

Course and Subject Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy and the supporting procedures set out the requirements for each stage of the course and subject life cycle, including design and development, approval, delivery and management, and continuous improvement. These documents ensure that courses leading to awards of Charles Sturt University (the University), and their constituent subjects and structures, are:

- a. of a consistently high standard and assist the University in responding to new opportunities and the changing educational environment
- b. developed in alignment with the University's strategy, vision, values, and sustainability goals
- c. subject to regular monitoring, review and improvement designed in alignment with the Charles Sturt [Education Framework](#)
- d. compliant with professional accreditation requirements where relevant
- e. compliant with the relevant provisions of the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#) and [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021 \(HESF\)](#), and the [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](#).

Scope

(2) This policy applies to all courses and subjects (award and non-award) offered by the University and by third parties on behalf of the University. This includes coursework and higher degree by research courses, unless otherwise specified. Governance, management and delivery requirements of courses and subjects apply to all University staff and adjunct staff involved in those activities.

Section 2 - Policy

Part A - Governance of courses and subjects

(3) The University is a registered higher education provider and self-accrediting authority under the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#).

(4) Academic Senate is the University's principal academic body and oversees the academic quality of award courses and subjects and their compliance with the relevant standards and regulations.

(5) Academic Senate has established academic governance sub-committees with responsibilities and authorities in relation to courses and subjects as set out in their membership and terms of reference, delegations, the [Academic Quality Policy](#), as well as this policy and its supporting procedures:

- a. University Courses Committee
- b. University Research Committee
- c. Academic Quality and Standards Committee
- d. Faculty Boards

e. Indigenous Board of Studies

(6) Courses and subjects are approved through:

- a. management governance processes (business case approval) where they relate to course viability, strategic alignment, research strengths and commercial interests
- b. academic governance processes where they relate to course design, structure, duration, content and learning outcomes, compliance with [HESF](#) and [AQF](#) academic quality or other academic activities.

(7) Each course has a faculty identified with responsibility for the oversight of course development, accreditation, maintenance, and reaccreditation.

(8) Courses will have an external advisory committee to inform development, ongoing improvement and review of the course.

Part B - Course and subject approvals

(9) The [Course and Subject Procedure – Lifecycle Approvals](#) supports this part.

Award course approval and accreditation

(10) There are four stages in the course approval and accreditation process:

- a. Stage 1: Authority to proceed – initial financial analysis and market intelligence scan to ensure overall viability of the proposal.
- b. Stage 2: Business case – consideration of course viability, strategic alignment, academic quality, research strengths and potential commercial interest, consideration of learning resources, facilities, and infrastructure (physical and virtual).
- c. Stage 3: Course accreditation (or reaccreditation) – relates to academic approvals to ensure that courses leading to an award:
 - i. meet the applicable [AQF](#) and [HESF](#) standards
 - ii. meet the University's education principles, curriculum model and architectures, and course and subject design requirements
 - iii. where relevant, comply with requirements for professional accreditation and codes.
- d. Stage 4: Course implementation and commencement – relates to processes and accountabilities to ensure that:
 - i. all conditions of course accreditation/reaccreditation have been satisfied
 - ii. all necessary legislative, administrative and resource conditions for commencement have been met before students are admitted (including requirements for marketing to or admitting international students).

Expedited approval

(11) Course approval processes may be expedited in the following limited circumstances:

- a. Customised course(s) required for a specific client within a short timeframe.
- b. Where there is a demonstrated benefit to the University and no compromise of the quality of the course, major or specialisation, or the reputation of the University.
- c. Full fee paying course(s) where it can be demonstrated that the faculty has to move quickly to take advantage of an opening in the market or maintain a place in the market.
- d. Other circumstances that warrant action related to maintaining or enhancing the University's competitive

position.

Accreditation period

(12) The course accreditation and reaccreditation process is aligned to [HESF](#) requirements. Each course is allocated a comprehensive course review date to enable reaccreditation within the [HESF](#) accreditation period.

