

Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Policy replaces Chapter 1.20 of the Academic Policy (December 2010).

Section 2 - Definitions

(2) For the purpose of this Policy refer to the Definitions (Academic) Policy.

Section 3 - Introduction

(3) This Chapter derives from and gives expression to those objectives relating to learning, teaching and the curriculum that are specified in the University's Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

(4) These are:

- a. we will provide inspirational learning experiences for our students through high quality teaching engaged with scholarship;
- b. we will generate and disseminate research and undertake research training in key areas that have global and regional impact;
- c. we will develop a high performance culture in an environment which encourages collaboration and the free exchange of ideas; and
- d. we will enhance our performance in a sustainable and responsible manner.

(5) It also derives from and gives expression to those priorities relating to teaching and the curriculum as specified in the University's Graduate Attributes Policy.

Section 4 - Objectives

(6) To provide a framework for inclusion in School/College Management Plans. The University defines good teaching in terms of the extent to which students are effectively encouraged and assisted to develop and apply higher-order learning processes in the context of a particular discipline or field of professional practice.

(7) To assert the importance of good teaching based on scholarship, and of learning as a lifelong quest for knowledge, skills and wisdom. It also recognises the importance of flexibility as a set of learner-centred opportunities that can be operationalised by institutional systems, structures and processes that increase learner choice as well as in learner-centred pedagogies, curriculum designs and related teaching and learning activities, and in the mix of learning environments and media.

(8) To identify a four-stage process in the University's performance of its teaching and learning role:

- a. the design and development of the curriculum;

- b. the delivery of courses;
- c. the assessment of students; and
- d. the further improvement of teaching and the curriculum, which assures the University of the equivalence of its courses in the global marketplace.
- e. To provide a framework within which policies and plans of the Academic Board and of Faculties related to teaching and learning are coherent with and give clear expression to the University's objectives 1 and 2.

Section 5 - Content and Implementation

(9) In the implementation of this Policy, the University will monitor, through the Vice Chancellor's Executive and Academic Board /Academic Boards, the implementation of procedures and policies to ensure continuous improvement in CEQ ratings for good teaching, generic skills, overall satisfaction and in student retention. Head of School /Head of College will monitor the impacts on financial and human resources associated with achieving effective implementation.

(10) The strategies in this Policy will be clearly evident in the planning, procedures and processes of Faculty and School/College Plans.

(11) Processes for the allocation of academic workloads must take account of responsibilities related to the delivery of courses, such as those of research and post graduate supervisors, Unit Assessors and Course Coordinators.

Part A - The Design and Development of Curriculum

(12) In the design and development of curriculum, the University expects that its courses:

- a. reflect a commitment to scholarly principles and pedagogy;
- b. are consistently delivered and equivalent in terms of fair and equitable workloads, student support for learning, student assessment, marking practices, grade distribution, formative feedback on progress;
- c. ensure that Unit Assessors and Course Coordinators have preordained responsibilities for ensuring that students all receive parity in terms of learning resources, and that allocation of resources required to do this be taken into account by the Head of School /Head of College when allocating resources;
- d. are developed with Unit Assessors having responsibility for the alignment of unit objectives with assessment tasks and the associated teaching and learning activities;
- e. explicitly embed through whole-of-course assessment regimes the University's Graduate Attributes;
- f. are consistently well taught regardless of the mode of delivery or students' enrolment category;
- g. conform to all quality-related requirements, rules, policies and processes developed approved and documented by the University's Academic Board;
- h. constituent units, including overall learning objectives and associated learning activities, are demonstrably related to the identified learning needs of students;
- i. overall objectives are aligned with the Objectives enunciated in the University's Strategic Plan 2016-2020;
- j. meet the learning needs of the University's diverse student profile which includes but is not limited to international students, mature age students, school leavers, and wide variety of ethnic and isolated and rural students;
- k. satisfy national and professional standards, as specified in codes such as the Australian Qualifications Framework and developed by bodies such as the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, and relevant professional accreditation bodies;
- l. meet the need to build and expand our strategic partnerships and develop distinctive learning programs;
- m. are increasingly offered in flexible modes of delivery that are strategically planned by Schools/Colleges to meet

the identified learning needs of the target student profile;

- n. demonstrate over an undergraduate course or award a relatively greater investment in supporting students in their learning experience in the first year of study through sound curriculum design, the provision of academic skills assistance, and fair and consistent assessment and marking practices;
- o. demonstrate in the documentation for new and substantially changed courses the inclusion of a detailed account of the resources expected to be used in the delivery of teaching and learning activities.

Part B - Internationalising Teaching and Learning

(13) Southern Cross University recognises that internationalisation of the curriculum is an ongoing process which is fundamental to the future of the institution and the success of its graduates. The University believes that a successful curriculum is the business of all people in the University, and that in addition to academic staff, professional staff also have a role in the delivery of the curriculum and on students' perception of their learning experience. The process of internationalisation critically relies on the development of intercultural awareness and communication competencies among all staff, regardless of their roles or responsibilities, and the fostering of these attributes in students, as professionals and global citizens, enabling them to develop globally portable skills and knowledge.

