

POLICY TITLE: Course Quality Control & Review

Purpose

Course quality control and review is a requirement of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021*. The purpose of this policy is to describe the course & subject quality control and review practices employed by Photography Studies College (Melbourne) (the College) to ensure the integrity and quality of its higher education courses and the procedures for ensuring regular and rigorous review.

Policy

The College is committed to a program of quality control and regular review and improvement in the design, content, delivery, and assessment of all its courses of study and subjects.

Policy Statement

The College has developed an Academic Course Review Cycle (Appendix A) and procedures. The College is committed to providing students with a quality, transformational learning experience and professional environment through their engagement with their studies. As part of that commitment, the College has developed this policy to outline the development, accreditation, and review of Higher Education courses of study and subjects.

This policy is designed to ensure the College's courses & subjects:

- advance the College's mission and strategic goals;
- are consistent with the College's Strategic Plan;
- are supported by resources which facilitate the offering of quality learning experiences and educational outcomes;
- produce graduates who are equipped with knowledge and skills which will specifically contribute to the wider community and society in general and which promote life-long learning;
- are planned with advice from internal and external experts;
- are consistent with internal policy;
- take account of current best practice; and
- are aligned to the needs of the national and international photographic industries.

Procedures

The procedures for Course Quality Control and Review are divided into eight key categories as follows:

- 1. Process and procedures for ensuring the adequate management and delivery of teaching.**
 - 1.1 The College will continually evaluate the delivery of its courses & subjects to ensure that the specified outcomes of the courses and the subject learning outcomes are being achieved.

- 1.2 Subject evaluations will be conducted at the completion of each subject in their respective courses, and these evaluations will be used to ensure that the teaching is effective and remains relevant to the needs of the students.
- 1.3 Teaching procedures and materials will be reviewed and adjusted to ensure a continuous improvement approach to academic standards and student requirements and/or recommendations.
- 1.4 Professional development and scholarly activity will be encouraged and supported for all teaching staff. This development will be in accordance with the guidelines in the *PSC Professional Development Policy*.
- 1.5 The College will foster an environment of academic integrity and ensure the principles described in the *PSC Academic Integrity Policy* are utilised to underpin all approaches in relation to Course Quality Control and Review.
- 1.6 The College will ensure that procedural materials and/or manuals in relation to Course Control and Review are disseminated throughout the organisation and that the procedures are applied consistently across the organisation.

2. Subject Review, Evaluations and Feedback

- 2.1 Student evaluations will be completed and collected following the completion of every subject.
- 2.2 Students will be provided with feedback on the outcome of subject evaluations via the Student Consultative Forum.
- 2.3 All student feedback will inform the review of the subject guides.
- 2.4 All student feedback will inform the annual internal course review.
- 2.5 Teaching staff will be provided with feedback on the outcome of subject evaluations.
- 2.6 The Course Convenors and the teaching staff will review and renew subject guides throughout the course life cycle.

- 2.7 Any changes to subjects and supporting guides as a result of the evaluations and/or reviews must be approved according to the following delegations:

2.7.1 Major changes are approved by the Academic Board. A major change is a change to an individual subject that could significantly impact the course and/or a student's ability to meet the requirements of the course and/or course learning outcomes. Examples include changes to credit points; duration; AQF level; delivery mode; subject name and title; workload; pre-requisites and revision of learning outcomes.

2.7.2 Minor changes are approved by the Academic Leadership Team. A change to an individual subject that will not impact the course and/or a student's ability to meet the requirements of the course and/or course learning outcomes. However, if minor changes could impact the subject and/or a student's ability to meet the requirements of the subject and/or subject learning outcomes then it must go to the Academic Board for approval. Examples include changes to topics; specialised facilities/equipment; assessment tasks and weightings; prescribed and recommended texts.

2.7.3 Regular Changes to Subject may be approved by the Higher Education Course Director or the Director of Academic Quality and Standards: A regular change is a change to an individual subject that is expected to be made periodically for purposes such as maintaining currency, quality or safeguarding academic integrity. Examples include providing further information to students; rubrics; teaching plan and sequence; current teaching period; changes to texts; topics or assessment tasks deemed as not fitting the "minor" definition.

3. Course Review & Feedback

- 3.1 Courses of study will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 3.2 The performance indicators for each of the course reviews are determined by the Academic Board.
- 3.3 All student feedback, as well as teacher feedback and feedback from any photographic professional associations must be included in every course review process.
- 3.4 The Higher Education Course Director will ensure the integrity of the course review and feedback process and prepare an annual report for the Academic Board.

