

Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedure HEPP41

PURPOSE

This policy and procedure is to provide a framework for the development and approval of higher education courses delivered by Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) and to ensure a consistent course quality assurance process is maintained.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure is for all staff who develop and approve courses of Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education), including members of the academic board and its relevant committees.

DEFINITIONS

Course	A course of learning comprising one or more units of study, or structured workplace learning that leads to the award of a qualification.
SCEI-HE	Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education)

POLICY

1. Course development at SCEI-HE is predicated on an educational philosophy that emphasises that the student is at the centre of the learning process. SCEI-HE's approach supports the personal and professional development of each student so that innovation, critical thinking and ethical and professional practice is encouraged.
2. All of SCEI-HE's courses will be developed to enable students to expand their professional interests across a range of related disciplines and enhance their future employment prospects.
3. SCEI-HE's courses are designed, developed and approved according to SCEI-HE's approach to course development and continuous quality improvement.
4. Course development will comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, including:
 - 4.1 Standard 1: Student Participation and Attainment – learning outcomes, assessment, and progression criteria
 - 4.2 Standard 2: Learning Environment – teaching resources, facilities, and support
 - 4.3 Standard 3: Teaching – qualified staff and appropriate pedagogical approaches
 - 4.4 Standard 4: Research and Research Training – where applicable, integration with course outcomes
 - 4.5 Standard 5: Institutional Quality Assurance – monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including external referencing and benchmarking
5. Processes of course and curriculum design at SCEI-HE are informed by:
 - 5.1 academic research in relevant fields of expertise;
 - 5.2 standards and guidelines established by peer institutions of higher education;
 - 5.3 advice, guidelines and standards of relevant professional and accrediting bodies; and
 - 5.4 consultation with appropriate industry associations.
6. Higher Education courses at SCEI-HE are designed to:
 - 6.1 provide students with accredited qualifications in their chosen field of study;
 - 6.2 provide a critically reflective theoretical and experiential learning context;
 - 6.3 expand the options available to students to engage in a range of career options;
 - 6.4 integrate theoretical and practical learning in a dynamic and supportive learning environment; and
 - 6.5 provide support to promote personal and professional development.
7. Course Development:
 - 7.1 New courses are developed in accordance with the strategic goals of the SCEI-HE;
 - 7.2 Course design and development is aligned with the standards and content criteria of the relevant peak professional and industry accrediting bodies;
 - 7.3 A new course is developed on sound business principles and in consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including potential employers of graduates of the course;
 - 7.4 New courses are developed in compliance with the current higher education legislative and regulatory requirements; and
 - 7.5 Courses are academically rigorous and of a quality and consistency with that of similar courses in other Australian higher education providers and universities.
 - 7.6 All new courses and units must consider the implications of generative AI for content delivery, learning outcomes, and assessment design, ensuring graduates develop skills in the ethical and effective use of

emerging technologies.

