

Short Course and Microcredential Management Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction/Background

(1) The University of Wollongong (UOW) is committed to supporting the lifelong learning of learners, students, staff, community members, graduates and industry professionals, accessible to all, regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability, migration status, socio-economic status or gender. The University offers a range of opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills in flexible ways that enable the University's learner community to succeed at all stages of their learning journey.

(2) This Procedure aligns with the Course Policy Framework within the [Course Policy](#), which sets out the overall framework for managing course-related matters at the University.

Section 2 - Scope/Purpose

(3) This Procedure applies to all microcredentials and offerings approved and promoted as University Short Courses offered by the University's onshore campuses. Offerings can be made available both onshore and globally.

(4) UOW Global Enterprises and its controlled entities will have their own version of this procedure, covering any Short Courses offered and accredited by UOW Global Enterprises.

(5) This Procedure outlines a consistent approach to the design, approval, amendment, implementation and quality assurance processes for Short Courses.

(6) This Procedure does not apply to award courses offered by the University. The [Course and Subject Approval Procedures](#), [Course Design Procedures](#) and [Course Monitoring and Review Procedures](#) cover the equivalent scope of requirements for award courses.

(7) This Procedure does not apply to non-award courses offered by the University. The [Non-Award Course Management Procedure](#) covers the requirements for the creation and management of non-award courses.

(8) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life) may exempt a Short Course or a suite of Short Courses from the application of the provisions of these procedures, either generally or for a specified period of time.

Section 3 - Objectives

(9) This Procedure outlines a framework of the design principles and quality assurance principles that guide the development of Short Courses that sit outside the award course portfolio.

(10) Short Course opportunities will be designed with consideration to the following features:

- a. Transformative – supporting individuals' personal and professional development;

- b. Flexible – enabling learners to engage in flexible ways based on their needs;
- c. Engaged – meeting the changing needs of our communities, education sector, industry and public sector, both domestically and internationally;
- d. Diverse – including informal and formal learning opportunities, which can be offered at any stage of an individual’s education lifecycle and structured in any delivery mode; and
- e. Aligned – drawing on the University’s disciplinary strengths and aligned to the University’s strategic goals, including interdisciplinary engagement and engagement with participants who have been impacted by social-cultural or economic factors.

(11) Each Short Course will:

- a. Align with the strategic directions of the University, the Faculty or the academic unit;
- b. Be relevant to participant, graduate, industry and/or community needs; and
- c. Be a distinct offering within the University’s course portfolio.

Section 4 - Short Course features

(12) At the University, Short Courses have the following features:

	Short Course Assessment		Align to AQF	Leads to credit into award course
Continuing education	Yes	Optional	No	No
Continuing professional development	Yes	Optional	No	No
Pathway program	Yes	Optional	No	No
Credit bearing microcredential	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Non-credit bearing microcredential	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

(13) Any continuing education, continuing professional development, pathway program or other Short Course that includes assessed learning, does not align with the AQF and does not lead to credit towards a University award course can also be called a non-credit bearing microcredential.

(14) Any continuing education, continuing professional development or other Short Course that includes assessed learning, aligns with the AQF and can lead to credit towards a University award course can also be called a credit bearing microcredential.

Section 5 - Guiding principles

(15) Approved microcredentials and other Short Courses are programs that are designed, branded and delivered as UOW offerings.

(16) Short Courses should incorporate best practice in curriculum design, development, assessment and delivery.

(17) Ongoing support through a course run (e.g. teaching or administrative support) needs to be specified and resourced appropriately to ensure adequate monitoring and facilitation.

(18) A Short Course must use a title that makes it clear it is not an AQF award course.

(19) Learning Outcomes must be specified for each Short Course.

