

NEW COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURES



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Approved by Council: 12 May 2021
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Policy steward: Vice-Chancellor

Related documents

Australian Qualifications Framework

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

Higher Education Standards Framework section 5.4.2 "Delivery with Other Parties"

Higher Education Support Act 2003

Regulation 3: Colleges

University of Divinity Act 1910 section 23 "Colleges of the University"

1. Rationale and Objectives

1.1 This Procedure sets out the criteria and process for the admission of a College as a new College of the University.

2. Scope

2.1 This Procedure applies to institutions applying to become a College of the University.

3. Principles

3.1 The University is committed to ensuring its collegiate system is robust and meets or exceeds all regulatory standards for students and stakeholders.

3.2 The University encourages high-quality applications from institutions from diverse theological traditions and geographies seeking to become Colleges of the University.

3.3 The University must exercise due diligence about the potential risks and opportunities from potential new Colleges.

3.4 Procedural fairness must be observed throughout the application process.

3.5 The new College application process is an opportunity for constructive engagement with other theology providers in the sector and a learning opportunity for the University.

4. Expression of Interest

4.1 The application process is initiated by the Principal or equivalent of the applicant institution sending an Expression of Interest (EOI) in the form of a letter to the Vice-Chancellor. The EOI is reported to the next meeting of the University Council.

4.2 The University Council may note the EOI and decides whether to invite the institution to submit an application to become a College of the University, or to decline the EOI. In

making this decision, the Council must have regard to the Principles of this Policy and the likelihood of an application from the institution being approved.

5. Application Development

- 5.1 The application consists of a cover letter, the Application Statement, and a series of appendices (Supporting Evidence).
- 5.2 While the applicant is responsible for preparing an application, the Vice-Chancellor may work with the applicant to explain the University's requirements, provide constructive feedback, and offer high-level guidance.
- 5.3 To facilitate a smooth application process the Vice-Chancellor may appoint a Project Manager to co-ordinate the application development, submission, assessment and implementation.

6. Submission of Application Statement and Supporting Evidence

- 6.1 The application should be submitted under cover of a letter signed by the Chair of the governing body of the applicant and by the applicant's Chief Executive Officer. This cover letter should state at high-level why the applicant is proposing to become a College of the University and the mutual advantages it perceives by doing so.
- 6.2 The primary purpose of the Application Statement is to demonstrate how the applicant meets the University's requirements for a College (both corporate and academic). The Application Statement may also be used by an applicant to identify areas of the University's operations that it would like to discuss as part of the assessment process.

The Application Statement should be no more than 5,000 words in total. It should be written with the University Council and Academic Board as its primary audiences, and be arranged under the following headings:

6.2.1 Overview

- a) A brief overview of the applicant's history, corporate identity, and mission
- b) details of its parent or sponsor bodies (where applicable)
- c) details of the applicant's current and previous accreditation arrangements
- d) details of any continuing relationships that the applicant has with other tertiary education providers (VET, overseas)
- e) why the applicant wishes to become a College of the University, identifying mutual benefits and opportunities, and
- f) the applicant's mission and strategic objectives and how these intersect with those of the University – what is distinctive or unique about the applicant?

6.2.2 Governance and Strategy

This section explains the applicant's governance structure, including:

- a) details of the governing body or governing authority

- b) who owns the applicant
- c) who oversees the day-to-day operations
- d) the applicant's Strategic Plan, and how this is set and monitored

6.2.3 Financial Viability and Sustainability

This section provides:

- a) a description of the applicant's business operations
- b) assessment of financial performance over the last 3 years and projected performance in the next 3 years
- c) details of any stakeholder support, such as grants from church sponsors or owners

6.2.4 Risk Management

This section explains how the applicant provides a safe environment for staff and students. How are risks identified and monitored, what safeguarding measures are in place, what processes exist to monitor OH&S issues, and how are serious incidents reported?

6.2.5 Infrastructure

This section provides details of the applicant's property and buildings, including its main campus and any secondary delivery sites (whether permanent or leased). It should also cover lecture spaces and remote learning facilities.