8. SCEI-HE's Academic Governance structure is designed to monitor the quality of SCEI-HE's courses, the effectiveness of course implementation, delivery and assessment and the effectiveness of the student and lecturer support infrastructure.
9. The Academic Board is primarily responsible for and has critical oversight of (as per HESF 2021):
 - 9.1 Achieving effective academic oversight of the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training;
 - 9.2 Setting and monitoring institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes;
 - 9.3 Establishing and maintaining academic governance at an institutional level, consistent with the types and levels of higher education offered; and
 - 9.4 Providing competent advice to the corporate governing body and management on academic matters, including advice on academic outcomes, policies and practices.
10. With respect to new course development, the Academic Board has final oversight and responsibility for:
 - 10.1 Establishing a new Course Advisory Committee to provide oversight to new course development for discipline areas outside of the institute's current course offerings;
 - 10.2 Ensuring that the Course Advisory Committee has the resources required to ensure effective management of any review or major change of existing courses; and
 - 10.3 Approving the final form of a new course before submission to appropriate accrediting bodies.
11. The Course Advisory Committee (for new course development) is responsible for:
 - 11.1 Ensuring informed leadership and direction that guides compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework, Australian Qualifications Framework, and professional body accreditation requirements for all new courses under development;
 - 11.2 Ensuring that all courses under development align with SCEI-HE's strategic objectives, market demand and industry and professional requirements;
 - 11.3 Convening and supervising a qualified Course Development Team (CDT) to develop any new course or change an existing course (major changes only);
 - 11.4 Providing feedback on the institute's courses in development, specifically:
 - 11.4.1 Course specifications;
 - 11.4.2 Course structure;
 - 11.4.3 Course content;
 - 11.4.4 Course and unit learning outcomes;
 - 11.4.5 Graduate attributes;
 - 11.4.6 Delivery modes and requirements;
 - 11.4.7 Assessment types and strategies;
 - 11.4.8 Constructive alignment (assessment, course learning outcomes, graduate outcomes, unit learning outcomes);
 - 11.4.9 Work-integrated learning /professional placement;
 - 11.4.10 Course entry requirements;
 - 11.4.11 Advanced standing;
 - 11.4.12 Articulation and graduate pathways;
 - 11.4.13 Suitability of teaching and learning materials;
 - 11.4.14 Scholarship within the relevant field;
 - 11.5 Recommending external referencing (benchmarking) and links with other Higher Education providers and comparability with University or Non-University Higher Education Institute's courses in a similar area; and
 - 11.6 Liaising with external reviewers regarding course content as per industry standards, professional accreditation body requirements and employer expectations.
12. The Course Development Team is responsible for:
 - 12.1 Developing and reviewing unit outlines, assessment strategies and unit resources;
 - 12.2 Developing unit delivery materials, rubrics and assessments; and
 - 12.3 Ensuring all copyright requirements have been met.
13. All courses undergo systematic reviews at least every seven years, incorporating external referencing and benchmarking against comparable courses. Interim reviews may be conducted based on student feedback, academic performance, or industry changes. Findings inform curriculum updates and quality enhancements.
14. All courses at SCEI-HE will clearly map learning outcomes, graduate attributes, and assessment strategies to the relevant AQF level. This ensures that students acquire the knowledge, skills, and application appropriate to the qualification type (e.g., Bachelor, Graduate Certificate, Master). Course design will explicitly reference AQF level descriptors to maintain national consistency and facilitate recognition across institutions and professional bodies.

PROCEDURE

1. Planning and Business Case

- 1.1 A business case for a new course must be prepared by the CEO in consultation with the Academic Director and Marketing.
- 1.2 The business case is to be supported by the itemised proposed development budget;
- 1.3 The completed business case must be submitted to the Corporate Board at least six months prior to commencement of course development;
- 1.4 The Corporate Board will review the business case and provide feedback to the CEO; and
- 1.5 Once the Corporate Board has approved the business case, the CEO may proceed to the next stage; convening the Course Advisory Committee and the Course Development Team.

2. Course Resourcing and Risk Management

- 2.1 Before course approval, a thorough assessment ensures the availability of qualified staff, learning resources, facilities, and financial sustainability. Potential risks, such as low enrolment or resource constraints, are identified with mitigation strategies developed accordingly.

