

Course Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Policy provides the framework for the management and quality assurance of courses at UOW. It provides guidance to staff who design, develop, approve, monitor and review courses to ensure their ongoing viability, quality and strategic alignment.

(2) This Policy applies to all UOW courses (award, non-award and short courses) including courses that are approved by UOW and delivered by a third party provider at either an onshore or offshore delivery location.

(3) This Policy operates in conjunction with the [Coursework Rules](#) and [HDR Award Rules](#), [Short Course and Microcredential Management Procedure](#), and the procedures regulating award course design, course approval and course review.

(4) This Policy supports the UOW [Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy](#) and the UOW [Quality and Standards Framework for Learning & Teaching](#).

Section 2 - Background

(5) UOW is a registered self-accrediting higher education provider with the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency \(TEQSA\)](#), with authority to self-accredit award courses of study that it offers or confers.

(6) UOW is responsible under the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#) for ensuring that all self-accredited award courses of study comply with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

(7) This Policy supports compliance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#), including the following requirements with respect to award course design, course approval and course review:

- a. There are processes for internal approval of the delivery of a course of study, or, where a provider has authority to self-accredit, internal accreditation, of all courses of study leading to a higher education qualification.
- b. Course approval and self-accreditation processes are overseen by peak institutional academic governance processes and they are applied consistently to all courses of study, before the courses are first offered and during re-approval or re-accreditation of the courses.
- c. A course of study is approved or accredited, or re-approved or re-accredited, only when:
 - i. the course of study meets, and continues to meet, the applicable Standards of the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#);
 - ii. the decision to (re-)approve or (re-)accredit a course of study is informed by overarching academic scrutiny of the course of study that is competent to assess the design, delivery and assessment of the course of study independently of the staff directly involved in those aspects of the course; and
 - iii. the resources required to deliver the course as approved or accredited will be available when needed.” (HESF 2021, Section 5.1);
- d. “All accredited courses of study are subject to periodic (at least every seven years) comprehensive reviews that

are overseen by peak academic governance processes and include external referencing or other benchmarking activities.

- e. A comprehensive review includes the design and content of each course of study, the expected learning outcomes, the methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes, and also takes account of emerging developments in the field of education, modes of delivery, the changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study.
- f. Comprehensive reviews of courses of study are informed and supported by regular interim monitoring, of the quality of teaching and supervision of research students, student progress and the overall delivery of units within each course of study.
- g. The results of regular interim monitoring, comprehensive reviews, external referencing and student feedback are used to mitigate future risks to the quality of the education provided and to guide and evaluate improvements, including the use of data on student progress and success to inform admission criteria and approaches to course design, teaching, supervision, learning and academic support." ([Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) Section 5.3).

(8) The University of Wollongong (UOW) is committed to supporting the lifelong learning of learners, students, staff, community members, graduates and industry professionals. The University offers a range of opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills in flexible ways that enable the University community to succeed at all stages of their learning journey.

Section 3 - Course Policy Framework

(9) The Course Policy Framework (Appendix 1) describes the policy framework on all courses at UOW, and how they are related to the UOW Quality Framework.

(10) The [Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#) and accompanying procedures set out provisions relating to qualification pathways and recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes, and the governing principles and processes for credit.

(11) The [Course Design Procedures](#) regulate course design for all proposed and approved UOW award courses.

(12) The Course and Subject Approval Procedures ([Course and Subject Approval Procedures - New Offerings and Discontinuations](#) and the [Course and Subject Approval Procedures \(Faculty Delegated Course and Subject Amendments\)](#)) detail course approval procedures for all award courses at UOW.

(13) The [ESOS Compliance Policy](#) and the [CRICOS Registration and Amendments Procedures](#) set out the University's procedures to meet [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) requirements.

(14) The [Course Monitoring and Review Procedures](#) set out the processes for monitoring, review and re-approval of existing award courses.

(15) The [Short Course and Microcredential Management Procedure](#) set out the design, approval, monitoring and review requirements for short courses and non-award courses.

