Quality Assurance Framework Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy sets out the framework through which quality at Macquarie University (the University) will be assured, enhanced, and improved.

(2) The Quality Assurance framework reflects a strong commitment to evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.

(3) At an organisational level, it is intended to guide the activities that will contribute to the development of a University-wide culture of ongoing Quality Assurance to achieve the University's strategic objectives and desired outcomes.

(4) The Quality Assurance framework is designed to meet the University's legislative and regulatory requirements and promote and support the achievement of high standards.

Scope

(5) This Policy applies to:

a. governance bodies / committees and operational committees of the University;
b. staff of the University, particularly members of the Executive Group in exercising designated responsibilities and leadership to embed a culture of Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement across the University as a whole.

(6) This Policy is relevant to all students, staff, and other stakeholders of the University.

Section 2 - Policy

(7) The University aims to achieve excellence in all aspects of its activities through accountability and collaboration under a 'students first' approach.

Principles

(8) The following statements of principle guide the University's framework for Quality Assurance:

a. strategic oversight of quality and compliance with External and Internal Standards and requirements resides at the highest levels of University governance;
b. efforts for Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement are coordinated by and cascade from the Executive Group (Quality Management);
c. key external reference points and higher education sector benchmarks inform the development, monitoring and review of plans, systems, policies, processes, practices, programs and courses. External reference points include, for example, legislation, sector-wide frameworks, codes of practice, guidelines and External Accreditation requirements;

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d. clear and transparent plans, systems, policies and processes relating to higher education and related services are in place, accessible and implemented;
e. processes are in place and implemented for the monitoring and evaluation of the reporting of higher education and related service provision outcomes, including benchmarking and performance measurement against targets, indicators and External Standards;
f. opportunity is provided for appropriate internal and external involvement in the monitoring, review and improvement of quality and standards, including through feedback from students, graduates employers, staff and other stakeholders;
g. students and staff are supported in the pursuit of quality and the upholding of standards; and
h. all students and prospective students are treated fairly and equitably and provided with timely and accurate information relevant to their current or future studies or research or other engagement and pursuits with the University.

Quality Assurance Cycle

(9) The University's Quality Assurance Cycle is divided into four stages:

a. Plan: formulation of plans, policy, processes, timelines and responsibilities for achieving outcomes intended to maintain or improve quality, including performance standards, measures, indicators, targets; and methods and frequency for performance monitoring and reporting;
b. Implement / Monitor: implementation of the planned arrangements, including regular monitoring and reporting on progress / effectiveness / outcomes;
c. Review: ongoing and summative review, based on evidence, of the extent to which planned arrangements are having / have had the desired effect in bringing about intended outcomes, including evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the planned arrangements; and
d. Improve: ongoing evidence-based identification of improvements and changes to be incorporated in new or reformulated plans, policy and processes in order to contribute to enhanced or improved outcomes.

(10) The four stages of the Quality Assurance Cycle do not stand in isolation from one another but rather feed into each other to promote continuous Quality Enhancement and Quality Improvement.

(11) Each stage of the cycle has a set of expected actions which support the evaluation and measurement of performance against External and Internal Standards and contribute to continuous improvement.

Areas encompassed by the Quality Assurance framework

(12) The Quality Assurance framework encompasses all areas of University activity and enterprise, including:

a. corporate governance (including monitoring and accountability);
b. academic governance;
c. University management;
d. student participation (including admission, credit and recognition of prior learning, orientation and progression, learning outcomes and assessment, qualifications and certification);
e. learning environment (including facilities and infrastructure, library services, accessibility support, diversity and equity, wellbeing and safety, student grievances and complaints);
f. teaching (including course design, staffing, learning resources and educational support);
g. research and research training (including research integrity);
h. institutional quality assurance (including course approval, monitoring, review, improvement and accreditation, academic and research integrity, delivery with other parties);

i. representation, information, and information management (including communications, marketing, and promotion); and
j. external engagement and environment.

Quality and standards accountabilities and responsibilities

(13) Policies and procedures of the University contribute wholly, or in part, to Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement and Quality Improvement or compliance with relevant External Standards or requirements. Responsibilities for implementation and review of those policies and procedures are identified in the relevant documentation through the specification of a Responsible Officer.

