



University of
South Australia

Quality assurance and improvement: Programs, courses and teaching arrangements

POLICY NO: A-35A.13

DATE: 5 April, 1993

AMENDMENTS:

- 15 July 1994
- Academic Board Resolution 94/6/120
- 10 October 1994
- Registrar – June 1995
- Registrar – November 1995
- Academic Board Resolution 2000/4/62
- Registrar – November 2000
- Academic Board Resolution 2001/9/189
- 23 November 2001
- Academic Board Resolution 2002/5/92
- Academic Board Resolution 27 June 2003
- 10 November 2006
- Academic Board Resolution 2008/7/124
- Director: Student and Academic Services – January 2011
- Academic Board Resolution 2011/8/5.1.3.1 (28 October 2011)

REFERENCE AUTHORITY: Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic

CROSS-REFERENCES:

- [Assessment Policy and Procedures Manual - Section 1: Assessment Principles and Requirements](#)
- [A-35.B: Review](#)
- [A-38: Advisory Structures](#)
- [RES 15: Quality Assurance and Improvement in Higher Degrees by Research](#)
- [Code of Good Practice: University Teaching](#)
- [Coursework Program Approval Manual](#)
- [Teaching and Learning Framework](#)
- [LTU resources on Teaching and Learning Framework](#)
- [LTU resources on Graduate Qualities](#)
- [LTU resources on Inclusive Curriculum](#)

CONTENTS

- Preamble
- Scope
- Definitions
- Policy
- Procedures
 - Course Evaluation
 - Program evaluation and reporting
 - Monitoring the performance of programs
- Appendix 1a: Schedule of program evaluation, review and approval: New programs
- Appendix 1b: Schedule of program evaluation, review and approval: Existing programs

Preamble

Quality assurance and the continuous improvement of the University's educational programs are fundamental to the mission of the University of South Australia. This policy establishes the conditions for evaluating the quality and viability of all programs and for monitoring and ensuring systematic improvement of the University's programs and courses.

The Teaching and Learning Framework of the University provides a coherent process around the key elements of teaching and learning activity by linking intentions, implementation activity, outcomes and reflections on improvement. Program evaluation and improvement processes are core to this Framework and an integral part of academic planning. Through this policy the University requires individual academics, teaching teams and Schools to review the content and focus of their courses and programs, reflect on their teaching through feedback from students and other stakeholders, evaluate their programs, and make appropriate revisions as required.

The University recognises that the resources available to develop and sustain programs may affect their quality. For this reason the University will evaluate the viability of its programs so that available resources are used to maximum effect. The University will set conditions for the continuing development and maintenance of program quality and require the use of a range of data sources to evaluate issues of quality and viability.

Scope

Where reference is made throughout this policy to school, this includes the UniSA College. Any reference to Head of School includes the Head of UniSA College.

Definitions of terms used in this policy

Evaluation of quality refers to:

- (a) the systematic consideration of stakeholder views and benchmarking activities about the quality of programs and the courses that comprise them; and,
- (b) the aggregation, analysis and interpretation of students' feedback about their perceptions of the quality of their courses of study to inform judgments about the quality of programs which incorporate those courses.

Evaluation of viability refers to the evaluation of the viability of programs based on performance against an agreed set of indicators and referenced against University-based targets.

Policy

1. University programs will be accredited for a *maximum* period of 6 years, inclusive of the review/evaluation year. Where appropriate and approved as part of the Coursework Program Approval procedures, the accreditation period will be aligned with external professional accreditation requirements. Where the relevant external professional accreditation is undertaken for a period less than six years, University programs will be accredited for that shorter period.
2. The University will evaluate the:
 - 2.1. quality of its programs and courses using student and stakeholder feedback and benchmarking against best practice. The evaluation will be based on an agreed set of indicators as determined by Academic Board on the advice from the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic;
 - 2.2. viability of its programs using an agreed set of indicators as determined by Academic Board on advice from the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic.
3. All courses will be evaluated using the University's course-level student feedback instrument each time the course is taught.
4. During the accreditation period of a program, performance will be monitored and evaluated through the:
 - 4.1 Business Review Report at the end of the second year of accreditation of all newly accredited programs¹; and
 - 4.2 Evaluation and Re-accreditation Review Report at the end of penultimate year of the accreditation period of the program or, as determined under policy clause 1 above, aligned to an external professional accreditation review.
5. In addition to the processes identified in clause 4 above the University will, on an annual basis, review the performance of its programs based on an agreed set of quality and viability indicators as determined by Academic Board on advice from the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic. Programs whose performance is consistently below benchmarks set by the University may be required to bring forward the program's Evaluation and Re-accreditation Review.
6. The scheduling of reviews and reporting of outcomes will form part of the University's program approval and review processes (Appendix 1).
7. Any amendments to programs and courses resulting from the process detailed in this policy will comply with the Coursework Program Approval Manual.
8. Responsibility for implementing the arrangements outlined in this policy rests jointly with the Divisions, Academic Policy and Program Review Committee (APPRC) and Academic Board.

