

Course of Study Design and Development Policy

Fact box

- **Policy owner:** Chair, Accreditation Committee
- **Policy category:** Academic: Course Development
- **Policy status:** Approved
- **Approval body:** Academic Board
- **Endorsement body:** Accreditation Committee
- **Related policies:**
 - [Assessment Policy](#)
 - [Course of Study Review Policy](#)
 - [Course of Study Termination Policy](#)
 - [Higher Education Subject Development, Delivery and Review Policy](#)
- **Last amended:** 20th Dec. 2022
- **Relevant HESF:**

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the guidelines for designing and developing a new Alphacrucis University College (AC) course of study.

Scope

All Vocational (VET) and Higher Education (HE) awards

Policy

The development of new courses of study is overseen by Accreditation Committee as a sub-committee of Academic Board. All new course design and development at AC adheres to the following principles:

- alignment with the AC Strategic Plan or other strategic priorities;
- integration of the AC Graduate Attributes. These are considered in developing the course rationale, course structure, course learning outcomes and subject outlines;
- conformity to the Australian Qualifications framework (AQF), the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 or Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, requirements of professional accrediting bodies (such as NESAS) where applicable, as well as any other relevant national or international protocols;
- compliance with AC's academic standards and approach to pedagogy; and
- systematic development and advancement of students' knowledge and skills through a scaffolded design of assessment tasks demonstrated through the constructive alignment between outcomes and assessments.

Provisions Related to Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Course Delivery

The development of new courses of study in LOTE is permitted at AC if the following conditions are met:

- support systems for students are available in the language of delivery; and
- the specific subjects being delivered have been translated, the translation has been verified, and evidence of that verification has been submitted to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

The following principles apply to all courses delivered in LOTE:

- all students enrolling in subjects delivered in LOTE must demonstrate capacity in the language of instruction prior to commencement; this is not required if the language of instruction is the first language of the student;
- where there is an equivalent English course available at AC, the development of a course in LOTE shall be based on and dynamically equivalent to the existing English subject or course in: admission; learning outcomes; resources; and student information and services;
- all courses and subjects will comply with AQF requirements, and other state and federal quality criteria as required;
- all AC testamurs and transcripts of results will be produced in English. AC testamurs and transcripts of results for courses delivered entirely in LOTE will include a clear statement that identifies the language of instruction and assessment;
- all learning resources must be of an equivalent standard as an English equivalent;
- AC faculty involved in LOTE delivery will normally be fluent in both English and the language of delivery and assessment and will be competent in the discipline area of the course. Where it is proposed that translators or interpreters be appointed, details of such arrangements must be included in the relevant course approval and quality assurance documentation;
- functionally bilingual staff are tasked to assist students progress and have adequate digital and printed documentation to support their tasks, which are of an equivalent standard to those provided for students studying in English medium.

Nested Awards

AC recognises the value of nesting lower-level courses of study within existing higher education courses to allow multiple entry and/or exit points for the higher qualification. A nested course of study must meet all the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework as a stand-alone qualification in its own right, including the specifications for each level of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). To qualify as a nested course of study, there must be a clearly articulated credit transfer arrangement leading to an existing AC course of study at a higher level on the AQF.

Responsible for implementation

Chair, Accreditation Committee

Key stakeholders

All staff and students

Procedures

Course of Study Design and Development Procedure

Accreditation Committee oversees the development of the design and application for a new course of study. To do this the following steps are generally undertaken:

1. Proposal

A proposal for a new course of study (including nested courses) must first be submitted to Accreditation Committee using the Course of Study Development Proposal Template. This proposal should include:

- proposed course of study title(s);
- proposed start date;
- proposed delivery sites, including existing and/or potential new sites;
- proposed delivery options, including whether for domestic and/or international students, online or offshore delivery, and language of delivery;
- proposed rationale, including how the proposed course aligns to AC's Strategic Plan as well as a description of how it will integrate the AC Graduate Attributes;
- viability of delivery;
- proposed budget for the development of the course of study (including a list of staff to be involved).

2. Approval to proceed

If the proposal is accepted by Accreditation Committee, then it is sent to both Executive and Academic Board for recommendation. If it is recommended by both Executive and Academic Board, it will then proceed to Council. It will then either be approved or not approved by Council.

For VET training packages and skill sets: after Council approval these may be added to AC's scope of offerings using required ASQA processes.

3. For HE courses of study and VET accredited courses: Course Development Committee appointed

If a course of study is approved by Council, Accreditation Committee will be tasked with overseeing the development of the course, according to the AC Course of Study template and guidelines. Accreditation Committee will appoint a Course Development Committee (CDC) which will usually include the Head of School (or delegated representative), other relevant academic staff and at least one external member from a relevant field. A chair will also be nominated.

