

NON-AWARD COURSES AND MICRO-CREDENTIALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure establishes CQUniversity's framework for the academic governance, quality assurance, structure and development of CQUniversity non-award courses and micro-credentials and aims to ensure its non-award courses and micro-credentials:
- meet relevant legislative and CQUniversity requirements and quality standards

- b) align with and support CQUniversity's strategic objectives, and
- c) provide students with high quality learning experiences and outcomes, including pathways into vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to the following CQUniversity non-award courses and micro-credentials and their constituent units or modules: Enabling courses, English language intensive courses for overseas students (ELICOS) courses, micro-credentials, and non-accredited VET short courses (hereafter included as non-credit-bearing micro-credentials).
- 2.2 This policy and procedure applies to CQUniversity-branded micro-credentials offered, hosted or delivered by CQUniversity as professional development, whether or not in partnership with an external organisation.
- 2.3 Some sections in this policy and procedure do not apply to all non-award courses or micro-credentials, only to the types of courses or micro-credentials specified. This is to accommodate differences in course structure and governance.
- 2.4 This policy and procedure does not apply to:
 - a) VET award courses, i.e. [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) Levels 1 to 6, and other vocational training products including VET accredited skill sets, which are governed under the [VET Product Registration Policy and Procedure](#).
 - b) higher education courses, i.e. AQF Levels 5 to 10, which are governed under the [Higher Education Qualifications Policy and Procedure](#).

3 POLICY STATEMENT

Course types

- 3.1 This document applies to three types of non-award courses offered: Enabling, English language and micro-credentials.
 - a) **Enabling courses**, such as Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS), provide a pathway for people intending to gain entry into a tertiary education course. Enabling courses are designed for students who do not already hold an undergraduate qualification.
 - b) **English language courses**, such as General English (GE), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and IELTS¹, assist students to improve their English skills for work and/or study. These courses are primarily, but not exclusively, for international students studying in Australia on a student visa who seek entry into a tertiary education course. Domestic students or international students studying overseas may also undertake these courses.
 - c) **Micro-credentials** are a certification of assessed learning that is additional, alternative, complementary to or a component part of a formal qualification” (Oliver 2019, p. 19). Micro-credentials may be [credit-bearing](#) or [non credit-bearing](#).

Governance and course approval

- 3.2 The University is a [self-accrediting provider](#), which meets nationally agreed criteria for a university.
- 3.3 The University is authorised to approve its own non-award courses and micro-credentials and is responsible for ensuring consistent standards of all non-award courses and micro-credentials.
- 3.4 Non-award courses and micro-credentials do not lead to an AQF qualification and must not be represented as accredited AQF qualifications.

¹ 'IELTS' means International English Language Testing System, a universally recognised English language proficiency test. Details are on the [IELTS website](#) or in the University's [English Language Proficiency Requirements Policy and Procedure](#). CQUniversity centres are accredited IELTS test centres.

- 3.5 Non-award courses and micro-credentials are not governed by the AQF; however, the University may apply particular AQF specifications to its non-award courses as a quality assurance measure.
- 3.6 Non-award courses and micro-credentials offered to international students studying in Australia on a student visa must comply with the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (National Code) and [ELICOS Standards 2018](#), and must be consistent with the University's CRICOS² registration.
- 3.7 The University will monitor courses delivered offshore and those delivered through partners or agents. Such arrangements will be monitored in accordance with the [Partnerships Policy and Procedure](#) and documented formal agreements with individual partners.
- 3.8 Non-award courses (and their constituent units or modules) and micro-credentials will be developed, approved, reviewed and enhanced in accordance with this policy and procedure.
- 3.9 Non-award course and micro-credential approval is the University's internal, peer assessment process at the relevant Curriculum/Course Committee, which will ensure each course meets its stated objectives and that its constituent units/modules achieve optimal learning outcomes for students. The University strives to maintain rigorous standards in approving its academic courses to meet its mission and strategic goals.
- 3.10 Non-award course and micro-credential approval involves assessment of proposals based on an objective, transparent and equitable process that is clearly documented.
- 3.11 Academic Board (or delegated authority) may also take any of the following actions:
- require information from an academic organisational unit, including statistical information
 - apply conditions on course, unit/module, or micro-credential approval
 - revoke course or unit/module approval based on reasonable grounds, such as quality, currency, viability and relevance, and/or
 - initiate a course or unit/module review outside the normal five-yearly review and re-approval process.
- 3.12 Non-award courses and micro-credentials generally do not require external accreditation. However, if a course is proposed on the basis that it requires or it is beneficial to obtain external accreditation or membership with an external organisation or network, approval by Academic Board (or delegated authority) will be conditional on the course first obtaining the external accreditation or membership.
- 3.13 Approved courses and units/modules and micro-credentials must meet standard reporting obligations and conditions decided by Academic Board and University policy documents.
- 3.14 Non-award courses and micro-credentials will be approved for a five-year period, unless otherwise approved for a lesser period.
- 3.15 Following approval, a course or micro-credential and its constituent units/modules will remain approved for the relevant maximum period (i.e. five years or as otherwise approved) and be subject to review and re-approval within that time.
- 3.16 Course or micro-credential approval will be granted on condition that no changes are made to the course and its constituent units/modules, unless those changes have been progressed and approved in line with this policy and procedure.

Enabling and English Language

- 3.17 New Enabling and English language courses and their constituent units will be considered on the basis of strategic and resource aspects and academic governance and standards before they can be approved.
- 3.18 The approval process for Enabling and English language courses involves a clear distinction between the committee responsible for considering the strategic elements of a proposal (University Management Committee) and the Committee responsible for considering the academic standards (Academic Board). The

² 'CRICOS' means Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses of Overseas Students.

functions and responsibilities of Academic Board and all relevant Committees, in relation to course approval, are set out in their terms of reference.

