



Academic Quality Assurance Framework Policy

Policy UP 22/1 (F22613)

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| Approver | Academic Board |
| Sponsor | Chair of the Academic Board |
| Owner | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) |
| Secretary | Academic Secretary |
| Policy Type | Academic |
| Policy Category | Academic Governance |

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The University is committed to ensuring that there is an oversight of academic quality assurance to:
 - (1) ensure the integrity and quality of its status as a registered higher education provider;
 - (2) meet the University's higher education legislative and regulatory requirements; and
 - (3) promote and support the achievement of high standards.
- 1.2 The University has an Academic Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) underpinned by policies and procedures and a regular cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting, reviewing and performance enhancement that collectively achieve effective academic oversight of the academic quality of teaching, learning, research, improvement of the content, delivery and assessment of all of its Higher Education courses, and the student experience.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Academic Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) policy is to describe the University's approach to quality assurance by embedding principles of good practice in quality and compliance management in accordance with the quality standards of its regulatory bodies through a system of mature quality assurance processes, evidence-based decision-making, compliance auditing and the capture and implementation of continuous improvement.

2 Definitions

In this policy and any associated procedures,

AQASU is the Academic Quality Assurance and Standards Unit that headed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) within the Office of the deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Benchmarking is the process of measuring and monitoring outcomes against predetermined standards
continuous improvement means the ongoing process of change for the purpose of improvement to practices and processes

Framework refers to the system which sets out the instruments to carry out quality control, quality assurance and continuous improvement

Quality Assurance means the program of activities to ensure that standards are maintained, and outputs are of the desired quality

Quality Cycle refers to the cyclic process of planning, quality improvement, quality control, quality and data reporting and quality improvement, including but not limited to benchmarking, audits, reviews and program or course review

Standing Committee refers to permanent committees established by a parent committee under the University's governance framework

Sub-committee refers to any committee established by a standing committee

University Executive refers to principal officers of the University namely, the Vice-Chancellor, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Chief Financial Officer

University is The University of Western Australia, and any and all subsidiary or associated entities.

University Community refers to all individuals who engage in University activity and/or use University property.

3 Scope

- 3.1 The AQAF policy applies to:

- (1) governance bodies and committees of the University;
- (2) staff of the University, particularly members of the University Executive in exercising designated responsibilities and leadership to embed a culture of Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement across the University;
- (3) all organisational units, campuses, staff and functions of the University, inclusive of the entire University community including students and partners of the University located locally, interstate and overseas.

3.2 The AQAF encompasses all areas of University activity and enterprise, including:

- (a) governance including, corporate and academic governance and accountability;
- (b) student participation and attainment (including admission, granting of credit and recognition of prior learning, orientation and progression, learning outcomes and assessment, qualifications and certification, cohort monitoring, English Language Competence monitoring);
- (c) integrity (academic and research integrity)
- (d) learning environment (including facilities and infrastructure, library services, accessibility support, diversity and equity, wellbeing and safety, student grievances (appeals) and complaints);
- (e) teaching (including course design, staffing, learning resources and educational support);
- (f) research and research training, including joint PhD programs with external institutions;
- (g) institutional quality assurance (including course approval, monitoring, review, improvement and accreditation, academic and research integrity, delivery with other parties);
- (h) representation, information, and information management (including communications, marketing, and promotion);
- (i) third party provide educational partnerships (e.g. UWA College Pathways, India Campus);
- (j) English Language Programs delivered by the Centre for English Language Teaching;
- (k) external engagement and environment; and
- (l) international operations.

4 Principles of the Academic Quality Assurance Framework

4.1 The University's AQAF is whole-of-institution mechanism that links strategic principles and strategic directions with planning and best practice in quality and compliance management.

4.2 The University's AQAF strives towards:

- (1) consistency rather than standardisation. There are agreed quality assurance processes but with some flexibility for schools and other organisational units to determine how they meet the intended outcomes of the process. The Academic Quality Assurance and Standards Unit (AQASU) within the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) provides a co-ordinated approach to quality assurance across Schools and organisational units across the campus to promote consistency. Consistency is achieved by:
 - (a) implementing quality control processes to ensure the minimum standards required by the Regulators are achieved.
 - (b) adopting agreed methodologies to capture, record and evaluate key outcomes to enable appropriate management responses.
 - (c) providing clear and consistent leadership in the implementation and maintenance of quality systems.
 - (d) establishing quality assurance processes to ensure that the University activities are being completed or delivered in a consistent and timely manner. This includes the reporting of the results of all reviews, audits, feedback, and complaints to the relevant standing committee.
- (2) accountability by way of:
 - (a) ensuring that the University's academic activities are well measured and informed, with transparent decision-making in line with the University's governance systems.
 - (b) implementing a consistent institutional approach across all operational areas in measured areas of quality control.
 - (c) ensuring that strategic oversight and compliance with External and Internal standards and requirements resides at the highest levels of University governance.
 - (d) recognising shared responsibility for the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of the University's academic provision. They recognise the broad involvement of academic staff,

students and other stakeholders, working in partnership through membership of School, and University committees as well as other organisational entities.