6.2.6 Student Cohorts

This section includes:

- a) a breakdown of the student body and recent trends, including (where available) age, gender, prior qualifications, and the cultural background of students
- b) description of the basis of enrolments (part time, full time, single unit, vocational, undergraduate, postgraduate, and higher degree students)
- c) types of students (for example, ministry candidates, chaplaincy, education, counselling)
- d) whether the applicant intends to enrol students on overseas student visas
- e) student recruitment strategy and plans for enrolment growth including targets

6.2.7 Student Supports

Topics to explore include:

- a) how are students supported academically throughout their studies?
- b) how is student wellbeing fostered including support for students with disabilities, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and students with other needs?
- c) how do students evaluate the applicant's units and programs?

d) how does the applicant measure student engagement?

6.2.8 Staff

In this section the application should describe the composition of the academic and professional staff of the applicant, including salaried, casual and honorary appointments. A full list of all current staff of the applicant is required with a brief statement of their expertise and research activity (if applicable) and a link to staff webpages if available. This section should also discuss the applicant's approach to academic freedom.

6.2.9 Academic Programs

The application should identify the applicant's current and emerging priorities for delivery of awards and courses. This may include a list of awards that it currently delivers or is planning to deliver, and non-award programs such as short courses or microcredentials. The applicant should explain its approach to curriculum development.

6.2.10 Research and Research Training

The applicant should identify its priorities and strengths in research and in research training, and the strategies or policies which support staff becoming or remaining research active. How will the applicant foster a vibrant research culture and support quality research? What funding or workload allocation or external partnerships support research?

6.2.11 Library and Academic Resources

In this section, the application should describe the applicant's library (size, collection priorities, staffing) and other academic supports, such as academic skills programs.

6.2.12 Standards

This section covers how the applicant proposes to meet the requirements of University Regulation 3.5 and any issues or concerns that are foreseen. The applicant should identify who it nominates as the Principal, Academic Dean, Research Coordinator, Registrar and Librarian for the University's purposes.

6.2.13 Matters for the University

Any issues, possibilities or challenges the applicant wishes to raise with the University in relation to its application or future participation in the University.

6.2.14 Other

Any other matters not covered above.

6.3 Supporting Evidence

6.3.1 Together with the Application Statement the applicant must supply Supporting Evidence. Schedule 1 indicates the Supporting Evidence that the applicant must provide (essential) and evidence which may be useful (optional). The applicant may include other evidence in addition to the information requested by the University. There is no

limit on the amount of evidence that can be provided. Evidence can be provided either as electronic documents (PDF, .doc, .xls, etc.) or as a link to online information.

6.3.2 Supporting Evidence may be accompanied by analytical commentary.

- a) Example: an applicant includes a statement of peer-reviewed research output, which shows considerable variance across its academic staff. The applicant might include commentary explaining how some staff are research-only or teaching-only, or on measures the applicant is taking to develop its research culture including metrics for assessing staff research performance.
- b) Example: The applicant includes a list of the awards and units it currently offers and the number of enrolments in each area. The applicant collaborates with the Dean of Academic Programs to compare these awards against the University's existing awards to identify any gaps in the University's offerings. This might include a recommendation that the University establish a new award to support the applicant's needs, or identify compatible alternatives from within the University's existing awards.

7. Distribution of Application

7.1 The application is distributed confidentially in whole or in part to members of relevant bodies within the University for assessment. The distribution list includes:

- a) the Vice-Chancellor's senior staff (Chief of Staff and University Secretary, Dean of Academic Programs, Dean of Research Strategy, Dean of the School of Graduate Research)
- b) the Project Manager, if any, appointed under clause 5.3 above
- c) a Senior Librarian from a Library of the University
- d) the Governance Committee and Finance and Risk Committee of the University Council
- e) the University Executive
- f) Academic Board
- g) Members of the Assessment Panel appointed by the Vice-Chancellor
- h) the University Council.

7.2 All persons who view the application are bound by confidentiality requirements in the University's Code of Conduct, Administrative Governance Policy, and Privacy Policy, and in the case of staff employed by the University, their employment agreements.

8. Assessment Report Templates

8.1 An Assessment Report Template is a high-level summary on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the application in particular areas, including the likely impact on the University if the application is approved, and any risks or concerns that have been identified.

