

Higher Degree by Research Program Accreditation - Procedures



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Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures.

The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT refers to the relevant staff within the Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching (C-SALT) who are responsible for supporting and facilitating the program accreditation and course approval process.

Jointly conferred award program is a program of study which is arranged and delivered by two or more institutions. Typically a program leads to the award of a single qualification. The student may receive either a single award testamur conferred and jointly badged by those institutions, or may receive award testamurs from each of the participating institutions on which the contribution of the other institution(s) is acknowledged on the testamur by way of note or inclusion of a logo. In the case of a jointly conferred dual award, the program leads to the award of two separate qualifications. A dual award may be a double degree, with both qualifications at the same AQF level, or may be qualifications at two sequential AQF levels. The student would typically receive a testamur for each qualification, acknowledging the contribution of each institution by way of note or inclusion of a logo. Articulation agreements which give students from other institutions advanced standing into USC programs are not considered jointly conferred award programs; these are managed under credit transfer arrangements.

Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate refers to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) unless otherwise specified.

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Part A: Purpose and Timelines

A1 Purpose of procedures

These procedures detail the steps that must be undertaken to approve and accredit a new Higher Degree by Research (HDR) program, change an existing HDR program, or discontinue or suspend intakes for a HDR program at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

The procedures must be read in conjunction with the Higher Degree by Research Program Accreditation – Academic Policy and outlines processes for the management of the policies and processes throughout the lifecycle of higher degrees by research.

A2 Timelines

A2.1 Schools should plan and progress all proposed new HDR program developments and changes to existing programs so that sufficient time is allowed for informed consideration of, and decision-making based on, the merit and academic integrity of proposed new HDR program developments and their associated resource and other implications.

A2.2 The following deadlines have been established for the accreditation of programs and the approval of changes to existing programs:

PROGRAM	REQUIRED APPROVAL DATE(S)
New program	Study Period 1 offering – accredited by 31 August for the following academic year

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Dean, Graduate Research

FIRST APPROVED

29 October 2013

LAST AMENDED

31 October 2019

REVIEW DATE

31 October 2024

STATUS

Active

Changes to existing programs	Study Period 2 offering – accredited by 30 November for the following academic year Study Period 1 implementation – approved by 31 August for the following academic year Study Period 2 implementation – approved by 30 November for the following academic year
Discontinuation of an existing program	Approved by 31 August for implementation in the following academic year

A2.3 The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT establishes timelines annually, covering two calendar years, to ensure timely progression of proposals through program accreditation or approval to meet the approval dates identified in A2.2.

A2.4 Expedited Pathway

A2.4.1 In exceptional circumstances, approval to expedite the accreditation/approval of a program can be given by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

A2.4.2 An expedited option allows for the Chairperson of Academic Board, Program and Course Committee, or Research Degrees Committee to act on behalf of the relevant Committee in considering a proposal for program accreditation or program change. The Chairperson has the option to consult with members of the committee before making a decision on an expedited proposal.

A2.4.3 An application to expedite can be made by the Head of School to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), through the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT, for approval to expedite. The written request outlines:

- the reasons for requesting expedition;
- the consequences if the expedited process were not followed; and
- the anticipated accreditation/approval date.

A2.4.4 The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT informs the relevant School of the decision of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

A2.4.5 The Chairperson of the relevant committee reports to the ensuing meeting of the committee on any actions taken on the committee's behalf.

Part B: Program Accreditation

B1 Scope of application

This part applies to all new HDR programs, including:

- proposals to change an existing accredited HDR program which would result in the assignment of a different Field of Education (FOE) code;
- proposals to establish a jointly conferred HDR program, by arrangement with one or more partner institutions (other than a new jointly conferred HDR program with no coursework component; refer to B3.3.3).

B2 Program accreditation approval authority

Accreditation of a new program is the responsibility of Academic Board.

B3 Approval to develop a new HDR program

B3.1 Approval to develop a new HDR program proposal, and to offer a new HDR program at nominated locations, is the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) as delegated by the Vice-Chancellor and President.

B3.2 For a new HDR program (other than a new jointly conferred HDR program with no coursework component), the business case for a new program is the resource and planning component of the HDR program accreditation process.

B3.2.1 The Business Case template is completed by the program development team to provide the case for the proposed new program's contribution to the University's strategic direction, financial viability, and all its resourcing requirements.

