

# Course of Study Suspension and Discontinuation Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to document the processes through which a course of study ('course') is:

- a. closed to new enrolments; or
- b. no longer offered by the University.

(2) This Policy is part of Stage 6 Suspension and Discontinuation 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 Macquarie University award courses that align with the categories of the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) including Combined Degrees and the Master by Research courses, but excluding other Postgraduate Higher Degree Research awards.

(4) This Policy also applies to the components of a course and units of study ('units') within a course that is suspended or proposed for discontinuation.

(5) This Policy does not apply to non-award programs of study with the exception of the following programs offered by the Macquarie University College:

- a. Standard Foundation Program; and
- b. Intensive Program.

(6) This Policy does not impact the regular scheduling processes for units across study periods.

## Section 2 - Policy

(7) Course Suspension is the cessation of the offering of a course to new students for a specified period of time while its accreditation status is evaluated by the University. Individual Course Components within a course can also be subject to suspension.

(8) Course Discontinuation is the process through which a course is disestablished and removed from the University's coursework suite. Individual Course Components can also be subject to discontinuation within an accredited course.

(9) The suspension or discontinuation of a course or course component must:

- a. be subject to a transparent process that meets the University's expectations and requirements;
- b. comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and meet any contractual obligations between the University and the Commonwealth and/or Third Parties regarding their changed status; and

- c. ensure that there is adequate provision to meet the learning needs of students impacted by the suspension or discontinuation so they may successfully complete their studies.

(10) Course Suspension and Discontinuation is informed by:

- a. the [Delegations of Authority Policy](#);
- b. the [Curriculum Architecture Policy](#); and
- c. the finalisation of approved plans for the transition of current students within the course or course component being suspended or discontinued.

(11) The suspension and discontinuation of a course or a course component is conducted through the approved University [Curriculum Management System](#).

## Section 3 - Procedures

### Part A - Suspension of a Course or Course Component

(12) A recommendation for the suspension of a course or course component may occur through one of the following:

- a. In-Cycle Review (see [Course of Study Annual Monitoring and Review Policy](#)); or
- b. Thematic Review.

(13) A course or course component may be recommended for suspension because there is a need to examine its suitability for continuation against one or more of the following criteria:

- a. alignment with University resources and strategic needs and priorities;
- b. viability; and/or
- c. the course not meeting expected institutional requirements and standards.

(14) The decision to accept a recommendation to suspend a course or course component is made by the Executive Dean or equivalent authority.

(15) The Executive Dean's decision is endorsed by the Education Strategy Committee and noted by the Academic Senate.

(16) The suspension will be recorded in the [Curriculum Management System](#) and the course will have its accreditation status changed to Conditional.

(17) A course or course component can be suspended for no more than one (1) year.

(18) New enrolments into the course or course component will usually be suspended from the next intake unless a case for delay has been made and approved or, if in the opinion of the Registrar, there is insufficient time to finalise such arrangements for the next student intake.

(19) In order to comply with legal obligations the University may be obliged to admit a student to a course or course component that has been suspended.

(20) During the period of suspension, a course or course component will be subject to an In-Cycle Review which addresses the reasons for the suspension (see [Course of Study Annual Monitoring and Review Policy](#)).

(21) The approval process for any recommendations originating from the In-Cycle Review will be the same as those

specified in the [Course of Study Annual Monitoring and Review Policy](#).

(22) Any recommendations that re-open a course component to admission or a course to full accreditation status will be completed in the [Curriculum Management System](#).

(23) If a suspended course is to be discontinued, the course will remain in suspension with conditional accreditation until the discontinuation process is completed.

## **Part B - Discontinuation of a Course or Course Component**

(24) A recommendation for the discontinuation of a course or course component may occur through one of the following:

- a. In-Cycle Review (see [Course of Study Annual Monitoring and Review Policy](#));
- b. Reaccreditation (see [Course of Study Reaccreditation Policy](#)); or
- c. Thematic Review.

(25) A course or course component may be recommended for discontinuation because it has been replaced by a new course or course component, or because it is no longer able to meet the university's expectations for an accredited course on one or more of the criteria listed at clause 13.

(26) The Executive Dean or equivalent will approve the recommendation for discontinuation.

(27) The Education Strategy Committee will endorse the recommendation to discontinue.

(28) The Course and/or Course Component Authority, in conjunction with the Registrar, will complete transition planning for impacted students.

(29) Before the academic matters relating to a proposal for discontinuation, are considered, the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will confirm that the proposal has met all legislative, regulatory, and contractual requirements, and, where necessary and as stipulated in the University's funding agreement, secure permission from the Commonwealth to proceed with discontinuation of the course in question.

(30) The Academic Standards and Quality Committee must approve all transition plans before a proposal for discontinuation is finalised through the approved [Curriculum Management System](#).

