



Higher Education Course Review Policy

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1. 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.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Higher Education (HE) awards.

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- 3.1. **Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):** The national policy for regulated qualifications in Australia's education and training system. It provides a comprehensive framework that sets out the levels and types of qualifications offered across the higher education sector.
- 3.2. **Accreditation Committee:** A sub-committee of Academic Board responsible for overseeing the course review and accreditation, review, and quality assurance processes at AC.
- 3.3. **Annual Course Report:** A yearly report submitted by the Program Director (or equivalent) reviewing enrolment, performance data, feedback from stakeholders, and progress on improvement plans. It contributes to the continuous monitoring and enhancement of a course.
- 3.4. **Comprehensive Review:** A formal, in-depth review of a course of study conducted on a regular cycle (typically every seven years) to ensure ongoing alignment with academic standards, regulatory requirements, and institutional goals. It includes both internal and external evaluations.
- 3.5. **Course of Study:** A sequence of learning that leads to the awarding of a qualification or part thereof, such as a degree, diploma, or certificate.
- 3.6. **Course Review Committee (CRC):** A sub-committee appointed by the Accreditation Committee to conduct comprehensive and evidence-based evaluations of courses of study.
- 3.7. **ESOS Framework:** The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework, including the National Code, sets out the legal framework governing delivery of education to overseas studying in Australia on a student visa.
- 3.8. **External Expert:** An external member of the Course Review Committee with relevant course disciplinary area expertise to provide external independent advice.
- 3.9. **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:** The minimum standards that all Australian higher education providers must meet to be registered and offer accredited courses.
- 3.10. **Industry Advisory Group (IAG):** A group convened to provide external industry-based feedback on AC's courses of study and ensure alignment with current professional and vocational expectations.
- 3.11. **Independent Expert Course Review:** An external academic with no significant ties to AC, appointed to conduct an impartial, comprehensive review of a course of study, particularly in the context of the Higher Education Standards Framework, RTO Standards, and ESOS Framework.
- 3.12. **Minor Review:** A limited review of a course of study that results in small, targeted changes (e.g. changes to progression rules or structure) and does not require full review procedures.



- 3.13. **Professional Course Accreditation:** Professional course accreditation refers to the formal approval granted by a professional or regulatory authority—such as the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) or Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA)—to a course that meets specific professional standards and requirements.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. Course Quality Assurance

- 4.1.1. All accredited courses of study are to be reviewed on a regular cycle. This ensures that all accredited courses are delivered to consistent academic standards and are engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement in line with AC's Quality Assurance Framework.
- 4.1.2. Course reviews are conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and frameworks and intended to enhance the quality of teaching, learning, scholarship and research activity for the benefit of students and other stakeholders.
- 4.1.3. Reviews of existing higher education courses of study will be guided by the AC Course Development and Course Review Framework and usually follow the Course Review Schedule outlined in the AC Curriculum and Assessment Quality Assurance Systems (CAQAS), which stipulates that reviews typically occur every seven years.
- 4.1.4. Each accredited course of study will be reviewed via regular course review mechanisms in the ways described below. Any changes to an existing course of study must be implemented by following the procedures outlined in this policy.

4.2. Annual Review

- 4.2.1. An Annual Course Report for 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.
- 4.2.2. 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 and Provost and reviewed by Academic Board. This allows for the ongoing monitoring of performance and improvement of the course of study.
- 4.2.3. 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.

4.3. Comprehensive Review

- 4.3.1. All higher education courses will undergo a comprehensive review on a regular cycle of approximately seven years. This will be overseen by the Accreditation Committee in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

4.4. Additional Review

- 4.4.1. 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.
- 4.4.2. This proposal should include a clear rationale for the additional review of the course of study.



- 4.4.3. If accepted by the Accreditation Committee, this additional review will then be overseen by the Accreditation Committee in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

4.5. Other Review Mechanisms

- 4.5.1. 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 training and educational delivery. 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.