B3.2.2 The program development team forwards the proposals to the relevant Head of School who considers the documentation and seeks advice from the Dean, Graduate Research and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

B3.2.3 Before endorsement, the Head of School requests that the documentation is considered by the School Board, providing advice on the following:

- the academic and financial merit of the proposed program and benefit to the School; and
- whether the proposed program meets the requirements of relevant policies and procedures.

B3.2.4 The Head of School considers the merit of the proposed HDR program on the basis of the documentation and advice of the School Board and recommends to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) that the proposed HDR program as documented be considered for development.

B3.2.5 The request to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is made through the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

B3.2.6 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) endorses the Business Case prior to consideration and comment by the Chief Financial Officer. Following the provision of comments by the Chief Financial Officer, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) arranges through the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT, for the Business Case to be scheduled on the University Executive agenda and provides the relevant documentation to the Secretary, University Executive.

B3.2.7 The University Executive considers the Business Case and makes a recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (as delegate of the Vice-Chancellor and President) who decides whether to approve or not approve the new program for development and to determine its offering at the nominated locations.

B3.2.8 The secretary, University Executive will advise the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT of the decision of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT then informs the relevant School.

B3.3 Jointly conferred award HDR program

B3.3.1 In the case of a proposal to develop a jointly conferred award, in-principle approval, additionally addressing the Partner Institution Selection (Jointly Conferred Award) Guidelines, must be obtained before detailed planning and negotiations about collaboration arrangements with the potential partner institution/s occur and before any binding commitments are made.

B3.3.2 The development of a strategic research training Partnership Agreement (the legal agreement) with the partner institution(s) should occur in parallel with the program development. The legal agreement is, in effect, the implementation plan specifying how the jointly conferred program is to be delivered, administered, completed and reviewed. This agreement documents the understandings and obligations of all parties, to ensure that the academic aspirations and standards embodied in the jointly conferred program are met.

B3.3.3 A new jointly conferred HDR program with no coursework component does not require formal program accreditation; approval to develop and to offer is by way of the Vice-Chancellor and President's acceptance of the legal agreement.

B3.3.4 If formal accreditation is required due to a coursework component, the legal agreement cannot be signed until the program itself has been accredited by the University's Academic Board as described in these procedures, as well as approved by an appropriate authority at the partner institution(s).

B4 Post-approval matters

The School Administration Officer arranges:

- (a) for a copy of the signed documentation to be captured in the relevant program file in the University's Records Management System; and
- (b) the creation of a Curriculum Bulletin (New Program).

B5 Curriculum Bulletin for a new program

B5.1 Following the approval to develop a new HDR program, as set out in section B3, the School Administration Officer prepares a Curriculum Bulletin (New HDR Program) and submits it to the Curriculum Support Unit for release to the University community.

B5.1.2 A period of normally two weeks is allowed for feedback by the University community to the program development team. Any feedback received during this consultation period must be addressed by the program development team in the subsequent program proposal documentation.

B5.2 Following the approval to develop a new HDR program, as set out in section B3.3, the School Administration Officer prepares a Curriculum Bulletin Notification and submits it to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT for release to the University community.

B6 Approval to market a proposed HDR program subject to final approval

B6.1 Following consultation with the Director, Marketing, the Head of School can make a case to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to market a proposed new program prior to it being accredited by the University.

B6.2. The Head of School completes a request to market a proposed program subject to final approval and submits it to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) through the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

B6.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) considers the request and decides to approve or not approve the proposal to market a new program "subject to final approval".

B6.4 When making the decision to market a new program "subject to final approval", the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) takes into consideration the potential risk and benefits to the University in advertising the program. To minimise risk, the decision of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may be based on the stage the program proposal has reached in the accreditation approval process.

B6.5 Following approval to market a new program "subject to final approval", the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT informs the relevant School of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) decision.

