

Courses Lifecycle - Professional Accreditation and Industry Recognition Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure provides direction on the requirements and processes for professional accreditation and industry recognition of all VU courses.

Section 2 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(2) HESF: 1.4.2 Learning Outcomes and Assessment; 3.1.5 Course Design; 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation; 7.1 Representation; 7.3 Information Management

(3) Standards for RTOs: Standard 4.1(j)

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to:

- a. Higher Education and Vocational Education Award courses offered by Victoria University which require accreditation by an external professional industry body in order that graduates may practice in the professional field (Professional Accreditation);
- b. Higher Education and Vocational Education Award courses offered by Victoria University where industry accreditation or recognition is advantageous or desirable, but not a requirement of graduate practice (Industry Recognition); and
- c. Non-Award courses offered by Victoria University which require accreditation by an external professional industry body for the resulting certification to be valid (e.g. Construction Induction (White Card) certification).

Section 4 - Definitions

(5) Accrediting body – The body responsible for accrediting courses and/or disciplines on behalf of the profession.

(6) Accreditation submission – The documentation submitted by the University to the accrediting body as a set requirement of the accreditation process.

(7) Industry Recognition

(8) Professional accreditation – Accreditation intended to ensure that a course of study meets essential criteria in the training and education of its students in the relevant professional discipline, and that graduates from that discipline achieve the professional competencies and learning outcomes necessary for entry into the relevant level of professional practice. Courses must be accredited by the relevant accrediting body for course graduates to be registered or otherwise licensed to practice in a regulated profession.

(9) Registration – Registration standards which apply to individual practitioners.

Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

(10) [Courses Lifecycle Policy](#)

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Higher Education

Roles	Responsibilities
Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare draft submission Provide draft submission to Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) for checking Obtain Vice-Chancellor authorisation Submit accreditation documentation Arrange site visit Report on site visit Respond to accreditation report Develop and implement a plan addressing any issues identified as a result of the accreditation process Send a copy of the accreditation report, the response and the implementation plan to the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (HE), Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer and AQS
Directors of Learning and Teaching (or equivalent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the ongoing relationship with accreditation bodies, including monitoring changes to accreditation requirements
Academic Quality and Standards (AQS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist Colleges with preparing Accreditation Submissions as required Maintain the Register of Accredited Courses and the Register of Industry Recognised Courses (Non-Mandatory Accreditation) Perform annual check of all accreditations to ensure that they are still valid and conditions are still being met Perform all system-related recording and updating
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance activity (initial) - Present details of accreditation report response and implementation plan to Courses Committee and Academic Board Quality assurance activity (ongoing) - Ensure that accreditation reports are made available to program review committees and to audit reports HE Course Review Comprehensive Course Review/Annual Course Monitoring

Victoria University TAFE

Roles	Responsibilities
Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare draft submission Provide draft submission to Administration and Governance and Academic Quality and Standards for checking Obtain Senior Leadership Team (SLT) authorisation Submit accreditation documentation Arrange site visit Report on site visit Respond to accreditation report Develop and implement a plan addressing any issues identified as a result of the accreditation process Send a copy of the accreditation report, the response and the implementation plan to the Vice-Chancellor, Chief TAFE Officer, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer and Senior Manager, Administration and Governance

Roles	Responsibilities
TAFE Administration and Governance	Assist with preparing Accreditation Submissions as required Maintain the Register of Accredited Courses and the Register of Industry Recognised Courses (Non-Mandatory Accreditation) Perform annual check of all accreditations to ensure that they are still valid and conditions are still being met Perform all system-related recording and updating
Chief TAFE Officer	Quality assurance activity (initial) - Present details of accreditation report response and implementation plan to Courses Committee and Academic Board Quality assurance activity (ongoing) - Ensure that accreditation reports and audit reports are made available to course review committees and to audit reports

Part B - Overview

What is Professional Accreditation?

(11) Professional accreditation is required for courses leading to professions where public safety needs to be ensured by regulating the quality and content of learning undertaken.

(12) The purpose of accreditation is to ensure that a program of study meets essential criteria in the training of its graduates in particular fields. Professions in the health, building and education industries are frequently regulated in this way.

(13) Some accreditation bodies are required by law and have explicit statutory functions, while others fulfil responsibilities delegated from registering authorities.