(31) A proposal for course or individual course component discontinuation will be completed by the authorised Course Authority in the [Curriculum Management System](#) for the consideration of the Academic Senate as per the [Delegations of Authority Register](#).

## **Part C - Transition Planning for Discontinuation**

(32) Students in courses which are discontinued will be either taught out of the existing course or migrated to another course.

### **Teach-Out Plans**

(33) A Teach-Out Plan is the means by which currently enrolled students are able to complete their studies in a course that is being discontinued.

(34) A Teach-Out Plan must be offered to currently enrolled students who have not opted to be migrated to another course.

(35) A Teach-Out Plan must ensure that students are still able to meet the Course's accredited course requirements.

(36) A Teach-Out Plan may:

- a. reduce or remove student choice as it applies to unit availability in option sets;
- b. require students to study a prescribed sequence of units to ensure students can complete their studies within the prescribed timeframe; or
- c. include provisions for recognising unit equivalence if required and approved in accordance with the [General Coursework Rules](#), the [Academic Senate Rules](#), and the [Delegations of Authority Register](#).

(37) The length of time a course remains in teach-out with conditional accreditation is informed by whether the course has a migration plan.

(38) A Teach-Out Plan will determine when a course's conditional accreditation status will end and the status of the course will change to discontinued.

(39) Students who do not complete their studies within the prescribed timeline for teach-out will have their enrolment discontinued and, where possible, be issued an exit award along with their transcript recording the extent of their studies and the reason for their discontinuation.

(40) The approved Teach-Out Plan must be appended to the proposal for discontinuation in the [Curriculum Management System](#).

## Migration Plans

(41) A Migration Plan is the means by which currently enrolled students can be transferred to another course or course component to complete their studies.

(42) A Migration Plan must ensure that students are able to meet the accredited course requirements of the new course without increasing the normal completion time and / or increasing student liability for course fees.

(43) A Migration Plan may include provisions for recognising unit equivalence if required and approved in accordance with the [General Coursework Rules](#), the [Academic Senate Rules](#), and the [Delegations of Authority Register](#).

(44) The approved Migration Plan must be appended to the proposal for discontinuation in the [Curriculum Management System](#).

## Application to Student Cohorts

(45) Teach-Out and Migration Plans will be designed for groups of students at similar stages of progression through the course being discontinued. These cohorts will usually be organised as follows:

- a. Undergraduate:
  - i. 80 cp or less completed;
  - ii. More than 80 cp but less than 160 cp completed;
  - iii. More than 160 cp but less than 240 cp completed;
  - iv. More than 240 cp but less than 320 cp completed; and
  - v. More than 320 cp but less than 400 cp completed.
- b. Postgraduate
  - i. 40 cp or less completed;
  - ii. More than 40 cp but less than 80 cp completed; and

iii. More than 80 cp completed.

(46) Other means by which a unique cohort of students can be identified to facilitate either teach-out or migration by the cohort may be approved as part of the provisions proposed in the Teach-Out or Migration Plan.

(47) When a cohort-based solution cannot be applied, for example due to specific individual student enrolment patterns or circumstances that make certain students atypical, individual arrangements may be proposed in the Teach-Out or Migration Plan.

## **Commencing and Transferred Students**

(48) Students will not be permitted to commence or enter a course or course component that has been approved to be discontinued unless they are a transfer student whose prior study places them in an approved teach-out cohort. This applies to students who have been accepted but not yet enrolled in any part of a course and includes students who have deferred their enrolment.

(49) Students who have been accepted but not yet enrolled in any part of a course or course component, including students who have deferred their enrolment, will be offered a place in an alternative course in accordance with any relevant Migration Plan.

(50) Students who are completing an award where there is an approved articulation pathway to a course or course component that is being discontinued will not be permitted entry unless their prior study places them in an approved teach-out cohort. They will be offered a place in an alternative course or course component in accordance with any relevant Migration Plan.

(51) If the University is legally bound to offer a commencing student entry into a specific course or course component, the student will be offered teach-out in that course if they do not wish to migrate to a different approved course or course component.

## **Part D - Responsibilities**

(52) Responsibilities related to the discontinuation of a course, or a course component are specified in the [Delegations of Authority Register](#) (section 5), the [General Coursework Rules](#), and the [Academic Senate Rules](#).

(53) Responsibilities related to this Policy are as follows:

- a. the Registrar will:
  - i. oversee communication plan for a discontinued course;
  - ii. communicate with all impacted students;
  - iii. oversee the implementation of transition plans and student study plans with Course and Faculty authorities;
  - iv. liaise with the Universities Admission Centre in the case where existing offers to commencing students need to be rescinded;
  - v. ensure proposed transition plans do not provoke a liability for tuition and relocation as per the University's obligations under the Tuition Assurance Scheme;
  - vi. liaise with the Commonwealth where the course in question:
    - is in a category listed under Closure of Courses in the University's funding agreement;
    - enrolls international students who are protected under the provider default obligations of the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) legislative framework;
    - has an Austudy entitlement; and
  - vii. approve Course transition plans.