3. Course design will be informed by industry and academic consultation, either by:

- 3.1 A course concept design must provide information to indicate:
 - alignment with the peak professional bodies and accrediting agencies relevant to the course discipline;
 - appropriate consideration of entry and exit pathways, including articulation from other courses and further studies;
 - compliance with the proposed AQF level and qualification type;
 - graduate attributes and learning outcomes, clearly identified and mapped to the course;
 - approaches to teaching and learning;
 - overview of course structure;
 - advanced standing and articulation;
 - unit assessment matrix;
 - how the proposed course specifically addresses English language proficiency; and
 - where Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is included within the proposed course, measures to support these activities and placement partner organisations should be indicated.
- 3.2 Unit outlines must be developed for each unit in the proposed course and must include the following within pre-designed TEQSA-approved outline templates:
 - Unit name and code;
 - Unit description;
 - Credit points and level;
 - Unit Coordinator;
 - Prerequisite or corequisite units;
 - Unit learning outcomes;
 - General taught content;
 - Prescribed and recommended resources;
 - Summarised assessment; and
 - Work-integrated learning placement.
 - Unit learning outcomes should clearly indicate how they contribute to achieving AQF level expectations.
- 3.3 Each course must demonstrate alignment with AQF level descriptors, including:
 - Knowledge: breadth and depth of theoretical and practical knowledge
 - Skills: cognitive, technical, and communication skills
 - Application: application of knowledge and skills in professional and ethical contexts

4. Course development staff and timelines

- 4.1 Course Development Team will consist of:
 - Project Lead (Accreditation Officer/Academic Director) (1);
 - Curriculum Expert (1); and
 - Content Creators (3-5).
- 4.2 Course development schedules will be affected by the size of the development team, but timelines are

- benchmarked vigorously against university and higher education providers' development experiences.
- 4.3 Course design will be further informed by industry and academic consultation, either by:
- Convened Course Advisory Committee, composed of at least 2 industry leaders and 2 academic consultants, which will meet at key developmental milestones to review, suggest revisions and validate content and assessments; or
 - Extensive, in person, industry and academic consultation.
- 4.4 Complete course will be comprehensively reviewed by an externally located academic in a course-relevant field. The external academic will:
- Be qualified at least one (1) AQF level above the qualification documentation being reviewed;
 - Make Track Changes edits, suggestions and comments 'in-text' to the course documentation as part of the commissioned review;
 - Assess whether the course content and learning activities engage with theoretical and conceptual frameworks, current knowledge and scholarship relevant to the discipline; and
 - Make an overall appraisal of the suitability and academic rigour of the course.
- 4.5 The course documentation and all the unit outlines are to be submitted to the Academic Board, which will:
- Review the work produced, in regard to the original work, the external reviewer's appraisal and suggested revisions;
 - Alignment of the course with SCEI-HE Strategic Plan, as well as SCEI-HE's mission and values;
 - Alignment with the appropriate AQF level of study;
 - Alignment with the standards and content criteria of the relevant peak industry body or professional association; and
 - General academic rigour of the assessments and content.
- 4.6 Feedback will be provided to the Course Development Team and Academic Director by way of a report and in the meeting minutes and will highlight where any issues have been raised by the Board.
- 4.7 In line with TEQSA policy and process, an application for accreditation will be sought with the appropriate peak industry accrediting body before applying for accreditation with TEQSA.
- 4.8 Academic Board will ensure each course meets the relevant HESF Standards during review and approval.
- 4.9 Documentation for each course must reference compliance with specific HESF standards, showing evidence of student learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and quality assurance processes.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Academic Board TOR HETOR02
Course Advisory Committee TOR HETOR09
Course Review, Amendment and Approval Policy and Procedure HEPP28
[TEQSA and the Australian Qualifications Framework – Questions and answers](#)
[TEQSA Guidance Note – Course design \(including learning outcomes and assessment\)](#)
[TEQSA Guidance note – External referencing \(including benchmarking\)](#)
[TEQSA Guidance note – Joint and dual awards](#)
[TEQSA Guidance note – Technology-enhanced learning](#)
[TEQSA Guidance note – Work-integrated learning](#)

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Australian Qualifications Framework
Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive Officer

- Developing business case
- Convening Course Advisory Committee (for new discipline areas) and Course Development Committee

Academic Director

- Compliance with this policy and procedure in the proposal, development and approval of new courses.

