

# Curriculum Approval Procedures

## Part A - Programs

### Program Development and Approval

- (1) The development of a new program requires consideration of the rationale for the program, employment opportunities for students and graduates, professional accreditation details if applicable, and anticipated student demand.
- (2) A new program requires the development of a Program Concept Proposal (PCP) and, if approved, a Full Program Proposal (FPP).
- (3) The development of new programs and subjects must include evidence of interdisciplinary collaboration where appropriate and socialisation with the Deputy Deans or equivalent.

### Program Concept Proposal

- (4) The PCP is developed by the School/Division after approval from the School Executive or equivalent, and in consultation with other Schools, University Research Institutes and Western Sydney University - The College (The College) if required. It allows the University Executive Committee to consider how well the proposed program fits with the University's strategic plans and academic profile. The PCP must provide sufficient information for the relevant committees to assess financial viability and resources required to support delivery of the proposed program.
- (5) A PCP must include an evidence-based business case, including consultation with either an external advisory committee or other industry and community stakeholders, and consultation with the Office of Marketing and Communications for an assessment of anticipated employer demand for the program and graduate employability, including professional accreditation requirements if applicable.
- (6) A PCP must include student demand and market research from a minimum of two sources, e.g. the Office of Business Intelligence and Performance, Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, International, Office of Marketing and Communication, Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research, External Advisory Committee, independent market analysis.
- (7) A PCP review by the Office of Student and University Planning is required to ensure that:
  - a. any market demand data sources are appropriately referenced
  - b. any key differences in views on market demand and load projections are highlighted in the PCP and
  - c. the preliminary proposed structure adheres to the relevant [Australian Qualification Framework](#) (AQF) and University policies.
- (8) A PCP must include evidence of interdisciplinary and cross-School collaboration, including the Graduate Research School, where appropriate and socialisation of the program concept with the Deputy Deans or equivalent.
- (9) A review of the PCP by the relevant Senior Finance Business Partner, School Manager and Dean is required prior to submission to the Business and Infrastructure Development Committee (BIDC).

(10) The PCP is submitted by the Dean or equivalent to BIDC for endorsement before submission to the Executive Committee for approval.

## **Full Program Proposal**

(11) After approval of the PCP, a FPP is developed. The PCP will be attached to the FPP upon submission to the approving committees. The purpose of an FPP is to provide details of the delivery of the program and its components, and evidence of alignment with [AQF](#) requirements and the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

(12) The FPP should be developed by an appropriately qualified disciplinary lead/expert, who may be external to the University. The Multi-Disciplinary Teaching and Learning Committees (MTALC) should be consulted in the development of the FPP.

(13) The School Academic Committee (SAC) will review the FPP and recommend proposals to Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee (APCAC) when it is satisfied with their academic quality. Following endorsement by APCAC, the FCP will be referred to Academic Senate for final consideration and approval.

## **New Curriculum Taught by The College**

(14) The approval process for curriculum to be taught by The College, such as Foundation Studies, Undergraduate Preparation Programs, diplomas and associate degrees, is the same as for the approval of undergraduate curriculum as detailed in these procedures, with additional The College approvals.

(15) Approval to develop new programs as preparatory programs and/or pathways into Bachelor degrees must be endorsed by The College Board.

(16) A PCP and FPP must be endorsed by The College Academic Pathway Programs (APP) Committee as well as by any relevant SAC and then APCAC. Following endorsement by those academic committees, the FPP will be referred to Academic Senate for final consideration and approval. Academic Senate or APCAC may seek further advice from The College's APP Committee or Board.

## **Major and Minor Development and Approval**

(17) New majors and minors can be included in program documentation, or can be submitted via a Proposal Form. The Proposal Form includes details of the delivery of the major or minor and its components, and evidence of alignment with [AQF](#) requirements and the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

(18) Approval of a new major or minor is by APCAC, after endorsement by SAC.

## **Retirement or Deletion of a Major or Minor**

(19) Proposals to retire or replace a major or minor must take into consideration students in all programs where the major or minor is offered and the impact on the learning outcomes and flexibility of these programs. The School/divisional unit which owns the major/minor must consult with all providers of all related programs.

(20) The SAC must be notified at least six months prior to the implementation of the decision to retire a major/minor. The notification should provide the arrangements to accommodate students who are affected by the retirement of the major/minor.

