

COURSE REVIEW AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

The continual review and improvement of courses is integral to ensure consistent delivery of high academic standards and a high-quality teaching and learning experience. It allows courses to integrate up-to-date scholarship and teaching practices and address any problems that may arise during the period of course delivery.

The *Course Review and Continual Improvement Policy and Procedures* outlines the policy and procedures that LEA** implements for the periodic review and improvement of all courses. It establishes the frequency of course reviews and the types of data that will be used in each review for ongoing improvement of its courses.

**The trading name for the Lincoln Institute of Higher Education (LIHE) is Lincoln Education Australia (LEA).

Scope

The policy applies to all staff involved in course review and improvement processes.

Principles

As a part of its quality assurance mechanism, LEA is committed to conducting a robust and ongoing monitoring and review process for all higher education courses offered.

Major course reviews informed by annual and interim course reviewing are designed to maintain high academic standards of all curricula delivered and supported at LEA.

Course reviews ensure that all courses:

- Continue to adhere to LEA's strategic goals and academic values
- Continue to comply with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)* 2021
- Continue to meet the relevant AQF level specification requirements
- Continue to provide a pathway to work and further study, where applicable
- Have up-to-date admissions criteria and pathways that are applied fairly and consistently
- Have up-to-date learning outcomes
- Have progressive and coherent achievement of up-to-date learning outcomes



- Continue to demonstrate constructive alignment of learning outcomes and assessment
- Employ contemporary assessment methodologies for testing student achievement of learning outcomes
- Remain intellectually challenging, encouraging critical inquiry and drawing upon broad and coherent or specialised knowledge appropriate to the AQF level and respective learning outcomes
- Continue to provide equivalent quality outcomes to all who meet entry requirements, regardless of their background or mode of study, and
- Have a strong foundation in theoretical frameworks, current research and scholarship, and trends in relevant industries

The Corporate Governance Board delegates responsibility for academic oversight to the Academic Board. The Academic Board is thus responsible for ensuring that all courses undergo regular review and improvement as outlined in this policy.

In the event that a course shall be discontinued, students' rights and wellbeing shall be prioritised according to the *Course Discontinuance Policy and Procedures*.

The Academic Board shall only re-approve a course if the course demonstrates that it continues to meet the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*.

Responsibilities

Academic Board

The Academic Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that courses meet all standards defined in the *Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedures*, before re-approval
- Overseeing the major and ongoing review of all LEA courses
- Approving, amending, or declining any suggested changes to a course
- Communicating decisions as needed
- Overseeing the development and implementation of approved changes to the course, and
- Ensuring that thorough records are kept throughout the whole review process

The *Teaching and Learning Committee*, *Course Advisory Committee*, *Assessment and Awards Committee* and *Appeals Committee* each provide interim reports containing data and information as outlined below. These reports shall be taken into account when conducting course reviews.

Teaching and Learning Committee

The Teaching and Learning Committee monitors and reports on:



- The standard and quality of teaching and learning, including assessment
- Advises the Academic Board on aspects of teaching and learning that can be improved, for example, staffing, library and learning resources, academic and non-academic student support, facilities, policy frameworks for admissions, progression, graduation, and staff professional development
- The performance of courses and students, providing a major annual report to Academic Board, with minor quarterly interim reports
- Regularly report to the Academic Board on students' participation, satisfaction, progress, attrition and completion rates and survey results (SELTS and QILT)
- Takes the leading role in revising the *Learning and Teaching Plan* and assisting with developing LEA academic objectives and benchmarks for achievement

Course Advisory Committee

The Course Advisory Committee advises the Academic Board on:

- The quality of current or proposed modified curricula
- Seeks input from external academic experts and/or industry representatives as stakeholders
- Reports to the Academic Board on the continuing compliance of curriculum and course design with the Higher Education Threshold Standards
- Obtains external advice on courses undergoing major review or external re-accreditation cycles

Assessment and Awards Committee

The Assessment and Awards Committee advises the Academic Board on:

- The standard and quality of assessment, including assessment strategies and methodologies within and between courses
- Aspects of assessment that can be improved such as infrastructural and resources, and cyber security of online assessment
- The standard and quality of awards for course completions, including internal and external benchmarking

Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee collects diverse data on:

- Review grievance and appeal data, and report to the Academic Board with recommendations regarding trends and issues arising from appeal hearings
- Report to the Academic Board on any issues arising from administration of relevant policies and procedures with regard to an appeal
- Decides on student grievance and appeal cases

Conflict of Interest

To ensure reviews are carried out as objectively as possible, staff members who were part of the initial course development, delivery and assessment of the course, are not permitted to participate in evaluation of the course by the Academic Board.