- (20) Any minimum entry requirements or assumed knowledge must be communicated to prospective participants.
- (21) Participation requirements and anticipated participant workload should be clearly outlined to prospective participants, including volume of learning and duration.
- (22) The [Short Course Learner Policy](#) should be made available to learners prior to registering for a Short Course.
- (23) A participant undertaking a Short Course is not considered a student of the University. Short Course participants are referred to as 'learners'.
- (24) Learners will not be charged the Student Amenities Fee and will not be supplied with a University email address for communications with the University and will not be entitled to access any benefits provided to University students (except as the University permits in its absolute discretion from time to time).
- (25) Short Course designers should ensure that resources required for the offering are accessible to learners (e.g. online, publicly available).
- (26) Short Courses may be designed as a suite of related, stacked offerings. They may be designed with a coherence to a University award course to prepare learners with the requisite knowledge or skills to succeed and/or to provide credit towards an award course.
- (27) Short Courses can be delivered through any of the University's approved delivery modes (on campus, online or mixed mode).
- (28) Short Courses that will be given a notional credit value must also align to the additional requirements of a credit-bearing microcredential.
- (29) If applicable, fees are to be set as part of the Short Course approval process. See Fees clauses (section 12).

Microcredentials

- (30) Microcredentials can be credit bearing or non-credit bearing.
- (31) Microcredentials may be stacked as a cohesive package of short programs that meet an overarching set of learning outcomes.
- (32) Two or more microcredentials may be packaged together to form a microcredential stack that demonstrates greater breadth/depth of knowledge or skills.
- (33) Credit bearing microcredentials are designed and operate under the principle of equivalence when considering volume of learning, assessment and delivery.
- (34) A credit bearing microcredential must be mapped to an equivalent AQF Level for quality assurance purposes; there should be no implication that the microcredential is a full AQF qualification.
- (35) Each credit bearing microcredential should have a minimum study load equivalent to 2 credit points (approximate volume of learning of 39-52 hours).
- (36) To be eligible for credit towards an award course, credit bearing microcredentials must stack up to at least 6 credit points. Credit arrangements for a credit bearing microcredential must be identified at the time of the Short Course approval. Limits on credit outlined in the [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#) and [Procedures](#) will apply.
- (37) Applicants seeking entry to an award course and applying for credit associated with the credit bearing microcredential will need to meet the entry requirements of the award course and provide evidence of their

completion of the microcredential.

(38) Microcredentials must be assured through the application of equivalent assessment standards used in award courses. Learner rights around assessment should be reasonably equivalent to those for the University's award courses.

(39) The volume of learning for non-credit bearing microcredentials should support achievement of the learning outcomes and accommodate robust assessment.

(40) Each microcredential must include compulsory assessment that must:

- a. assure the learning outcomes;
- b. be academically robust to align with the University's reputation as a quality education provider;
- c. be appropriate for the mode(s) of delivery, the level of learning, and the learning outcomes;
- d. be fair, valid and consistent;
- e. contain or involve some form of summative assessment(s);
- f. address the [Teaching and Assessment: Assessment and Feedback Policy](#); and
- g. for credit bearing microcredentials, be appropriate to the relevant mapped AQF level.

Section 6 - New Short Course Approval Process

Short Course Proposals (credit-bearing microcredentials)

(41) Credit-bearing microcredentials can be proposed by a Faculty or non-faculty unit. Any credit-bearing microcredentials proposed by a non-faculty unit must be aligned with a Faculty that can approve and own academic items.

(42) The proposing Faculty/unit is responsible for developing the proposal for a new Short Course, via the Short Course approval form together with required supporting documentation.

(43) The proposing Faculty/unit is responsible for undertaking appropriate consultation with other faculties, academic and support units, and to manage any identified impacts arising from the proposal.

(44) The proposing Faculty/unit may seek a viability assessment from the Course Portfolio Strategy team to provide market intelligence, including advice on fees and market demand.

(45) The proposal requires endorsement from the Faculty Education Committee.

(46) Depending on the faculty governance structure, there may be additional groups or sub-committee(s) that are required to endorse the proposal before the Faculty Education Committee.

(47) The final approval authority for credit bearing microcredential proposals is:

- a. the relevant Faculty Executive Dean for short course proposals which attract specified credit;
- b. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life) for Short Courses proposed by a non-faculty unit and attracting unspecified credit.

