Principles of Equivalence Policy

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) Victoria University (VU) offers courses through partnerships with other providers in Australia and offshore locations. The University has made a commitment to strengthen quality assurance of course delivery under this arrangement along with the intent to increase student growth.

(2) The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011 and the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2011 underpin the development of this policy. It is also underpinned by the TEQSA Information Sheet: TEQSA's Approach to Regulating the Offshore Provision of Regulated HE Awards, September 2013. The implementation of this policy is to ensure the University's commitment to:

a. robust quality assurance in all aspects of course and unit delivery;
b. achievement of equivalent learning outcomes to those of courses delivered directly by VU;
c. educational experience that focuses on students;
d. collegial collaboration with partner staff in course planning, design, delivery and assessment;
e. consideration of local circumstances in all matters of course and unit delivery.

(3) The purpose of this policy is to set out broad principles that underpin the delivery of Victoria University courses in partnership with other providers in Australia and offshore locations, excluding research qualifications. Models of delivery may comprise:

a. Full VU delivery — full delivery and assessment of the entire course is undertaken by staff directly employed by VU.
b. Joint delivery with partner — part of the delivery and/or assessment of the course is undertaken by staff directly employed by VU and part of the delivery and/or assessment is undertaken by partner staff.
c. Full delivery by partner — full delivery and assessment of the VU course or qualification is undertaken by staff employed by partner in accordance with the Principles of Equivalence Procedures.

(4) Equivalence in this Policy focuses on student learning outcomes and experience and is defined through principle statements of the Policy.

(5) The Academic Board has the overall oversight of the Policy and Procedures implementation and will receive academic quality assurance and improvement reports on a regular basis.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(6) This policy applies to:

a. Victoria University staff involved in course delivery in partnership with other providers.
b. Partner institution staff involved in course delivery on behalf of Victoria University.
c. Students undertaking Victoria University and externally-registered courses delivered in partnership with other providers.

Section 3 - Definitions

(7) Admission: Refers to the broad process that may result in entry to a University award course. This includes the application and the process of establishing eligibility criteria and ensuring students meet them; as well as the offer and enrolment processes.

(8) Applicant: Refers to a potential student who provides the information required as the basis for the selection process.

(9) Advanced Standing: Is a process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (may include formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determines the outcomes of an individual application for credit.

(10) Learning outcome: Is a statement identifying what students should have achieved as a result of successfully completing a unit and a course. The term includes elements of competency.

(11) Academic honesty: Is a commitment given to acknowledging the work and ideas of others that it is built upon.

(12) Assessment: Is a process used to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written, oral and practical methods. It also includes gathering information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of educational experiences; and it culminates when assessment results are used to improve student learning.

(13) Credit: Is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualification which reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification.

(14) Curriculum: Is a body of scholarly knowledge that includes goals for student learning, content, sequence, instructional methods and activities, instructional resources, evaluation and adjustments to teaching and learning processes based on experience and evaluation.

(15) Complaint: In the context of this policy, an expression of dissatisfaction that arises where a student, a VU or a Partner staff member considers that he or she has been disadvantaged because of an action, decision or omission within the control or responsibility of the University, related to an administrative, academic, teaching or research function or to a student's enrolment and includes complaints relating to allegations of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

(16) Complainant: The person who has made a complaint.

(17) Respondent: The person against whom a complaint is made.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

Student Selection, Admission and Enrolment Principles

Entry qualifying requirements

(18) Academic

a. The minimum academic level for admission to a course should provide students with adequate prior knowledge and skills to undertake the course successfully and be appropriate for the level under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF).

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(19) Delivery of a course in Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

    a. When a course is delivered entirely in LOTE or using a planned combination of English and LOTE, the entry requirements should ensure that students are able to undertake the course successfully. The course must comply with external and internal regulatory requirements and be delivered in accordance with The Use of Languages Other Than English in Award Course Delivery Policy.

(20) English language entry requirements

    a. The English requirements should be adequate to equip students to participate effectively in a course and achieve the expected learning outcomes in accordance with the [Admissions Policy](#).

Admission Process

(21) The student selection process must involve assessment of applicants against prescribed course entry requirements in accordance with the [Admissions Policy](#). Undertaken by appropriately qualified personnel in an equitable manner, admission decisions should be documented and recorded.

Advanced Standing and Learning Pathways

(22) Advanced Standing and Learning Pathways assessments should be undertaken in accordance with the [Courses and Pathways Lifecycle Policy](#). The credit given toward a course should preserve the integrity of learning outcomes and course requirements without disadvantaging students.

