

# Third Party Arrangements - Online Partnerships Procedure

## Section 1 - Summary

(1) The purpose of this Procedure is to provide detailed direction regarding the delivery of Victoria University Higher Education award and non-award courses online in partnership with any providers.

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to all online delivery arrangements, whether via VU Online or through other arrangements, with domestic and international partners involving award and non-award courses and units offered by Victoria University (VU) to:

- a. domestic onshore students
- b. offshore students

(3) This Procedure does not apply to commercial training activity that does not involve an award or non-award course.

## Section 3 - HESF/ ASQA/ ESOS Alignment

(4) The Procedure complies with the requirements of the following Higher Education Standards Framework Standards:

- a. 1.3.6 Students have equivalent opportunities for successful transition into and progression through their course of study, irrespective of their educational background, entry pathway, mode or place of study.
- b. 3.1.4 Each course of study is designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery.
- c. 5.2.4 Academic and research integrity and accountability for academic and research integrity are maintained in arrangements with any other party involved in the provision of higher education, including placements, collaborative research, research training and joint award of qualifications
- d. 5.4.2 When a course of study, any parts of a course of study, or research training are delivered through arrangements with another party(ies), whether in Australia or overseas, the registered higher education provider remains accountable for the course of study and verifies continuing compliance of the course of study with the standards in the Higher Education Standards Framework that relate to the specific arrangement

(5) This Procedure also complies with the recommendations of the TEQSA Guidance Note on Technology-Enhanced Learning (April 2019), in particular:

- a. access to electronic information (Standard 2.1.2)
- b. supporting interactions among students outside of formal teaching (Standard 2.1.3) such as group work
- c. safety and support services (Section 2.3)
- d. access to learning resources and educational support, and for maintaining contact with off-campus students

## Section 4 - Definitions

(6) Online Delivery

(7) Third Party Arrangements – For the purposes of this Policy, a third-party arrangement is a formal agreement between VU and one or more partners for the purposes of the partner wholly or partly delivering VU units or courses on VU's behalf.

## Section 5 - Policy Statement/Regulation

(8) [Third Party Arrangements Policy](#)

## Section 6 - Procedures

### Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
VU Online Board of Directors	Provides business and fiduciary oversight of the operations of VU Online Responsible for the strategic plan and approach of VU Online
VU Online Academic Director	Ensures all third parties are aware of, and abide by, all VU academic and students policies unless exceptions are specified in contract Manages risks to the University and to students arising from online delivery and stages interventions where necessary Develops processes and procedures for online learning and teaching Liaises with Colleges and Online Unit Convenors Reports to Academic Board and other governance bodies
VU Online CEO	Manages the overall operations of VU Online. Manages business relationships with partner organisation.
Course Chair (College)	Oversees the course in both online and campus delivery modes
Unit Convenor	Oversees unit delivery Moderates assessment Provides support to staff and students via online on-demand and webinar contact
Subject Matter Experts (College)	Provides content expertise and advice for the building on online units, materials and assessments
Facilitators (Partner or VU supplied)	Supports student groups for a minimum of 15 hours per week Marks student work Under supervision of Unit Convenor, delivers the unit content
Student Success Advisors (Partner supplied)	Provide first contact point for student advice Assist with IT, technical and learning queries Provide academic assistance to students
Partner organisations	Provides all services under the contract, ensuring all VU policies and processes are followed unless a specific exemption exists
VU Online	Approves all marketing conducted by partners in the University's name Ensures that appropriate student support services are provided to online students
Chief Student Officer via the VU Admissions team	Assesses applications for admission for online courses or units Advises applicants of the outcome of their application, including the outcome of any credit or advanced standing request

Role	Responsibilities
Business Intelligence	Conducts student surveys Provides data and analysis to Partnerships, the Colleges, Academic Board, and VU Online as required
Executive Deans	Ensures that a new online course delivery: - complies with all aspects of VU's course approval process as specified in the <a href="#">Courses Lifecycle Policy</a> and its Procedures, and - is Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) compliant
Academic Quality and Standards	Oversight of ongoing academic quality assurance and improvement, including annual and comprehensive course monitoring, review and improvement processes

## Part B - Establishment of Online Delivery and Content Arrangements

(9) All courses and units to be delivered online will comply with all external and internal regulatory requirements.

(10) All award and non-award online courses and units proposed for third-party development or delivery will go through the prescribed stages for assessing new VU courses and units or new ways of delivering courses and units:

- a. Concept Proposal
- b. Business Case
- c. Course Approval

(11) No third-party online delivery arrangement will be entered into without the completion of due diligence checks, approval by the VU Online Board and the development and signature of a formal contract between VU Online and all partners.

(12) No extensions of existing contracts will occur without passing through the prescribed stages at (10) above.

(13) All contracts will be developed in accordance with the [Contracts Policy](#) and [Contracts Procedure](#).

