Course Review and Quality Assurance Procedure

Policy/Document Approval Body:	Academic Board
Date Created:	26 October 2012
Policy Custodian:	Chair, Academic Board
Policy Contact:	Dean of Engineering
File Location:	W:\Data - ALL.Standard\Policies and Procedures\EIT Policies and Procedures
Location on EIT website:	http://www.eit.edu.au/organisation-policies
Review Period:	Three years
Revision No:	5.1
Date of Revision:	9 January 2018
Date Approved:	2 November 2018
Date Commenced:	5 November 2018

1.0   Purpose

This procedure outlines the steps taken as part of the academic review of the Engineering Institute of Technology's (EIT's) higher education courses and the units that make up each course. It gives guidance to the conduct of reviews and should be read together with the overarching policy. The purpose of academic reviews is to provide quality assurance through regular internal and external review, and to facilitate quality improvement with respect to higher education courses offered by the Institute.

2.0   Scope

This procedure applies to all members of EIT's higher education community. Key activities of the academic review process are the collection of data on student learning, interpretation of that data, and monitoring emerging trends according to key indicators of student performance.

This procedure includes information on ongoing internal reviews of units or courses as well as circumstances where a full review is conducted for units or courses. However, it does not include the development of new courses.

It is recognised that academic staff may update units on an ongoing basis, as good practice, where there are no changes to the learning outcomes or overall aims of the unit. Issues arising that have been identified via lecturer evaluations will be acted upon via the lecturer evaluation process. Reviews of individual units will take into account whether improvement is required as a result of a systemic issue, or whether it is a result of a specific lecturer or class/cohort situation.

3.0   Process

EIT is committed to ensuring that input is sought from a diverse group of people in the conduct of academic reviews. The academic committees responsible for conducting reviews and assessing data collected are prescribed in the Academic Governance terms of reference for each committee.

The Academic Board may, from time to time, seek additional expertise to assist with the provision of feedback on courses, or to assist with assessing feedback. The terms of reference for the Board

of Studies and Course Advisory Committee provide details of roles and responsibilities.

Academic reviews are conducted for entire courses and individual units. These reviews are conducted internally on an ongoing basis as part of the continuous improvement process, together with regular external reviews of partial or entire courses. The Course Review Criteria for all types of review is provided in Appendix 1.

3.1 Frequency

Three years after accreditation of a new Bachelor course or two years after accreditation of a Masters course, an external review process will be conducted. The next external review will occur 18 months to 2 years prior to the due date for submission of the renewal of the course to TEQSA. Once a course has been granted renewal of accreditation by TEQSA, the frequency of external course review will occur at a maximum timeframe of seven yearly, which will be determined by the Academic Board based on any changes in the discipline area or sector.

Internal reviews of a course will occur annually.

The stages for internal and external review processes are located at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively.

The overarching Course Review Implementation Plan, located at Appendix 4, sets out the frequency and timeframes over a seven-year period for all types of review.

3.2 Recommendations/Reports

A Course Review Report will be developed at the end of each course review cycle, which will include all data that has been collected, and will measure course performance against stated KPIs. It is expected that an evidence-based approach will be undertaken that will reference external standards and benchmarking, where possible.

Report details
Reports will include the following:
a. Review processes considering all offerings of the same award across all locations, focusing on course performance and development possibilities and taking account of strategic priorities of EIT and impact on students.
b. A brief review report that includes an action plan identifying issues that need to be addressed at the course level, and across EIT.
c. A course review report informing the relevant stakeholders across EIT including the academic staff, the technical writers and the academic committees.
d. Development and re-development priorities based on the issues identified that need to be resolved.
e. Issues identified for action which are referred to the appropriate personnel for action; are appropriately resourced; and the outcomes communicated back to the Dean and relevant members of staff and academic committees.
f. Processes for external re-accreditation of the course to be undertaken as required by the relevant external accreditation body, and where feasible, aligned with internal course review processes.

If the report recommends discontinuance of a course, then detailed information regarding the impact on students, and teach out plans must be included. This should only progress under extenuating circumstances and after careful consideration.

If the report recommends discontinuance of a unit, then details of a replacement unit and the impact on students must be included.

Unit Review Reports focus on specific units of study, but recognises that a unit is embedded in a course. It seeks to examine all aspects of the student's experience including those that are often outside of the lecturer's control. Aspects out of the lecturer's control that are to be examined can include: the learning outcomes for the unit, mode of delivery, and course resources.

Unit Review Reports will be developed as required, and at the end of each cohort cycle as part of the Course Review Report and similarly for the reviews for external renewal of accreditation.

