

## C6 – COURSES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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### 1 PURPOSE

This policy and procedure outline the framework whereby *BBI – The Australian Institute of Theological Education (the Institute)* designs, develops and reviews their courses of study through the application of best practice course design, development and review principles.

Institute courses must have as their foundation a substantial body of knowledge, scholarship, and skills, at the appropriate AQF level, to demonstrate the application of advanced knowledge and skills for professional or highly skilled work and/or further learning.

This policy and procedure incorporate the following policies:

- C1 Cancellation of Course Policy
- C6 Course of Study Design and Development Policy
- C7 Course Review Policy
- C10 Course Completion Policy

### 2 BACKGROUND

The *Higher Education Standards Framework (2015) Section 3.1 Course Design* requires that:

1. The design for each course of study is specified and the specification includes:
  - a. the qualification(s) to be awarded on completion
  - b. structure, duration and modes of delivery
  - c. the units of study (or equivalent) that comprise the course of study
  - d. entry requirements and pathways
  - e. expected learning outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative student workload
  - f. compulsory requirements for completion
  - g. exit pathways, articulation arrangements, pathways to further learning, and
  - h. for a course of study leading to a Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral qualification, includes the proportion and nature of research or research-related study in the course.
2. The content and learning activities of each course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:
  - a. current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines
  - b. study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course, and
  - c. emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice.
3. Teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.
4. Each course of study is designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery.
5. Where professional accreditation of a course of study is required for graduates to be eligible to practice, the course of study is accredited and continues to be accredited by the relevant professional body.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government. *Higher Education Standards Framework, Section 3: Teaching, 3.1 Course Design*. Accessed

### 3 SCOPE

This policy and procedure apply to all courses of study at the Institute, whether they be new courses, or courses under review in the normal seven-year review cycle.

### 4 DEFINITIONS

**Assessment:** assessment refers to the 'systematic collection and analysis of information to improve student learning' (Stassen et al., 2001, p5). It is the process whereby a student's achievement of the learning outcomes for a unit of study are measured, feedback is given, and a grade is assigned to a task. This reflects a student's performance following critical evaluation of that task by the lecturer or tutor. Assessment can be formative or summative. Feedback and discussion are the decisive elements that differentiate between formative and summative assessment.

**Assessment tasks:** in coursework units, assessment tasks may include assignments, essays, quizzes, examinations, practice-based assessment and major papers/dissertations. Assessment involves one or more tasks that the student is required to complete successfully to satisfy the requirements of a unit of study.

**Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):** '...is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework. The AQF was introduced in 1995 to underpin the national system of qualifications in Australia encompassing higher education, vocational education and training and schools.'<sup>2</sup> Courses offered by the Institute must comply with the AQF Guidelines.

**Constructive alignment** means that the various components of instruction, for example, methods and assessment tasks, are aligned to the learning outcomes of the unit of study.

**Course(s)/Courses of study** refers to all courses and awards offered by the Institute.

**Course accreditation** is the process by which new and existing courses are approved and reviewed. These courses must be of a high academic standard; be consistent with the Institute's educational mission and its academic policies and procedures; and be appropriately reviewed externally to ensure benchmarking with similar awards prior to final approval of the accreditation of the course.

**Course design** means the application of best practice curriculum design principles to the development of the various components for the design of a course of study. These may include, collaborative design, constructive alignment, application of the *HESF Threshold Standards (2015)*, and the use of best practice curriculum design principles in the development of high-quality courses and units of study.

**Course Review** is the process for the review of a course of study at the Institute. This process should occur at least once every seven years.

**Course Modification** refers to a change/changes that is/are made to a course or unit that requires the approval of the Academic Standing Committee or the Academic Board.

**Unit Learning Outcomes** refers to what a student should know on the successful completion of the unit of study in which they are enrolled. The unit learning outcomes should constructively align with the course learning outcomes.

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online at [https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639/Html/Text#\\_Toc428368859](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639/Html/Text#_Toc428368859) on 1 Jun 2020.

<sup>2</sup> The Australian Qualifications Framework (2014). 'About the AQF'. Located at: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>, accessed 2 June 2020.