(48) Where a Faculty Short Course is proposed to be offered in partnership, the relevant Faculty Executive Dean will be the delegated authority for approving the partnership in accordance with the requirements in section 11 of this procedure.

(49) Where a non-Faculty Short Course is proposed to be offered in partnership, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life) will be the delegated authority for approving the partnership. Where a Short Course is owned jointly by two or more Faculties/units, all relevant approvals must be obtained.

Short Course Proposals (non-credit bearing microcredentials, continuing education, continuing professional development, pathway programs)

(50) Non-credit bearing Short Courses can be proposed by a Faculty or non-faculty unit.

(51) The relevant Faculty/unit is responsible for developing the proposal for a new Short Course via the Short Course approval form, together with required supporting documentation.

(52) The proposing Faculty/unit is responsible for undertaking appropriate consultation with faculties, academic and support units, and to manage any identified impacts arising from the proposal.

(53) The proposing Faculty/unit may seek a viability assessment from the Course Portfolio Strategy team to provide market intelligence, including advice on fees and market demand.

(54) The proposal requires endorsement from either:

- a. the Associate Dean Education of the proposing Faculty (and/or via the Faculty Education Committee as required); or
- b. any other delegated authority from the Faculty as required; or
- c. the Director of the relevant non-faculty unit.

(55) For Short Courses proposed by a Faculty, the Faculty Executive Dean is the final approval authority for Short Course approvals owned by that Faculty.

(56) Short Courses proposed and endorsed by a non-faculty unit will be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life), via the Future Education Division, for approval.

(57) The Future Education Division may seek clarification of any issues identified with a non-faculty Short Course proposal prior to forwarding the proposal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life).

(58) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life) is the Delegated Authority for the approval of non-faculty Short Course proposals, having regard to any recommendations made by the Future Education Division regarding the proposal.

(59) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life) may approve non-faculty Short Course proposals subject to the resolution of any issues identified with the proposal. It is the responsibility of the proposing non-faculty unit to resolve these issues to the satisfaction of the Program Manager, Future Education.

Section 7 - Amendments to Short Courses (including microcredentials)

(60) The Short Course Owner is responsible for developing a proposal for a Short Course amendment via the Short Course Amendment Form and for seeking relevant approvals from either the Faculty or non-faculty unit.

(61) Any proposals to amend a Short Course must include evidence of consultation with impacted Faculties/Divisions.

(62) All amendments to the approved design of a credit bearing microcredential require endorsement by the Associate

Dean Education or Faculty Education Committee and approval by the relevant Executive Dean.

(63) All amendments to the approved design of faculty owned Short Courses other than a credit bearing microcredential requires endorsement by the Associate Dean Education and/or delegated authority and approval by the Executive Dean (or their delegated authority).

(64) All amendments to the approved design of Short Courses owned by a non-faculty unit shall be endorsed by the Director of the relevant portfolio and approved by the Director, Future Education

(65) A copy of the approved form must be submitted to the Future Education Division. The Future Education Division will update a central Short Course register to reflect Short Course amendments, including:

- a. Changes to delivery dates, intakes,
- b. Changes to delivery mode,
- c. Change of Short Course contact person,
- d. Change to fee structure,
- e. Any factors influencing the refund process,
- f. Changes to admission requirements and/or target audience for enrolments (i.e. public, closed cohort, etc.),
- g. Changes to accreditation status or accrediting body,
- h. Changes to the course learning outcomes, and
- i. Changes to credit for credit-bearing microcredentials.

(66) Any cancellations or rescheduling of Short Courses that impact enrolled learners should be approved and follow the requirements outlined in the [Short Course Learner Policy](#).

Section 8 - Discontinuations

(67) The course owning faculty or non-faculty unit is responsible for completing a Short Course Discontinuation Form and for seeking all relevant approvals.

(68) All discontinuations of Short Courses owned by a Faculty shall be endorsed by the Associate Dean Education and/or Faculty Education Committee and approved by relevant Executive Dean as delegated authority.

(69) All discontinuations of Short Courses owned by a non-faculty unit shall be endorsed by the Director of the relevant portfolio and approved by the Director, Future Education.

