



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

POLICY:

**HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL, AMENDMENT, MONITORING,
REVIEW, RE-ACCREDITATION AND DISCONTINUATION**

Purpose: Sets out the University's approach to program approval, amendment, monitoring, review, re-accreditation and discontinuation.

Location of Policy The policy is maintained on the National Drive.

Responsible Executive: Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic

Responsible Office: Academic Registrar

Contact Officer: Academic Registrar

Effective Date: 16 March 2015

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Modification History: Created: 24 November 2014; replaces Policy: Course Management (January 2010) and Policy: Course Reviews (June 2009)

Related Procedures: Procedure: Higher Education Program Approval, Amendment and Discontinuation;
Procedure: Higher Education Program Monitoring, Review and Re-accreditation

Authority: Endorsed by Academic Council: 24/11/2014. Approved by Vice Chancellor: 12/03/2015.

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The University of Notre Dame Australia (**University**) is committed to systematic and rigorous processes for the approval, amendment, review, re-accreditation and discontinuation of programs that support alignment with the University's objectives, uphold academic standards and quality and ensure ongoing relevance and viability.
- 1.2 This Policy outlines principles for the approval, amendment, review, re-accreditation and discontinuation of programs and clarifies the responsibilities and accountabilities of staff in these processes.

2 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Academic Council means the Academic Council established in accordance with the University Statutes.

AQF means the Australian Qualifications Framework

Certificate has the same meaning as given in the University's General Regulations.

Coursework programs accredited by the University comprise: undergraduate and postgraduate programs leading to a single award; combined degree programs leading to a single award; double degree programs leading to two separate awards; and nested award programs that provide articulated pathways from qualifications at lower AQF level 5 and above to those at higher AQF levels.

Degree has the same meaning as given in the University's General Regulations.

Diploma has the same meaning as given in the University's General Regulations.

Discontinuation means a program that is closed for intake of commencing students, but may have continuing student enrolments until those students are either transitioned to another program or they complete the program in accordance with approved transition arrangements.

Executive Council means the Executive Council established as a standing committee by the University Statutes.

Non-award programs are programs offered by the University that do not lead to a recognised AQF qualification and include Foundation Year programs, Tertiary Enabling Programs and University Certificates.

PCAC means the Program and Course Accreditation Committee of the University.

Program has the same meaning as given in the University's General Regulations.

Programs with a major research component mean a program of study that involves conduct of research leading to a thesis/dissertation which is a major component of the overall program requirements (that is comprising two thirds or more of the student load). Examples include Masters by Research; Master of Philosophy; Doctor of Philosophy; and Professional Doctoral Degrees.

Relevant Deans means each Dean with responsibility for either (a) the school delivering the program; or (b) another school with similar programs and discipline areas; or (c) the Directors, Academic Enabling and Support Centre (AESC) in the case of non-award programs delivered by the AESC.

USRO means the University Statistics and Reporting Office.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all programs.

4 Exclusions

Vocational Education and Training qualifications and units of competency.

5 Principles

5.1 Program approval and review processes verify that:

5.1.1 the design of programs and curriculum align with and advance the Objects and Strategic Goals of the University and meet the needs of employers and the wider community.

5.1.2 programs are designed to ensure equivalency of outcomes and standards for students, irrespective of study location or mode of attendance.

5.1.3 program requirements, including entry criteria, expected learning outcomes, program structure and other award requirements:

5.1.3.1 align with the appropriate AQF specifications for the level and qualification type of the award;

5.1.3.2 meet the applicable standards within the Higher Education Standards Framework;

- 5.1.3.3 comply with any relevant requirements for professional accreditation or recognition; and
- 5.1.3.4 are comparable to those for similar programs in the discipline or field of study.
- 5.1.4 there are appropriate arrangements in place to manage and quality assure all aspects of the arrangement and to protect the academic integrity of the program where program delivery involves an external third party.
- 5.2 Program and award requirements will be documented in Program Regulations that specify the minimum requirements for completion of an award. In the case of awards with a major research component and no coursework, requirements are documented in the relevant Degree Regulations.
- 5.3 Non-award programs will comprise a structured sequence of units and shall be approved by Academic Council subject to verification that the program will meet, and continue to meet, relevant academic standards and educational requirements.
- 5.4 Coursework awards shall be monitored on an annual basis, and subject to external review and/or professional accreditation on a cyclical basis to identify and respond to issues affecting academic quality, student experiences, and ongoing viability and relevance.
- 5.5 Amendments to coursework awards will be subject to an approval process that takes into account implications for academic and resourcing arrangements.
- 5.6 Programs shall be re-accredited each five years and re-accreditation decisions shall take into account formal review outcomes.
- 5.7 Program discontinuation shall be undertaken in such a way as to minimise disadvantage to students and manage risk to the University's reputation and achievement of its Objects.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 *Academic Council*