3.3 External course review – accrediting authority approval

The external review process for renewal of accreditation will be conducted based on the same process for the external course review after initial accreditation. However, for renewal of accreditation, EIT will conduct a more in-depth review of the courses, including benchmarking against higher education institutions. EIT will ensure that the process takes account of all requirements of the accrediting authority in the revision of the higher education courses.

The Dean will initiate a review of EIT's higher education courses in sufficient time for submission to TEQSA. The Academic Board may appoint a Course Advisory Committee to undertake an internal and external review of the courses due for renewal of accreditation. The revised curriculum, once approved by the Academic Board, will be forwarded to TEQSA for assessment.

To develop an application to TEQSA, the Academic Board may form a Course Advisory Committee to oversee the revision of the higher education courses that are due for renewal. The Committee's terms of reference outline the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships.

Benchmarking will be conducted against similar courses at other higher education institutions. Benchmarking may be conducted with partnering institutions to inform curriculum review or other mechanisms to facilitate continuous improvement. The Benchmarking Policy provides further details.

3.4 Impact from Discontinuance

Students

Proposals to amend higher education courses or units must ensure that students are not unduly disadvantaged. Students should be consulted on proposed changes that may have an impact on students, and then notified in writing within 14 days, if the proposal is approved. Minor unit improvements do not require written notification to students. The written notification should include:
- Effective date of the change
- Details of the change
- Transition arrangements and options for completing the course within a clearly defined period of time
- Name of contact persons to provide academic advice to students

No new enrolments will be accepted into a discontinued course. For any pending applications or enrolments, students must be notified and where possible transferred to an alternative EIT course, or other course.

All students enrolled in a course at the time of discontinuation should be allowed the opportunity to complete the course under the advertised structure and timeframe at the time of their enrolment, wherever possible. Students will not be permitted to defer their studies.

Staff

All higher education staff must be notified of approved changes to courses and/or units as soon as practical, including discontinuation of courses or units.

3.5 Material Changes

Recommended changes arising from Unit Review Reports or Course Review Reports that constitute a major/material change to a unit or course, as per the following extract from the TEQSA Guideline, will need to be submitted to TEQSA for approval, after approval from the Academic Board. Additional information will need to be prepared based on TEQSA's requirements.

TEQSA provides the following information to assist with identifying material changes.

TEQSA states that there are circumstances of 'No notification required', relating to:
- changes to curriculum with the following examples given on page 1 of its Material changes notifications document, revised December 2013, as:
  - *course changes (for providers without self-accrediting authority):*
    - *course duration or volume of learning resulting in a notable reduction or increase in student contact hours - if renewal of accreditation is due within 12 months, or there are no changes to learning outcomes*

- *curriculum content, curriculum design; content, such as substitution or deletion of existing subjects- if no change to learning outcomes; or no change to narrow field of education (FoE); or renewal of accreditation is within 12 months*

TEQSA also state that there are circumstances of 'Possible notification required' relating to curriculum with the following examples listed on page 2 as 'Changes that may impact students': *These may include (but are not limited to): a significant change of premises, changes to or issues with third party arrangements, and significant changes to TEQSA accredited courses (not courses accredited by providers with Self-Accrediting Authority) and CRICOS-registered courses including to titles of courses.*

If TEQSA advises that the proposed changes to the course structure, content or delivery constitute a 'material change', then a proposal should be developed for approval by the Academic Board and/or Governance Board and TEQSA. If any course of study and/or unit is offered to international students studying in Australia on a Visa, there may be additional requirements under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and the National Code 2018.

4.0   Implementation and Monitoring

The Board of Studies is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of higher education courses under delegation from the Academic Board. The collection of data will be in accordance with the data itemized under each type of academic review process. Course data will be examined based on trends over time and interpreted in the context of each individual course, where relevant. Feedback via various mechanisms will be aggregated and used as evidence to inform changes to effect continuous improvement in all aspects of the curriculum.

Academic teaching staff will contribute to the monitoring process via their input at staff meetings, reporting to the Board of Studies on trends and issues and providing specific input when requested.

The Academic Board may request specific monitoring of any issues that arise from time to time.

The Curriculum Change Register will document key details of changes made to the course and individual units as a result of the academic review process. The Curriculum Change Register is a key document that provides the history of all changes made as part of the continuous improvement process that will feed into the renewal of accreditation process.

4.1 Internal Review Monitoring

Data analysis personnel will analyse the following data collected from surveys and other data collection mechanisms:
- Student feedback on the course and units including assessment, labs, IT and internet support infrastructure and tools
- Student feedback on teaching and supervision/support
- Staff feedback on all aspects of the course, units and delivery
- Enrolment, entry requirements and student attrition data
- Student progression data including grade distributions and moderation outcomes
- Student/staff ratios
- Articulation pathway data

EIT will ensure that feedback mechanisms obtain information that will provide responses to the following key questions. The Board of Studies and Academic Board will have regard for ensuring that the following key questions are answered when reviewing and approving minor changes to units.