(70) All discontinuations of credit bearing microcredentials shall be endorsed by the relevant Faculty Education Committee and approved by the relevant Executive Dean as delegated authority.

(71) All Short Course discontinuations must be submitted to the Future Education Division, so the central Short Course register can be updated, and be noted in relevant planning.

Section 9 - Accreditation

(72) Faculties offering continuing professional development or other Short Course programs that require industry accreditation are responsible for applying for and managing any accreditation requirements.

(73) The Future Education Division must be advised of any accreditations granted or any changes to accreditation status, so that the central Short Course register can be updated.

Section 10 - Badging and Validation

(74) The University may award the following types of validation certification on successful completion of a Short Course:

- a. Microcredential certificate of attainment – upon successful completion of a microcredential, including satisfactory performance on assessments that assure learning outcomes have been achieved.
- b. Short Course completion certificate – upon demonstrated successful completion of all other lifelong learning activities.

(75) Short Course Owners can issue validation certification to successful learners in the form of:

- a. Digital badges
- b. PDF certificates

(76) All badges and certificates issued to learners in Short Courses are required to use the approved University branding.

(77) Digital badging is the preferred validation method for credit-bearing microcredentials and available via the Open Learning platform. The Future Education Division can create and upload digital badge templates via the platform.

(78) Where other learning platforms or delivery methods are used, the Short Course Owner is required to issue and store validation certification in a manner that facilitates future requests for credit for prior learning assessment (e.g. via EDRMS).

(79) Validation certification is required for credit-bearing microcredentials, but optional for all other forms of Short Courses.

Section 11 - Partnerships

(80) Short Courses can be offered in partnership with third parties, including industry, government, education and community-based organisations within Australia or overseas.

(81) A Short Course offered in partnership may be:

- a. an existing University offering delivered with minor modifications for the partner's context;
- b. developed primarily by the University to meet the needs of the partner;
- c. co-created by the University and the partner; or
- d. developed primarily by the partner with the University providing educational leadership, advice and any assurance of learning.

(82) In all partnership arrangements where the University is issuing a credential for the Short Course, the University must maintain oversight of the quality of the teaching staff, the teaching, content, learning activities, learning resources and any assessment of learning.

(83) Any proposal for a Short Course offered in partnership must specify the role of the partner, if any, in co-design, co-delivery, (co)supervision, and/or co-assessment. Following approval of a proposal, partnership arrangements must be documented to clarify responsibilities, ownership of intellectual property and other relevant issues as described in the [‘TEQSA Guidance Note: Third Party Arrangements’](#).

(84) Consideration should also be given to the applicability of the [International Alliances Policy](#) (for partnerships with overseas organisations) and the [Collaborative Delivery of a UOW Course Policy](#).

Section 12 - Fees and Refunds

(85) Short Courses may be offered free of charge or for a fee. Where a Short Course is offered for free a fee may be charged for an assessable component and/or for the issuing of a certification.

(86) Fees for Short Courses are set by the proposing Faculty/unit, and should consider:

- a. Competitor rates;
- b. Actual costs associated with the design and ongoing delivery of the Short Course; and
- c. If the Short Course is a credit-bearing microcredential, consideration should be given to the per-credit-point student fee of the subject/course into which the microcredential gives credit.

(87) The proposing Faculty/unit may seek a viability assessment from the Course Portfolio Strategy team to provide market intelligence, including advice on fees and market demand.

(88) Short Courses must comply with Australian consumer law. A standard refund protocol as outlined in the [Short Course Learner Policy](#) is applied to all Short Courses, unless a different refund model is required based on a sponsorship arrangement or other agreement. Variations to the standard refund protocol must be provided to learners prior to enrolment and payment for a Short Course.

(89) Refund decisions will be determined by the Short Course Owner, in consultation with the Future Education Division where required.

(90) Fees and refunds via the Open Learning platform will be administered by the Future Education Division.

Section 13 - Quality Assurance

(91) No new Short Course may be advertised or offered until all approvals have been obtained as specified in section 6 of this procedure.

