ACADEMIC QUALITY POLICY

UNIVERSITY OF DIVINITY

Current version in effect from: 1 Apr 2024
Approved by Academic Board: 14 Sep 2018
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Related Documents

Academic Integrity Policy

Assessment Policy

Regulation 9 *Code of Conduct*

Regulation 11 *Awards, Courses and Units*

Higher Education Standards Framework 2015, Section 5

Learning Management System Policy

Support for Students Policy

Student Unit Evaluation Policy

Higher Degree by Research Policy

Unit Policy

TEQSA Risk Assessment Framework

1.   Rationale and Objectives

1.1   This Policy sets out the University's academic quality framework in order to demonstrate how the University guarantees the quality of its offerings to students, stakeholders and employers.

1.2   The Policy identifies academic quality measures in related Policies, and sets out how the University monitors, reviews, and improves academic quality, including setting and testing benchmarks, and conducting regular external reviews of key processes.

1.3   A key aim of this Policy is to demonstrate how the University ensures the consistent application of academic standards across all Colleges.

1.4   This Policy supports the University's compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework, specifically section 5 "Institutional Quality Assurance".

2.   Scope

2.1   This Policy applies to all students and academic staff of the University.

3.   Principles

3.1   The University aspires to deliver academic programs of the highest quality, evidenced in teaching, research and learning resources.

3.2   Academic quality is measured based on student progress through and retention in courses; satisfaction with courses; and evaluation of units.

3.3   Academic quality is tested against the University's Mission to provide "excellence in learning, teaching, and research, and stewardship of our resources".

3.4   Academic quality is tested against benchmarks, set with reference to external standards and quality indicators and using uniform measures, definitions and processes.

3.5   Academic quality data generated by the University, Colleges, government and higher education sector is reported with recommendations to the Academic Board.

3.6   Students and staff take responsibility for the quality of their academic work, and the University provides processes to affirm or improve quality of such work.

4.   Definitions

4.1   "Admission rate" means the proportion of students who commence a course within a year of being admitted to the course.

4.2   "Completion rate" is the percentage of students who completed a course (full-time) as a proportion of the total number of students who commenced the course in any given year.

4.3   "Normal Attrition Rate" means the proportion of students newly commencing a course of study in a given year (year x) who neither complete nor return in the following year (x+1). It does not identify students who defer their study.

4.4   "Retention Rate" is a measure of the proportion of students who continue their studies after their first year.

4.5   "Progress rate" is the proportion of actual student load (EFTSL) for units of study that are passed, divided by all units of study completed (passed + failed + withdrawn) for a given year.

4.6   Definitions of Metrics of Annual College Committee Report (Schedule A)

1 = Not at all met
2 = Somewhat met
3 = Adequately met
4 = Fully met
5 = Highly and innovatively met

Not at all: Processes not in place for use in any way; or to any extent
Somewhat: Processes in place to an inefficient extent or by a lesser amount than adequate
Adequately: Processes in place that are sufficient, suitable, effective, or appropriate
Fully: Processes are completely or entirely; to the fullest extent implemented
Highly and innovatively: Processes in place and functioning to a high degree or level with the introduction of a new idea or method.

5.   Academic Quality Framework

The University's Academic Quality Framework supports compliance with section 5 of the Higher Education Standards Framework as described below.

5.1   Course Approval and Accreditation

Course approval and accreditation is governed by the Course Policy of the Academic Board and its related Procedures. All courses are subject to consistent processes of approval and review through the Course Approval Procedures and the Course Review Procedures.

5.2   Academic and Research Integrity

Academic and research integrity is governed by the Academic Integrity Policy of the Academic Board. Academic integrity is monitored by the Academic Board and supported by the Authorised Officers appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.

