Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Accreditation (HE) Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure provides direction on the requirements for the accreditation of new Higher Education (HE) Award courses, new majors, new minors and new units.

(2) HE Award courses include:

a. Single qualification courses;
b. Double degrees; and
c. Double qualifications.

(3) It also provides direction on the re-accreditation process undertaken periodically for all HE Award courses.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to:

a. The accreditation of all new HE Award courses; and
b. The re-accreditation of HE Award courses following a Comprehensive Course Review.

(5) This Procedure does not apply to:

a. The making of amendments and modifications to HE Award courses and components (Refer to Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Amendments (HE) Procedure).
b. The approval of any Non-Award courses.
c. The approval of Higher Degrees by Research programs (Refer to Courses Lifecycle - Course Approval Procedure - Higher Degrees by Research).
d. The approval of Vocational Education and Training (VET) Award courses (Refer to Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Approval (VET) Procedure).

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(6) Courses Lifecycle Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

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Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
College staff	Prepare Award course curriculum documentation as guided by template.
College Course Advisory Group or equivalent	Considers and recommends the Award course curriculum proposal to the Executive Dean or delegate.
Executive Dean of College or delegate	Recommends the Award course curriculum proposal to the Courses Committee of Academic Board.
Courses Committee	Considers and recommends the Award course curriculum proposal to Academic Board.
Academic Board	Via acceptance of Courses Committee minutes, endorses the Award course curriculum proposal for final approval.
Director, Academic Quality and Standards	Reviews the final, endorsed course curriculum proposal to ensure it is complete and ready for approval. Forwards the Award course curriculum proposal to the Vice-Chancellor for signature.
Vice-Chancellor or delegate	Approves the Award course curriculum proposal, which has the effect of: a) accrediting the course; and b) declaring the Award, if a new Award of the University is being created.

Part B - General

(7) Victoria University (VU) is a self-accrediting higher education provider. This means that VU is responsible for:

a. interpreting the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth) (HESF), and;
b. judging whether these will be appropriately applied and met throughout the development, approval, delivery and discontinuance of an Award course.

(8) In exercising this authority, VU is also responsible for ensuring that compliance across all the HESF is sustained throughout all HE operations.

(9) For HE Award courses, VU meets these requirements through a rigorous Award course accreditation and re-accreditation process.

Part C - Before Accreditation

(10) Prior to Award course accreditation, a Course Proposal and Business Case must be prepared for all proposed new HE Award courses or new majors (Refer to Courses Lifecycle - Concept Proposal and Business Case (HE) Procedure).

(11) Award course development cannot commence until the Course Proposal and Business Case is endorsed as prescribed in that Procedure.

Part D - Accrediting a New HE Award Course

Requirements for Accreditation

(12) The accreditation of a new Award course must comply with:

a. The requirements of the HESF;
b. All other external regulatory requirements including those imposed by the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework as appropriate;
c. External requirements of relevant professional accrediting and disciplinary bodies;
d. Internal requirements such as availability of specialist staff and resources as needed;
e. Institutional strategic directions and curriculum requirements at the time; and
f. Approved quality assurance arrangements with external partners.

Preparing the Award Course Curriculum Proposal

(13) The College must develop an Award Course Curriculum Proposal. This documentation is prepared within the template provided, with fields that assist preparers in understanding the questions.

(14) All Award Course Curriculum Proposals must include detailed learning and teaching information, including:

a. Course learning outcomes.
b. Admission requirements by cohort.
c. Educational rationale for the course.
d. Course structure, including course completion rules.
e. Description, structure and completion rules for majors and minors.
f. Work-Integrated Learning components.
g. Relationship to the VU Graduate Capabilities.

(15) Where an Award course will be offered to international students, CRICOS details must also be included (Refer to Courses Lifecycle - Management of the CRICOS Register (HE) Procedure).

(16) If the Award course requires Professional Accreditation, details must be provided regarding this matter. Evidence of consultation with relevant Professional Accreditation bodies is required. (Refer to Courses Lifecycle - Professional Accreditation and Industry Recognition Procedure)

(17) Where an Award course is to be offered interstate or offshore, key quality assurance details as directed by the template must also be provided regarding the particular delivery location and / or partner arrangement. Evidence of consultation with relevant partners is also required.

