

# Curriculum Design and Development Procedures

## Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

### Purpose

(1) The purpose of these Procedures is to ensure that award courses, pathway programs, and their constituent unit clusters and units are designed to meet the requirements of the [Curriculum Policy](#).

### Scope

(2) These Procedures apply to all award courses and units and to all pathway programs and their constituent units developed by Southern Cross University.

## Section 2 - Definitions

(3) The [Definitions \(Academic\) Policy](#) applies to these Procedures.

## Section 3 - Design and Development of Courses

### Course Concept Process

(4) Course Concept Proposals will be developed in the UCMS with information to allow evaluation, prior to course development, of:

- a. alignment of the proposed course with the strategic directions and priorities of the University;
- b. the expertise and resource requirements needed to develop and deliver the proposed course;
- c. target student cohorts and likely demand for the proposed course;
- d. prospective funding arrangements, competitors and financial viability of the proposed course; and
- e. course continuity arrangements.

### Course Design Process

(5) Courses will be designed by a Course Design Team that includes:

- a. at least one academic staff member of the University with broad expertise in the discipline of the course;
- b. a representative from the Centre for Teaching and Learning;
- c. the Associate Dean (Education) or nominee;
- d. Discipline Chair (if any);
- e. the Faculty Board Chair or nominee;
- f. a representative from SCU College, in the case of courses designed at AQF levels 5 to 7, to assist in meeting the requirements of clause (9) below;
- g. a representative potential employer from outside the University, in the case of courses designed to produce

graduates for work in a specific field or industry;

- h. a representative from the University's strategic or third-party partnerships, in the case of courses designed to be delivered at or through those partnerships; and
- i. other members as required to ensure the necessary depth and breadth of expertise to design the course.

(6) The names, roles and relevant expertise of each member of the Course Design Team will be documented in the UCMS.

(7) The role of each member of the Course Design Team may vary from detailed design through to providing specialist input or review related to particular aspects of the course, however each member must at a minimum have the opportunity to review and provide comment on the course design prior to the course being set to "ready for approval" in the UCMS.

(8) The Course Design Team will consult broadly to ensure representative views of all relevant stakeholder groups are considered, specifically including an appropriate Indigenous academic community member, and document this consultation in the UCMS.

(9) Courses will be designed to embed nested awards at lower AQF levels to provide both entry and exit pathways, unless this would compromise the ability to meet one or more of the Design Principles specified in the [Curriculum Policy](#).

(10) The course design process will include benchmarking of the aim, structure, learning outcomes and assessment against relevant similar courses offered by other higher education providers in Australia and overseas through a desktop review, and any significant variations justified in terms of the pedagogical, intellectual and strategic rationale.

### **Course Name (Award Title)**

(11) The title and abbreviated title of the award that a student will receive upon successful completion of the course will:

- a. accurately represent the course aim and content to students, potential employers, other education providers and the community; and
- b. comply with the requirements of the [Course Nomenclature and Volume of Learning Schedule](#).

### **Course Aim, Educational Approach, Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes**

(12) The course will have an aim that concisely describes its purpose with respect to intended graduate destinations (including preparation for professional practice, if relevant), disciplinary focus and major educational features.

(13) The educational approach for the course will be evidence-based, conceptually sound, culturally appropriate and described in detail within the UCMS.

(14) The course will have Course Learning Outcomes that are relevant, desirable, achievable, concise and clearly written in plain English.

(15) Course Learning Outcomes will, as demonstrated by detailed mapping, address:

- a. all the University's Graduate Attributes as specified in the [Graduate Attributes Schedule](#);
- b. the AQF generic learning outcomes appropriate to the AQF level of the award;
- c. discipline-specific requirements and expectations, such as the appropriate disciplinary Threshold Learning Outcomes; and
- d. requirements for accreditation by a professional body where this is required for registration to practise.

(16) All award courses will specifically include Course Learning Outcomes related to development of:

- a. threshold academic knowledge and skills including literacy, numeracy and academic integrity; and
- b. advanced knowledge and inquiry at a level appropriate to the AQF level of the course.

(17) Bachelor courses (AQF level 7) and Bachelor courses with embedded Honours (AQF level 8) will specifically include Course Learning Outcomes related to development of:

- a. significant depth of knowledge in one or more disciplines; and
- b. some breadth of knowledge beyond the narrow discipline focus.

