Definitions (Academic) Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to provide a definition to common use terms within University policy.

Scope

(2) The Policy applies to University rules, policies, procedures and guidelines where the term is not separately defined within the relevant rule, policy, procedure or guideline.

Section 2 - Definitions

(3) Academic Board - the body of that name appointed by the Council of the University.

(4) Academic Integrity - behaving in accordance with the values of honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, courage, responsibility and respect in relation to academic work.

(5) Academic Work Unit – a University Work Unit which delivers teaching and learning. An Academic Work Unit may be further organised into disciplines and research centres.

(6) Advanced Standing - a form of credit for any previous learning (AQF 2013, p.92). Advanced standing is granted on the basis of previous, successfully completed studies or other recognised prior learning, and is expressed as specified or unspecified credit points towards the completion of an award.

(7) Advanced Standing Precedent - an advanced standing outcome that is made publicly available to increase the transparency of the University's advanced standing decisions.

(8) Aegrotat Award - an award granted under circumstances where a student was unable in the final study period to complete particular assessment tasks on account of death or incapacity.

(9) Annual Course Report - the report compiled annually by the Course Coordinator and is based on data provided by the Office of Business Intelligence and Quality and other relevant information to course monitoring and review.

(10) Articulation Arrangements - enabling students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined qualification pathway' (AQF, 2013, p.92).

(11) Assessment - the process by which student academic progress is monitored and judged.

(12) Assessment Task - any item of assessment, for example, tests, examinations, assignments, practicals, clinicals, orals and any other performances required as part of an assessment.

(13) Attrition - the proportion of students enrolled in year(x) who neither complete in year(x) or year(x + 1) nor return in year(x + 1).

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a. The attrition rate identifies students that neither complete a course nor are retained the following year at the same institution. Students who change institution are counted as attrition. Students who change course at the same institution are not counted as attrition.

(14) Award - a qualification of a type that is recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework and achieved following successful completion of an accredited course.

(15) Award Course - a course that leads to issue of a University Award on completion.

(16) Benchmarking - a process whereby the University or parts of the University compare themselves with other areas within the University, other institutions or parts of other institutions. This can be extensive or on a minor scale.

(17) Breach of Academic Integrity – behaviour that contravenes the values of academic integrity. The University classifies breaches of academic integrity as either:

a. Minor breach – a breach that is determined to be an unintentional and can be reasonably considered as part of the normal learning process;
b. Moderate breach – a breach that is determined to be unintentional but unacceptably negligent with regard to opportunity to learn and appropriately apply academic integrity principles;
c. Major breach – a breach that is determined to be intentional or deliberately negligent including (but not limited to) contract cheating.

(18) Candidate - a person admitted to the University as a student and proceeding towards an accredited award of the University.

(19) Census Dates - the date prescribed in the Higher Education Support Act 2003 as the day upon which enrolment for a study period becomes fixed. Generally, a student cannot enrol or withdraw from units after census dates without financial penalties. Census dates are set for each unit of study that the University proposes to offer each year.

(20) Co-requisite Unit - a Unit which a candidate is normally required to enrol in concurrently with another specified Unit.

(21) Commonwealth Supported Place - a place for which the Commonwealth makes a contribution towards the cost of that place.

(22) Commonwealth Supported Student - a student who is generally required to contribute to the cost of their education through a student contribution, while the Commonwealth Government also funds part of the costs involved.

(23) Community - groups of individuals or organisations that students may engage with as graduates. They include communities of professionals, communities of employees, constituents and a broad range of communities of interest. They range from a community of peers (in whatever form that may take) to a community of global citizens.

(24) Completion - successfully passing all required components of a qualification.

(25) Comprehensive Course Review (CCR), a course review which is either:

a. ‘ad hoc’ – based on risks raised through monitoring processes; or
b. ‘scheduled’ – means it is on the five year review cycle plan, as set out in the Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy.

(26) Consecutive Study Periods - the successive study periods that a student is enrolled with the University For example, where a student is enrolled in first session and third session only, these sessions are considered to be consecutive study periods. Where a student is only enrolled in Session 2 in one year and Session 2 in the following

year, these sessions are considered to be consecutive study periods.