Section 4 - Course Attributes

(16) All courses offered by UOW will reflect the following attributes:

- a. Quality – judged by reference to relevant sector and disciplinary standards and through benchmarking and other comparators; and

- b. Viability – judged by reference to financial and academic sustainability measures.

Section 5 - Course Design

(17) The University will:

- a. develop, adopt and implement procedures for course design for the UOW course portfolio that is in line with and supports the course attributes for a UOW course;
- b. include within the procedures specific details relating to:
 - i. appropriate entry standards and entry and exit pathways, including articulation from other studies and to further studies;
 - ii. AQF qualification levels criteria and qualification type descriptors for all award courses;
 - iii. structural requirements of all courses by qualification type;
 - iv. processes for effective assurance of Course, Major and Subject Learning Outcomes;
 - v. appropriate engagement by students in intellectual inquiry consistent with the nature and level of the units being taught and the expected learning outcomes of the course of study;
- c. provide staff with guiding or explanatory material to support and implement the process of course design;
- d. ensure that course design takes account of the credit students may gain for prior learning, subject to preserving the integrity of learning outcomes and/or discipline requirements of the award to which it applies; and
- e. adopt strategies to monitor, review and improve the course design through the course approval and course review processes.

Section 6 - Course Approval

(18) The University will:

- a. maintain an effective framework to ensure all approved UOW courses are approved on the basis they reflect the course attributes for a UOW course;
- b. implement a strategic and efficient governance process for course approval;
- c. adopt procedures that describe and regulate the approval process;
- d. adopt procedures to appropriately manage amendment and discontinuation of courses;
- e. include within the procedures specific details relating to the assessment of relevant matters in course approval; and
- f. adopt strategies to monitor, review and improve faculty managed processes for course approval.

Section 7 - Course Review

(19) The University will:

- a. maintain effective processes to monitor, review and re-accredit, as required, the course portfolio;
- b. support the course review process through annual interim monitoring;
- c. adopt procedures to support both internal and external course and subject reviews;
- d. provide guiding and explanatory materials to support and implement the process of course and subject review; and
- e. adopt strategies to monitor, review and improve course review processes.

Section 8 - Roles & Responsibilities

(20) The University is responsible for:

- a. establishing effective processes to take into account new or amended legislation, national standards, discipline standards and relevant external benchmarks that may affect the Course Policy;
- b. ensuring that compliance with legislation, standards and benchmarks is taken account of within procedures where detailed actions need to be taken for business continuity and/or risk management purposes;
- c. providing guiding or explanatory materials to support and implement the process of compliance with this Policy.

(21) The Academic Quality and Standards Division (AQS) is primarily responsible for the administration of this Policy and award course-related procedures,

(22) The Future Education Division (Future Ed) is responsible for administering short-course and non-award course-related procedures, and processes and systems for all courses in accordance with this Policy.

(23) The Learning, Teaching and Curriculum (LTC) is responsible for providing information, advice and consultation to faculties and individual academics to facilitate the design of subjects, major study areas and courses which are constructively aligned and reflective of research-based educational practice.

Management

(24) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life) has executive oversight of the implementation of this Policy and is responsible to approve New Offerings and re-approve award courses, subject to the oversight of the Academic Senate.

(25) Each Faculty Executive Dean and each Associate Dean Education are jointly responsible within their respective faculties for:

- a. ensuring that faculty processes and governance arrangements are in place and operating as required to contribute to course related activities outlined in this Policy;
- b. overseeing course activities in accordance with the provisions of this Policy; and
- c. reporting the outcomes of these activities as required under the strategic planning process and the course portfolio planning process.

Committees

(26) The Course Portfolio Development Group, the Quality Assurance Review Group and the Academic Senate provide general oversight of course approval and course review.

(27) The Course Portfolio Development Group and the Quality Assurance Review Group are responsible for overseeing the development of new award courses and significant amendments to existing award courses.

(28) Academic Senate is responsible for overseeing the processes for approval of new award courses, significant amendments to existing award courses and the review and re-approval of existing award courses, as well as approving proposals and re-approvals delegated to it for determination.