B7 Program Development

B7.1 The program development team develops the proposed HDR program ensuring that:

- (a) consultations are held with all relevant parties:

(i) with a legitimate interest in the proposed HDR program, including for example other Schools, the Graduate Research School and other service areas of the University, potential employers, professional and registration bodies, and the relevant advisory committee;

(ii) for whom there may be resource, legal or administrative implications with the proposed HDR program, including for example International Office, Information Technology, Information Services, Student Services and Engagement, Facilities Management, and Marketing; and

(b) input is sought from other appropriate sources with expertise relevant to development of the HDR program, for example, the school's curriculum body, academic developers within the Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching (C-SALT), Governance and Risk Management, and the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT for alignment with University policies and procedures and the external requirements listed in B7.2;

B7.2 The program is designed and developed consistent with –

- the Australian Qualifications Framework and associated guidelines and principles
- the Higher Education Standards Framework
- any standards for external recognition, registration or accreditation of the proposed HDR program for potential graduates.

B7.3 The program is in line with the University's values and relevant policies procedures and good practice in HDR program design and research training.

B7.4 The HDR program development team documents the proposed new HDR program using templates identified in the next section.

B8 Accreditation Documentation

B8.1 The program development team documents the proposed new program using:

- the Program Proposal template; and
- the Program Outline template (including Study Component and Course Outlines and Resource Impact Statements for new curriculum).

B8.2 Program Proposal

The Program Proposal (HDR program) provides information on the academic rationale for the introduction of the new HDR program and the design and development process, including the consultation undertaken in support of the proposed program.

B8.3 HDR Program Outline

The HDR Program Outline is the detailed description of the proposed new HDR program that is used to assess the academic integrity of that HDR program and forms the basis for provision of information to students, prospective students, the University community and the broader community concerning the program.

B8.3.1 Study Component Outline

All proposed new study components in the program should be documented using the Study Component Outline template and added to the Program Outline as appendices.

B8.3.2 Course Outlines

All proposed new courses in the program should be documented using the Course Outline template and added to the Program Outline as appendices, except where the program is proposed to be approved subject to further documentation (refer to B8.3.3).

B8.3.3 Course Synopses

Approval by course synopsis is not applicable for HDR programs.

B8.3.4 Resource Impact Statements

Resource Impact Statements detail the resource needs and implications of the component courses in the proposed program for provision of support and services by Student Services and Engagement, the Library, Facilities Management and Information Technology.

B9 Consideration of accreditation documentation by the Head of School

B9.1 Before consideration by the Head of School, the documentation is deliberated by the School Board, and the Board would provide advice to the Head of School on the merit and quality of the proposed program and required documentation.

B9.2 Following endorsement from the School Board and before consideration of the proposal by the Head of School, the School Administration Officer completes a template to request from Student Services and Engagement the:

- allocation of a Program code;
- allocation of Study Component codes for any new study components; and
- allocation of Course Codes for any new courses.

B9.3 The School Administration Officer requests the creation of any new files required for the University's records management system.

B9.4 The School Administration Officer updates the accreditation documentation and Resource Impact Statements to include program and course codes and file numbers, and then provides a copy to Student Services and Engagement (Timetabling Unit), Facilities Management, the Library and Information Technology.

B9.5 The Head of School considers the merit of the proposed program on the basis of the accreditation documentation and advice of the School Board and approves the proposal.

B9.6 The School Administration Officer arranges for the signed accreditation documentation to be submitted to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT and captures the accreditation documentation in the relevant HDR program and course files in the University's records management system.

B10 Consideration of the accreditation documentation by Research Degrees Committee

B10.1 The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT checks the accreditation documentation for completeness and clarity, accuracy, internal consistency and compliance with relevant University and external reference points and liaises with the relevant School so that action and/or amended documentation can be reconsidered by the Head of School and re-submitted to the secretary, Research Degrees Committee via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT as required.

B10.2 The Chairperson, Research Degrees Committee can determine that the accreditation documentation is incomplete or under-developed and delay the consideration of the proposal by the Committee until such time as the School has responded to the Chairperson's concerns regarding the completeness of the accreditation documentation.

B10.3 The Research Degrees Committee considers the academic merit of the HDR program on the basis of the accreditation and related documentation and:

- (a) resolves to recommend to Academic Board that the proposed new HDR program as documented be accredited; or
- (b) resolves to recommend to Academic Board that the proposed new HDR program as documented be accredited, subject to identified amendments being made; or
- (c) makes such other resolutions as may be appropriate.

B10.4 If (a), the resolution is to recommend unqualified accreditation, then the Secretary, Research Degrees Committee refers the HDR program accreditation documentation to the Academic Board for consideration.