Micro-credentials

- 3.19 New micro-credentials are considered based on their alignment with the University's strategic goals and academic and/or professional standards, and their financial and commercial viability.
- 3.20 Credit-bearing micro-credentials will be developed based on a top-down approach being a subset of an approved award course. The practice of building a degree from an amalgamation of micro-credentials will be avoided.
- 3.21 The approval process for micro-credentials involves consideration of the strategic, financial and commercial elements of a proposal and relevant academic and/or professional standards by the host school or division and the relevant Course Committee. The functions and responsibilities of Course Committees are set out in their terms of reference.

Course development

- 3.22 Non-award courses and micro-credentials will be designed, developed and delivered based on the principles of the [Learning and Teaching Framework](#) and other references endorsed by Academic Board.
- 3.23 Appropriately experienced academic employees will provide leadership and supervise all aspects of academic quality for key tasks such as curriculum design and delivery, including the alignment of learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment tasks, course, unit and micro-credential development, reflection, enhancement and review.
- 3.24 The discipline area of courses/units/modules and micro-credentials will be underpinned by a substantial level of scholarship demonstrated by a coherent body of knowledge, theoretical framework, published research and current literature. This scholarship will be reflected in non-award course and micro-credential development.
- 3.25 The business area responsible for developing and delivering non-award courses or micro-credentials will vary depending on the non-award course or micro-credential type and discipline or area of study. However, more than one business area may be involved in developing a new course or unit/module. Cross-disciplinary approaches are encouraged.
- 3.26 Divisions proposing to develop a new non-award course or micro-credential outside their primary area of responsibility will first consult the relevant [Senior Executive](#) to decide the most appropriate business area for delivering the non-award course or micro-credential. If the business area for delivering the course or micro-credential delivery is not agreed, the Senior Executive will make the final decision.

Course structure

- 3.27 All non-award courses and micro-credentials will be designed to achieve the purpose of the course, meet the needs of its intended student cohort, and enable students to achieve the learning outcomes and [graduate attributes](#) (if applicable), of the course and its constituent units/modules.
- 3.28 All non-award courses and micro-credentials will have documented course learning outcomes (and graduate attributes if applicable) that are relevant to the purpose and expected level of student performance and form the basis of assessment.
- 3.29 When designing new non-award courses and micro-credentials, potential alignment with or suitability of the course as a pathway into a related higher education or VET course will be considered.
- 3.30 Non-award courses and micro-credentials have a relatively specific focus and short duration, and therefore do not comprise groups of units in a particular area of study, i.e. major or minor specialisations.
- 3.31 Each approved non-award course and micro-credential will be allocated a unique identifying code by the University's Academic Information Management System (AIMS).

Enabling courses

- 3.32 Enabling courses will be structured to include core and elective units in an overall course plan and to meet entry requirements into higher education or VET qualifications, where appropriate.

English Language courses

- 3.33 English language courses do not have core or elective units. Instead, these courses form a structured pathway that enable students to progress from one course to the next based on their achievement of English language proficiency.

Micro-credentials

- 3.34 Micro-credentials may vary to meet the wide variety of professional development needs of students, employers, industry and business. Micro-credential structures may consist of one or more core modules, and may include elective modules, in an overall course plan.

Notional student workload and credit points

Enabling courses

- 3.35 The University will apply AQF specifications regarding notional (duration) student workload and credit points to its Enabling courses as a guide to estimate the volume of learning. Notional student workloads and credit points apply only to Enabling courses.
- 3.36 Enabling courses will comprise a number of units, each with a notional student workload; the sum of the workload of all units in a course will be the volume of learning for that course.
- 3.37 The notional student workload in an Enabling course will be expressed as the sum of all time spent in all the learning activities in a unit. This includes the time spent in optional and compulsory face-to-face or online activities (e.g. lectures, tutorials, workshops, residential schools) and all the notional time spent in personal study (directed and independent learning) and preparing for assessments.
- 3.38 The notional student workload for a volume of learning equivalent to one year of full-time study in an Enabling course is 1200 hours, calculated as shown below:
- a) One full-time year of study = 50 hours of study per week x 24 study weeks (two terms of 12 weeks each) = 1200 notional study hours.
 - b) As an example, this equates to 150 hours of notional student workload for each unit of six credit points (12.5 hours of study over each of the 12 weeks of term).
- 3.39 The credit value of Enabling courses must be justified in terms of the notional student workload of the course when proposing new courses for approval and undertaking five-yearly course review and re-approval.
- 3.40 Credit points are used to express the amount of study (notional student workload) required in a particular Enabling course.
- 3.41 One credit point represents the same notional student workload in all Enabling courses.
- 3.42 Each credit point is equivalent to just over two hours of notional student workload per week, which is 25 hours of notional student workload over a standard 12-week term.
- 3.43 The AQF volume of learning for one year (1200 hours of notional study workload) equates to 48 credit points in Enabling courses.
- 3.44 Units in an Enabling course normally consist of six credit points.
- 3.45 Any variation in credit points per course reflects a different amount of notional student workload for the unit rather than the academic level of the unit, which is specified through the course learning outcomes.

English Language courses

- 3.46 Volume of learning for English Language courses is 20 hours per week in line with minimum contact hours prescribed within the ELICOS Standards. English Language courses are intensive in nature and held over a set number of weeks depending on the course type and the student's level and study plan.

Micro-credentials

- 3.47 Notional student workload for a 'credit-bearing' micro-credential is based on volume of learning (hours) that aligns with the appropriate volume of learning for the award course from which it is derived.
- 3.48 There is no prescribed volume of learning for a 'non-credit bearing' micro-credential. Volume of learning for these is measured in hours.

