
PROCEDURE A4.2-P4.3

COURSE AND UNIT LIFECYCLE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Related Policy

Course and Unit Lifecycle Policy.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the processes involved in the development, approval, delivery, and review of a course and/or unit, course discontinuance, and course teach-out.

1.3 Scope

This procedure applies to all ABS courses and units delivered by ABS and third-parties, and to ABS and third-party staff (where relevant) involved in the development, approval, delivery, review, and discontinuance/teach-out of courses and units.

1.4 Scope Exceptions

Excludes non-accredited programs.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

New Course Development

1. The Executive Director, ABS in consultation with the Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Financial Officer is responsible to conduct market research and to advise on commercial viability of new course proposals.
2. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to prepare an Expression of Interest (Eol) for a new course after consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.
3. Once the Chief Executive Officer has accepted the detail of the EOI, the Executive Director, ABS is responsible to present the Eol to the ABS Corporate Board.
4. The ABS Corporate Board is responsible to give the initial approval on the Eol and for ABS to proceed with development of a new course.
5. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to inform the ABS Academic Board of the ABS Corporate Board approval.
6. The ABS Academic Board is responsible to commission a Course Advisory Committee (CAC) to advance the new course development process.

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7. The CAC is responsible for developing the course proposal, forming course development working parties, recruit SMEs and oversee the development of the new course and to keep the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) informed of progress.
 8. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible for the new course proposal and for the day-to-day coordination of its development and implementation.
 9. The TLC is responsible to provide input and feedback as requested by the CAC and keep the ABS Academic Board informed of the progress.

New Unit Development

10. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to oversee development of the new unit proposal and present the proposal to the TLC.
11. The TLC is responsible for the approval of new unit proposal and to refer the unit development to the Course Review Committee (CRC).
12. The CRC is responsible to oversee the development of the new unit outline and content.
13. The TLC notifies the ABS Academic Board that the new unit is being developed.
14. ABS Academic Board notes the development.

New Course and Unit Approval

15. ABS Academic Board is responsible to approve a new course.
16. The ABS Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible to approve a new unit.
17. The ABS Academic Board is responsible to endorse the approval of a new unit.
18. The Head of Compliance is responsible to submit new courses to TEQSA for accreditation.

Course and Unit Delivery

19. ABS academic staff and/or third-party staff are responsible to deliver the course or unit as approved.

Existing Course and Unit Review, Monitoring and Improvement

20. ABS Academic Board is responsible to establish a Formal Course Review Schedule to meet the requirements of the Higher Education Standard 5.3.
21. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to establish a Course Review Register to record the outcomes of each review and to record the actions and responsibilities for each recommendation.
22. The ABS Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for the review of units.

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23. The Course Review Committee is responsible for the review of existing courses.
 24. The Head of Compliance is responsible to notify TEQSA of significant changes to courses as required.

Course Discontinuance

25. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible for identifying commensurate courses offered by other providers and seeking to develop a Memoranda of Understanding with those providers to facilitate a transition of students in the event of a course discontinuance.
26. The ABS Corporate Board is responsible for approving an agreement with such a provider, executed via the Memorandum of Understanding.
27. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to recommend the discontinuance of a course to the ABS Corporate Board.
28. The ABS Corporate Board is responsible to accept or deny the recommendation.
29. ABS Academic Board is responsible to endorse ABS Corporate Board's decision or recommend further consideration.
30. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to notify all relevant stakeholders, including third-party partners.
31. The Executive Director, ABS liaises with providers with whom a Memorandum of Understanding has been established to facilitate the transition of students due to the discontinuance of a course.
32. The Head of Compliance notifies TEQSA of the discontinuance of a course.

Unit Discontinuance

33. The Executive Director, ABS or nominee is responsible to recommend discontinuance of units to the ABS Teaching and Learning Committee.
34. The ABS Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible to approve unit discontinuance.
35. The ABS Academic Board is responsible to endorse the approval.