B10.5 If (b), the resolution is to recommend accreditation subject to amendments, then:

- (i) the relevant parties are advised to make the amendments and resubmit to the Chairperson, through the committee secretary via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT, the amended documentation together with a written response to the matters identified, including a statement detailing the changes made to the documentation (with page references);
- (ii) the School resubmits the amended accreditation documentation for reconsideration via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT to the Secretary, Research Degrees Committee; and
- (iii) the Chairperson of the Research Degrees Committee reviews the amended documentation and if satisfied that the required amendments have been made, the Secretary, Research Degrees Committee forwards the revised accreditation documentation to the Secretary, Academic Board.

B11 Consideration of accreditation documentation by Program and Course Committee

B11.1 If the proposed HDR program includes coursework, the Higher Degree by Research Proposal and Outline will be provided to the Program and Course Committee in parallel to consideration by the Research Degrees Committee, and prior to recommendation to Academic Board. The Program and Course Committee considers the academic merit of the proposed new courses and study components on the basis of the accreditation and related documentation; and

- (a) resolves to approve the proposed new courses and study components as documented; or
- (b) resolves to approve that the proposed new courses and study components as documented be approved subject to identified amendments being made; or
- (c) makes such other resolutions as may be appropriate.

B11.2 If approval is recommended subject to amendments being made then:

- (i) the relevant School is advised to make the amendments and submit to the Chair of the Committee, through the Secretary, Program and Course Committee via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT, the amended documentation together with a written response to the matters identified, including a statement detailing the changes made to the documentation;
- (ii) the School resubmits the amended accreditation documentation for reconsideration vis the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT to the Secretary, Program and Course Committee; and
- (iii) the Chairperson, Program and Course Committee, reviews the amended documentation and if satisfied that the required amendments have been made approves the proposal.

B11.3 The Secretary, Program and Course Committee sends the relevant School/s the Committee minutes when they have been approved by the Chairperson. Any queries in relation to the accreditation documentation will be referred to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

B12 Consideration the accreditation documentation by Academic Board

B12.1 Academic Board considers academic merit of the proposed program on the basis of the accreditation documentation, and:

(a) resolves to accredit the HDR program subject to the standard conditions of accreditation as specified in the parent policy and any other conditions that the Academic Board may impose, confirming when the HDR program will be offered for the first time; or

(b) resolves to accredit the HDR program subject to identified amendments being made;

or

(c) makes such other resolutions as may be appropriate, for example, for the proposal to be revised and brought back to a future meeting of Academic Board.

B12.2 Where accreditation is subject to any required amendments being made:

(i) the relevant School is advised to make the amendments and submit to the Chair of the Board, through the Secretary, Academic Board via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT, the amended documentation together with a written response to the matters identified, including a statement detailing the changes made to the documentation;

(ii) the School resubmits the amended accreditation documentation for reconsideration via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT to the Secretary, Academic Board; and

(iii) the Chairperson, Academic Board, reviews the amended documentation and if satisfied that the required amendments have been made approves the proposal.

B12.3 The Secretary, Academic Board sends the relevant School/s the Committee minutes when they have been approved by the Chairperson. Any queries in relation to the accreditation documentation will be referred to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

B13. Post approval matters

B13.1 Following notification of approval, the School Administration Officer is responsible for making arrangements for the appropriate changes to University webpages and informing relevant parties (internally and externally) of the implementation of the approved new program (including new courses and study components) by:

(a) notifying the relevant Program Coordinator/program development team;

(b) recording and registering the approved documentation in the University's records management system;

(c) notifying and requesting actions from relevant administrative units;

(d) adding any approved Course Outlines included in the program documentation to the repository; and

(e) implementing in collaboration with Student Service and Engagement the approved transitional/teach-out arrangements (if required).

B14 Reporting

An annual summary report of all programs accredited by Academic Board compiled by the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT is to be provided to Council. The report should be submitted to the first meeting each year and includes all programs accredited in the previous year.

Part C: HDR Program Changes

C1 Program changes approval authorities

C1.1 Approval of changes to existing HDR programs is the responsibility of either Academic Board or the Vice-Chancellor and President depending on the nature of the proposed changes.

C1.2 Any proposals for HDR program changes that proceed to Academic Board or its standing committees, or Vice-Chancellor and President (or delegate) for approval, would first be endorsed by the Head of School, giving due regard to resourcing and the program's continued financial viability.

