

Version	v1.0
Short description	This procedure outlines the processes for the accreditation of new higher education award courses.
Relevant to	All academic and professional staff involved in the development of new higher education courses.
Authority	Academic Board
Policy owner	Manager, Academic Quality & Standards
Responsible office	Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Date approved	30 August 2023
Date effective	1 February 2024
Review due	August 2028
Related Avondale documents	<p>Course Amendment Procedure</p> <p>Course Quality Assurance Policy</p> <p>Course Re-accreditation Procedure</p> <p>Course Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure</p> <p>Unit Development, Amendment & Discontinuation Procedure</p>
Related legislation	<p>Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition 2013</p> <p>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</p>
Key words	Accreditation, new course, business case, course proposal, course development

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This procedure supports the Course Quality Assurance Policy by outlining Avondale University's (Avondale) processes regarding the approval of new higher education courses in line with the Higher Education Standards Framework, Australian Qualifications Framework, and industry standards.
- 1.2 Avondale is authorised by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to self-accredit its courses.
- 1.3 Current accreditation status is a requirement for offering a course at Avondale University.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to:
 - Higher Education Coursework courses
 - Higher Degree by Research (HDR) courses
- 2.2 This procedure does not apply to:
 - Vocational Education & Training courses
 - Professional Accreditation of courses

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **Academic Case:** the part of a New Course Proposal that documents the academic design of the course (academic content, standards and quality), the impact on the University's course portfolio, internal and external compliance, governance and management of the course, professional accreditation and associated partnerships.
- 3.2 **Accreditation:** the process (or the outcome of the process) by which a proposed course is initially assessed and assured for quality of design, delivery and student outcomes in the context of the Higher Education Standards Framework, Australian Qualifications Framework, and industry standards.
- 3.3 **Accreditation cycle:** the period of time between when course accreditation begins and expires, as determined by the Academic Board at the time of accreditation.
- 3.4 **Benchmarking:** in the context of course accreditation, benchmarking involves comparing elements of course design and outcomes with similar courses of study delivered by other providers. 'Internal benchmarking' against other relevant courses offered by Avondale may also be undertaken.
- 3.5 **Business Case:** the part of the New Course Proposal which documents the strategic purpose of the course, the consultation undertaken, available resources, market analysis, evidence of demand and estimated revenue and costs.
- 3.6 **Course:** a coherent sequence of units and/or research component, usually leading to a degree or other award.
- 3.7 **Course amendment:** any change to an existing course.
- 3.8 **New course:** a course which is not currently offered by Avondale.

- 3.9 **Professional Accreditation:** the process (or the outcome of the process) by which a program of study is validated by a professional or regulatory body as a program that prepares students for registration in a regulated profession.
- 3.10 **Working Party:** a group of staff appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, whose main responsibilities are to write Parts A & B of the New Course Proposal.

NEW COURSE PROPOSAL PREPARATION

4. PROCESS OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The following table sets out the steps required for course accreditation, together with the person responsible for each step and the approximate timeline for completion. This timeline may vary following consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

	Step	Person Responsible	Indicative Timeline Months prior to proposed launch date
1	Set up Working Party	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	12 months
2	Complete Part A of the New Course Proposal	Course Convenor	10 months
3	Submission to Executive Committee	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	10 months
4	Complete Part B of the New Course Proposal and update Part A	Course Convenor	8 months
5	Submission to School Committee/ HDR Committee for endorsement	Course Convenor	8 months
6	Submission to Manager, Academic Quality and Standards for review	Course Convenor	7 months
7	Submission to Academic Quality Committee for endorsement	Manager, Academic Quality & Standards	5 months
8	Submission to L&T/ Research Committee for endorsement of Academic Case	Vice-Chancellor or nominee	4 months
9	Submission to Executive Committee for approval of Business Case	Vice-Chancellor or nominee	4 months
10	Submission to Academic Board for approval	Vice-Chancellor or nominee	3 months

- 4.2 The Workflow diagrams for the endorsement and approval of Parts A and B of the New Course Proposal can be found with this procedure in the Policy Repository.

5. EXPEDITED APPROVAL

5.1 The process for a new course accreditation may be expedited with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor. This approval should be sought by the Course Convenor in advance of commencing the process.

5.2 This approval may be for, but is not limited to the following cases:

5.2.1 those courses which use all existing units; or

5.2.2 strategic priorities, as nominated by the Executive Committee.