4.6. Professional Accreditation Renewal of Accreditation

- 4.6.1. Reviews of courses of study that are subject to professional accreditation will consider professional accreditation requirements as part of comprehensive course review processes.
- 4.6.2. Where practicable, comprehensive course reviews are aligned to professional accreditation timelines in order to allow for an effective course review process.
- 4.6.3. The Accreditation Committee, in consultation with the CRC, is responsible for submitting professional accreditation applications.

4.7. Course Closure (Teach Out)

- 4.7.1. A review may lead to a decision by Academic Board to discontinue (teach out) a course. Refer to the Course Discontinuation Policy for more information.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:

- Academic Board (AB):** The AB is responsible for reviewing and approving course renewal of accreditation recommendations from the Accreditation Committee.
- Accreditation Committee (A/C):** The A/C is responsible for overseeing all course of study reviews, including annual, comprehensive, and additional reviews; appointing Course Review Committees (CRCs); reviewing Comprehensive Course Review Reports and Renewal of Accreditation Applications; ensuring compliance with internal policies and external standards (e.g., AQF, HESF); and making recommendations to Academic Board based on review findings.
- Chair, Accreditation Committee:** The Chair of the Accreditation Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring timely review and revision of the policy in line with AC's Policy Development and Review Policy.
- Course Review Committee (CRC):** The CRC is responsible for conducting internal reviews of courses of study according to policy and procedures; gathering and analysing data such as enrolment, student/staff feedback, performance metrics, and external stakeholder input; making recommendations for course improvements or development of related/nested courses; considering and responding to findings of the Independent Expert Reviewer; and preparing the Comprehensive Course Review Report or Renewal of Accreditation Application for submission to the Accreditation Committee.
- Head of School (HoS):** HoS are responsible for reviewing Annual Course Reports and overseeing the implementation of recommended improvements; participating in Course Review Committees (usually as Chair); submitting professional renewal of accreditation



applications (where required); and contributing to the AC Annual Academic Report with input from course-level reporting.

- 5.6. **Independent Expert:** The Independent Expert is responsible for conducting a comprehensive, external review of a revised course of study; assessing compliance with AQF, HESF, and ESOS Framework (as applicable), and AC's course design principles; and providing a written report with findings, risks, and recommendations.
- 5.7. **Program Director (or equivalent):** Program Directors are responsible for preparing and submitting the Annual Course Report to the Head of School; participating in the course review process as required; monitoring course performance; and implementing recommendations for improvement as directed by the Head of School or Accreditation Committee.

6. Procedures

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

6.1. Appointment of Course Review Committee

- 6.1.1. Accreditation Committee will appoint a Course Review Committee (CRC). Members of the CRC will usually be chaired by the relevant Head of School and include a representative from the Quality & Standards Team, relevant academic staff with disciplinary expertise, representatives from relevant Third Parties (if applicable) and other AC departments as needed. The CRC membership for review of higher education courses will also include at least one suitably qualified external expert.
- 6.1.2. The criteria for appointment of external expert members of the CRC are guided by the relevant course of study to be reviewed, to ensure that external experts have the necessary industry or disciplinary expertise to provide relevant input.
- 6.1.3. The purpose of the CRC is to review the course of study according to the guidelines of the policy.

6.2. Internal Review of Course of Study

- 6.2.1. The CRC will conduct a comprehensive review of the course of study, including consideration of the following information as relevant:
 - a. annual course reports;
 - b. performance data (such as any outcomes of external moderation of grades);
 - c. staff and student feedback (including feedback from completed subject evaluations, student experience surveys, and other student surveys);
 - d. external stakeholder feedback;
 - e. external referencing e.g. benchmarking;
 - f. nested course of study arrangements;
 - g. professional accreditation requirements or feedback (if applicable);
 - h. strategic alignment of the future delivery of the course.
- 6.2.2. 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.
- 6.2.3. 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.
- 6.2.4. The reviews and recommendations of the CRC are presented as a Comprehensive Course Review Report.
- 6.2.5. For a course renewal of accreditation, the CRC will be tasked with drafting a Renewal of Accreditation Application.



