Course Accreditation, Amendment and Review Policy

Section 1 - Policy Statement

(1) This Policy establishes a robust approach to the approval, amendment and review of award courses offered by the Australian Catholic University (ACU) and ensures consistent course quality assurance processes are maintained across the institution.

Section 2 - Policy Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all:

a. undergraduate and postgraduate coursework award courses;
b. coursework components of higher degrees by research prior to consideration and review via the University Research Committee (URC);
c. non-award courses comprised of units drawn from approved undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs and/or units deemed equivalent;
d. integrated qualifications;
e. pathway programs;
f. microcredentials; and
g. short courses.

Section 3 - Definitions

(3) The terms used in this Policy and the associated Course Accreditation and Amendment Procedure and Course Review Procedure are available in the Glossary of Student and Course Terms. The following specific definitions also apply:

Term	Definition
Discontinuation of a course, specialisation major or minor	means that no students may be enrolled in the course or any units that are unique to that course specialisation, major or minor.
Integrated qualifications	are purposely designed qualifications that enable explicit articulation pathways and encompass more than one AQF level and / or qualification type.
Microcredentials	means a discrete learning package with appropriately articulated learning outcomes and constructively aligned learning and teaching, and assessment strategies.
Suspension of a course, specialisation or major	means that no students may be admitted or commence, and may be a precursor to discontinuation.
Short Courses	are programs other than accredited higher education awards or microcredentials that are undertaken by an individual to improve or support progress towards work, career and/or personal goals.

Section 4 - Principles

(4) Courses must comply with the requirements of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth), Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF) and must align with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) criteria at the relevant level.

(5) All course development and accreditation will be guided by the objectives of ACU strategies tied to Learning and Teaching and the ACU Mission, Identity and Values and must adhere to the provisions of Statute 5.1 - Courses for Degrees, Diplomas and Other Awards and Statute 2.11 -The Course Incubator.

(6) The documentation supporting course approval and internal accreditation must be sufficiently detailed to assure compliance with the HESF (sections 3.1, 5.1 and 7.2) and to allow an expert in the field to undertake an assessment of the scope and nature of the course, and for prospective and current students to have detailed insight into their program of study.

(7) Any proposal for course approval, amendment, review, suspension or discontinuation, must address corporate governance and academic governance requirements as relevant.

(8) All course design and development must be consistent with the Structuring Coursework Programs Policy.

(9) Courses offered by ACU require approval as set out in Statute 2.5 - The Academic Board and Statute 2.6 - The Faculties.

(10) Changes to courses and course reviews will be approved by the Academic Board following scrutiny by the relevant standing committee.

(11) Changes to units of study will be approved by the relevant Faculty Board.

(12) Each Faculty must maintain a schedule of reviews on a six-yearly basis for its existing courses in line with the requirements of the HESF and in recognition of the need for development and change.

(13) In addition to the requirements under clause (12), Faculties will undertake a scheduled annual monitoring exercise of each course.

(14) The University will develop and maintain internal supporting documents and system templates for each category of proposal.

(15) Microcredentials are normally credit-bearing and normally aligned to an AQF level 8 qualification.

(16) Short courses are not aligned with AQF levels.

Section 5 - Responsibilities

Senate

(17) Senate is responsible for approval of courses in disciplines not identified in the Constitution.

Academic Board

(18) The Academic Board is responsible for the:

a. approval and accreditation of new courses in existing disciplines as identified in the Constitution;

b. endorsement of courses proposed in new discipline;
c. approval of amendments to existing courses;
d. reaccreditation of courses following course reviews;
e. discontinuation and deaccreditation of courses;
f. oversight of quality assurance activities tied to courses and for monitoring compliance with relevant legislation, external standards, and internal academic requirements through its subcommittees; and
g. annual reporting of all course accreditation activity to Senate.

Chair, Academic Board

(19) The Chair, Academic Board is responsible for:

a. exercising the powers and authority as delegated in Section 7.23 and 7.24 of the Delegations of Authority Policy and Register and as per the circumstances outlined in the Course Accreditation and Amendment Procedure; and
b. exercising the powers as prescribed in this Policy and the Course Accreditation and Amendment Procedure.

Courses and Academic Quality Committee (CAQC)

(20) CAQC is responsible for the:

a. oversight, quality assurance and endorsement of courses for approval by the Academic Board;
b. consideration and recommendation of courses proposed through the Course Incubator for approval, in accordance with clauses (17) and (18) b;
c. consideration and endorsement of course amendments for approval by the Academic Board;
d. consideration and noting of findings and recommendations arising from Stage 1 course reviews for noting by the Academic Board;
e. consideration and endorsement of coursework components of higher degrees by research where relevant;
f. approval of stand-alone microcredentials;
g. approval of short courses offered by organisational units other than Faculties.