5.3   Monitoring, Review and Improvement

Monitoring, review and improvement of all academic activities is overseen by the University through cyclical review at least once every five years. This includes:

a)   Major Review of each College every five years under the College Review Policy

b)   Annual Review of each College, including self-review of compliance with the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act* and the National Code 2018 reported through the College Information Collection, under the College Review Policy

c)   Review of academic staff at a College in conjunction with the Major College Review as required by the Academic Staff Policy

d)   Review of honorary researchers every three years under the Academic Staff Policy

e)   Course Reviews of each award every five years, including associated professional accreditation arrangements, under the Course Review Procedures of the Course Policy

f)   Review and reaccreditation or expiry of each unit of study every five years under the Unit Policy

g)   Moderation and calibration of grades awarded to assessment, including external peer review, under the Assessment Policy and as defined in this Policy

h)   Twice-yearly review of student unit evaluation survey results by Colleges with a report to the Academic Board under the Student Unit Evaluation Policy

i)   Continuous monitoring of student outcomes including admission, attrition, retention, success and completion rates as defined in this Policy

j)   Review of each University Policy every five years, including policies approved by the Academic Board

k)   Annual reporting by College Academic Committees on compliance with the policies of the Academic Board as defined in this Policy.

5.4   Annual Academic Quality Audits

5.4.1   The Academic Board commissions an external audit each year (other than a year in which Renewal of Registration with TEQSA occurs) of a key academic process, which may be a policy area, an area of deficiency or opportunity in the University's academic quality framework, or an area identified as a priority in the wider higher education sector.

5.5   Delivery with Other Parties

5.5.1   The University's collegiate structure is authorised by the *University of Divinity Act 1910* and governed by Regulation 4 Colleges. Under Regulation 4, the Academic Board is the sole authority which may accredit a College to deliver an award of the University.

5.5.2   The relationship between the University Council and the University's Colleges is contracted through the Collegiate Agreements which support the Academic Board in ensuring that Colleges comply with all academic policies of the University and that Colleges support consistent academic standards across the University.

5.5.3   No award may be delivered through arrangement with another party without approval of an Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding between the University Council and the external party. A College or Colleges of the University are normally party to such an Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding.

6.   Continuous Monitoring of Student Outcomes

6.1   An Annual Course Report for each award of the University is presented annually to the Academic Board by the Dean of Academic Programs (in the case of coursework awards) or the Dean of the School of Graduate Research (in the case of higher degrees by research).

6.2   The Annual Course Report must provide data for the previous calendar year and, where available, longitudinal data on prior years, including as a minimum the:

a)   admission rate

b)   progress rate

c)   attrition rate

d)   retention rate

e)   completion rate

f)   total number of students admitted to the award

g)   total number of students enrolled in the award, expressed as headcount and as EFTSL

h)   total number of students who graduated with the award.

6.3   Reports prepared by external agencies on student outcomes at the University of Divinity are analysed and reported by the Dean of Academic Programs to the Academic Board at least annually. These may include

a) the student experience survey (QILT) (satisfaction with overall educational experience)

b) the graduate destination survey (QILT) (employment outcomes, salary)

c) other reports prepared by government and other external bodies.

6.4   The Dean of Academic Programs advises the Academic Board on benchmarks for comparison and testing against or in collaboration with external benchmarking partners, including benchmarked targets for admission, progression, attrition, retention and completion rates for inclusion in the Annual Course Reports described above.

6.5   The University's preferred external benchmarking partners in Australia are:

a) Universities which are members of the Council of Deans of Theology

b) The Australian College of Theology and the Sydney College of Divinity

c) Universities which are listed on Table B of the Higher Education Support Act

d) Other Universities.

7.   Academic Committees

7.1   The Academic Committees of the University approved by the Academic Board are:

a) The Academic Committee of each College of the University, as required by Regulation 4

b) The Academic Committee of each School, as constituted under Regulation 2

7.2   An Academic Committee must have at least three members of which one must be the Academic Dean or equivalent, and one must be an academic expert who is external to the College or School.

