

Course Discontinuation Policy and Procedure HEPP38

PURPOSE	
This policy sets out the principles for the discontinuation of accredited courses at Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education). This policy is informed by ongoing monitoring and review of course performance, aligned to institutional benchmarks and regulatory standards.	
SCOPE	
This policy and procedure applies to staff who review and approve the discontinuation of accredited courses. This includes the Corporate and Academic Boards and their standing committees. It applies to all courses delivered at all locations and in all modes, including online and on-campus.	
DEFINITIONS	
Course	A program of learning comprising 1 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)
Student	An individual who is formally enrolled to study at the Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education). The individual person is who appears on the enrolment documents, and who is assigned a Student ID.
Material Change	A change to a course that is significant enough to require notification or approval by TEQSA under its material change obligations (e.g., course closure or major delivery changes).
Teach-out	The process through which students enrolled in a discontinued course are provided a pathway to complete the course or transfer with full academic credit.
Teach-out Period	A plan that describes how the course will be discontinued and how the impact on students concerned will be minimised.
Tuition Protection Service (TPS)	'Tuition protection' refers to the protections and assistance available to support FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP (HELP) students, VET Student Loans (VSL) students and international students, in the event that their education provider defaults (ceases delivering a course or closes entirely) https://www.education.gov.au/tps .
POLICY	
- Decisions to discontinue a course must be based on evidence obtained through regular course monitoring and comprehensive course review processes, including academic quality, viability, and strategic alignment. - The discontinuation of a course must be approved by the Corporate Board on the recommendation of the Academic Board. - Discontinuation must be formally approved before any students are notified that the course is discontinued. - Where students are currently enrolled in a discontinued course an appropriate phase-out plan must be submitted to the Academic Board by the Academic Director. - All students enrolled in a discontinued course must be notified of the plans for discontinuation, the timeline for the phasing out and the options for them to complete their course of study. - Students must be notified in writing at least one full teaching period (semester or trimester) before the teach-out period commences, wherever practicable.	
PROCEDURE	
Discontinuation Proposal - A proposal to discontinue a course is made by the Academic Director, Teaching and Learning Committee or Course Advisory Committee to the Academic Board. The proposal must reference the most recent comprehensive course review and any performance benchmarking data relevant to the course's continuation.	

- 1.2 The proposal to discontinue a course will address the following matters:
 - 1.2.1 Reasons for proposal to discontinue the course;
 - 1.2.2 Teach-out plan;
 - 1.2.3 Impact on stakeholders, including students, staff, and industry partners;
 - 1.2.4 Consequences for strategic planning; and
 - 1.2.5 Financial consequences.

2. Teach-out Plan

The teach-out plan will address the following matters:

- 2.1 Number of students involved over the teach-out period;
- 2.2 Proposed duration of the teach-out period: this is the full-time duration of the course plus 1 year;
- 2.3 How the academic quality of the course will be maintained over the teach-out period;
- 2.4 How the educational experience of the students will be maintained to ensure that the students meet the learning outcomes of the course;
- 2.5 Mechanisms to uphold academic integrity and equivalency of assessment throughout the teach-out;
- 2.6 Whether discontinuation applies across all delivery locations and modes, or selected campuses only;
- 2.7 Details of the arrangements made for students to complete their course, including availability of core and elective units;
- 2.8 Details of the arrangements made for students who are unable to complete their course for medical or compassionate circumstances and for students who fail units or fail to make progress in a timely manner; and
- 2.9 Communication with students: how and when information will be communicated; content of communication; arrangements for ongoing communication throughout the teach-out period.

3. Consideration by the Academic Board

- 3.1 The proposal, with an accompanying teach-out plan, will be submitted to the Academic Board for consideration. In evaluating the proposal, the Academic Board must ensure that discontinuation does not compromise students' ability to complete their qualification or transfer with appropriate recognition of prior learning.
- 3.2 The Academic Board, in its role of quality oversight of academic programs, will consider whether the proposal and teach-out plan appropriately provide for the students enrolled.
- 3.3 The Academic Board decision may be:
 - 3.3.1 return to the Academic Director for amendments;
 - 3.3.2 not to recommend the proposal to discontinue the course; or
 - 3.3.3 recommendation to the Corporate Board to discontinue the course.

4. Consideration by the Corporate Board

On the recommendation of the Academic Board, the Corporate Board may approve the discontinuation of a course. The Corporate Board must consider strategic alignment and potential reputational and compliance risks before granting approval.

5. Regulatory Notification

Following approval by the Corporate Board to discontinue the course, the Compliance Manager will notify TEQSA and any other relevant bodies. The Academic Director will determine whether TEQSA notification or formal approval is required, based on TEQSA's guidance on material changes.

6. Cessation of Enrolments

- 6.1 Enrolments must cease as early as practicable after Corporate Board approval, ensuring no new admissions compromise teach-out feasibility.
- 6.2 Students will be advised that offers made as a last intake for the course cannot be deferred.

7. Marketing

- 7.1 All marketing channels, including the SCEI-HE website and external promotional materials, must be updated to reflect the discontinuation. The course should be clearly marked as 'discontinued from DD/MM/YYYY'. Education agents must also be notified in writing.

8. Communication with Students

- 8.1 All currently enrolled students must be informed in writing, with details including:
- 8.2 Reasons for discontinuation
- 8.3 The approved teach-out plan
- 8.4 Options for completion or transfer
- 8.5 Limitations on deferrals or progression changes and
- 8.6 Ongoing communication must be scheduled throughout the teach-out period.

9. Teach-out Period

- 9.1 Adjustments may need to be made over the teach-out period to ensure that continuing students have access to the units they require to complete the course. Any such adjustments must be approved by the Academic Board. Adjustments to curriculum delivery, staffing, or assessment must be reviewed by the Academic Board to ensure consistent academic quality.
- 9.2 The Course Coordinator will review student progress at the end of each semester and report to the Academic Director, who will in turn, report to the Teaching and Learning Committee.
- 9.3 The Course Coordinator will also advise the Academic Director on any delayed progress in the teach-out plan.
- 9.4 The Course Coordinator is to provide students with course plans that map out their progress to completion.
- 9.5 Students will be advised that a deferment for a time in the teach-out period is not likely to be approved.

10. Appeals

Students may make an appeal regarding any aspect of the teach-out plans via the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure HEPP03.

11. Tuition Protection Service (TPS)

SCEI-HE participates in the Tuition Protection arrangements. The TPS is an initiative of the Australian Government to assist international students and eligible domestic students accessing FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP (HELP) loans, whose education providers are unable to fully deliver their course of study. The TPS ensures that these students are able to either:

- 11.1 complete their studies in another course or with another education provider; or
- 11.2 receive a refund of their unspent tuition fees (international students) or a re-credit of their loan for open units of study.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Student Complaint and Grievance Policy and Procedure HEPP03
- Refund Policy and Procedure HEPP25
- Course Review, Amendment and Approval Policy and Procedure HEPP28
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure HEPP16
- Academic Quality Assurance Framework

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
- Tuition Protection Service requirements (per ESOS Act and Higher Education Support Act)

RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Board: Responsible for approving the teach-out plan and ensuring the academic quality of the course during the teach-out period.

Academic Director: Responsible for the development of the teach-out plans of discontinued courses and submission to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Corporate Board: Responsible for approving the discontinuation of existing accredited courses at SCEI-HE.

Course Coordinator: Responsible for monitoring student progress throughout the teach-out period with a view to ensuring that students are enabled to complete their course and to propose course adjustments where required.

Teaching and Learning Committee: Responsible for administering the teach-out plans for discontinued courses, reporting to the Academic Board.



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DOCUMENT AND RECORD CONTROL	
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