

# Courses Lifecycle - Dual and Joint Awards Procedure

## Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure provides directions for the proposal, establishment, monitoring and termination of Higher Education (HE) Dual and Joint Awards involving Victoria University (VU) and partner institution/s.

(2) This Procedure complies with the requirements of the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021 \(Cth\)](#) - Standard 5 (Institutional Quality Assurance); specifically:

- a. Standard 5.4.2: Delivery with Other Parties
- b. Standard 7.1: Representation
- c. Standard 7.2: Information to Prospective Students

(3) This Procedure complies with the principles provided in the Australian Government [Principles for Joint Higher Degrees by Research between Australian Higher Education Providers](#) (2011).

## Section 2 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to:

- a. Dual awards; and
- b. Joint awards.

(5) This Procedure does not apply to:

- a. Pathway agreements (refer to [Credit - Pathways Procedure](#)).
- b. Advanced Standing and Credit arrangements (refer to [Credit - Academic Credit Procedure \(HE\)](#)).
- c. Recognition of Prior Learning for vocational education courses (refer to [Credit - VET Skills Recognition Procedure](#)).
- d. Student Exchange programs, whether for credit or not.

## Section 3 - Definitions

(6) Credit

(7) Credit Arrangements

(8) Credit Transfer

(9) Dual Award (HE only)

(10) Joint Award (HE only)

## Section 4 - Policy

(11) Refer to [Courses Lifecycle Policy](#).

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer	Approves, where warranted, explicit exceptions to University policies for Dual or Joint Award agreements. Approves and signs Dual and Joint Awards agreements on behalf of VU.
Academic Board	Assesses and determines academic governance issues arising in Joint Awards.
University Council	Approves the use of dual badging on a VU testamur, or for VU to be dual-badged on a testamur issued by another institution.

(12) Some roles and responsibilities for Dual and Joint Awards are located within Policies and Procedures relating to specific aspects of Award development and accreditation, or Contract management. Please see the following documents:

- Proposal of Dual or Joint Award: [Courses Lifecycle - Concept Proposal and Business Case \(HE\) Procedure](#).
- Accreditation of the VU Award involved in the Dual or Joint Award: [Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Accreditation \(HE\) Procedure](#).
- Development and approval of the Contract governing the Dual or Joint Award: [Contracts Policy](#) and [Contracts Procedure](#).
- Issuance of Award and Testamur: [Awards Regulations 2018](#) and associated Procedures.

### Part B - Rationale for Dual and Joint Awards

(13) Dual and Joint Awards are established by institutions to:

- provide students with access to the best possible combinations of studies to meet their educational and professional aspirations;
- create the opportunity for students to engage in collaborative double degrees which are beyond the scope of a single institution to offer;
- expand the opportunity for students to work with and access the latest equipment, facilities and expertise in more than one institution, and obtain awards that facilitate professional mobility; and
- develop partnerships between research institutions, including the facilitation of movement between institutions of doctoral or research masters candidates under joint supervision and enrolment arrangements.

## Part C - General conditions of Dual and Joint Awards

(14) The academic standards of Dual and Joint Awards must be equivalent to those of comparable awards conferred solely by VU.

(15) Partner institutions must have:

- a. the demonstrated capability to deliver the program to the academic standards required by VU;
- b. the ability to sustain those programs financially;
- c. the legal standing to enter into an agreement with VU; and
- d. be recognised as having the same degree award standing in the home country as suggested by the [Department of Education](#).

(16) Arrangements for establishing, delivering, monitoring and reviewing Joint and Dual Award programs will be specified in a legally binding agreement between the partner institutions. (Refer to [Contracts Policy](#) and [Contracts Procedure](#)).

(17) The VU Award course that is included in the arrangement will be approved through the usual course accreditation process specified in the [Courses Lifecycle Policy](#) and associated Procedures.

(18) The VU Award course must be active for the whole term of the agreement. If the VU Award course ceases to be active (ie. goes into teach out), the Dual or Joint Award status will also be required to be changed to teach out. The Dual or Joint Award status is aligned to the VU Award course status.

## Part D - Concept Proposal and Business Case for New Dual Awards

(19) New Dual Awards may be proposed by areas of the University as opportunities arise through existing partnerships or in recognition of the needs of a student cohort.

