Program Change, Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure

University of Southern Queensland

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 programs offered by the University.

3 Procedure Overview

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

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

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

This Procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:* Standard 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment, Standard 3.1 Course Design, Standard 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation, Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement, Standard 6.2 Corporate Monitoring, Assurance and Controls, Standard 6.3 Academic Governance, Standard 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students

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.

4.1 Approval timelines

For all programs, the following approval timelines apply.

Table 1 – Required Academic Board Approval timeframes

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Program	Required Academic Board Approval Date(s)
Changes to existing programs	31 May of the previous academic year to meet Handbook and Application timelines
Discontinuation of existing programs	If the program has not already been suspended, approval by 31 May for implementation in the following Academic Year
Suspension of existing programs	Provided no offers of Admission have been issued, a suspension may be approved at any time. If offers of Admission have been issued, these will be managed on a case-by-case basis and alternate arrangements may need to be made

4.2 Program change

Significant changes to programs are undertaken:

- as an outcome of Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Program Review process or in response to an approved Continuous Course Reflection outcome
- in response to recommendations related to program structural change from professional accreditation submissions;
- as a result of regulatory changes; or
- as a result of updating mapping requirements; 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 three different categories of program changes, and 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 2 below, the Dean (Curriculum and Quality) will determine the appropriate level of approval required.

1. Major Change governance approval (exception is Program Discontinuation which is approved at Academic Board):

2. Minor Change:

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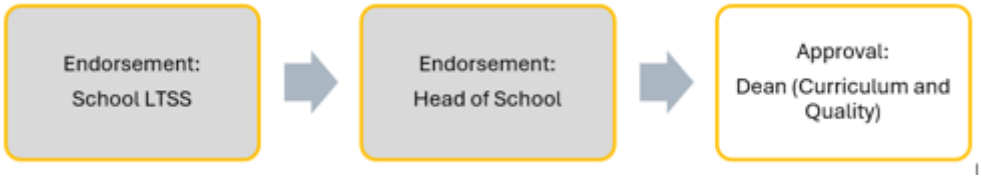

3. Administrative Change:

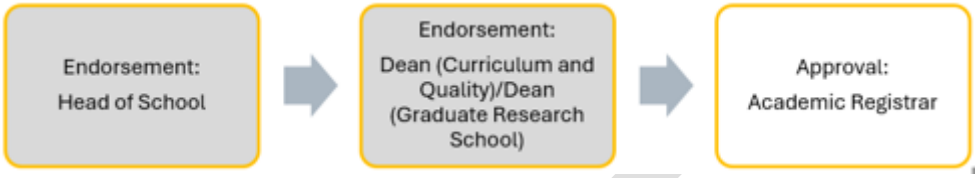

Table 2: Detailed Program Level Changes

Change Category	Typical Changes	Endorsement	Approval
Administrative	Transcript Testamur (Study Component listed) Study Period (Academic Calendar layer or length of Study Period) Program mode of delivery (on campus, online, external) Program Intakes – Study period and Campus Funding type (Commonwealth-supported, full-fee paying) CRICOS registration Citizenship (ISOFF, ISOVS, ISONC, AUS, PHV)	Head of School Dean (Curriculum and Quality)	Academic Registrar (reported to Education Committee and Academic Board)

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	ATAR Field of Education (FOE)		
Minor	Program title Decrease in admission requirements (including GPA and English Language) Program articulation# Course discontinuation (outside of major change process) Suspension of a program, Major or Specialisation Adding or removing existing Courses from programs Change of Course Unit value and volume of learning New nested entry and exit and exit only Awards (using existing courses in an existing program)	School LTSS Head of School	Dean (Curriculum and Quality) (reported to Education Committee and Academic Board)
Major	Change of Program structure, new core volume (e.g. 4-8 units), new majors or specialisations Program Recode Program Learning Outcomes (change	School LTSS Head of School Dean (Curriculum and Quality) DVC (Academic and Research)	Education Committee (reported to Academic Board)

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	including change of verbiage and expectations of learning) AQF level Credit value or volume of learning Increasing Admission requirements (including GPA and English Language entry Requirements) Adding new Courses, Majors or Specialisations Discontinuing Majors or Specialisations		
Major - Program Discontinuation	Discontinuing a Program (including Courses unique to the program)	School LTSS Head of School Dean (Curriculum and Quality) DVC (Academic and Research) Education Committee	Academic Board

 # Articulation and Third Party delivered/developed curriculum are addressed in the relevant Partnership agreement.

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.

