# Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy

## Abstract
The Policy outlined in this document applies to the approval and reaccreditation of all award courses offered onshore and offshore by the University and should be read in conjunction with the [Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Procedures](#).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy approved</td>
<td>02/11/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy takes effect</td>
<td>03/11/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy is due for review (up to five years)</td>
<td>05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy amendment approved</td>
<td>18/11/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy amendment takes effect</td>
<td>20/01/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approved by Academic Board
Meeting 11/5, 02/11/2011
Resolution AB 11/78

Latest amendment: Academic Board (see [change history](#) for details).

Implementation Officer
Manager, Academic Programs Office, Institute for Interactive Media and Learning

Relevant to All staff responsible for any aspect of the development, approval and reaccreditation of onshore and offshore award courses, and all students undertaking award courses

Related documents
- [Curriculum Design](#)
- [Curriculum Design Principles](#) (restricted access: Staff Connect)
- [Curriculum Principles and Practice — majors, sub-majors and streams](#) (restricted access: Staff Connect)
- [Cotutelle Framework](#) (restricted access: Staff Connect)
- [Faculty Approval Processes for Changes to Award Courses and Study Packages](#) (restricted access: Staff Connect)
- [Graduate Profile Framework](#)
- [Online Course Approval Process — User Guide](#) (restricted access: Staff Connect)
- [The UTS Model of Learning](#)
- [UTS Academic Standards: Develop Coursework Graduates](#)
1. Purpose

1.1 In accordance with Rule G3, Part 1, Division 3, clause 14(2) of the General Rules of the University, Academic Board shall determine the accreditation of proposed or existing award courses on their academic merit, and the removal of the accreditation of award courses, the introduction of which has
been approved by the Vice-Chancellor or his or her nominee or designated group.

1.2 The objective of this policy is to enable Academic Board to pursue its role in approving course proposals so that stakeholders are assured that award courses at UTS are of the required quality and meet all specified requirements. It also provides protection for the University and its staff in the event that questions are raised about the propriety of any award, including the legal liabilities of the University.

2. **Scope**

2.1 The Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy applies to approval and reaccreditation of all levels of award courses offered onshore and offshore by UTS. It does not apply to non-award courses other than foundation programs offered under UTS’s name.

2.2 Changes to a course, once it has been accredited by Academic Board and commenced offer, shall be approved in compliance with the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy and follow the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Procedures with the exception of:

- changes to courses for which approval has been delegated to faculty boards in the Faculty Award Course Changes Approval Process and Delegations approved by Academic Board for each faculty
- changes to courses listed in sections 2.3 and 2.4 below.

2.3 Changes to the admission criteria of a course shall be approved in compliance with Rule 3.6 (Student Rules) and with the UTS Admissions Policy.

2.4 Changes to the nomenclature of a course shall be approved in compliance with the Course Name and Award Title Nomenclature Policy.

2.5 Phasing out and discontinuation of a course shall be approved in compliance with Rule 3.6 (Student Rules), the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy, and the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Procedures.

3. **Definitions**

Unless specified, the definitions of terms used in this policy follow those stated in the Schedule 1 (Student Rules).

4. **Policy principles**

4.1 The course approval process shall encourage and assist the planning, accreditation and reaccreditation of courses that are aligned with the vision, purpose and values of UTS, and develop highly valued graduates who have capabilities that reflect the UTS Graduate Profile Framework.
4.2 The course approval process shall encourage and support sound curriculum design, and the development and approval of sustainable course structures.

4.3 The course approval and reaccreditation process shall assist rather than hinder the ability of the University to respond in a timely way to new opportunities as these arise.

4.4 Course approvals and reaccreditation should be based on assessment of the opportunities and risks in offering the course, including the following key areas:
   - strategic alignment with the UTS mission
   - resourcing and capability
   - curriculum design
   - teaching and learning
   - legal issues and governance monitoring and review.

4.5 Consideration of course approvals is guided by all the legislation, rules, policies and principles relevant to the design, delivery, management and quality assurance of award courses.

4.6 These rules, regulations and any supporting policies may change from time to time as circumstances change and as directed by the various authorising bodies concerned. The approval of courses must take these requirements into consideration.

4.7 All courses must comply with the relevant provisions of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011.

4.8 Each course must have a faculty of ownership that is responsible for its development, accreditation, ongoing maintenance and reaccreditation.