1. Will the proposed change alter the learning outcomes? If so, will the proposed changes keep unit outcomes consistent with the course outcomes?

2. Do the learning and teaching activities of the unit/course ensure that learning outcomes are met in accordance with the objectives of the Teaching and Learning Plan?

3. Are the methods of assessment consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, and are they capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment?

4. Does the content and learning activities of the course/unit engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:
   - current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines

   - study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course/unit, and

   - emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in professional practice?

5. Are the teaching and learning activities arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout the course/unit?

6. Is the course/unit designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery?

7. Will the changes impact on the workload of the course?

8. Will the proposed changes constitute a 'material change' as defined by TEQSA? If so, see the section on Material Changes.

9. Does the course meet the requirements of the applicable Standards of the *Higher Education Standards Framework*, the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)* and other external accreditation requirements, where relevant;

4.2   External Course Review Monitoring

Data analysis personnel will analyse the following student data collected by EIT from surveys and other data collection mechanisms:
- Student feedback on the course and units including assessment, labs, IT and internet support infrastructure and tools
- Student feedback on teaching and supervision/support
- Staff feedback on all aspects of the course, units and delivery
- Enrolment, entry requirements and student attrition data
- Student progression data including grade distributions, moderation outcomes, completion times and rates
- Student/ staff ratios
- Articulation pathway data
- Feedback from the Institute's community
- Feedback from external stakeholders
- Benchmarking
- Where applicable, comparing different locations and/or modes of delivery

EIT will ensure that feedback mechanisms obtain information that provide responses to the following key questions. The Academic Board and Course Advisory Committee will have regard for ensuring that the following key questions are answered when conducting a full external higher education course review.

1. Are the stated learning objectives consistent with the EIT's strategic direction, values, plans and policies?

2. Are the teaching and learning activities designed for the course designed to achieve the learning outcomes, especially the core graduate attributes, in accordance with the objectives of the Teaching and Learning Plan?

3. Are the methods of assessment consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, and are they capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.

4. What are the key trends relating to student entry, progression and success in the course, and what improvements have already been made, or are planned to be made?

5. What are the key issues that need to be addressed in the next accreditation cycle for the course?

6. Has the course been benchmarked against a comparable course nationally and/or internationally?

7. Does the content and learning activities of the course engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:
   - current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines
   - study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course/unit, and
   - emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in professional practice?

8. Are the teaching and learning activities arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout the course?

9. Is the course designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery?

10. Does the course meet the requirements of the applicable Standards of the *Higher Education Standards Framework*, the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)* and other external accreditation requirements, where relevant;

11. Will the proposed changes constitute a 'material change' as defined by TEQSA? If so, see the section on Material Changes.

5.0   Definitions
A glossary is provided at Appendix 5.

6.0   Related policies and procedures
The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:
   - Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy
   - Course Development Policy and Procedure
   - Curriculum Change Register
   - Teaching and Learning Policy
   - Teaching and Learning Plan
   - Benchmarking Policy
   - Academic Board Terms of Reference
   - Board of Studies Terms of Reference
   - Course Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

7.0   Accountabilities
The Terms of Reference for each of the academic governance committees shall determine the composition of panel members and their roles and responsibilities in relation to course reviews. In particular, the:
   a. The Board of Studies and Course Advisory Committee are responsible for making recommendations arising from feedback collected from stakeholders and making recommendations to the Academic Board for approval.
   b. The Dean of Engineering has overarching responsibility for implementing approved changes to units and the course and reporting outcomes to the Academic Board.
   c. The Deputy Dean and Course and Unit Coordinators are responsible for implementing and monitoring relevant changes made to units and courses under their responsibility and reporting outcomes to the Dean, the Board of Studies and the Academic Board.

Appendix 1
Course Review Criteria

Purpose and function	The purpose of Course Reviews is to provide quality assurance through regular internal and external reviews and to facilitate quality improvement with respect to courses offered by the EIT.

Criteria	For higher education coursework courses, the committee will examine the data and evidence collected, and make recommendations regarding:
	
	 1. The relevance and currency of the curricula in meeting the needs of students, the profession and employers.
	
	 2. The current and likely future demand for the course areas and their viability with respect to students, employers, professions and partner organisations, and plans for future course developments (including prospective partnerships and the creation or closure of courses).
	