(18) The Course Learning Outcomes for double degree courses will be such that the requirements of clauses (15), (16) and (17) are satisfied for each of the component awards.

(19) The Course Learning Outcomes for combined degree courses will be such that the requirements of clauses (15), (16) and (17) are satisfied for each field of study of the award.

## Course Rules

(20) Specific Award Rules will specify:

- a. the overall volume of learning that must be completed, consistent with the requirements of the [Course Nomenclature and Volume of Learning Schedule](#);
- b. which and how many units must be successfully completed, either individually or as part of a minor, major or specialisation;
- c. options for students to choose elective units, minors, majors or specialisations; and
- d. alternative exit points, entry points, and formal pathways for transfer to other courses.

(21) Specific Award Rules will comply with the requirements of the [Admission and Course Requirements Standard Wording](#) unless this would result in inconsistency, ambiguity or confusion, in which case alternative wording must be developed in consultation with the Manager, Course Implementation and Publications.

## Course Structure and Content

(22) The course structure and content will be consistent with the educational approach for the course.

(23) Courses will normally consist of a combination of:

- a. core units, which all students must complete;
- b. unit clusters such as minors, majors and specialisations; and
- c. elective units.

(24) The course structure will allow students to choose elective units and minors, majors or specialisations, unless this would compromise the ability to meet one or more of the Design Principles specified in the [Curriculum Policy](#) or external, professional accreditation requirements.

(25) The course structure will allow students to choose study options in other disciplines through choice of shared elective units, minors and majors, unless this would compromise the ability to meet one or more of the Design Principles specified in the [Curriculum Policy](#) or external, professional accreditation requirements.

(26) The course structure, including the units and unit clusters that comprise the course, will be designed to ensure that all students can progressively achieve the Course Learning Outcomes, regardless of the point of entry into and

pathway through the course, as demonstrated by mapping of Unit Learning Outcomes and Unit Cluster Learning Outcomes against Course Learning Outcomes.

(27) The progressive nature of achievement of Course Learning Outcomes will be demonstrated by mapping Unit Learning Outcomes and Unit Cluster Learning Outcomes against Course Learning Outcomes and identifying the extent to which each Unit Learning Outcome or Unit Cluster Learning Outcome develops the corresponding Course Learning Outcome(s) as either:

- a. emerging proficiency;
- b. increasing proficiency; or
- c. attainment of proficiency.

(28) Mapping of Unit Learning Outcomes and Unit Cluster Learning Outcomes against Course Learning Outcomes must be performed separately for each specialisation within a course to assure the requirements of the [Curriculum Policy](#) are satisfied for all specialisations.

(29) To satisfactorily address the Course Learning Outcome specified in clause (16), the core units for an award course must include Unit Learning Outcomes that demonstrate:

- 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 and, where applicable, advances in practice.

(30) The Course Learning Outcome specified in clause (17) a will normally be developed through availability of discipline-specific majors, minors or elective units within the course structure, as demonstrated by mapping.

(31) The Course Learning Outcome specified in clause (17) b will normally be developed through availability of shared majors, minors or elective units within the course structure, as demonstrated by mapping.

(32) All other Course Learning Outcomes will normally be developed through the core units within the course structure, as demonstrated by mapping.

(33) The course structure and content will incorporate Work Integrated Learning through contextualised and experiential learning activities, either within a single unit or distributed throughout the course, except in the case of pathways programs or unless this would compromise the ability to meet one or more of the Design Principles specified in the [Curriculum Policy](#).

(34) In the case of double and combined degree courses, each core unit may contribute to the achievement of Course Learning Outcomes for both the component awards, but the number of such units must not exceed the maximum number of units for which advanced standing may be granted under the [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

(35) The course structure and content will meet the requirements of an external accrediting body if such external accreditation is necessary for graduates to engage in professional practice.

## Section 4 - Design and Development of Specialisations

## **Aims and Learning Outcomes**

(36) Each specialisation will have an aim that describes its purpose with respect to intended graduate destinations (including preparation for professional practice, if relevant), intended development of specialist knowledge and capabilities, and disciplinary focus.

(37) Each specialisation will have learning outcomes consistent with its aim that students are expected to achieve in addition to the overall Course Learning Outcomes.