6. EXPEDITED APPROVAL PROCESS OVERVIEW

6.1 The following table sets out the steps required for an expedited course accreditation, together with the person responsible for each step and an approximate timeline for completion of each step. This timeline may vary following consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

	Step	Person Responsible	Indicative Timeline	
			All existing units	Strategic Priorities
1	VC approval & Working Party set up	Vice-Chancellor /Deputy Vice-Chancellor		✓
	Deputy Vice-Chancellor approval	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	✓	
2	Complete Parts A & B of the New Course Proposal	Course Convenor	3 (CC)	8 (WP)
3	Submission to School Committee/ HDR Review Panel for endorsement & Vice-Chancellor simultaneously	Course Convenor	2	2
4	Submission to Academic Quality Committee AND L&T/ Research Committee for endorsement of Academic Case AND Executive Committee for approval of Business Case	Vice-Chancellor	4	4
5	Submission to Academic Board for approval	Vice-Chancellor	2	2
	TOTAL		11	16

6.2 Time savings are gained by the following changes to the standard process outlined in Section 4.1:

- 6.2.1 Executive Committee approval of Part A of the New Course Proposal is not required prior to the commencement of Part B. The Vice-Chancellor approval (for strategic priorities) or Deputy Vice-Chancellor approval (if only existing units are required) for an expedited approval process replaces this first stage of the normal process. However, a complete New Course Proposal (Parts A and B) is still required, with the exception that no information is required regarding resources and infrastructure for courses which use all existing units. Details are included in the template instructions.
- 6.2.2 A Working Party is not necessarily convened for the new courses using existing units. The Course Convenor completes the form, with whatever consultation is considered necessary.
- 6.2.3 Simultaneous consideration of the proposal by Academic Quality Committee, the Learning and Teaching Committee/Research Committee and the Executive Committee is allowed.
- 6.2.4 An extraordinary meeting of Academic Board may be required if the meeting schedule does not fit this timeline.

7. WORKING PARTY

- 7.1 The purpose of the Working Party is to support the course development and accreditation process, largely through completion of the New Course Proposal template.
- 7.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor will establish a Working Party typically 12 months before the proposed launch date.
- 7.3 Membership of the Working Party will include the proposed Course Convenor (Chair) and other relevant team members, for example academic staff, library and/or school professional staff.
- 7.4 If a Working Party member becomes unavailable during the life of the Working Party, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor will nominate a replacement.
- 7.5 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor may be ex officio members of the Working Party.
- 7.6 The Academic Quality Office in the Vice-Chancellor's portfolio will support staff throughout this process and will provide feedback and recommendations as needed.

8. NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

- 8.1 The New Course Proposal template (which can be found with this procedure in the Policy Repository) is to be used for the proposal of new courses and to present a business and academic case for accreditation.
- 8.2 The Working Party will prepare the New Course Proposal (Proposal). The Course Convenor will be responsible for ensuring that the Proposal is complete, accurate and delivered on schedule.
- 8.3 Where a course is required to be accredited by an external professional body, the Proposal may also refer to or replicate relevant information submitted as part of the professional accreditation process.
- 8.4 The template is divided into two parts: *Part A* and *Part B*.

New Course Proposal Part A

- 8.5 Part A of the Proposal will be used to present an overview of the proposed course and a preliminary business case for the introduction of the new course.
- 8.6 Part A will be completed first and submitted to the Executive Committee for approval before Part B is commenced.
- 8.7 This work should begin 12 months before the proposed launch date.
- 8.8 Part A will provide sufficient information regarding each of the following sections to enable the Executive Committee to make a determination regarding approval to proceed with the full Proposal:
 - 8.8.1 Course Details
 - 8.8.2 Course Structure
 - 8.8.3 Strategic Purpose of the Course
 - 8.8.4 Consultation
 - 8.8.5 Market Analysis and Evidence of Course Demand
 - 8.8.6 Business Plan

New Course Proposal Part B

- 8.9 Part B of the Proposal will be used to present a case for accreditation based on a full academic and business case.
- 8.10 Work on Part B shall commence only once the Working Party has received approval from the Executive Committee for Part A.
- 8.11 The Working Party should continue to update Part A of the Proposal as necessary. Together with Part A, Part B will provide sufficient information to enable the relevant committees, and ultimately Academic Board to make a determination regarding accreditation. Part B includes information regarding each of the following sections:
 - 8.11.1 Course Description
 - 8.11.2 Course Entry and Completion Requirements
 - 8.11.3 Course Learning Outcomes and Course Design
 - 8.11.4 Resources and Infrastructure
- 8.12 Depending on the availability of internal expertise, the Working Party may need to consult external experts, e.g. for peer-review and practitioner/professional input, to assure the Academic Board that the proposed course has undergone rigorous scrutiny.

9. RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 9.1 It is required that consultation occurs with each of the Library, IT and the Chief Financial & Operations Officer and any other relevant Avondale departments to determine what, if any, additional resources are required to support the new course. Sufficient time must be allowed for each of the stakeholder groups to make an informed assessment of the proposal.
- 9.2 Sufficient consultation and time must also be allowed for Advancement to prepare a Promotional Plan for the launch of the new course.

10. NEW COURSE PROPOSAL PART A APPROVAL PROCESS

- 10.1 The Course Convenor will submit Part A of the Proposal to the School Committee/HDR Committee for consideration and endorsement.
- 10.2 Following any revisions required, the Course Convenor will submit Part A of the Proposal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- 10.3 Following any revisions required, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor will submit the Proposal Part A to the Executive Committee for a decision regarding whether it has sufficient merit to proceed to the full Course Proposal stage.
- 10.4 The Executive Committee will make their decision based on the strategic goals of the institution, evidence of demand, and the feasibility of the course in light of an assessment of finance and resource availability, and/or other factors.
- 10.5 Once approval is received from the Executive Committee, the Working Party shall commence work on Part B of the Proposal and continue to update Part A ensuring that the complete New Course Proposal is coherent and in total presents a sound academic and business case for accreditation.

NEW COURSE PROPOSAL (PARTS A & B) APPROVAL PROCESS

11. SCHOOL COMMITTEE/HDR COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT

- 11.1 The New Course Proposal (Parts A & B) is to be submitted by the Course Convenor to the relevant School Committee/HDR Committee for consideration and endorsement.
- 11.2 The Committee will either endorse the Proposal for review by the Manager, Academic Quality & Standards or provide feedback requiring actions and/or revisions to be made. If revisions are required:
 - 11.2.1 the Committee will determine whether the revisions are to be considered as major or minor.
 - 11.2.2 if major revisions are required, the Proposal should be re-drafted by the Working Party, and then re-submitted to the School Committee/HDR Committee.
 - 11.2.3 if the revisions required are minor, these are to be applied to the Proposal by the Working Party and then the Proposal is to be submitted to the Manager, Academic Quality & Standards for review and comment.

12. ACADEMIC QUALITY MANAGER ENDORSEMENT

- 12.1 The endorsed New Course Proposal is to be submitted by the Course Convenor to the Manager, Academic Quality & Standards for consideration and endorsement.
- 12.2 The Manager, Academic Quality & Standards will either endorse the Proposal for review by the Academic Quality Committee or provide feedback requiring actions and/or revisions to be made. If revisions are required:
 - 12.2.1 the Manager, Academic Quality & Standards will determine whether the revisions are to be considered as major or minor.
 - 12.2.2 if major revisions are required, the Proposal should be re-drafted by the Working Party, and then re-submitted to the School Committee/HDR Committee.

12.2.3 if the revisions required are minor, these are to be applied to the Proposal by the Working Party and then the Proposal is to be submitted to the Academic Quality Committee for review and comment.

13. ACADEMIC QUALITY COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT

13.1 The endorsed New Course Proposal is to be presented by the Manager, Academic Quality & Standards to the Academic Quality Committee for consideration and endorsement of the Proposal.

13.2 Using the Avondale Guidelines regarding the HESF Standards, the Academic Quality Committee will affirm that the guiding principles of the policy have been met. Specifically, that the proposed course:

- reflects Avondale's Purpose and Values;
- develops and facilitates student achievement of Avondale's Graduate Attributes;
- complies with the relevant provisions of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); and
- is designed to educate, support and encourage Academic Integrity.

13.3 The Committee will either endorse the Proposal for review by the Learning and Teaching Committee/Research Committee (Academic Case) and the Executive Committee (Business Case) or provide feedback requiring actions and/or revisions to be made. If revisions are required:

13.3.1 the Committee will determine whether the revisions are to be considered as major or minor.

13.3.2 if major revisions are required, the Proposal should be re-drafted by the Working Party, and then re-submitted to the School Committee/HDR Committee. Once endorsed by the School Committee/HDR Committee, the Proposal can be re-submitted directly to the Academic Quality Committee.