4. Curriculum and Learning Outcomes

- 4.1 If, as a result of subject evaluations and course review and feedback, changes to learning outcomes are identified and recommended for subjects, the Academic Board will determine whether the changes are to be approved and whether any such changes necessitate notification of Material Change as per the TEQSA Material Change Policy and Process (Version 3.5).
- 4.2. Material Change: Where material changes are proposed (as outlined in the TEQSA Policy), the Academic Board will advise the Higher Education Council which, if endorsed, will forward the recommended changes to the Board of Photography Holdings Pty. Ltd for their approval and forwarding to TEQSA.
- 4.3 The Academic Board will determine and monitor the procedures for recording and implementing changes to curriculum design, content and/or learning outcomes.
- 4.4 The Academic Board will determine and monitor the procedures for version control of any courses under its purview.

5. **Process and procedures for ensuring the quality control of assessment, moderation, and validation of student outcomes**

- 5.1 Methods of assessment must be consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed and capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment (Standard 1.4.3 HESF 2021).
- 5.2 The policy and procedures for ensuring the quality control of assessment of all subjects are described in the *Assessment Policy* and the Academic Integrity Policy
- 5.3 Teaching staff are required at all times to ensure the integrity of assessment and utilise methods of assessment that uphold this integrity.
- 5.4 Regular assessment moderation and validation sessions are conducted internally to ensure that methods of assessment adequately and consistently measure learning outcomes for each of the subjects of study, and that appropriate and adequate teaching and learning methods are used to prepare students for assessment against the learning outcomes.
- 5.5 External validation of assessment is conducted an External Examiner where 'capstone' assessments are being undertaken to ensure credible evidence that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment and demonstrate achievement of overall course learning outcomes.

External validation is conducted by the external examiner who will:

- review the learning outcomes of the subjects that form the review;
- review the appropriateness of the methods of assessment for measuring those outcomes.
- review and validate the assessment practices that have occurred in the capstone assessments.
- report to the Academic Board on the findings.

6. **Course Record Keeping**

- 6.1 The policy and procedures for ensuring quality control of all records relating to courses and subjects delivered by teaching staff and undertaken by students is described in the *Records Management Policy*, the Student Records Management Policy and other related records management policies.
- 6.2 The College will be responsible for issuing the appropriate qualification when participants have successfully completed all the requirements of a course of study. The policy and procedures for ensuring quality control of such issuance is described in the *Assessment Policy* and the *Course Completion and Graduation Policy*.
- 6.3 Records of qualifications granted, and subjects completed/not completed will be stored for a period of thirty years.

7. Course Benchmarking

- 7.1 The College maintains a Course Benchmarking Register for the purposes of ensuring the courses of study developed and approved by the Academic Board are comparable to equivalent courses of study by field of education and Australian Qualification Framework level. The Academic Board has oversight of the Course Benchmarking Register, which lists Australian and International courses and institutions. Each course of study is also appraised by national benchmarking exercises, which utilise student evaluation surveys, student cohort data and graduate outcome data.
- 7.2 Course benchmarking is also undertaken by the external moderation and validation of achievements of learning outcomes against capstone projects in courses of study.

8. Continuous Improvement

- 8.1 All evaluation and review processes are conducted to ensure quality and integrity in courses of study. These processes provide opportunities for learning, reflection and improvement which all contribute to a cycle of continuous improvement.
- 8.2 Findings and actions arising from the Academic Course Review cycle are also recorded and monitored by the Academic Board Minutes of Meetings and Action Lists.

Responsibility

PSC Board
Academic Board
Higher Education Course Director
Director, Academic Quality and Standards
Course Convenors
Teaching Staff
Academic Leadership Team

Related Documentation

Policies

Professional Development
Academic Integrity
Assessment
Records Management
Student Records Management
Course Completion and Graduation
Academic Quality Assurance
Material Change

Procedures Forms & Documents

Academic Board Charter

Course Accreditation Documents
Subject Evaluation Forms
Subject Guides and Assignments
Course Benchmarking Register
External Examiner Guide
Academic Board Reporting Schedule
PSC Continuous Improvement Register
TEQSA Material Change Notification Policy (June 2021)
HEPP-QN Unit Change Policy (endorsed by Academic Board, Dec 2022)
PSC Subject Integrity Matrix

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APPENDIX A:

Academic Course Review Cycle

There are five levels in the Academic Course Review Cycle for higher education courses of study:

- 1. Subject Evaluation and Review**
- 2. Internal Annual Course Review**
- 3. Strategic Course Review**
- 4. External Course Review**
- 5. Course Re-accreditation**

1 Subject Evaluation and Review

- 1.1. Every subject that is delivered in the course is evaluated and reviewed upon its conclusion. Students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to complete a subject evaluation. Students provide feedback on learning outcomes; subject content; subject delivery and resources and on their teaching, learning and assessment experiences.
- 1.2. The Student Services Team Leader collates the data for reporting to the Academic Leadership Team, and the Academic Board.
- 1.3. The Higher Education Course Director provides feedback to teaching staff on the outcomes of the subject evaluations. The Higher Education Course Director will discuss any relevant matters concerning teacher performance one on one and report the outcomes of this discussion to the Leadership Group.
- 1.4. Recommendations for change to the content or delivery of a subject or the assessment modes or practices arising from the evaluation process will be discussed with teaching staff at Year Level meetings.
- 1.5. Subject evaluation outcomes are reported to the Academic Board bi-annually.