- 8.2 The Vice-Chancellor's senior staff complete Assessment Report Templates relevant to their respective areas of responsibility (Governance, Academic Programs, Learning Environment, Research, Research Training).
- 8.3 An appropriately qualified Council Member or University employee completes an Assessment Report Template in relation to the financial sustainability and risk management processes of the applicant.
- 8.4 A Senior Librarian completes an Assessment Report Template in relation to the applicant's library resources and facilities, library systems, and broader networks.
- 8.5 The Vice-Chancellor may request additional Assessment Report Templates in other areas to help assess the application.
- 8.6 In relation to the academic staff of the applicant, the Vice-Chancellor may arrange for academic staff accreditation or initial classification / promotion applications to be assessed in accordance with the University's Academic Staff Policy and outcomes decided, subject to the approval of the overall application.

9. Application Summary Assessment

- 9.1 The Vice-Chancellor or delegate completes an Application Summary Assessment by synthesising the information provided across all the individual Assessment Report Templates.

10. Committee Review and Input

- 10.1 The application statement, relevant Assessment Report Templates, and Application Summary Assessment are provided to the following committees (in whatever order is most expeditious) for their recommendation to Council in relation to their area of expertise:
 - a) Academic Board – how the applicant's academic quality and academic risk (if any) would affect the University if admitted as a College. **Note:** If the Academic Board is unable to recommend approval of the application, then the application is deemed unsuccessful, and all further processes cease (University of Divinity Act, section 23(1)).
 - b) Governance – how the applicant meets the requirements of Regulation 3
 - c) Finance and Risk – what risks or concerns the applicant would present if admitted as a College and how these might be addressed
 - d) University Executive – how the applicant would affect the Colleges of the University including risks or opportunities. **Note:** This step constitutes the 30 days' notice required to be given to existing Colleges of the University prior to admission of a new College
- 10.2 Any matters of concern raised during the Committee stage may be referred by the Vice-Chancellor to the applicant for clarification and response.

11. Assessment Panel

- 11.1 The Vice-Chancellor appoints an Assessment Panel consisting of at least four members. The Assessment Panel typically includes the Vice-Chancellor, the Chair of the Academic Board, the Project Manager (if one is appointed), and a College Principal.
- 11.2 The Assessment Panel meets with the applicant's Principal, Academic Dean, and Registrar, and as appropriate with staff, students, or Board members.
- 11.3 Ahead of the Assessment Panel meeting, the Vice-Chancellor or Project Manager prepare an Agenda and a set of questions arranged thematically in areas such as Governance and Strategy, Finance and Risk, Academic Programs, and Research and Research Training.
- 11.4 The set of questions are specific to the applicant based on its application, the Assessment Report Templates, the Application Summary Assessment, and the Committee feedback. The questions should be provided to the applicant in advance to ensure well-considered responses.
- 11.5 The panel may meet in person or virtually and is typically scheduled for two hours of interaction.
- 11.6 After the Assessment Panel meeting is concluded, a draft Assessment Panel report is prepared, with an overall recommendation to Council. The recommendation of the Assessment Panel may include specific KPIs for the consideration of Council.
- 11.7 The draft Assessment Panel Report is provided to the applicant for comment.

12. Statutory Declarations

- 12.1 If the Assessment Panel recommends the approval of the application, then a statutory declaration is required from the Principal of the applicant institution.
- 12.2 The statutory declaration provides additional assurance to Council by way of due diligence and to assure Council that the applicant is in a position to meet its responsibilities under the Collegiate Agreement. This declaration may cover a range of matters including the protection and welfare of students, stability of faculty, reputational matters, legal issues, regulatory compliance, and academic integrity issues and may be varied to address other issues of concern. A sample statutory declaration is attached as Schedule 2.

13. Decision by Council

- 13.1 Council considers the Application Statement, the Application Summary Assessment, and the reports and feedback from Committees (including the Academic Board), and the report from the Assessment Panel.
- 13.2 In addition, Council may by way of additional context, have regard to whether the applicant:
 - a) has a track record of partnership with the University or a College of the University
 - b) has operated within, or is, a University
 - c) is a non-University higher education provider registered with TEQSA or which has operated within a higher education provider registered with TEQSA

- d) is a higher education provider in another country
- e) is not a higher education provider but has delivered vocational education or not-for-credit programs
- f) is a new institution (greenfields)

13.3 Council may reject the application, approve the application, or approve the application subject to special conditions.