(92) For all microcredentials, content creation, teaching and assessments must be overseen by a qualified University academic staff member.

(93) All Short Courses must be accessible to people with disabilities.

(94) Prior to the initial delivery of an online Short Course, the Short Course Owner is responsible for ensuring the quality assurance of the online Short Course via the Short Course Quality Assurance checklist. A copy of the completed checklist should be emailed to the Future Education Division for record keeping purposes.

(95) Short Course Owners responsible for Short Courses offered via other delivery modes (e.g. mixed mode or on campus) are recommended to meet the minimum quality requirements outlined in Appendix 2.

(96) When advertising a Short Course potential participants must be able to access the following information:

- a. Course summary description,
- b. Language of course delivery (if not delivered in English),
- c. Participation requirements and anticipated workload (volume of learning in hours),
- d. Start date and end date / total course duration,

- e. Short Course fees (incl. GST) and payment options,
- f. Delivery mode, location and days and times for any synchronous classes,
- g. Short Course learning outcomes,
- h. General assessment requirements,
- i. Entry requirements or assumed knowledge,
- j. Credit description (where applicable),
- k. Certification (where applicable),
- l. Contact details for prospective learners to seek further information about the course, and
- m. Links to relevant policies and terms and conditions.

(97) Short course owners can seek support from Learning, Teaching and Curriculum to align their design with online learning environment standards and good practice.

(98) Short Courses to be advertised on a national platform may be required to meet additional quality assurance processes as stipulated by that platform prior to initial delivery.

Quality Assurance - evaluation and review

(99) Evaluation and reflection provides an opportunity to update and maintain the quality of the offering and ensure a positive educational experience for the learner.

(100) Short Courses should be monitored and evaluated via:

- a. Reflections on delivery; and
- b. Annual reporting.

(101) Reflections are created and owned by the Short Course Owner. A copy should be provided to the Future Education Division for record keeping and to support institutional monitoring, review and quality assurance activities for the Short Course portfolio. When requested, these may also be provided to the Associate Dean Education, Faculty Education Committee, unit Director or Director, Future Education.

(102) Evaluations and reflections can:

- a. Be used as evidence of learner outcomes, quality and viability during the course/subject review (for credit bearing microcredentials);
- b. Support faculty course portfolio planning or divisional KPI monitoring; and
- c. Trigger a Short Course amendment process.

(103) The staff member responsible for the delivery of Short Courses must complete a delivery reflection following each delivery, addressing the criteria outlined in Appendix 3 and document any recommendations to improve the quality of the course.

(104) Where delivery is on a rolling schedule that allows multiple intakes throughout the year then it is recommended that the staff member delivering the program considers possible improvements throughout the year. However, they will only be required to submit one combined reflection for the year.

(105) There will be an annual report on the performance of all Short Courses in the previous year provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life) via Course Portfolio Development Group and reported through to Academic Senate via the relevant committees, as appropriate.

(106) Where Short Courses are delivered in collaboration with a partner institution, the University will communicate

aggregated results of any evaluation back to the relevant University and partner institution staff.

Section 14 - Record keeping

(107) Approved Short Course proposals must be submitted to the Future Education Division for inclusion on a central Short Course register.

(108) The central Short Course register will include a record of approved credit pathways.

Learner Records

(109) Owing Faculties or non-faculty units must keep a record of each enrolled learner's:

- a. First name and last name,
- b. Email,
- c. Course code or course name,
- d. Enrolment date,
- e. Course completion date,
- f. Assessment results (where applicable), and
- g. Certificate type issued and certificate ID for digital certification (where applicable).

(110) Learner assessment results and completion records are to be kept by the Short Course Owner for 7 years following completion of the Short Course.

(111) Where a Short Course is offered via the Open Learning platform, the Future Education Division will transfer the learner records into EDRMS.

(112) Where a Short Course is offered via another delivery mode, it is recommended that learner records are also stored in EDRMS. This will be the responsibility of the course owning faculty or non-faculty unit.

