

# Multi-Badged Degree Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose & Scope

(1) This policy provides the framework for Southern Cross University's Multi-Badged Degree arrangements with Collaborating Institutions in Australia and internationally.

### Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all staff involved in the development of Multi-Badged Degrees.

## Section 2 - Definitions

(3) 'Collaborating Institution' means an educational provider with which Southern Cross University has established, or proposes to establish, a Multi-Badged Degree award.

(4) 'Multi-Badged Degree' (MBD) means a course taught by two or more education providers, including Southern Cross University, leading to the conferral of an undergraduate, postgraduate or doctorate degree.

(5) 'Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Candidate Collaboration Agreement' means a formal arrangement, negotiated and agreed between a HDR candidate, the University and a Collaborating Institution, for the provision of a MBD.

(6) 'Higher Degree Research (HDR) Candidate Concept Proposal' means a HDR Candidate Collaboration Agreement which is in draft form and has not been agreed or signed by all parties or their nominated representatives.

(7) 'Home Institution' means the primary coordinating institution that provides the greater share of supervision and other resources throughout candidature, and where the student spends most of their time.

(8) 'Strategic Collaboration Agreement' means a formal MBD arrangement, applicable to all suitably qualified candidates within a defined period of time, negotiated between the University and a Collaborating Institution.

(9) 'Strategic Concept Proposal' means a MBD plan which, if approved, would provide a MDB opportunity to all suitably qualified candidates within a defined period of time.

(10) 'University' means Southern Cross University.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(11) The University shall develop and deliver Multi-Badged Degrees (MBD) in collaboration with educational providers which are:

- a. of a demonstrated high educational standing; and
- b. possess educational capabilities or facilities complementary to, or supporting, those possessed by the University; and
- c. recognised as a recognised as a Higher Education Provider as defined by the [Higher Education Standards](#)

(12) MBDs shall:

- a. strengthen the University's existing ties with Collaborating Institutions; or
- b. foster new institutional relationships to create valuable educational opportunities for University students and staff beyond that which the University could achieve through its own means; or
- c. provide an additional mechanism to attract high calibre research students who, but for a MBD opportunity, may not enrol at the University; or
- d. maximise the resources available to students and researchers.

(13) Multi-Badge Degree's:

- a. must be underpinned by a [HDR Candidate Collaboration Agreement](#) or Strategic Collaboration Agreement signed by representatives of all parties to the arrangement;
- b. must demonstrate full compliance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#); and
- c. are only valid once approved by a [delegated authority](#) of the University on a case by case basis.

## Section 4 - Procedures

### Part A - Strategic Proposals and Agreements

#### Strategic Concept Proposals

(14) Strategic Concept Proposals shall be developed according to the University's [Course and Unit Accreditation Policy](#) and must demonstrate (using additional documentation as necessary) that:

- a. the institution with which the University would collaborate is of a high-standing;
- b. the collaboration would provide quality learning, teaching or research opportunities for students which the University could not provide through its own means;
- c. the University has sufficient capacity and capability to provide or perform the services and facilities it is liable for under the proposal, including specifically how it will do so where the University is required to teach, assess, provide resources, establish understanding of its Rules, Policies, Procedures or Guidelines or otherwise communicate in a language other than English under the proposal;
- d. the volume of learning and learning outcomes which must be achieved at the Collaborating Institution for a student to earn the proposed Multi-Badged Degree are commensurate with those of the relevant [Australian Qualifications Framework 2013](#) (AQF) award;
- e. the University and any proposed Collaborating Institution's enabling Acts, By-Laws, Rules, Policies and Procedures (or equivalently termed mandatory requirements) are consistent with respect to administering the proposed Multi-Badged Degree, particularly in relation to:
  - i. academic integrity;
  - ii. admission;
  - iii. assessment and examination;
  - iv. course and unit delivery;
  - v. English language proficiency;
  - vi. graduation arrangement and requirements;
  - vii. grievance resolution;

- viii. moderation;
  - ix. monitoring student progression;
  - x. recognised prior learning;
  - xi. staffing; and
  - xii. student support;
- f. where an off-shore Collaborating Institution is sought, the proposal adheres to the University's relevant quality assurance policies and procedures;
  - g. at least one year or one third of the full time equivalent candidature (whichever is greater) shall be undertaken at the University, its affiliates or via online means;
  - h. adequate communication strategies are devised to ensure students will be fully informed about their rights and responsibilities;
  - i. appropriate provision is made by the University and the Collaborating Institution for course advice and academic support for students, including library and IT facilities equivalent at least to the University's standards and compliant with Australia's national standards and frameworks;
  - j. the Collaborating Institution's (including its welfare agencies such as student health and housing) faculties and departments will provide an appropriate level of support for students equivalent at least to the University's standards and compliant with Australia's national standards and frameworks; and
  - k. the proposed Multi-Badged Degree complies with all relevant privacy legislation.