Course duration

- 3.49 Course duration will vary based on a number of factors, including:
- course type and purpose
 - learning outcomes (and graduate attributes if applicable) to be achieved
 - intended student cohort (domestic or international students)
 - student attendance mode
 - student attendance type (e.g. full- or part-time)
 - relevant regulations, standards or University policy documents that specify course duration, including contact time, and
 - fees or relevant terms and conditions of a partnership agreement, if applicable (e.g. micro-credentials).
- 3.50 Courses designed for international students studying in Australia on a student visa must comply with any relevant course duration/contact hour/student attendance mode requirements in the National Code and ELICOS Standards, and be consistent with CQUniversity's CRICOS registration.
- 3.51 All courses may be designed for full-time or part-time study, subject to meeting relevant regulatory provisions regarding student attendance mode. Table 1 includes indicative duration/contact times for courses.

Table 1

Course type	Course duration / contact time	Notional study hours	Credit points	No. of units x CPs
Enabling: STEPS	12 wks / variable	450	18 [^]	3 units x 6 CPs
English language: IELTS Preparation	12 wks / 20 contact hrs per wk	NA	NA	NA
English language: General English	Up to 50 wks / 20 contact hrs per wk	NA	NA	NA
English language: English for Academic Purposes	10, 20, or 30 wks / 20 contact hrs per wk	NA	NA	NA
Micro-credential	Variable	NA	NA	NA

[^] STEPS students may need to complete more than three units depending on the undergraduate course in which students aim to enrol.

^{^^} CPs means 'credit points'

^{^^^} NA means 'not applicable'

Enabling

- 3.52 Enabling course duration is generally 12 weeks but may vary for each student based on an assessment of student skills and needs on entering the enabling course and the number of credit points required for entry into the students' intended undergraduate course.

English Language

- 3.53 Academic English language course duration is 10, 20, or 30 weeks and must provide students with a minimum of 20 contact hours a week over that time. General English course duration is up to 50 weeks and must provide students with a minimum of 20 contact hours a week.

Micro-credentials

- 3.54 There is no prescribed course duration for micro-credentials, and it may vary widely depending on the intended learning outcomes, the attendance mode and the curriculum content. For example, a micro-credential may require achievement of a single completion criterion requiring only four hours on-online delivery and assessment; a micro-credential comprising four modules with a four-week duration via on-campus, may be online or mixed mode attendance, or a fully online, self-paced micro-credential with a nominal duration.

Course elements (units/modules)

Enabling and English Language

- 3.55 All units in an Enabling course will have documented unit learning outcomes that are aligned to the course learning outcomes (and or graduate attributes, if applicable) and the expected level of student performance, which will form the basis of assessment. These unit learning outcomes will include advanced knowledge and inquiry at a level appropriate for the course.
- 3.56 Each approved unit in an Enabling or English language course will be allocated a unique identifying code by the University's student management system (StudentOne), e.g. the unit code MATH40237 indicates a mathematics (MATH) unit in an enabling course (number begins with '4').

Micro-credentials

- 3.57 Micro-credentials will be allocated unique identifier codes by AIMS.

Course and unit classification

- 3.58 The University must assign Field of Education (FoE) codes to certain courses under the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) for national data collection purposes.
- 3.59 Information about how to code courses and units is available from Student Central or the [Department of Education, Skills and Employment Higher Education Information Management System \(HEIMS\) website](#).

Enabling and English Language

- 3.60 Each Enabling and English language course and unit will be assigned the correct FoE code as part of course and unit approval.

Micro-credentials

- 3.61 FoE codes do not apply to micro-credentials

Advertising courses

- 3.62 Non-award course and micro-credential marketing and related material must comply with the [CQUniversity Brand Guideline](#) (available via the Marketing StaffNet website).
- 3.63 Non-award courses and units/modules, and micro-credentials must not be advertised (e.g. in a prospectus, course brochure, or website) or implemented, and no students may be enrolled, until course approval is granted.
- 3.64 Although the University approves non-award courses and micro-credentials, they are not accredited AQF qualifications and must not be represented as such in any advertising/promotional material.

- 3.65 Non-award courses and micro-credentials must not be advertised or marketed to international students before their approval and CRICOS registration.

Review and re-approval

- 3.66 Regular and systematic review and evaluation of each Enabling and English language course and their constituent units by the relevant Course Review Panel is an integral component of academic quality assurance. Enabling and English language courses and micro-credentials are quality assured by the relevant Course Committee through an annual review process.
- 3.67 Reviews are undertaken to evaluate and improve learning outcomes, to identify priorities for development and planning, and to reassess existing learning and teaching activities before re-approval.
- 3.68 These review processes are designed to ensure that non-award courses and micro-credentials reflect high standards of curriculum development; these standards are underpinned by the competence employees apply when developing courses and units through the relevant Committee.
- 3.69 Reviews ensure that non-award courses and micro-credentials remain viable and units remain relevant within a non-award course, and that a non-award course or micro-credential is compliant with minimum academic and or professional standards for the discipline area/s.

Low enrolment units

- 3.70 To support academic quality, financial viability, and appropriate resource allocation, all units within Enabling courses will be subject to ongoing low enrolment review.
- 3.71 Low enrolment units are defined as those offered with a total enrolment of 10 or fewer students post-census date, across terms one, two, or three.
- 3.72 Enabling units with low enrolment numbers will be considered for termination unless an exemption is approved by the Dean of School (or equivalent), and Vice-President (Academic).

4 PROCEDURE: ENABLING AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES

- 4.1 Part 4 of this document applies only to Enabling and English language courses. For information about micro-credentials, see [Part 5 Procedure: Micro-credentials](#).
- 4.2 Academic governance involves a systematic process of proposal, endorsement, approval, review and re-approval through relevant decision-makers, Academic Board and its sub-committees. Concept proposals for new courses also require consideration by the University Management Committee. Details of committee functions and responsibilities are in each committee's terms of reference.
- 4.3 Academic governance processes are managed primarily through AIMS, unless otherwise stated. AIMS is designed to capture course and unit information necessary for effective academic governance.