13.3.3 if the revisions required are minor, these are to be applied to the Proposal by the Working Party and then the Proposal is to be submitted to the Learning and Teaching Committee/Research Committee for review and comment of the Academic Case and to the Executive Committee for approval of the Business Case.

14. LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE/RESEARCH COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT

14.1 The endorsed New Course Proposal is to be presented by the Vice-Chancellor to the Learning and Teaching Committee/Research Committee for consideration and endorsement of the Academic Case of the Proposal.

14.2 The Committee will either endorse the Academic Case of the Proposal for consideration by the Academic Board or provide feedback requiring actions and/or revisions to be made. If revisions are required:

14.2.1 the Committee will determine whether the revisions are to be considered as major or minor.

- 14.2.2 if major revisions are required, the Proposal should be re-drafted by the Working Party, and then re-submitted to the Learning and Teaching Committee/Research Committee and sent to the Executive Committee for noting.
- 14.2.3 if the revisions required are minor, these are to be applied to the Proposal by the Working Party and then the Proposal is to be submitted to the Academic Board for consideration.

15. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

- 15.1 The endorsed New Course Proposal is to be presented by the Vice-Chancellor to the Executive Committee for approval of the Business Case.
- 15.2 The Committee will either approve the Business Case of the Proposal or provide feedback requiring actions and/or revisions to be made. If revisions are required:
 - 15.2.1 the Committee will determine whether the revisions are to be considered as major or minor.
 - 15.2.2 if major revisions are required, the Proposal should be re-drafted by the Working Party, and then re-submitted to the Executive Committee and sent to the Learning and Teaching Committee/Research Committee for noting.
 - 15.2.3 if the revisions required are minor, these are to be applied to the Proposal by the Working Party and then the Proposal is to be submitted to the Academic Board.

16. ACADEMIC BOARD APPROVAL

- 16.1 The Manager, Academic Quality & Standards shall ensure that the Proposal submitted to the Academic Board has integrated actions and revisions requested by the Learning and Teaching Committee/Research Committee and Executive Committee.
- 16.2 The endorsed New Course Proposal is to be presented by the Vice-Chancellor to the Academic Board to consider approval for course accreditation, only if the Executive Committee has approved the Business Case.
- 16.3 The Academic Board will either approve the course accreditation or request further documentation and/or revisions regarding the Academic Case of the Proposal. If revisions are required:
 - 16.3.1 the Academic Board will determine whether the resulting revisions are to be considered as major or minor.
 - 16.3.2 if major revisions are required, the Proposal should be re-drafted by the Working Party, and then re-submitted to the Academic Board.
 - 16.3.3 if the revisions required are minor, these are to be applied to the Proposal by the Working Party and then submitted to the Chair of Academic Board for re-evaluation and approval.

17. CONDITIONS OF ACCREDITATION

17.1 On approval, the Academic Board will confirm the expiry date of the accreditation. The period of accreditation is typically five years, however, may be shorter, or longer, up to a maximum of six years at the discretion of the Academic Board.

17.2 Academic Board accredits a course on the condition that the relevant School will:

- a) renew the course as required to address feedback; maintain currency in relation to advances in discipline knowledge, professional practice and pedagogical principles; and address findings of external benchmarking;
- b) obtain the appropriate approval to amend the course;
- c) monitor and review the course in accordance with policy;
- d) notify the Chair of Academic Board as soon as the School becomes aware of any breach of the Higher Education Standards Framework, or any risk to professional accreditation; and
- e) report the outcomes of course reviews and applications for professional accreditation, including changes to the status of professional accreditation, to the Academic Board, in a timely manner.

17.3 Academic Board may withdraw a course's accreditation before the expiry date if the conditions in clause 17.2 are not met or the course is not considered to be meeting academic quality standards.

18. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

18.1 Upon approval, the Academic Quality Office will action updates to the Master Course Information.

18.2 The Academic Quality Office will share a summary of the course accreditation decision with the Academic Office, Admissions, Advancement, Business Office, Library, and IT Services.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (located with this procedure in the Policy Repository)

- New Course Approval Process Workflow Part A
- New Course Approval Process Workflow Part B
- New Course Proposal Template
- Market Analysis template
- Business Plan template
- Guidelines regarding the HESF Standards

Table of Amendments

Version Number	1.0	Replaces Version	NA
Implementation Date	1 February 2024	Scheduled Review Date	August 2028
Approving Body	Academic Board	Approval Date	30 August 2023
Procedure Owner	Manager, Academic Quality & Standards	Date first introduced	1 February 2024
Short description of amendment	New Procedure		