M (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
9	Master Degree (Extended)	Master of (Field of study/discipline) *For exceptions that may be used, see below**	M (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
10	Professional Doctoral Degree	Doctor of (Field of study/discipline)	D (Field of study/discipline, usually abbreviated)
10	Higher Doctoral Degree	Doctor of Philosophy	PhD

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** Exceptions:*

1. The use of the title 'Juris Doctor' is permitted for a Masters Degree (Extended) for legal practice

2. The use of the title 'Doctor of …' is permitted for a Masters Degree (Extended) for five professions: medical practice; physiotherapy; dentistry; optometry and veterinary practice.

4.7 Course Nomenclature

All Courses are assigned a unique and identifiable Course name and code to enable the Course and its associated details to be recorded in the relevant systems.

4.7.1 Course naming

When selecting and approving a Course name, the following should be taken into consideration:

- the extent to which the name reflects the Learning Outcomes of the Course
- the extent of professional or employment demands for a specific Course name or descriptors
- the possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpretation by Students and employers
- the life expectancy of the Course name.
- Limits in characters, including spaces, to the length of a Course name are applied to accommodate transcripts and systems constraints (50 characters).

4.7.2 Course coding

Course codes are University-wide, discipline-based codes and are not exclusive to particular Programs or organisational units. Previously allocated codes may not be used again.

Course codes comprise a maximum of seven (7) alphanumeric characters. For Academic Courses, the seven (7) characters are comprised of three (3) letters and four (4) digits.

4.7.3 Alpha characters

The three (3) character alpha prefix represents the discipline and should not usually end in "I" or "O", to avoid confusion with the numeric "one" or "zero".

Discipline descriptors associate with a Course are aligned with the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) [6] codes. There is a direct relationship between the discipline descriptor, Student Contribution Amount bands and funding clusters.

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Schools wishing to establish a new discipline descriptor must obtain approval as part of a new Program or existing Program change request, in accordance with this Procedure or the Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure.

4.7.4 Numeric characters

The first digit represents the Level of the Course (e.g., 1 is normally associated with the first Full-Time Study year in an undergraduate program, 2 is normally undertaken in the second or third full-time year of an undergraduate program). Refer to Table 4 in section 4.5.3 of the Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Procedure for further details.

The second to fourth digits may be allocated at the discretion of the school, provided that each Course has a unique identifier.

4.7.5 Same Course offered in both an undergraduate and a postgraduate program

If the same material is taught both in an undergraduate program and in a postgraduate program, there should be two Course codes assigned to reflect the more rigorous standard of Assessment expected of postgraduate Students. Refer to section 4.5.7 of the Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Procedure for further details.

4.7.6 Same Course offered in a suite of related programs

If the same Course is available in either a suite of related undergraduate programs or a suite of related postgraduate programs, it should be assigned a single Course code using the discipline and Level of the program with which it is primarily associated. If there is any uncertainty, it should be assigned a discipline code with the broadest coverage of the Course's topics and at the higher Level. For example, a mathematics Course to be offered in undergraduate engineering, education, and science programs in either the second or third years of the programs should be coded MAT3XXX.

4.7.7 Year-long Courses

Year-long Courses follow the naming and coding conventions outlined in this Procedure. In alignment with the Government definition of a year-long Course, the Course must be equivalent to an Academic Year in length to be classified as a year-long Course.

4.7.8 Replacement Course codes

A replacement code is required when the following changes to a Course are being proposed or mandated:

1. Field of Education;

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2. funding cluster;
3. Course Level;
4. total Unit value; or
5. substantial change to Course Learning Outcomes where Credit for the existing Course cannot be granted for the updated Course.

4.8 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)
Responsible Officer	Dean (Curriculum and Quality)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Academic Programs and Courses Quality Policy
Subordinate Schedules	Course Specifications Requirements Schedule
Approved Date	
Effective Date	
Review Date	
Relevant Legislation	*Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Admissions, Enrolment and Graduations Policy

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	Assessment Policy Curriculum Design Policy Marketing and Brand Policy
Related Procedures	Admissions Procedure Assessment Procedure Coursework Curriculum Design and Structure Procedure 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 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 Admission Applicant **Award (Amended)** The qualification conferred upon a Student following the successful completion of an Academic Program. The categories of Award are listed in the Program Development and Professional Accreditation Procedure. Award Program Course Coursework

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	Coursework Program Double Degree Dual Award Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Joint Award Nested Qualifications Policy Instrument Procedure Research Student University
	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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