Course concept proposal

- 4.4 Before each new course is developed, proposers must submit a Course Concept Proposal for approval.
- 4.5 The course concept proposal approval process is as follows:
- a) The proposer will complete the Course Concept Proposal Form in AIMS:
 - ensuring the proposal's alignment with this policy and procedure and University plans
 - providing evidence of demand for the course (which includes contacting the Global Brand and Marketing Directorate to obtain the required market intelligence), and
 - completing the business case component in the Form (an abridged version of the [Business Case Template](#)).
 - b) The proposer will submit the Course Concept Proposal via AIMS to the Dean of School (or equivalent role) for endorsement.

- c) The Dean of School (or equivalent role) will submit the endorsed Course Concept Proposal via AIMS to the relevant Senior Executive of the division/area responsible for course delivery.
- d) The Course Concept Proposal will then proceed to the University Management Committee for consideration of the approval of the concept, business case and recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor and President for approval. The proposer will be advised of the decision.

Business case for additional funds

- 4.6 For courses to be delivered using recurrent funds of up to \$1 million (i.e. no additional funds are required), no additional documentation is required.
- 4.7 For courses requiring funding of greater than \$1 million³, and/or the set-up of a new delivery site, the relevant Senior Executive must submit a full business case (via the [Business Case Template](#)) to the Strategic Planning and Projects Committee for recommendation to Council for approval. The proposer will be advised of the decision.

New course and unit approval

- 4.8 Timelines to obtain approval will vary depending on a number of factors, including the course type, the complexity of the proposal, and/or the need to provide additional information if the proposal lacks relevant details. Three months is an indicative timeframe that employees should allow for submitting a complete and satisfactory Course Concept Proposal through to course approval.

New course proposals

- 4.9 After the Course Concept Proposal is approved, the developer must submit a New Course Proposal to seek approval of the new course.
- 4.10 The new course proposal process for course approval is as follows:
 - a) The developer will complete the New Course Proposal Form in AIMS, in consultation with the relevant Course Committee. The developer will include the following information:
 - consultation with divisions and key stakeholders
 - any required or preferred external accreditation or membership obtained or sought, if applicable
 - all unit/s required to complete the course, and
 - transition arrangements if the new course is replacing an existing course, i.e. course termination (see [course and unit termination](#)).
 - b) At the same time, the developer must also complete a New Unit Proposal Form in AIMS for each new unit in a new course, following consultation with the relevant Course Committee.
 - c) The developer will submit the relevant New Course Proposal Form with the relevant Unit Proposal Form/s via AIMS to the Course Committee for endorsement of Enabling courses or to the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee for approval of English language courses.
 - d) The Course Committee will submit the endorsed New Course Proposal and Unit Proposal/s via AIMS to the Curriculum Committee for approval of Enabling courses.

New unit in an existing course (including course termination)

- 4.11 When including a new unit into an existing course, it is common practice to terminate an existing unit within the current course. The developer must complete and submit the following forms via AIMS:
 - a) Unit Termination Proposal Form (for approval to terminate the unit, see [course and unit termination](#))
 - b) New Unit Proposal Form (for unit approval, see [new unit proposals](#)), and
 - c) Change Course Proposal Form (for approval to add the new unit to the existing course, see [course change proposals](#)).

³ Authority for expending funds specified in the [Authorities and Delegations Register](#).

New unit proposals

- 4.12 The new unit proposal process for unit approval is as follows:
- a) The developer will submit the relevant New Unit Proposal Form via AIMS to the Course Committee for endorsement of Enabling units or to the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee for approval of English language units.
 - b) The Course Committee will submit the endorsed New Unit Proposal via AIMS to the Curriculum Committee for approval of Enabling units.

Overview of review and re-approval processes

- 4.13 Review processes are focussed on quality assurance and enhancement.
- 4.14 Courses and units will undergo two types of review:
- a) an annual enhancement reporting process, and
 - b) a five-yearly review and re-approval process, which involves four-stages:
 - [stage 1](#): course review panel formation
 - [stage 2](#): producing a self-evaluation report
 - [stage 3](#): self-evaluation report, course review panel report, and work plan template considered (for course re-accreditation), and
 - [stage 4](#): addressing the course review panel report recommendations, which may include course and unit changes, terminations, or other appropriate actions.
- 4.15 The Dean of School (or equivalent role) in consultation with the Head of Course will ensure courses and constituent units are systematically reviewed before submission to the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee (English language courses) or the Curriculum Committee (Enabling courses) for re-approval.

Annual course enhancement

- 4.16 Annual reporting and enhancement of courses and units are integral components of the academic quality assurance process aimed at improving students' experiences and learning outcomes. It also provides significant reference points for developing best practice.
- 4.17 Commitment to the experience of students as learners is essential, and is founded on the standards and outcomes of the academic courses and units.
- 4.18 Courses must have effective mechanisms to collect regular, valid and reliable feedback from stakeholders, such as students (e.g. unit evaluations) and employees (e.g. peer review and teaching evaluations, academics who taught course graduates) to ensure the feedback results in course and unit enhancement.
- 4.19 Changes implemented as a result of stakeholder feedback will be identified and appropriately communicated back to stakeholders.
- 4.20 Annual Course Enhancement Reports will be submitted each year that the course is offered. This annual reporting process is described below:
- a) The Head of Course will complete the Annual Course Enhancement Report Form in AIMS, reflecting on the following:
 - course statistics, including trends and implications
 - previous year's recommendations and action taken
 - strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threat analysis of the course
 - relevance and adequacy of course resources, including facilities, software and information resources
 - the status of professional accreditation by or membership with an external organisation or network (if applicable for course re-approval) and any related risks or concerns

- engagement strategies and their effectiveness
 - feedback on the course from employers, industry, employees and/or students, and
 - potential alignment with or suitability as a pathway into existing and/or proposed higher education or VET courses.
- b) If course resource requirements or academic outcomes change, the Head of Course must also complete a Change Course Proposal Form in AIMS and apply the process for [course changes](#).
- c) The Head of Course will submit the completed Annual Course Enhancement Report via AIMS to the relevant Course Committee for approval.

