

<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Short description</b>	This policy outlines Avondale's principles and the responsibilities regarding the course life-cycle. This includes course design, development, review and approval processes.
<b>Relevant to</b>	All staff involved in managing courses.
<b>Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Policy owner</b>	Vice-Chancellor
<b>Responsible office</b>	Office of the Vice-Chancellor
<b>Date approved</b>	30 August 2023
<b>Date effective</b>	1 February 2024
<b>Review due</b>	August 2028
<b>Related Avondale documents</b>	<p>Course Accreditation Procedure</p> <p>Course Amendment Procedure</p> <p>Course Re-accreditation Procedure</p> <p>Course Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure</p>
<b>Related legislation</b>	<p>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</p> <p>Australian Qualifications Framework</p>
<b>Key words</b>	Accreditation, new course, business case, course proposal, course development

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy establishes the framework for evaluating the quality and viability of Avondale University's (Avondale) courses and for their design, development, review and approval processes.
- 1.2 Details regarding the management of each stage of the course life-cycle including the processes, usual timeline, staff responsibilities, recording and reporting are available in the supporting procedures.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
  - a) all higher education coursework courses; and
  - b) all HDR courses.
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to:
  - a) VET courses; or
  - b) non-accredited 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 and the viability including available resources, market analysis, evidence of demand and estimated revenue and costs.
- 3.6 **Course:** a coherent sequence of units and/or research component, leading to a higher education qualification.
- 3.7 **Course amendment:** any change to an existing course.
- 3.8 **Course Component:** an element of a course such as a major, minor or specialisation.
- 3.9 **Discontinuation:** the process through which a course is disestablished and removed from the University's course offerings. Individual Course Components can also be subject to discontinuation.

- 3.10 **Major amendment (to a course):** an amendment to a course that substantially affects the course structure or learning outcomes, and could significantly impact a student's ability to complete the course.
- 3.11 **Minor amendment (to a course):** an amendment to a course that does not involve substantial change to the course structure or learning outcomes, and would not significantly impact a student's ability to complete the course.
- 3.12 **New course:** a course which is not currently offered by Avondale.
- 3.13 **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.
- 3.14 **Re-accreditation:** the process for renewing course accreditation, sometimes referred to as accreditation renewal.
- 3.15 **Suspension:** the cessation of the offering of a course to new students for a specified period of time while its accreditation status is evaluated. Individual Course Components within a course can also be subject to suspension.
- 3.16 **Teach-out Plan:** the steps put in place to allow currently enrolled students to complete their studies in a course that is being discontinued.
- 3.17 **Transition Plan:** the steps put in place to allow currently enrolled students to be transferred to another course to complete their studies.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 All courses will:
  - 4.1.1 reflect Avondale's Purpose and Values;
  - 4.1.2 develop and facilitate student achievement of Avondale's Graduate Attributes;
  - 4.1.3 comply with the relevant provisions of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); and
  - 4.1.4 be designed to educate, support and encourage academic integrity.
- 4.2 Course design will be informed by benchmarking, professional accreditation competencies and/or standards as appropriate and will be responsive to student and industry needs.
- 4.3 Avondale is committed to a cycle of monitoring, evaluation and improvement, in order to facilitate quality assurance and continuous improvement of clear and demonstrable learning outcomes for all courses.
- 4.4 Within this cycle, academic staff are required to:
  - 4.4.1 review the content and focus of their courses;
  - 4.4.2 evaluate and reflect on student learning resulting from their teaching practice, curriculum design and approaches to assessment; and
  - 4.4.3 make appropriate revisions as required.
- 4.5 Avondale will use multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data in the evaluation of its courses, programs and teaching, including feedback from students and stakeholders.

- 4.6 Courses will have entry requirements, entry and completion pathways, course requirements and the availability of exit options to other qualifications clearly specified and communicated to students where appropriate.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1 The Academic Board oversees all academic quality assurance and continuous improvement policies and processes. The Board regularly receives relevant reports and has final approval for accreditation, course amendment and re-accreditation decisions as well as Transition and Teach-out Plans.
- 5.2 The Academic Quality Committee plays a role in monitoring and evaluating academic quality assurance policies and processes, and the outcomes, and makes recommendations to the Academic Board. It receives more granular level reports which may be summarised to a briefer report for the Academic Board.
- 5.3 The Learning and Teaching Committee and the Research Committee are utilised for consultation purposes, including endorsement to the Academic Board, and are kept informed as relevant.

## **6. ACCREDITATION**

- 6.1 The responsibilities, suggested timelines, required proposal content and the endorsement and approval process regarding the New Course Proposal are included in the Course Accreditation Procedure.
- 6.2 Responsibility for approval of the Business Case component of the New Course Proposal is with the Executive Committee.
- 6.3 Responsibility for approval of a New Course Proposal is with the Academic Board once the Executive Committee has approved the Business Case.
- 6.4 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. The period of accreditation may be up to six years at the discretion of the Academic Board.

