UNIT DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PROCEDURE

Initial Approval by Academic Board: 3 June 2025
Subsequent Approval by Vice Chancellor:
Procedure Steward: Dean of Academic Programs

Related documents

>   Australian Qualifications Framework

>   Higher Education Standards Framework sections 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 7.2

>   Higher Education Support Act 2003

>   *Unit Development and Review Policy and Unit Development and Review Procedure*

>   *Assessment Policy and Assessment Procedure*

>   *Academic Integrity Policy and Academic Integrity Procedure*

>   *Support for Students Policy*

>   Regulation 2 *Academic Board*

>   Regulation 11 *Awards*

1.   Rationale and Scope

1.1   This Procedure and Guidelines support the implementation of the Unit Development and Review Policy in the design, development, accreditation, modification, review and discontinuation of units of study at the University of Divinity.

1.2   Unit Records once approved by the Dean of Academic Programs, become the intellectual property of the University of Divinity.

1.3   Unit Guides are the intellectual property of the College or School as well as the academic responsible for the delivery of the unit.

2.   Unit Record

2.1   The Unit Record is the set of information about a unit required for the purposes of approval of a unit under the Unit Policy and consists of:

>   a)   Unit Code: a code unique which communicates the primary discipline and primary level

>   b)   Unit Title[1]: a suitable broad title that appears on a student transcript

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[1] A Unit Title is for student transcript purposes. However, for marketing purposes, Colleges and Schools may market the unit under a different name as long as the learning outcomes, concepts and contents are not changed.

c) Unit Delivery Title: a subtitle that follows the unit title on the transcript and can be used in conjunction with the Unit Title for marketing purposes. (This section can also be left blank and the Unit Title used alone.)

d) Descriptor: a paragraph describing the unit contents in general terms

e) Discipline(s): the disciplines to which the unit may be attributed

f) Unit Level(s): the year level(s) to which the unit is assigned

g) Course(s): the course or courses in which the unit may be used

h) Learning Outcomes: measurable statements of what is to be achieved by the student in a unit. They include active verbs based on a framework such as Bloom's Taxonomy, are at the appropriate AQF level, and are constructively aligned to the Course Learning Outcomes of the nominated courses

i) Volume: the volume of the unit expressed as points

j) Student Workload: the total hours expected for successful completion of the unit based on the number of points of the unit

k) Unit Sequence: prerequisite units, co-requisite units, or prohibited combinations of units

l) Approvals: certifications required by this Procedure for approval of the unit including the date on which the unit received final approval and the date on which the unit will expire if no further action is taken.

3. Unit Record Development and Approval

3.1 All existing Unit Records created before 1 January 2026 are considered "Old" for the purposes of this procedure. Unit Records created after 1 January 2026 using the template in this document are considered "New".

3.2 A unit record is created by one or more staff member/s at one or more College(s) of the University to meet a learning requirement(s).

3.3 Wherever possible, an Old Unit Record will be revised using the new template rather than creating a New Unit Record.

3.4 If an Old Unit Record suitable for use or revision is not found, then a new Unit Record may be designed. Before creating a New Unit Record, the College or School Academic Committee, which may delegate to the Academic Dean, must be satisfied that there is no existing unit on the Unit Management System which may be revised. Consult the Unit Record Template Guidelines.

3.5 The Unit Record must then be externally reviewed in accordance with Section 5 of this Procedure.

3.6 Unit Records must then be approved by the Academic Dean and the Academic Committee of the College or School.

3.7 Unit Records must then be approved by the Dean of Academic Programs.

3.8   The New Unit Record will be stored in the Unit Management System and made accessible to all academic staff and students at the University.

3.9   All unit approvals must be completed by the Final Approval Due Date in the semester prior to intended delivery, in order to facilitate unit scheduling, preparation of timetables, the student record system, and the Learning Management System.

Submission cut-off date	Final Approval Due Date	Semester for Unit Scheduling and Delivery
September 1	September 30	Semester 1, the following year
April 1	April 30	Semester 2, the same year

3.10   In exceptional circumstances, a College or School may apply to the Dean of Academic Programs for exemption from the requirements of section 3.9. The Dean may grant an exemption if:

a)   there is no disadvantage to any student at the University; and

b)   the Dean is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist; and

c)   sufficient notice of the Unit Approval and timetabling can be given for the purposes of compliance with the *Higher Education Support Act*.

3.11   All new and updated unit approvals are reported to the Academic Board.

4.   Unit Record Review

4.1   A proposed unit must be externally reviewed prior to being approved by a College or School Academic Committee. The purpose of external review is to provide independent advice on the academic quality of a proposed unit. The Unit Record External Reviewer Template must be used.

4.2   External reviewers are:

a)   not an academic staff employed by the College or School proposing the unit

b)   qualified to deliver units in the Discipline of the proposed unit

4.3   Where a suitable external reviewer satisfying 4.2 is not available, the Academic Dean of the College or School proposing the unit may designate an alternative external reviewer in consultation with the Dean of Academic Programs.

