

**University Policy on Cohort Monitoring**

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| Policy Approver: | Academic Board |
| Policy Steward: | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) |
| Policy Administrator: | Academic Secretary |
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# Purpose

## The University aims for excellence and is committed to assuring the quality of its academic activities and student outcomes. The University’s cohort monitoring framework is a fundamental element of that academic quality assurance and enhancement to improve student outcomes. The University is committed to implement review and improvement activities that include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including analyses of progression rates, retention rates, and completion rates.

## This policy sets out the principles governing the systematic approach to monitoring student performance at a cohort level and to facilitate evidence-based improvements with regard to all aspects of academic activities, both locally (e.g. delivery of a course of study at school level) and institutionally that is sufficient to diagnose, address and prevent issues and risks with identified cohorts..

# Scope

## The Cohort Monitoring Policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students, including international students covered under the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000. This policy does not apply to HDR students.

# General Principles

## UWA's Cohort Monitoring Policy is guided by the following principles:

1. informs strategic planning and performance evaluation and is part of the University's Quality and Standards Framework
2. is evidenced-based and is both strategic and operational in focus
3. informs the development and improvement of retention rates, progression rates and completion rates;
4. is a continuous process which closes the loop on previously identified issues and actions.

## Integration of strategic priorities for monitoring cohorts with the operational processes of the University is achieved through:

1. a focus on improvement, enhancement and regular, constructive reflection leading to an improved student outcome in identified cohorts;
2. an understanding that quality in student outcomes is a goal common to all members of the University;
3. the identification and allocation of responsibilities for student success;
4. the use of meaningful indicators to measure cohort performance and outcomes, and
5. openness of reporting on quality assurance and quality improvement in cohorts across the University.

## The University’s quality assurance and continuous improvement processes for monitoring cohorts operate within the following regulatory framework:

1. the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), which is the national regulator for Australia’s higher education sector. TEQSA regulates and assures the quality of Australia’s higher education providers through the [Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639) (HESF) (Cwlth)*,* which requires that institutions undertake monitoring of student performance at a cohort level with a view to developing a detailed understanding of the performance of their students and to create an evidence base for improvements in all aspects of academic activities.
2. the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01182)(the National Code) (Cwlth), which sets out nationally consistent standards under the (Cwlth) to support providers to deliver quality education and training to overseas students, and
3. the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) is a register of Australian education institutions that recruit, enrol and teach overseas students. CRICOS registration allows providers to offer courses to overseas students studying or intending to study in Australia on student visas. CRICOS lists all Australian education providers approved.

## The University adopts a structured approach to the monitoring of identified cohorts which involves, where applicable, the following:

1. Cohort Monitoring: occurs in all courses and unit sets through established mechanisms and processes.;
2. Priority Review of identified cohort(s): Priority review of identified cohorts are conducted for any course or unit set that has been flagged through the Biannual Cohort Monitoring schedule and has detected areas of risk and developing an evidence-based diagnostic understanding of risks and causal factors to improve performance and prevent future under-performance of identified cohorts;
3. Biannual schedule for cohort monitoring: An indicative biannual schedule for cohort monitoring to demonstrate continuous self-monitoring and improvement activities year on year in line with the HESF requirements and institutional quality assurance mechanisms.

# Cohort Monitoring Methodology and Quality Assurance

## The University’s Cohort Monitoring methodology includes, but not limited to, the following:

1. a focus on standards, evidence and outcomes;
2. benchmarking exercise to establish comparative measures guide evaluation;
3. alignment with any external regulatory requirements; and
4. evaluation of future opportunities in the context of the University’s strategic goals, resources and planning activities, and increase in student performance.

## Cohort Monitoring is data-driven based on a range of performance indicators, supplemented by qualitative insights and risk analysis.

## The University aims to use multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data in the evaluation of cohort performance, including feedback from staff, students and stakeholders.

## The University is committed to conducting biannual Cohort Monitoring which is undertaken every year as specified in this policy and in accordance with the relevant procedures.

## On an annual basis, the AQSC reviews the performance of the cohorts admitted to the University based on the University's cohort performance data and any additional strategic measures as determined by the University from time to time, on advice from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for identified cohorts.

## The Biannual conduct of Cohort Monitoring may identify cohorts that are of concern and may initiate a response by way of producing a Cohort Action Plan with measurable targeted improvements.

## Cohort Action Plans are approved jointly by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of Academic Board.

## Monitoring of progress towards Cohort Action Plans is undertaken by AQSC, which reports annually to Academic Board on progress.

# Responsibilities

## Quality management with a focus on improvement, enhancement and regular, constructive reflection leading to an improved student outcome in identified cohorts is the responsibility of all organisational units and all staff.

## The Academic Board is responsible to Senate for providing quality assurance in respect of academic activities as specified in the UWA Statute.

## The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education ensures that strategies and activities are in place to enhance quality management and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Act 2011 across the University.

## The Chair of Academic Board has governance oversight of all Biannual Cohort Monitoring.

## Responsibilities for managing other mechanisms for assuring and improving quality are included in relevant policies and procedures.

# Definitions –

Commonly defined terms are in the UWA Policy Library Glossary.

In this policy and any associated procedures,

**the University** means The University of Western Australia

**AQSC** refers to the University's Academic Quality and Standards Committee

**a course** refers to a plan of study which may include a major within an undergraduate degree course, undergraduate degree course at AQF Level 7, honours courses at AQF Level 8, and postgraduate courses at AQF Level 8, Level 9 and Level 10

**benchmarking** means the comparison of performance and process against best practice and performance in the higher education sector or elsewhere with the aim of improving University courses, programs and teaching. Wherever possible, national and international reference points are used.

**continuous improvement** means the ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation of the performance of cohorts.