(14) Professional accreditation requirements may include reference to the inherent requirements of study or of the regulated profession for which the course of study will qualify a graduate. Where accreditation requirements include inherent requirements, these must be addressed during course design and approval processes, in accordance with VU's [Courses Lifecycle - Inherent Requirements of Study Procedure](#).

What is Industry Recognition?

(15) Industry recognition is determined by the relevant industry organisation or body associated with the industry. Industry recognition is not required for graduates of a course to practice in a profession, but may be required for graduates to gain membership of a professional body, or desirable as a marker of quality.

(16) There are two types of Industry Recognition:

- a. Highly Desirable Recognition: This is where the industry recognition is a prerequisite for graduates to be members of the relevant professional body but not a pre-requisite for graduates to practice in the relevant profession. Associations may establish an accreditation function as part of their wider professional services. Highly Desirable Recognition may be very important or essential for successfully marketing the course to potential applicants.
- b. Optional Recognition: Various industry bodies may offer recognition options which are not tied to eligibility for graduate participation in professional bodies and may not have a widely recognised impact on perceived course quality. These kinds of recognition are optional and at the University's discretion.

(17) Industry Recognition may be sought when:

- a. the industry body's reputation is of sufficient stature that there is viable evidence to suggest that recognition from them will enhance the marketability of the course, either in Australia or internationally; or

- b. industry recognition is essential or desirable for course graduates to gain membership of professional, industry or other collegiate bodies, or obtain professional privileges of other kinds; or
- c. recognition by the industry body opens up potential informal linkages and opportunities for students as they are undergoing their course or after they graduate (e.g. internships, placements, information and networking events, and career assistance); or
- d. recognition by the industry body creates formal connections between the course and key employers in the field, which allow students or graduates preferential or exclusive access to scholarships or assistance, internships, and graduate recruitment.

Part C - Identifying Accreditation Needs

(18) Where a new course is proposed, the course proponent must determine if the course will require accreditation in order for graduates to be able to practice in a regulated profession. This occurs as part of the Course Approval processes specified in:

- a. [Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Accreditation \(HE\) Procedure](#);
- b. [Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Approval \(VET\) Procedure](#);
- c. [Courses Lifecycle - Non-Award Course Approval \(HE\) Procedure](#);
- d. [Courses Lifecycle - Non-Award Course Approval \(VET\) Procedure](#).

(19) Course design will be mindful of professional accreditation requirements at all stages of the process, in order to ensure an integrated approach to professional compliance and educational outcomes.

(20) Existing courses may identify new accreditation needs, either as part of course review processes or outside them.

(21) Existing courses that are accredited are also subject to cyclical reaccreditation requirements to retain their accredited status.

(22) Where a new double degree is proposed, both degrees must have the same accreditation status if both are creditable.

(23) Where a dual award is proposed, both awards must contribute to the achievement of the accreditation outcome, irrespective of different regulatory requirements for each award.

(24) Where an award at a lower AQF level than the destination course forms a potential pathway to an accredited qualification, the pathway must be declared to the accrediting body, and, where applicable, accreditation must also be sought for the pathway award.

(25) On an annual basis, courses are reviewed as part of the Annual Course Monitoring process. As part of that process, professional accreditation status and requirements are checked and, if necessary, remediated.

(26) Professional accreditation and industry recognition for HE courses is reassessed at least every five years as part of the Comprehensive Course Review process.

(27) Where a Higher Education course that is subject to professional accreditation undergoes a major change process (as outlined in the [Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Amendments \(HE\) Procedure](#)):

- a. the accrediting body must be consulted prior to making any resulting material changes to curriculum, course structure, work integrated learning, course nomenclature, or any other matter that is relevant to the basis of the accreditation; and
- b. the accrediting body must be advised in writing of the full range of the changes once they are made.

(28) In all Professional Accreditation situations, VU will engage constructively and iteratively with the relevant accrediting body to ensure that professional requirements are well understood and integrated into course design and amendments.

Part D - Pre-Accreditation Plans

(29) Where a need for professional accreditation has been identified as part of a Course Proposal, as part of External Referencing (see [Courses Lifecycle - External Referencing Procedure](#)), during Comprehensive Course Review, or in any other context, a brief Pre-Accreditation Plan must be developed by the College which is the course proponent.

