

Unit of Study Review Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy supports the assurance and enhancement of the quality, integrity, and relevance of the University's suite of units of study (units) and ensures that they meet agreed institutional, disciplinary and regulatory standards regarding teaching, learning and the student experience.

(2) This Policy is part of Stage 4 Monitoring of the Curriculum Lifecycle Framework and should be read in conjunction with all policies and procedures specific to this Stage and the Curriculum Lifecycle Framework.

Scope

(3) This Policy applies to all units that are available for credit within award courses and enabling programs.

(4) This Policy applies to units within the Bachelor of Philosophy/Master of Research but does not apply to other Higher Degree Research awards.

(5) This Policy does not apply to microcredentials (see [Microcredentials Policy](#)).

Section 2 - Section 2 - Policy

(6) Unit Review is designed to ensure that units:

- a. provide students with an exceptional academic experience that meets their needs, as well as the requirements of industry, disciplinary fields, and scholarly understandings, in alignment with national and global priorities;
- b. are fit for purpose and meet all internal and external requirements and standards; and
- c. are reviewed through a credible, effective, and fair quality assurance system overseen by the University's academic governance processes.

(7) The Unit Review process will:

- a. provide staff with opportunities to evaluate selected units and their delivery in depth;
- b. facilitate ongoing improvements to unit design and delivery; and
- c. build a body of meaningful data which can be used to support the Course Reaccreditation Stage in the Curriculum Lifecycle.

(8) Unit Review is informed by:

- a. transparent and coherent institutional processes;
- b. institutionally agreed and independently compiled data metrics;
- c. the latest pedagogical and professional developments in the scholarship of teaching and learning;
- d. institutional and, where appropriate, external referencing;

- e. a risk-based approach to decision making and escalation from monitoring to review; and
- f. the feedback of students and staff.

(9) A selection of units from each course will undergo Unit Review at least once during the accreditation cycle of the course for which it was designed.

(10) All units are regularly monitored in accordance with the [Unit of Study Monitoring and Grade Ratification Policy](#).

(11) This Policy documents the process by which units are selected for and subjected to review using a risk-based approach that considers:

- a. the role of the unit in assuring achievement of the course learning outcomes and alignment to the AQF, including units at key points within a course;
- b. units that are key foundational units within a course;
- c. units that have shared teaching with other units;
- d. units that have a high student load and/or that are part of the core zone of more than one course;
- e. units identified to have one or more significant issues, including but not limited to:
 - i. low success rate;
 - ii. low student satisfaction;
 - iii. significant concerns regarding academic integrity;
 - iv. high rates of special consideration applications;
 - v. high rates of academic appeals;
 - vi. low or decreasing enrolments;
 - vii. issues related to the enrolment numbers and/or performance of specific cohorts;
- f. units that are integral to a course's alignment with and achievement of key institutional priorities, such as employability, sustainability or Indigenous connected curriculum;
- g. units that are integral to the external accreditation of a course; and
- h. units identified through internal or external accreditation processes to undergo a Unit Review.

(12) Sufficient units from a course must be selected to undergo Unit Review within the accreditation cycle of the course to ensure that the achievement of course learning outcomes and alignment with the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) can be assured. For Bachelor courses, the units selected must include the capstone unit.

(13) Units that appear in the core zone of more than one course can be reviewed against the needs of all courses in a single review if the Directors of these courses support such an approach.

(14) External referencing must be undertaken for some of the units selected for Unit Review to assure assessment methods and grading of student achievement of unit learning outcomes, and alignment with external comparators. At a minimum external referencing must be completed in:

- a. at least one (1) core unit within a course with a volume of learning equivalent to one (1) year or less; or
- b. at least two (2) core units within a course with a volume of learning equivalent greater than one (1) year, including Capstone units in Undergraduate Bachelor courses of study.