C1.3 Proposed program changes requiring approval by one or more standing committee and Academic Board are presented on the same template. A separate template is used for changes requiring Vice-Chancellor and President approval.

C2 Changes approved by Academic Board

C2.1 Following consideration by Research Degrees Committee, and if relevant by Program and Course Committee (regarding coursework components), Academic Board will consider and approve:

(a) altering the requirements for completion of a HDR program, including the addition or removal of exit/entry points; addition and removal of required courses

(b) a change to the award title (requires a new program code)

(c) a change to the total unit value (requires a new program code)

(d) a change to the duration (standard completion time)

(e) a significant alteration to the entry requirements.

C2.2 Refer to section C5 for details of the process.

C3 Program management changes approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate

C3.1 The following types of proposed changes will be documented by the Head of School, for the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (as delegate of the Vice-Chancellor and President):

(a) the offering of an existing program at a new location;

(b) changing the funding arrangement for an existing program;

(c) the offering of an existing program at an additional calendar entry point;

(d) the discontinuation of an existing program at a location; and

(e) a change to a program that has significant resource impact outside the proposing school or for the University.

Note: if the program is to be discontinued at all locations, the process identified in Part D should be followed.

C3.2 Refer to section C6 for details of the process.

C4 Program change proposal

C4.1 Program redesign

C4.1.1 All proposed changes to a program must be designed to ensure that the HDR program continues to meet all criteria for accreditation as provided in the parent policy.

C4.1.2 The Program Coordinator in association with all relevant staff finalises the redesign of the changed program, ensuring that:

(a) consultations are held with all parties:

(i) with a legitimate interest in the program, including for example other schools and service areas of the University, potential employers, student groups, graduates, advisory groups, professional and registration bodies

(ii) for whom there may be resource, legal or administrative implications with the proposed changes, including for example International Office, Information Technology, Information Services, Student Services and Engagement, Marketing

(b) input is sought from other appropriate sources with expertise relevant to redesign of the program, for example the School Board, academic developers within the Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching (C-SALT)

(c) the program is designed and developed consistent with –

- the Australian Qualifications Framework and associated guidelines and principles
- the Higher Education Standards Framework
- any standards for external recognition, registration or accreditation of the proposed program or potential graduates
- relevant policy, procedures and good practice in program design and development for programs of that level

(d) if involving cancellation of coursework components, the requirements for transition and teach-out as identified in Section G of the Program Accreditation, Changes and Discontinuation - procedures are met.

C4.1.3 The Program Coordinator documents the proposed changes using the template appropriate for the nature of the change and revises the existing HDR Program Outline incorporating the proposed changes. Any new courses or study components associated with the proposed change are documented using the Course Outline and Study Component templates.

C4.1.4 The proposal is the case made for making changes to the program.

C4.1.5 The proposed new Program Outline is the revised version intended to replace the current Program Outline.

C4.1.6 The Program Coordinator submits the Proposal and associated documents to the relevant Head of School.

C5 Changes requiring Standing Committee or Academic Board approval

C5.1 Consideration by the Head of School

C5.1.1 Before consideration by the Head of School, the documentation is considered by the School Board, the Board would provide advice the Head of School on the merit and quality of the proposed program changes.

C5.1.2 Following consideration by the School Board, the School Administration Officer completes a template to request from Student Services and Engagement the:

- (a) allocation of Course Codes for any new courses; and
- (b) allocation of a new Program Code if any of the following changes are being proposed:
 - (i) change of program title
 - (ii) change to the duration of the program
 - (iii) change to the total unit value for the program.

C5.1.3 The School Administration Officer requests Information Management Services to create any new University file required for the University's Records Management System.

C5.1.4 The School Administration Officer updates the accreditation documentation and Resource Impact Statements to include program and course codes and file numbers, and then provides a copy to Student Services and Engagement (Timetabling Unit), Facilities Management, the Library and Information Technology.

C5.1.5 The Head of School considers the academic merit of the proposed changes to the program on the basis of the documentation and the advice of the School Board. The Head of School signs the relevant section of the Proposal.

C5.1.6 The School Administration Officer arranges for the signed accreditation documentation to be submitted to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT and the capture of the accreditation documentation in the relevant HDR program and course files in the University's Records Management System.