(14) VU and its partners will remain the owners of, and responsible for, all intellectual property they bring into the arrangement. Where new intellectual property is created through the arrangement, ownership will be determined under the particular terms and conditions of the relevant contract.

(15) All online courses and units delivered by partners must be delivered via VU Collaborate. This will be a condition of all online partnership agreements.

### Application of VU policies and procedures

(16) All VU policies, procedures and processes will apply to students and staff in online delivery arrangements.

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

(18) Explicit exceptions to University policies in relation to online delivery must be approved by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer.

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

(20) Current versions of all VU [policies and procedures](#) are available via VU's online Policy Library.

## Part C - Student Selection and Support

### Admissions and Enrolment

(21) Admission requirements are established in the partnership agreement and will align with the admission requirements established through the University's course approval process. This includes English language requirements and any approved pathway arrangements.

(22) Admission requirements are identical to those imposed for face to face delivery of the same unit or course.

(23) Applications for admission are assessed and determined by the VU Admissions team using the same process and criteria as those used for face to face delivery of the same unit or course. (See the [Admissions Procedure](#) for details).

(24) Applicants who have been made and accepted offers can enrol using MyVU.

(25) Letters of offer issued to students will include the following information:

- a. confirmation that applicants will be enrolled as VU students should they accept the offer;
- b. courses or units in which students are to be enrolled;
- c. minimum IT requirements for participation in the unit or course; and
- d. Credit or Recognition of Prior Learning assessment result (if applicable).

(26) Applicants who are not made an offer of admission may request reasons for the admission decision and may subsequently lodge an appeal against the decision if they have grounds.

### Credit, Pathways and Advanced Standing

(27) All arrangements for course credit and advanced standing, and any pathway arrangements, for students will be managed in accordance with the [Credit Policy](#), the [Credit - Academic Credit Procedure \(HE\)](#) and the [Credit - Pathways Procedure](#).

(28) Advanced Standing results are included in letters of offer issued to applicants.

### Orientation and Induction

(29) A Flipbook for students, with associated Introduction module on VU Collaborate, is produced and promulgated by the relevant partner service provider, with oversight from VU Online.

### Student Assessment and Progress

(30) The academic progress of students will be monitored and addressed by VU in accordance with the [Academic Progress Regulations 2016](#) and its associated Procedures.

(31) Online partners will deliver assessment tasks to students as agreed with VU Online.

(32) Marking of assessment tasks will be performed by:

- a. VU staff, in accordance with the [Assessment for Learning Policy](#) and its associated Procedures; or
- b. Partner staff, against agreed criteria and in accordance with the [Assessment for Learning Policy](#) and its associated Procedures.

(33) Where marking is performed by partner staff, VU Online will be responsible for arranging auditing and moderation of results in accordance with the [Assessment for Learning - Moderation and Validation Procedure \(HE\)](#).

## Student Evaluations

(34) Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) and Student Evaluations of Units (SEU) are conducted by Business Intelligence (VU).

(35) Business Intelligence undertakes the processing of survey forms, the analysis of responses and the creation of reports.

(36) Business Intelligence provides SEU and SET reports to the Academic Director, VU Online. They are then provided to the Director Learning and Teaching of the relevant College.

(37) The Academic Director, VU Online, and the College are responsible for relevant actions arising out of these reports.

(38) The partner may administer its own survey instruments. If they do so, the partner provides feedback to the Academic Director, VU Online.

## Student Support, Wellbeing and Safety

(39) Academic and administrative support for students in online units or courses is provided by:

- a. the partner organisation as agreed under the partnership agreement;
- b. VU as appropriate and possible.

(40) All students engaging in online study are provided with specific advice and resources regarding expected online behaviour, ensuring wellbeing and safety in online study, and avenues for seeking support.

(41) VU Online will ensure that general support services are available to online students, including:

- a. ongoing academic language and learning support, including an appropriate range of generic and discipline specific support services and development activities;
- b. access to the VU Library and online support from the Library;
- c. administrative, enrolment and course information services;
- d. disability and accessibility services, including advice, support and access to reasonable adjustments to study and assessment tasks;
- e. as appropriate and possible, personal support such as counselling, health, welfare, accommodation and career services.

## Student Complaints Resolution

(42) Students in online courses and units will have access to VU's Student Complaints Resolution and Student Appeals processes, as specified in the [Student Complaints Policy](#) and [Student Complaints Procedure](#), and the [Student Appeals Regulations 2019](#) and [Student Appeals Procedure](#).

(43) Students are provided with access to all VU [policies and procedures](#) and are required to comply with all behavioural standards established in them, including, but not limited to, the:

- a. [Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Management Policy](#)
- b. [Bullying Prevention and Management Policy](#)
- c. [Sexual Harassment Response Policy](#)
- d. [Student Equity and Social Inclusion Policy](#)
- e. [Student Charter Policy](#)

## Part D - Quality Assurance and Equivalence of Learning

(44) The relevant Course Chair is responsible for ensuring the achievement of approved learning outcomes in course and unit levels.