7.3   An Academic Committee is responsible for

a) contributing to the work of the University Academic Board, through activities such as participation in policy development and monitoring academic quality, academic risk and academic integrity

b) endorsing applications for accreditation of academic staff, including honorary researchers and supervisors

c) endorsing applications for approval or revision of courses or units

d) reviewing and responding to student unit evaluation data

e) ensuring the College or School is compliant with policies of the Academic Board, including admissions and enrolment, assessment, student support, student progress and student completions

f) ensuring student engagement in academic decision making in the College or School either by student membership of the Academic Committee or transparent processes for gathering student feedback and student input into academic decisions.

g) ensuring that academic staff at the College or School remain research active and teaching active as appropriate, and making provision for professional development

h) providing an Annual Report to Academic Board using Schedule A to this Policy and identifying actions to remedy any areas of deficiency.

8. Review Date

8.1 This Policy must be reviewed no later than 31 December 2023.

SCHEDULE A: College Academic Committee Annual Report to the Academic Board

Approved by Academic Board: 14 September 2018

Revised by Academic Board: 13 September 2019, 4 June 2021

College Academic Committee Annual Report
The scale is related to the fulfillment of HESF: 1 - Not at all met 2 - Somewhat met 3 – Adequately met 4 – Fully met 5 - Highly and innovatively met. Comments section is for Deans to identify any issues, what action is proposed to support or amend these and by what date the action will be completed.

Name of College:	

A. Academic Integrity		1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A.1	The College has adhered to the requirements of the Academic Integrity Policy	○	○	○	○	○	
B. Academic Staff		1	2	3	4	5	Comments
B.1	All academic staff delivering units are accredited by the University	○	○	○	○	○	
B.2	The College Academic Committee has endorsed all applications for academic staff accreditation prior to submission to the OVC (Academic Staff Policy 7.1)	○	○	○	○	○	
B.3	All academic staff delivering units are teaching active (Academic Staff Policy 4.4; 8.2)	○	○	○	○	○	
B.4	The College provides support for academic staff orientation (Academic Staff Policy 13.6 a)	○	○	○	○	○	

		1	2	3	4	5	Comments
B.5	The College provides support for academic staff including peer teaching performance supervision (Academic Staff Policy 13.6 b)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
B.6	The College provides support for academic staff professional development at College Academic Committee or faculty meetings (Academic Staff Policy 13.6 c)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
B.7	The College provides support for honorary researchers and research supervisors who are not ongoing members of academic staff, including access to relevant events and appropriate resources. (Academic Staff Policy 12.3)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
C. Admissions, Enrolments and Course Advice		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Comments**
C.1	The College complies with the requirements for admission in the Admissions Policy and the Regulations and Determinations governing each award it is accredited to deliver (Admissions Policy 5)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
C.2	The College maintains course advisors in accordance with Regulation 4.5 g) trained in advising students for each award it is accredited to deliver	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
C.3	Overloading, Leave of Absence and Course Transfers are recorded (Enrolment Policy 7.7, 7.8, 8, 9, 10)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
C.4	The College is proactive in identifying and advising students on their eligibility to graduate (Graduation Eligibility Policy 4)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

		1	2	3	4	5	Comments
C.5	The College has reviewed the current enrolment to all awards offered and considered their viability and Sustainability	○	○	○	○	○	
D. Assessment		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Comments**
D.1	Assessment information about assessment tasks is approved prior to units commencing (Assessment Policy 4.2)	○	○	○	○	○	
D.2	Assessment information is provided to students no later than the unit commencement date (Assessment Policy 4.2)	○	○	○	○	○	
D.3	Assessment examination determines grades as per grade descriptors and feedback on assessment is provided to students (Assessment Policy 4.4; 3.4)	○	○	○	○	○	
D.4	First and Second Examiners are appointed prior to commencement of a unit and the Second Examiner is qualified and from a different College to the First Examiner (Assessment Policy 12.6)	○	○	○	○	○	
D.5	The Second Examiner examines all tasks and units which receive a Fail grade (Assessment Policy 12.9; 12.10)	○	○	○	○	○	
D.6	All grades are moderated (Assessment Policy 13) by at least two qualified persons (Assessment Policy 13.3)	○	○	○	○	○	
D.7	Moderation methods used and any adjustment of grades are recorded (Assessment Policy 13.7 d)	○	○	○	○	○	
D.8	Where held, examinations are conducted according to policy (Assessment Policy Schedule H)	○	○	○	○	○	