C5.2 Progression of documentation through University committees

The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT checks the documentation for completeness and clarity, accuracy, internal consistency, compliance with relevant University policies and procedures, and liaises with relevant School staff for appropriate actions to be taken to address any issues and for amended documentation to be submitted to the Secretary, Research Degrees Committee.

C5.3 Research Degrees Committee

C5.3.1 The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT forwards the documentation to the committee secretary for consideration by the Research Degrees Committee.

C5.3.2 Research Degrees Committee considers the academic merit of the proposed changes to the HDR program on the basis of the documentation, and:

- (a) resolves to recommend that the proposed changes to the HDR program as documented be approved, identifying when the changes will take effect; or
- (b) resolves to recommend that the proposed changes to the HDR program as currently documented be approved, subject to identified amendments being made to the associated documentation; or
- (c) makes such other resolutions as may be appropriate.

C5.3.3 If (b), the resolution is to recommend approval subject to amendments then:

- (i) the relevant parties are advised to make the amendments and resubmit to the Chairperson of the Committee, through the committee secretary via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT, the amended documentation together with a written response to the matters identified, including a statement detailing the changes made to the documentation (with page references);
- (ii) the School resubmits the amended accreditation documentation for reconsideration via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT to the Secretary, Research Degrees Committee
- (iii) the Chairperson of the Committee reviews the amended documentation and if satisfied that the required amendments have been made endorses the revised documentation.

C5.3.4 The Secretary, Research Degrees Committee sends the relevant School/s the Committee minutes when they have been endorsed by the Chairperson. Any queries in relation to the accreditation documentation will be referred to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

C5.4 Academic Board

C5.4.1 For changes requiring Academic Board approval, the committee secretary forwards the latest version of the documentation to the Academic Board.

C5.4.2 Academic Board considers academic merit of the proposed changes to the HDR program on the basis of the accreditation documentation, and:

- (a) resolves to accredit the program subject to the standard conditions of accreditation as specified in the parent policy and any other conditions that the Academic Board may impose, confirming when the changes take effect; or
- (b) resolves to accredit the program subject to identified amendments being made to the associated documentation to the satisfaction of the Chairperson Academic Board; or
- (c) makes such other resolutions as may be appropriate, for example, for the proposal to be revised and brought back to a future meeting of Academic Board.

C5.4.3 Where accreditation is subject to any required amendments being made:

- (i) the relevant School is advised to make the amendments and submit to the Chair of the Board, through the Secretary, Academic Board via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT, the amended documentation together with a written response to the matters identified, including a statement detailing the changes made to the documentation;
- (ii) the School resubmits the amended accreditation documentation for reconsideration via the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT to the Secretary, Academic Board; and
- (iii) the Chairperson, Academic Board, reviews the amended documentation and if satisfied that the required amendments have been made approves the proposal.

C5.4.4 The Secretary, Academic Board sends the relevant School/s the Committee minutes when they have been approved by the Chairperson. Any queries in relation to the accreditation documentation will be referred to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

C5.5 Post-approval matters

C5.5.1 Following notification of approval, the School Administration Officer is responsible for arranging the appropriate changes to University webpages and informing relevant parties (internally and externally) of the implementation of the revised program by:

- (a) notifying the relevant Program Coordinator/program development team;
- (b) recording and registering the approved documentation in the University's records management system;
- (c) notifying and requesting actions from relevant administrative units;
- (d) adding any approved new Course Outlines included in the program documentation to the repository; and
- (e) implementing in collaboration with Student Service and Engagement the approved transitional/teach-out arrangements (if required).

C6 Program Changes requiring Vice-Chancellor and President (or delegate) approval

C6.1 Design and consultations

C6.1.1 The Program Coordinator consults with all interested parties concerning the proposed changes, including relevant areas of the University for which the changes may have administrative or resource implications. If the changes also involve any changes to current courses, majors or minors offered in other programs consultations are held with the relevant Program Coordinators.

C6.1.2 The Program Coordinator writes a proposal using the relevant template and revises the existing Program Outline incorporating the proposed changes.

C6.1.3 The new Program Outline is the version intended to replace the current Program Outline.

C6.2 Consideration by Head of School

C6.2.1 The Program Coordinator submits the Program Change Proposal and the HDR Program Outline to the relevant Head of School.

