

Program Accreditation and Course Approval - Academic Policy

1. Purpose of policy

The University is registered in the Australian University provider category and is authorised under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* to self-accredit each course of study (program) that leads to a higher education award that it offers or confers.

Program accreditation at the University of the Sunshine Coast is a determination made by Academic Board. The University separates academic quality assurance of its curriculum from the managerial decisions regarding the development and offering of that curriculum.

This policy provides the broad framework for:

- (a) accreditation of programs that lead to a qualification awarded by the University of the Sunshine Coast;
- (b) approval of the key points within a program life-cycle, from the business case for development of a new program, offering a program, program review, renewal and change, through to discontinuation of program offerings in some cases;
- (c) approval of courses and study components to be offered in such programs; and
- (d) approval of changes to or discontinuation of courses and study components.

2. Policy scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to all programs and courses offered by the University of the Sunshine Coast, except higher degrees by research. Please refer to the Higher Degree by Research Accreditation - Academic Policy.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of terms for policy and procedures.

4. Program development and life-cycle

4.1 Approval to develop a program

4.1.1 The Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate will approve a program for development and for offering if a business case demonstrates that it contributes to the University's strategic direction and financial sustainability.

4.2 Criteria for accreditation

A program may be accredited by the Academic Board only if it:

- (a) is consistent with the policies and strategic directions of the University; and
- (b) is compliant with the requirements for the qualification level as identified in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- (c) meets quality standards as set out in the Higher Education Standards Framework, regulated by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

4.3 Conditions of continuing to offer a program

A program, once accredited, continues to be offered on condition that:

- (a) no changes are made to the program unless those changes have been progressed and approved consistent with this policy and associated procedures;

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Academic Board

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching

FIRST APPROVED

12 August 2003

LAST AMENDED

16 June 2022

REVIEW DATE

1 August 2024

STATUS

Active

(b) the program is formally reviewed at least every seven years from the date of initial offer and a review report is presented for consideration by the Academic Board; and the Academic Board is satisfied that appropriate actions are in place to address any recommendations in the review report; and

(c) the Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate is satisfied that the program continues to be viable and does not pose any unacceptable risk to the University.

4.4 Approval of New Courses and Study Components

4.4.1 The Program and Course Committee, under delegation of authority from Academic Board, approves courses and study components.

4.4.2 A new course or study component must be designed, developed, documented and progressed in accordance with the procedural requirements associated with this policy before it can be offered.

5. Approval to change programs and courses

5.1 In granting approval for a change to programs and courses, the relevant approval authority must be satisfied that the change will not compromise the academic integrity of any University program.

5.2 A change to University programs and courses cannot be implemented until the requisite approval for the change has been formally approved in accordance with the relevant procedural requirements and guidelines associated with this policy.

5.3 Approval of changes to accredited programs

The nature of the proposed changes to programs determines the process for the approval of those changes. If the changes relate to the academic quality of the program, these are approved by the Academic Board or Program and Course Committee. If the changes relate to the program's viability or management, these are approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate, who may seek advice from University Executive. The two processes are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

5.4. Approval of changes to courses

Depending on the nature of the course change, approval is either by the Program and Course Committee or by the relevant Head of School.

5.5 Approval of changes to study components

Changes to study components are approved by the Program and Course Committee.

6. Approval to discontinue University programs, courses and study components

6.1 Approval to discontinue a program

The Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate approves:

- (a) the discontinuation of an existing program
- (b) the discontinuation of a program at a location, and
- (c) specific transition arrangements for students enrolled in any program that is to be discontinued.

6.2 Approval for discontinuation of a study component

The Vice-Chancellor and President or delegate, acting on the advice of the Program and Course Committee, makes the decision whether to approve:

- (a) the discontinuation of an existing study component, and
- (b) any transition arrangements for students whose progress through a program may be affected by such a discontinuation.

6.3 Approval for discontinuation of a course

6.3.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), acting on the advice of the Program and Course Committee, makes the decision whether to approve:

- (a) the discontinuation of a course, and
- (b) any transition arrangements for students whose progress through a program may be affected by such a discontinuation.

6.3.2 In granting such approval, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) must be satisfied that discontinuation of a specific course or study component will not compromise the quality and integrity of any University program.

7. Expedited accreditation or approval

7.1 Under exceptional circumstances, the accreditation of programs and the approval of new courses, study components or changes to accredited programs may be expedited.

7.2 Proposals for expedited accreditation or approval must be documented and progressed in accordance with the relevant procedural requirements and guidelines associated with this policy.

Guidelines, flowcharts and templates are available from MyUSC > Teaching > Program Accreditation and Course Approval.

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Abbreviations for University Qualifications - Procedures
- Course Approval, Change and Discontinuation - Procedures
- Coursework Curriculum Design - Academic Policy
- Coursework Curriculum Design - Procedures
- Higher Degree by Research Program Accreditation - Academic Policy
- Higher Degree by Research Program Accreditation - Procedures
- Program Accreditation, Change and Discontinuation - Procedures
- Program Review - Procedures

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- Abbreviations for University Qualifications - Procedures
- Course Approval, Change and Discontinuation - Procedures
- Program Accreditation, Change and Discontinuation - Procedures
- Program Review - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)