

# **Courses Lifecycle - Concept Proposal and Business Case (HE) Procedure**

## **Section 1 - Summary**

(1) This Procedure provides requirements for the development of the Concept Proposal and for the development of the Business Case for new:

- a. Higher Education (HE) award courses;
- b. majors in a HE award course;
- c. non-award courses (for HE Colleges only);
- d. interstate or overseas delivery of a HE award course or major or Higher Degrees by Research course;
- e. new mode of delivery of a HE award course;
- f. dual awards;
- g. joint awards;
- h. double degrees; and,
- i. double qualifications.

## **Section 2 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment**

(2) HESF: Standard 2.1 Facilities and Infrastructure; 3.1 Course Design; 3.2 Staffing; 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support; 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation; 5.3.7 Monitoring, Review and Improvement - Mitigating Future Risks; 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability.

## **Section 3 - Scope**

(3) This Procedure applies to all HE award and HE non-award coursework courses at VU offered to domestic and international onshore and offshore students.

(4) This Procedure applies to Higher Degrees by Research courses.

(5) This Procedure does not apply to:

- a. Courses that have completed a Comprehensive Course Review (CCR) as they are entering into the re-accreditation phase.
- b. New Vocational Education and Training (VET) award courses.
- c. New VET-run non-award courses.

# Section 4 - Definitions

- (6) Award Course: A course of study that leads to an Award of the University in line with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
- (7) Business Case: The business rationale for proceeding to implement any of the items listed in Clause (1) above.
- (8) Concept Proposal: Outline of the concept for proceeding to implement any of the items listed in Clause (1) above.
- (9) Double Degrees: A Double Degree comprises two individually approved VU courses at the same AQF level, undertaken at the same time, and resulting in two awards. Often these will take longer than either degree would take individually (eg Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts).
- (10) Double Qualifications: A Double Qualification comprises two individually approved VU courses at different AQF levels in an integrated fashion (eg Bachelor of Arts/Master of Teaching (Secondary Education)).
- (11) Dual Awards: Dual Awards involve a registered Higher Education Provider and another entity offering a course of study which results in two separate awards being conferred from two institutions. A dual award may involve one AQF level, or two sequential AQF levels - for example, two Masters degrees or a Bachelor and Diploma award. 'Collaborative double degree programs' are a form of dual award. Dual awards may provide students with the opportunity to complete two awards in a shorter timeframe than if completed separately.
- (12) Joint Awards: These Awards involve the awarding of a single qualification which is jointly conferred by two or more providers and recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework. Joint awards involve close cooperation among the providers in curriculum development, design, organisation, course delivery, and assessment of learning outcomes as well as requirements necessary for awarding the qualification.
- (13) New Course: Usually, but not exclusively, a course that will lead to a new Award (if an Award course) or a course that has a new course code and a new title, even if some elements are retained or re-purposed from previous or existing courses.
- (14) Non-Award Course: A course of study that does not lead to the issuance of an Award of the University in line with the AQF.
- (15) 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.

# Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

- (16) [Courses Lifecycle Policy](#).