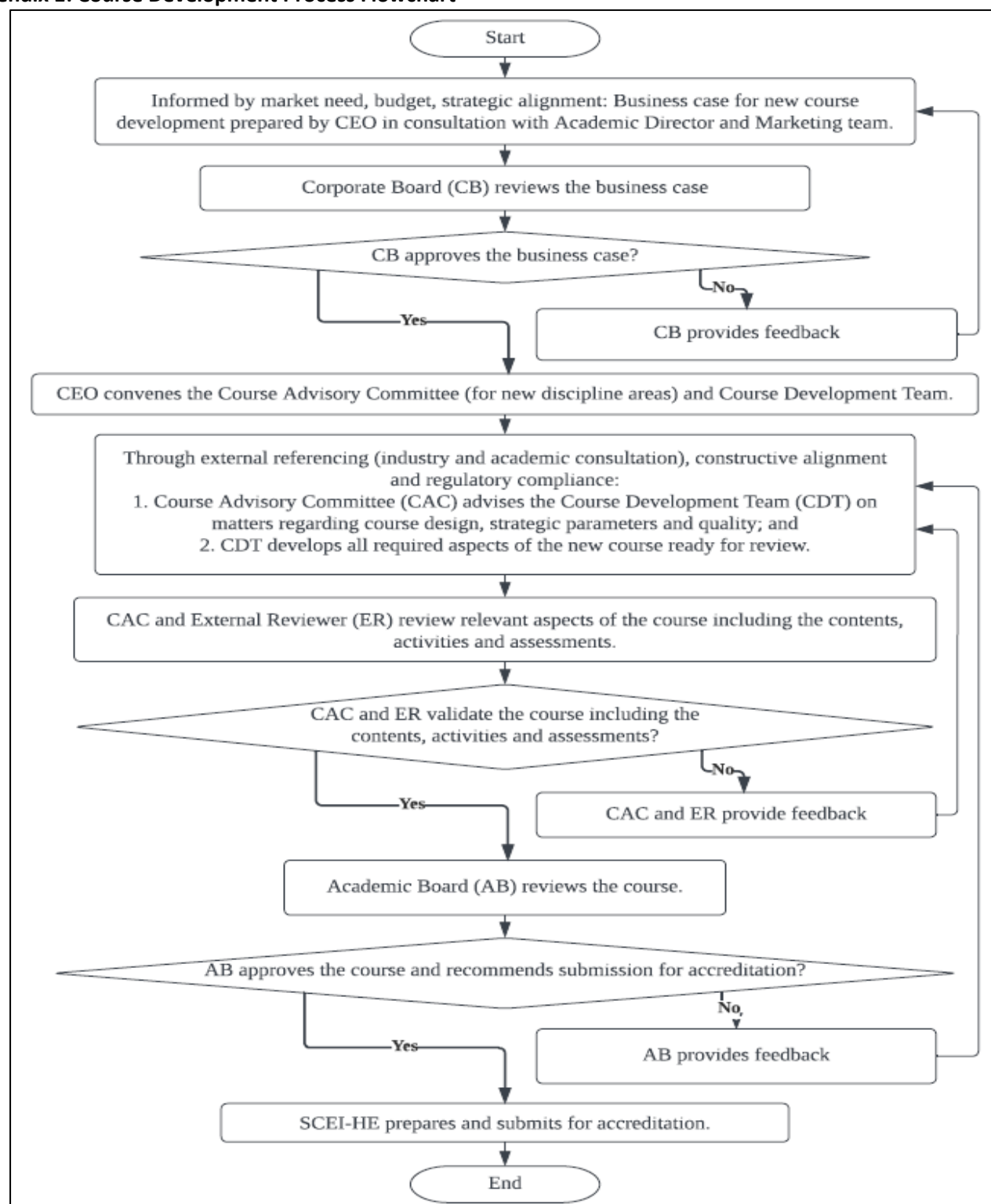
Course Advisory Committee

- Monitoring the development of new courses and providing advice as required
- Overseeing the Course Development Team

Academic Board

- Approving new courses and changes to existing courses and units; and
- Ensuring quality assurance of all courses.

Appendix 1: Course Development Process Flowchart





DOCUMENT AND RECORD CONTROL	
Created	Feb 2016 (V1.0)
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