Teach-out

36. The Executive Director, in conjunction with the Chief Marketing Officer and the Executive Director, ABS is responsible to develop a communication plan to notify current and prospective students about the discontinuance of the course, and that current students will receive individual teach-out plans.
37. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to prepare a teach-out plan.
38. The TLC is responsible to approve the teach-out plan and provide regular progress updates to the ABS Academic Board.

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39. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to develop individual teach-out plans for each student enrolled in the course, if required.
 40. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible for the success of the teach-out plan.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Course Development

A. New Course Recommendation

1. Recommendations for a new course may come from a variety of sources, including (but not limited to):
 - a. the marketing or products teams;
 - b. industry;
 - c. ABS academics;
 - d. surveys of staff, students or industry;
 - e. course planning days;
 - f. benchmarking and external referencing; and
 - g. external reviews.
2. All recommendations for a new course are made to the Executive Director, ABS and must include supporting information which indicates a need for, and likely viability of, the proposed new course. This information includes but is not limited to:
 - a. how the new course would positively support the strategic corporate objectives of ABS;
 - b. outcome of discussions with other Scintia subsidiaries to ensure there is no likelihood of the proposed course negatively impacting on their academic plans;
 - c. the likely competition in the market, and a SWOT analysis;
 - d. the likely demand and estimated commencing EFTSL;
 - e. the need for third-party involvement, if any;
 - f. outcome of consultation with industry, where appropriate, to assess the possible careers for graduates of the proposed new course;
 - g. any additional staffing, expertise and /or facilities or infrastructure required; and
 - h. competitor analysis.

3. The Executive Director, ABS reviews the new course recommendation and will involve other senior academic staff in this activity. As part of the review, the Executive Director, ABS liaises with the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Marketing Officer to confirm the costing of the recommended new course to gain confirmation of its likely viability within three (3) years of its first intake.
4. If the information and costing for the recommended new course confirms its likely demand and viability, the Executive Director, ABS, will submit the new course recommendation, as an Expression of Interest (Eoi) to:
 - a. the Chief Executive Officer for discussion; and
 - b. the ABS Corporate Board, with the support of the Chief Executive Officer, for approval.
5. The ABS Corporate Board will either:
 - a. refuse permission to proceed, giving reasons, and notify the Executive Director, ABS, who will notify other stakeholders; or
 - b. give permission to proceed by notifying the ABS Academic Board and the Executive Director, ABS.
6. The Executive Director, ABS will notify the ABS Academic Board which in turn will commission a Course Advisory Committee (CAC), which will provide internal and external expert advice into the preparation of the new course.
7. The Executive Director, ABS provides the day-to-day management of the course development process, liaising with internal and external members of the CAC as well as ABS's academic staff, and nominated staff of a Third-Party Partner (if applicable). The Executive Director, ABS coordinates course development activities and provides leadership and support.

B. Course Development Action Plan

1. The CAC develops a Course Development Action Plan which contains:
 - a. time frames for development and approval of the course in order for the course to be approved in time for its first intake;
 - b. time frames for development and release of promotional material;
 - c. actions and responsibilities during these timeframes;
 - d. a communication plan;
 - e. key stakeholder contacts details; and
 - f. any other detail to assist in the management and coordination of the course development process.

C. Course Proposal Stage 1: Course Outline

1. The CAC oversees the preparation of a Course Outline which is the blueprint for the development of course content, preparation of delivery systems and quality management of the course. The Course Outline captures course information, but not detailed content at this stage. The information in the Course Outline includes:
 - a. Course Code
 - b. Course Title
 - c. AQF Level
 - d. ASCED code
 - e. Fees (tuition and other)
 - f. Year/Study period of its first intake
 - g. Course Design Overview
 - h. Course Objectives
 - i. Course Structure
 - j. List of units, including any new units to be developed
 - k. Major/minors if applicable
 - l. Electives, if applicable
 - m. Entry requirements - which may change as the course is further developed
 - n. Any Pre-requisites
 - o. Course rules, such as rules for progression
 - p. Pathways (in and out)
 - q. Expected commencing EFTSL
 - r. Benchmarking and competitors
 - s. Industry consultation
 - t. Industry involvement in the course, such as in work integrated learnings, if applicable
 - u. Delivery and assessment strategies
 - v. Study pattern
 - w. Staffing and any additional resources or infrastructure

