

Version	1.0
Short description	This procedure outlines Avondale University's higher education course suspension and discontinuation processes.
Relevant to	All academic and professional staff involved in proposing, endorsing or approving higher education course suspensions or discontinuations.
Authority	Academic Board
Policy Owner	Manager, Academic Quality and 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 Accreditation Procedure</p> <p>Course Amendment Procedure</p> <p>Course Quality Assurance Policy</p> <p>Course Re-accreditation Procedure</p> <p>Unit Development, Amendment & Discontinuation Procedure</p>
Related legislation	<p>Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition 2013</p> <p>Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000</p> <p>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF)</p>
Key words	Course, course assurance, discontinuation, transition, suspension, teach-out, tuition assurance

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This procedure supports the Course Quality Assurance Policy by outlining Avondale University's (Avondale) processes through which a course of study or component of a course of study is approved for suspension or discontinuation.
- 1.2 The procedure specifies the process and responsibilities for student transition and/or teach-out.

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
- 2.3 This procedure applies to:
 - courses
 - minors, majors or specialisations
 - delivery locations
 - delivery mode
 - partner delivery agreements.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **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. Current accreditation status is a requirement for offering a course at Avondale University.
- 3.2 **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.
- 3.3 **Major:** an approved sequence of studies comprising between six and eight 6-credit point units in one discipline area or coherent multi-discipline area with at least two units at 300-level.
- 3.4 **Minor:** an approved sequence of studies comprising at least four 6-credit point units in one discipline area or coherent multi-discipline area with at least two units at 200- or 300-level.
- 3.5 **Re-accreditation:** the process for renewing course accreditation, sometimes referred to as accreditation renewal.
- 3.6 **Specialisation:** an approved sequence of studies comprising of at least ten units in one discipline or coherent multi-discipline area.

- 3.7 **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.
- 3.8 **Teach-out plan:** the steps put in place to allow currently enrolled students to complete their studies in a course that is being discontinued.
- 3.9 **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 The suspension or discontinuation of a course or course component, and related transition or teach-out arrangements, must:
 - 4.1.1 comply with legislative and regulatory requirements including the HESF and ESOS Act, as appropriate;
 - 4.1.2 meet any contractual obligations between Avondale and the Commonwealth and/or Third Parties;
 - 4.1.3 meet the requirements of relevant professional accrediting bodies;
 - 4.1.4 ensure that there is adequate provision to meet the learning needs of students impacted by the suspension or discontinuation so that they may successfully complete their studies; and
 - 4.1.5 include consultation with stakeholders.

5. SUSPENSION

- 5.1 A course or course component may be recommended for suspension because there is a need to examine its suitability for continuation against one or more of the following criteria:
 - 5.1.1 alignment with Avondale's resources and strategic needs and priorities;
 - 5.1.2 viability;
 - 5.1.3 expected institutional requirements and standards; and/or
 - 5.1.4 professional accrediting body conditions, where applicable.
- 5.2 A Course Suspension Application will be developed by the Course Convenor in conjunction with the Academic Quality Office at the request of the Vice Chancellor and/or Head of School. The template is available in the Policy Repository.
- 5.3 The Course Suspension Application will be endorsed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor who will ensure that all schools that have an interest in the course have been consulted.
- 5.4 The decision to accept a recommendation to suspend a course or course component is made by the Vice-Chancellor.
- 5.5 The Vice-Chancellor's decision is to be noted by the Academic Board.
- 5.6 A course or course component can normally be suspended for no more than one year. Approval for a longer suspension period is at the discretion of the Vice Chancellor.
- 5.7 New enrolments into the course or course component will usually be suspended from the next intake unless a case for delay has been approved by the Vice Chancellor or, if

in the opinion of the Director, Student Administration Services, there is insufficient time to finalise such arrangements for the next student intake.

