

# Course of Study Review 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 Design and Development Policy](#)
  - [Course of Study Termination Policy](#)
- **Last amended:** 20th Dec. 2022
- **Relevant HESF:** 5.3

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a course of study currently accredited by Alphacrucis University College (AC) is reviewed on a regular cycle to guarantee quality learning and teaching standards, and to define a process for changes to existing courses of study.

## Scope

All courses of study

## Policy

All accredited courses of study are to be reviewed on a regular cycle. This ensures that all accredited courses are delivered with consistent academic standards and are engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement in line with AC's Quality Tracking and Improvement System (QTIS). Any changes to an existing course of study must be implemented by following the procedures outlined below.

## REGULAR COURSE REVIEW MECHANISMS

Each accredited course of study will be reviewed in the following ways:

### 1. Annual Report

An Annual Course Report of each course of study will be submitted by the relevant Program Director (or equivalent) to the Head of School. The annual report is a review of the performance of the previous year and will generally include information such as:

- enrolment data for the previous year;
- performance data (such as attrition, progress and completion rates);
- student feedback;
- staff feedback;
- industry feedback;
- improvement plan for the upcoming year;

- evidence of implementation of previous improvement plans.

These reports will be used to inform the Head of School Report, which will be included in the AC Annual Academic Report prepared by the Vice President Academic and reviewed by Academic Board. This allows for the ongoing monitoring of performance and improvement of the course of study. The implementation of any recommendations for improvement to the course of study arising from this annual review will be overseen by the Head of School.

## **2. Comprehensive Review**

Where a higher education course of study lies within AC's scope of self-accrediting authority, the course of study will undergo a comprehensive review on a regular cycle of approximately five years. This will be overseen by the Accreditation Committee in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

A comprehensive review will also be conducted as part of the reaccreditation application process of all VET courses and higher education courses of study outside AC's scope of self-accrediting authority. This will be overseen by the Accreditation Committee in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

## **3. Additional Review**

In certain circumstances, for example in response to market demand, an additional course of study review may be undertaken. In this case, a proposal for a course of study review outside the regular cycle must be submitted to the Accreditation Committee. This proposal should include a clear rationale for the additional review of the course of study. If accepted by the Accreditation Committee, this additional review will then be overseen by the Accreditation Committee in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

## **4. Other Review Mechanisms**

Other mechanisms for review of a course of study may be implemented from time to time. These may include:

- **Industry Advisory Groups.** The task of Industry Advisory Groups (IAGs) which may be convened from time to time is to provide industry feedback on AC's operations and training and educational products and services. The IAGs may provide feedback on a specific course of study being offered currently by AC;
- **Minor Reviews.** On occasion, there may be minor reviews to a course of study (e.g. progression rules, minor changes to structure). In the case of a minor review, a proposal is tabled at Accreditation Committee for consideration and recommendation to Academic Board. The procedures below are not required.

Responsible for implementation

Chair, Accreditation Committee

Key stakeholders

All faculty and students

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Procedures

## **Course of Study Review Procedure**

Reviews of existing courses of study will usually follow the AC Curriculum and Assessment Quality Assurance System which outlines scheduling details.

Procedures for the review of courses of study are outlined below:

### **1. Appointment of Course Review Committee**

Accreditation Committee will appoint a Course Review Committee (CRC). Members of the CRC will usually include a representative from Accreditation Committee, the Head of School, and other relevant academic staff. The CRC membership for review of higher education courses will also include at least one suitably independent expert member. The criteria for appointment of external expert members are outlined below. The purpose of this committee is to review the course of study according to the guidelines of the policy. A chair will also be nominated.

### **2. Internal review of course of study**

The CRC will conduct a review of the course of study, including consideration of the following information as relevant:

- annual reports;
- performance data (such as any outcomes of external moderation of grades);
- staff and student feedback (including feedback from completed subject evaluations, student experience surveys, and other student surveys);
- external stakeholder feedback;
- feedback from the professional accreditation body (if applicable);
- external referencing e.g. benchmarking;
- nested course of study arrangements;
- how the future delivery of the course aligns to the strategic direction of AC.

From this review, recommendations are made by the CRC as to improvements to the structure, delivery, student learning, learning outcomes at the course and subject level, and management of the course of study. The CRC may recommend the development of related or nested courses of study as part of the review of the higher-level qualification, which includes all elements of the course design as a stand-alone qualification as well as details of the nested arrangement into the higher-level qualification. The reviews and recommendations of the CRC are presented as a Comprehensive Review Report.

For a course reaccreditation, the CRC will be tasked with drafting a Reaccreditation Application.

### **3. External review of course of study**

In the case of a Comprehensive Review or a Reaccreditation Application for a higher education course of study, AC will appoint an independent expert to conduct a holistic and comprehensive review of the proposed changes to the course of study.

#### **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 CRC will be tasked to consider and respond to the independent expert review before submission to Accreditation Committee for approval.

#### **4. Recommendation by Accreditation Committee**

The completed Comprehensive Review Report or Reaccreditation Application, together with the External Expert Course Review Report, will be sent to Accreditation Committee by the CRC. The Accreditation Committee will review and make a recommendation to Academic Board.

#### **5. Approval by Academic Board**

In the case that the course being reviewed lies within AC's scope of self-accrediting authority, Academic Board will review the Comprehensive Review Report and take necessary action.

In the case that the course being reviewed lies outside AC's scope of self-accrediting authority, including VET courses of study, the Academic Board will review the Reaccreditation Application and, once satisfied, task the Accreditation Committee to submit a Material Change Notification or Reaccreditation Application to the relevant Agency.

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