(15) Strategic Concept Proposals must be presented to the Vice Chancellor's Group for consideration of approval.

## **Strategic Collaboration Agreements**

(16) Upon gaining approval for a Strategic Collaboration Proposal from Vice Chancellor's Group:

- a. the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Innovation); or
- b. for post-graduate degree Strategic Concept Proposals, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Innovation) in conjunction with Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor;

shall in consultation with the University's Legal Office lead on the negotiation of a draft Collaboration Agreement (CA) with the Collaborating Institution prior to the proposal's consideration by Student Administration Services, the Commercial Activities Committee, the Academic Board, and then the final approval authority as defined by the [Delegations Rule and Schedules](#).

(17) At a minimum, the negotiated draft CA must establish agreed:

- a. obligations and responsibilities of the University and the Collaborating Institutions, including the rights and responsibilities of each party to discontinue Multi-Badged Degree arrangements;
- b. course delivery modes, including details of:
  - i. units;
  - ii. admission criteria;
  - iii. languages of instruction and assessment;
- c. admission procedures, enrolment procedures, fee administration, exam arrangements and other sharing arrangements;
- d. staffing arrangements;
- e. division of administrative and technical costs associated with the Multi-Badged Degree;
- f. applicable Rules and Policies (or Collaborating Institution's equivalent) governing the Multi-Badged Degree, and in particular mandatory requirements governing:
  - i. academic integrity;

- ii. admission;
  - iii. assessment and examination;
  - iv. course and unit delivery;
  - v. English language proficiency;
  - vi. graduation arrangement and requirements;
  - vii. grievance resolution;
  - viii. moderation;
  - ix. monitoring student progression;
  - x. recognised prior learning;
  - xi. staffing; and
  - xii. student support; and
  - xiii. quality control and audit mechanisms to ensure ongoing compliance with relevant legislative requirements;
- g. issuance policy and testamur protocols compliant with [AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy](#) and [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#);
  - h. branding and marketing protocols;
  - i. teach-out arrangements;
  - j. Intellectual Property rights;
  - k. schedule of requirements for sharing or transferring resources between the University and the Collaborating Institution(s);
  - l. structures and processes for ensuring effective inter-institutional communication and coordination; and
  - m. administrative and learning system arrangements.

(18) In accordance with TEQSA requirements, MBDs between Australian institutions must be awarded on a single testamur bearing the crests and authorising signatures of all providers. For MBDs involving international institutions, either the award of a single testamur or two separate testamurs may be provided for in the Collaboration Agreement. In the latter case, appropriate wording must be placed on both the academic transcript and the testamur of each institution must transparently detail that the degree was awarded pursuant to a Multi-Badged Degree.

## **Part B - HDR Candidate Proposals and Agreements**

### **HDR Candidate Concept Proposals**

(19) Subject to clause (20), HDR Candidate Concept Proposals shall be developed by the candidate, proposed Supervisor, and other relevant members of the Faculty or College with which the candidate will study, according to the [HDR Candidate Collaboration Agreement Template](#) at Schedule 1.

(20) Where the Home Institution is not Southern Cross University, the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor in conjunction with the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Innovation) may approve the use of the Collaborating Institutions documentation in lieu of the [HDR Candidate Collaboration Agreement Template](#), if satisfied the documentation supplies all the information required by the [HDR Candidate Collaboration Agreement Template](#).

(21) Subject to clause (22) and (23), HDR Candidate Concept Proposals must be presented to the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor for consideration of provisional approval.

(22) Where an international Collaborating Institution is proposed, the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor may consult with the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Innovation) before granting or declining provisional approval .

(23) Provisional approval of a HDR Candidate Concept Proposal may only be granted where the:

- a. institution(s) with which the University would collaborate is or are of a high-standing; and
- b. academic governance standards to apply are equal to or higher than the University's own; and
- c. template is completed in full and signed by the candidate; and
- d. required evidence, as defined within the template, is documented and credible.

## **HDR Candidate Collaboration Agreement**

(24) Where provisional approval is obtained, the proposed candidate's relevant Executive Dean, College Dean, or Director Special Research Centre shall seek the proposed Collaborating Institution's formal agreement to the University's terms as contained in the [HDR Candidate Collaboration Agreement](#). The agreement shall not be valid until signed by all parties or their nominated representatives. An Executive Dean, College Dean or Director, Special Research Centre may not, unless otherwise indicated within the [HDR Candidate Collaboration Agreement Template](#), alter the terms and conditions of the Collaboration Agreement without prior consultation and approval of the Legal Office in conjunction with the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor.

## **Section 5 - Guidelines**

(25) Nil.

## **Section 6 - References**

(26) This policy draws substantially on the paper 'Joint Badging of Coursework Degrees' published by Melbourne University, 2005. "<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/Council/minutes/Attachments/apps0805.pdf>"

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
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