(45) The Courses Committee of Academic Board endorses curriculum arrangements prior to course delivery, including any adaptations of curriculum or assessment for online delivery.

(46) The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer is responsible for oversight of ongoing academic quality assurance and improvement.

### Academic Integrity

(47) The Academic Director VU Online is responsible for ensuring that all online staff and students are aware of the University's requirements regarding academic integrity, and what this entails. These can be found in the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [Academic Integrity Guidelines](#).

(48) Consistent with the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [Academic Integrity Guidelines](#), VU and Partner teaching staff are responsible for:

- a. including information on citation requirements and preferred referencing style on the unit guide;
- b. equipping students with language and writing skills to prevent them from committing plagiarism;
- c. providing samples of past students' work that demonstrates academic integrity;
- d. introducing tools to help students learn about proper citation techniques;
- e. referring students to the resources available on the VU Library website;
- f. educating students on the definitions of plagiarism, contract cheating and collusion, and the consequences of engaging in these activities, and
- g. using strategies in detecting plagiarism in checking assessments.

(49) Staff must report instances of detected academic integrity breaches to the Unit Convenor, who will include this information in wider University reporting:

- a. Marking and moderation reports indicating plagiarism issues;
- b. Reports on annual investigated cases.

### Course Approval

(50) The Executive Dean is responsible for ensuring that a new course delivery:

- a. complies with all aspects of VU's course approval process as specified in the [Courses Lifecycle Policy](#) and its Procedures, and
- b. is Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) compliant.

### Periodic reviews

(51) Courses and units within the scope of these Procedures are subject to Annual Course Monitoring (ACM) and Comprehensive Course Review (CCR) processes as set out in the [Courses Lifecycle Policy](#) and Procedures.

(52) Academic Quality and Standards is responsible for oversight of ongoing academic quality assurance and improvement, including annual and comprehensive course monitoring, review and improvement processes.

(53) Correlation analysis between student pass rate and RPL assessment results will be provided by approved

institutions. Business Intelligence will be responsible for analysing this data to be provided to Academic Quality and Standards.

## **Part E - Staffing**

### **Qualifications and requirements of teaching staff**

(54) The Academic Director VU Online is responsible for recommending VU and partner teaching staff and ensuring they:

- a. are appropriately qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching; and
- b. have a standard of English proficiency (IELTS) at least one level higher than that required for students in the course.

(55) The Executive Dean of the relevant College (or nominee) is responsible for approving teaching staff for all delivery and assessment of College content.

(56) Staff must be qualified to at least one AQF or equivalent qualification level higher than the course of study being taught, or possess equivalent professional experience according to VU's established criteria. Requirements are outlined in detail in the [Learning and Teaching Quality and Standards - Equivalence of Professional Experience to Qualifications \(Staff\) Procedure](#).

(57) Staff must have the capacity to deliver the course in the English language to an adequate level of proficiency.

### **Teaching Staff Induction**

(58) Teaching staff have access to an online Orientation module to assist them.

(59) Other resources provided include:

- a. [VU Online Facilitator Guidelines](#)
- b. VU Online Unit Convenor Role
- c. VU Online Facilitator Induction

### **Staff Complaints**

(60) Should disputes arise during course delivery, VU and Partner staff should raise concerns with the Unit Convenor in the first instance.

(61) If the matter remains unresolved, the staff member is able to raise and, if preferred, formalise their concerns with the Academic Director, VU Online.

(62) If still unresolved, VU Online will consult with People and Culture (P&C) (as appropriate).

(63) P&C will maintain statistics on nature and number of complaints, and statistics on outcomes of complaints.

## **Part F - Monitoring and Ending Online Delivery and Content Arrangements**

(64) If a course or unit is discontinued for online delivery, effective teach out or transition plans for all enrolled students must be developed to ensure that these students are not disadvantaged.

(65) The cessation of a course will be conducted in accordance with the [Courses Lifecycle - Course Cessation and](#)

[Student Transition \(HE\) Procedure](#). The Academic Board will provide endorsement of the Teach Out Plan.

(66) The exact terms of teach-out arrangements are dependent on circumstances that are spelt out in relevant Master Services Agreement (MSA) with the third party provider.

## **Section 7 - Guidelines**

(67) [VU Online Facilitator Guidelines](#)

(68) Operations Manual and Communications Guide Online

(69) [VU Online Flipbook](#)



## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	6th August 2019
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<b>Accountable Officer</b>	John Germov Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer +613 9919 5077
<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 <hr/> Tertiary Education Portfolio

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Online Delivery"** - Study where the teacher and student primarily communicate through digital media, technological based tools and IT networks and does not require the student to attend scheduled classes or maintain contact hours