E. Courses		1	2	3	4	5	Comments
E.1	The College has sufficient academic staff and access to an appropriate sequence of units to ensure that all courses it offers remain viable and sustainable (Regulation 11 Awards Courses and Units 11.7.3)	○	○	○	○	○	
F. Learning Resources		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Comments**
F.1	The Learning Management System is used in all units of study for resources, assessment information, and originality checking (LMS Policy 2.4)	○	○	○	○	○	
F.2	The College has an LMS contact person, provides basic user support, and assists with new and updated system testing. (LMS Policy 4.2)	○	○	○	○	○	
F.3	The College's designated library (or libraries) has sufficient resources and an appropriate acquisition policy to meet current and future needs	○	○	○	○	○	
G. Student Support and Progress		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Comments**
G.1	The academic progress of each student is monitored (Support for Students Policy 4.2 d)	○	○	○	○	○	
G.2	Students at risk of unsatisfactory progress are monitored and intervention strategies are put in place (Support for Students Policy 4.2 d, e)	○	○	○	○	○	
G.3	The College proactively identifies and removes barriers to student participation in units and courses, including making reasonable adjustments for students with particular needs (Support for Students Policy 4.2 c, Schedule A)	○	○	○	○	○	

G.4	The College:						
	a. Provides an orientation event (Support for Students Policy 4.2 a)	○	○	○	○	○	
	b. Provides student support information (Support for Students Policy 4.2 b)	○	○	○	○	○	
	c. Ensures students have information on the University Code of Conduct (Support for Students Policy 4.2 a, f and g)	○	○	○	○	○	
	d. Ensures accuracy of information in Handbooks or on Websites	○	○	○	○	○	
G.5	The College ensures information on appeals and complaints including contact details of relevant officers is easily accessible by students on campus and on its website and publications (HESF 7.2.2f)	○	○	○	○	○	
G.6	Applications for special assessment consideration are managed in a timely manner and Examiners are advised (Assessment Policy 11.4)	○	○	○	○	○	
G.7	Late work is examined, and penalties are applied (Assessment Policy 10.6.2)	○	○	○	○	○	
H. Student Unit Evaluation		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Comments**
H.1	The College ensures that student unit evaluation data is collected ensuring anonymity and confidentiality (Student Unit Evaluation Policy 3.1; 3.2)	○	○	○	○	○	
H.2	The College Academic Committee reviews and responds to the outcomes of the Student Unit Evaluation Process (Student Unit Evaluation Policy 6.2)	○	○	○	○	○	

I. Supervisors		1	2	3	4	5	Comments
I.1	A Supervision Agreement is in place for all supervisors and students in higher degrees by research enrolled through the College, including arrangements for remuneration of supervisors (Higher Degree by Research Policy 7.3.1)	○	○	○	○	○	
I.2	Arrangements are made to cover the absence of a Supervisor (Higher Degree by Research Policy 7.3.3 h)	○	○	○	○	○	
J. Units		1	2	3	4	5	Comments
J.1	College Academic Committee endorses all proposed Unit Records in light of their external reviews (Unit Policy 6.4c, 7.7, 7.8, 8)	○	○	○	○	○	
J.2	Supervised Reading Units are approved based on availability of resources, supervisor and in light of review by academic in the same discipline (Unit Policy 13.4)	○	○	○	○	○	
K. Human Research Ethics		1	2	3	4	5	Comments
K.1	The College is aware of its obligations under the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research	○	○	○	○	○	
K.2	All research involving humans conducted by staff or students at the College is undertaken in accordance with the National Statement and, where applicable, approval is sought prior to commencement of research from the University's Human Research Ethics Committee	○	○	○	○	○	