Part E - Accrediting New Majors

(18) Where new Award majors are proposed to be accredited as part of a New Award Course, they will be considered, consulted upon and accredited as part of that package.

(19) New majors must specify the balance of units at foundational, intermediate and advanced levels of knowledge and skills.

(20) Where new majors are proposed outside of the context of a new Award course accreditation, they must:

a. have already completed the required Concept Proposal and Business Case process (refer to Courses Lifecycle - Concept Proposal and Business Case (HE) Procedure);
b. be attached to an Award course undergoing a Major Amendment process (refer to Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Amendments (HE) Procedure). This could constitute the major amendment itself.

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Part F - Accrediting New Minors

(21) Where new minors are proposed as part of a New Award Course, they will be considered, consulted upon and accredited as part of that package.

(22) Where new minors are proposed outside of the context of a new Award course, they will be attached to a course undergoing a Major Amendment process (this could constitute the major amendment itself).

Part G - Accrediting New Units

(23) Where new units are proposed as part of a new Award Course, they will be considered, consulted upon and accredited as part of that package.

(24) New units must specify a unique set of unit learning outcomes, the achievement of which are measured by appropriate assessment tasks specified in the unit introduction.

(25) Where new units are proposed outside of the context of a new Award course, they will be attached to a course undergoing a Major Amendment process (this could constitute the major amendment itself).

Part H - Re-accrediting an HE Award Course

(26) HE Award Courses must be submitted for re-accreditation following the completion of a Comprehensive Course Review (CCR) process (refer to Courses Lifecycle - Comprehensive Course Review (HE) Procedure).

(27) When an HE Award course is submitted for re-accreditation, the outcomes of the CCR must be included in the documentation.
(29) The re-accreditation process involves the same endorsement and approval steps as for accreditation of a new course, with the exception of the Concept Proposal and Business Case step, which is not required. (see Part I).

Part I - Endorsements and Approvals

(28) The Award Course Curriculum Proposal is submitted to the College Course Advisory Group or equivalent.

(29) The Committee recommends the Award Course Curriculum Proposal to the Executive Dean or delegate.

(30) The Executive Dean or delegate recommends the Award Course Curriculum Proposal to the Courses Committee of Academic Board.

(31) Courses Committee recommends the Award Course Curriculum Proposal.

(32) The Academic Board endorses the Award Course Curriculum Proposal to the Vice-Chancellor or delegate.

(33) The Director, Academic Quality and Standards, checks the Award Course Curriculum Proposal and submits to the Vice-Chancellor.

(34) The Vice Chancellor approves the Award Course Curriculum Proposal.

(35) If the Award course results in a new Award of the University, the Vice-Chancellor's approval also declares the Award.

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Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(36) Standards 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment; 3.1 Course Design; 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation; 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement.

Section 6 - Definitions

(37) Accredited Unit

(38) Award Course

(39) Double Degree

(40) Double Qualification

(41) New Award Course

(42) Major

(43) Minor

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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Award Course" - A structured combination of approved units and/or supervised research into which students are admitted and are issued with an Award at the completion of their studies.

"Double Degree" - Comprises two individually approved Victoria University Awards at the same Australian Qualifications Framework level, taken concurrently, and resulting in the conferral of two Awards.

"Double Qualification" - A combination of two degrees at different Australian Qualifications Framework levels undertaken sequentially, where the full requirements of each Award must be met.

"Major" - A major consists of 96 credit points of study within an undergraduate course that provides students with a depth of knowledge in a particular discipline. Majors may only be commenced after first year.

"Accredited Unit" - A unit that is approved as part of a formal accreditation process within an award course. This is also referred to as a Unit of Competency for VET Awards.

"Minor" - A minor consists of 48 credit points of study that may either be a discipline minor or a breadth minor.

"New Award Course" - A course that has a new course code and a new award title, even if some elements are retained or repurposed from previous or existing courses.

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