(30) The Pre-Accreditation Plan should identify:

- a. the key stakeholders in the accreditation process;
- b. the main types of data or evidence needed to complete the submission requirements;
- c. the relationship between accreditation requirements and the inherent requirements of study for the course (see [Courses Lifecycle - Inherent Requirements of Study Procedure](#));
- d. the internal and external timeframes and milestones that must be met, including internal committee clearance dates;
- e. the resources needed to complete the accreditation; and
- f. any tools or specific system requirements prescribed by the accrediting body.

(31) AQS can assist Colleges with preparing Pre-Accreditation Plans.

(32) Pre-Accreditation Plans will form part of Course Proposal or Comprehensive Course Review documentation.

Part E - Preparing Submissions for Accreditation or Recognition

(33) When preparing a submission for accreditation or recognition, the following steps are undertaken:

- a. The Pre-Accreditation Plan is completed;
- b. A full copy of the current accreditation requirements is obtained by the College;
- c. The College initiates the development of a response, obtaining assistance and advice from AQS and other parts of the University as needed;
- d. The College works closely with the accrediting body to ensure that the submission is optimally presented and covers all requirements, including following (where provided) any available evidence guides, templates or specific instructions;
- e. The accreditation submission is approved by the College and then presented to the relevant sector Deputy Vice-Chancellor for approval to submit; and
- f. The accreditation submission is provided to the accrediting body.

Part F - Outcomes of Accreditation Processes

(34) A submission for accreditation has three potential outcomes. These are:

- a. Accreditation with no conditions;
- b. Accredited with conditions;
- c. Not accredited.

(35) Once an accrediting body's response is received, the College or VU TAFE will forward a copy of the letter of response, along with a full copy of the original submission, to AQS.

(36) Upon receipt of the response, if it has resulted in accreditation with or without conditions, AQS will:

- a. add the accreditation to the Register of Accredited Courses;
- b. note any conditions applied to the accreditation and with the College identify how they will be addressed (if required);
- c. note the reaccreditation or reporting cycle required by the accrediting body.

(37) Where a course does not receive accreditation:

- a. if this relates to reaccreditation for a course that is currently running, the failure to gain reaccreditation must be escalated to a critical incident management strategy, as losing accreditation will have very serious consequences for current students;
- b. if this relates to a proposed new course, the course will not proceed to be offered unless and until professional accreditation can be obtained.

Part G - Industry Recognition

(38) Where a College or VU TAFE determines that Industry Recognition would be advantageous, they will:

- a. work with AQS to prepare the submission in accordance with the requirements of the relevant industry body;
- b. present the submission to the relevant sector Deputy Vice-Chancellor for approval to submit;
- c. respond to any queries or requests by the industry body in assessing the submission.

(39) Once an industry body's response is received, the College will forward a copy of the letter of response, along with a full copy of the original submission, to AQS.

(40) Upon receipt of the response, if it has resulted in recognition, AQS will:

- a. add the information to the Register of Industry Recognised Courses;
- b. note any conditions applied to the recognition and identify how the College will address them (if required).

Part H - Reporting

(41) Where required as a condition of accreditation, VU will provide an annual report to the accrediting professional body on the status of the course, utilising data gathered in the Annual Course Monitoring process (for higher education courses) or through internal systems (for vocational education and relevant non-award courses). Data may include, but is not limited to:

- a. student admissions, such as new student numbers and the satisfaction of specified accreditation-related admission requirements (e.g. English language proficiency levels);
- b. student progression rates;
- c. any changes to course structure or mode;
- d. curriculum changes; and
- e. any other relevant matter which the accrediting body requires information.

(42) Mandatory reporting to accrediting bodies applies to some health, conduct and other matters involving students who may graduate into regulated professions. Accrediting bodies provide direction on what matters must be reported, with the guiding principle being the prevention of harm to individuals and the public. Matters that require mandatory reporting may arise through:

- a. student misconduct investigations or findings;
- b. actions taken by the University under the [Exclusion for Safety Reasons Regulations 2019](#); or
- c. verified information provided to VU by the student or another person.

(43) Where VU identifies that a mandatory report may need to be made, the appropriate staff member will make the report via the designated accrediting body process. Before making the report, the action must be approved by the Executive Dean (or delegate) of the student's College.

(44) The student must be informed that the University is making the report and what the substance of the report will be.

(45) After making the report, a notation must be added to the student's record that the report has been made.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	19th November 2021
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Industry Recognition" - A form of non-mandatory industry recognition that is undertaken at the discretion of the University.