## **Structure and Content**

(38) A specialisation will normally include one or more core units that are specific to that specialisation and may also include a choice of minors, majors and elective units as part of the specialisation.

(39) The units that comprise the specialisation will be designed to ensure that all students achieve the Course Learning Outcomes and the additional Specialisation Learning Outcomes as demonstrated by mapping of Unit Learning Outcomes against the Specialisation Learning Outcomes in the same manner as described in clause (26).

# **Section 5 - Design and Development of Minors and Majors**

## **Aims and Learning Outcomes**

(40) Each minor or major will have an aim that describes its purpose with respect to intended development of specialist knowledge and capabilities and disciplinary focus.

(41) Each minor or major will have learning outcomes consistent with its aim that students are expected to achieve.

## **Structure and Content**

(42) A minor will consist of four single-weighted units or equivalent (48 credit points).

(43) A major will consist of eight single-weighted units or equivalent (96 credit points).

(44) A choice of units will not normally be provided within the major or minor.

(45) The units that comprise the minor or major will be designed to ensure that students achieve the Minor or Major Learning Outcomes as demonstrated by mapping of Unit Learning Outcomes against the Minor or Major Learning Outcomes in the same manner as described in clause (26).

# **Section 6 - Design and Development of Units**

## **Unit Design Process**

(46) Prior to developing a new unit, it must be established that no similar existing units within the University could be used to fulfil the same intended purpose.

(47) Units will be designed by a Unit Design Team that includes:

- a. at least one academic staff member of the University with specialist expertise in the subject of the unit;
- b. a representative from the Centre for Teaching and Learning;

- c. the Associate Dean (Education) or nominee;
- d. Discipline Chair (if any);
- e. a representative from the relevant professional community from outside the University, in the case of units involving Work Integrated Learning; and
- f. other members as required to ensure the necessary depth and breadth of expertise to design the unit.

(48) The names, roles and relevant expertise of each member of the Unit Design Team will be documented in the UCMS.

(49) The role of each member of the Unit Design Team may vary from detailed design through to providing specialist input or review related to particular aspects of the unit, however each member must at a minimum have the opportunity to review and provide comment on the unit design prior to the unit being set to "ready for approval" in the UCMS.

(50) The Unit Design Team will consult broadly to ensure representative views of all relevant stakeholder groups are considered, specifically including an appropriate Indigenous academic community member when relevant to the unit and document this consultation in the UCMS.

## **Unit Name**

(51) Unit names will be concise, appealing and accurately represent the unit aim and content to students.

## **Unit Aim, Learning Outcomes and Level of Study**

(52) Each unit will have an aim that describes its purpose with respect to intended development of knowledge and capabilities and disciplinary focus.

(53) A unit will normally have no more than four Learning Outcomes.

(54) Unit Learning Outcomes will be designed to:

- a. align with the unit aim;
- b. be achievable and assessable;
- c. contribute to progressive development of Course Learning Outcomes in all courses for which the unit is a core unit;
- d. contribute to achievement of Minor or Major Learning Outcomes in all minors or majors with which the unit is associated; and
- e. minimise duplication and repetition with other units, as demonstrated through the mapping between Unit Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes.

(55) When a new unit is to be used in multiple courses, or an existing unit is to be used in a new course, an iterative approach to developing Course Learning Outcomes and Unit Learning Outcomes may be required to meet all relevant provisions of these Procedures.

(56) Each unit will be assigned a Level of Study that reflects the specificity of learning within a discipline and cognitive complexity of intended learning outcomes in the context of the course(s) with which the unit is associated, based on the descriptors in Schedule A of the [Definitions \(Academic\) Policy](#).

## **Unit Content and Learning Activities**

(57) The structure and content of units will be consistent with the educational approach of the course(s) for which they are designed.

(58) All teaching methods, learning resources and learning activities will directly and demonstrably contribute to achievement of one or more of the Unit Learning Outcomes.

(59) Teaching methods, learning resources and learning activities will demonstrably provide students with equivalent opportunities to achieve the intended learning outcomes irrespective of their study location or mode of participation.

(60) Teaching methods, learning resources and learning activities will demonstrably meet the learning needs of all students, including Indigenous Australians, international students regardless of cultural background, mature age students, school leavers, students with disabilities and students who are the first in their family to study at university.