14. Collegiate Agreement

14.1 If an application is approved, Council authorises the Vice-Chancellor to enter into a Collegiate Agreement on behalf of the University

14.2 Council may stipulate special conditions (if any) or KPIs that are to be included for the new College (and for the University) as Schedules to the Collegiate Agreement.

14.3 The Vice-Chancellor negotiates a Collegiate Agreement with the applicant based on the University's current template. This may include inconsequential amendments to the template for the purpose of meeting the applicant's legal requirements but may not include substantive changes to the collegiate relationship without approval of the Council.

15. Transitional Plan

15.1 If an application is approved, a Transition Plan must be developed between the applicant and the Vice-Chancellor who is accountable to the Council for its execution.

15.2 The Transition Plan must include teach-out and transfer provisions for students of the applicant enrolled with another higher education provider, and an induction and mentoring process for staff at the College, especially its key officers.

16. Public Announcement

16.1 A public announcement about the admission of the new College is agreed by the University and College and may only be released after the Collegiate Agreement has been signed and all conditions to its operation have been satisfied.

17. Date of next review

17.1 This Policy must be reviewed no later than 31 December 2028.

SCHEDULE A
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Approved by the Vice Chancellor: DRAFT

Revised by the Vice Chancellor:

	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Evidence – required</i>	<i>Evidence – optional</i>
1	Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision / mission statement • Copies of current agreements or MOUs with any other tertiary education providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant’s history • Details of any reviews of the applicant undertaken in recent years • Evidence of reputation, e.g. key alumni, international recognition
2	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution or equivalent • Organisational chart • Strategic Plan, including most recent progress report • Governing body membership including qualifications and terms of appointment • Policies or processes for managing complaints, grievances or appeals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on relationship with key stakeholders / parent agency • Governing body skills matrix
3	Finance and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audited financial statements for last 3 years • Current profit and loss statement and balance sheet • Current year budget and future year forecasts • Audited financial statements for most recent year and auditor’s closing report • Marketing and Business plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if applicable, statement of financial support provided by stakeholder/s • include letter from stakeholder/s if there is a guarantee to meet liabilities or make an annual grant • if part of a larger organisation, information on how financial accountability is managed
4	Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Register or equivalent • Most recent OH&S review or equivalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical incident register or reporting mechanism • Surveys relating to operating environment or organisational culture
5	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus location and size, and whether owned or leased • Buildings, including details of classrooms, offices, libraries, accommodation • Equipment, such as IT facilities • Student / staff support facilities (e.g. common rooms, recreation, café) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site plan • Campus master plan
6	Student cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment statistics for last 3 years (by equivalent fulltime student load, and by headcount) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of student participation in applicant’s decision-making

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown of students by age, gender, cultural background, prior learning • Information on full-time, part time, undergraduate, postgraduate, HDR, vocational, or other categories • Any Enrolment Plans or equivalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student / graduate testimonials
7	Student support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student unit evaluation reports • Student engagement surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies relating to academic support for students • Policies or procedures for students with disabilities or from diverse backgrounds
8	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of all staff (academic and professional, identifying FTE, whether permanent, casual or honorary) • A CV for each academic staff member or a link to staff webpages • Safeguarding or professional standards requirements for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Succession Plan • Staff appointment processes • Staff professional development activities • Support for academic freedom
9	Academic programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards offered by the applicant • Units (subjects) offered by the applicant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination and moderation processes for assessment • Benchmarking activities for academic quality
10	Research and research training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of refereed publications for all staff for last 3 years (can be included in staff CVs) • Current and recent HDR candidates and topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research grants (internal and external) • Research seminars
11	Library and academic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library collection – number of volumes, scope • Library staff and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation programs • Academic skills programs
12	Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the applicant would constitute its Academic Committee (Regulation 3.5 b and Academic Quality Policy section 7) • Names of proposed Principal, Academic Dean, Research Coordinator, Registrar (Regulation 3.5 c) – f)) 	

SCHEDULE B
SAMPLE STATUTORY DECLARATION

Approved by the Vice Chancellor: DRAFT
Revised by the Vice Chancellor:

I, [insert full name of Principal of applicant College], of care of [insert address of applicant college], sincerely declare as follows:

I am the Principal of [insert name of College] (the College) located at the above address.