- b. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will:
  - i. approve the templates and processes within the approved [Curriculum Management System](#);
  - ii. create the knowledge articles and other sources of information and training which support engagement with the [Curriculum Management System](#);
  - iii. approve the institutional timetable for the discontinuation process; and
  - iv. regularly review the Curriculum Management System for potential improvement.
- c. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Engagement) will:
  - i. advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Registrar on the process and timing requirements as they apply to international students;
  - ii. advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Registrar on international offers for students who have accepted an offer for a course or course component that is to be discontinued;
  - iii. liaise with responsible authorities in the case where existing offers to commencing international students need to be rescinded;
  - iv. design and deliver a communications strategy in consultation with the Course and Faculty Authorities, the Registrar and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) regarding the specific needs of international students; and
  - v. complete any new course offer requirements where a student is being migrated to a course with a different [CRICOS](#) code.
- d. the Academic Senate will approve a course for discontinuation or the revision of a course to remove a course component from that course.
- e. the Academic Standards and Quality Committee will:
  - i. approve any transition plans; and
  - ii. review and note any revisions to the templates and processes within the [Curriculum Management System](#) approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
- f. the relevant authorised Course Authority will:
  - i. propose the case for course discontinuation; and
  - ii. design the transition arrangements in consultation with the Registrar.
- g. the relevant authorised Faculty Authority with, where necessary, the support of the Office of the General Counsel, will manage the dissolution or alteration of any course specific third-party agreements.
- h. the relevant authorised Course Component Authority will propose the case for course component discontinuation through the [Curriculum Management System](#).
- i. the relevant authorised Unit Authority will propose the case for a unit to be discontinued through the [Curriculum Management System](#).
- j. the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Research and the Director, Macquarie University College may, if required, fulfill the same responsibilities as an Executive Dean in the finalisation of a course discontinuation in relation to their respective areas of responsibility.

## Section 4 - Guidelines

(54) Nil.

## Section 5 - Definitions

(55) Commonly defined terms are located in the University [Glossary](#). The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Accreditation means the process, within the 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. Course Authority is the person assigned by a Faculty or equivalent, to perform certain roles within the Curriculum Lifecycle processes at a course level, for example Course Director, Head of Department, Program Director.
- c. Course Component Authority is the person assigned by a Faculty or equivalent, to perform certain roles within the Curriculum Lifecycle processes at a course component level, for example Head of Discipline, (Deputy) Head of School
- d. Course discontinuation refers to the process by which a course of study is no longer offered by the University; also referred to as course disestablishment.
- e. Course Suspension means the cessation of the offering of a course of study to new students for a specified period of time while its accredited status is evaluated by the University.
- f. Curriculum Management System means Macquarie's 'single source of truth' and repository for all curriculum information including courses, course components (majors, specialisations, and minors) and units.
- g. Education Strategy Committee is a sub-committee of the Executive Group. It provides input and support in the development of a vision for education and execution of an education strategy.
- h. Knowledge Articles are articles written and maintained by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) as part of the [MQ Curriculum Manual Wiki](#) to support and inform all University staff who engage with curriculum development, management, support and quality assurance, enhancement and improvement, across all stages of the Curriculum Life Cycle.
- i. Faculty Authority is the person assigned by a Faculty or equivalent, to perform certain roles within the Curriculum Lifecycle processes at a Senior Leadership level, for example: Deputy Dean, Associate Dean, Associate Director.
- j. In-cycle review is a targeted review process conducted if a risk to the quality of the course is identified by an Annual Health Check or as a directive of an Executive Dean.
- k. Migration Plan means the steps put in place to allow currently enrolled students to be transferred to another course to complete their studies.
- l. Reaccreditation means the process, within the Macquarie Curriculum Lifecycle Framework, for the formal appraisal of a course against institutional and course specific domains takes place, involving a group of academic, professional experts and stakeholders.
- m. Teach-Out plan means the steps put in place to allow currently enrolled students to complete their studies in a course that is being discontinued.
- n. Thematic Review means an institutional review process that examines a specific issue of concern across a number of courses of study.
- o. Transfer student is an internal Macquarie or external student who has applied to transfer to another course through either internal or external admission processes.
- p. Unit Authority is the person assigned by a Faculty or equivalent, to perform certain roles within the Curriculum Lifecycle processes at a unit level, for example Unit Convenor.

## Status and Details

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| <b>Responsible Executive</b> | Mariella Herberstein<br>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)<br>+61 2 9850 4890  |
| <b>Responsible Officer</b>   | Sean Brawley<br>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Programs and Pathways)<br>+61 2 63386585 |
| <b>Enquiries Contact</b>     | Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Programs and Pathways)                     |