(61) Teaching methods, learning resources and learning activities will minimise reliance on other units to develop prior knowledge and capabilities wherever possible.

(62) When development of essential prior knowledge in other units is unavoidable, a requirement for a pre-requisite or co-requisite may be applied only if the absence of the pre-requisite or co-requisite would directly and demonstrably result in academic peril, as described in the [Curriculum Policy](#).

(63) Pre-requisites, co-requisites or other enrolment restrictions for reasons other than academic peril may only be applied if one of the other circumstances described in clause (18) of the [Curriculum Policy](#) clearly and demonstrably applies.

## **Assessment**

(64) All assessment tasks will be explicitly and demonstrably designed to assess achievement of the Unit Learning Outcomes.

(65) Assessment tasks will be mapped to each relevant Unit Learning Outcome.

(66) A rationale for how each assessment tests the achievement of the differed learning outcomes will be provided.

(67) Assessment tasks will be assigned one of the following levels of cognitive complexity to support mapping of the progressive achievement of learning outcomes at the unit and course level:

- a. knowledge/comprehension;
- b. application/analysis; or
- c. synthesis/evaluation.

(68) Assessment tasks will be explicitly and demonstrably designed to minimise the potential for breaches of academic integrity.

(69) Assessment tasks will be designed to comply with the [Assessment, Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and [Assessment Procedures](#).

## **Section 7 - Course Removals**

(70) The University may consider removing a course for the following reasons:

- a. a recommendation in a Comprehensive Course Review;
- b. the course no longer has a strategic fit with the University's plans and priorities;
- c. the course is not financially viable;
- d. the course has a pattern of low course performance based on:
  - i. low student satisfaction; or

- ii. a lack of applications for admission (or substantially declining applications); or
- iii. a lack of enrolments (or substantially declining enrolments); or
- iv. poor student performance including high attrition and low student progression.

(71) A course removal may be initiated by:

- a. the Executive Dean or Head of College;
- b. the Vice-Chancellor; or
- c. the Academic Board.

(72) Where the course removal proposal is initiated by the Vice-Chancellor or the Academic Board, the proposal may go directly to Accreditation Committee for consideration and further progression in accordance with the [Course and Unit Approval Authorities](#).

(73) A proposal to remove a course must include:

- a. the reason for the proposed removal;
- b. an explanation of how the decision is aligned with the University's strategic plan and priorities;
- c. the impact of the removal on other courses; and
- d. the Course Removal Plan developed in accordance with these Procedures.

### **Course Removal Plan**

(74) The Course Removal Plan must detail:

- a. the final study period into which the University will admit students;
- b. the communication plan to inform students and relevant external stakeholders, including plans to remove the course from marketing materials (such as UAC and QTAC guides and marketing materials for international students);
- c. the date on which the University will cease delivering the course. All students will need to have completed or transitioned out of the course by this date;
- d. if the course is delivered to international onshore students, how the University will meet its obligations for the provider default under the [Education for Overseas Students Act 2000\(Cth\)](#); and
- e. the transition plan developed in accordance with these Procedures so that students enrolled in the course are not disadvantaged by the course removal.

(75) The University will consider all options available to students and make the necessary arrangements within the University or with another education provider to confirm the transition plan. This includes consideration of the credit transfer, access and availability, and tuition costs of alternative courses.

(76) The transition plan will outline all options available to students, such as:

- a. transferring to a similar course at the University;
- b. completing the course within a specified time period;
- c. transferring to an equivalent course at another institution; or
- d. taking an early exit option (if appropriate).

(77) The University is not required to continue to deliver a course if a student has not completed or transitioned out of the course by the date specified.



## Section 8 - Associated Documents

(78) Schedules:

- a. [Course Nomenclature and Volume of Learning Schedule](#)
- b. [Graduate Attributes Schedule](#)

(79) Policies:

- a. [Curriculum Policy](#)

(80) Guidelines:

- a. [Admission and Course Requirements Standard Wording Guidelines](#)

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	6th October 2021
<b>Review Date</b>	6th October 2024
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Chair, Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	4th October 2021
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Erica Wilson Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Innovation) +61 2 66203151
<b>Head of Work Unit</b>	Ruth Greenaway Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Centre for Teaching and Learning