- (e) delegating authority through the Delegations of Academic Authority.
- (3) continuous improvement through the adoption of a quality compliance management system and associated assurance program (cycle of Plan, Do, Review and Improve) to drive the process of self-review underpinned by external benchmarking for professional accreditation, academic quality and outcomes, reflection, continuous improvement and accountability to assure internal and external accreditation, registration and relevant audits. The AQASU within the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) in the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Portfolio actively plans for quality cycle of the University as well as seeking opportunities to enhance best practice through continuous improvement.
- (4) alignment with the University's risk management principles. The University's quality assurance processes are designed to be proportionate to the risk attached to the activity they are assuring, especially in relation to collaborative provision. Documentation requirements seek to ensure that students and other stakeholders are able to get clear and accurate information about courses of study which lead to a UWA award, and clarity to the University's partners with respect to the maintenance of the academic standards of the University's awards.
- (5) ensuring that quality processes are clearly communicated to staff and students with good practice being identified and shared across the University to aid quality enhancement. The quality assurance framework is based on peer review and involve a constructive dialogue between all those involved in the processes.
- (6) proactive management of academic risks through the identification, assessment, and mitigation of potential threats to academic integrity, quality, and compliance. This includes:
 - (a) embedding risk assessment protocols within academic planning and review processes to ensure early detection of issues that may impact academic standards or student outcomes.
 - (b) maintaining a dynamic risk register for academic activities, regularly updated and reviewed by relevant governance bodies.
 - (c) ensuring that academic risk management is integrated with institutional risk frameworks, enabling coordinated responses across operational and strategic levels.
 - (d) fostering a culture of awareness and responsiveness among academic staff and leadership to emerging risks, including those related to curriculum relevance, assessment integrity, and external regulatory changes.

5 Elements of the Academic Quality Assurance Framework

5.1 The Academic Quality Assurance Framework comprises the following elements, which are inter-related and act to draw together diverse individuals and information in a coherent and holistic review of quality:

- (a) Legislation and regulatory requirements;
- (b) University Governance Arrangements;
- (c) Quality Control & Monitoring; and
- (d) Academic risk management.

5.2 **Legislation and Regulatory Requirements**

(1) The statutory requirements of the following legislations and regulatory requirements are:

- (a) Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS);
- (b) ESOS Regulations 2019;
- (c) ESOS (Registration Charges) Act 1997;
- (d) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (The National Code);
- (e) ELICOS Standards 2018;
- (f) Education Services for Overseas Students (Foundation Program Standards) Instrument 2021;
- (g) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011;
- (h) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021;
- (i) Australian Qualifications Framework;

- (j) Regulatory bodies for professional accreditation of University qualifications; and
- (k) Other relevant legislation and amendments which may arise from time to time.

5.3 **University Governance Arrangements** - The University's academic governance arrangements ensure appropriate strategic and operational oversight of the quality and standards of UWA's academic activities. This includes the following:

