Q1 QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

1. PURPOSE

This framework policy aims to provide a whole of institution approach to the quality assurance of *BBI The Australian Institute of Theological Education's* (BBI-TAITE or the Institute) programs, courses and units of study through systematic monitoring and continuous improvement. This policy describes the principles that underpin the Institute's framework for evaluating, assuring, and managing course and unit quality. It ensures the Institute's programs and courses are aligned with statutory and regulatory requirements, implemented consistently, appropriately benchmarked, evaluated regularly, and consistent with sector and discipline norms.

In addition, quality assurance is a shared responsibility between the Institute's Board of Directors, the executive team, committees, staff and students. This framework outlines the roles and responsibilities of Directors, management and staff in the quality assurance processes. It ensures that the Institute communicates the outcomes of quality assurance processes to all stakeholders, including students and staff, to close the communication loop.

2. BACKGROUND

BBI-TAITE is committed to building a quality assurance culture that demonstrates the attainment of the desired level of academic achievement. The Institute recognises that effective quality assurance is central to promoting confidence in the quality and validity of its post-graduate awards.

3. SCOPE AND CONTEXT

The *Quality Assurance Framework* applies to all BBI-TAITE Directors, Officers, Committees, Executive Management, Academic and Professional Staff, and students involved in the Institute's governance, operational and academic activities.

4. DEFINITIONS

Academic Board is the principal academic body of the Institute. It provides academic oversight of all the courses and units offered by the Institute and advises the Board of Directors on the content and performance of those programs.

Academic Quality Assurance refers to the plans, policies, procedures and processes essential to ensure the maintenance and improvement of academic quality. It is an evidence-based approach that demonstrates or verifies that the '…desired level of an academic activity has been attained or sustained, or is highly likely to be attained or sustained.'[1]

Academic risk relates to the consequences of failure in academic quality and the likelihood that students may not achieve stated learning outcomes.

Benchmarking '…is a structured, collaborative, learning process for comparing practices, processes or performance outcomes. Its purpose is to identify comparative strengths and weaknesses as a basis for developing improvements in academic

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[1] TEQSA. (2017). *Guidance Note: Academic Quality Assurance.* Version 2.2. Accessed 24 August 2022 at: https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/guidance-note-academic-quality-assurance-v2-2-web.docx?v=1581307458.

quality. Benchmarking can also be defined as a quality process used to evaluate performance by comparing institutional practices to sector good practice.'[2]

Blended learning relates to students attending some face-to-face classes while accessing activities, resources, assessments and interacting with lecturers and other students online.[3]

Board or *Board of Directors* means the Board of Directors of the Institute. The Board is the governing body of the Institute and is responsible for its strategic direction, financial performance, regulatory compliance, and meeting its obligations to stakeholders.

Continuous improvement is the process of continuous change to improve academic practices, methods and procedures.

Executive Leadership Team means those staff "(Principal/CEO and other senior executives and managers, including executive deans/deans/academic directors and heads of schools/departments) involved in implementing policies, programs, and processes.... Its ultimate responsibility and accountability is to the corporate governing body for effective implementation of both corporate and academic objectives."[4]

External accreditation relates to the process of approval of an Institute course of study TEQSA.

Framework refers to the Institute document(s) outlining a governance or management model for particular Institute functions, for example, the Quality Assurance Framework, or the Risk Management Framework Policy, or the Policy Framework Policy.[5]

Fully online learning relates to the delivery of online degree programs '…with no requirement for students to attend classes' on campus. Instead, the Institute provides learning resources online. 'Interactive activities, communication, and assessment occur through a learning management system (LMS) or other digital platforms.'[6]

Higher Education Standards means the TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

Quality assurance cycle relates to how the Institute manages its approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Quality improvement relates to the management and organisational processes the Institute has in place for ongoing improvement in the design and delivery of its units and courses.

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[2] _____. (nd). *Guidance Note Benckmarking.* https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/benchmarkinggnfinal_0.pdf?v=1507592618

[3] _____. *Online Learning: Discussion Paper*, 6.

[4] _____. *Guidance Note: Academic Governance.* https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net2046/f/academicgovernancegn_1.docx

[5] AICD. (2022). *Governance and the Practice of Directorship.* AICD Company Directors Course Materials

[6] TEQSA. (2017). *Quality Assurance of Online Learning: Discussion Paper.* https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/quality-assurance-online-learning-discussion-paper_0.pdf?v=1575861233

5. POLICY STATEMENT

Quality Assurance refers to the plans, policies, procedures and processes essential to ensure the maintenance and continuous improvement of academic quality. It is an evidence-based approach that demonstrates or verifies that the '…desired level of an academic activity has been attained or sustained, or is highly likely to be attained or sustained.'[7] This framework supports all aspects of course design and delivery at the Institute, including course and curriculum design, teaching, learning, and assessment of students.