2 Internal Annual Course Review

- 2.1 Photography Studies College (Melbourne) courses are reviewed as a whole and at a subject-level annually.
- 2.2 The performance indicators considered in the review include:
 - Teaching and Learning:
 - adherence to Teaching and Learning Plans.

- student feedback on subjects and quality of teaching and assessment.
 - student commencements.
 - attrition, progression, completion rates.
 - teacher feedback on course.
 - grievance / complaints.
 - Benchmarking:
 - external recognition.
 - external stakeholder feedback.
 - Physical and electronic resources and infrastructure:
 - student learning resources.
 - OH&S.
 - adequacy of equipment.
 - Management and Human Resources: Staffing - ratios, skills, and experience.
- 2.3 The Academic Leadership Team will conduct the internal review and provide a formal report to the Academic Board.
- 2.4 The Academic Board will review the findings and provide a formal report of findings and recommendations to the PSC Board.

3 External Independent Course Review

- 3.1 An external course review may be conducted by an independent expert according to the re-accreditation cycle of the courses of study and in accordance with the requirements of the HESF 2021.
- 3.2 Administration support will be provided to the external review to coordinate and collect data from the relevant sources and provide support to the review team.
- 3.3. The external reviewer will provide a report to the PSC Board for review and will make recommendations on the teaching and learning, facilities, strategic fit and market viability of the course.
- 3.4. At the discretion of the PSC Board, an out of cycle course review may also be requested.

4 Strategic Course Review

The strategic value and sustainability of all higher education courses of study will be reviewed every three years by the PSC Board.

- 4.1. The PSC Board will initiate a strategic review of the higher education course and identify the data for consideration in the review meeting. The PSC Board will liaise with the Higher Education Council, the Academic Board, the Regulatory Compliance Committee and the Academic

Leadership Team, regarding their role in the review process to be undertaken.

- 4.2. Information that might be considered in the PSC Board's deliberations include:
- enrolments and completions.
 - popularity polls and performance in VTAC preferences.
 - distribution of Student Fee Types.
 - contribution of the course to the College strategic direction.
 - adequacy of relevant resources.
- 4.3 The outcome of the strategic course review, as determined by the PSC Board may be:
- no change.
 - major, minor or substantial revision.
 - suspension or closure.

In the event of either of the first two outcomes, changes are to be processed via the Academic Board and ALT. Where the outcome is a recommendation for suspension or closure, the Higher Education Council will make a recommendation to the Board of Photography Holdings Pty Ltd.

5 Course Re-accreditation

- 5.1. At least 180 days prior to the expiry date of a currently accredited course, the College, as a non-self-accrediting institute must lodge an application for reaccreditation with TEQSA. TEQSA encourages Institutes of Higher Education to synchronise course accreditation applications with Institute re-registration where possible. It is the intention of the College that this link be maintained particularly as both the Bachelor of Photography and the Master of Arts Photography were re-accredited by TEQSA in May 2017 at the same time as the College was Re-Registered by TEQSA.
- 5.2. One year prior to the expiry of an existing course accreditation, the Academic Board will oversee the collection of evidence required to support the application for reaccreditation of the course. The Board may establish an ad hoc Course Advisory Committee for this purpose which will include the Higher Education Course Director and Director Academic Quality and Standards. The Academic Board may nominate other members of the Board and external industry or academic subject experts as appropriate.
- 5.3. The Committee will review and update the status of the recommendations from the following internal quality control and review strategies:
- The annual internal review of the course(s) being re-accredited.
 - The annual External Examiner reports
 - The external expert review (if any)

- The strategic course review (if any)
 - Semester subject reviews
 - The Minutes and decisions of the Academic Board that relate to course and subject quality control and review.
 - The advice of the Academic Leadership Team
- 5.4. The Committee will review PSC's course(s) against the current TEQSA "Renewal of course accreditation - core assessment scope and minimum evidence requirements", identify any gaps in the minimum evidence requirements and develop plans to address those gaps.
- 5.5. The Academic Board will review the advice of the Committee and any other relevant information including academic policies, TEQSA guidance and any recommendations from an external expert engaged to conduct an academic review the course(s) eligible for re-accreditation.
- 5.6. The Academic Board will then make a recommendation to the Board of Photography Holdings Pty. Ltd. whether to seek reaccreditation of the courses or advise TEQSA that the course will be taught out. The final decision will be a matter for the Board alone.