Conflict of Interest - Staff-Authored Texts Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) The Procedure is intended to support academic staff and Colleges in decision-making where a perceived or actual conflict of interest may reasonably be anticipated. It also reflects expected good practice in institutions across Australia and internationally.

(2) The Procedure sets out the University expectations for the use of staff-authored texts and other resources that are provided on a commercial (for-profit) basis, and that are required and/or recommended as learning resources for students.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to all Higher Education and TAFE teaching staff employed by the University in any capacity, or employed by VU Online in any capacity, ie ongoing, sessional, contract.

(4) This Procedure does not apply to texts and resources authored by staff that are provided free of charge to students.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(5) Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Executive Dean (or equivalent)	Implementation of the process.
College Course Advisory Group (or equivalent)	Peer–review and recommendations for the inclusion of staff authored texts or resources as required or recommended materials.
Academic Quality and Standards	Periodic monitoring of compliance with the Procedure.

Part B - Procedures

(6) Teaching and research staff are supported and encouraged to develop, both alone and in collaboration with others, materials to support excellence in teaching. Where these materials are published it validates and confirms the

expertise of the staff involved and highlights the skill of the staff member/s.

(7) Where a staff member or an individual with whom the staff member has a close relationship is likely to benefit financially from the inclusion of a particular text or resource in a required or recommended list of study materials for a unit of study at Victoria University, selection must include a process of peer review and approval.

(8) Executive Deans are accountable for the implementation and monitoring of the following process.

(9) Staff must declare any potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest in relation to texts or resources to be included as required or recommended materials in units, as outlined in clause (7).

(10) Such conflicts of interest should be presented to the College Course Advisory Group (or equivalent). This should include a justification for inclusion of the text or resource in the named unit(s), and details regarding;

a. the academic rationale for the selection of the text or resource and why it is more suitable than alternatives;
b. an explanation of the alignment with the learning outcomes of the unit of study;
c. the activities and tasks that students will undertake that require the use of this text or resource;
d. evidence that the teaching team has been consulted and agree with the selection;
e. a list of materials currently used at other institutions in similar or equivalent units of study;
f. evidence of inclusion of the text in the library collection;
g. the cost of the materials to students.

(11) The College Course Advisory Group (or equivalent) considers the texts or resources in relation to the provided supporting evidence, and makes a recommendation to the Executive Dean.

(12) Recommendations may;

a. approve the materials for required use, with an associated CAMS update to be reflected in the Unit of Study Guide;
b. approve the materials for recommended student use rather than required use;
c. require further external advice on the suitability of the materials, or alternatives for required use;
d. require selection of one or more alternate materials.

(13) A record of the discussion and decision made is included in the minutes and kept for the duration of the use of the materials.

Part C - CAMS and Academic Quality and Standards

(14) Following approval by the Executive Dean, any required changes are to be immediately made in CAMS.

(15) Colleges have the responsibility to monitor SEU’s of all units of study, including those where staff authored texts or resources are included as required or recommended materials in units.

(16) All required and recommended texts or resources are re-evaluated by the College Course Advisory Group (or equivalent) when a course, following Comprehensive Course Review is submitted for re-accreditation.

(17) Academic Quality and Standards may periodically monitor compliance with the Procedure.

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Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(18) HESF: Standards 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support (specifically 3.3.1; 3.3.3).

(19) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Standard 4.1, 4.2 Leadership and Accountability; 4.3 Risk Management.

Section 6 - Definitions

(20) Training and assessment strategies and practices

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Accountable Officer	John Germov Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer +613 9919 5077
Responsible Officer	Deborah Tyler Director, Academic Quality and Standards +613 9919 4310
Enquiries Contact	Deborah Tyler Director, Academic Quality and Standards +613 9919 4310

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Training and assessment strategies and practices" - Training and assessment strategies and practices are the approach of, and method adopted by, an RTO with respect to training and assessment designed to enable learners to meet the requirements of the training package or accredited course.

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