- 5.8 In order to comply with legal obligations, Avondale may be obliged to admit a student to a course or course component that has been suspended.
- 5.9 During the period of suspension, a course or course component will be subject to a review which addresses the reasons for the suspension.
- 5.10 As a result of the review, the Vice Chancellor will determine whether:
 - 5.10.1 the course will be reactivated; or
 - 5.10.2 the process will be commenced to permanently discontinue the course.
- 5.11 If a suspended course is to be discontinued, the course will remain in suspension with conditional accreditation until the discontinuation process is completed.

6. DISCONTINUATION

- 6.1 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 on one or more of the following criteria:
 - 6.1.1 alignment with University resources and strategic needs and priorities;
 - 6.1.2 viability;
 - 6.1.3 expected institutional requirements and standards; and/or
 - 6.1.4 professional accrediting body conditions, where applicable.
- 6.2 The proposal may be initiated with or without a prior suspension stage.
- 6.3 A Course Discontinuation Application will be developed by the Course Convenor in conjunction with the Academic Quality Office at the request of the Vice Chancellor and/or Head of School. The template is available in the Policy Repository.
- 6.4 A Teachout and/or Transition Plan must be included as a component of the Course Discontinuation Application
- 6.5 Before the academic matters relating to an application for discontinuation are considered:
 - 6.5.1 the Deputy Vice Chancellor will ensure that all schools that have an interest in the course have been consulted; and
 - 6.5.2 the Vice Chancellor will confirm that the proposal has met all legislative, regulatory, and contractual requirements, and, where necessary and as stipulated in Avondale's funding agreement, secure permission from the Commonwealth to proceed with discontinuation of the course in question.
- 6.6 The Course Discontinuation Proposal will be endorsed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
- 6.7 The decision to accept a recommendation to discontinue a course or course component is made by the Vice-Chancellor.
- 6.8 The Vice-Chancellor's decision is to be noted by the Academic Board.
- 6.9 Generally, Course Discontinuation Applications must be provided in time to assist with establishing an accurate course profile for the following academic year.

7. TEACH-OUT

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The Course Convenor in conjunction with the Academic Quality Office will develop a detailed Teach-out Plan to ensure that students are not disadvantaged and that each student is able to meet the course requirements within the planned teach-out period. The Teach-out Plan template is available in the Policy Repository.
- 7.3 The Teach-out Plan will:
 - 7.3.1 Identify all cohorts for whom individual teach-out arrangements are required, including international students and pending students who have been made offers of admission via pathway or package arrangements.
 - 7.3.2 Identify all students currently enrolled in the course or course component, and for each student list (in like groups where possible):
 - their completed credit points, and their credit point levels
 - the remaining units required to complete the course
 - whether the student is enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis, and
 - the length of the teach-out period that each individual has to complete the course or major.
- 7.4 A Teach-out Plan may:
 - 7.4.1 reduce or remove student choice as it applies to unit availability;
 - 7.4.2 require students to study a prescribed sequence of units to ensure students can complete their studies within the prescribed timeframe; and/or
 - 7.4.3 include provisions for recognising unit equivalence if required and approved by the Academic Board.
- 7.5 The Teach-out Plan will be endorsed by the Head of School and the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
- 7.6 The Teach-out Plan must be approved by the Academic Board.
- 7.7 Implementation of the Teach-out Plan is the responsibility of the Course Convenor.
- 7.8 Where the teach-out period has finished however students remain enrolled in the course (for example due to failed units or non-compliance with their Teach-out plan), Avondale will endeavour to negotiate a credit arrangement with a similar course at another university.
- 7.9 Students who do not complete their studies within the prescribed timeline for teach-out will have their enrolment discontinued and, where possible, be issued an exit award along with their transcript recording the extent of their studies and the reason for their discontinuation.
- 7.10 No new admissions will be accepted during the teach-out period.