4.9 Processing of award course proposals requiring university-level approval is via the Online Course Approval Process (OCAP) system. The Provost may advise that award course proposals not be submitted via the OCAP system. The OCAP system templates reflect the current information that must be provided by faculties for university-level approval of courses.

4.10 The level and nature of the resources and information required for submission of a course proposal, the level of the authority approving the proposal, and the complexity of the approval process shall be commensurate with the opportunities and risks associated with the proposal.

5. **Policy statements**

The course approval and reaccreditation process shall be a staged process where the successive stages provide an opportunity to assess the opportunities and risks in the key areas listed in section 4.4 above. While it is usual for faculties to consider the requirements of the Course Planning and Course Accreditation stages...
simultaneously, at university level these stages are approved sequentially and through different processes.

While approval of course proposals of similar natures, and presenting similar opportunities and risks, shall follow similar approval processes, the Provost may approve alternative approval processes for specific proposals.

Details of the requirements for each stage of the approval process are included in the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Procedures.

5.1 Initial Strategic Assessment: assessing the strategic alignment and viability of courses

The course approval process includes an early assessment of the viability of a proposed new course, or of significant course changes, before resources are allocated to develop the full proposal. This assessment covers matters of strategic and commercial interest and resource use. It also provides the opportunity to notify other interested parties of course development and to identify issues that will require particular attention at the course planning and/or course accreditation stages.

This information constitutes the Initial Strategic Assessment.

5.2 Course Planning: assessing resources and capability to offer courses

The purpose of the Course Planning stage is to gather information for the consideration of all planning issues that may have an impact on the quality, risk management, and successful delivery and management of a course. This information constitutes the Course Plan.

5.3 Course Accreditation: assessing the soundness, relevance and sustainability of the curriculum design

5.3.1 The purpose of the Course Accreditation stage is to ensure that the course meets, or continues to meet, the University’s educational standards and requirements for the appropriate level of award while reflecting the University vision, purpose and values, and the UTS Model of Learning.

5.3.2 The Course Accreditation stage involves close examination of the proposed course structure and content, delivery arrangements and assessment profile to ensure that these are appropriately designed to achieve the desired educational aims and learning outcomes.

5.4 Course Commencement: ensuring legislative and governance compliance

The purpose of the Course Commencement stage is to ensure that all conditions of endorsement imposed within the course development process have been satisfied, and that the necessary legislative, administrative and resource conditions for the commencement of the course or continued offering of the course have been met before students are admitted.

5.5 Monitoring course performance to support and enhance the course review and reaccreditation processes
5.5.1 The performance of all accredited courses, irrespective of whether they are offered within or beyond Australia, shall be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis using a set of key tracking measures against an agreed set of benchmarked indicators.

5.5.2 For courses offered offshore, an annual report is provided to the executive and to the Commercial Activities Committee of Council on all offshore courses involving commercial activities.

5.6 **Accreditation period**

5.6.1 Course accreditation for all coursework courses, and courses categorised as Doctor by Research with a Coursework component (DRC) and Master's by Research with a Coursework component (MRC), is normally given for a period of five years.

5.6.2 New courses forming part of a set of existing courses will be initially accredited to align with the accreditation period of the existing courses.

5.6.3 Course accreditation for postgraduate research award courses categorised as Doctor by Research (DR) and Master's by Research (MR) is normally given for an unlimited period. Consideration of continued offering of research courses categorised as DR and MR is the responsibility of the Graduate Research School.

5.6.4 Equivalent courses, combined courses and courses that are part of a suite of articulated courses are to be re-accredited together whenever possible.

5.6.5 If courses receive accreditation from external professional bodies, faculties are encouraged to request a period of UTS accreditation that enables them to submit for internal and external reaccreditation at the same time.

5.6.6 Extension of course accreditation shall be an exceptional measure and must be approved by Academic Board. Extension of course accreditation shall be approved in compliance with the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Procedures.

5.7 **Annual reports to Academic Board**

The Academic Programs Office produces an annual report to Academic Board and the Senior Executive Meeting setting out for that year:

- new courses set to active in CASS
- courses nearing the end of their accreditation period
- courses that, on the advice of Academic Board, have been set to phasing out or discontinued.