Procedures

9. Course Evaluation

- 9.1 In accordance with clause 3 above, it is a requirement that every course is evaluated using the University's current course-level student feedback instrument each time the course is offered.
- 9.2 Where a School believes application of the course-level student instrument is inappropriate for a given course or for a particular offering of that course (eg low student

¹ *Newly accredited programs* refers to those programs classified as new programs within the University's Coursework Program Approval procedures; it does not include review of programs and business cases associated with program amendments.

numbers, clinical placement), the Head of School may negotiate an alternative evaluation mechanism with the Divisional Dean: Teaching and Learning.

- 9.3 In addition to the requirements of policy clause 3 above, the evaluation of a course through the course-level student feedback instrument may be complemented by other evaluative mechanisms such as focus groups, peer review and benchmarking.
- 9.4 A short summary of changes arising from the evaluation will be placed on the Course Home-page (or equivalent) the next time the course is taught so that students are informed of the value attached to the feedback provided.

10. Program evaluation and reporting

- 10.1 In accordance with clause 4 above, the Academic Policy and Program Review (APPRC) Committee will establish an annual schedule for program evaluation.
- 10.2 Program evaluation requirements and reporting will be in accordance with two University-wide proformas which together provide the framework for the systematic evaluation of programs.
 - (a) **Business Case Review Report**

At the end of the second year of the accreditation period of a new program, the performance of the program will be evaluated against claims made in the original business case and any amendments to the program identified to ensure the ongoing success of the program.
 - (b) **Evaluation and Re-accreditation Review Report**

All programs in the penultimate year of their accreditation period will undertake a comprehensive evaluation in preparation for re-accreditation. Where double degrees across Divisions are to be reviewed, the Academic Policy and Program Review (APPRC) Committee will agree on the scheduling of the review such that the contributing single degrees are also reviewed.
- 10.3 Student evaluation of a program will be achieved by aggregating data from the results of the University's current course-level student feedback instrument for the core courses that comprise the major strands of the program as listed in the approved program schedule. Interpretation of the program schedule when determining core courses and major strands for the purpose of program evaluation will be the responsibility of the relevant Program Director.
- 10.4 The evaluation processes and reporting are to be managed in Divisions by the relevant School. The School will establish processes to:
 - (a) gather and analyse responses from relevant external stakeholders (for example, professional associations, employer groups, accrediting bodies);
 - (b) engage staff who teach courses in the program in the analysis and interpretation of program data, including reporting on program outcomes against national benchmarks;
 - (c) report on the program evaluation and the recommended changes arising from the evaluation to Division Board.
- 10.5 Business Case Review reports will be considered by School and Division Board. The Division will provide an annual summary report to Academic Policy and Program Review Committee on the outcome of all Business Case Reviews undertaken each year. Any amendments to the program as a result of a Business Case Review will comply with the procedures and timelines of the Coursework Program Approval Manual.
- 10.6 Evaluation and Re-accreditation Review reports will be considered by School and Division Board. The Evaluation and Re-accreditation Review report will then form part of the submission for re-accreditation or withdrawal of the program to Academic Policy and Program Committee and Academic Board. Where re-accreditation also includes

program amendment, the submission will be accompanied by the appropriate program proposal documentation in accordance with the Coursework Program Approval Manual. Where a program is externally accredited, the Evaluation and Re-accreditation Review report may refer to or replicate information submitted as part of the external process.

10.7 Academic Policy and Program Review Committee will report annually to Academic Board on the outcomes of:

- (a) Business Case Reviews; and
 - (b) Evaluation and Re-accreditation Program Reviews,
- and the actions taken by each Division in response to the evaluation of its programs.

10.8 Programs that have not undergone program evaluation and review processes in accordance with this policy are considered non-compliant offerings. Divisional Deans Teaching and Learning must refer non-compliant programs to Divisional Pro Vice Chancellors for further action, including the expedition of internal accreditation processes, or program withdrawal.

11. Monitoring the performance of programs

11.1 In accordance with clause 5 above, the agreed indicators for the annual monitoring of the performance of programs will include separate indicators for undergraduate and postgraduate programs and for onshore and offshore programs.

11.2 Monitoring of quality and viability will be undertaken for all programs every year through an annual report prepared by Planning and Institutional Performance for consideration by the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic. The Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic will identify programs of concern and recommend to Academic Policy and Program Committee that the program's Evaluation and Re-accreditation Review be brought forward. For programs with consistently low performance the Division may be required to show cause as to why the program should not be withdrawn.

