

Academic Quality Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) Charles Sturt University (the University) has a key goal of achieving and ensuring the quality of all academic endeavours to enhance student academic outcomes. The three core strategies for accomplishing this goal are:

- a. organisational assurance – that ensures independent confirmation and confidence over the achievement of University objectives, including academic quality objectives,
- b. risk management - that establishes the mechanisms for identifying and mitigating risks, and
- c. academic quality assurance and academic quality enhancement - that meet internal and external quality requirements.

(2) This Academic Quality Policy allows the University to formulate strategies for quality assurance and quality enhancement of its academic activities, within the context of its statutory obligations under Commonwealth and state legislation, including the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#); the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) and regulatory instruments associated with these Acts, including the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(Second Edition January 2013\)](#); the [Higher Education Standards Framework 2021](#); the [Charles Sturt University Act 1989](#); and the University's strategic priorities.

Scope

(3) This policy applies to all aspects of academic activities within the University and all staff involved in these activities.

(4) This policy also applies to all academic activities undertaken in conjunction with onshore and offshore education and research partners.

Section 2 - Glossary

(5) For the purpose of this policy, the following terms have the definitions stated:

- a. Academic activities - all activities undertaken to enhance student performance and outcomes, including learning, teaching, scholarship, research and research training.
- b. Academic quality assurance - independent confirmation and confidence over the compliance and quality of academic activities according to internal and external requirements.
- c. Academic quality enhancement - the continuous improvement of the quality of academic activities to enhance academic outcomes.

Section 3 - Policy

Academic quality principles

(6) Academic quality processes at Charles Sturt University will ensure all activities:

- a. align with the [University Strategy](#) and assist in implementation of the strategy,
- b. demonstrate a commitment to the [University's Values](#),
- c. are consistent with the continuous improvement and quality enhancement objectives of the [Organisational Assurance Policy](#),
- d. align with the University's [Risk Management Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) and are within the limitations of the University's [Risk Appetite Statement](#),
- e. respond to and comply with statutory obligations relating to its academic activities,
- f. collaborate with staff, students and stakeholders as partners in enhancing and assuring all aspects of academic quality,
- g. are evidence-based and externally referenced; whereby judgments about performance and decisions about improvements are informed by data and formal feedback collected from a range of sources, both internal and external, and
- h. are systematic, sustainable and transparent; with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Academic quality cycle

(7) The [Organisational Assurance Policy](#) sets out the elements of the continuous improvement and quality assurance and enhancement objectives of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. This cycle is based on establishing performance expectations, implementing mechanisms to achieve performance expectations, monitoring performance results, and adjusting or maintaining mechanisms as appropriate.

(8) Quality assurance activities are conducted to certify that regulatory, accreditation and other internal and external requirements and standards for academic quality have been met.

(9) Quality enhancement activities are conducted systematically to generate and document actions that lead to improvements in academic outcomes for students and the broader institution.

(10) Outcomes of the quality enhancement process may be used as evidence in academic quality assurance processes. Similarly, academic quality assurance provides important information for consideration in quality enhancement processes.

(11) Quality enhancement and quality assurance processes are enacted at organisation, faculty and school levels.

Academic standards and quality processes

(12) Charles Sturt Academic Standards (provided in [Appendix 1](#)) refer to the objectives against which performance of academic activities are assessed based on key academic indicators.

(13) The University has a set of core quality processes in place to support academic quality against each academic standard ([Appendix 1](#)).

(14) The Academic Standards apply to the development and delivery of all:

- a. coursework award courses,
- b. higher degree by research courses, and
- c. research,

including all academic activities undertaken in conjunction with onshore and offshore education and research partners.

(15) The assessment of risk to academic quality can be documented and monitored through faculty, school or other specific area assurance management plans.

Academic quality governance

(16) The Academic Senate, in accordance with its terms of reference, is responsible for academic standards compliance and quality and outcomes in learning, teaching, research and research training.

(17) The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC), University Courses Committee (UCC) and University Research Committee (URC) are the Academic Senate subcommittees responsible for conducting detailed examination of matters related to academic quality and making recommendations to the Academic Senate, as set out in the terms of reference for each committee ([Academic Quality and Standards Committee](#); [University Courses Committee](#) and [University Research Committee](#)).

(18) Governance of academic quality at the faculty level rests with [faculty](#) and [school](#) boards. School and faculty boards will monitor quality within the faculty and will report to the AQSC, UCC and URC as required. Reports will identify the key faculty quality enhancement and assurance processes as per the [terms of reference for the boards](#).

(19) Reports provided to the Academic Senate subcommittees will provide an evidence base for the identification and funding of centrally-led quality enhancement initiatives, including exploration of, investment in and evaluation of new technologies and innovative pedagogies.

(20) Faculties, schools or other areas can use the governance reporting model in the assurance management plan to report on the management of academic risk to the Academic Senate and its subcommittees.

Roles, responsibilities and support

(21) A summary of key governance and management roles and their responsibilities is provided in [Appendix 2](#).

(22) The Office of the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Division of Learning and Teaching and Office of Research Services will provide support and advice in relation to the implementation of the Academic Quality Policy.

(23) The Office of Planning and Analytics will provide institutional data warehousing, analytics, scorecards, dashboards and reporting.

Section 4 - Procedures

(24) Related procedures for the conduct of course and subject reviews and benchmarking are set out in the [Course and Subject Policy](#) and [Course and Subject Procedure - Quality Assurance and Review](#).

Section 5 - Guidelines

(25) Nil.

Resources and acknowledgements

The Academic Quality Policy draws on the academic/education policies, procedures and frameworks of a number of higher education providers, including the University of New South Wales and the University of Technology Sydney.

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