D. Course Proposal Stage 2: Content Development

1. The Course Outline forms a framework for the development of course content.
2. SMEs working alongside the CAC develops the course design and content. As the documentation progresses, it is presented to the TLC for review and feedback. This feedback may lead to further amendments, making this process highly iterative.
3. The CAC sends a regular progress report to TLC and the TLC reports progress to the ABS Academic Board, as required.
4. In the development of the new course:
 - a. Course design, content, how students progressively attain the learning objectives/outcomes for the course and its units and the attainment of the course's graduate outcomes, as well as assessment must reflect the level of the qualification as designated by the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) and the requirements of the [Higher Education Standards Framework 2021](#), specifically 3.1.1 to 3.1.3 Course Design;
 - b. all courses and units will have defined learning outcomes which describe, in plain English and aligned to the AQF what students must know and be able to do to demonstrate that they have achieved these outcomes;
 - c. where work integrated learning is part of a course, the learning and skills/competency outcomes will be clearly defined as well as the workplace activities and experiences required to achieve these;
 - d. assessment in the course will be sequenced and aligned to enable students to build their capabilities and skills progressively towards unit and course learning outcomes; and
 - e. where possible, the course will be designed to enable a diversity of students to succeed.
5. A key course objective is to provide further education pathways for ABS students, that is, to align ABS courses to other relevant courses offered through Scintia subsidiaries and those offered at other institutions. The course design process is one of the most important stages of the course lifecycle for seeking to create and improve student pathways. To achieve this:
 - a. the course design process includes research and benchmarking undertaken on similar courses at other institutions, investigating articulation pathways for ABS students; and
 - b. unit selection and topic coverage are designed to enhance choice and mobility, with a view to providing students with pathways within ABS's course offerings.

3.2 Course Approval

1. The Course Proposal is submitted to the TLC for endorsement and then to the ABS Academic Board by the Executive Director, ABS.
2. ABS Academic Board may:
 - a. approve the course;
 - b. approve with minor amendments, with no requirement for re-submission;
 - c. require re-submission, with reasons why; or
 - d. not approve, with reasons why.
3. ABS Academic Board advises the Executive Director, ABS, in writing, of its decision and the Executive Director, ABS advises other stakeholders. The discussion and decision are recorded in the minutes of ABS Academic Board.
4. If ABS Academic Board requires re-submission, the Executive Director, ABS will notify the CAC to re-convene and develop the required further information, before re-submitting the documentation to ABS Academic Board.
5. ABS Academic Board includes new courses in its reporting to the ABS Corporate Board.
6. The Head of Compliance will ensure the new course is submitted to TEQSA for accreditation.

3.3 New Unit Development and Approval

1. A new unit recommendation is made to the Executive Director, ABS. Recommendations for a new unit may come from a variety of sources, including:
 - a. the marketing or products teams;
 - b. industry;
 - c. ABS academics;
 - d. surveys of staff, students or industry;
 - e. course planning days;
 - f. external referencing and benchmarking; and
 - g. external reviews.
2. The Executive Director, ABS reviews the recommendation and will involve the other senior academic staff in this activity. The costing for the development of the new unit will be included in this review.

3. If the recommendation is accepted, the Executive Director, ABS, the Academic Manager and academic staff develop a proposal to present to ABS TLC. The proposal includes:
 - a. the need for the unit;
 - b. the AQF level;
 - c. its uniqueness among current ABS units or units of other Scentia subsidiaries;
 - d. the course or courses it would be part of;
 - e. the consultation undertaken about the new unit, including with the library regarding resources;
 - f. an overview of its content; and
 - g. any new staffing or other resources/infrastructure/technology likely to be required.
4. The Executive Director, ABS presents the proposal to ABS TLC for endorsement.
5. If endorsement is given, the Executive Director will notify the CRC which will oversee the development of the Unit Outline and content and present it to ABS TLC for approval.
6. If the new unit is approved, the ABS TLC notifies ABS Academic Board and the Executive Director, ABS notifies relevant stakeholders.