(29) Faculty Education Committees have responsibility for considering and endorsing changes to the Faculty's course portfolio.

Section 9 - Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
100 level subject	A subject at first year undergraduate level.
200 level subject	A subject at second year undergraduate level.
300 level subject	A subject at third year undergraduate level.
400 level subject	A subject at fourth year undergraduate level.
800 and 900 level subjects	Subjects at postgraduate level.
Academic item	A course, major, specialisation, minor, field of education, subject or field of research.
Academic Program Director	May also be known as Course Leader, Course Director, Discipline Leader, Associate Academic Program Director or similar. An academic staff member who provides strategic leadership for one or more UOW award coursework programs, and who takes ultimate responsibility for key areas of the course design and course performance, under the UOW Quality and Standards Framework for Learning & Teaching . Whether leadership and operational responsibilities are the sole responsibility of the Academic Program Director will depend on faculty arrangements, academic level and prior experience. Key responsibilities are set out in the Teaching and Assessment: Code of Practice - Teaching .
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework .
AQF Levels	An indication of the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement. AQF level criteria describe the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement for each AQF level .
AQS	Academic Quality and Standards Division.
Assurance of learning	The quality assurance processes by which the University ensures that graduates of a course achieve stated educational outcomes.
Award course	A course recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework and approved by the Delegated Authority as an award or degree offered at the University of Wollongong. An award course leads to a higher education award as detailed in the Coursework Rules and the HDR Award Rules .
Benchmarking	A learning process structured so as to enable those engaging in the process to compare their service/activities/products in order to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses as a basis for self-improvement (Jackson and Lund (2000)). Benchmarking may involve internal or external parties engaging in the process, or a comparison against publicly available information and market intelligence.
Business Case	An evidence based portfolio of material examining the viability of a proposed New Offering.
Blended Learning	Learning that connects purposefully designed synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences across a range of technology enhanced online and on campus delivery modes.
CAA	Commission for Academic Accreditation is the government-run institutional licensure and degree accreditation organisation for private universities and their academic programs in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
Capstone experience	An experience through which students are able to integrate existing knowledge, consolidate skills, apply existing knowledge and skills, reflect on and evaluate their actions and develop their graduate or professional identity in an authentic setting. It may involve coursework, work-experience, a research or creative project, work placement, internship or professional practice. A capstone experience may be a subject, part of a subject or designed across several subjects in a course. The associated assessments typically assure the attainment of one or more Course Learning Outcomes.
Capstone subject	A subject that is designed to provide students with a capstone experience.

Career Development Learning	Supports individuals and groups to discover more about work, leisure and learning and to consider their place in the world and plan for their futures. It can take a wide range of forms and draws on diverse theoretical traditions, but must be a purposeful learning opportunity which supports individuals and groups to consider and reconsider work, leisure and learning in the light of new information and experiences and to take both individual and collective action as a result of this.
Cognate courses	Related courses at the same or different Australian Qualifications Framework levels (that may include nested courses, double degree courses, honours courses and/or extended versions of courses) that are in the same or related disciplines and collectively form an integrated suite of courses.
Contextualisation	The adaptation of one or more elements of a subject to increase its relevance to the location and cultural context where the course is being delivered.
Continuing Education	A form of short course that encompasses a wide variety of special interest and learning opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills.
Continuing Professional Development	A form of short course that encompasses a wide variety of specialised training and professional learning designed to assist professionals to meet requirements for ongoing learning to maintain registration, accreditation or professional standing.
Core subject	A core subject is a compulsory subject that must be completed in order to meet the requirements of a course, major study or minor study.
Co-requisite subject	A subject which must be passed previously or taken concurrently with the subject for which it is prescribed.
Course	A program of study consisting of a combination of subjects and other requirements, whether leading to a specific higher education award or not.
CPDG	Course Portfolio Development Group.
Credit	The value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/ or qualifications.
Credit points	Credit points are defined as the number value attached to a subject that indicates the study load.
Course structure	Refers to the specific program of subjects which a student undertakes to meet the requirements of a course as specified in the Course Handbook for the year the course was commenced.
Curriculum design	The designing and sequencing of learning activities, learning support, resources and assessment tasks that enable a student to attain the specified Course Learning Outcomes.
Customisation	The alignment of subject design and materials with its students' profile to promote effective learning for that cohort of students.
Delegated authority	A person or body granted decision-making authority as detailed in the Delegations of Authority Policy .
Delivery mode	A description of the delivery means and format through which learning and teaching methods and activities are enacted.
Discipline area	An academic discipline area or field of educational study identifiable as a distinct branch of knowledge and research.
Double-badged subject	A duplicate version of a subject originally designed for delivery as part of an AQF qualification type (typically a Bachelor degree) that is created for delivery as part of a different, usually higher, AQF qualification type (typically a postgraduate qualification type).
Double degree	A double degree is an approved course containing two degree strands and leading to the conferral of two degrees upon a student who has complied with the course requirements for double degrees and the two individual course requirements inclusively.
EFTSL	Equivalent Full Time Student Load.
Elective subject	An elective subject is a subject the selection of which is optional for students meeting course, major study or minor study requirements.