(27) Contract cheating – when a student submits work that has been completed for them by a human third party, irrespective of the third party's relationship with the student, and whether they are paid or unpaid (after Harper et al.2018 doi:10.1080/03075079.2018.1462789)

(28) Course - an approved plan of study with specific rules defining the requirements for admission, progression and successful completion that is formally recognised and certified by the University. A course can be either an Award Course or a Non-Award Course.

(29) Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) - a national instrument for gauging graduate satisfaction with their university experience.

(30) Coursework - a non-research based course of study.

(31) Coursework award – an award that is not a Higher Degree by Research award.

(32) Deferment of Study - official permission to delay the commencement of study in a nominated course.

(33) Discipline - broad field in the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) Field of Study e.g. Natural and Physical Sciences.

(34) Elective Unit - a free choice unit drawn from anywhere within the University, except as prescribed in the Specific Award Rules.

(35) ESOS - Education Services for Overseas Students.

(36) Examination - the formally supervised examination held at the end of a study period.

(37) Exemption (Unit Substitution) - where previous studies and/or subsequent work experience are sufficient that the student has acquired the level of knowledge expected from the study of the unit a unit substitution may be made. This means a student does not need to complete the unit as part of the award, but they must choose a replacement unit in consultation with the Course Coordinator. This is usually applied for on an individual basis.

(38) Field of Study means

a. defined as a specific field in the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) Field of Study; area of specialisation e.g.
    i. Mathematical Sciences. An award title would normally be at this level of detail.
b. detailed field in the ASCED Field of Study; more specific area of specialisation e.g.
    i. Mathematics.

(39) Formal Learning - the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification' (AQF, 2013, p.95);

(40) Grade Point Average (GPA) - a simple numerical index which summarises a student's academic performance in a course in a single study period or over the duration of the student's enrolment in the course. The GPA is recorded on a student's Statement of Academic Record/Transcript and Notification of Assessment. The GPA is calculated as:

a. Sum of (Grade Point x Credit Points) / Sum of (Credit Points)
b. Grade points are assigned to graded units where High Distinction = 7, Distinction = 6, Credit = 5, Pass = 4, 3, Fail = 0. Non-graded units, interim notations and advanced standing are not included in grade point average calculations.

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(41) Informal Learning - "learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support" (AQF, 2013, p.96).

(42) Information Literacy - an understanding and set of abilities enabling individuals to:

a. recognise when information is needed and have the capacity to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. (American Library Association, 1989)

(43) Learning Outcomes – are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

(44) Level of Study - a classification of a unit, ranging from levels 0 to 7, which denotes the specificity of learning within a discipline and cognitive complexity of intended learning outcomes appropriate to different stages of university study (see Schedule A for descriptors).

(45) Major – a combination of eight single-weighted units or equivalent (96 credit points) in an undergraduate course that substantially deepens a student's learning in a specific field of study or field of practice within the broader context of the course.

a. A Shared Major – a major that is approved by Academic Board as being available for incorporation into the Schedule of Units of any undergraduate course offered by the University.

(46) Minor – a combination of four single-weighted units or equivalent (48 credit points) in an undergraduate course that deepens a student's learning in a specific field of study or field of practice within the broader context of the course.

a. A Shared Minor – a minor that is approved by Academic Board as being available for incorporation into the Schedule of Units of any undergraduate course offered by the University.

(47) National Code - the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

(48) Nested courses - a set of related courses leading to awards at different AQF levels in which the majority of units comprising the lower AQF level award course/s are a sub-set of those comprising the higher AQF level award course/s.

(49) Non-Award Course - a course that does not lead to issue of a University Award, but may lead to other formal recognition by the University, upon successful completion.

(50) Non-Award Unit - a unit that does not contribute to achievement of the requirements for any Award Course.

(51) Non Formal Learning - learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification' (AQF, 2013, p. 98).

(52) Pathway Program - a preparatory Non-Award Course designed to help build skills and knowledge needed for further university study that provides direct entry into an Award Course.

(53) Peer Review - a systematic process whereby academics review and improve teaching, curriculum and assessment practices. It is an iterative collegial process that aims to increase visibility and accountability in decision-making about teaching and student learning.

(54) Placement - a type of community engaged learning that requires the student to be situated in a community setting outside of the University. This may be termed Work Integrated Learning and can take the form of internship, practicum, industry placement or fieldwork.

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(55) Postgraduate - means a course of study that leads to one or more of the following higher education awards: graduate certificate, graduate diploma, masters degree, doctoral degree.