C6.2.2 Before consideration by the Head of School, the documentation is considered by the School Board, the Board would provide advice to the Head of School on the merit and quality of the proposed program changes.

C6.2.3 The Head of School considers the documentation, taking into account any matters of relevance. The Program Change Proposal should evidence consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Dean, Graduate Research for comment on matters of resourcing and the program's continued viability.

C6.2.3 If the Head of School decides that approval should be sought for the changes, they sign the relevant section of the proposal and arrange for the signed documentation to be submitted to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

C6.3 Approval by the Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate

C6.3.1 The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT checks the Program Change Proposal for completeness and clarity. The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT refers the proposal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

C6.3.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (as delegate of the Vice-Chancellor and President) decides whether to approve the proposed program changes and signs the relevant section of the proposal.

C7 Post-approval matters

C7.1 Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT provides written advice to the relevant School of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) decision.

C7.2 Following notification of approval, the School Administration Officer is responsible for making the appropriate changes to University webpages and informing relevant parties (internally and externally) of the implementation of the revised program by:

- (a) notifying the relevant Program Coordinator/Program Development Team;
- (b) recording and registering the approved documentation in the relevant records management system
- (c) notifying and requesting actions from relevant administrative units; and
- (d) implementing in collaboration with Student Service and Engagement the approved transitional/teach-out arrangements (if required).

C8. Reporting

C8.1 Summary reports of program changes approved is required to be submitted as follows:

Annually

- Research Degrees Committee to Academic Board

C8.2 Annual reports should be submitted to the first meeting each year and include all program changes approved in the previous year.

C8.3 A report of all HDR program change decisions approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)) is noted at the next scheduled meeting of the Research Degrees Committee.

Part D: Discontinuation of a program

D1 Discontinuation of a HDR program

D1.1 Discontinuation of a program means that:

- (a) there can be no new intake of students into that HDR program from a specified date;
- (b) the HDR program can no longer be advertised or marketed as available to students; and
- (c) the HDR program is to be eventually removed from the suite of HDR programs available to students.

D1.2 Approval of the discontinuation of a program is the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (as delegate of the Vice-Chancellor and President).

D2 Timing of program discontinuation

D2.1 If it is proposed to discontinue a HDR program, the School consults all interested parties and arranges for development of a timetable for the discontinuation from the proposed date from which there will be no new intake up to the proposed date of permanent removal of the HDR program. The timetable and preliminary plan takes account of:

- (a) the requirements for transition and teach-out of any coursework components, as identified in Section G of the Program Accreditation, Change and Discontinuation -Procedures;
- (b) any courses or study components that are “owned” by the program also available in other programs;
- (c) the date of the most recent intake into the HDR program
- (d) the maximum completion time for the program as stated in the applicable University policy and procedures
- (e) prior offers of a place in the program that have been made to any international student (agreed commencement date for student plus maximum completion time);
- (f) any other obligation of the University to continue to offer the program to a student who is currently enrolled
- (g) the need to provide timely information to the University community, relevant authorities and the public concerning discontinuation of the program and any applicable transition arrangements; and
- (h) University timeframes for progressing proposals for discontinuation as outlined in guidelines prepared by the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

D3 Seeking approval to commence the discontinuation of a program

D3.1 To commence the approval of the discontinuation of a program the relevant Head of School submits Curriculum Bulletin (Program Discontinuation) to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) through the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

D3.2 The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT forwards the Curriculum Bulletin to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for consideration, who discusses any issues related to the proposed discontinuation with the relevant parties and then advises Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT whether to release the Curriculum Bulletin.

D4 Proposal to Discontinue a Program

D4.1 Incorporating any submissions received or issues raised in response to the Curriculum Bulletin (Program Discontinuation), the Program Coordinator completes the Proposal to Discontinue a Program template. The document is forwarded to the Head of School for consideration.

D4.2 If the Head of School decides that approval for discontinuation should be sought, they sign the relevant section of the proposal and submit the proposal to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

D5 Endorsement by the Research Degrees Committee

D5.1 The Head of School completes a Proposal to Discontinue a Program, using the relevant template and forwards it to Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT. Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT refers the proposal to the secretary, Research Degrees Committee.

D5.2 The Research Degrees Committee considers the proposal, with particular attention to the impact on the student experience and the quality of the teach-out arrangements and decides whether to endorse the discontinuation of the program.