Enabling Program	A type of non-award course that enables students to demonstrate competence that would allow them to successfully gain entry to a UOW award course, which is reportable under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and/or funded by the Australian government.
Equivalent	Two courses or two areas of major study or specialisations are equivalent when the structure of the course, major study or specialisation includes the same core subjects, has course, major or minor learning outcomes that share the same intent, and are assessed as being at the same level of the Australian Qualifications Framework .
Exit only course	A course designed to allow a student who chooses to terminate their studies before completing the requirements of their original course to be awarded a formal degree, typically at a lower AQF level . Exit only courses are not open for direct admission.
External Accreditation	A formal process of assessing a course against professional or industry standards including, in the case of courses offered exclusively at the University of Wollongong in Dubai, accredited by the Commission for Academic Accreditation.
External Peer Review of Assessment (EPRA)	An activity that involves two or more higher education providers participating in concurrent reviews of assessment practices, in selected subjects, within similar courses. Peer review of assessment includes judgements about grading standards and the appropriateness of the assessment towards attainment of learning outcomes at the level of the subject and the course.
External Referencing	A process through which a higher education provider compares an aspect of its operations with an external comparator(s) e.g. comparing the design of a course of study and/or student achievement of learning outcomes with that of a course from another provider.
FEC	Faculty Education Committee and, in the case of UOW College, includes the UOWCA Education Committee.
Future Ed	Future Education Division
General Elective Schedule	The General Elective Schedule is a list of undergraduate subjects that are open for enrolment by any undergraduate student, often to make up the total number of credit points required for their degree.
Generic learning outcomes	Transferable, non-discipline specific skills a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts. The four broad categories in the Australian Qualifications Framework are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. fundamental skills; 2. people skills; 3. thinking skills and 4. personal skills.
International Branch Campus	An offshore campus owned and/or operated by UOW Global Enterprise or UOW directly (e.g. UOWD, UOWM, UOWCHK, or UOW India) but does not include offshore campuses directly managed by a third party collaborative delivery partner campuses (e.g. SIM, CCNU and Zhengzhou).
Joint or Dual Awards	A Joint Award involves the awarding of a single qualification that is jointly conferred by the University and one or more higher education providers. Joint Awards typically involve close cooperation in curriculum development, design, organisation, course delivery, and assessment of learning outcomes as well as requirements necessary for awarding the qualification. (TEQSA 2013) A Dual Award involves the University and another entity offering a course of study that results in two separate qualifications being conferred by the two institutions. A dual award may involve one AQF level, or two sequential Australian Qualifications Framework levels - for example, two Masters degrees or a Bachelor and Diploma award. Dual awards may provide students with the opportunity to complete two awards in a shorter timeframe than if completed separately. (TEQSA 2013)
Learning outcomes	The expression of the set of knowledge skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.
Lifelong Learning	any learning activities that are undertaken throughout life to acquire knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills within personal, civic, social and/or employment-related contexts.
LTC	Learning, Teaching and Curriculum.