- (1) The Senate – The Senate is the highest level of governing body constituted in accordance with Standard 6 of the Higher education Standards Framework 2021. The UWA Statute outlines the Senate's powers, roles and responsibilities on corporate governance and the oversight and accountability for the award of higher education awards/qualifications.
- (2) Academic Board – The Academic Board is the University's peak governing body for academic matters and is responsible to the Senate for assuring quality, integrity and the maintenance of standards in all academic activities including teaching, scholarship and research and compliance with relevant external regulatory requirements, including the Higher Education Standards Framework. The Academic Board has oversight of the work, operations and governance of the following standing committees:
 - (a) Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) – The AQSC is a standing committee of the Academic Board. The conduct of quality assurance processes is delegated by Academic Board to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. The AQSC monitors the University's overall compliance with the requirements of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency; ensures alignment of relevant University policies and procedures with the requirements issued by external regulatory agencies and professional accreditation bodies as they relate to learning, teaching, research training and assessment; and monitor quality and standard of undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and higher degree by research degree courses taught to ensure that the University's academic quality and standards framework is implemented appropriately.
 - (b) Board of the Higher Degree Research (BHDR) – The BGRS is a standing committee of the Academic Board. It advises and make recommendations to the Academic Board/Council and/or other University bodies or officers, as appropriate, on matters relating to postgraduate research, research training and supervision and on policy matters related to the establishment and administration of postgraduate research awards within the University; and deals exclusively with all matters, including review of complex cases, relating to admission, enrolment, candidature management, supervision and examination of candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and the degrees of Master by Research by thesis as are approved by the Academic Board.
 - (c) University Curriculum and Admission Standards Committee (UCASC) – The UCASC is a standing committee of the Academic Board. The University Curriculum and Admission Standards Committee oversees coursework curriculum and admission standards across the University. It advises the Academic Board on new award courses and key policy issues, and has authority to approve curriculum changes, non-award offerings, entry requirements, recognition of prior learning, and admission standards for professional programs. The committee also sets ATAR/WAM thresholds and quotas, manages academic pathways and articulation agreements, provides curriculum advice to schools, oversees the UWA College Academic Pathways Committee, and reports annually to the Academic Board. To facilitate knowledge domain specific input in the approval of curriculum proposals, the University's five Boards of Studies operate as sub-committees of the UCC and provide detailed feedback on broader proposals while approving detailed proposals under delegated authority.
 - (d) University Education Committee (UEC) – The UEC is a standing committee of the Academic Board. The University Education Committee provides strategic oversight and leadership for the University's Education Strategy. It ensures the strategy aligns with the broader institutional plan, monitors progress against key performance indicators, and identifies strategic risks that may affect its successful implementation. The committee also keeps track of internal and external developments in the education landscape and advises the Academic Board on future directions and policy needs. A key part of its role is promoting best practice in academic

integrity by supporting consistent and educative approaches to misconduct management and monitoring emerging trends and risks in this area. The committee also advises on the development of education-related policies and oversees their implementation and ongoing review.

- (e) University Research Committee (URC) - The URC is a standing committee of Academic Board. The University Research Committee provides strategic leadership for the University's research agenda. It advises the Academic Council and University Executive on research priorities and ensures that school-level research strategies align with institutional goals. The committee oversees the research components of the University's Strategic Plan, including higher degrees by research, research infrastructure, academic enterprise, and engagement with research partners and end-users. It monitors the University's response to national and international research policies and assessment frameworks, such as the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). The committee also ensures robust governance of research practices, including compliance with legislation and regulations relating to research involving humans, animals, biological hazards and foreign entities. Working closely with the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), it helps develop initiatives to enhance research performance, including strategic funding, HDR scholarships and cross-disciplinary research opportunities.
- (f) University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) – The ULTC is a sub-committee of the Academic Board and a standing Committee of the University Education Committee. The ULTC provides strategic leadership and oversight of learning and teaching across the University. It advises the Academic Board on the quality of learning and teaching, related policies, evidence-based improvements, digital transformation, and key indicators of student satisfaction. The committee monitors the implementation of learning and teaching policies, educational technologies, and initiatives that support and recognise high-quality teaching. It also promotes an inclusive and enriching student experience by guiding strategies that enhance students' physical, digital and social environments, strengthen engagement across the student lifecycle, and foster participation, success, diversity, safety and global connectedness. In addition, the committee contributes to University and School planning in relation to learning and teaching and reports annually to the Academic Board on its activities.
- (g) University Strategic Enterprise Education Council (USEEC) – The USEEC is a sub-committee of the Academic Board and a standing Committee of the University Education Committee. The University Strategic Enterprise Education Council leads the University's enterprise education agenda by aligning education, research and industry engagement with institutional strategic priorities. It develops and oversees a University-wide framework that embeds industry partnerships, digital transformation, ethical AI governance and interdisciplinary collaboration into teaching and research. The Council champions strategic initiatives—including industry-integrated learning, research commercialisation linked to education, and global and regional partnership development—and supports schools to co-design curricula with industry. It also evaluates enterprise-focused course and unit proposals, ensures alignment with market trends, monitors performance indicators such as employability and engagement outcomes, and reports annually to senior University leadership.
- (h) Coursework Scholarships Committee (CSC) - The CSC is a sub-committee of the Academic Board and a standing Committee of the University Education Committee. The Coursework Scholarships Committee provides University-level oversight of all matters relating to coursework scholarships. It advises on policies governing the establishment and administration of scholarship awards, recommends funding and budget strategies, and ensures that academic and eligibility standards are applied consistently and in line with University legislation, equity principles and open competition. The Committee manages all scholarship matters arising from Deeds of Gift and externally funded awards, and on behalf of the Academic Board, oversees and approves the establishment of new coursework scholarships. It ensures scholarship conditions are accurate, clear and compliant with University policy, and recommends actions to maintain appropriate standards across all coursework scholarship processes.