(14) In the broader context:

a. the University Council is accountable to the Australian Government and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency for Quality Assurance and compliance with External Standards by the University;
b. the Vice-Chancellor is responsible and accountable to the University Council for University management and Quality Assurance and compliance with External Standards across all of the University's activities and enterprises;
c. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), in collaboration with Academic Senate, is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in the areas of academic governance, academic integrity, student participation and wellbeing, student grievances and complaints, course design and teaching, course delivery with other parties, and institutional quality assurance;
d. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), in collaboration with Academic Senate, is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in the areas of research, research training (including collaborative research training arrangements with delivery with other parties), research integrity, institutional quality assurance, and in relation to the controlled entity Access Macquarie Ltd (including any subsidiaries);
e. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Medicine and Health), is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in relation to Hearing Australia Macquarie University and the controlled entity Macquarie University Health Pty Limited;
f. the Vice-President, Finance and Resources is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in the areas of financial and investment management, facilities and infrastructure, safety and security, enterprise risk, workplace health and safety;
g. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Operations) is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External and Internal Standards in the areas of information and communications technology, information management (including communications, marketing and promotion), student recruitment, human resources, diversity and equity, business intelligence and reporting, and in relation to the controlled entities U@MQ Ltd and MGSM Ltd;
h. the Vice-President, Strategy, Planning and Performance is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External and Internal Standards in the areas of University planning and performance against the University Strategy and the University Operating Plan 2020-24, and global engagement;
i. the Executive Dean of each Faculty is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor, and where identified, reporting requirements to the Academic Senate (in their capacity as Chair of the Faculty Board), for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in the areas of staffing / scholarship, learning and teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, and research and research training;

j. the Deputy Dean, Education and Employability of each Faculty is responsible and accountable to their respective Executive Dean for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards, including development and management of learning, teaching, employability activities within their Faculty (such as admissions, academic integrity, student discipline, accreditation activities, work integrated learning);
k. the Associate Deans, Curriculum and Learning of each Faculty are responsible and accountable to their respective Deputy Dean, Education and Employability for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards, including teaching quality, curriculum, education activities and work-integrated or practice-based learning activities;
l. the Deputy Dean, Research and Innovation of each Faculty is responsible and accountable to their respective Executive Dean for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards, including development and management of research services / funding, facilities, ethics and integrity within their Faculty and across the University;
m. the Associate Deans, Research Training and Performance of each Faculty are responsible and accountable to their respective Deputy Dean, Research and Innovation for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards, including the HDR training program and management of the Faculty's research facilities and enablers;
n. Heads of Departments / Deans of Schools are responsible and accountable to their respective Executive Dean for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in the areas of staffing/scholarship, learning and teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, and research and research training;
o. Course Directors work under the guidance of the Associate Dean for responsibilities relating to the governance of the course (including annual monitoring of quality and internal and external accreditation) and take guidance from the Head of Department / Head of School for responsibilities relating to course delivery (including staff and student experience, course level outcomes, learning and teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, work integrated learning and research-led teaching);
p. Executive Directors, Directors or Managers who report directly or indirectly to a member of the Executive Group are responsible and accountable to the relevant member for implementation of the University's Quality Assurance Cycle including improvement actions and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards within the area that they lead;
q. all employees of the University, through their supervisor, are responsible and accountable to their supervisor, for implementing the University's Quality Assurance Cycle including improvement actions and compliance with External Standards and Internal Standards as they pertain to each employee's work and area of operation; and
r. students and other members of the University community are important contributors to the University's Quality Assurance Cycle.

Section 3 - Procedures

(15) Refer to the:

a. Quality and Standards Monitoring and Reporting Procedure;
b. Faculty Annual Review and Planning Procedure;
c. Course of Study and Unit of Study related policies of the University.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(16) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(17) In this Policy, the following definitions apply:

a. External Accreditation is the process through which a specified course of study or its graduates are warranted by a professional or governmental body;
b. Internal Accreditation is the formal process through which a course of study is approved for delivery by Macquarie University in its capacity as a self-accrediting higher education provider;
c. Executive Group is the group of executive University officers referred to as Band B in the Delegations of Authority Policy;
d. External Standards refers to the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 and other codified quality-related standards applicable to Australian universities, for example the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018, and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000;
e. Faculty refers to the Faculty of Arts, Macquarie Business School, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences, and Faculty of Science and Engineering.
f. Internal Standards refers to the University's Rules, policies and procedures;
g. Quality Assurance means the management and organisational processes in place for checking that the standards and quality of higher education provision by the University meet higher education sector requirements and norms;
h. Quality Assurance Cycle is the model and mechanism through which the University operationalises its approach to Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement;
i. Quality Enhancement is the process by which the University augments the quality of its activities;
j. Quality Improvement means the management and organisational policies and processes in place for ongoing improvement of higher education provision by the University; and
k. Responsible Officer refers to the senior / executive staff member who is responsible for the effective implementation and review of a Macquarie policy / procedure as identified in the Status and Details section of each policy document.

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