(21) Where a major/minor will be replaced by a new major/minor, the request for retirement will form part of the proposal documentation of the replacement major/minor.

(22) Any continuing students affected by the decision to retire a testamur major should be given notice at least six

months prior to the change, communicated by the Schools' Dean or nominee, and including options of alternative arrangements.

## **Variations to a Program**

(23) Where changes to an existing program result in one or more of the following changes, then it is considered a new program and a PCP must be submitted as above (see section Program Concept Proposal):

- a. Change to qualification awarded, e.g. change from Bachelor (Honours) degree to Graduate Diploma
- b. Change from postgraduate Masters, Doctorate by coursework (predominantly coursework) to a research degree, i.e. including at least two-thirds research work
- c. Change to expected learning outcomes that provide training for different (broadened or specialised) scope of professional practice, such as a new major or program focus, e.g. change to program focus on forensic accounting instead of management accounting
- d. Change in the duration of a program of study or the volume of learning
- e. Changes to entry requirements where this would change the consequent type and level of learning experiences that flow from the change, e.g. change from undergraduate to graduate entry, or new and substantial requirements for prerequisite professional or workplace experiences
- f. Change to design and delivery to fundamentally change the graduate capabilities and/or capacity to meet new community expectations, e.g. change to include an unprecedented predominance of 'best-practice' work-integrated learning (WIL)
- g. Change to include a capability not previously demonstrated, e.g. adding new field of education not previously taught.

(24) Program variations must be approved in accordance with the [Course Approval Authorities and Delegations](#).

(25) Change proposals, including transition arrangements for continuing students, must be submitted as a program variation to SAC and approved by APCAC.

(26) Any changes to program that are the responsibility of one or more School/divisional unit must be considered by all relevant School Academic Committees before proceeding to APCAC.

(27) Any proposals to change a program must address any potential effects on special requirements, legislative requirements and accreditation requirements of the program.

## **Variations to a Program also Taught by The College or Other Third Parties**

(28) The School, which is the custodian of the program, must consult The College or other third-party organisation during the development of the variation if the change is likely to affect delivery of an equivalent or related program.

## **Transition Arrangements**

(29) A new program replacing another program and all variations to programs must be accompanied by a transition plan for continuing students and approved by APCAC.

(30) Transition arrangements must ensure students are able to continue their studies without disruption to their duration of study.

(31) Program owners are responsible for communicating transition details to affected students.

## **Program Suspension, Discontinuation, Retirement or Termination**

(32) The Dean or Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Education, after discussion with the Provost, can propose

suspension or discontinuation of a program to the Vice-Chancellor and President.

## **Suspension of Intake to a Program**

(33) A program owner may propose the suspension of an intake of students to a program for a period of up to two years.

(34) The proposal to suspend a program must be made at least six months prior to the next planned intake.

(35) The proposed suspension of a program must be discussed with The College or other third-party provider if delivered by them.

(36) The Dean or Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Education, after discussion with the Provost, can propose a suspension of an intake to a program to the Vice-Chancellor and President, with the SAC, APCAC and Academic Senate to then be notified.

(37) The proposal for suspension should provide the rationale for suspension, the arrangements to accommodate students currently enrolled in the program and those with offers to an approved pathway to that program, including international offers, and the effect of suspension on other programs with shared subjects. The SAC must provide details of proposed transition arrangements to APCAC for consideration and, if endorsed, will be recommended to Academic Senate for approval.

(38) A School may request approval of the suspension of a program for a third year.

(39) If a request for extension is not made, the program will automatically be made available for the next planned intake.

(40) If the suspension is to be removed early, APCAC is to be advised of the intention to lift a suspension at least six months before the next planned intake.

## **Discontinuation of a Program**

(41) A School may wish to discontinue all future intakes of students to a program.

(42) The proposal to discontinue a program must be made at least six months prior to the next planned intake.

(43) Prior to notification to the SAC, APCAC and Academic Senate, the Dean will discuss with the Provost before seeking endorsement from the Vice-Chancellor and President. Where there is a third-party provider, the Dean will also discuss the proposed discontinuation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Education.

(44) Proposals for the discontinuation of a program must take into account the students currently enrolled in the program and include a summary of the transition arrangements.