4.4   The College or School proposing a unit is responsible for submitting a proposed Unit Record to the external reviewer and obtaining an External Review Report.

4.5   Where a proposed Unit Record is assigned to more than one Discipline (with alternative codes), only one reviewer could be used from either of the disciplines or both.

4.6   A proposed Unit Record may only be approved by a College or School Academic Committee after receipt of an External Review Report.

4.7   If the External Review Report advises changes to the proposed Unit Record, the College or School must make a written statement on the External Review Report explaining:

a)   what changes have been made to the proposed Unit Record in response to the advice; and

b)   where the College or School decides not to act on any or all such advice, the reasons for that decision.

5.   College or School Review

5.1   The Academic Committee of the College or School proposing a unit is responsible for ensuring that the proposed Unit Record meets the requirements of the Unit Development and Review Policy.

5.2   The College Unit Review Checklist must be used to guide the College or School Academic Committee to review the proposed Unit Record and the External Review Report.

5.4   If after such review the College or School Academic Committee is not satisfied with the proposed Unit Record then it must be returned to the proposer for further revision.

5.5   When the College or School Academic Committee has satisfied itself that the proposed Unit Record meets the requirements of this Policy and Procedure, the Academic Committee may approve the proposed Unit Record.

5.6   When a proposed Unit Record has been approved by the Academic Committee, the Academic Dean of the College submits through the Unit Management System:

a)   the proposed Unit Record;

b)   the External Review Report;

c)   where applicable, the STFE Framework Checklist approved by a STFE Panel member; and

d)   the College Review Checklist.

6.   University Approval

6.1   The Dean of Academic Programs must give notification of a decision on Unit Approval to the Academic Dean of the relevant College within 30 days of receipt of the proposed Unit Record.

6.2   The Dean of Academic Programs may only approve a Unit Record when they are satisfied that the proposed Unit Record:

a)   meets the requirements of the Unit Development and Review Policy

b)   has been reviewed by an external reviewer(s)

c)   has been approved by a College Academic Committee of the University.

6.3   The Dean of Academic Programs may consult any member of the Academic Board for advice prior to making a decision on approval of a proposed Unit Record.

6.4   The Dean of Academic Programs may approve a Unit Record in the Unit Management System.

6.5   If the Dean of Academic Programs does not approve a Unit Record, the Dean must provide a written explanation of the reasons to the Academic Dean of the College proposing the Unit Record, and may specify whether:

a)   the Unit Record may be amended and resubmitted by the Academic Dean

b)   the Unit Record may be resubmitted after a further External Review Report or after further action by the Academic Committee

c)   the Unit Record may not be resubmitted.

6.6   The Academic Dean may appeal the Dean of Academic Programs' decision by referring the proposed Unit Record, the External Review Report, the STFE Framework Checklist (where applicable), the College Review Checklist, the Dean of Academic Programs' written explanation, and a response from the College Academic Committee to the Chair of the Academic Board for decision on Unit Approval. If the Chair of the Academic Board does not approve the unit, the College or School may have recourse to the Appeals Policy.

6.7   When a Unit Record is approved, the Dean of Academic Programs must:

a)   inform the Academic Dean of the College proposing the unit in writing

b)   add the Unit Record to the Unit Register

c)   report the Unit Code, Title, and date of approval to the next meeting of the Academic Board

7.   Scheduling Units for Delivery

7.1   Once a unit record has been approved it can be scheduled for delivery toward a University award on a College or School timetable prior to the commencement of unit delivery.

7.2   Students may only be enrolled in units:
a)   that have been fully approved and appropriately scheduled via the UMS prior to the commencement of unit delivery; and

b)   where the student has been made aware of the unit key dates (start date, end date, census date) and unit requirements (assessment tasks, mode of attendance) as identified via the Unit's Scheduled Delivery ID located on the UMS and the University's website.

8.3   Once units are scheduled, Unit Guides must be developed for each unit detailing all the required information and guidance for the student to achieve success in their study.

8.   Developing Unit Guides for Delivery

8.1   An existing Unit Guide in the Learning Management System may be accessed by any academic staff appointed to teach the unit, to update it for a new scheduled delivery.

Such updates may include academic names, delivery and census dates, assessment tasks and due dates, assessment rubrics, and updated bibliography.

8.2   If a Unit Guide does not exist, the academic creates a new Unit Guide using the ***Unit Guide Template***.

8.3   A Unit Guide builds on the information contained in the Unit Record, and adds the additional information specific to the College or School delivery:

  a)   Academic staff teaching the content, including visiting academics or professional practitioners, and those who will be examining student assignments

  b)   Timelines of delivery, census date and assessment due dates

  c)   Introduction and rationale of the scheduled unit from the College or School's perspective

  d)   Content and schedule of delivery in either modules or weeks as appropriate

  e)   Pedagogy, learning activities and any aspects that are unique to this delivery of the unit

  f)   Mode of delivery

  g)   Assessment Tasks, including options and variations

  h)   Assessment Task Rubrics that clarify the expectations of student performance related to grades to be awarded

  i)   Permission or otherwise to use Generative Artificial Intelligence tools for each of the Assessment Tasks

  j)   Academic Integrity requirements and guidelines

  k)   Full bibliography and resources that are essential for student success in the unit

  l)   Other information related to the College or School delivering the unit, including academic and wellbeing support personnel and resources.