3.4 Course/Unit Delivery

1. Courses and units will be delivered as approved by the ABS Academic Board, irrespective of mode, location or whether it is delivered through a third- party.
2. Changes to the officially approved unit outlines and course structure must follow the process of review and improvement as outlined in clauses 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7.
3. Academic staff teaching the course will maintain their expertise as outlined in the Scholarly Activity Policy, and the Scholarly Activity and Professional Development Procedure.

3.5 Annual Course Surface Review and Improvement

1. All ABS courses must be reviewed annually by the Executive Director, ABS with a report on findings provided to the CRC.
2. The annual review includes:
 - a. demand, based on student enrolment statistics (student commencing and continuing load (EFTSL), market research and analysis; plus,
 - b. if the review is for the second year of delivery of the course, demand compared to the original business case;

- c. the quality, scope and adequacy of course-related information provided to students and prospective students;
 - d. first year attrition;
 - e. progress rate (first year and total);
 - f. completion rates;
 - g. the appropriateness and flexibility of the course's methods of delivery in relation to student need and demand;
 - h. the range, depth and currency of resources for students, such as text books;
 - i. student and academic staff surveys, with an analysis of significant trends;
 - j. financial viability data;
 - k. Third-Party Agreement, where applicable; and
 - l. the assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses of study.
3. The CRC provides a report via the TLC to ABS Academic Board, including recommendations for any improvements.
 4. The Academic Manager records the review, recommendations and actions, and progress of the actions, on the Course Review Register.
 5. The CRC is responsible to oversee implementation of the actions on the Course Review Register and provide regular updates to the TLC.
 6. The TLC provides updates to the ABS Academic Board on the progress of implementing the recommendations.

3.6 Unit Surface Review, Monitoring and Improvement

1. Units are annually reviewed by the CRC, which evaluates:
 - a. the content, learning and assessment methodologies;
 - b. the clarity of purpose of the unit within the course;
 - c. data related to grade distributions and student progress;
 - d. teaching and resources for each unit;
 - e. the quality and adequacy of information provided to students;
 - f. Unit load; and
 - g. Unit learning outcome mapping.
2. Student survey results and academic staff recommendations for improvement are collated and analysed by the Executive Director, ABS who generates unit-specific reports which are presented to the TLC.

3. The TLC presents unit-specific recommendations to the ABS Academic Board for endorsement.
4. Endorsed recommendations are implemented by the Executive Director, ABS in liaison with the Academic Manager.
5. The Executive Director, ABS records the review, endorsed recommendations, actions, and progress of the actions, on the Course Review Register.
6. Academic staff delivering units who wish to make improvements to components of the accredited unit outline or assessments outside of an annual review must present a recommendation to the Executive Director, ABS who will present the recommendation to TLC for endorsement followed by seeking approval by the Academic Board.
7. The Executive Director, ABS provides regular reports to TLC on the progress of implementing the endorsed recommendations, and a final progress report to TLC and ABS Academic Board when all recommendations are implemented.
8. Units are formally reviewed as part of the formal course review process outlined in clause 3.7.