6. **Roles and responsibilities**

**Accountable Officer**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)
**Implementation Officer**

Manager, Academic Programs Office in the Institute for Interactive Media and Learning responsible for providing advice on the implementation of the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy and for ensuring the efficiency and integrity of the systems that support the approval process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vice-Chancellor</strong></td>
<td>Approves award course nomenclature for all new and existing courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provost</strong></td>
<td>Approves the Initial Strategic Assessment stage and Course Commencement stage for new courses and approves Course Planning by delegation from the Vice-Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)</strong></td>
<td>Monitors course performance and makes recommendations on actions to improve course performance to Vice-Chancellor, Academic Board and other bodies as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Advancement)</strong></td>
<td>Endorses and provides advice to the Provost on the Initial Strategic Assessment for new courses to be offered to international students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources)</strong></td>
<td>Endorses and provides advice to the Provost on the Initial Strategic Assessment for new courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</strong></td>
<td>Endorses and provides advice to the Provost on the Initial Strategic Assessment for new research courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Board</strong></td>
<td>Determines the accreditation of proposed or existing award courses on their academic merit, and the removal of the accreditation of award courses, the introduction of which has been approved by the Vice-Chancellor or his or her nominee or designated group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate Research School Board</strong></td>
<td>Endorses Course Accreditation for research degree programs and makes a recommendation to Academic Board that course accreditation approval be granted for research courses that meet, or continue to meet, the University’s educational requirements for the appropriate level of award, in accordance with the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Courses Accreditation Committee**
Endorses Course Accreditation for coursework degree programs and makes a recommendation to Academic Board that course accreditation approval be granted for coursework courses that meet, or continue to meet, the University’s educational requirements for the appropriate level of award, in accordance with the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy.

**Courses Planning Committee**
Recommend to the Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor’s delegate that Course Planning approval be granted for courses where there are no planning issues that may have an adverse impact on the quality, risk management, successful delivery and management of the course, in accordance with the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy.

**Deans and Faculty Boards**
Ensure that courses offered by their faculty are developed and approved in compliance with the Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy.

## 7. Acknowledgments
No acknowledgments for this Policy.

## 8. Version control and change history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Approved by, resolution no.</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/11/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Academic Board, AB 11/78</td>
<td>New Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/01/13</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Council, COU/12-2/30.1; Academic Board, AB12/70.3</td>
<td>Changed the following references: • University Graduate School to Graduate Research School, and • University Graduate School Board to Graduate Research School Board in accordance with approved nomenclature changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/11/15</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Academic Board, AB/15-6/84</td>
<td>Amendments following external articulation process review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 1. Award Course Approval Process for new courses — stages, responsibilities and purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval point</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Submitted/endorsed by</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Initial Strategic Assessment</td>
<td>Submitted by: dean or delegate Endorsed by: DVC (International and Advancement) for courses offered to international students, DVC (Resources) and DVC (Research) for research courses</td>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>To assess the viability of a proposed new course, or of significant course changes, before resources are allocated to develop the full proposal. This assessment covers matters of strategic and commercial interest, and resource use. It also provides the opportunity to notify other interested parties of course development and to identify issues that will require particular attention at the course planning and/or course accreditation stages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Course Planning</td>
<td>Submitted by: dean or delegate Endorsed by: Faculty Board and Courses Planning Committee</td>
<td>Provost (in exercise of delegated authority from the VC)</td>
<td>To gather information for the consideration of all planning issues that may have an impact on the quality, risk management, and successful delivery and management of a course. Note: Award course nomenclature is endorsed by the Courses Planning Committee as part of the Course Planning approval process and approved by the Vice-Chancellor, in accordance with the Course Name and Award Title Nomenclature Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Course Accreditation</td>
<td>Submitted by: dean or delegate Endorsed by: Faculty Board, Courses Accreditation Committee (for coursework degrees) and Graduate Research School Board (for research degrees)</td>
<td>Academic Board</td>
<td>To ensure that the course meets, or continues to meet, the University’s educational standards and requirements for the appropriate level of award while reflecting the University’s vision, purpose and values. This stage involves close examination of the proposed course structure and content, delivery arrangements, and assessment profile to ensure that these are appropriately designed to achieve the desired educational aims and learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Course Commencement</td>
<td>Submitted by: dean or delegate Endorsed by: • UTS Academic Programs Manager</td>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>The purpose of the course commencement stage is to ensure that all conditions of endorsement imposed within the course development process have been satisfied, and that the necessary legislative, administrative and resource conditions for the commencement of the course or continued offering of the course have been met before students are admitted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Award Course Approval and Reaccreditation Policy*