Section 15 - Roles & Responsibilities

(113) The Future Education Division is responsible for:

- a. providing advice to faculties on viability and market demand via the Course Portfolio Strategy team (where requested);
- b. providing faculty and non-faculty units with a clear process and forms/systems to enable approval, amendments and discontinuations of Short Courses;
- c. providing faculty and non-faculty units with clear processes, forms and support for quality assurance processes;
- d. administering the Open Learning licence and payment system;
- e. providing advice and/or consulting with the Short Course Owner on refund requests;
- f. maintaining a central Short Course register; and
- g. Transferring learner records from Open Learning into EDRMS.

(114) The Faculty and/or non-faculty unit owning Short Courses are responsible for:

- a. designing and developing Short Courses in line with the requirements of these procedures and the [Copyright Policy](#);
- b. considering appropriate resourcing required for ongoing course delivery, including learner engagement,

- oversight of learning activities and responding to learner enquiries;
- c. ensuring learning resources are accessible to learners;
- d. where required, seeking exemption from these procedures from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life);
- e. consulting with stakeholders where Short Course proposals impact other faculties and divisions;
- f. monitoring, evaluating and ensuring the quality of Short Courses;
- g. contributing to annual reporting for the Course Portfolio Development Group;
- h. managing any accreditations associated with Short Courses;
- i. maintaining a learner record;
- j. issuing certification to learners on successful completion of a Short Course; and
- k. storing validation certification (that is not issued via an Open Learning digital badge) in a manner that supports future requests for credit for prior learning (e.g. via EDRMS).

(115) Learning, Teaching and Curriculum are responsible for:

- a. providing support and guidance on Short Course design and build in online platforms; and
- b. providing support and guidance to support best practice in teaching and online learning environment design.

Section 16 - Definitions

(116) The key terms used in this procedure are defined in the [Short Course Learner Policy](#) and the [Course Policy](#).

(117) For the purposes of this procedure, a Short Course is an inclusive term covering all shorter-form programs that sit outside the Award course portfolio, and are neither reportable under the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) nor allow participants to access Commonwealth supported places. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the model of Short Courses at the University.

(118) The University's Short Courses are distinct from short courses funded under the Australian Government Job-ready Package. Government funded short courses start at 0.5 EFSTL and are recognised qualifications under the AQF. Government funded short courses can lead to the award of an Undergraduate Certificate or Graduate Certificate.

Section 17 - Appendix 1 - UOW Short Course Model

(119) [Short Course Model UOW](#)

Section 18 - Appendix 2 - Short Course Quality Assurance Checklist

(120) A [Short Course Quality Assurance Checklist](#) is available to support planning and preparation of a short course.

Section 19 - Appendix 3 - Evaluation and Review Criteria

(121) Learner experience should be measured each time a course is offered. A learner survey template will be available to support the collection of feedback for the evaluation process.

(122) [Short Course Evaluation and Review Criteria](#) are available to assist reflection on short course design, delivery and performance.

(123) Design

- a. Appropriateness of the learning outcomes;
- b. Appropriateness of sequencing of content and activities;
- c. Suitability of content and learning activities having regard to:
 - i. the relevant discipline,
 - ii. contemporary developments in the discipline or field, including contemporary research and practice,
 - iii. registration/accreditation requirements (if any),
 - iv. the most suitable means of representing content and activities (e.g. multimodal);
- d. Suitability of assessment tasks having regard to:
 - i. the learning outcomes,
 - ii. assessment and feedback principles;
 - iii. inclusive and accessible design best practices.

(124) Delivery

- a. Appropriateness of content, assessments and learning activities to the mode of delivery, and where relevant the technological platform used to deliver them; and
- b. Where relevant, arrangements for delivery at other delivery locations including by third parties.

(125) Performance

- a. viability of the courses;
- b. learner performance data; and
- c. feedback from learners and staff.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	14th March 2024
Review Date	14th March 2029
Approval Authority	Institutional Policy Manager
Approval Date	14th March 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Sue Bennett Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life)
Responsible Officer	Alison Freeman Director, Future Education
Enquiries Contact	Future Education Division