8. TRANSITION PLAN

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Should a student elect not to transition to the nominated course, they will be placed on a Teach-out plan.
- 8.3 The Course Convenor in conjunction with the Academic Quality Office will develop a detailed Transition Plan for each student (where possible in cohorts), to ensure that they are not disadvantaged and that students are still able to meet their new course requirements within the planned transition period. The Transition Plan template is available in the Policy Repository.
- 8.4 The Transition Plan will be endorsed by the Head of School and the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
- 8.5 The Teach-out Plan must be approved by the Academic Board.
- 8.6 Implementation of the Transition Plan is the responsibility of the Course Convenor.
- 8.7 A Transition Plan may include provisions for recognising unit equivalence if required and approved by Academic Board.
- 8.8 The Course Transition plan will:
 - 8.8.1 Identify all students currently enrolled in the course or major, their completed credit points, and their credit point levels.
 - 8.8.2 Recommend groups of students that may be transitioned into a replacement course or major.
 - 8.8.3 Identify all cohorts for whom individual transition arrangements are required, including international students and pending students who have been made offers of admission via pathway or package arrangements.
- 8.9 The Course Transition Plan is presented to Academic Board concurrently with the Course Proposal for the new course (where the discontinued course is being replaced by a new course).

9. TUITION PROTECTION SERVICE

- 9.1 If Avondale ceases to provide the course an international student has commenced, it undertakes to meet its obligations by either refunding any unused prepaid tuition fees, or to assist the student to find enrolment in a suitable alternative course at Avondale or with another provider. If Avondale has not been able to meet this obligation international students may access the Tuition Protection Service. Further details are available at <https://www.avondale.edu.au/Main/Information/Statement-on-Tuition-Assurance.pdf>

10. COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

- 10.1 Students will be advised of Avondale's intention to discontinue the course or major as soon as possible after the approval of the Course Discontinuation Proposal by the Vice-

Chancellor and the subsequent approval of the Course Teach-out and/or Transition Plans by Academic Board.

- 10.2 Each student will be advised of their individual plan, including:
 - 10.2.1 the reason for the course discontinuation
 - 10.2.2 the student's options regarding transition (if applicable)
 - 10.2.3 the length of time that they have to complete the course or major;
 - 10.2.4 that there will be no disadvantage to students, especially in relation to professional accreditation (if applicable); and
 - 10.2.5 where they can seek further advice and information about their course status.
- 10.3 This communication will be sent to each student's Avondale email address by the Course Convenor.
- 10.4 General communications to the student cohort may also be sent through the student portal, forums, via the learning management system or through other methods.
- 10.5 There should be no pre-emptive communication to students until Academic Board approval is granted for the Transition and/or Teach-out Plan.
- 10.6 Avondale will also advise any students who have been offered a place in a course or major approved for discontinuation that the course or major will no longer be on offer.
- 10.7 Details of a course or major that has been approved for discontinuation will be removed from future editions of all relevant publications.
- 10.8 An exception is provided for Course listings where these are used to provide existing students with information regarding their course structure. In this case, courses will be identified as no longer taking admissions.

11. MONITORING

- 11.1 The Academic Quality Office will submit an annual report to Academic Board for each course that is under suspension, transition or teach-out. The report shall include:
 - 11.1.1 the status of the review for courses under suspension
 - 11.1.2 the numbers and status of students enrolled in the course or course component being taught out or transitioned; and
 - 11.1.3 the expected timeframes for completion of transition or teach-out.

12. RECORDING

- 12.1 Upon approval, the Academic Quality Office will action updates to the Master Course Information.
- 12.2 The Academic Quality Office will share a summary of the course suspension and/or discontinuation decision with the Academic Office, Admissions, Advancement, Business Office, Library, and IT Services.
- 12.3 The approved Teach-out Plan will be filed by the relevant School and the Academic Quality Office.

12.4 The Academic Office will retain a copy of all communication to individual students and keep on the student's file.

12.5 The relevant School is to retain a copy of all correspondence with student cohorts.

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

- Course Suspension & Discontinuation Application Template
- Course Suspension & Discontinuation Endorsement and Approval Responsibilities: Summary Table

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
Policy Owner	Manager, Academic Quality and Standards	Date first introduced	February 2024
Short description of amendment	New procedure		