(56) Pre-requisite Unit - a Unit which a candidate must have successfully completed before enrolling in another specified unit.

(57) Primary Specialisation - within postgraduate and undergraduate education awards, a primary specialisation may be indicated. A Primary Specialisation:

a. will be in a curriculum area;
b. will be built by the Faculty of Education to suit the needs of the award of which it is a part, in line with requirements from external accreditation bodies; and
c. will be named on the award's testamur.

(58) Prize - a reward provided to a student in recognition of the completion of a distinguished piece of work.

(59) Professional Development Course - a non-award course involving learning activities for professionals to develop and enhance their professional abilities.

(60) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - an assessment process that involves assessment of relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) (National Quality Council Training Packages Glossary) (AQF, 2013, p.99).

(61) Schedule of Units - the table of units annexed to and forming part of Specific Award Rules.

(62) Faculty Board - a body of that name which is a sub-committee of Academic Board.

(63) Southern Cross University's feeder region - is the area bordered in the south by the New South Wales Central Coast, west to the New South Wales/South Australian border, north to the Darling Downs, Queensland and east to include the Greater Gold Coast.

(64) Special Consideration - consideration for extension or variation of deadlines for assessment tasks, for a special Examination, or for consideration related to a completed assessment task.

(65) Special Examination - an Examination offered in lieu of the normal Examination.

(66) Specialisation - a combination of units in a course, with a total credit point value commensurate with the volume of learning in the course, that is recognised by potential students, educators and professionals as qualifying a student for further learning or professional practice within a specific field of study or field of practice.

(67) Specific Award Rules - Rules applying to a specific course that prescribe requirements for admission, progression and completion of a course that are additional to requirements specified in the University's general Rules Relating to Awards.

(68) Student - a person enrolled as a candidate in a course leading to an accredited award of the University, or in units which do not lead to an accredited award of the University.

(69) Student History - the internal record of grades and advanced standing awarded to a specific student by the University.

(70) Study Period - a session in the three session academic calendar, or a study period in the six study period academic calendar, or any other period as designated by the Academic Board.

(71) Study Plan - an approved program of study leading to the completion of an award course.

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(72) Testamur - the document awarded to a student upon graduation which includes the name of the award and any accredited majors listed.

(73) Transcript - the final record of grades and advanced standing awarded to a specific student by the University.

(74) Unit - a discrete component of a course requiring demonstrated achievement of specific learning outcomes for successful completion.

(75) Undergraduate - a course of study that is neither an enabling course nor a postgraduate course of study.

(76) Unit Assessor means the academic staff member, designated by the Associate Dean (Education) responsible for ensuring that the assessment process for a unit is implemented and completed.

(77) Unit Cluster means a group of units that fulfil a specific educational purpose within a course. Examples include, but are not limited to, specialisations, majors, minors and electives.

(78) Unit Outline - describes the context, aims, objectives, content, assessment and materials requirements for a unit. It is provided to a student at the commencement of the teaching period in which the unit is being offered. It must be in accordance with University policy and Rules.

(79) Unit Performance Reports means:

a. Individual Unit Performance Report
b. This MIS report provides an overall snapshot across all locations of how a particular unit is performing in the chosen year, study period and location with respect to unit status (including attrition), grade distribution and overall student satisfaction including comparative data.
c. Individual Unit Performance (Trend Analysis) Report
d. This MIS report provides a trend analysis of a chosen unit to see how it has performed over time (in the past offerings) compared against the university mean for each measure. Data are represented to track performance over time by unit Status, grade results and overall satisfaction mean Unit Report

(80) Unit Report - the report completed by the Unit Assessor at the end of each teaching period in which the unit has been offered. The report is provided no later than three weeks into the following teaching period to the relevant Course Coordinator. The Unit Reports provide information for the annual course report (as further described in the Unit Report Template).

(81) Work Integrated Learning (WIL) - an educational approach involving three parties – the student, educational institution, and an external stakeholder – consisting of authentic work-focused experiences as an intentional component of the curriculum. Students learn through active engagement in purposeful work tasks, which enable the integration of theory with meaningful practice that is relevant to the students' discipline of study and/or professional development (Zegwaard et al., 2023,
p. 38).

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Head of Work Unit	Mark Dixon Director, Governance Services
Enquiries Contact	Governance Services

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