In accordance with Statute 35.9:

- (a) approves: academic content and standards of programs; re-accreditation of programs; major changes to existing programs relating to academic content and

standards; and the Terms of Reference, timing and scope of program reviews and refers decisions to the Vice Chancellor for noting.

- (b) recommends: to the Vice Chancellor for approval programs not to be re-accredited.

6.2 **Relevant Deans**

(a) endorse:

- annual program reports for submission to PCAC;
- the self-review process for program reviews of coursework programs;
- formal responses to program review recommendations

(b) report on main outcomes of review processes to the DVC, Academic (or delegate) when review recommendations have been addressed

(c) ensure that:

- coursework programs are managed in accordance with appropriate regulatory and policy requirements;
- documentation supporting proposals to PCAC and Academic Council are complete and accurate and have been developed with relevant external industry/professional input.

6.3 **Executive Council** considers and makes recommendations to the Vice Chancellor on:

- the strategic alignment, relevance, long-term sustainability and viability of proposed new programs and of proposed major changes to existing programs
- proposals for program discontinuance, taking into account proposed transition arrangements.

6.4 **Program and Course Accreditation Committee (PCAC)**

(a) recommends to Academic Council: new programs; changes to new programs, re-accreditation of programs, the Terms of Reference, timing and scope of program reviews;

(b) reviews and endorses detailed transition plans to ensure that teach-out arrangements are appropriate and minimise disadvantage to students for programs that are to be discontinued.

6.5 **Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic (DVC Academic)**

(a) endorses Terms of Reference, scope and process for program reviews;

(b) monitors the quality and performance of programs and makes recommendations to Deans and/or Academic Council and/or the Vice Chancellor on actions for improvement;

(c) provides a summary of outcomes and advice that program review processes have been concluded to Academic Council.

6.6 **Pro Vice Chancellor, Research (PVC Research)**

(a) monitors the quality and performance of programs with a major research component and makes recommendations on actions for improvement;

(b) endorses Terms of Reference, scope and process for reviews of programs with a major research component.

6.7 Quality Management Office (QMO)

(a) provides:

- a high level summary of the outcomes of annual program monitoring to the DVC Academic (or delegate);
- in consultation with the URSO, data on program performance to schools to support program monitoring and program review processes

(b) advises Deans and Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) (or equivalent) of the timeline and requirements for annual program monitoring and reporting, including grouping of programs;

(c) develops and maintains a schedule of program reviews in consultation with the Academic Registrar (or nominee) and presents this for endorsement and updating each year to Academic Council;

(d) manages feedback on program review processes and reports the outcomes to Academic Council; and makes recommendations to Academic Council about any changes to the program review process.

6.8 Research Directors

(a) ensure that:

- programs with a major research component are managed in accordance with appropriate regulatory and policy requirements;
- documentation supporting proposals to the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee and Academic Council are complete and accurate and have been developed with relevant external input;

(b) endorse:

- annual program reports relating to programs with a major research component for submission to PCAC;
- the self-review process for program reviews of programs with a major research component;

(c) prepare formal responses to program review recommendations relating to programs with a major research component;

(d) report on main outcomes of review processes to the DVC Academic (or delegate) when review recommendations have been addressed.

6.9 Academic Registrar

(a) endorses minor program amendments prior to implementation;

(b) receives forms and associated paperwork for program approval, program amendment and program discontinuation and ensures that these are complete and are considered in accordance with procedure;

(c) determines (in consultation with the DVC, Academic) if a business case is required to support proposed major changes

- (d) maintains a formal record of all minor program amendments and presents an annual report of the amendments to Academic Council;
- (e) supports program discontinuation by ensuring variation to enrolments and program offers are made, and that program information and marketing materials are updated as necessary.

7 Supporting Procedures

Procedure: Higher Education Program Approval, Amendment and Discontinuation

Procedure: Higher Education Program Monitoring, Review and Re-Accreditation

8 Related Policies

Policy: Double and Combined Degrees

Policy: Nested Awards

Policy: The Award of a Degree with Honours