Faculties

(21) Faculties are responsible for the:

a. resourcing of development of new courses and revisions to existing courses;
b. establishment of a Course Development Committee (CDC) to oversee the development of each course in accordance with the Course Accreditation and Amendment Procedures;
c. establishment of a Course Review Committee (CRC) to conduct reviews in line with the schedule of reviews, or at the request of the Academic Board, and in accordance with the Course Review Procedure;
d. facilitation of reviews by professional accreditation bodies as required;
e. assigning a Course Monitoring Committee (CMC) to oversee the implementation of courses, monitor their continued appropriateness and currency, and to recommend amendments to the relevant Faculty Board;
f. development of an annual plan for new courses proposals and the amendment, suspension, or discontinuation of existing courses, which must be submitted to Academic Board, via the Faculty Board and the Courses and Academic Quality Committee, by the final Academic Board of the preceding year.

Faculty Boards

(22) Faculty Boards are responsible for the:

a. endorsement of new courses in existing disciplines and revisions to existing courses;
b. approval of minor changes to curriculum in accordance with the Course Accreditation and Amendment Procedure;
c. approval of embedded microcredentials which are a subset of a credit pathway to an existing ACU award course; and
d. approval of short courses.

Provost

(23) The Provost is responsible for:

a. strategic management approval of proposals for new course or amendments to existing courses which have a resourcing implication;
b. oversight of the development of courses through the Course Incubator and proposal to CAQC;
c. assigning a Course Monitoring Committee (CMC) to oversee the implementation of courses under the Course Incubator, to monitor their continued appropriateness and currency, for the first implementation cycle;
d. initiating the suspension process of courses or specialisations in the context of enrolment plan management and subject to the relevant Government requirements; and
e. approval of amendments to fee type at course level.

Academic Registrar

(24) The Academic Registrar is responsible for:

a. the management of systems templates and documents to support the course accreditation and review process;
b. ensuring nomenclature is consistent with the Award Nomenclature Policy;
c. endorsement of fee structure and administrative elements of microcredentials.

Section 6 - Course Accreditation Processes and Timelines

(25) The two stages of the course accreditation process are:

a. strategic management approval; and
b. accreditation by the academic governance authority.

(26) The timelines for course approval, amendment and review are outlined in the Course Accreditation and Amendment Procedure and the Course Review Procedure.

(27) Any proposal to develop a new course or specialisation must follow the process as outlined in the Course Accreditation and Amendment Procedure.

(28) New or changed courses may not be advertised or implemented until approved by the relevant approval authority. Any exceptions require prior written approval of the Chair, Academic Board.

(29) There are restrictions on advertising courses which require external accreditation and registration.

(30) Courses subject to the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) (ESOS Act) may not be advertised to International students prior to CRICOS registration.

(31) Where such approval is granted under clauses (28) and (29), any promotional material must clearly indicate that offering of the course is subject to final approval and/or external accreditation.

Section 7 - Microcredentials

(32) Academic approval of microcredentials must be in accordance with the Microcredentials and Short Course Policy and must follow the process pathway as outlined in the Course Accreditation and Amendment Procedure.

(33) Proposals for microcredentials at other than AQF level 8 must be accompanied by a rationale that justifies their use.

Section 8 - Review of Course Offerings

(34) Course reviews will be conducted in accordance with the Course Review Procedure.

(35) Course reviews will be led by an appropriately qualified academic(s) operating independently of those involved directly in the delivery of the course.

(36) Reviews must commence no later than the fifth year of the cycle.

(37) Faculties must monitor the viability of award courses annually in accordance with the Course and Unit Viability Analysis Policy.

(38) The Academic Board may require Faculties to undertake out of cycle reviews where there are particular concerns based on student success outcomes, retention, satisfaction or external drivers.

(39) The relevant Faculty/s are responsible for scrutinising and updating embedded microcredentials that are a subset of, or credit pathway to, an existing ACU award course, as needed and undertaking formal reviews at least on a three-yearly cycle. Microcredentials that form part of a higher education award must be reviewed in accordance with the Course Review Procedure.

(40) CAQC is responsible for scrutinising and updating stand-alone microcredentials. at least on a three-yearly cycle

(41) In consultation with the Provost, each Faculty will review the financial viability of microcredentials each year.

(42) Any adjustments to the fee structure of a course must be reviewed in consultation with the Academic Registrar and in line with the Student Fees Policy.

(43) Faculties are responsible for reviewing short courses on a three-yearly cycle to determine whether approval should be renewed.

Section 9 - Supporting Documents

(44) Administrative amendments to the system templates and supporting documents can be approved and enacted by the Academic Registrar, provided that they do not affect the intent of this Policy.

(45) Any such amendments will be notified to the Academic Board via CAQC.

Section 10 - Revisions made to this Policy

(46) A summary of revisions made to this Policy compared to the previously published version is available in the Status and Details tab. For older changes, check the Status and Details tab within previous versions of the document. These are accessible via the Historic Versions tab.

Section 11 - Associated Information

(47) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	27th September 2024
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Responsible Executive	Helen Murnane Academic Registrar
Responsible Manager	Gerard Goodwin-Moore National Manager, Student Policy and Appeals
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