D5.3 The secretary, Research Degrees Committee informs the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT of the outcomes of the consideration of the proposal.

D6 Approval by the Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate

D6.1 The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT refers the proposal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

D6.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (as delegate of the Vice-Chancellor and President) decides whether to approve the proposed program discontinuation and signs the relevant section of the proposal.

D7 Post-approval matters

E7.1 The Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT provides written advice to the relevant School of the decision concerning the proposal for discontinuation of a HDR program.

E7.2 Following notification of approval, the School Administration Officer arranges for:

- (a) the notification of the relevant Program Coordinator;
- (b) the approved documentation to be captured in the University records management systems; and
- (c) requesting action from the relevant University's administration units in regard to: admission (informing QTAC), updating curriculum Web pages, and system data changes (Peoplesoft).

D8 Reporting

A report on any discontinuation of a HDR program decisions approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is compiled by the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT for noting at the next scheduled meeting of the Research Degrees Committee.

Part E: Suspension of intake into a HDR program

E1 Suspension of intake approval authority

Suspension of intake is a management decision made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) that there will be no intake of students for a particular HDR program in a specified period. A suspension of intake is temporary and may or may not lead to discontinuation of a program. Nonetheless, arrangements must be put in place to allow students who are currently enrolled in the program to complete the award or an equivalent award with minimal disruption.

E2 Timeframes and consultations

If, it is proposed that there be a temporary suspension of intake into a program, the Head of School initiates the process for approval to suspend intake and consults all interested parties as soon as possible.

E3 Curriculum Bulletin (Program Suspension)

E3.1 The Head of School drafts a Curriculum Bulletin (Program Suspension) using the relevant template and submits it to the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT.

E3.2 Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT forwards the Curriculum Bulletin (Program Suspension) to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for consideration, who discusses any issues related to the proposed suspension of intake with the relevant parties and then advises Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT whether to release the Curriculum Bulletin.

E4 Proposal to Suspend an Intake

E.4.1 After the closing date for submissions in response to the Curriculum Bulletin (Program Suspension), the Head of School completes a Proposal to Suspend an Intake, using the relevant template and forwards it to Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT. Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT refers the proposal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

E.4.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) decides whether to approve the suspension of intake and signs the relevant section of the proposal.

E.4.3 Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT provides written advice to the School Administration of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) decision concerning the proposal for suspension of intake.

E.4.4 Following notification of approval, the School Administration Officer arranges for:

- (a) the notification of the relevant Program Coordinator;
- (b) the approved documentation to be recorded and registered in the University's records management system; and
- (c) requesting action from the relevant University's administration units in regard to: admission (informing QTAC), updating curriculum Web pages, and system data changes (Peoplesoft).

E5 Reporting

A report on any Suspension of Intake decisions approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is compiled by the Curriculum Support Unit, C-SALT for noting at the next scheduled meeting of the Research Degrees Committee.

Part F: Programs and Study Components

F1 Programs and study Components

F1.1 Study Components are approved as part of the accreditation of the "owning" program. A Study Component can be a requirement in multiple programs but only one program is identified as its "owner".

F1.2 Study Components that have been identified as owned by a program in the accreditation process are modified or discontinued as a change to the owning 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.

F1.3 A program that proposes the inclusion of an existing study component as new structural requirement will be required to make a program change to have that inclusion approved.

Part G: Transition and Teach-out requirements

From time to time the University may determine that HDR programs are to be discontinued, replaced or significantly amended. Transition arrangements are planned and implemented, so that students who are currently enrolled in an HDR program are able to complete the award or an equivalent award with minimal disruption, and that the proposed changes and the rationale for those changes are communicated to all students impacted.

In the case of any HDR program that is changed or discontinued that involves cancellation of coursework components, the requirements for transition and teach-out as identified in Section G of the Program Accreditation, Changes and Discontinuation - Procedures will apply.

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Course Approval, Change and Discontinuation - Procedures
Coursework Curriculum Design - Academic Policy
Higher Degree by Research Program Accreditation - Academic Policy
Higher Degrees by Research - Academic Policy
Program Accreditation and Course Approval - Governing Policy
Program Review - Procedures

LINKED DOCUMENTS

Higher Degree by Research Program Accreditation - Academic Policy

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

Higher Degree by Research Accreditation - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth)