COURSE REVIEW PROCEDURE

SCOPE

This procedure applies to:

- all courses leading to an award, exit-only awards and non-award enabling programs; and
- all locations.

For non-award professional development education, including micro-credentials, refer to the [Professional Development Education Procedure](#).

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

This procedure describes the process for evaluating the academic, strategic and business effectiveness of approved courses, at a maximum interval of every seven years.

In this procedure, the 'appropriate senior academic officer' refers to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for coursework and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training) for graduate research.

The term 'course' refers to one or more courses that are reviewed together in a single review event and includes non-award enabling programs.

1. Purpose of course reviews

1.1 Course reviews ensure that the University's course offerings contain up-to-date knowledge and contemporary teaching, learning and assessment methods, and inform Academic Board's decision to reaccredit courses and the Vice-Chancellor's (or delegate's) decision to offer a course.

1.2 Academic Board or the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate) may direct the dean (or delegate) of a degree faculty to review a course at any time if concerned that the course is not meeting academic quality standards.

Terms of reference: coursework course reviews

1.3 The terms of reference for a coursework course review are to consider the course's past and present effectiveness and future directions, taking into consideration the expertise, resources and learning experience across Monash's global network of campuses/locations, and to advise Academic Board and the senior academic officer on the course's:

1.3.1 strategic alignment with Monash's overall academic profile and priorities, and with the entire portfolio of courses;

1.3.2 market positioning and demand, the economics of sustaining the course quality, and addressing external factors that may challenge the course or its viability;

1.3.3 academic standards, particularly the appropriateness of the entry criteria and standards, the learning outcomes in relation to the AQF (and international equivalents, where applicable), and the validity of external benchmarking;

1.3.4 academic design across teaching locations including curriculum relevance and currency, course structure, pedagogy, assessment strategies, and academic support initiatives for students;

1.3.5 student outcomes, such as academic success, student satisfaction, graduate employment and employer satisfaction, with particular reference to equity and diversity in the student profile;

1.3.6 access to adequate and quality academic resources across teaching locations, including information technology; library programs, resources and services; learning spaces; and staffing;

1.3.7 academic governance and management, addressing their appropriateness for ensuring successful delivery and oversight of the course; and

1.3.8   appropriate quality, standard and viability, and noting if there are matters that should be addressed or considered by the faculty and/or University.

Terms of reference: graduate research course reviews

1.4   The terms of reference for a graduate research course review are to consider the course's past and present effectiveness and future directions, taking into consideration the expertise, resources and learning experience across Monash's global network of campuses/locations, and to advise Academic Board and the senior academic officer on:

1.4.1   the strategic alignment of the course within the overall academic, graduate research training and research profile and priorities of both the faculty and Monash;

1.4.2   the case for retaining the course where it has, at the time of the course review, fewer than 15 currently enrolled students, with specific reference to the ongoing strategic need for the course, resourcing, program management and quality assurance, addressing any external factors which may challenge how the course is offered or its future viability;

1.4.3   the academic quality of the course, in particular, evidence of quality supervision, course structures, coursework and professional development training where applicable;

1.4.4   the academic resources required to support graduate research students undertaking the course, particularly when delivered across multiple teaching locations and including: information technology; library programs, resources and services; study and learning spaces; laboratory spaces (where relevant); and staffing, including professional staff or technical staff resourcing, addressing evidence that resources are adequate to continue to offer the course at a high standard, and challenges and opportunities where students enrolled in a single course are dispersed across multiple locations;

1.4.5   the academic governance and management arrangements for the course, including compliance of the course in relation to Monash regulations and policies, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018) and other external government protocols (including both Australian and offshore government protocols where relevant); and

1.4.6   to advise Academic Board if the reviewed course is of appropriate quality, standard and viability and if there are any matters that should be addressed or considered by the faculty and/or University.

2.   Planning for course reviews

2.1   Every course must be reviewed before its accreditation expires, unless the course will be disestablished before the expiry date (see Course Accreditation Procedure, section 7).

2.2   To provide adequate time for the course review and reaccreditation, the faculty should start the review process 18 to 24 months before the course's expiry date.

2.3   The managing faculty is responsible for undertaking the course review. The faculty general manager (or delegate) will appoint an executive officer to support the independent review panel and may appoint a different executive officer to support the overall review process and self-review team.

2.4   The course review and reaccreditation can begin earlier for any reason, such as:

•   to align with external accreditation/registration requirements (see also section 10 Alternative arrangements); or
•   to accommodate requirements in offshore locations or with partner institutions.

2.5   By 1 August each year, the dean (or delegate) of the managing faculty will advise the Academic Programs and Governance Office (APGO) (for coursework) or the Monash Graduate Research Office (MGRO) (for graduate research) of the proposed course review schedule for the following year. APGO (for coursework) or MGRO (for graduate research) will submit a collated schedule to Academic Board and the appropriate senior academic officer for information.

2.5.1   If the dean (or delegate) intends to seek alternative arrangements for a course review, they must notify APGO or MGRO at this time (see section 10 for more details).

2.5.2   If the dean (or delegate) seeks to include additional terms of reference to address specific issues not covered by the terms in sections 1.3 or 1.4 above, the dean must notify APGO or MGRO as appropriate, who will seek the approval of the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate). Additions must be approved before the appointment of the independent review panel.

2.6   A course review will include all applicable campuses, teaching locations, modes and:

2.6.1   for coursework courses, all majors, minors and specialisations within the course, all courses within a nested course, partners in course delivery and related double degree courses; or

2.6.2   for graduate research courses, all programs, units and professional training delivered to students within the course.

2.7   Faculties may review cognate groups of courses together.

2.8   The managing faculty must give other faculties that teach into the course an opportunity to participate in the review, e.g. through involvement in the self-review team (section 3) or preparation of the course review portfolio (section 4), or through a submission to the independent review panel (section 5).

2.9   For a course offered in a country other than Australia and subject to local requirements, the managing faculty must take into account the legislative requirements of that country relating to course reviews, which may include length of review cycle, timing of the review, review panel composition, terms of reference or how the review event is conducted.

2.10   For coursework, the responsibilities, processes (including location-specific processes) and templates for each section of this procedure are set out in the course review guidance information.

2.11   A course review process comprises the following components outlined in the sections below:

- self-review by the faculty;
- compilation of a course review portfolio;
- independent review panel event;
- independent review panel report;
- faculty response; and
- 12-month faculty update.

Benchmarking course design and performance

2.12   Benchmarking, or external referencing, relative to one or more appropriate institutions is required for all course reviews. Faculties are required to benchmark the course design when a course is first proposed (see Course Accreditation Procedure, sections 2.2 and 2.6) and to compare aspects of a course's performance during the period of accreditation.

2.12.1   For coursework course reviews, the minimum benchmarking requirements that must be reported are:

- course content, structure and learning outcomes;
- student progression, retention, success and completion rates; and
- teaching, learning and assessment methods and grading of student achievement for selected core units within the course.

2.12.2   For graduate research course reviews, the minimum benchmarking requirements that must be reported are one or more of the following:

- organisational benchmarking, where comparisons are made at the organisational level (e.g. university, academic unit or course level);
- benchmarking against a specific course, with a focus on student learning outcomes, graduate outcomes and the research undertaken by the other higher education provider(s);
- outcomes benchmarking, where comparisons are made in relation to student outcomes; or
- best-practice benchmarking, where the faculty identifies another institution (or faculty or school) at the forefront of delivering a similar course to the one under review.

3.   Self-review team

3.1   The dean, in consultation with the associate/deputy dean (education or graduate research as appropriate), will appoint a self-review team that must include:

3.1.1   **For coursework**: the current course director and at least one academic staff member from each teaching location who teaches in the course; and

3.1.2   **For graduate research**: at least one senior academic faculty staff member with insight into the research discipline (e.g. heads of academic units, graduate research coordinators/program directors).

3.2   The self-review team engages in a process of critical reflection with staff who are involved in the delivery and management of the course, across all campuses, teaching locations, delivery modes and partners.

3.3   The self-review team prepares two components of the course review portfolio: the academic case (see section 4.3.3) and the self-review report (see section 4.3.9).

4.   Course review portfolio

4.1   The course review portfolio is the complete set of documentation provided to the independent review panel before the review event. The faculty executive officer who is supporting the course review ensures all the components of the course review portfolio are completed according to this procedure.

4.2 The self-review team must have access to all documentation prepared for the course review portfolio to inform their deliberations; however, the self-review team must not edit any parts of the course review portfolio other than the academic case and self-review report.

4.3 At a minimum, the course review portfolio consists of the following parts.

A. Monash context

4.3.1 The Monash context provides the independent review panel with contextual information to inform their review of the course. This section includes:

- an overview of the Monash and campus/location context;
- relevant strategic plans;
- an overview of the faculty's course portfolio at the relevant level, i.e. undergraduate, graduate coursework or graduate research; and
- the terms of reference for the review.

B. Data-analysis report

4.3.2 The managing faculty produces the data-analysis report independently of the self-review team. This section includes:

- objective analysis and interpretation of the course's business intelligence data over the accreditation period;
- comparison with courses within the faculty and across Monash;
- examination of external data sources and benchmarking activities for comparison with at least one other appropriate institution and with discipline standards if applicable; and
- course viability data, including profitability/financial performance.

C. Academic case

4.3.3 The academic case comprises the original academic case for the current accreditation period, drawn from the curriculum management system (if available), and an updated academic case to reflect the current course showing amendments that have been made during the current accreditation period, and any plans for future development of the course. These original and updated cases both include:

- academic course information;
- design compliance;
- course governance; and
- implementation plan.

4.3.4 Where the current accreditation was prior to 2016, the accredited version first entered in the curriculum management system should be used. If design compliance or course governance were not completed for that version, each section should be completed for the current version of the course and provided as part of the updated academic case.

D. Submissions to the independent review panel

4.3.5 The dean (or delegate) will call for submissions to the independent review panel from members of the Monash community and other stakeholders identified by the dean (or delegate).

4.3.6 The call for submissions is made before the self-review report is prepared and informs stakeholders that the submission will be available to the self-review team. Persons making a submission to the independent review panel can request that their submission be shared anonymously with the self-review team.

4.3.7 A separate call for submissions will be sent to current students and recent graduates and will invite them to apply for selection to meet with the review panel.

4.3.8 Any party within the Monash community may make written submissions to the course review but the review panel will determine whom they will interview.

E. Self-review report

4.3.9 The self-review team produces the self-review report. The report must:

- address the terms of reference;
- reflect on the performance of the course since the last accreditation, particularly in relation to Monash graduate attributes and course learning outcomes;
- respond and refer to the data-analysis report to support arguments or provide clarifications;
- reflect on critical peer-review discussions facilitated by the self-review team and on other feedback received;
- critically reflect on the outcomes of benchmarking activities to, for example, demonstrate the comparative quality of the course;

- reflect on the outcomes of opportunities and challenges identified at the initial accreditation or last review (whichever applies) and, in the latter case, comment on the response to the recommendations of the last review;
- review and reflect on formal stage 3 complaints related to the course received over the accreditation period;
- reflect on the feedback received over the accreditation period from course advisory boards or equivalent; and
- reflect on the opportunities and challenges anticipated in the next accreditation period.

Additional information

4.4 The following additions to the portfolio may be included:

- pre-existing documentation provided by the self-review team;
- information requested by the review panel; and
- information required under other countries' legislation for courses recognised in those countries, prepared by the self-review team in consultation with appropriate staff members.

Distribution of the course review portfolio

4.5 The executive officer is responsible for compiling the course review portfolio and sending it to:

- the independent review panel;
- the APGO (for coursework) or MGRO (for graduate research);
- the Chair of Academic Board;
- senior Monash officers and staff specified in the relevant guidance documents; and
- other key stakeholders identified in consultation with the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate).

4.6 The dean (or delegate) must give the review panel the opportunity to request further relevant information before the review event.

5. Independent review panel

5.1 The dean (or delegate) of the managing faculty is responsible for nominating members for the independent review panel in consultation with relevant heads and partner faculties. Nominees will have attributes of:

- impartiality/objectivity;
- expertise in relevant fields; and
- experience in academic and/or quality assurance leadership.

5.2 At least half of the panel members, excluding any student members, must be external to Monash, unless approved by the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate). The panel must, at a minimum, consist of:

- one chair who is a senior academic, has relevant experience and expertise including in university management, and has previously served as a member on at least one quality assurance review panel within the higher education sector; and
- two other members who are senior academics with relevant experience.

5.2.1 Normally the chair would be external to Monash but if that is not possible or appropriate then the chair must be external to the faculty.

5.3 For courses taught only at offshore campuses/locations, the composition and conduct of the review panel must satisfy both Monash requirements and any in-country government requirements.

5.4 The panel members must not have been involved in the management or teaching of the course under review within the current accreditation period.

5.5 The dean (or delegate) can nominate additional members to the panel to ensure the panel has specific knowledge critical to achieving the terms of reference (e.g. industry expertise, complementary discipline expertise, local/regional expertise, international perspective).

5.6 The faculty general manager must appoint an executive officer to the review panel, who must have knowledge of relevant Monash policies and procedures. The executive officer is not a member of the review panel, and must not have been involved in the preparation of the self-review report.

5.7 The dean (or delegate) must submit nominations for review panel membership to APGO (for coursework) or MGRO (for graduate research) for approval by the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate). If the review panel chair is not external to Monash, a justification must accompany the request for approval.

5.8 The independent review panel:

- must consult widely;
- must not modify the terms of reference or co-opt members; and
- advises Academic Board in relation to the standards and quality of the course under review, the availability of resources to support it and its current and future sustainability and opportunities.

5.9   Independent review panel members will not be compensated for their service on the panel but costs (accommodation, travel, meals) can be covered by the faculty.

6.   Review event

6.1   The review event is the meeting of the independent review panel for interviews with relevant parties, discussions and deliberations to address the terms of reference.

    6.1.1   The executive officer is responsible for drafting an agenda for the review event and sending it to the chair who will finalise the agenda.

6.2   The review event will normally be conducted face-to-face at one or more teaching locations. Panel members or interviewees may attend remotely through appropriate technology.

6.3   For reviews that involve courses at more than one campus, teaching location or partner organisation, the chair of the review panel will determine, in consultation with the dean (or delegate), the need to travel to locations other than the administrative centre of the course. The review panel should have the opportunity to tour relevant facilities.

6.4   Local regulatory requirements must be considered when planning the locations of the review event.

6.5   At a minimum, the review panel must meet with the following stakeholders and make every effort to include representatives from all course locations:

- the managing faculty's senior officers and the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate);
- student and alumni representatives;
- industry representatives;
- representatives of the teaching team; and
- representatives of relevant service areas.

6.6   At the end of the review event the panel must give an oral report of their preliminary findings and recommendations to the dean (or delegate), associate/deputy dean (education or graduate research as appropriate), course director and other faculty/University representatives (including relevant senior staff from other course locations) as desired. An invitation must be extended to the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate).

7.   Independent review panel report

7.1   The independent review panel report must address each of the terms of reference in relation to the evidence presented in the course review portfolio and at the review event.

7.2   The executive officer is responsible for drafting the review panel report and must send it to the chair within two weeks of the review event.

7.3   The chair is responsible for reviewing and refining the report and ensuring that all panel members agree with the contents of the report or have the opportunity to register a minority view.

7.4   When the chair is satisfied that the report fully and accurately reflects the conclusions of the review, the executive officer must send the draft report to the dean (or delegate). The dean (or delegate) is responsible for reviewing the report and notifying the chair and executive officer of any errors of fact within two weeks.

7.5   The chair must finalise the report with the executive officer and send the final report to the dean (or delegate) within eight weeks of the review event.

8.   Faculty response report

8.1   The dean (or delegate), in consultation with the associate/deputy dean (education or graduate research as appropriate) and course director, will review the review findings and prepare the faculty response report, addressing each of the panel's recommendations.

8.2   Where recommendations apply to a campus or teaching location, the dean (or delegate) must consult with the campus or location when developing the response.

    8.2.1   For courses offered at offshore campuses/locations, consultation must include the head of school and relevant quality assurance staff at the location.

8.3   The faculty response report will be sent to members of the independent review panel to demonstrate how their recommendations are informing Monash's continual development.

8.4   The dean (or delegate) is responsible for implementing the outcomes of course reviews.

9. Reporting review outcomes and applying for reaccreditation

9.1   Within six months of the review event, the dean (or delegate) must submit the review documents (i.e. self-review report, review panel report and faculty response report) to the APGO (for coursework) or MGRO (for graduate research) who will, on behalf of the dean (or delegate):

    9.1.1   seek the endorsement of the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate) for reaccreditation of the course. The senior academic officer (or delegate) can request more information from the dean (or delegate) to inform their decision; and

    9.1.2   submit the review documents for noting to Academic Board (through the UEC or GRC as appropriate).

9.2   The dean (or delegate) must apply for reaccreditation of the course within two years of the review event and in time for Academic Board to approve the proposal before the current expiry date. If this timeframe is not met, the senior academic officer (or delegate_ will determine whether another review is required.

    9.2.1   The review documents must be attached to the reaccreditation proposal in the curriculum management system. If the reaccreditation proposal is submitted within six months of the review event, the review documents and the proposal can be submitted together (without the need for the action in 9.1.2).

    9.2.2   If the faculty decides not to reaccredit the course, they must submit a disestablishment proposal with the review documents attached before the current expiry date.

9.3   Twelve months after a course has been reaccredited, the dean (or delegate) must submit to Academic Board, through the APGO (for coursework) or MGRO (for graduate research), a written update on the progress towards implementing the recommendations of the review panel report as planned in the faculty response report.

10. Alternative arrangements

10.1   The dean (or delegate) may seek approval to use alternative arrangements for a course review. The dean (or delegate) must advise APGO (for coursework) or MGRO (for graduate research) of the intention to seek alternative arrangements when proposing the course review schedule for the following year (as detailed in section 2.5) and submit a written request to the APGO (for coursework) or MGRO (for graduate research).

10.2   The appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate) will approve alternative arrangements.

10.3   Alternative arrangements for course reviews must:

    10.3.1   address all the terms of reference (section 1), satisfy the composition of the independent review panel (section 5), or an approved alternative composition, and receive input from stakeholder groups identified in section 6.5;

    10.3.2   assure Academic Board of the quality standards and viability of the course; and

    10.3.3   be conducted in the format approved by the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate).

10.4   Alternative arrangements may be used in the following cases, or in any other circumstances approved by the appropriate senior academic officer (or delegate).

    10.4.1   Where a course has undergone external accreditation or registration in the two years prior to the Academic Board accreditation expiry date, any terms of reference that were addressed in that process do not need to be re-addressed in the course review.

    10.4.2   For joint doctoral and research master's courses, in addition to the terms of reference the review process must consider the strategic significance of the courses in the context of Monash's international strategy.

11. Improving the course review process

11.1   The senior academic officers (or delegates) will report to Academic Board at the second meeting each year through its committees on the process and outcomes of course reviews held in the previous year to inform the process for future course reviews and to identify areas for improvement.

DEFINITIONS

Academic case	The part of a course proposal that documents the academic design of a course (academic content, standards and quality), the impact on the University's course portfolio, internal and external compliance, governance and management of the course, professional accreditation and associated partnerships.

Academic course information	The academic information about a course including the Handbook description (course overview, learning outcomes, course structure, specialisations, major and minors, course requirements, awards), the eligibility requirements for admission, designed pathways, and AHEGS statement.
Accreditation of courses	The University's process for course approval using criteria established by Academic Board to ensure courses meet academic standards. External (or professional) accreditation is the evaluation of a course or qualification undertaken by a body external to the University and aimed at gaining recognition in an industry or profession or by a government agency.
Appropriate senior academic officer	For the purpose of this procedure, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for coursework or the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training) for graduate research.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	The Australian Government's policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system.
Benchmarking	In the context of course accreditation and review, benchmarking involves comparing courses, outcomes, structures and/or management of similar courses within the University or at other institutions.
Business case	Arguments and evidence to support the introduction of a new offering, changes to an existing offering that may have strategic or market impact, or the continuation of an offering (e.g. in relation to an application for reaccreditation following a course review).
Course	A coherent sequence of units and/or research component, usually leading to a degree or other award.
Coursework	A method of learning and teaching that leads to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, undertaken by enrolled students through scheduled activities, directed learning and independent study. In contrast, see 'graduate research'.
Curriculum management system	CourseLoop, Monash's system for managing course and unit approval, accreditation, publication and review.
Degree faculty	The faculty responsible for the curriculum content and design of a course. Double degree courses may have two degree faculties, referred to in the Handbook as managing faculty and partner faculty for the course.
Double degree course	An accredited course of study that leads to two awards.
Executive officer	For the purpose of these procedures, the person who supports the independent review panel.
Graduate attributes	Generic learning outcomes that refer to transferable, non-discipline specific skills that a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts.
Graduate research	Systematic experimental and theoretical study, undertaken by enrolled students, characterised by the acquisition of advanced skills, techniques and knowledge, and resulting in a major research output (such as a thesis). In contrast, see 'coursework'.
Handbook	A handbook published annually by the University specifying courses of study and units of study to or in which students may be admitted or enrolled during the year for which it is published.
Joint award course	A single course of study arranged and delivered jointly by Monash and another higher education institution that leads to the award of a single qualification.
Learning outcomes	The expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.
Managing faculty	The faculty specified in the Handbook as being responsible for the administration of a course for the year for which the Handbook is published.
Reaccreditation	The process for renewing the accreditation of existing courses after course review.
Teaching location	The physical place where a course is delivered, including Australian and international locations. The location may or may not be a Monash campus or owned by Monash.

GOVERNANCE

Parent policy	Courses and Units Policy
Supporting schedules	
Associated procedures	Course Design Procedure Course Accreditation Procedure Handbook Procedure Unit Accreditation Procedure
Legislation mandating compliance	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 – National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Com) – Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Malaysian Qualifications Framework Monash University Statute Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations Monash University (Council) Regulations Monash University (Vice-Chancellor) Regulations Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)
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