6.3. Independent Expert Course Review of Course of Study

6.3.1. In the case of a Comprehensive Review for a course of study, AC will appoint an independent expert to conduct a holistic, comprehensive review of the proposed changes to the course of study.

a. Criteria for appointment

AC will ensure the independent expert:

- i. holds relevant academic qualifications, external memberships, and/or professional experience to the course of study being reviewed;
- ii. does not have (or intend to have) any material dealings with AC (or an associated party) that could interfere with the exercise of independent judgement; and
- iii. does not have a direct or indirect material financial interest with AC.

b. Terms of reference

The independent expert will be tasked with:

- i. conducting a comprehensive review 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, ESOS Framework, Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards);
 - AC's principles of course design and development, as outlined in this policy; and
 - any other matters deemed relevant by the Accreditation Committee or Academic Board.
- ii. provide a written summary of findings, risks and recommendations against the specified Standards;
- iii. The CRC will be tasked with developing an action plan considering and responding to the independent expert review before submission to Accreditation Committee for approval.

6.4. Recommendation by Accreditation Committee

6.4.1. The completed Comprehensive Review Report or Renewal of Accreditation Application, together with the Independent Expert Course Review Report, will be tabled at the Accreditation Committee by the Chair of the CRC. The Accreditation Committee will review the documentation and make a recommendation to Academic Board.

6.5. Approval by Academic Board

- 6.5.1. Academic Board will review the Comprehensive Review Report and take action accordingly (e.g., Academic Board may approve the proposed revisions to a course of study, or may instruct the Accreditation Committee to address concerns raised by Academic Board).
- 6.5.2. Once revisions to a course of study have been approved by Academic Board, an official announcement will be made to all relevant stakeholders and necessary amendments to course information will be made, and where relevant, the professional renewal of accreditation application will be submitted by the relevant Accreditation Committee.
- 6.5.3. Where necessary, the Program Director(s) will implement a transition plan for the superseded course to ensure that all existing students enrolled in a revised course are either provided with an option to complete the superseded course of study or transfer to the new version once it comes into effect. Transition arrangements must ensure students are able to continue their studies without disruption to their duration of study. Program Directors are responsible for communicating transition details to affected students.
- 6.5.4. Where there has been a variation to a course, the previous version will no longer be available for student admission.



7. Responsible for Implementation

7.1. Chair, Accreditation Committee.

8. Related AC Policies or Documents, Standards and Legislations

8.1. AC Policies or Documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following AC policies available at ac.edu.au/ppm/:

- 8.1.1. Assessment Policy;
- 8.1.2. Higher Education Course Design and Development Policy;
- 8.1.3. Higher Education Course Discontinuation Policy;
- 8.1.4. Higher Education Subject Development, Delivery and Review Policy;
- 8.1.5. Course Development and Course Review Framework;
- 8.1.6. Curriculum and Assessment Quality Assurance Systems (CAQAS).

8.2. Relevant Standards and Legislation

- 8.2.1. Higher Education Standards Framework;
- 8.2.2. ESOS Framework;
- 8.2.3. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF);
- 8.2.4. [Guidance note: Changes in a course of study that may lead to accreditation as a new course | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency;](#)
- 8.2.5. [Guidance note: Nested courses of study | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency;](#)
- 8.2.6. [Guidance note: Course design \(including learning outcomes and assessment\) | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.](#)

9. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee on a regular basis in accordance with the Policy Development and Review Policy. Any proposed changes will be tabled at the Accreditation Committee for endorsement and Academic Board for approval. Revisions will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders upon approval.

10. History of Approval and Amendments

Policy owner	Chair, Accreditation Committee
Policy category	Academic: Course Development
Policy status	Approved
Approval Body	Academic Board
Endorsement Body	Accreditation Committee
Approval Date	2025.12.08
Last Review Date	2025.11.13
History of Policy Amendments	
V2 2025.06.24	Transferred to new policy template, added roles and responsibilities, definitions, general revisions (e.g., removing references to limited self-accrediting authority, changed five years to seven years cycle)
V2.1 2026.10.02	Reformatting changes



Add a new row for each version of the policy. Do not remove previous rows/changes.

Appendices

- N/A