3.7 Formal Course Review and Improvement

1. All ABS higher education courses must undergo a comprehensive, formal course review at least every 7 years as required by Higher Education Standard 5.3 Course Review, Monitoring and Improvement or 1 year prior to course re-accreditation by TEQSA, if that is earlier.
2. The ABS Academic Board establishes a Formal Course Review Schedule.
3. The Formal Course Review is actioned according to the scheduling in the Formal Course Review Schedule established by ABS Academic Board.
4. The Formal Course Review includes extensive review of all the aspects listed in clause 3.5.2 a.to l. plus:
 - a. external benchmarking;
 - b. academic governance processes; and
 - c. includes external experts, industry and alumni in the review process.
5. The Executive Director, ABS sends a formal course review report to the CRC, which will review the report, make any recommendations it believes to be necessary and include these in its report to ABS Academic Board.
6. The Executive Director, ABS records the review, recommendations and actions, and progress of the actions, on the Course Review Register.
7. CRC sends the proposal to the TLC for endorsement.
8. The Executive Director, ABS is responsible to action all the recommendations and actions from the Course Reviews.

9. The CRC is responsible to oversee implementation of the actions on the Course Review Register and provide regular updates to the TLC.
10. TLC sends the proposal to the Academic Board ABS. The Academic Board will consider the proposal and approve or reject the recommendations.
11. The TLC oversees implementation of the approved recommendations and provides regular reports to the ABS Academic Board until all recommendations are finalised.
12. The ABS Academic Board includes course reviews in its required reporting to the ABS Corporate Board.

3.8 Course Discontinuance

1. A recommendation to discontinue a course may be made due to any or all of the following:
 - a. The course is no longer relevant to industry.
 - b. The course has had a consistent decline in demand and enrolment over the previous years and is no longer viable, despite strategies employed to increase demand.
 - c. the course has not reached viability in the time frame listed in its original business case to the ABS Corporate Board, despite strategies employed to increase demand.
 - d. The course is no longer aligned with the strategic focus and vision of ABS.
2. The Executive Director, ABS provides a recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer and then to the ABS Corporate Board outlining:
 - a. the reasons for course discontinuance, including the commencing and continuing demand and enrolment trends (EFTSL);
 - b. the likely impact of course discontinuance on current students, how the impact will be minimised, and whether a teach-out plan will be required or not (refer to clause 3.10);
 - c. the impact on third party agreements, where applicable; and
 - d. the proposed year and study period for discontinuance, which must provide sufficient time for notification to relevant stakeholders, the teach-out of the course to enable students to graduate as they originally expected to, or student transition to another course, as appropriate.
3. The ABS Corporate Board accepts or rejects the recommendation, or asks for further information, noting reasons for their decision:
 - a. If the recommendation to discontinue the course is accepted by ABS Corporate Board, the Executive Director, ABS will notify relevant staff and submit the recommendation to the ABS Academic Board for

endorsement. If a teach-out plan is required, it will be submitted to ABS Academic Board at another meeting of the Board.

- b. If ABS Academic Board wishes to discuss ABS Corporate Board's decision to approve the discontinuance of the course, the Chair of ABS Academic Board will request this by writing to the ABS Corporate Board.
 - c. If the recommendation to discontinue the course is rejected by ABS Corporate Board the Executive Director, ABS will notify relevant ABS staff. The course will continue to be closely monitored.
 - d. If ABS Corporate Board asks for more information before it makes a decision on discontinuing the course, that information will be provided by the Executive Director, ABS.
4. Minutes of decisions are kept by both ABS Corporate Board and ABS Academic Board.
 5. In the event a Third Party Partner no longer intends or is permitted to deliver an ABS course, the Executive Director, ABS is responsible to ensure there is a transition plan in place for impacted students.

3.9 Unit Discontinuance

1. A recommendation for discontinuing a unit is made by the Executive Director, ABS to the CRC, only after negotiation with all stakeholders who teach the unit, including other Scentia subsidiaries and Third-Party Partners (if applicable) has been conducted.
2. The CRC will review the recommendation and provide feedback to the TLC.
3. The TLC approves or rejects the recommendation.
4. If TLC approves the recommendation it is presented by the ABS Executive Director to the ABS Academic Board for endorsement.
5. Minutes of decisions are kept by TLC and ABS Academic Board.