Major	An approved combination of subjects related to a particular area or discipline offered by one or more academic units that have a minimum value of one third of the total undergraduate degree credit point requirements. The title of the major appears on the testamur.
Microcredential	A form of short course that is a certification of assessed learning that is additional, alternative, complementary to or a component part of an Award Course.
Minor	An academic item containing an approved combination of subjects related to a particular area or discipline that have a minimum value of 24 credit points offered by one or more academic units, of which 12 credit points should be at least 200 level or higher. The minor is recorded on the official academic transcript.
Mixed mode	A combination of online and face-to-face delivery where the face-to-face component is compulsory.
Mixed mode course delivery mode	As defined in clause 6 of the Course Design Procedures .
Mixed mode subject delivery mode	As defined in clause 6 of the Course Design Procedures .
Nested course	An undergraduate or postgraduate course that is linked to a primary course that is also undergraduate or postgraduate, as the case may be, and typically at a lower AQF level to the primary course, through an articulation arrangement to enable multiple entry and/or exit points to and from the primary course.
New Offering	A new offering, being a new course, major; specialisation; delivery location (including delivery via UOW Online) for a course, major or specialisation; or a Collaborative Delivery Arrangement, being a new Collaborative UOW Award, Joint or Dual Award.
Non-award course	A course or unit of study (i.e., subject or short course) that is not recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework but approved by the delegated authority as a non- award course or subject offered at the University of Wollongong.
On campus course delivery mode	As defined in clause 6 of the Course Design Procedures .
On campus subject delivery mode	As defined in clause 6 of the Course Design Procedures .
Online course delivery mode	As defined in clause 6 of the Course Design Procedures .
Online subject delivery mode	As defined in clause 6 of the Course Design Procedures .
Pathways	Pathways allow students to move through qualification levels with full or partial recognition for the qualifications and/or learning outcomes they can demonstrate.
Pathways Program	A Pathways Program is a short course designed to provide students with the foundational knowledge and skills needed for success in further study and to assist in the transition to tertiary education. It includes any one of the options available to prospective students that will enable them to meet the admission requirements for their chosen course.
Pre-requisite subject	A subject which must be completed satisfactorily before a specified other subject or subjects may be attempted.
Principles of equivalence	Two courses or two areas of major study or specialisations are equivalent when the course, major study or specialisation is designed and delivered in conformity with the Principles of Equivalence as set out in Appendix 14 of the Course Design Procedures .
Program	A combination of two or more courses, for example a Double Degree Program.
Proposer	An officer of the University proposing a New Offering.
Qualification type descriptors	The set of statements that describes the learning outcomes of each of the AQF qualification types in terms of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills.
Session	A period in which subjects may be offered. Standard sessions are defined as Autumn, Spring, Summer, Annual and Trimesters 1, 2 and 3

Short Course	A course that is not recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework , which may be microcredentials, continuing education, continuing professional development, or pathway programs (excluding enabling programs).
Specialist Degree	An award course that is designed to provide learning focussed on a specific field of study or discipline
Specialisation	An approved combination of postgraduate subjects offered by one or more academic units related to a particular area or discipline which have a minimum value of eighteen (18) credit points. The title of the specialisation shall appear on the testamur.
Standard study load	1 EFTSL, or the equivalent of 48 credit points in a calendar year studying in Autumn and Spring sessions.
Student	A person registered for a course.
Subject	A self-contained unit of study identified by a unique code.
Subject Coordinator	A staff member of UOW that is responsible for the delivery of a subject as described in the Teaching and Assessment - Code of Practice - Teaching .
TNE	Transnational Education Unit

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	7th April 2024
Review Date	7th April 2027
Approval Authority	Institutional Policy Manager
Approval Date	3rd April 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Sue Bennett Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic and Student Life)
Responsible Officer	Dominic Riordan Director, Academic Quality and Standards
Enquiries Contact	Academic Quality and Standards Division