# Section 6 - Procedures

## Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

| Roles | Responsibilities |
|-------|------------------|
|-------|------------------|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ideation Group  | <p>Members to be representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each College including the Directors of Learning and Teaching and Course Chairs</li> <li>- VU Polytechnic</li> <li>- Data Insights</li> <li>- Future Students and Marketing</li> <li>- VU Research</li> <li>- VU International</li> <li>- Others with insight into the discipline and the industry</li> </ul> <p>The Ideation Group to workshop and agree on a course, or set of courses to be developed into concept proposals.</p>  |
| Proposer / Ideation Group   | <p>Presents Concept to College for initial feasibility assessment.</p> <p>Prepares Concept Proposal according to instructions and template.</p>   |
| Director, Learning and Teaching (Proposing College)   | <p>Presents Concept Proposal to Dean (Proposing College) or Director, Transnational Education Partnerships for approval and recommendation to be considered by the CPBC Evaluation Panel.</p>   |
| Dean (Proposing College)  | <p>Endorses the Concept Proposal and recommends to the CPBC Evaluation Panel for consideration.</p> <p>Endorses the Business Case and recommends to the CPBC Evaluation Panel for consideration.</p>  |
| Director, Transnational Education Partnerships (for VU Sydney, offshore and partnered delivery) | <p>Endorses the Concept Proposal and recommends to the CPBC Evaluation Panel for consideration.</p> <p>Endorses the Business Case and recommends to the CPBC Evaluation Panel for consideration.</p>  |
| College Finance Business Partner  | <p>During the development of the Business Case, the Proposer must work closely with the College Finance Business Partner to complete the financial modelling template.</p>  |
| Data Insights   | <p>The Proposer must consult with Data Insights to provide evidence of market demand, competition and job/graduation outcomes, which is included in the Business Case.</p>  |
| Planning and Performance  | <p>The representative from Planning and Performance assists the proposer with the load estimates in the financial modelling tool.</p>   |
| Academic Quality and Standards Department   | <p>The Proposer should consult with the Academic Quality and Standards department to ensure course design and the creation of courses and units adhere to appropriate academic quality, standards, regulations and guidelines.</p>  |
| Evaluation Panel  | <p>The Evaluation Panel is to include:<br/>Chair: Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (SDVC) or nominee<br/>Members to be representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Future Students and Marketing</li> <li>- VU International</li> <li>- Heads of College Clusters – Vice-President, Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities; Vice-President, Health, Sport and Active Living; and, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Business &amp; Law</li> <li>- Finance</li> <li>- Data Insights</li> <li>- Academic Programs of the Future</li> <li>- VU Polytechnic</li> </ul> <p>Members may invite the Proposer or relevant nominee to a meeting. The nominee must be able to contribute to the evaluation.</p> <p>The CPBC Panel:<br/>Evaluates the Concept Proposal for feasibility and suitability.<br/>Approves the development of Concept Proposals into a Business Case.<br/>Reviews the Business Case and either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- endorses the Business Case and recommends to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor for approval.</li> <li>- does not endorse the Business Case (which may result in the Business Case being sent back to the Proposer for further development).</li> </ul> |
| Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor   | <p>The SDVC endorses the Business Case for all coursework courses.</p>  |

## Part B - Ideas Generation

(17) The formation of an 'Ideation Group' enables Colleges to collaborate more effectively with other Colleges, VU Polytechnic, VU International, VU Research and relevant departments across the University to aid with innovation and market-informed decisions in the development of new ideas for course proposals.

## Part C - Preparing the Concept Proposal

(18) Proposers/ Ideation Group:

- a. Prepare a summary outline of the concept for the proposed new HE award course or major, non-award course, new delivery location/partner for a course or new mode of delivery.
- b. Course proposals (at the concept and business case stages) can be presented as a portfolio – if there are suites of courses or offers that are interrelated. Separate concepts and business cases would not be required if the evidence of demand and competition is similar.
- c. The Concept Proposal should cover:
  - i. brief program overview
  - ii. proposal rationale (summary only). The rationale summary is to include:
    - expected graduate outcomes;
    - indication of whether the course is responding to an identified need;
    - how the course will contribute to the College strategy and to the overall VU strategy;
  - iii. outline if the program will increase student numbers, replace an existing course, supplement or complement existing courses, or, follow on from existing course overview of potential market; and,
  - iv. a high level financial model.

Detailed evidence is not required at this stage, but all sections of the template must be completed.

- d. Secures endorsement of the Concept Proposal by the Dean (Proposing College) or Director, Transnational Education Partnerships (for VU Sydney, offshore and partnered delivery).

Panel members may invite the Proposer or relevant nominee to a meeting. The nominee must be able to contribute to the evaluation.

(19) The Evaluation Panel evaluates the Concept Proposal against:

- a. the University's goals and strategic direction;
- b. existing offerings by the College, VU Polytechnic or any other part of VU;
- c. competitive market conditions; and,
- d. feasibility for delivery within the College's existing parameters.

(20) Where the Concept Proposal involves partner delivery, the Director, Transnational Education Partnerships must be engaged as part of this initial evaluation.

(21) In performing this evaluation, the Panel may consult with whomever it sees fit.

(22) After evaluation of the Concept Proposal, the Panel:

- a. recommends the Concept Proposal is suitable for development of a Business Case; or
- b. indicates to the Proposer that the Concept Proposal is not suitable for further development; or

- c. indicates to the Proposer that the Concept Proposal may be reconsidered following further work.

(23) If the Panel approves the development of a Business Case, the Proposer begins preparation of a Business Case in consultation with: the relevant Director, Learning and Teaching or Director, Transnational Education Partnerships (for VU Sydney, offshore and partnered delivery); the College Finance Business Partner (for completion of the financial modelling tool); Data Insights (market demand, competition and job/graduation outcomes); Planning and Performance (load planning); and, any other relevant College or department.

(Link to Concept Proposal Template (HE).)

## Part D - Preparing the Business Case

(24) Multiple related courses can be combined within the one Business Case. However, separate financial templates would be expected.