(15) External referencing must be conducted by an individual/s external to Macquarie University. In some cases, external referencing may be satisfied through external course accreditation process. External referencing will be conducted prior to the panel review and in accordance with the University's [Unit of Study External Referencing Guidelines](#).

Section 3 - Procedures

Part A - Unit Review Process

(16) The Faculty or The College Authority will liaise with Course or Course Component Authorities on an annual basis to select and schedule units to undergo Unit Review for the following 12 months, including units that will undergo external referencing.

(17) Where appropriate, a Course or Course Component Authority may bundle units to be reviewed at the same time.

(18) The Unit Review process will be conducted through the approved University system.

(19) The Review Panel will be nominated by the Course Authority and will consist of at least:

- a. one (1) academic of Level C or higher whose expertise or experience will be valuable to the review and who is not currently involved with delivery of the unit, and who will act as Panel Chair; and
- b. one (1) academic of any level whose expertise or experience will be valuable to the review and who is not currently involved with delivery of the unit.

(20) Academic panel members who have previously been involved with the design and/or the delivery of the unit must declare any potential conflicts of interest and be able to provide a balanced, objective and considered review of the unit.

(21) Where required for external referencing, the Unit Convenor, in consultation with the Course Authority, will identify an appropriate reviewer external to Macquarie University who is suitably qualified and has current knowledge and skills in the relevant discipline and experience in learning and teaching.

(22) The Unit Convenor will enter the required review information into the approved University system and provide the Review Panel, and where required, the External Reviewer, with the necessary information and materials to conduct the review.

(23) The Unit Convenor will be available for consultation during the review.

(24) The External Reviewer will complete their review using the External Peer Review of Unit Template, or a suitable alternative. The completed template will be attached or linked to the Unit Review Template within the approved university system.

(25) The Review Panel will complete their review and submit their comments and recommendations in the approved University system.

(26) The Unit Convenor will develop an Action Plan, informed by the recommendations made by the Review Panel, in consultation with the Course or Course Component Authority.

(27) The Course or Course Component Authority will submit the Action Plan to the Faculty or The College Authority, for endorsement.

(28) The Faculty or The College Authority will submit the Action Plan to the Executive Dean, or The College Director, for approval.

(29) The Unit Convenor will execute the Action Plan.

(30) Upon completion of the Action Plan, the Unit Convenor will complete the final report in the University approved system and submit it to the Course or Course Component Authority for endorsement.

(31) The Course or Course Component Authority will recommend the final report to the designated Faculty or The College Authority for review.

(32) The Faculty or The College Authority will endorse the final report and submit it to the Faculty Board or the Macquarie University College Board.

(33) Upon examination of the Unit Review Final Report, the Faculty Board or Macquarie University College Board will make one of the following three decisions:

- a. approve the continued offering of the unit including any proposed amendments made to the unit as a result of the review;
- b. return the report to the Unit Convenor for revisions to the Action Plan noting that approval of the unit is pending; or
- c. approve the discontinuation of the unit. Unit discontinuation will trigger a revision of the course or courses in which the unit is part of the structure. The timing of the unit discontinuation will be dependent upon the impact in those courses (see [Course of Study Revision Policy](#)).

(34) An annual report of all unit reviews in the Faculty or The College, undertaken in the previous year, is submitted to the Academic Standards and Quality Committee for noting.

Part B - Responsibilities

(35) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is responsible for:

- a. facilitating access to regular unit monitoring data;
- b. making available a Learner Experience of the Unit Extended (LEUX) in the last offering of the unit before review; and
- c. regular review for improvement purposes of the systems which support this Policy.

(36) The Academic Standards and Quality Committee is responsible for:

- a. noting each Faculty's Annual Unit Review Report and approving The College's Annual Unit Review Report; and
- b. considering if there are issues deserving of thematic review in the areas of its responsibility.