Annual unit enhancement

- 4.21 Annual unit enhancement is conducted once a year in each year that a unit is offered. If a unit is offered in more than one term, the Dean of School (or equivalent role) must nominate the term in which the Unit Enhancement Report will be submitted.
- 4.22 This annual reporting process is described below:
- a) The Unit Coordinator will complete the Annual Unit Enhancement Report in AIMS, reflecting on the following:
- unit statistics
 - previous year's recommendations and action taken
 - self-evaluation, peer feedback, student feedback and any additional feedback, including from Course Committees, industry stakeholders, etc., and any recommended actions to address feedback, and
 - good practice in learning/teaching/assessment.
- b) The Unit Coordinator will also develop recommendations for the following year, including communication strategies to inform students of the recommendations, potential impact on resources and change to the synopsis, learning outcomes, graduate attributes and/or assessment items.
- c) If unit resource requirements or academic outcomes change, the Unit Coordinator must also complete a Unit Course Proposal Form in AIMS and apply the process for [unit changes](#).
- d) The Unit Coordinator will submit the completed Annual Unit Enhancement Report via AIMS to the relevant Course Committee for approval.

Five-yearly course and unit review and re-approval

- 4.23 In the second last year of the course's approval period, the Head of Course will begin self-evaluating the course to decide whether to propose the course be re-approved for a further period and to identify any changes needed to ensure its ongoing success. This will take the form of a renewal plan for the course and its constituent units. Alternatively, the Head of Course may propose the course be terminated.
- 4.24 The University requires relevant benchmarking of each course's academic performance against other universities to identify and act on areas needing improvement.
- 4.25 Benchmarking provides assurance that standards of courses and units, and student learning outcomes, are comparable with standards expected across the Australian tertiary education sector.

Stage 1: Course review panel role and formation

- 4.26 Broadly, the Course Review Panel's role is to:
- a) evaluate the course against the relevant external and internal references and benchmarks, and
 - b) make recommendations on the course's continuation or enhancement.
- 4.27 Course Review Panel functions and responsibilities, membership composition and responsibility for their formation are in the panel's [Terms of Reference](#).

- 4.28 The Course Review Panel's composition will vary depending on the course under consideration, and include representation from higher or vocational education, where appropriate. The Chair will be independent of the course, school or business area, and of any academic units involved in delivering units within the course/s to be reviewed.
- 4.29 The process for forming a course review panel is as follows:
- a) The Head of Course will propose and submit the panel Chair and members for a Course Review Panel via the Course Review Panel Membership Form in AIMS to the Dean of School (or equivalent role) for endorsement.
 - b) The Dean of School (or equivalent role) will submit the endorsed Course Review Panel Membership Form via AIMS to the Curriculum Committee for approval.

Stage 2: Self-evaluation report

- 4.30 Self-evaluation is a holistic [360-degree feedback](#) process that involves collecting feedback from multiple sources. Academic employees undertake reflective analysis of the course and its constituent units, which forms the basis for a review by the Course Review Panel.
- 4.31 In the second last year of the course's approval period, the Head of Course will begin Stage 1 of the five-yearly course and unit review process as follows:
- a) The Head of Course will refer to the Course Review Schedule (on the accrediting committee's [StaffNet page](#)) to identify when the five-yearly course and unit review and re-approval is due.
 - b) The Head of Course will complete the self-evaluation report details in the Five-Yearly Course Review (FYCR) Form in AIMS and submit this, with all supporting materials and data, through the Dean of School, to the relevant Course Committee for consideration and recommendation to Curriculum Committee (as relevant), prior to submission to the Course Review Panel for consideration.

Stage 3: Course review panel report

- 4.32 At this point, the Course Review Panel will have been [formed](#), and the Head of Course will have completed Stage 2, including the collation of supporting materials and data for the review by the panel.

Course review panel site visit

- 4.33 Site visits usually take three days, but may range from two to five days, depending on the size and complexity of the course review. These visits include a half-day for the panel to consider its findings before the visit formally concludes.
- 4.34 The range of people and groups meeting during the panel visit varies depending on the course and units. If appropriate, people in other locations may be interviewed via teleconference or videoconference. Generally, a panel may meet the following, as required:
- a) the appropriate University Management Committee member
 - b) members of key committees, such as Academic Board and its sub-committees, including Education Strategy and Innovation Committee, which is responsible for academic policy development and oversight
 - c) key people in the University responsible for managing and operating the quality system and sub-systems, such as Deans of School, Heads of Course, representative/s of the discipline from the higher and vocational education
 - d) employees and students involved in the course
 - e) a cross-section of past and current students (the panel may nominate specific groups)
 - f) a selection of graduates from the current course approval period
 - g) representatives of stakeholder groups from industry, commerce and government with experience of its graduates, and
 - h) community representatives.

Course review panel report

- 4.35 The Course Review Panel will write a succinct Course Review Panel Report with recommendations addressing all aspects of the course considered by the panel. Among its recommendations, this report must specifically address whether or not the course is recommended for re-approval.
- 4.36 The Panel Chair is normally responsible for writing the report, assisted by the Administrative Officer to the Course Review Panel and other panel members as required. A draft report must be completed by the end of the site visit while all panel members are on site, before the exit meeting. The Panel Chair will ensure panel members agree with the report's contents or have the opportunity to register a minority view.
- 4.37 The course review panel report approval process is as follows:
- The Course Review Panel will submit the completed report via AIMS to the Head of Course
 - The Head of Course will write a succinct response to the report, including a work plan to address each of the report's recommendations, using the [Course Review Panel Report – Work Plan template](#)
 - The Head of Course will submit the Panel Report, Work Plan and the original self-evaluation document via AIMS to the Dean of School (or equivalent role) for endorsement
 - The Dean of School (or equivalent role) will submit the endorsed Panel Report, Work Plan and the original self-evaluation document via AIMS to the relevant Senior Executive, for endorsement
 - The Senior Executive will submit the endorsed Panel Report, Work Plan and the original self-evaluation document via AIMS to the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee (English language courses) or Curriculum Committee (Enabling courses) to consider course re-approval and monitor implementation of the report's recommendations.