(25) The Business Case must be presented within the specified template and include:

- a. HE Award and Non-Award Courses, Majors, Double Degrees, Double Qualifications and Dual Awards
  - i. A summary rationale for the introduction of the new offering, including relevance to the University's goals.
  - ii. A course outline.
  - iii. Details of proposed course structure (may be represented in an image if appropriate).
  - iv. If an exception to course architecture rules is requested, reasoning must be provided. Valid reasons include -
    - Student feedback suggested flexibility is key to selecting the course.
    - Without these options, demand will be curtailed putting viability of course at risk.
    - Plans in place to minimise proliferation of new low volume units.
  - v. Details of the suitability of the proposed course plan to rolling enrolment.
  - vi. Details of delivery method (online, face-to-face, or digitally supported remote delivery). This should include a rationale for why a particular method(s) has been selected.
  - vii. Type of cohort that the offer/course is pitched towards, e.g. school leaver, part-time student, international student or professional person. What is the offer's key selling points?
  - viii. Details of proposed cross-College units, including evidence of consultation with other Colleges.
  - ix. If applicable -
    - Summary of internal pathways and relationship to existing VU award or non-award courses.
    - Summary of external pathways and relationships to existing off-shore and partner award or non-award courses.
  - x. Details of any nested and exit qualifications (exit points) within the proposed new award or non-award course or major.
- b. Evidence of Demand, Competition and Job/Graduation Outcomes
  - i. Summary evidence of demand:
    - Demand analysis must show new demand, rather than taking student numbers from existing VU courses.
    - Evidence may include details of VTAC and other offers made for similar courses in Victoria; evidence of industry growth or change. If the proposal relates to international cohorts, demand in other states can be shown. Tailor evidence to the cohort that the offer is pitched towards.
    - The level of evidence required depends on how "radical" the offering is. If the Business Case relates to a different delivery method, (i.e. online, digitally supported remote delivery, versus face-

to-face) or is an additional major, the evidence required is less than a brand new offer.

- ii. Competitor analysis, i.e. who else delivers the same or similar courses in Victoria/Australia?
- iii. Evidence regarding the employment and other graduate outcomes expected from the new award or non-award course or major. Evidence may include:
  - Employment and job vacancy figures within the industry or professional discipline related to the proposed award or non-award course or major.
  - Details of new industry expansions, initiatives or government policy and funded projects, which are anticipated to generate new demand for skilled workers.
  - Expert opinion from industry peak bodies or research bodies indicating employment trends or outcomes.
  - Details of how the content and coverage of the proposed award or non-award course or major aligns with the needs and expectations of relevant industries or disciplines.
  - Professional accreditation or industry recognition, if relevant, including any international recognition (if known).
  - Other information as directed.

Note: Detailed evidence may not be required for this section if sufficient competition and demand detail has already been provided.

c. Interstate or Overseas Delivery (if relevant)

This section relates only to the proposed delivery of an existing award or non-award course interstate or overseas. If the proposed award or non-award course or major is new, the requirements of the above section must be completed in addition to this section.

- i. Details of the planned institutional partner/s, including:
  - Alignment with the requirements of the Third-Party Arrangements Policy and Procedure.
  - A summary of the due diligence conducted.
  - Any existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or contractual arrangements with the proposed partner/s and their current status. Indicative schedules should be provided.
  - Background information for the partner institution, including the legislative status in the home country.
  - Legislative requirements for offering a course/ non-award in the host country, if any.
  - If the partner institution qualification constitutes part of the delivery (as pathway or dual awards), the AQF equivalent level as guided by the Department of Education and Training Country Education Profiles.
- ii. A summary rationale for the introduction of the new delivery location, including relevance to the College's goals.
- iii. Summary evidence of demand in that market for the provider, (e.g. details of market analysis; evidence of industry growth or change).
- iv. Professional accreditation or industry recognition (if relevant).
- v. Competitor analysis, i.e. who else delivers the same or similar award or non-award course or majors in the proposed location?
- vi. Risks and how these are mitigated.
- vii. Details of award or non-award course or major profile:
  - Summary of internal pathways and relationship to existing VU award or non-award courses.
  - Summary of external pathways and relationships to existing off-shore and partner award or non-award courses.

viii. The proposed delivery mode and breakdown of responsibilities for delivery.

d. Joint Awards

- i. The Business Case for Joint Awards must be prepared and presented to University Council in the first instance, to obtain approval for use of dual badging on a VU testamur, or for VU to be dual-badged on a testamur issued by another institution.