	 3. The content and learning activities of the course engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:
	
	      i. current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines
	      ii. study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course, and
	      iii. emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice
	
	 4. Whether the teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout the course.
	
	 5. Whether the methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, and are they capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.
	
	 6. Whether the course design enables achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery.
	
	 7. Whether the course design meets the applicable Standards of the *Higher Education Standards Framework*, the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)* and other external accreditation requirements, where relevant.
	
	 8. The relationship between the course and other EIT higher education courses across and training programs.
	
	 9. The adequacy of learning resources (including library, IT and infrastructure support) and the level of student learning support.
	
	 10. The effectiveness of quality assurance processes for courses and units including processes for benchmarking and obtaining student and employer feedback and the use of appropriate performance indicators.
	
	 11. The adequacy of the level (for example, numbers, classification, qualifications, experience) of teaching staff (including sessional staff) and the quality of staff development and support provided for teaching staff.
	
	 12. Any additional matter of relevance.

Committee Membership	The Board of Studies for ongoing reviews. The Course Advisory Committee for external reviews.
Method of appointment	All members are appointed in accordance with the relevant committee's terms of reference.
Secretariat	As per the relevant committee's terms of reference.

Schedule of meetings	The duration of the Course Review meeting will be determined by the relevant committee, and will be determined depending on: • the quantity of information to be considered; and • whether the review forms part of the renewal of accreditation submission to the external accrediting authority
Final Approval	Final approval of a course will only be given by the Academic Board when: • the course meets the applicable Standards of the *Higher Education Standards Framework,* the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)* and other external accreditation requirements, where relevant. • the decision to approve a course of study is informed by overarching academic scrutiny of the course of study that is competent to assess the design, delivery and assessment of the course of study independently of the staff directly involved in those aspects of the course, and • the resources required to deliver the course as approved will be available when needed.

Appendix 2
Internal Course Review Process

The internal review process for a course and for individual units will consist of the following stages:

Stages of individual unit reviews	Timeframe	Responsibility
Distribution of surveys to staff and students	2 weeks before the end of each teaching period of the course.	Unit Coordinator under direction from the Course Coordinator and administered by the Learning Support Officer
Analysis of internal data collected from enrolments, assessments and survey data	Commence within 1 week of the end of each 6 month period of the course.	Data analysis personnel
Production of Report containing suggested changes to units, consideration of whether it constitutes a material change, and overall impact on the course prepared by the Deputy Dean together with a proposed Unit Change Plan submitted to the Dean for endorsement and forwarding to Board of Studies for consideration and approval.	Within 4 weeks of the end of each 6 month period of the course.	Deputy Dean
The Board of Studies submits approved Report and Unit Change Plans to Academic Board for consideration and approval.	Within 4 weeks of receipt of report.	Board of Studies
Academic Board considers recommendations and denies or approves changes for implementation, together with direction to prepare a material change application to TEQSA, if applicable.	Within 4 weeks of receipt of report.	Academic Board
If approved, changes are to be implemented, recorded and monitored.	As per approved timeframes.	Deputy Dean, relevant academic staff and committees
Note: The Course Review process is the same as for individual units, except administered annually with a focus on the overall course.		

Appendix 3
External Course Review Process

The external review process of an entire course will consist of the following stages:

Stages	Timeframe	Responsibility
Production of a self-review report for each course (utilizing internal data and feedback, and details of improvements already made).	1 month before the review meeting, at end of each cohort.	Deputy Dean
Request for interested parties from the EIT's community, including external stakeholders, to provide comment.	2 months before the review meeting.	Deputy Dean
Consideration of additional expertise to form a Course Advisory Committee (CAC)	At least 1 month before the review meeting.	Deputy Dean
Board of Studies or Course Advisory Committee (CAC) special meeting to discuss submissions and data, talk to stakeholders and develop recommendations.	Panel members will need adequate time to review the material.	Board of Studies or CAC
Preparation of a Course Review Report by the Board of Studies or Course Advisory Committee, including a Course Amendment Implementation Plan developed by the Deputy Dean, and consideration of material change requirements.	Completed within 1 month of the panel meeting, where possible.	Secretary BoS or Secretary, CAC and Deputy Dean
Submission of the Course Review Report and Course Amendment Implementation Plan to Academic Board for consideration and approval.	Submitted to the Academic Board	Deputy Dean
Academic Board considers recommendations and denies or approves changes for implementation, together with direction to prepare a material change application to TEQSA, if applicable.	Within 1 month of receipt of report.	Academic Board
If approved, changes are to be implemented, recorded and monitored.	As per approved timeframes.	Deputy Dean, relevant academic staff and committees
Note: An external accreditation process is the same as above, except that the Self Review Report will include benchmarking against other higher education institutions and taking account of TEQSA's requirements. It will be a more in-depth process usually requiring the formation of a Course Advisory Committee and preparation of a Course Accreditation Renewal submission once approved by the Academic Board.		