Major Course Review

The Academic Board is responsible for conducting a major review of every higher education course delivered at LEA. New courses undergo a major review after one year of accreditation, and every three (3) years thereafter.

A key responsibility of the Course Coordinator is to work with relevant academic and support staff members to gather and synthesise evidence for the Academic Board for the purpose of the major review. During this process, they shall liaise with the sub-committees of the Academic Board as necessary.

The finalised evidence shall be included as a report for the Academic Board who shall review and re-approve the course as appropriate.

These reviews are comprehensive and include an evaluation of:

- The design and content of the course in terms of:
 - Alignment with AQF level
 - Alignment with the Higher Education Standards Framework
 - Engagement with current and emerging developments in the field
 - Its foundation in relevant theoretical frameworks, critical inquiry and rigorous academic research
- The success of course delivery across different modes and locations
- The expected learning outcomes
- The extent of students achieving expected learning outcomes
- The methods of assessment
- The learning and teaching resources provided
- How student needs have changed
- Potential risks to course quality

For a comprehensive list of requirements for initial course approval (and, by extension, re-approval), refer to the *Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedures*.

To this end, LEA summarises and utilises information relating to each subject in the course, such as:

- Benchmarking data (for more information please refer to the *Benchmarking Policy and Procedures*)
- Input from external academic and industry experts



- Student attrition, progress, and completion rates
- Student experience survey data
- Staff feedback
- Graduate feedback, and information on graduate pathways such as further study and work
- Assessment and grade distributions
- Research on recent changes in the industry or discipline that shall be integrated into the course
- Research on best practice in terms of pedagogy

The Academic Board shall review evidence about the course and provide its review findings in writing. This may include:

- Approval or disapproval of suggestions for improvement
- Adjustment of suggestions for improvement
- Request for further information or re-submission
- Identify resourcing issues
- Define a timeline for implementation of improvement measures

Ongoing Course Review

Major course reviews shall be informed by interim course monitoring and reporting.

Interim reporting additionally allows the early detection of risks to quality and compliance, and the continual improvement of courses outside of the major review cycle. An early major review may also be triggered through the interim monitoring process if major problems arise (see “early and targeted reviews” below).

The Course Coordinator is responsible for the ongoing review of the course, shall gather a range of course related information, and compile into a single report to present to the Academic Board Committees on an annual basis. The report shall have sections that are relevant to one or more of the Committees. The Committees shall provide comments/recommendations on the report and these shall be presented to the Academic Board for consideration.

Reporting to the Academic Board shall include information about the success of improvements made since the previous review and advice for the Academic Board about future changes and improvements, including further investment in infrastructure or resources.

The Academic Board shall review and consider conclusions and recommendations for future improvements. Where the Academic Board finds concerns with course performance, a major course review may be triggered ahead of schedule.

The Academic Board shall make decisions on the Committees' recommendations and these decisions are conveyed to the Committees and the Course Coordinator. The Course Coordinator would be responsible for implementing any changes through the subject coordinators, teaching staff and teaching support staff.

The course related information gathered by the Course Coordinator for the report would be:

Teaching and Learning Committee:

- The standard of quality of teaching and learning, including assessment
- Enrolment, progression, completion rates
- Modes of delivery, including across locations
- Staffing
- Library and learning resources
- Academic and non-academic student support needs
- Quality of teaching survey feedback from students
- Facilities
- Student admission, progression, and graduation policies and procedures
- Staff professional development
- Academic objectives and benchmarks for achievement.

Course Advisory Committee:

- The quality of current or proposed curriculum
- Input on course content, course design, learning outcomes, and graduate attributes from external academic experts and/or industry representatives as stakeholders
- Compliance and course design with regards to the 2021 Threshold Standards
- Benchmarking projects and quality assurance.

Assessment and Awards Committee:

- The standard and quality of assessment and awards, including
- Modes of assessment
- Infrastructure and resources
- Staffing needs
- Student support needs
- Professional development needs
- Benchmarks for achievement.

Appeals Committee:

- Data on student grievances, appeals and outcomes

This ongoing monitoring is crucial to improving quality and mitigating future risks to the quality of courses.

Early and Targeted Reviews

The Academic Board may request a major course review sooner than planned, should any concerns or risks arise during ongoing course review.

The Academic Board may also initiate a targeted review in response to a particular issue such as:

- An identified risk or need
- Consistent failure to reach the benchmark in a certain area
- Organisational or environmental change

Additionally, targeted reviews may be initiated by external accreditation bodies or auditors.