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4.2.3 Professionally accredited programs

Where a proposed change to a professionally accredited program may affect compliance with professional accreditation requirements, the School must assess the accreditation implications of the proposed change, in consultation with Curriculum and Quality, before the change is approved or implemented.

Where required by the professional accrediting body, the School must notify the accrediting body of the proposed change or obtain its approval within the applicable timeframe.

Any professional accreditation conditions, recommendations or requirements arising from the proposed change must be documented and addressed through the relevant University approval and quality assurance processes.

Reaccreditation submissions required by a professional accrediting body must be prepared by the School with support from Curriculum and Quality and approved by the Head of School, Dean (Curriculum and Quality) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) before submission to the professional accrediting body.

Changes to professional accreditation status, accreditation periods, conditions or reporting requirements resulting from reaccreditation or program change must be recorded in the University curriculum management system.

Ongoing monitoring of professional accreditation requirements must be undertaken in accordance with the Program Quality Assurance and Review Procedure.

4.2.4 Program change proposal

The program change proposal details the case for making changes to the program. As with new programs, changes to coursework programs are informed by the criteria outlined in the Program Development and Professional Accreditation Procedure Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 and these must be addressed in the program change proposal.

Proposals involving changes to Program Learning Outcomes, or addition or removal of Courses from the program, will include documented mapping of Assessment to Course Learning Outcomes to Program Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes within the curriculum management system. Proposals will not be accepted without completed curriculum mapping.

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

4.2.5 Study Component changes

Study Components are approved as part of the initial program accreditation deemed as the 'parent' program. A Study Component can be a requirement in multiple programs but is tied to the program for which the Study Component was specifically

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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 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 consulted on the proposed changes and able to provide input.

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.

4.2.6 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 a program or Study Component

Suspension 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 is extended, or the program or Study Component is discontinued.
3. current enrolled Students continue their studies as courses within the program or study component remain available

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, and appropriate notifications are completed
- 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.

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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.

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. All discontinued program proposals must include a teach-out plan before they can be considered at any committee level.

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 two (2) years from the approval of the discontinuation for coursework Programs. HDR programs will be managed on a case-by-case basis.

The Program Director is responsible for monitoring Student progression throughout the teach-out period and maintaining appropriate communication with Students at the conclusion of each Study Period to support completion within the required timeframe.

Discontinued programs will retain a published Handbook entry for the duration of the teach-out period including teach-out plans available for Students and staff. Where adjustments to a teach-out plan may be required to accommodate the needs of specific Student cohorts, changes to the availability of substitute courses, or unforeseen complexities in study plan configurations, any amendments must be reflected in the Handbook entry and communicated to affected Students in a timely manner.

During the Teach-out period, regular quality assurance activities will continue and professional accreditation maintained where applicable.

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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 change proposal must include a Transition plan before it can be considered at any committee level and the plan must specify:

- 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 must 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 professional accreditation requirements which require Students to meet certain additional criteria for professional practice.

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
- 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.

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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	*Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Admissions, Enrolment and Graduations Policy Assessment Policy Curriculum Design Policy
Related Procedures	Admissions Procedure 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

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Definitions	Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary
	Academic Program Admission **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. Core Course Course Coursework Coursework Program Double Degree Elective Field of Education Head of School/College Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Learning Outcomes Nested Qualifications Non-Award Program Policy Procedure Research Sentinel Indicator Student **Study Component (Amended)**

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	A coherent set of Courses that develop a particular academic theme. This includes Majors, Extended Majors, and Specialisations. Teach-out Testamur Transition University
	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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