11.3 Programs identified for review under clause 11.2 above, will form part of the annual schedule of program evaluation established by Academic Policy and Program Review Committee (see clause 10.1 above).

11.4 Academic Policy and Program Review Committee will report annually to Academic Board on the actions taken in response to the annual monitoring of program performance.

12. Variation to Accreditation Period

The Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic may approve a variation to the period for which a Program is accredited, to align it with the requirements of an external accreditation process. The variation may operate to extend the period for which a program is accredited by up to two years.

13. Vice Chancellor's Review

Programs subject to a Vice Chancellor's Review in accordance with Policy A35B are not required to undergo an ERR for that review period where the information provided for the Vice Chancellor's review is equivalent to that required within an Evaluation and Reaccreditation Review.

14. Programs subject to Phase-out Plan

Consistent with Policy A45.A Program Transition, programs being withdrawn and not replaced are subject to a phase-out plan enabling students to progress through the award. The University deems that a program has met the requirements of Policy A35A where a phase out plan is in place, and the program is therefore recognised as compliant and accredited for the period in which students are enrolled, up to four years.

APPENDIX 1a: Schedule of program evaluation, review and approval: New programs

	Jan	February	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	October	November	Dec
Year 0 Program Approval			SATAC Programs. Program approved for implementation in Year 1				All other domestic programs. Program approved for implementation in Year 1.	DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.			Offshore programs. Program approved for implementation Year 1.	
Year 1 New program implemented								PIP prepares annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic. DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.				
Year 2 Business Case Review							PIP provides <i>Business Case Review</i> data set	PIP prepares annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic. DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year. School commences <i>Business Case Review</i>				
Year 3 Amendments arising from review approved.		SATAC Programs Final date for outcomes of <i>Business case review</i> reports to Division Board.	SATAC programs. Final date for approval of amendments arising from <i>Business case review</i> (APPRC/Acad. Board)			All other domestic programs. Final date for outcomes of <i>Business case review</i> reports to Division Board	All other domestic programs. Final date for approval of amendments arising from <i>Business case review</i> (APPRC/Acad. Board)	PIP prepares annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic. DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.		Offshore programs. Final date for outcomes of <i>Business Case review</i> reports to Division Board	Offshore programs. Final date for approval of amendments arising from <i>Business Case review</i> (APPRC/Acad. Board)	

APPENDIX 1a: Schedule of program evaluation, review and approval: New programs

	Jan	February	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	October	November	Dec
Year 4 <i>Revised new Program implemented</i>								<p>PIP prepares annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic.</p> <p>DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.</p>				
Year 5 <i>New program scheduled for re-accreditation</i>							<p>PIP provides <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> data set.</p>	<p>School commences <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i></p> <p>PIP prepares annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic</p> <p>DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.</p>				
Year 6		<p>SATAC Programs Final date for outcomes of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> reports to Division Board.</p>	<p>SATAC programs. Final date for approval of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> submission (APPRC/Acad. Board)</p>			<p>All other domestic Programs Final date for outcomes o <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> reports to Division Board.</p>	<p>All other domestic programs. Final date for approval of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> submission (APPRC/Acad. Board)</p>	<p>PIP prepares annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic</p> <p>DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.</p>		<p>Offshore Programs Final date for outcomes of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> reports to Division Board.</p>	<p>Offshore programs. Final date for approval of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> submission (APPRC/Acad. Board)</p>	
Year 7 <i>Re-accredited programs commence</i>												

APPENDIX 1b: Schedule of program evaluation, review and approval: Existing programs

	Jan	February	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	October	November	Dec
Year x <i>Existing programs identified for review</i>								<p>PIP prepares annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic.</p> <p>DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.</p>				
Year x+1 <i>Existing programs reviewed</i>							<p>PIP provides <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> data set.</p>	<p>School commences <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i></p> <p>PIP prepares annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic</p> <p>DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.</p>				
Year x+2 <i>Program re-accreditation approved.</i>		<p>SATAC Programs Final date for outcomes of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> reports to Division Board.</p>	<p>SATAC programs. Final date for approval of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> submission (APPRC/Acad. Board)</p>			<p>All other domestic Programs Final date for outcomes o <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> reports to Division Board.</p>	<p>All other domestic programs. Final date for approval of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> submission (APPRC/Acad. Board)</p>	<p>PIP prepare annual <i>Program Performance Report</i> and submits to DVC: Academic</p> <p>DVC: Academic recommends to APPRC programs to be reviewed in the following year.</p>		<p>Offshore Programs Final date for outcomes of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> reports to Division Board.</p>	<p>Offshore programs. Final date for approval of <i>Evaluation and Re-accreditation review</i> submission (APPRC/Acad. Board)</p>	
Year 0 <i>Re-accredited programs commence</i>												