Please see the [Credit - Dual and Joint Awards Procedure](#) for further details in relation to this process.

e. Business Case: Financial Modelling

- i. Financial modelling must be attached to the Business Case.
  - Financial modelling must be performed in consultation with the relevant College Finance Business Partner using the University's financial modelling tool.
  - Modelling is required to cover:
    - Workload assessment and allocation (anticipated number of new units to be developed and the planned allocation of this work).
    - Staffing required to develop, coordinate and deliver the new award or non-award course or major or new major.
    - Availability of facilities, equipment and other required resources to deliver the award or non-award course or major.
    - If specialist equipment is required, it must be identified and costed.
    - Costs associated with Professional Accreditation or Industry Recognition, if relevant.
    - Enrolment targets for the first five years of proposed award or non-award course or major operation, broken down into domestic, international onshore, and international offshore students. (Financial modelling must show a minimum of break-even with the target numbers.)
    - Summary of full financial model including costs/revenue and margin.

Note: If the suggested offering is not a course or a unit, and the University's Financial Modelling tool is not appropriate, Proposers must work with their Finance Business Partner to develop the appropriate financials.

f. Implementation Plan

- i. A high level Implementation Plan must be provided to the CPBC Evaluation Panel, which includes details of the following:
  - The anticipated date that the proposal will be submitted to College Course Advisory Group.
  - The anticipated date the course will be entered into the Course Approvals and Management System.
  - The anticipated date the course will be considered by Academic Board.
  - The anticipated date the course will be ready to commence enrolments.
  - A brief summary of intended marketing initiatives.
- ii. If additional resources are required to develop the program, they must be identified. Availability and the costs of the additional resources must also be listed.

g. Exit Strategy

- i. If the course is not as successful as expected:
  - What remediation activities will be undertaken at the end of its first year of operation? For example, improved content, increased marketing and/or adjusted expectations.
  - What would be required at the end of Year 2 or 3 if it continued to not meet expectations? For example, teach-out of units, transfer students to similar courses or transfer students to other

institutions.

- ii. The Exit Strategy must include what the trigger point would be for these actions, (i.e. not meeting 50 per cent of Year 1 target, not meeting 50 per cent of Year 3 target, mitigation in Year 1 doesn't result in improvement).
- iii. The level of detail required will depend on the level of resources and costs involved in its development.

#### h. Consultation

- i. Evidence of consultation with relevant stakeholders should be presented as part of the Business Case.

- ii. In particular, consultation may occur with:

- Other Colleges involved in delivering units, which form part of the proposed new HE award course or major, non-award course, new delivery location/partner for a course or new mode of delivery.
- The College Finance Business Partner (for completion of the financial modelling tool).
- A representative from Data Insights to assist with evidence of market demand, competition and job/graduation outcomes.
- A representative from Planning and Performance to assist the proposer with load planning in the financial modelling tool.
- A VU International representative for international onshore courses.
- Transnational Education Partnerships for VU Sydney, offshore and partnered delivery.
- Relevant support units, e.g. Academic Quality and Standards, Marketing, Information Technology Services, Library, Student Services, Facilities etc.
- Any partner institution within Australia or overseas who has a role in delivery of the proposed new HE award course or major, non-award course.
- For professionally accredited award or non-award courses or majors, accrediting body advice must be sought and included within the Business Case.
- VU Polytechnic.

#### i. Executive Endorsements and Approvals

- i. The Business Case with completed financial modelling must then be endorsed by the Dean (Proposing College) or Director, Transnational Education Partnerships (for VU Sydney, offshore and partnered delivery) and then presented to the CPBC Evaluation Panel.

- ii. The Business Case is considered by the Evaluation Panel, who may:

- recommend endorsement by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor; or
- decline to recommend endorsement by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor. This may or may not result in a Business Case being returned for further development.

- iii. If the Proposal is recommended, it is presented to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor for endorsement (all Proposals).

- iv. The College will then work with the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching (or nominee) and an Academic Quality Standards representative to ensure course design and units adhere to appropriate academic quality, standards, regulations and guidelines.

- v. The course is entered into the Course Approvals and Management System.

- vi. The course is considered by the College's Course Advisory Group.

- vii. The Courses Committee considers the course and may recommend to Academic Board for consideration.

- viii. Academic Board considers the course and may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor for final approval.

(Link to [Business Case Template - new HE Award course or major, delivery location/partner or new mode of delivery.](#))



## Status and Details

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Status</b>              | Historic   |
| <b>Effective Date</b>      | 26th May 2020  |
| <b>Review Date</b>         | 26th May 2023  |
| <b>Approval Authority</b>  | Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor  |
| <b>Approval Date</b>       | 21st May 2020  |
| <b>Expiry Date</b>         | 14th December 2020   |
| <b>Accountable Officer</b> | Matthew Walsh<br>Chief Financial Officer<br>officeofCFO@vu.edu.au                              |
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