



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Name:	COURSE DESIGN, APPROVAL, AND REVIEW POLICY
Policy No:	PP3119
Approved by:	ACER Academic Board
Last reviewed:	August 2018
Responsible Division/ Department	Professional Resources Division/ACER Institute

1. Purpose

To design, approve, and review ACER Higher Education courses, and provide academic direction that enhances and assures the quality and continuous improvement of all Courses and Units.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Staff Members, Students, and members of the ACER Course Development and Quality Committee (CDQC).

3. Definitions

See [Glossary of Terms](#).

4. Relevant documents and legislation

[ACER Student Policies](#)

[Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\) 2nd edn. \(Jan 2013\)](#)

[Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#)

[TEQSA Guidance Note: Course Design](#)

5. Policy Principles

Courses submitted for approval within ACER are the result of rigorous development and continuous improvement in their content, delivery and assessment.

These objectives are embedded in the following principles:

- i. Courses are grounded in research evidence and sound conceptual and theoretical underpinnings.
- ii. Continuous improvement demands continuous involvement from all stakeholders.
- iii. Process reviews will be carried out on a regular basis to identify changes, and/or modifications which, when implemented, will ensure effective and efficient practice.
- iv. Learning technologies will be embedded in overall curriculum design and logically linked to learning outcomes.
- v. ACER's [Quality Professional Learning Quality Principles](#) and Graduate Attributes will help to guide the development, review, and evaluation of Courses and Units.
- vi. Courses and Units comply with ACER policies, Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) requirements outlined in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards 2015), and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
- vii. ACER will support innovative course design by investing in current and relevant educational technology, online infrastructure, and learning spaces.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

See: Schedule of Delegations

7. Course and Unit design

7.1 The design for each Course of study is specified, and the specification includes:

- i. Structure, duration and modes of delivery.
- ii. The qualification(s) to be awarded on completion.
- iii. The Units of study (or equivalent) that comprise the Course of study.
- iv. Entry requirements and pathways.
- v. Expected Learning Outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative Student workload.
- vi. Compulsory requirements for completion.
- vii. Exit pathways, articulation arrangements, pathways to further learning, and for a Course of study leading to a Masters' qualification, includes the proportion and nature of research or research-related study in the Course.
- viii. That Course and Unit nomenclature complies with PP3128 the ACER Nomenclature Policy.

7.2 The educational aims and Learning Outcomes for a new Course or Unit must be consistent with the level of classification for that qualification in the AQF, and expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills as

specified in the relevant AQF criteria and the award-level descriptor.

- 7.3 Course and Unit learning and teaching activities, and other ACER learning activities and tools will be designed to incorporate current and appropriate learning technologies that are accessible to all users.
- 7.4 Each Course or Unit of study is designed to enable achievement of expected Learning Outcomes regardless of a Student's place of study or the mode of delivery; this includes development of content that will help to create an online collaborative community.
- 7.5 Mapping will be used to show how the learning strategies embodied in individual Units work together to produce Student Learning Outcomes, and how Units work together to build Learning Outcomes for an entire Course.
- 7.6 Design strategies will ensure that all learning and teaching activities, resources, assessment and criteria for grading, and learning outcomes (including graduate attributes) will be aligned so that Courses and Units are explicitly coherent.
- 7.7 Learning Outcomes will be informed by national and international comparators and appraised using peer review and feedback from external stakeholders to ensure they are responsive to discipline, professional, and employer needs and priorities.
- 7.8 Courses and Units will be designed to accommodate student diversity, including the under-representation and/or disadvantage experienced by identified groups, and create equivalent opportunities for academic success regardless of students' backgrounds.
- 7.9 Course and Unit design will include provision for activities that contribute to a deep knowledge and understanding of digital systems, data and information, to enable Students to take an active role in meeting current and future needs.

8. Course and Unit approval

- 8.1 All Courses and Units require formal approval.

The following criteria will be considered when approving Courses and Units:

- i. The content and learning activities of each course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected Learning Outcomes.
- ii. That Learning Outcomes embrace specific, generic, employment-related, and life-long Learning Outcomes.
- iii. Teaching and learning activities include the use of relevant and current learning technologies and are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected Learning Outcomes throughout each Course of

- study.
- iv. That sufficient evidence has been provided to show that the Course or Unit can be offered within an appropriate teaching and learning environment, and within available resources, for example market research and a business case (including financial impact) may be requested before a new Course can be approved.

9. Course and Unit review and evaluation

9.1 Review:

- i. 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.
- ii. 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, educational technology, and the changing needs of Students and identified risks to the quality of the Course of study.
- iii. Evaluation is an integral element of ACER's review and development. Interim reviews and minor reviews of Courses and Units incorporate approved evaluation processes.

9.2 Evaluation processes

Evaluation provides information that helps to make decisions about how to improve or develop learning and teaching, as follows:

- i. Feedback from the Unit/Course Staff Member will be collected and analysed at the conclusion of each Unit and Course.
- ii. Feedback from Graduates and Employer bodies will also be collected and analysed.
- iii. Student retention and attrition will be considered as part of the evaluation process.
- iv. All relevant data collected will contribute to immediate minor adjustments to content and delivery strategies and will constitute a report to be presented to the ACER Course Development and Quality Committee.
- v. Staff Members who participate in Course and Unit evaluation processes will do so with integrity and honesty.
- vi. The use of learning technologies will be evaluated annually to ensure that Courses, Units, and other ACER learning and teaching activities incorporate technology and tools that are appropriate and current.

10. Dispute Resolution

Should a dispute arise in relation to the interpretation or application of this policy or its procedures a Grievance may be notified and managed in accordance with the ACER PP3111 Student Grievance Resolution Policy.

11. Awareness of Policy

The Director will take reasonable steps to disseminate and explain this policy to Staff Members and Students who may be affected by it.

The policy is available online at: www.acer.org/professional-learning/postgraduate/students/policies.

12. Version Control

Authorised by: ACER Academic Board
Maintained by: Director, ACER Institute
Written: March 2013
Review: August 2019
Version: 5

Version Control	Date Effective	Amendments by	Amendment
1.	21/1/2013	E. Hartnell-Young	Logo, Page Numbers
2.	12/03/2013	C. Kemp	Last Review date updated, Version Control details included, formatting
3.	12/11/2015	G. Appleby	Definitions, Purpose, Scope, Awareness of Policy, Version Control details, formatting
4.	17/8/2016	P. Taylor-Guy	Renamed Policy Updated purpose Aligned with Threshold Standards 2015 Statements without dedicated roles and responsibilities moved out of section 6 Added section 7 Added section 8 Added section 9 Remove table of Definitions and add link. Update Legislation and Related Documents. Update Version Control.

5.	1/8/2018	P. Taylor-Guy	<p>Aligned this policy with the proposed Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy.</p> <p>Replaced roles and responsibilities with a Schedule of delegations.</p> <p>Added new principles around learning technology at iv and vii.</p> <p>Added new section at 7.3</p> <p>Added wording in 7.2</p> <p>Added new section at 7.6</p> <p>Updated wording 7.7</p> <p>Added new section 7.8</p> <p>Added new section 7.9</p> <p>Updated 8.1 iii.</p> <p>New section 9.1 vi</p> <p>Minor edits.</p> <p>Added legislation.</p> <p>Updated links.</p> <p>Updated Version Control.</p>
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