Stage 44: Addressing course review panel report recommendations

- 4.38 The process for addressing course review panel report recommendations is as follows:
- The Head of Course will implement the approved work plan in response to the Course Review Panel Report's recommendations.
 - The Head of Course will report on progress within a maximum of one year of the Course Review Panel Report date, by completing a formal written response to each of the report's recommendations, with documented evidence, using the Post Five-Year Course Review (PFYCR) Form in AIMS.
 - The Head of Course will submit the completed progress report via AIMS to the relevant Course Committee for consideration and recommendation to Curriculum Committee (as appropriate).
 - If changes to a course have resource implications or alter course academic outcomes, the Head of Course must also complete a [Change Course](#) Form.
 - If changes to a unit have resource implications or alter unit academic outcomes, the Unit Coordinator must also complete a [Change Unit](#) Form.
 - If a course or unit/s are to be terminated as a result of the Five-Yearly Course and Unit Review and Re-Approval Report, the Head of Course must also complete the applicable Course Termination/Unit Termination Form/s in AIMS and consider teach-out and transition arrangements for current students (see [course and unit termination](#)).

Course and unit changes

- 4.39 Changes to courses and/or units usually occur as a result of [Annual Course](#) and [Unit Enhancement Reviews](#) or the [Five-Yearly Course and Unit Review and Re-approval process](#).
- 4.40 Changes that have resource implications or alter course or unit learning outcomes require approval for course and unit changes.
- 4.41 The process for approving course changes is as follows:
- The Head of Course will complete the Change Course Proposal Form in AIMS, detailing the proposed change/s and the reason for the change/s as well as CRICOS implications, CQUni Handbook implications, and anticipated impact on resources and students

- b) The Head of Course must also complete the New Unit Proposal Form/s in AIMS at the same time if introducing a new unit/s as part of the Change Course Proposal (see [new unit proposals](#))
- c) The Head of Course will submit the completed Change Course Proposal Form (and New Unit Proposal form/s if applicable) via AIMS to the Course Committee (for endorsement of Enabling courses) or to the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee (for approval of English language courses)
- d) The Course Committee will submit the endorsed Course Change Proposal (and New Unit Proposal form/s if applicable) via AIMS to the Curriculum Committee for approval of Enabling courses.

4.42 The process for approving unit changes is as follows:

- a) The Unit Coordinator will complete the Change Unit Proposal Form in AIMS, detailing the proposed change/s and the reason for the change/s as well as any impact on the alignment of unit learning outcomes with the course learning outcomes and/or graduate attributes. The Unit Coordinator also needs to consider resource implications, impact on students, and marketing and recruitment implications.
- b) The Unit Coordinator will submit the completed Change Unit Proposal Form via AIMS to the relevant Course Committee for approval.

Low enrolment unit review process

- 4.43 Heads of College (or nominee), in consultation with Heads of Course, Course Committee, and Deans of School (or equivalent), will identify and manage low enrolment Enabling units through a formal review process to be conducted following census date each term.
- 4.44 [Low enrolment Enabling units](#) (see [low enrolment units](#)), will be considered for termination in accordance with the [terminate unit proposal](#) process, or granted exemption from termination subject to justification and approval.
- 4.45 Unit level and individual delivery site enrolments will be considered with a view to terminating Enabling units with low enrolments or securing exemption and implementing strategies to improve unit viability. Strategies may include reducing the number of delivery locations or offerings scheduled, or moving to online delivery.
- 4.46 Terminating Enabling units due to low enrolment must not hinder a student's timely progression to graduation, and adequate [transition and/or teach out arrangements](#) must be implemented where necessary.
- 4.47 Justification for exemption from termination may include units which are:
- wholly or substantially funded by a third party
 - addressing a specific need within the regional communities served by the University
 - in areas of strategic or reputational importance for the University
 - offered in a field with demonstrated high potential for future growth
 - necessary for the University to achieve accreditation in a specific field
 - temporarily impacted by market downturn caused by a global crisis, e.g., COVID-19
 - new or experimental (exempt from termination for two years from initial offering)
 - teach out units, and
 - incorrectly categorised and not within the scope of this policy and procedure.
- 4.48 Applications for exemption from termination must be accompanied by evidence and approved by the Dean of School (or equivalent), and Vice-President (Academic).
- 4.49 Where Enabling units with low enrolment numbers are approved as being exempt from termination, the Head of College (or nominee) must implement mechanisms to achieve the minimum enrolment of 10 students per term prior to the next review where relevant.
- 4.50 Low enrolment unit review outcomes will be reported to the Tertiary Education Advisory Committee (TEAC).

