

## **POLICY TITLE: Academic Quality Assurance Framework**

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### **Purpose**

Academic governance and the oversight of quality assurance in teaching and learning is a requirement of the *Higher Education Standards Framework 2021* established by section 58 of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*. The purpose of this policy is to describe the Academic Quality Assurance framework utilised by Photography Studies College (Melbourne) to ensure the integrity and quality of its status as a higher education provider.

### **Policy**

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) has an Academic Quality Assurance Framework of structures and processes that collectively achieve effective academic oversight of the academic quality of teaching and learning and regular review and improvement of the content, delivery and assessment of all its Higher Education courses.

This framework is underpinned by policies and procedures and a regular cycle of planning, implementation and monitoring, reporting and reviewing & performance enhancement.

## **The Academic Quality Assurance Framework**

### **1. Corporate Governance**

The Board of Photography Holdings Pty. Ltd “**Board**” is the formally constituted governing body in accordance with Standard 6 of the *Higher Education Standards Framework 2021*. A Board Charter outlines its roles and responsibilities on corporate governance and the oversight and accountability for the award of higher education qualifications.

The Board of Photography Holdings Pty. Ltd has established two specialist committees for its higher education functions; the Higher Education Council and the Academic Board.

The Higher Education Council which provides advice on the direction for, and oversight of, all the College’s higher education courses and the membership and operations generally of the Academic Board. In particular, the Higher Education Council is also responsible for advising on the development and content of the PSC Strategic Plan as it relates to higher education and its monitoring. The Strategic Plan, when approved by the Board of Photography Holdings Pty. Ltd, ensures the College’s future directions in higher education have been determined, that realistic targets are set and that progress against these targets are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. The Higher Education Council advises the Board of Photography Holdings Pty. Ltd on the plan’s implementation including in relation to higher education.

The Academic Board provides direct and ongoing oversight of the College’s higher educational processes and courses including overseeing and monitoring academic quality assurance processes, monitoring and approving student results and scholarships and the development, implementation and monitoring of academic policies and procedures for use in the College’s accredited higher education courses.

The Board of Photography Holdings Pty. Ltd remains ultimately responsible for the exercise of these advisory and delegated powers at all times, and may review and override any advice of the Higher Education Council, or decision of the Academic Board within the area of its delegated powers or advice provided under its 'additional functions'.

## **2. Academic Governance**

The Academic Board provides oversight and responsibility for all academic decision-making processes to assure the quality of each course of study leading to a higher education award. An Academic Board Charter outlines its role and responsibilities on Academic Governance. The *Higher Education Standards Framework 2021* specifies academic governance requirements and expectations and the Regulatory Compliance Committee of the Board of Photography Holdings Pty Ltd monitors the process and evidence required to ensure adequacy of academic governance and quality assurance of academic standards against the *Framework* requirements.

## **3. Quality Control & Review**

### **(a) Academic Standards**

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) has developed a number of policies and procedures and methods in the assessment of Academic Standards. The Teaching and Learning Plan covers many elements of learner, teacher and College outcomes that are measured and reviewed on an annual basis. The College participates in benchmarking activities to ensure ongoing comparability with other higher education courses where applicable and to compare the Colleges performance and standards on teaching, student learning outcomes and engagement and graduate outcomes.

### **(b) Curriculum Development and Course Monitoring**

The Academic Board determines and monitors the procedures for developing, recording and implementing changes to curriculum content, design and/or learning outcomes. The Academic Board ensures that the design of the learning outcomes for higher education course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education for the qualification awarded and informed by national and international comparators. This includes monitoring of the delivery of higher education courses to ensure learning activities are aligned with intended learning outcomes and provide students opportunities to develop and demonstrate their learning for each course of study.

The *Course Quality Control and Review Policy* specifies the mechanisms and cycles for reviewing and reporting on courses and subjects and for ensuring adequate benchmarking processes and procedures are in place.

Data relating to student outcomes and student performance is collected, monitored and benchmarked to ensure ongoing comparability with other higher education courses, and for the purposes of review, reflection and improvement.

The *Assessment Policy* specifies the quality control mechanisms for ensuring that methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that

grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment. (*Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 Standard 1.4.3*)

### **(c) External Examiner and External Benchmarking**

Assessment processes are moderated and validated annually by an External Examiner to provide assurance that methods of assessment are appropriate to the learning outcomes specified for the course of study and are benchmarked against comparable courses.

The Academic Board will appoint a senior academic (who has not taught at the College in the preceding two years) as the External Examiner. Amongst other matters, the External Examiner must be able to assess the relativity and appropriateness of the College's grading and student assessment outcomes against comparable courses offered by other tertiary institutions.

To provide an external benchmark, the External Examiner will review a representative sample of graded student work from both folio and theory/coursework units within the College's degree programs. The precise selection of work for review will be determined by the Higher Education Course Director in consultation with the External Examiner, with the overarching objective being to provide a sufficient spread of graded student work in order for the External Examiner to provide a meaningful benchmark of the grading approach undertaken by the College's teaching staff across the College's degree programs.

The External Examiner will provide a report on the how the College's assessment outcomes compare to external benchmarks. This report will be considered by the Academic Board, and such action taken in response to it as considered necessary and appropriate by the Academic Board.