(20) Proposals must be prepared and approved in accordance with the [Courses Lifecycle - Concept Proposal and Business Case \(HE\) Procedure](#).

## Part E - Concept Proposal and Business Case for New Joint Awards

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

## Part F - Developing the course of study

(22) In developing the Award course, the following conditions must be in place:

- a. VU's admission standards and relevant course English language requirements must be met.
- b. All VU course requirements must be met for a student to qualify for a VU Award.
- c. VU must be responsible for assessment and the setting of academic standards with regards to its units.
- d. Where students are enrolled in a VU unit, any VU policies with regard to units must be adhered to; where students are enrolled in VU courses, any VU policies with regard to courses must be adhered to.

## Part G - Criteria and agreements for Dual and Joint Awards

(23) Partner agreements will generally cover the following matters:

- a. The Award title/s that will be conferred upon completion.
- b. Quality assurance - including approval, amendments, monitoring and reviewing processes and how this will be undertaken.
- c. Course Co-ordination.
- d. Admission requirements.
- e. Methods by which partners will ensure that the information (both online and in print format) provided to students (prospective and current) is consistent with the needs of the cohorts, is accurate, and is not misleading.
- f. Time, unit load and sequencing of the course of study, at each institution.
- g. Fees.
- h. Enrolment status of students (whether they are considered enrolled at both institutions simultaneously or consecutively).
- i. Access to resources.
- j. Processes for each partner to notify the other of changes to the course of study.
- k. In the case of partnerships with non-Australian providers, the language of instruction and assessment must be identified.
- l. Credit arrangements and sequencing of units.
- m. Complaints, appeals and review processes for students.
- n. Conditions for the extension or termination of the program .

(24) No intakes of students will be made other than in accordance with a valid schedule or agreement.

(25) The agreement will provide for comparable rules and policies to be applied by the partner institution(s) to students undertaking the Dual or Joint Award regarding matters including, but not limited to:

- a. Assessment;
- b. Academic equivalence;
- c. Behaviour;
- d. Monitoring of academic progress and students at risk; and
- e. Academic and General Misconduct

as applicable.

(26) In a case where VU policies need to have their application modified to suit the needs of partnership arrangements, all variations from standard VU policies will to be brought to the attention of the relevant Policy Owner and the Policy Unit.

(27) Explicit exceptions to University policies must be approved by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer.

(28) Exceptions are not permissible if they will compromise VU's standards, reputation or assets.

(29) Dual and Joint Awards agreements are signed on behalf of VU by:

- a. The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer for all agreements; and
- b. The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer for agreements involving international partners and / or international students.

## **Joint Awards: Additional Arrangements to be included in agreements**

(30) In addition to the above matters, the agreement for a joint degree should include a mechanism for overseeing and resolving academic governance issues between the institutions.

(31) The policies of each institution will be adhered to under the agreement, with any conflict between policy generally resolved in favour of the more stringent academic requirement.

(32) Matters requiring further resolution should be referred to the Academic Board or equivalent of each institution. Where Academic Boards provide conflicting requirements, the dispute resolution section of the agreement will be invoked to resolve the matter.

(33) Each partner must confirm the student's eligibility to enrol.

(34) The academic governance responsibilities and arrangements for discipline and academic progress matters must be specified by each partner.

(35) There must be evidence of collaborative curriculum design leading to the joint award with all institutions involved.

## **Part H - Approval of Dual and Joint Awards**

(36) The Concept Proposal and Business Case must be approved in the first instance before proceeding to academic approvals. (Refer to [Courses Lifecycle - Concept Proposal and Business Case \(HE\) Procedure](#)).

(37) Approval of Dual and Joint Awards follows the requirements established in Part I of the [Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Accreditation \(HE\) Procedure](#).

## **Part I - Exiting a Dual Award (Students)**

(38) Students may be provided with the option to discontinue their Dual Award studies and instead complete a single Award with one institution.

(39) If this option is available:

- a. Exit points and paths must be specified in the Dual Award agreement;
- b. Clear direction regarding the credit implications of discontinuing the Dual Award must be available; and
- c. Students must be fully advised of their options before enrolling in the Dual Award and at key points throughout their studies.