Discontinuation and teach out

(13) Where the University intends to stop offering an award course, it may be approved for discontinuation or teach out as follows:

- a. Immediate discontinuation - if no students are enrolled/admitted, the course may be discontinued immediately after approval.
- b. Teach out – if students are still enrolled/admitted, the course is suspended and:
 - i. no further students will be admitted into the course
 - ii. arrangements will be put in place to allow enrolled students to complete the course of study or transition to a mutually agreed course at no disadvantage
 - iii. accreditation of the course will be maintained for the duration of the teach-out period
 - iv. professional accreditation will be maintained for the duration of the teach-out period where required for graduates to be eligible to practice, unless permitted to lapse by the relevant professional accrediting authority and committee
 - v. discontinuation will take effect at the end of the teach-out period when the final student has completed or transitioned out of the course.

Suspension of intake

(14) Admission into a course offering (without discontinuation or teach-out approvals) may be suspended for up to 12 months by the Executive Dean, or for longer than 12 months by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Part C - Course and subject design

(15) The [Course and Subject Procedure – Coursework Design](#) supports this part.

Course and subject design requirements

(16) Courses and subject design will:

- a. embody the University's unique value proposition and deliver distinctive and transformational education experiences by applying the [Education Framework](#), as approved by Academic Senate
- b. apply the [Charles Sturt curriculum model](#) (including course, subject and assessment design principles) and [curriculum architecture principles \(CAPs\)](#) as approved by Academic Senate
- c. integrate Indigenous Australian studies in alignment with the [Indigenous Australian Content in Courses and Subjects Policy](#), [University First Nations Strategy](#) and First Nations curriculum
- d. enable students to achieve course learning outcomes by aligning learning activities, assessment tasks, subject learning outcomes and course learning outcomes
- e. comply with [HESF](#) standard 3.1.1 (Course design)
- f. provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the University's graduate attributes
- g. equip students for their transition to a career, further study or research
- h. meet the needs of the regions, industries and professions served by the University

- i. be based on current knowledge, scholarship, underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks aligned to the academic discipline or research represented in the course
- j. incorporate emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice.

(17) To ensure a unique offering in relation to their student market and industry or profession, each course or group of courses will be designed:

- a. with an external advisory committee
- b. in consultation with employers, practitioners, and industry professionals
- c. based on data and information about:
 - i. the needs and expectations of the current and prospective student markets
 - ii. forecast workforce demand, job growth and capability requirements.

Graduate attributes

(18) Through its course and subject design, the University aims to produce graduates who:

- a. are well-educated in the knowledge, capabilities, practices, attitudes, research, ethics and dispositions of their discipline or profession
- b. are capable communicators with effective problem-solving, analytical and critical thinking skills and can work well both independently and with others
- c. value diversity and the common good, and work constructively, respectfully and effectively with local and global communities and workplaces
- d. engage meaningfully with the culture, experiences, histories and contemporary issues of First Nations communities
- e. practise ethically and sustainably in ways that demonstrate 'yindyamarra winhanganha', the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in
- f. are digitally literate citizens, able to harness technologies for professional practice and participate independently in online learning communities
- g. critically appraise and continue to develop their own personal and professional capabilities.

Maximum periods for completion

(19) The University will set maximum completion periods for coursework and higher degree by research award courses to ensure that:

- a. each graduate's award certifies current knowledge and skills in the discipline or field of study at the time of the award
- b. students complete award courses within a maximum period that allows for part-time study and leave of absence.

(20) A student's enrolment or candidature may be terminated if they do not complete their course within the maximum period.

Part D - Course monitoring, review, changes and improvements

(21) The [Course and Subject Procedure - Quality Assurance and Review](#) supports this part.

Monitoring and review

(22) To ensure the quality, profitability, strategic fit and market orientation of courses, all courses will undergo the following monitoring and review activities, and faculties will address and improve areas of underperformance:

- a. Annual course health check - annual monitoring of course quality, viability and relevance between comprehensive course reviews and the quadrant result from the optimisation framework.
- b. Evaluation against the optimisation framework - regular monitoring of courses across four domains of quality, profitability, strategic fit and market orientation.
- c. Student performance comprehensive analysis and improvement action setting - an annual review of student performance metrics and evaluation of completed actions.
- d. Comprehensive course review (CCR) and reaccreditation - will be undertaken for each course within four years of accreditation (for new courses) or seven years of the previous accreditation (for existing courses), unless an extension is allowed or the course is exempted from CCR (e.g. when it is being discontinued, subject to accreditation requirements for courses in teach out).
- e. Benchmarking - will be undertaken against similar courses offered by other higher education providers, and of student cohorts' success against comparable courses of study.
- f. Subject performance evaluation (coursework subjects only) - will be undertaken after each offering of a subject, reporting on performance and improvements.