(14) As such, internationalisation involves a whole of university approach to:

- a. the development and review of policy (the institutional component),
- b. administrative services (the administration component) and
- c. academic programs (the academic component) which will help meet the learning needs of an internationalised student body - both domestic and foreign - and provide all students with the ability to collaborate and compete in increasingly globalised, changing professional environments.
- d. A commitment to internationalisation of the curriculum is based on the University's strategic vision of itself as an international community of scholars, who support regional development with an international presence, and on the guiding principle of equity in service provision, regardless of students' national, ethnic, cultural, social class or gender identities. Internationalisation supports the University mission in being internationally significant, and enhancing cultural, social, economic and international development in our region. Not only does internationalising the curriculum directly support one of the university's major priorities ('to internationalise our programs and focus our overseas activities for the benefit of students, staff and our regional community'), but it also indirectly supports the other priorities, such as 'to continue to improve the quality of university experience for our students'; 'enhance the leadership potential and performance of our staff through strategic staffing support and development' and 'to promote the image of the University and awareness of its programs and achievements in Australia and overseas'. Also, internationalisation supports and is reflected in the university's policies on academic integrity, graduate attributes, staff development, and learning and teaching plan.
- e. The process of implementation requires a Coordinated response across the University with regular review and ongoing calibration of strategies in three key areas, embracing (1) university wide, (2) faculty and (3) individual levels:
 - i. Administration and support services:
 - Protocols should be geared towards the needs of an internationalised student body, and should recognise and negotiate cultural difference across higher educational systems.
 - ii. Academic courses:
 - Development of curriculum, pedagogy, outcomes and assessment strategies should encourage development of globally portable skills and knowledge, embrace culturally diverse perspectives, negotiable learning objectives and flexible delivery.
 - iii. Staff development:
 - All staff (academic and administrative) should be assisted/resourced to acquire and apply intercultural competencies (values, attitudes, knowledge and skills) within their workplaces, with

monitoring through annual performance reviews.

(15) As internationalisation is an ongoing process, this will require regular and honest self-assessment (how internationally oriented and intercultural competent are we, on an international scale?), regular recalibration and a commitment to training that meets the needs of the vision.

Part C - The Delivery of Courses

(16) In the delivery of courses, the University requires that:

- a. students who are correctly enrolled receive study materials, assessment tasks and assessment criteria within published timeframes. This will normally occur before the commencement of studies, but at the latest in the first week of semester/trimester;
- b. systems are put in place to ensure the expeditious development and delivery of study materials that are high quality and delivered on time;
- c. consideration is given to the diverse range of backgrounds and learning needs of students as identified in the Improving Student Retention Report and the International and Intercultural Perspectives Report, and where appropriate, in reports from the Academic Skills unit;
- d. all students, regardless of enrolment category, receive parity in terms of learning resources and guidance to support their learning. The 'Learning package' which a student receives must include progressive formative feedback on completed assessment tasks; study materials; access to an interactive learning community; and fair and transparent marking of assessment tasks;
- e. academic staff cooperate across campuses so that students in any unit of study, regardless of campus location, will enjoy a consistent learning experience, particularly in relation to the moderation of assessment and the teaching and learning experience;
- f. academic staff maintain and develop their professional skills in teaching and the facilitation of learning, in student assessment practices, and in course and unit review procedures;
- g. academic staff maintain and develop their skills in the utilisation of educational technologies and electronic communication systems in support of student learning;
- h. academic staff address the main issues and themes on student feedback in units they have taught.

Part D - The Further Improvement of the Learning Experience for Students

(17) The Academic Board considers that the student learning experience depends on good teaching and support for learning, and sound curricula that have their basis in research and scholarship. Teaching, learning support and the curriculum must therefore be well informed and subject to continuous reflection and improvement. To this end the University requires that:

- a. teaching, units, unit materials and courses be routinely and reliably evaluated with a view to formative improvement;
- b. blueprints for embedding graduate attributes be documented in new course and course change submissions, and reviewed as part of the University's course review process;
- c. Head of Schools /Head of Colleges ensure that course accreditation documentation contains explicit reference to the ways in which peer review and student satisfaction data will be collected and reported, and on how these processes will contribute to a cycle of continuous improvement in the curriculum;
- d. a program of opportunities for the improvement of contemporary teaching practice and knowledge about student learning be made available to all teaching staff;

- e. student support systems, including academic skills development, support for students studying online or at a distance, and formative guidance on progress associated with assessment tasks must regularly be reviewed by School/College Boards to ensure continuing relevance and effectiveness;
- f. all newly appointed academic staff, including sessional staff, must be provided with an induction program on teaching and assessment practice unless equivalence can be demonstrated;
- g. the professional development needs of individual teaching staff shall be discussed as part of Performance Management and Planning processes;
- h. skills development in relation to teaching and student learning shall be provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning in response to identified needs;
- i. a staff development program on contemporary assessment practice shall be provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning and tailored towards groups of staff teaching in particular courses and units;
- j. feedback from relevant stakeholders as well as national benchmarks be taken into account in course and unit reviews;
- k. blind peer review of units and training for collegial peer review of teaching practice be available to teaching staff;
- l. all unit materials be made available for review as part of course review processes;
- m. all students be encouraged each teaching period to provide feedback on units via the online Student Feedback on Learning and Teaching system in [MySCU](#);
- n. a developmental system be maintained by the Centre for Teaching and Learning for teaching staff to obtain feedback on teaching and units in which students may provide anonymous feedback on the teaching in a unit
- o. Course Coordinators report to Head of School /Head of College on student satisfaction with units each teaching period with a view to contextualising the results and indicating the nature of interventions to be made in units where satisfaction is not optimal;
- p. Course Coordinators ensure that students are informed via [MySCU](#) of modifications and interventions made to teaching and the curriculum as a result of student feedback on units;
- q. Course Experience Questionnaire results, Graduate Destinations Survey data and student satisfaction rankings be reviewed as part of the University's course review processes.
- r. staff submit a teaching portfolio which provides evidence of reflective practice, skills development and collegial peer review when applying for promotion;
- s. an integrated approach to reward and encourage innovation and excellence in teaching and the facilitation of learning in the University be developed.

Status and Details

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