Review Outcomes

For all reviews, a final report shall be produced summarising its findings. The report shall be submitted to the Academic Board, along with any necessary supporting materials.

Academic Board Review

Members of the Academic Board, under the *Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures*, shall declare any conflicts of interest present when reviewing a course. The Academic Board shall complete the major review and present its findings to the responsible Course Coordinator, the Dean, and the Corporate Governance Board, within 28 days of receiving all materials required to undertake a major course review.

Outcomes under re-approval can include:

- Approval of advice to make changes to the course
- Amendments to advice for course changes
- Requests to the Course Coordinator for changes to the course
- Requests for further information
- Setting timelines for implementation for course improvements.

Where a course has been re-approved by the Academic Board, the responsible Course Coordinator working with the Academic Dean shall lead the process of developing an application for reaccreditation by TEQSA.

Continual Improvement

The Course Coordinator would be responsible for implementing any changes arising out of a major review or an ongoing review through the subject coordinators, teaching staff and teaching support staff.

Unsatisfactory performance

A major course review may identify serious issues with the course. The Academic Board may then recommend:

- Significant alterations and improvements to the course
- More frequent ongoing monitoring of the course moving forward
- The discontinuation of the course

In the event that a course is discontinued, the rights and wellbeing of students shall be prioritised. For more information, please refer to the *Course Discontinuation and Teachout Policy and Procedures*.

Record Keeping

Detailed records of all review processes shall be kept, including all reports, supporting material, and action plans determined by Boards and Committees.

See *Data and Records Integrity Policy & Procedures* for more information.

Compliance

All staff involved in the course review and improvement processes at LEA are required to comply with this policy and its procedures, and with related policies and respective procedures. Non-compliance may result in a disciplinary action or withdrawal from these activities.

File Number	LEA-GEN-COR-70022-D
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Contact Officer	TBA
Legislative Compliance	• <i>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</i> • <i>Australian Qualifications Framework</i> • <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</i>
Supporting Documents	
Related Documents	• <i>Academic Standards Policy and Procedures</i> • <i>Benchmarking Policy and Procedures</i> • <i>Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedures</i> • <i>Course Discontinuance Policy and Procedures</i> • <i>Data and Records Integrity Policy and Procedures</i> • <i>Teaching and Learning Plan</i>
Superseded Documents	
Effective Date	23 Feb 2023
Next Review	3 years from the effective date

Definitions



Academic Board: Governing body responsible for academic matters, including learning and teaching, course approval, workforce planning, academic staff appointments, research and professional development, academic policies and procedures, overseeing student grievances and appeals processes.

Assessment and Awards Committee: Committee of the Academic Board that is responsible for monitoring the quality and adequacy of assessment of student learning and outcomes and conferral of authorised certification for qualifications at LEA.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): National guidelines that regulate Australian post-compulsory education and training qualifications. The framework identifies learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification, policy requirements, educational and economic objectives, governing and monitoring arrangements.

Benchmarking: Process of comparing practices, processes and performance outcomes for the purpose of identifying comparative strengths and weaknesses in order to develop and improve academic quality and performance.

Corporate Governance Board: Governing body responsible for oversight of all higher education operations, including the ongoing viability LEA and the quality of its higher education delivery. The Corporate Governance Board guides the Executive Management and delegates responsibility for academic matters to the Academic Board.

Course: Sequenced program of subjects that a student enrolls in and for which they receive a degree upon graduation.

Course Advisory Committee: Committee dedicated to developing the initial proposal of new higher education courses at LEA, including external benchmarking and external input.

Course Coordinator: Senior Academic staff member responsible for the delivery, planning and development of a course at LEA, particularly subject curriculum information, and works in conjunction with other academic staff, the Academic Board and its relevant sub-committees.

Dean: Senior member of academic staff at LEA who is the principal point of contact between the Corporate Governance Board, the Academic Board, and academic staff.

Teaching and Learning Committee: Committee of the Academic Board that is responsible for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching at LEA, including progress towards achieving objectives of the *Teaching and Learning and Teaching Plan* and the adequacy of all forms of support for learning and teaching present at LEA.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA): Australia's regulatory and quality agency for higher education. TEQSA's primary aim is to ensure that students receive high quality education at any Australian higher education provider.



Review Schedule

This policy shall be reviewed by the Academic Board every three years.

Version History			
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval Date:	Revision Notes:
1.0	Academic Board	16/07/2020	New policy
1.1	Academic Board	22/02/2023	TEQSA and CRICOS requirements incorporated
1.2		20/05/2025	Replaced outdated 'HESF 2015' references with correct 'HESF 2021' references.