Course and subject surveys

(23) Student feedback on courses and subjects is gathered and used to improve the curriculum, teaching and student learning experiences, to mitigate risks to the quality of education provided, and to help inform institutional monitoring, review, and improvement activities.

Course changes and improvements

(24) Courses of study will evolve as improvements are made through quality assurance processes and/or in response to changing circumstances.

(25) [Delegation Schedule E - Academic and Research](#) provides the course change approval authorities, and the change categories and criteria are defined in the [Course and subject change categorisation tables](#), approved by Academic Senate. Where there is any doubt, the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will determine the type of change.

(26) Major and minor changes may also have resourcing implications that require management approval of a business case (stage 1). These are stated in the [Course and Subject Procedure – Lifecycle Approvals](#) and [Table B: Course change categorisation](#).

Part E - Course delivery, management and representation

(27) The [Course and Subject Procedure – Delivery and Management](#) and [Course and Subject Procedure - Information and Representation](#) support this part.

Course and subject delivery and management

(28) Courses and their component subjects will be delivered and managed in accordance with legislation and other relevant requirements, including but not limited to:

- a. [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021 \(HESF\)](#)
- b. [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) and the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education](#)

- c. Professional accreditation requirements
- d. [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition 2013 \(Updated 2021\)](#) section 2.1.5(iv)
- e. for offshore offerings, any legislative instruments relevant to the delivery location.

(29) Each delivery of a course or subject will be consistent with the course or subject as currently approved, regardless of delivery location or delivery mode, ensuring that:

- a. in courses, students complete the same required subjects and will have the same course learning outcomes
- b. in subjects, students have the same learning experience and learning outcomes, and will as far as possible complete the same assessment tasks.

(30) The delivery of courses and subjects align to the common University academic calendar and the [principles for preparation of the academic calendar](#) (approved by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)), unless a variation is approved by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or their nominee.

Courses involving third parties

(31) The University will ensure that third-party education provider deliveries comply with the [HESF](#).

(32) University award courses delivered by or in collaboration with a third party are subject to the same approval, reaccreditation and performance monitoring requirements as any other award of the University, with additional oversight of the academic quality of partnered deliveries.

Course admission requirements

(33) The [Admissions Policy](#) states the minimum entry requirements for each level of study and provides for higher and/or additional requirements to be approved for specific courses as part of the accreditation process for each course.

Course and subject information

(34) Course and subject information for prospective and current students is:

- a. accurate, relevant and of a consistently high standard, so it will form a sound basis for the enrolment contract
- b. publicly available and accessible (via online course brochures and the [University Handbook](#)) in good time for prospective and current students to:
 - i. make decisions about their applications
 - ii. consider particular enrolment conditions that do not apply to other courses more generally
 - iii. consider the number of enrolments (as an indication of the scale of the University, course and learning environment)
 - iv. prepare for study (for example, health and security checks, language requirements)
- c. aligned with specific course admissions information under the [Admissions Policy](#)
- d. consistently and correctly recorded on University systems, so it will meet the requirements of regulators and funders and be a sufficient record of the University's curriculum.

(35) The University will not knowingly provide false or misleading information about outcomes associated with undertaking a course of study, eligibility for acceptance into another course of study, employment outcomes or possible migration outcomes.

Part F - Subjects and non-award offerings

Subject approval and review

(36) Subject approval processes will consider subject documentation and assess a subject's disciplinary integrity, professional currency, quality, and alignment with the relevant courses as part of the approval process.

- a. Proposals for new, amended, temporarily not offered or withdrawn subjects, must consider the impact on any relevant course and subject and detail this consideration in the proposal.
- b. Subject documentation must be reapproved at least every seven years, normally in line with the reaccreditation of the course(s) they are a part of.

(37) Where a subject is not offered or withdrawn, students will be advised of the change and of alternative arrangements or options, particularly where the subject is compulsory for a student to complete to satisfy course requirements.

(38) Subject reviews are completed as per Part D of this policy.

(39) Faculties must have procedures for changes and updates to the approved subject information.

Subject changes

(40) Subject changes will be classified according to the [Course and subject change categorisation tables](#).