3.10 Teach-out of a Discontinued Course

1. The Executive Director, ABS, informs and liaises with the Executive Director, ABS and other internal stakeholders, third parties (where relevant), and relevant other staff on all issues to be taken into account in development of a teach-out plan. The teach-out will be led by the Executive Director. The teach-out plan will include:
 - a. the content of written communication to students;
 - b. how any contractual obligations associated with the course of study will be met;
 - c. addressing student load issues involved in the teach-out strategy; and
 - d. offering valid transition pathways to other courses of study.

2. The Executive Director, ABS prepares a detailed teach-out plan that addresses the needs of all cohorts of current students enrolled in the course.
3. The teach-out plan is submitted to the ABS TLC for approval and ABS Academic Board for noting.
4. The Executive Director, ABS advises Student Support, Admissions, Chief of Sales, and the Chief Marketing Officer that the course is to be discontinued, the date of the final intake, and the end date of the final study period.
5. The Executive Director, ABS or delegate develops a communication plan in liaison with the Team Leader Student Support to advise current students that the course will no longer be offered including information about alternative course options available.
6. The Executive Director, ABS liaises with online libraries, Information Technology and Student Services staff regarding any changes to service delivery associated with the teach-out arrangements and the provision of specialised support services for affected students.
7. The Executive Director ABS or delegate will contact students to all affected students explaining the teach-out arrangements and detailing all available options for students, including the option to transition to another course. A contact person will be nominated to deal with student enquiries about teach-out processes.
8. The Executive Director, ABS approves publication of information on the College's web site regarding teach-out arrangements.
9. The Teaching and Learning Committee will provide regular reports to ABS Academic Board on the progress of the approved teach-out plan, while also seeking approval for any necessary changes to ensure teach-out success.
10. The Executive Director, ABS in conjunction with the academic staff prepares and supplies individual plans for all students to assist in mapping progression to completion within the designated teach-out period, where applicable.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **ASCED Code** - the Australian Standard Classification of Education which is comprised of two component classifications, Level of Education and Field of Education. It provides a basis for comparable administrative and statistical data on educational activities and attainment, classified by level and field of education.
- **Course design** - defined by TEQSA as the content, duration and sequencing of the elements (units) of a course of study. It also includes various other design characteristics such as entry requirements and pathways, the nature of the content, the expected learning outcomes, their sequence of attainment and assessment, and professional accreditation if required.
- **Student** - Refers to domestic and international ABS students.

- **Third-Party Partner** - an organisation, other than ABS, providing education services to ABS, such as providing an ABS course, under the auspices of a Third-Party Agreement.

5.0 REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED INFORMATION

- [Australian Qualifications Framework](#)
- Course and Unit Lifecycle Policy
- Framework for the Management of Third-Party Course Delivery Arrangements
- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(2021\)](#)
- Third-Party Policy
- Teach out and Transition Policy and Procedure

6.0 POLICY/PROCEDURE OWNERSHIP

Policy Owner	Executive Director, ABS
Status	Reviewed on May 2024
Approval Authority	ABS Academic Board
Date of Approval	25 June 2024
Effective Date	2 July 2024
Implementation Owner	Academic Manager
Maintenance Owner	Head of Compliance
Review Due	May 2027
Content Enquiries	Christine Brickenstein - Academic Manager Email: christine.brickenstein@aim.com.au

7.0 AMENDMENTS

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
A4.0-P4.0	14 September 2021	ABS Academic Board	<p>Policy and Procedure separated.</p> <p>Title changed to Course and Unit Lifecycle Procedure.</p> <p>Teach-out Policy's Procedure included in this procedure.</p> <p>Other policies/procedures on course and unit review included so that all in one policy and procedure.</p>

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
A4.0-P4.1	23 November 2021	Director of Education	Minor amendment clarifying the role of the TLC and AB in clause 3.6.6
A4.0-P4.2	06 December 2022	Head of Compliance	Updates to Course Discontinuance in Responsibilities and references to the Australian Qualifications Framework and HES Framework. Update to staff titles.
A4.2-P4.3	25 June 2024	Executive Director	No changes required- minor corrections only. Exclusion of scope for unaccredited courses.