5.4 Quality Control & Monitoring

- (1) Academic Integrity monitoring - The University, guided by its Academic Integrity Policy, monitors the data collected on Academic Integrity breaches in learning and teaching activities at the University and additionally those collected by any other party involved in the provision of higher education for the University, on an annual cycle, to inform ongoing quality improvement of the University's Academic Integrity support and processes.
- (2) University entry and Academic Standards monitoring – The University has developed policies and procedures and methods in the assessment of Academic and entry Standards. The University policy on Assessment specifies the quality control mechanisms for ensuring that methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment. (Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 Standard 1.4.3). The Admissions Policy and the Adequate research Preparation Policy set the standards for entry into the University for undertaking coursework study and research training respectively.
- (3) External Benchmarking - The University participates in benchmarking activities to ensure ongoing comparability with other higher education courses where applicable and to compare the performance and standards on teaching, student learning outcomes and engagement and graduate outcomes.
- (4) Course Monitoring - The Course and School Review Policy specifies the mechanisms and cycles for reviewing and reporting on courses and schools and for ensuring adequate benchmarking processes and procedures are in place. Data relating to student outcomes and student performance is collected, monitored and benchmarked to ensure ongoing comparability with other higher education courses, and for the purposes of review, reflection and improvement.
- (5) Student Cohort monitoring – The University has several mechanisms for identifying students that are at risk of not performing well (this could be a predicted risk or an observed risk). This enables the University to intervene early, to support students and mitigate against these risks occurring in the future. Typical indicators of student performance include English Language competency monitoring, retention rates, progression rates, completion rates, grade distributions, student satisfaction, and graduate success. The Academic Quality and Standards Committee is required to monitor its compliance of the higher education legislative and regulatory requirements noted above, and when required, provide reports to the relevant governing bodies and the University Executive.
- (6) Higher Education Academic Scholarship – Scholarship that informs teaching is an essential characteristic of higher education providers, as is engagement with advanced knowledge and inquiry. The University Policy on Higher Education Academic Scholarship is the mechanism through which the University's compliance with the following Higher Education Standard Thresholds 2021 are monitored:
 - scholarship informs course design; the content and learning activities of a course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry – standard 3.1.2
 - teaching staff maintain knowledge of their field of teaching through continuing scholarship; teaching and assessment principles are contemporary and relevant to the discipline – standard 3.2.3
 - scholarship characterises the environment of research training – standard 4.2.2.
- (7) External Professional Accreditation Standards monitoring – The Academic Quality and Standards committee has a process to ensure that the University's professional courses continue to meet relevant accreditation standards across the accreditation period.
- (8) Student experience monitoring – The University Policy on Student experience or Learning and Teaching is the instrument that is used as a basis for establishing surveys for collecting student feedback about student learning and teaching.
- (9) Quality and compliance monitoring (assurance activities) – Assuring relevant University's academic and corporate operations against the regulatory standards and requirements that were established under the TEQSA Act 2011 and ESOS Act 2000 in accordance with an approved Quality and Compliance Management System and Assurance Program.

6 Accountabilities and Responsibilities

- (1) the Senate is accountable to the Australian Government and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency for Quality Assurance and compliance with External Standards by the University;
- (2) the Vice-Chancellor is responsible and accountable to the Senate for University management and Quality Assurance and compliance with External Standards across all of the University's activities and enterprises;

- (3) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience), in collaboration with the AQASU within the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in the areas of, academic integrity, student participation, teaching and institutional quality assurance, and student grievances and complaints;
- (4) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) is responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in the areas of research, research training, academic research integrity;
- (5) the Head of school is responsible for Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement, Quality Improvement and compliance with relevant External Standards and Internal Standards in the areas of staffing / scholarship, learning and teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, and research and research training;
- (6) all employees of the University, through their supervisor, are responsible and accountable to their supervisor, for implementing the University's Quality Assurance Cycle including improvement actions and compliance with External Standards and Internal Standards as they pertain to each employee's work and area of operation;
- (7) students and other members of the University community are important contributors to the University's Quality Assurance Cycle; and
- (8) the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) through the AQASU has the University-wide responsibility for coordinating and conducting quality assurances processes. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is Chair to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee which is responsible for the University's Quality Assurance and Continuous improvement.
- (9) the AQASU is responsible for establishing and implementing an approved Quality and Compliance Management System and Assurance Program in consultation with University governance committees, management, University Executive and other key personnel as appropriate.

7 **Framework ownership and support**

- (1) Academic Board is responsible for and approves this framework.
- (2) The Academic Quality and Standards Committee is responsible for enforcement of, and compliance with, this framework, ensuring that its principles and statements are observed.