## **7. MID CYCLE QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- 7.1 Mid-cycle quality assurance processes will include but are not limited to Annual Course Reports, student evaluations, unit self-reviews, external benchmarking and/or External Advisory Committee reports.
- 7.2 These processes may identify amendments to ensure the ongoing success of the program. Any amendments to programs will be undertaken in accordance with the Course Amendment Procedure.
- 7.3 Courses whose performance is consistently below the targets and benchmarks may be required to show cause as to why the course should not be discontinued.
- 7.4 The Teaching and Learning Committee assesses the reports from the Course Convenors and makes recommendations to the Academic Board as appropriate on actions to improve course quality.

## 8. RE-ACCREDITATION

- 8.1 An annual Course Re-accreditation Schedule will be approved and may be varied from time to time, by the Vice-Chancellor, on recommendation by Academic Board.
- 8.2 The responsibilities, suggested timelines, required report contents and the endorsement and approval processes regarding re-accreditation are included in the Course Re-accreditation Procedure.
- 8.3 Responsibility for re-accreditation approval is with the Academic Board.
- 8.4 On approval, the Academic Board will confirm the renewed course accreditation cycle and expiry date. The period of re-accreditation is typically five years, however, may be shorter. The period of accreditation may be up to six years at the discretion of the Academic Board.

## 9. AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 The responsibilities, suggested timelines and the endorsement and approval process for course amendments are included in the Course Amendment Procedure.
- 9.2 Minor amendments to a course are to be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The decision is then noted by the Academic Board.
- 9.3 Major amendments to a course are to be approved by the Academic Board.
- 9.4 Applications for any course amendment which has an impact on students must be accompanied by a Transition Plan for Continuing Students. This is to be approved by the Academic Board.

## 10. SUSPENSION AND DISCONTINUATION

- 10.1 The responsibilities, suggested timelines and the endorsement and approval process for suspension and discontinuation are included in the Course Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure.

### ***Suspension***

- 10.2 Suspension of intake into a course or course component may be approved:
  - 10.2.1 when a school plans to cease the admission of new students in a course flagged to be discontinued, but approval for discontinuation has not yet been finalised; or
  - 10.2.2 when a school does not plan to admit new students to a course for a specific or indeterminate period of time, but it plans to maintain the course as 'active' in order that it can be offered again at a later stage.
- 10.3 Suspension of intake into a course is approved by the Vice-Chancellor. The decision is then noted by the Academic Board.

### ***Discontinuation***

- 10.4 A course or course component may be proposed for discontinuation because it has been replaced by a new course or course component, or because it is no longer able to meet the university's expectations for an accredited course.
- 10.5 The proposal may be initiated with or without a prior suspension stage.
- 10.6 Discontinuation of a course is approved by the Vice-Chancellor. The decision is then noted by the Academic Board.

- 10.7 A Teach-out Plan is the means by which currently enrolled students are able to complete their studies in a course that is being discontinued. A Teach-out Plan must be offered to currently enrolled students who have not opted to be transitioned to another course.
- 10.8 A Transition Plan is the means by which currently enrolled students may be transferred to another course or course component to complete their studies. A Transition Plan must ensure that students are able to meet the accredited course requirements of the new course without increasing the normal completion time and/or increasing student liability for course fees.
- 10.9 Teach-out and or Transition Plans are approved by the Academic Board.

## 11. UNIT APPROVAL, AMENDMENT AND DISCONTINUATION

- 11.1 The Academic Board delegates the responsibility for accrediting and re-accrediting units to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- 11.2 The maximum period of accreditation for units is six years.
- 11.3 The Academic Board, or the Vice-Chancellor may direct the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to review a unit and may set the criteria for the review.

## 12. RECORDING

- 12.1 This policy and the procedure recognise the Curriculum Management System (CMS) and the Student Management System (SMS) as the primary and authoritative sources of award course information for publishing purposes and the Fees and payment section of the Avondale website as the primary and authoritative source of official tuition (and other) fee information for award courses.

## 13. REPORTING

- 13.1 The Academic Quality Office will provide an annual report to Academic Board and the Executive Committee summarising the status of all courses with respect to the course life cycle. Courses in the following categories will be highlighted:
- 13.1.1 new courses (approved in the last 12 months);
- 13.1.2 courses within 12 months of the end of their accreditation period;
- 13.1.3 courses that have been discontinued within the last 12 months or are to be discontinued within the next 12 months; and
- 13.1.4 courses that have been suspended within the last 12 months or are to be suspended within the next 12 months.

### Table of amendments

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