5.1 Principles

Quality assurance at BBI-TAITE involves:

- o corporate and academic governance through the Board of Directors and the Academic Board
- o alignment of quality assurance processes with the Institute's strategy, including the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Implementation Plan
- o compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, including the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF 2021)* and the *Australian Qualifications Framework 2013 (AQF)*
- o development and communication of policies and procedures through the Policy Framework Policy
- o appropriate academic delegation through *D1 Delegations and Authorities* policy and accompanying schedules
- o determining the criteria and standards underpinning the Institute's evaluation of the quality of courses and units
- o well-defined designation of roles and responsibilities
- o the establishment of courses and units through a consistent quality-assured process based on course and unit policy
- o adopting and maintaining a culture of continuous improvement
- o externally referenced evidence-based transparent decision-making
- o academic risk management through the Risk Management Framework
- o identification, monitoring and management of risk to academic quality
- o independent quality evaluation and reporting by internal assurers
- o independent external compliance reviews before reaccreditation
- o benchmarking of courses and units to ensure they comply with sector norms and meet and exceed regulatory requirements
- o academic and research integrity
- o analysis of statistical data
- o feedback from stakeholders, and
- o communicating the outcomes of the academic quality assurance processes to stakeholders, including staff and students.

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[7] TEQSA. (2017). *Guidance Note: Academic Quality Assurance.* Version 2.2. Accessed 24 August 2022 at: https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/guidance-note-academic-quality-assurance-v2-2-web.docx?v=1581307458.

5.2 Governance

BBI-TAITE governance bodies responsible for academic quality assurance include:

i. *Board of Directors*: The Board is responsible for the corporate governance of BBI-TAITE. They delegate authority to Board Committees, their sub-committees and Institute Officers through the *Governance Charter* and *D1 Delegations and Authorities Policy.* In addition, the Board is responsible for approving and reviewing the Quality Assurance Framework.

ii. *Board Committees:* The functions of committees of the Board of Directors include monitoring, reviewing and advising the Board on academic quality and compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

iii. *Academic Board:* The Academic Board is responsible for 'effective academic oversight of quality outcomes in learning, teaching, research and research training [HESF 6.3.1(a)]'[8], including the oversight of Academic Board Committees in their monitoring and reporting of academic quality assurance.

iv. *Human Research Ethics Committee:* 'The Board of Directors delegates authority to the Academic Board to determine the Institute's human research ethics approval policies and processes. The Academic Board of the Institute administers an auspice agreement with *Sydney College of Divinity* to process and approve BBI-TAITE faculty and student applications for human research ethics approval.'[9]

5.3 Roles and responsibilities

i. The Board of Directors approves and reviews the Quality Assurance Framework.

ii. The Principal/CEO is responsible for the strategic management of courses and units as determined under the *Governance Charter* and *D1 Delegations and Authorities Policy.*

iii. The Director Student Services and Operations is responsible for data collection, management and reporting concerning courses and units offered by the Institute.

iv. The Associate Dean (Academic) is responsible for Institute policy development, review and implementation, and course and unit approval processes.

v. The Associate Dean (Courses) is responsible for the adoption and implementation of curriculum quality assurance activities and oversight of the curriculum management of courses and units.

vi. The Director Research is responsible for reviewing ethics applications and raising academic or research quality issues with the Chair of the Academic Board.

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[8] BBI-TAITE. (2022) *AC-A3 Academic Board Membership and Terms of Reference, Section 5.1.* Academic Policies. Accessed online 26/08/2022 at: https://www.bbi.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/AC-A3-Academic-Board-Membership-and-Terms-of-Reference-20220315.pdf.

[9] BBI-TAITE *Governance Charter, Section 15.7*

6. KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Governance Charter
- D1 Delegations and Authorities Policy and accompanying schedules
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- AC-A3 Academic Board Membership and Terms of Reference
- BBI-TAITE policy suite, in particular, policies related to academic course quality and the development and delivery of courses and units

7. NOTES

Contact Officer	Chair, Academic Board
Implementation Officer/s	Board of Directors Principal/CEO Executive Leadership Team
Approval Authority / Authorities	Board of Directors (Approval) Academic Board (Endorsement) Executive Leadership Team (Endorsement)
Date Approved	24 October 2022
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