## 5 POLICY

### 5.1 Academic Governance

#### 5.1.1 Academic Governance Committee

The *Academic Governance Committee* is a sub-committee of the BBI Board with delegated authority for the oversight of the Institute's academic activities and concerns. The *Academic Governance Committee* has the authority to approve or reject proposals for new courses of study, and in doing so, to:

- a. assess the alignment of the proposed course(s) with the mission statement of the Institute;
- b. determine from the evidence provided the need and demand for the course(s) of study;
- c. assess any resource implications, including the required staff profile, and the potential impact of these implications on the Institute; and
- d. determine the timeline for the introduction of the course.

#### 5.1.2 Academic Board

Refer to the Institute's [A3 – Academic Board Membership and Terms of Reference](#) for a complete list of the roles and responsibilities of the Academic Board of the Institute.

The *Academic Board* is the peak academic body of the Institute. As part of its role, the HESF Standards 6.3.2.(c) require the *Academic Board* is to:

- (c) 'Critically scrutinise, review and approve courses and units of study underpinned by sustained, current and coherent bodies of scholarship which reflect the Institute's educational mission, and fulfil relevant accreditation authority requirements [HESF 6.3.2 (c)];'<sup>3</sup>

On behalf of the *Academic Governance Committee* the *Academic Board* ensures that:

- a. the structure, content, depth and standards of assessment are appropriate for the level of award;
- b. the course and award are consistent with AQF requirements; and
- c. the methods and modes of course delivery are appropriate for achieving the aims and objectives of the course.

#### 5.1.3 Course committees of Academic Board

A course committee may be set up by the Institute's *Academic Board*, or its *Academic Board Standing Committee*, to undertake the development, review or modification of a course, or group of courses, and to advise the Academic Board on the course(s) viability, and the continued offering of the course(s).

The course committee takes responsibility for overseeing the development of all elements of course design as well as all components of the relevant TEQSA application form where required. This may include delegation of the development of components, for example, unit outlines delegated to staff not on the course committee.

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<sup>3</sup> BBI-TAITE. (2020). *A3 – Academic Board Membership and Terms of Reference*. Located at: <https://www.bbi.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/A3-Academic-Board-Memb-TOR-13052020.pdf>. Accessed 2 June 2020.

#### 5.1.3.i *New course team membership*

Normally the membership of a course team for the development of a new course shall comprise:

- the Academic Dean;
- the potential Course Coordinator, or a senior member of staff potentially teaching in the course;
- two academic staff who will be involved in the teaching of the course;
- an external discipline representative;
- an external practitioner or stakeholder; and
- a second-year enrolled student in a course of the Institute.

#### 5.1.3.ii *Course review team membership*

Normally the membership of a course review team shall comprise:

- the Academic Dean;
- the Course Coordinator, or a senior member of staff teaching in the course;
- two academic staff teaching in the course;
- an external discipline representative, or a recent graduate of the course where appropriate;
- an external practitioner or stakeholder where appropriate; and
- a second-year enrolled student in the course of study.

## **5.2 *Course advisory panel***

### **5.2.1 *Course advisory panel criteria***

The course advisory panel shall ensure that:

- a. the course is of a high standard, built on current scholarship, and is an intellectually stimulating and challenging learning experience;
- b. the course is at an appropriate AQF level and consistent with its proposed aims and objectives;
- c. the course is relevant to the changing needs of the community, its industry, and its potential market; and
- d. appropriate records are kept of meeting discussions and outcomes of the Advisory Panel.

### **5.2.2 *Appointment of course advisory panel***

The *Academic Board Standing Committee* will appoint an expert Advisory Panel relevant to the course in development, modification, or review. This panel will consist of:

- a. the Academic Dean of the Institute;
- b. two external appropriately qualified academics with expertise in the discipline area of the course; and
- c. the Deputy Principal and the Registrar (Secretariat) of the Institute.

## **5.3 *New course development***

When a new course is proposed a *Business Case* (refer 6.2.1 below) will be developed to determine if the course is viable and meets the requirements of the Institute. If the *Business Case* is approved by the Institute's governance committees

the proposal will proceed to course development with a course team appointed to develop the course and take it through the accreditation processes.