Non-award offerings

(41) Academic and administrative units of the University may offer single subjects, micro-credential subjects, and short courses which may include micro-credential modules. These will:

- a. be approved under [Delegation Schedule E - Academic and Research](#)
- b. not imply that participants have completed or will receive an award of the University in any information about the offerings or on any certificates or statements of attainment issued for completing them
- c. where students complete one or more single subjects not leading to an award of the University, provide the students with an authorised record of results for the subjects undertaken
- d. provide appropriate support, tools, resources and technologies for teaching and learning.

(42) Non-award offerings may be assessed for credit (single subject and micro-credential subjects) or recognition of prior learning (short course and micro-credential modules) on the conditions stated in the [Credit Policy](#).

Section 3 - Procedures

(43) The following procedures state detailed requirements in support of this policy:

- a. [Course and Subject Procedure - Conscientious Objections](#)
- b. [Course and Subject Procedure - Coursework Design](#)
- c. [Course and Subject Procedure - Lifecycle Approvals](#)
- d. [Course and Subject Procedure - Information and Representation](#)
- e. [Course and Subject Procedure - Delivery Management](#)
- f. [Course and Subject Procedure - Quality Assurance and Review](#)

Section 4 - Guidelines

(44) Some of the procedures that support this policy include guidelines or refer readers to guidelines on specific topics in those procedures.

Section 5 - Glossary

(45) This policy uses the following terms:

- a. Accreditation – approval or re-approval of a course by the University as meeting the required course design requirements and standards.
- b. Award – as defined in the policy library glossary.
- c. Course – as defined in the policy library glossary.
- d. Coursework course – as defined in the policy library glossary.
- e. Coursework subject – as defined in the policy library glossary.
- f. Discontinuation – means the cessation of an existing award course as approved by Academic Senate. A course with discontinued status refers to a course that is no longer offered to new students.
- g. Higher degree by research (HDR) course – as defined in the policy library glossary.
- h. Indigenous Australian content – see the [Indigenous Australian Content in Courses and Subjects Policy](#).
- i. Micro-credential – [Note that this definition will be updated to align with new definitions currently being proposed] – means a short module of learning that certifies achievement of learning outcomes; standards; knowledge, skills and/or capabilities that are not sufficient to warrant recognition by the University as a single course. It may be a proportion of learning of a standard course that addresses a subset of the total learning outcomes of the course.
- j. Mode – the mode of delivery of a course or subject; for example, online or on-campus.
- k. Non-award offering – single subject or micro subject in which a student is enrolled without having been admitted to a course that leads to an award of the University.
- l. Offering – an individual delivery of a course or subject in a teaching period, at a location and by a mode.
- m. Professional accreditation – accreditation of a course by an external body, such as a professional association, as meeting the standards set by the body for a qualification leading to the relevant profession.
- n. Reaccreditation – means the reapproval of an existing award course.
- o. Short course – as defined in the policy library glossary.
- p. Single subject – a subject when a student is enrolled in it on a non-award basis.
- q. Subject documents – the documents submitted for academic approval of a new subject or change to a subject.
- r. Teach out – means the gradual process of discontinuation whereby Academic Senate has approved that the course no longer be offered to new students, but that students currently admitted to the course can continue their studies in accordance with the existing course structure and requirements.
- s. Teaching period – as defined in the policy library glossary.

Status and Details

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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Award" - a qualification such as a certificate, diploma or degree, which the University confers on students who have completed the requirements of the course of study leading to the qualification. An award represents a particular set of learning outcomes and objectives, based on and compliant with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

"Course" - see Coursework course, Higher degree by research course and Short course. Where the term 'course' is used without a modifying adjective, it means a course leading to an award of the University, and does not include short courses. Where a short course is meant, the term 'short course' is used.

"Coursework course" - a course leading to an award/qualification recognised by the Australian Qualifications Framework that is not classified as a higher degree by research.

"Higher degree by research (HDR) course" - means a course leading to a qualification at Australian Qualifications Framework level 9 or level 10 in which a research component makes up 66% or more of the course volume of learning. Higher degree by research courses lead to the award of a master by research, professional doctorate or doctor of philosophy.

"Teaching period" - each formal period of study during which a subject is delivered, including sessions, terms, micro-sessions, year-long periods and ADPP periods.

"Coursework subject" - a subject on a specified topic for which students engage with text, learning materials and/or resources, and complete assessment tasks, not a research component.

"Short course" - a learning activity or series of learning activities, for which students may receive a certificate of completion but which is/are not recorded as a subject with a grade on a formal transcript of results and have no relationship to award courses.