### **(d) Student Consultative Forum ("SCF")**

The College facilitates at least two meetings of the SCF per year. Currently, students from each course and year level are invited by the College to be appointed to the Forum. The Forum is chaired by the Chair of the Academic Board and PSC is represented by members of the Academic Leadership Team ("ALT"). The SCF has a Terms of Reference and a formal agenda. The purpose of the forum is to hear the student voice on the performance of the College's academic activities and to gather student input into a range of PSC strategic and academic matters, such as the College strategic plan; the review of academic policies and processes; academic governance generally and current issues affecting the student body. Formal minutes are taken and reported to the Academic Board and the PSC Company Board.

### **(e) Student internal and external evaluations**

Internal: The College seeks student evaluations of its all its subjects bi-annually. Every subject is evaluated at the end of each semester and those evaluations are provided to the Academic Leadership team for review and discussion, the relevant teaching staff and the Academic Board. Teachers are requested to review their subject evaluations and comments and, after discussion with their supervisor, identify improvement initiatives in their individual teaching and learning plans ("ITLP").

External: The College participates annually in two surveys conducted by QILT (Quality Indicators in Learning and Teaching). These two surveys are the Student Experience Survey (SES) which surveys current students, and the Graduate Outcomes Survey

(GOS) which surveys graduates at regular intervals after they have graduated. The QILT SES surveys are analysed, and the results compared to our internal subject evaluations and to compare our performance generally against the higher education sector and to our competitors. The results are provided to ALT, Academic Board, the HEC and the PSC Company Board.

**(f) Review of academic policies**

The Academic Board develops a schedule of regular reviews (every 3 years) of all academic policies. The Board may also undertake an “out of schedule” review of an academic policy as required.

**4. Academic Board Reporting Schedule**

An Academic Board Reporting Schedule ensures regular reporting on Academic progress activity to the Academic Board. This reporting cycle enables the Academic Board to regulate the integrity and quality of outcomes to ensure academic standards are maintained and continuous improvement is occurring. Responsibility for the reports is assigned to the Higher Education Course Director and the Director of Academic Quality and Standards.

<b>Academic Reporting Activity</b>	<b>Reporting Frequency</b>
Student Numbers and Withdrawals	<b>Quarterly</b>
Student Attrition, Progression and Completions	<b>Annually (prepared by College Accountant)</b>
Student Success and Grade Distribution – by subject	<b>end of Each Semester</b>
Course Completion – by cohort	<b>End of course cycle (3 year Full Degree cohort, 1 year pathway cohort)</b>
Student Selection / Admission	<b>Annually</b>
Eligibility to Graduate	<b>Annually</b>
Student Progress	<b>Quarterly</b>
RPL / Credit Transfer arrangements	<b>Annually</b>
Scholarship and Community Engagement	<b>end of Each Semester</b>
Staff Qualifications	<b>Bi-annually (prior to commencement of each semester)</b>
Scholarship and Professional Development Activity	<b>Bi-annually</b>
Internal Annual Course Review	<b>Annually</b>
Individual Teaching and Learning Plan (staff reviews)	<b>Bi-annually</b>
Activities and Outcomes Report – Teaching and Learning Plan	<b>Annually</b>
Student Consultative Forum	<b>Bi-annually</b>
Student evaluations (internal)	<b>Bi-annually</b>
QILT SES and GOS surveys	<b>Annual</b>

**5. Scholarship/Teaching and Learning**

The College has a Scholarship Framework, which demonstrates the integral nature of scholarship and its application across the College. The Strategic Plan sits at the centre of this Framework and is supported by 6 sectors: Institutional support; teaching and learning; business and strategic asset plans; teacher engagement;

student engagement and workforce development. The Teaching and Learning Plan, the Student Engagement Strategy and the Workforce Development Plan set the targets for success in these key areas.

The quality of teaching and learning is measured through the ITLP and through a number of benchmarking activities including student evaluation data and student cohort data.

The Teaching and Learning Plan is reviewed on an annual basis. Student evaluation data informs this review. Teaching staff undertake a self-review process using their ITLP each semester and meet with their supervisor to discuss their achievements of targets against the Teaching and Learning Plan and against student satisfaction with the subjects they teach. Outcomes and achievements against key performance targets are reported to the Academic Board through the Internal Annual Course Review process.

Scholarship activity is recorded and reported to the Academic Board on a half yearly cycle.

Scholarship and Teaching and Learning is also underpinned by a range of policies that support teaching and learning including but not limited to:

- Recruitment
- Professional Development
- Performance Planning and Review
- Teacher Salary Structure
- Course Quality Control and Review
- Support for Students
- Student Progress and Exclusion
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Assessment
- RPL and Credit Transfer
- Intellectual and Academic Freedom

## **Related Documentation**

### **Policies**

Academic Policies  
Student Policies  
Staff Policies

### **Procedures, Forms & Documents**

PSC Strategic Plan  
PSC Teaching and Learning Plan  
PSC Scholarship Framework  
PSC Student Engagement Strategy  
Individual Teaching and Learning Plan Review  
Student Evaluation Forms  
Benchmarking Reports

## Publishing details

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Julie Moss - Managing Director

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Moss', is positioned below the name 'Julie Moss - Managing Director'.