(45) The SAC will provide details of proposed transition arrangements, including the timeframe for student completion, to APCAC for consideration and if endorsed, will be recommended to Academic Senate for approval.

## **Retirement of a Program**

(46) Where there has been a variation to a program, the previous version will no longer be available for admission.

(47) The SAC must provide details of proposed transition arrangements, including the timeframe for student completion, to APCAC for consideration and if endorsed, will be recommended to Academic Senate for approval.

## Termination of a Program

(48) A program will be administratively terminated by the Office of Student and University Planning when there are no students enrolled in the retired program. Any former student presenting for completion of the program after termination has taken effect will be advised to seek admission to a current program and seek Credit for Prior Learning (Credit) for previous study.

## Timing of Program Approvals

(49) The timeframe required for approval of a new program will vary dependent on the schedule of committee meetings.

(50) When developing a timeline for program approval, the following should be taken into consideration:

- a. Administration – following approval, at least four weeks is required to allow for administrative processes to open a program for applications.
- b. Student experience – the shorter the timeframe between a program being approved and being offered, the greater the risk to the student experience, including misinformation (or no information) provided because program details are not available, and/or students need to be transferred from one program to another or to new subjects. Late approvals will require additional communication and increase the potential of confusion for the student, along with operational cost and reputational risk to the University.
- c. Marketing – in order to generate interest in a program, sufficient time is required for a marketing plan to be implemented in order to fully inform potential applicants and conversion to applications.
- d. International students – following approval, [Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students \(CRICOS\)](#) approval of the program must be sought from Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) prior to marketing. Consideration should be made for students who may need to undertake academic pathways, including English language pathways, to meet conditions for entry. An indicative timeframe for International students offshore is six to 18 months. A shorter period may be feasible for international students who are onshore.
- e. The program approval process should take no longer than 12 months to ensure it remains relevant.

(51) New subjects associated with a new program are approved at APCAC and should be approved at the same time as the new program. If the subjects are not ready at that time, a timeline must be included to ensure approval of all subjects in an acceptable timeframe.

## Part B - Subjects

(52) The Subject Proposal outline includes information such as:

- a. the learning outcomes for the subject
- b. subject content
- c. assessment tasks
- d. delivery mode
- e. campus location
- f. WIL and/or placement details
- g. Special Requirements, legislative requirements and professional accreditation requirements
- h. facility requirements, e.g., laboratory space, tutorial rooms.

(53) Subject Proposals require a detailed resource assessment, and proposers must consult with supporting service areas such as the Library, Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching, Data Integrity, Quality and

Operations, to ensure that the subject can be supported.

(54) All subjects must adhere to the provisions of the [Assessment Policy](#).

## **New Subjects**

(55) For the purposes of these procedures, a new subject:

- a. introduces curriculum content and related learning outcomes that are not currently offered by the University and/or
- b. replaces one or more existing subjects and substantially changes their curriculum content and/or learning outcomes and/or
- c. results from a change to the credit point value and/or
- d. results from a change to the level of a subject and/or
- e. results from a change to the discipline code to a new Field of Education.

(56) A new subject requires the completion of a [Unit Proposal and Variation Form](#). Schools/Divisional units will be responsible for the academic content and quality of the subject including learning outcomes.

(57) New subjects developed in association with a new program or major require endorsement by SAC and approval by APCAC.

(58) All new elective subjects require endorsement by SAC and approval by APCAC.

(59) All other new subjects require approval by SAC and reporting to the next APCAC meeting. This provides opportunity for APCAC members to consider the fit of the subject in the academic profile and to ensure there is no duplication of content already offered by another School. The report to APCAC will include the following details:

- a. name and code of the subject
- b. rationale for introduction of the new subject
- c. discipline code
- d. subject level
- e. credit points
- f. Handbook summary.

(60) Coursework subjects in research programs must be considered by Research Studies Committee prior to submission to SAC.

(61) A quarterly review of SAC approvals will be undertaken, with samples initially identified by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Education in conjunction with the Curriculum Data Quality team and endorsed or supplemented by APCAC.

## **New Subjects Taught by The College**

(62) New subjects developed in association with a new program or major to be delivered by The College must be first endorsed by The College APP Committee, then endorsed by the Academic Committee of the School that teaches the equivalent University subject where applicable, before approval by APCAC.