Enrolment Process

(23) Enrolment occurs in a timely manner and enrolment records are accurately maintained.

Orientation for Students Principles

(24) All students are expected to be provided with a culturally appropriate orientation that familiarises them with policies, grievance processes and student services available.

Staff Requirements Principles

Qualifications and requirements of teaching staff

(25) Minimum qualifications for staff teaching in a course should be assessed to ensure that they meet the requirements of relevant Australian Qualification Framework levels. Qualifications also need to conform to the in-country government's requirements.

Teaching Staff Support Principles

Teaching staff induction

(26) An induction program for VU and partner staff who are involved in teaching should facilitate effective learning for students in a particular course and take into account relevant cultural contexts.

Learning and Teaching Information

(27) Partner teaching staff will be provided with sufficient information to deliver a unit of study or its components.

Ongoing Academic Support for Partner Teaching Staff

(28) Partner staff should have access to equivalent resources, support and information for the courses in which they

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are teaching.

Facilities, Equipment and Teaching Resources Principles

(29) Students and staff should have sufficient access to facilities, equipment and teaching resources to enable them to meet the learning outcomes of the course in accordance with the Learning and Teaching Policy .

Curriculum Standards Principles

(30) Course design should ensure equivalent learning outcomes to those delivered directly by VU. Internationalisation and/or customisation of curriculum may be required to ensure the relevance of learning outcomes in a local context. The relevant approvals will occur in accordance with the [Courses and Pathways Lifecycle Policy](#).

Assessment Standards Principles

(31) Assessment tasks should cover equivalent learning outcomes to those delivered directly by VU; use specified explicit criteria and be administered at an appropriate level in accordance with the [Student Assessment and Progress Policy](#). Moderation processes should be undertaken to ensure agreed assessment standards between VU and partner staff.

Student Progress and Performance Principles

(32) VU and partner teaching staff will have in place strategies (including progressive assessment) to aid in identifying students who are not making satisfactory progress and provide necessary support in accordance with the [Student Assessment and Progress Policy](#). Monitoring of student performance between cohorts is undertaken regularly.

Academic Honesty Principles

(33) VU and partner teaching staff will collaborate to maintain academic honesty in learning and teaching activities in accordance with the [Academic Honesty and Preventing Plagiarism Policy](#). Students will be equipped with practical skills to prevent them from committing academic dishonesty.

Student Evaluation Principles

(34) VU students in all locations will be able to provide evaluation of learning and teaching. Results of evaluations will be provided to relevant staff to be used in a regular and systematic review of the course delivery in accordance with the Student Evaluation Survey Policy.

Student Support Principles

(35) Arrangements for the delivery of a course must provide students with sufficient access to appropriate academic, learning and personal support services. Services will be provided in equitable and inclusive ways.

Course Approval and Review Processes Principles

(36) The approval process for new course delivery in all locations will comply with the [Courses and Pathways Lifecycle Policy](#) and Procedures which specifies compliance with the Australian Qualifications Framework and endorsement by the Academic Board.

(37) VU courses will be subject to systematic internal and external review processes to maintain the integrity of the course and ensure continuous improvement. Review processes will be undertaken in accordance with the [Courses and Pathways Lifecycle Policy](#) and Procedures.

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Course Discontinuation Principles

(38) If a course is discontinued there will be effective teach out or transition plans for all enrolled students to ensure that these students are not disadvantaged. Course cessation and student transition will be conducted in accordance with the [Courses and Pathways Lifecycle Policy](#) and the [Course Cessation and Student Transition Procedure](#).

Complaints Resolution, Review and Appeal Principles

(39) Students, VU and partner staff are able to make complaints about academic-related and other issues. Complaint resolution processes should ensure impartiality, confidentiality and fairness for both complainant and respondent. Processes relating to student complaints should be undertaken in accordance with the Student Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedures.

Application of VU Policies Principles

(40) The application of VU policies should not disadvantage students in meeting the learning outcomes of courses. Students should have adequate access to VU policies relating to course delivery.

Courses that are not offered at VU Melbourne

(41) The delivery of courses offered in locations other than VU Melbourne will have quality assurance arrangements endorsed by the Academic Board. The arrangements may include input provided by professional accrediting agencies and inclusion of a generic set of units of study in a similar course at VU Melbourne. Consistent with The Use of Languages Other Than English in Award Course Delivery, the courses under this principle should be delivered entirely in English.

Section 5 - Procedures

(42) See [Principles of Equivalence Procedures](#).

Section 6 - Guidelines

(43) Nil

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