## **Part J - Exiting a Joint Award (Students)**

(40) Exit points may be provided with a Joint Award to allow a student to exit with a different AQF qualification. Such options may only be provided with the agreement and input of all partner institutions.

(41) If this option is available:

- a. Exit points and paths must be specified in the Joint Award agreement; and
- b. Students must be fully advised of their options before enrolling in the Joint Award and at key points throughout their studies.

## **Part K - Testamurs for Dual and Joint Awards**

(42) When a Dual or Joint Award arrangement is approved, the resulting Dual or Joint Award will be added to the VU Register of Awards (Refer to Awards - Managing the Register of Awards Procedure [Pending]).

(43) Sufficient time must be allowed to negotiate testamur issues with partner institutions (this may take a considerable amount of time to finalise).

(44) The testamur and academic transcript (if applicable at the other institution) of each institution will contain a notation as specified in the agreement. An example of the notation is "This degree was undertaken jointly with the (name of institution(s))".

## **Joint Awards**

(45) The result of a Joint Award course is the award of a single award, jointly conferred by the partner institutions. The certification documentation takes the form of a single testamur.

(46) The degree title that each institution confers will be specified in the agreement.

(47) The form of the Joint Award testamur must be approved by the University Council.

(48) Students undertaking a jointly conferred course will have their award conferred by their 'host' or 'home' institution.

## **Dual Awards**

(49) The result of a Dual Award course is the award of two (or more) Awards, conferred separately by each of the partner institutions.

(50) Where awards are dual-badged, the VU testamur may include the logo of the partner institution(s) and vice versa.

## **Part L - Review and monitoring of Dual and Joint Awards**

(51) Dual and Joint Awards will be subject to the relevant review and monitoring processes specified in their agreements.

(52) The review process will involve input and feedback from all partner institution(s).

(53) Before renewing any Dual or Joint Award agreement, the arrangement will be reviewed to ensure that the contractual obligations of each partner are being effectively implemented and that the academic, business and strategic case for continuing the arrangement remains sound.

## **Part M - Disestablishing Dual and Joint Awards**

(54) Dual and Joint Awards may be disestablished:

- a. At the expiry of an agreement, if VU determines that there is no longer a good case for maintaining the dual or joint award;
- b. According to the termination or exit clauses incorporated in the agreement, which may include early exit for reasons relating to:
  - i. A substantially changed academic, teaching or quality profile of one or both partners;
  - ii. A substantially changed financial profile of one or more partners which impacts on their ability to fulfill their obligations under the agreement; or
  - iii. Any other specific exit conditions nominated in the agreement.

(55) Where a Dual or Joint Award is disestablished in advance of the agreement's nominated expiry date, VU must:

- a. Ensure appropriate advice, support and transition arrangements are put in place for currently enrolled students;

and

- b. Ensure that prospective students are quickly advised of the disestablishment of the joint or dual award.
- c. Ensure that the Dual or Joint Award is appropriately archived on the Register of Awards.

## Section 6 - Guidelines

(56) [Principles for Joint Higher Degrees by Research between Australian Higher Education Providers](#) (2011).

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	24th November 2017
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<b>Approval Authority</b>	Pro Vice Chancellor Learning Innovation & Quality
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<b>Accountable Officer</b>	John Germov Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer +613 99195077
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Deborah Tyler Director, Academic Quality and Standards +613 9919 4310
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Deborah Tyler Director, Academic Quality and Standards +613 9919 4310

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Dual Award (HE only)"** - Where Victoria University and another Higher Education institution offer a collaborative course which results in two separate Awards being conferred from the two institutions.

**"Joint Award (HE only)"** - The awarding of a single qualification, recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework, which is jointly conferred by Victoria University and one or more institutions. In such arrangements, each institution delivers their own units / content.

**"Credit"** - Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of time required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, recognition of prior learning or academic credit.

**"Credit Arrangements"** - Formal negotiated arrangements within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities.

**"Credit Transfer"** - is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for completed components of a course of study. This may be based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched courses of study, or the completion of units of competency or skillsets evidenced by AQF certification documentation or authenticated VET transcripts.