Course and unit termination

- 4.51 Curriculum Committee (for Enabling) or the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee (for English language) may terminate offering a unit or a course after considering a recommendation from the relevant Course Committee (if applicable). Course and unit termination usually occur as a result of Annual Course or Unit Enhancement Reviews or a Five-Yearly Course and Unit Review and Re-approval process. A course or unit may also be terminated as a result of a new course or unit being introduced.
- 4.52 When terminating the offering of a course, Curriculum Committee (for Enabling) or the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee (for English language) will approve the last term and year of intake of students into the course based on the teach-out and transition arrangements recommended in the Course Termination Proposal or decide an alternative date.
- 4.53 The process for terminating a course is as follows:
- The Head of Course will complete the Course Termination Proposal Form in AIMS, documenting the reason for the termination, impacts on other courses and schools, transition arrangements, and consultation with the relevant Course Committee.
 - If course termination also requires units to be terminated, the Head of Course must also complete the Unit Termination Proposal Form/s in AIMS at the same time as the Course Termination Proposal Form.
 - The Head of Course will submit the completed Course Termination Proposal Form (and Unit Termination Proposal Form/s if applicable) via AIMS to the Course Committee for endorsement of Enabling courses or to the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee of English language courses.
 - The Course Committee will submit the endorsed Course Termination Proposal (and Unit Termination Proposal form/s if applicable) via AIMS to the Curriculum Committee for approval of Enabling courses.
- 4.54 The process for terminating a unit/s is as follows:
- The Head of Course will complete the Unit Termination Proposal Form/s in AIMS, detailing the reasons for the termination, impacts on course structure, prerequisites and students; impacts on other courses and schools; and consultation with the relevant Course Committee and/or the relevant course/s.
 - The Head of Course will submit the completed Unit Termination Proposal Form via AIMS to the Course Committee for endorsement of Enabling units or to the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee for approval of English language units.
 - The Course Committee will submit the endorsed Unit Termination Proposal via AIMS to the Curriculum Committee for approval of Enabling units.

Teach-out and transition arrangements

- 4.55 Immediately after the last intake into the course, the course will be in teach-out mode and no new enrolments will be permitted.
- 4.56 Teach-out of courses will be completed as soon as possible, taking into consideration student numbers and enrolment patterns, as well as possibilities to provide substitute units, or the ability of students to access cross-institutional studies to complete their course.
- 4.57 When the approved teach-out period ends, enrolment into the course will not be permitted. Course details will be moved from the database of active courses to the archives.
- 4.58 If a course is to be terminated without an appropriate teach-out period, transition arrangements into a new course for existing students must be approved by the Curriculum Committee (for Enabling) or the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee (for English language) as part of the [Course Termination Proposal](#) to avoid an extended teach-out period.

5 PROCEDURE: MICRO-CREDENTIALS

- 5.1 Part 5 of this document applies only to micro-credentials. For information about other non-award courses, see [Part 4 Procedure: Enabling and English Language Courses](#).

- 5.2 Academic governance involves a systematic process of proposal, endorsement, approval, review and re-approval through relevant decision-makers and the relevant Course Committee (as delegated by Academic Board).
- 5.3 These governance processes are managed through AIMS, unless otherwise stated. AIMS is designed to capture course information necessary for effective academic governance. These processes are set out below.

Partnerships with external parties

- 5.4 Micro-credentials may be initiated to meet the needs of external parties (e.g. public sector organisations; private sector employers from industry or business; professional bodies; community groups).
- 5.5 Arrangements to develop, host and/or deliver micro-credentials for an external party must be formalised in an education partnership agreement and discussed with Learning Design and Innovation as a project in the first instance and include rationale and costing methodology.
- 5.6 The requirements applicable to establishing and managing these agreements are in the [Partnerships Policy and Procedure](#). The Procurement Advice Team may also provide guidance on partnership arrangements for micro-credentials.
- 5.7 If an external partner will be involved, the proposer must submit a completed Micro-credential Proposal and:
- consult with the relevant host school/division employees and external parties, (if applicable) and
 - prepare and submit an education partnership agreement to the Deputy Vice-President (Educational Strategy and Innovation) for approval.
- 5.8 The business area (host school or division) will establish, manage, report on, evaluate and retain records relating to partnership agreements in accordance with the [Partnerships Policy and Procedure](#).

Business case for additional funds

- 5.9 Micro-credentials generally do not require funding of greater than \$1 million⁴ and/or the set-up of a new delivery site. However, if such funding or a new delivery site is required, the relevant Senior Executive (host division) must submit a full business case (via the [Business Case Template](#)) to the Strategic Planning and Projects Committee for recommendation to Council for approval. The proposer will be advised of the decision.

Micro-credential approval

- 5.10 The process for micro-credential approval is as follows:
- The micro-credential lead/author (nominated by the host school or division) will create a new Professional Development Course Proposal in AIMS, including evidence of Dean of School (or nominee) support and Learning Design and Innovation endorsement, and will submit to either the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee for non credit-bearing micro-credentials, or the discipline specific Course Committee for credit-bearing micro-credentials, for approval.
 - For micro-credentials developed, managed and/or hosted by the school or division, the course lead/author will finalise the course design and development, and arrange marketing and course delivery.
 - For micro-credentials developed in conjunction with and/or hosted through Learning Design and Innovation, the course lead/author must liaise with Learning Design and Innovation to finalise course design and development, and to arrange marketing and course hosting/delivery and ongoing course review.
- 5.11 If a digital badge (or certificate) will be issued to students, the course lead/author must liaise with Learning Design and Innovation to develop the digital badge, and ensure the certificate design complies with the methodology approved by Academic Board, terminology for certificate classifications and requirements for awarding. Refer to the [Awards Policy and Procedure](#) for further information.

⁴ Authority for expending funds specified in the [Authorities and Delegations Register](#).

Micro-credential review and enhancement

- 5.12 Annual review and enhancement of micro-credentials are integral components of the academic quality assurance process aimed at improving students' experiences and learning outcomes. It also provides an opportunity for developing best practice.
- 5.13 Micro-credentials must have effective mechanisms to collect regular, valid and reliable feedback from stakeholders, such as students, employees, and external partners to ensure the feedback results in course enhancement.
- 5.14 Changes implemented as a result of stakeholder feedback must be communicated back to stakeholders, where appropriate (e.g. external partners, employees associated with the micro-credential, Course Committee).
- 5.15 A Micro-credential Review Report must be completed each year that the course is offered (i.e. 12 months following short course approval and at 12 month intervals).