(37) The relevant authorised Course Authority and/or Course Component Authority is responsible for:

- a. liaising with Faculty or The College Authority to select units to be reviewed in alignment with the criteria stipulated in clause 11;
- b. selecting the review panel;
- c. recommending the proposed Action Plan;
- d. reviewing the progress of the Action Plan; and
- e. conducting Course/s Revision in the event of unit discontinuation resulting from the review process in line with the [Course of Study Revision Policy](#).

(38) The relevant authorised Faculty Authority or The College Authority is responsible for:

- a. collaborating with Course Authorities in the selection of Units to be reviewed;
- b. collaborating with Course Authorities in the selection of Units to undergo external referencing;
- c. overseeing Unit Reviews across the Faculty to ensure sufficient units within each course are being reviewed;
- d. endorsing the proposed Action Plan;

- e. providing the Unit Convenor with any support required to finalise the Action Plan;
- f. endorsing finalisation of the Action Plan; and
- g. finalising the accumulated Faculty report on units reviewed in that year.

(39) The Faculty Board and the Macquarie University College Board are responsible for:

- a. approving the continued offering of units that have successfully completed the Action Plan; or
- b. approving the discontinuation of units.

(40) The Unit Convenor is responsible for providing the Review Panel with the necessary information and materials for the Unit Review, including:

- a. identifying and liaising with an External Reviewer if external benchmarking is to be undertaken, and preparing and sharing materials and information required for external review with the external reviewer, prior to the panel review;
- b. being available for consultation during the Unit Review;
- c. finalising the Action Plan based on Review Panel's recommendations;
- d. implementing the Action Plan; and
- e. submitting a Final Report to the Course of Course Component Authority once implementation is completed.

(41) The Panel Chair is responsible for:

- a. liaising with other panel member/s to facilitate the efficient review of the unit; and
- b. finalising the Unit Review Report and recommendations within the approved University system.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(42) See the [Unit of Study External Referencing Guidelines](#).

Section 5 - Definitions

(43) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Accreditation means the process, within the Macquarie Curriculum Lifecycle Framework, where the design of a new academic item (course, course component or unit) is undertaken followed by the submission of an academic case through the pertinent academic governance process.
- b. Action Plan means the plan developed by the authorised unit authority to address issues highlighted as a result of the unit monitoring or unit periodic review processes.
- c. Course Authority is the person assigned by a Faculty or The College to perform certain roles within the Curriculum Lifecycle processes at a course level, for example Course Director, Head of Department, Program Director.
- d. Course Component Authority is the person assigned by a Faculty or The College to perform certain roles within the Curriculum Lifecycle processes at a course component level, for example Head of Discipline, (Deputy) Head of School.
- e. Curriculum Lifecycle Framework charts the journey of an award course, course component or unit from idea to disestablishment, including the processes and policies for their accreditation, revision, monitoring and review,

and reaccreditation. It can also be applied to non-award educational products that still require institutional oversight.

- f. Education Strategy Committee is a sub-committee of Executive Group. It provides input and support in the development of a vision for education and execution of an education strategy.
- g. External Referencing means a process through which a higher education provider compares an aspect of its operations with an external comparator(s).
- h. Faculty or The College Authority is the person assigned by a Faculty or the Macquarie University College to perform certain roles within the Curriculum Lifecycle processes at a Senior Leadership level, for example: Deputy Dean, Associate Dean, Associate Director.
- i. Final Report means the report created by the Unit Convenor or Course Authority outlining the outcomes of the implementation of an Action Plan or Success Plan.
- j. Monitoring data means a unit of information, derived from a measurement, and represented numerically and/or graphically, provided to support the processes of review, monitoring and reaccreditation via institutional dashboards and to be used as evidence to justify Action or Success Plans.
- k. Unit Review is the process through which the Units of Study identified through a risk-based approach are subject to an in-depth evaluation of their design, delivery and performance.
- l. Recommendation means an action resulting from a review process where a panel or other authority provide a course of action based on the evaluation of the submission against domains, data and/or other supporting resources.

Status and Details

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