Appendix 4
Course Review Implementation Plan

Issue	Frequency	Timeframe	7 year timeline	Action Steps	Responsibility
Masters and Graduate Diploma					
Course Review					
Internal	Annual	2 months	End of Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Review current year	Course Coordinator/ Deputy Dean
External after initial accreditation by TEQSA	2 years	3 months	End of Year 2	Review full cohort	Course Coordinator/ Dean
External accreditation thereafter	1.5 – 2 years prior to TEQSA's due date	6 months	Year 5 to 6	Full review	Course Coordinator/ Academic Board
Unit Review					
Internal	Every 6 months	1 month	Every 6 months Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Review current teaching period. All units for first cohort and sample thereafter.	Unit Coordinator/ Deputy Dean/Board of Studies
External after initial accreditation by TEQSA	2 years	2 months	End of Year 2	Review units as part of course review	Unit Coordinator/ Deputy Dean
Part of external accreditation thereafter	1.5 to 2 years prior to TEQSA's due date	6 months	Year 5 to 6	Review units as part of renewal of course accreditation	Unit Coordinator/ Deputy Dean

Issue	Frequency	Timeframe	7 year timeline	Action Steps	Responsibility
Bachelor courses					
Course Review					
Internal	Annual	2 months	End of Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Review current year	Course Coordinator/ Deputy Dean
External after initial accreditation by TEQSA	3 years	3 months	End of Year 3	Review full cohort	Course Coordinator/Dean
External Accreditation thereafter	1.5 to 2 years prior to TEQSA's due date	6 months	End of Year 6	Review all changes over 2 full cohorts	Course Coordinator/Academic Board and CAC
Unit Review					
Internal	Every teaching period	1 month	Every teaching period, Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Review current teaching period. All units for first cohort and sample thereafter.	Unit Coordinator/ Deputy Dean/ Board of Studies
Part of External after *initial accreditation by TEQSA*	3 years	2 months	End of Year 3	Review full cohort	Unit Coordinator/ Deputy Dean
Part of External Accreditation thereafter	1.5 to 2 years prior to TEQSA's due date	6 months	End of Year 6	Review all changes over 2 full cohorts	Unit Coordinator/ Deputy Dean

Appendix 5 - Glossary

Articulation – a defined pathway that enables a student to progress from a completed course of study to another course of study with admission and/or credit.

Attrition – is the proportion of students commencing a course of study in a given year who neither complete nor return in the following year. It does not identify those students who defer their study or transfer to another institution.

Benchmarking – Benchmarking is recognized as a means by which an entity can: demonstrate accountability to stakeholders; improve networking and collaborative relationships; generate management information; develop an increased understanding of practice, process or performance; and garner insights into how improvements might be made. In the context of course accreditation, benchmarking involves comparing performance outcomes and/or processes of similar courses of study delivered by other providers. Internal benchmarking against other relevant courses offered by EIT may also be undertaken.

Course (aka program) – a single course leading to an Australian higher education award.

Course Coordinator – An academic position responsible for leading, managing and coordinating the course study for which they are assigned to, as well as the Unit Coordinators and the guest and sessional staff involved in the course.

Grade distributions – are set by each higher education provider and involve analysing the aggregation of final grades using data by unit, course of study, student cohort or other grouping.

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.

KPI - A set of quantifiable measures used to gauge or compare performance in terms of meeting strategic and operational goals.

Learning outcomes – learning outcomes are 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.

Learning Support Officer - Full time, administrative coordinator assigned to a course(s). Also referred to in the National Code as 'Student Contact Officer' and other EIT policies as Course Coordinator or eLearning Coordinator.

Nested courses – courses of study leading to higher education awards that include articulated arrangements from a lower level higher education award into a higher level higher education award to enable multiple entry and exit points.

Student progression rates – is the equivalent full- time student load (EFTSL) passed as a percentage of the EFTSL attempted (comprising units passed, failed and withdrawn and excluding work experience in industry load)

Student/staff ratio – is calculated by dividing the student load by the associated teaching staff effort where:
- student load is expressed as equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL); and
- teaching staff effort is the number of teachers expressed as full-time equivalents (FTE).

Unit - A unit is a discrete unit of study and a combination of units make up a course of study.

Unit Coordinator - An academic position responsible for coordinating the delivery of the particular unit they are involved with for all sites and modalities for which the unit is being delivered.