8.4   Assessment Tasks must be aligned to the Unit Learning Outcomes of the unit. One or more Assessment Tasks are generally included in a unit to satisfactorily measure the Unit Learning Outcomes, as per the Assessment Policy and Procedure.

8.5   The assessment tasks must be designed in accordance with the Guidelines for Choosing Assessments Fit for Purpose, Guidelines for Creating and Using Assessment Rubrics, and Guidelines for the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence.

8.6   The content outlines and modules must be informed by the recommended bibliography.

8.7   The Unit Guide must be approved by the relevant Academic Dean before being entered in the Learning Management System.

9.   Unit Guide Revisions

9.1   A revision of a Unit is considered major when it proposes:

a) Changes to one or more of the Unit Learning Outcomes that change the intended outcomes of the unit.

b) Changes of more than 20% in the weighting of Assessment Tasks.

c) Changes of the mapping or relationship of Assessment Tasks to Unit Learning Outcomes.

9.2   Any major revision to a Unit Record requires completion of the full Unit Approval process.

9.3   A minor revision of a Unit is an amendment to any or all of the following elements of an approved Unit Record:

a) Unit Title

b) Unit Code

c) Minor or grammatical changes to Unit Learning Outcomes that do not change the intended outcomes

d) Unit Sequence

e) Volume of Learning

f) Student Workload

9.4   Changes to the Unit Guide are considered operational and may be approved by the College or School Academic Dean.

9.5   All revisions to the Unit Record are approved by the Dean of Academic Programs.

9.6   The Dean of Academic Programs may refuse approval for a proposed revision if the Dean is of the opinion that the revision substantially affects the content and outcome of the unit. In such cases the Dean must provide a written explanation of the reasons to the College or School proposing the minor revision.

10.   Unit Register

10.1   The Dean of Academic Programs is responsible for maintaining a Unit Register of all currently approved units.

10.2   The Unit Register must include:

a) a copy of each currently approved Unit Record

b) the date on which each currently approved unit is due to expire.

10.3   The Office of the Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that information about all currently approved units is available on the University website in accordance with the requirements of the *Higher Education Support Act* or as otherwise prescribed by relevant Commonwealth Government departments or agencies.

11.   Unit Expiry and Annual Review

11.1   An approved Unit Record is current for six years from the date of initial or most recent approval.

11.2   A minor revision to a Unit Record does not extend the period of approval, but a major revision may extend the period of approval.

11.3   A unit may only be delivered beyond the initial period of approval if the Unit Record is revised and resubmitted for approval as if it were a new unit, by applying to the Dean of Academic Programs for an extension.

11.4   In conjunction with the annual review, the Dean of Academic Programs must provide a report to the Academic Board on the effectiveness of the Unit Development and Review Policy and Procedures, including identifying areas for improvement and areas of best practice in the development and approval of units.

12.   Supervised Reading Units

12.1   A Supervised Reading Unit is an individual program of study undertaken by a student under direction of a supervisor. The program of study may include participation or attendance in classes, lectures, seminars or conferences.

12.2   A Supervised Reading Unit may only be undertaken at Undergraduate Level 3 or at Postgraduate Elective level, and only if there are no alternative options to undertake a scheduled unit of study at the University in the student's particular area of interest at the time the student needs to take it.

12.3   A Supervised Reading Unit may only be supervised by a person who is qualified to deliver a standard Unit of an equivalent Level and Discipline.

12.4   A Supervised Reading Unit may only be approved by the Academic Dean of a College or School of the University. The Academic Dean must be satisfied that:

a)   sufficient academic support exists for the student to complete the unit; and

b)   the proposed supervisor is appropriately qualified; and

c)   the Supervised Reading Unit proposal has been reviewed by a person who is qualified to deliver a standard Unit of an equivalent Level and Discipline.

12.5   The Supervised Reading Unit Approval Form must be completed, approved and lodged with the Dean of Academic Programs no later than the census date for the semester in which the Supervised Reading Unit is to be undertaken.

12.6   The Supervised Reading Unit Approval Form may be approved or amended by the Academic Board.

12.7   If a student is enrolled in a Supervised Reading Unit and the Supervised Reading Unit Approval Form is not received by the census date for the semester in which the Supervised Reading Unit is to be undertaken, the student's enrolment in the Supervised Reading Unit may be discontinued.

12.8   The Dean of Academic Programs must report annually to the Academic Board on the number of Supervised Reading Units approved and their outcome and may make recommendations.

13. Date of next review

13.1   This Procedure must be reviewed no later than 31 December 2028.