The College has applied to become a member College of the University of Divinity (the University) and the University has now commenced a due diligence process about the College.

I have made or instigated inquiries with officers of the College, its Board, and [sponsoring church, if relevant] so that I can make this declaration.

The Declarations

Student welfare matters

- Working with Children and Criminal Record Checks (or relevant equivalents) have been obtained for all current employees and volunteers at the College including any non-clergy staff and honorary faculty.
- In the last 5 years there has been no allegation of reportable conduct, such as a child protection matter, for any employee or volunteer at the College.
- In the last 3 years, there has been no complaint from a staff member or student at the College that has been referred to the College Board or Diocese of Perth that has been the subject of any formal or informal investigatory process (Note: In making this declaration, ignore appeals about student grades, staff promotion or classification)
- No substantiated allegation of sexual abuse has been made to the College (or has come to the College's attention) concerning any current or former staff member, student or volunteer.
- I am aware of no reason to be concerned about the safety or welfare of any student, or cohort of students, because of their engagement with the College or its staff.
- In the last 3 years, there has been no substantiated discrimination, harassment or bullying complaint made against a staff member or volunteer or student at the College or any claims relating to psychological harm.

Safe environment

- In the last 3 years, there is no record of any serious workplace health or safety issue having been raised by a staff member, volunteer or student at the College.
- The buildings and grounds at the College site are compliant with all occupational safety requirements, including fire safety regulations.

- No building on the College site contains asbestos material that is reasonably likely to be harmful to the health of persons entering or occupying it.
- In the last 3 years, a comprehensive site safety audit or similar review process has taken place.

Other protections

- The College is adequately and comprehensively insured against risks to all invitees, including staff, students, volunteers and contractors.
- The College complies with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and adheres to the National Privacy Principles in terms of the capture, retention, and use of student and staff data.

Legal environment and compliance

- There are no directions, sanctions, judgements or administrative orders issued against the College.
- No legal proceeding is on foot, or is contemplated, concerning the College.
- There are no claims, demands or disputes between the College and any person.
- No notice of breach of any regulation pertaining to the College has been received from any government regulator or authority (Commonwealth, State or Local Government).
- The College holds all the approvals, licences and permits required for the proper conduct of an educational institution and all current activities on the College site.
- All necessary licenses are in place for the use of intellectual property used by the College.

Risk management

- There is a risk register that identifies and tracks risks at the College, and that register is regularly reviewed and updated.
- The College has clear plans, policies and procedures in place to mitigate and respond to cyber risks.
- There is an incident reporting system at the College (by whatever name) for accidents, injuries and/or behaviours of concern.

Stability of faculty

- There are no academic staff who have applied for extended leave or to whom a Leave of Absence has been granted (excluding any period of sabbatical or equivalent).

- All changes in academic staff at the College since the date of its application have been advised to the University.
- There are no academic staff working at the College who rely on a sponsored visa or other form of visa for their right to work.

No impediment to joining the University

- I am not aware of any commercial, contractual or other consideration that would be an impediment to the College becoming a member college of the University of Divinity.
- The College is not party to any arrangements or agreements with other educational providers (apart from those disclosed in the application to become a member College of the University)

Academic integrity

- There has been no case of academic fraud involving a staff member, an honorary appointee or sessional lecturer, or a higher degree student at the College in the last 5 years, nor am I aware of any facts or circumstances that could reasonably give rise to such an allegation.
- In the last 5 years no article authored by a faculty member has been retracted.

This declaration is true and I know that it is an offence to make a declaration knowing that it is false in a material particular.

This declaration is made under the [insert name of relevant state-based legislation governing the making of Statutory Declarations]

At _____ on the _____ day of _____

By:

[Declarant to sign, print name below signature]

In the presence of:

[JP/Qualified Witness