(63) New elective subjects to be delivered by The College must be first endorsed by The College APP Committee, then endorsed by the SAC of the School that teaches the equivalent University subject where applicable, before approval by APCAC.

(64) The College APP Committee will approve all other new subjects (following endorsement by the SAC of the School that teaches the equivalent University subject where applicable) and report them to the next APCAC meeting. This will provide opportunity for APCAC members to consider the fit of the subject in the academic profile and to ensure there is no duplication of content already offered by another School. The report to APCAC will include the following details:

- a. name and code of the subject
- b. rationale for introduction of the new subject
- c. discipline code
- d. subject level
- e. credit points
- f. Handbook summary
- g. evidence of endorsement of relevant SAC, where applicable.

(65) A quarterly review of SAC approvals will be undertaken with samples initially identified by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Education in conjunction with the Curriculum Data Quality team and endorsed or supplemented by APCAC. This review must include Special Requirements, legislative requirements and accreditation requirements.

### **Variations to a Subject**

(66) Subject variations must be approved in accordance with the [Subject Approval Authorities and Delegations](#).

### **Variations to a Subject also Taught by The College or Other Third-Party Provider**

(67) The School/divisional unit that owns the subject must consult The College or other third-party provider during the development of the variation, if the subject or equivalent subject is delivered by them.

### **Retirement or Deletion of a Subject**

(68) Proposals to retire or replace a subject must take into consideration students in all programs where the subject is offered and the impact on the learning outcomes of any programs where the subject is a core subject. The School/divisional unit which owns the subject must consult with all providers of the related program(s).

(69) The SAC must be notified at least six months prior to the implementation of the decision to retire a subject. The notification should provide the arrangements to accommodate students who are affected by the retirement of the subject.

(70) Where a subject will be replaced by a new subject, the request for retirement will form part of the proposal documentation of the new replacement subject.

(71) Any continuing students affected by the decision to retire a core subject should be given notice at least six months prior to the change, communicated by the Schools' Dean or nominee, and including options or alternative arrangements.

### **Timing of Approvals for Subjects**

(72) New subjects associated with a new program are approved at APCAC and should be approved at the same time as the new program.

(73) When developing a timeline for subject approval, the following items should be taken into consideration:

- a. Administration - following approval, up to four weeks is required to allow for administrative processes to open a

subject for applications.

- b. Student experience - the shorter the timeframe between a subject being approved and being offered, the greater the risk to the student experience, including misinformation (or no information) provided because subject details are not available, and/or students need to be transferred from one subject to another or to new subjects. Late approvals will require additional communication and increase the potential of confusion for the student, along with operational cost and reputational risk to the University.
- c. The subject approval process should take no longer than 12 months to ensure it remains relevant.

## **Part C - Delegations and Associated Documents**

(74) Refer to the Delegations documents in the Associated Information.

(75) Refer to the Curriculum Approvals Work Flow and forms available in the Associated Documents to these procedures.



## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	9th April 2024
<b>Review Date</b>	25th October 2024
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Director, Governance Services
<b>Approval Date</b>	9th April 2024
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Core Subject"** - Mandatory subject required for the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills needed to achieve program outcomes.

**"Volume of Learning"** - (As defined in the AQF) The volume of learning is a dimension of the complexity of a qualification. It is used with the level criteria and qualification type descriptor to determine the depth and breadth of the learning outcomes of a qualification. The volume of learning identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type. It is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

**"Program"** - A program of study consisting of at least four subjects or 40 credit points leading to an award of the University (Foundation Studies Program, Undergraduate Preparation Program, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Undergraduate Certificate, Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Postgraduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma and Masters by Coursework Degree) which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by the Board of Trustees.

**"Major"** - An approved sequence of subjects that make up a special focus within a program. The major may or may not form part of the degree title and appear on the student's testamur. Testamur majors are defined sequences of subjects in a focus area, which represents a significant area of study that the University wishes to recognise to highlight the graduate's area of specialisation.

**"Minor"** - An approved sequence of subjects that makes up a shorter area of special focus (than a Major) within a program.

**"Subject"** - The subject of study in a program in which a student enrolls.

**"Testamur"** - The official certificate, bearing the University Seal, issued to students when their award is conferred and confirms their completion of a University qualification.