## **5.4 Course review**

### **5.4.1 Five-yearly course review**

All accredited courses will be reviewed at a minimum of every five-years. This ensures that all courses are delivered with consistent academic standards. Ideally, these reviews should be coordinated with the reaccreditation processes for each course. The course review procedures are outlined below under *6. Procedure*.

### **5.4.2 Mid-cycle review**

Each course of study will undergo a mid-cycle review. This is a light-touch review looking at annual reports, assessing issues that have arisen and if these issues need to be addressed prior to the standard five-yearly course review cycle.

## **5.5 Course Reports**

An annual report for each course of study shall be submitted to the Academic Board once course statistics are available. The report should highlight enrolment data, attrition, progress and completion rates, student and staff feedback, stakeholder feedback, any changes approved during the year, and any proposed improvements to the course.

The implementation of improvements arising from the annual report will be overseen by the *Academic Board* or its subcommittees.

## **5.6 Cancellation of a course**

If the Institute cancels the delivery of a course, it is required to ensure that either:

- a. students currently enrolled in the course can complete their course of study within the normal period of candidature through the Institute; or
- b. students currently enrolled in the course will be presented with options to transfer to another provider to complete their course of study – it is the Institute's responsibility to facilitate transfer arrangements with the new provider and to communicate these arrangements with enrolled students.

## **6. PROCEDURE**

### **6.1 Endorsement and approval authority**

- *Business case*
  - *Academic Board – Endorsement*
  - *Academic Governance Committee – Approval*
- *New course documentation following business case, course review or course modification*
  - *Academic Board – Approval*

### **6.2 Course development, review and modification**

#### **6.2.1 Business Case**

Where the Institute's Executive Committee has proposed a new course of study, the *Academic Board Standing Committee* of the Institute will consider the

proposal, and if endorsed will request the Academic Dean or nominee to develop a Business Case for the delivery of the proposed course.

a. The Business Case will normally include the:

- course title;
- start date;
- rationale for the development and delivery of the course, including alignment with the Institute's Strategic Plan, and integration of the Institute's Graduate Attributes;
- business case, including market research, where applicable;
- viability of the course, including locations and modes of delivery; and
- budget for the development of the course, including a list of staff involved in delivery of the course.

b. If the Business Case is deemed to be viable by the *Academic Board Standing Committee*, it will go to:

- the *Academic Board* for endorsement; then to
- the *Academic Governance Committee* of *BBI Board* for final approval. The Business Case will either be approved or rejected by the *Academic Governance Committee*.

c. If the Business Case is approved, the *Academic Board Standing Committee* will appoint a course committee to undertake the development of the course.

### 6.2.2 *Design and development*

In designing and developing a new course of study, the course committee will ensure that the course:

- a. aligns with the Strategic Plan of the Institute;
- b. integrates the Institute's Graduate Attributes in the development of the course rationale, structure, outcomes, and unit outlines' abstracts, learning outcomes and assessments;
- c. corresponds with the requirements of the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)* and the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*;
- d. is consistent, where relevant, with the requirements of professional accreditation bodies;
- e. takes account of the needs of potential stakeholders, for example: students, employers, ecclesial bodies and contexts;
- f. aligns with benchmarks set by similar courses in the Australian and international contexts;
- g. prepares students for independent research and acts as a pathway to higher learning; and
- h. is subject to rigorous internal and external peer review.

### 6.2.3 *Course structure*

#### 6.2.3.i *Volume of learning*

In line with *Australian Qualifications Framework Guidelines* the volume of learning of the Institute's courses will be:

- a. *Graduate Certificate*: .5 years FTE
- b. *Graduate Diploma*: 1 year FTE

c. *Master's degree:*

- 2 years FTE following a level 7 award in a different discipline;
- 1.5 FTE years following a level 7 award in the same discipline; or
- 1 year FTE following a level 8 award in the same discipline.

6.2.3.ii *Course completion and minimum study requirements*

For a student to complete their course within the maximum time limits shown below, students will be required to complete a minimum of 2 units every 12 months.

The maximum period refers to elapsed time from admission term, inclusive of periods of leave of absence, exclusion or academic suspension.