4. Design of course of study

The CDC is responsible to oversee the development of all elements of course design. This may include delegation of the development of components, such as the development of subject outlines, to staff outside the committee. Subject outlines will be externally peer-reviewed by an academic in the relevant field.

5. Independent External Course Review

AC will appoint an independent expert to conduct a holistic and comprehensive review of all new courses of study . VET courses and training packages, including qualifications, units of competency, and skill sets, are exempt from this requirement.

The criteria for appointment and terms of reference for independent external course reviews are as follows:

a. Criteria for appointment

AC will ensure the independent expert:

- holds relevant academic qualifications, external memberships, and/or professional experience to the course of study being reviewed;
- does not have (or intend to have) any material or significant dealings with AC (or an associated party) that could interfere with the exercise of independent judgement; and
- does not have a direct or indirect material financial interest with AC.

b. Terms of reference

The independent expert will be tasked to:

- conduct a comprehensive assessment of the course of study, including a holistic review of subject outlines in the course context, with consideration given to how well the course adheres to:
 - - the AQF, and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) or the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs);
 - AC's principles of course design and development, as outlined in this policy; and
 - any other matters deemed relevant by Academic Board or Accreditation Committee.
- provide a written summary of findings and analysis of the quality of the evidence against the specified standards;
- set out conclusions of the review, identifying in each case whether (1) the expert is satisfied that the standard has been met or (2) there is an issue presenting a potential risk to quality that requires resolution; and
- outline a summary of relevant expertise from the last five years to offer context for findings.

The CDC will be tasked to consider and respond to the independent expert review before submission to Accreditation Committee for approval.

6. Approval by Academic Board

The completed Course of Study documentation will be sent to Accreditation Committee by the CDC. Accreditation Committee will review the course of study and make a recommendation to Academic Board.

If the course of study (including any nested course) is within AC's scope of self-accrediting authority:

Academic Board (or a delegated panel constituted ad hoc by Academic Board, including at least one external member of Academic Board) will examine the documentation and then make a decision to either:

- approve the course of study;
- request more information;
- approve the course of study subject to revisions; or
- reject the course of study.

If approved, the course of study will be listed on AC's register of courses, an official announcement will be made, and marketing and delivery of the course can commence.

If the course (including any nested course) is outside AC's scope of self-accrediting authority:

Academic Board will review the AC Course of Study document prepared by the CDC. Once the Academic Board is satisfied of the quality of the application it can be submitted to the relevant agency using the appropriate application form and process.

No advertising or promotion of an award is permitted without appropriate disclaimers until official approval, or official sanction to do so, has been granted by the relevant agency.

DOUBLE DEGREE APPROVAL PROCEDURE

In order to provide maximum flexibility and opportunities for students, AC recognises the value of double degrees leading to the completion of two separate awards in minimum possible time. This does not require the accreditation of a combined course, but Academic Board may approve a structural model that permits two qualifications to be undertaken concurrently for a reduced total duration. The following criteria apply:

- there must be a clearly articulated pedagogical rationale for a double degree;
- the reduced total duration must allow for the student to meet the completion requirements and learning outcomes for each of the single degrees, including any professional registration requirements;
- where double degree components are at different AQF levels, students must complete the lower-level component first;
- students must meet the entry requirements of both component degrees;
- naming convention for a double degree is that the qualification names are separated by 'and';
- the reduced total duration must be at least two thirds of the normal combined duration of the component degrees.

For approval of a double degree, a proposal should be submitted to Accreditation Committee. If Accreditation Committee determines that the above criteria have been met, the proposal will be recommended to Academic Board for approval.

LOTE DELIVERY APPROVAL PROCEDURE

All proposals to deliver courses in LOTE must be:

- submitted to Accreditation Committee and Executive. Such proposals must include a draft budget and evidence of viability and resourcing, as well as validation of translated subject outlines;
- if recommended by Accreditation Committee, the proposal is tabled to Academic Board for approval.
- If the course is outside AC's scope of self-accrediting authority, the relevant Agency will be notified using the appropriate application form and process.

All courses taught and assessed in LOTE must appoint external examiners annually, who will assess the quality of teaching, the translation of teaching materials, and the appropriateness of assessment materials for a sample of subjects. These external examiners must be fluent in both English and the language of delivery and assessment as well as be competent in the discipline area of the subject. The external examiner will prepare a report for Learning and Teaching Committee.