Micro-credential re-approval or termination

- 5.16 Micro-credentials will be approved for a period of five years or less as decided by the Short Courses and Micro-credentials Course Committee for non-credit bearing micro-credentials, or to the discipline specific Course Committee for credit bearing micro-credentials.
- 5.17 In the final year of course approval, the Course Committee will decide whether to re-approve the course for a further period. The Course Committee will consider the annual Micro-credential Review Report and any other information the Course Committee deems relevant to inform its decision.
- 5.18 The Course Committee may decide to terminate a micro-credential, following an annual review or consultation with the course lead/author and Dean of School or Director (or equivalent) in the host school or division.
- 5.19 Following the Course Committee's decision to terminate a micro-credential, the course lead/author (or nominee) will complete the Terminate Professional Development Course process in AIMS, and implement any actions necessary to finalise teach-out and/or transition arrangements (e.g. partnership arrangements, marketing arrangements, changes to website/s).
- 5.20 An external partner may decide to terminate a micro-credential, following consultation with the course lead/author and Dean of School or Director (or equivalent) in the host school or division.
- 5.21 Following an external partner's decision to terminate a micro-credential, the University proposer will complete the Terminate Professional Development Course process in AIMS, and implement any actions necessary to finalise teach-out and/or transition arrangements (e.g. partnership arrangements, marketing arrangements, changes to website/s).

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 6.1 Academic Board (or delegated authority) is responsible for approving non-award courses and micro-credentials, managing academic governance and establishing quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the University's compliance with relevant legislation and education standards.
- 6.2 Non-award courses and micro-credentials are not AQF qualifications; however, the University's policy is to apply Australian higher education standards where relevant to ensure proper governance and quality assurance of its non-award courses. This is important given their role as academic pathways into tertiary education and in improving employment outcomes.
- 6.3 Compliance monitoring occurs through various processes undertaken to give effect to this policy and procedure, including new non-award course and micro-credential proposals, change non-award course proposals, annual non-award course and unit enhancement, micro-credential review report and five-yearly course and unit review and re-approval submissions to Academic Board and its sub-committees.

- 6.4 The Director Learning Design and Innovation is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.

Reporting

- 6.5 The University will report information on Enabling and English language courses and units to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment in accordance with prescribed HEIMS data collections and other regulatory reporting requirements.

Records management

- 6.6 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 6.7 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email records@cqu.edu.au).

7 DEFINITIONS

- 7.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

Terms and definitions

Note: These definitions align with the AQF and should be read in conjunction with the [AQF Glossary of Terminology](#).

360-degree feedback: also known as multisource assessment, this involves seeking feedback from all stakeholders, including staff, students, graduates and employers.

Business area: a team employed at the University to manage a specific area of responsibility. Business areas sit under a School or Division.

Credit-bearing micro-credential: a micro-credential which may assist towards an AQF qualification. Credit may be recognised for the completion of a credit-bearing micro-credential for a module or short-course component within an AQF qualification.

Developer or course lead/author: the person developing a new course or unit/module for approval.

Micro-credentials: a type of short course which focuses on a specific study topic suitable for professional development, upskilling and pathways to further qualifications. Micro-credentials may be credit-bearing or non-credit bearing..

Non-award course: a structured course of learning (non-formal learning) that does not lead to an officially accredited AQF qualification or the award of a testamur. Non-award courses may be comprised of structured units of learning called 'units' or 'modules'.

Non credit-bearing micro-credential: a micro-credential which is taken for personal or professional development, and does not work towards an AQF qualification.

Proposer: the person submitting a new course concept for approval or a new unit/module for approval.

Re-approval: a process of regular evaluation by Academic Board (or its sub-committees) of a previously approved course to ensure currency, quality, viability and relevance of content, delivery and outcomes.

Self-accrediting provider: a higher education provider⁵ which has been given responsibility to accredit (approve) its own qualifications and non-award courses. As an Australian university, CQUniversity is a self-accrediting provider which delivers higher education qualifications that comply with the relevant titles and descriptors in the AQF and non-award courses.

⁵ 'Higher education provider' is defined in the [AQF Glossary of Terminology](#).

Self-evaluation: an ongoing process that is built into all activities for continuous improvement; it might lead to major or minor changes to enhance activity.

8 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Authorities and Delegations Register](#)

[Awards Policy and Procedure](#)

[Business Case Template](#)

[Course Committee Terms of Reference](#)

[Course Review Panel Terms of Reference](#)

[CQUniversity Brand Guideline](#) (see the Global Brand and Marketing StaffNet page)

[Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) (Cwlth)

[ELICOS Standards 2018](#) (Cwlth)

[Graduate Attributes](#)

[Learning and Teaching Framework](#)

[National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (Cwlth)

[Partnerships Policy and Procedure](#)

Report and coversheet templates

[Course Review Panel Report Template](#)

[Course Review Panel Report – Work Plan Template](#)

Micro-credential Review Report Template (under development, contact Learning Design and Innovation)

9 FEEDBACK

9.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

10 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Delegated Approval Authority	N/A
Advisory Committee	Curriculum Committee
Required consultation	N/A
Administrator	Director Learning Design and Innovation
Next Review Date	24/11/2024

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Academic Board 26/11/2014
Amendment Authority and Date	Learning and Teaching Committee 15/11/2017; Legislative updates 5/03/2018; Learning and Teaching Committee 22/04/2020; Editorial amendment 25/05/2020; Editorial amendment 23/07/2020; Academic Board 24/11/2021; Editorial amendment 20/09/2022; Editorial amendments 04/01/2023.
Notes	This document replaced the Non-Award Programs Policy and Procedure (effective date 01/01/2015). This document was formerly known as the Non-Award Course Policy and Procedure (last approved 06/04/2020).