Postgraduate coursework degree course load	Maximum Duration
4 units	2 years
8 units	4 years
12 units	6 years
16 units	8 years

6.2.3.iii *Course structure content:*

In determining the structure of a new course of study, the course committee may include:

- Core units:* units essential to meeting potential outcomes of the course of study;
- Elective units:* units at the appropriate AQF level designed to develop the depth and breadth of the student's knowledge; and
- Capstone units:* a unit, taken typically in the final trimester of study, designed to demonstrate a student's learning and skills development throughout their course of study – normally a course of study would have only one capstone unit.

### 6.3 *New course of study*

The course committee's role in the development of a new course of study includes the design and delivery of the new course, as well as the completion of *TEQSA's Application for Accreditation of a Higher Education Course of Study (AQF Qualification)* in collaboration with other members of the Institute.

Once the course design is complete, the course committee initiates a review of the course documentation by:

- a. one internal academic staff member not a member of the course review team;
- b. two external academics who are discipline experts in the field of education of the course; and
- c. one professional stakeholder in the course, for example, a leader from a potential employer likely to employ graduates of the course.

#### ***Accreditation documentation***

TEQSA application guides can be accessed at [TEQSA's application guides and support page](#). The application forms are available through the [Provider portal](#).

## 6.4 **Course review**

The course review team addresses the current aims and objectives, unit outcomes, course content and structure, and appropriate assessment and ascertains if any improvements are required.

The course review team undertakes a comparison of the course performance against available course data, among others:

- student feedback;
- student progress;
- student satisfaction;
- completion rates;
- industry feedback;
- industry standards;
- professional practice standards; and
- best practice in teaching and learning in the field.

The course review team will align the course with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*, the *Australian Qualifications Framework (2014)*, and the Institute's graduate attributes. The nature and extent of the review is decided in the early stages of the process, and if substantial changes are required the review will be considered a major review.

### **External advisory committee**

During the process of the review an external advisory committee will be established (refer 5.2 above) to provide industry feedback.

## 6.5 **Peer review of a course of study**

The following questions or statements shall be answered/satisfied in the peer review process for all new courses developed, all course reviews, and, in some cases, course modifications:

- the course enables students to fulfil the outcomes listed in the *Australian Qualifications Framework* (level 8, graduate certificate and graduate diploma; Level 9, Masters);
- the course's graduate attributes map to the outcomes listed in the *Australian Qualifications Framework*;
- individual unit learning outcomes are appropriate for this level of study; and
- the unit assessments are appropriate to meet the learning outcomes for this level of study.

### **Discipline experts**

- the content of the course reflects current knowledge in the academic discipline;
- the course's core units enable students to meet the Institute's graduate attributes and achieve the course aims and objectives; and
- the elective units within the course enable students to develop breadth and/or depth in an area of the discipline.

### **Student body**

- the content of the course reflects the requirements of the sector in this area of study;
- the graduate attributes will enhance students' skill and knowledge in their professional area;



- the course is likely to be attractive to students, and competitive in the sector; and
- will the course increase graduates' employability?

## 7 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Higher Education Standards Framework (2015) Threshold Standards

The Australian Qualifications Framework (2014)

## 8 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Provider Course Accreditation Standard 1.3* requires that 'the content of the course of study is drawn from a substantial, coherent and current body of knowledge and scholarship in one or more academic disciplines and includes the study of relevant theoretical frameworks and research findings.'
- *Provider Course Accreditation Standard 1.4* requires that 'where the course of study is in an emerging or highly specialised field of knowledge or is strongly multi-disciplinary, the provider demonstrates that course of study content draws appropriately on more established bodies of knowledge.'

## 9 NOTES

Contact Officer	Academic Dean
Implementation Officer/s	Academic Dean
Approval Authority / Authorities	Academic Board / Audit and Risk Committee / Board
Date Approved	16/10/15
Date of Commencement	16/10/15
Date for Review	24 MONTHS AFTER COMMENCEMENT
Amendment History	30/07/2020 Amalgamation of <i>C1 Cancellation of Course Policy</i> , <i>C6 Course of Study Design and Development Policy</i> , <i>C7 Course Review Policy</i> , and <i>C10 Course Completion Policy</i> . Extensive revisions to policy in this amalgamation.
Key Stakeholders	Academic Board Academic Board Standing Committee Academic Dean Full-time, Fractional and Sessional Academic Staff Students Higher Education Partners