Courses Lifecycle Policy

Section 1 - Summary

(1) Victoria University (VU) provides award courses and non-award courses, including micro-credentials, across the Higher Education, Vocational Education and Further Education sectors. VU delivers courses in person, online real-time, online self-paced, and hybrid mode, both alone and with international and domestic institutional partners.

(2) VU is committed to providing courses that support its diverse student body to be capable lifelong learners in a complex global environment.

(3) The purpose of the Courses Lifecycle Policy and associated procedures is to provide academic quality management across the lifecycle of VU courses and pathways and ensure alignment with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) where this is required. Courses are also designed to be appropriate to the values and needs of students, and relevant to industry, community and institutional partners.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) This Policy applies to:

a. Award and non-award courses that are not micro-credentials, including Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) courses, delivered both in Australia and overseas by VU, or by domestic or international partners on behalf of VU.

(5) This Policy does not apply to:

a. Micro-credentials, whether part of a credit-bearing micro-credential stack or stand-alone credentials. (See Micro-credentials Policy and Procedure – pending)

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(6) Processes at Victoria University for course design, development, approval, monitoring and review are informed by consistent principles and subject to transparent, robust governance.

Part A - Course Structure and Design

(7) Courses and pathways are designed to give students access to modular, vertically-integrated qualifications that allow for multiple entry and exit points across the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

(8) Transition options for students are flexible, clear, transparent and systemic, facilitating credit and recognition arrangements to ensure access to a wide range of pathways.

(9) Ongoing course approval and additions to scope of registration are contingent on evidence-based decision-making and external referencing.

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(10) Course design involves:

a. detailed external referencing and comprehensive consultation with industry, professional accreditation bodies, partners, students, and stakeholders, and alignment to VU strategic priorities (see Courses Lifecycle - External Referencing Procedure);
b. engaging with peer review and scholarly understanding of theory and practice derived from discipline knowledge, pedagogy, and understanding of professional and industry contexts; and,
c. facilitating the development and operations of collaborative communities through team-based course design, development, management and collaborative review by VU and partner organisations.

(11) Course concept and design rules, including a description of how courses at different AQF levels are constituted, are established in:

a. Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Design (HE) Procedure
b. Courses Lifecycle - Concept Proposal and Business Case (HE) Procedure

(12) Course nomenclature adheres to VU's course architecture and the regulations established for Australian qualifications, and is specified in:

a. Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Nomenclature and Coding Procedure

Part B - Course monitoring

(13) Higher education courses are monitored on an annual and periodic basis in accordance with the processes established in:

a. Courses Lifecycle - Annual Course Monitoring (HE) Procedure
b. Courses Lifecycle - Higher Degrees by Research Annual Course Monitoring Procedure
c. Courses Lifecycle - Comprehensive Course Review (HE) Procedure
d. Courses Lifecycle - External Referencing Procedure

(14) Vocational education courses are monitored in accordance with the processes established in:

a. Courses Lifecycle - Continuous Improvement of Training and Assessment (VET) Procedure

Part C - Student support

(15) Courses are designed to support student success as they transition through courses and pathways, and enable students to develop capabilities for the future.

(16) All course processes are structured to ensure students are not disadvantaged where course review leads to significant changes to or discontinuation of a course.

(17) Course cessation occurs in accordance with:

a. Courses Lifecycle - Course Cessation and Student Transition (HE) Procedure
b. Courses Lifecycle - Course Cessation and Student Transition (VET) Procedure

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Part D - Authority to approve

(18) The Academic Board has the authority to approve new courses, approve changes to existing courses and approve discontinuation of courses.

(19) The Academic Board may delegate authority to approve some matters to its Committees or to a senior academic role in the University.

(20) In the case of minor changes to courses, which are developed in a manner consistent with Procedures, the DVC (HE) and DVC (VE) as relevant have delegated authority to approve proposals after endorsement by Executive Deans of Colleges and to notify Academic Board of the outcomes.

(21) Courses, with the exception of micro-credentials, are approved and amended in accordance with the provisions of:

a. Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Accreditation (HE) Procedure
b. Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Amendments (HE) Procedure
c. Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Approval (VET) Procedure
d. Courses Lifecycle - Course Approval Procedure - Higher Degrees by Research
e. Courses Lifecycle - Non-Award Course Approval (HE) Procedure
f. Courses Lifecycle - Non-Award Course Approval (VET) Procedure

(22) Micro-credentials are approved and amended in accordance with the provisions of the Micro-credentials Policy and Procedure (pending).

Section 4 - Procedures

(23) Courses Lifecycle - Annual Course Monitoring (HE) Procedure

(24) Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Accreditation (HE) Procedure

(25) Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Amendments (HE) Procedure

(26) Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Approval (VET) Procedure

(27) Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Design (HE) Procedure

(28) Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Nomenclature and Coding Procedure

(29) Courses Lifecycle - Comprehensive Course Review (HE) Procedure

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

(31) Courses Lifecycle - Continuous Improvement of Training and Assessment (VET) Procedure

(32) Courses Lifecycle - Course Approval Procedure - Higher Degrees by Research

(33) Courses Lifecycle - Course Cessation and Student Transition (HE) Procedure

(34) Courses Lifecycle - Course Cessation and Student Transition (VET) Procedure

(35) Courses Lifecycle - Professional Accreditation and Industry Recognition Procedure

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(36) Courses Lifecycle - Dual and Joint Awards Procedure

(37) Courses Lifecycle - External Referencing Procedure

(38) Courses Lifecycle - Higher Degree by Research Comprehensive Review of Courses Procedure

(39) Courses Lifecycle - Higher Degrees by Research Annual Course Monitoring Procedure

(40) Courses Lifecycle - Inherent Requirements of Study Procedure

(41) Courses Lifecycle - Management of the CRICOS Register (HE) Procedure

(42) Courses Lifecycle - Management of the CRICOS Register (VET) Procedure

(43) Courses Lifecycle - Managing the Register of Awards Procedure

(44) Courses Lifecycle - Non-Award Course Approval (HE) Procedure

(45) Courses Lifecycle - Non-Award Course Approval (VET) Procedure

(46) Courses Lifecycle - VET Industry Engagement Procedure

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(47) HESF: Standard 1.2.1, 1.4.1, 1.5.1, 1.5.3; 3.1.1; 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3; 5.3.

(48) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Standard 1.2 Training; 1.3-1.5 Assessment;1.8 Facilities, Resources and Equipment; 2.3-2.4 Training Support; 2.5 Diversity and Inclusion; 2.6 Wellbeing; 4.4 Continuous Improvement. Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: 9 Issuance of AQF certificiation documentation; 10 Records of AQF certification documentation and assessments; 11 Issue of VET qualifications and VET statements of attainment; 14 Transition of training products; 20 Compliance with Laws.

(49) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth): Standard 2 Recruitment of an Overseas Student; 3 Formalisation of enrolment and written agreements; 11 Additional Registration Requirements.

Section 6 - Definitions

(50) Accreditation

(51) Advanced Standing

(52) Articulation: Course articulation is the process by which one institution matches its courses or requirements to course work completed at another institution. Students use course articulation to assure that the courses they complete will not have to be repeated at the institution to which they are transferring.

(53) Course

(54) Course Approval

(55) Course Cessation

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(56) Course deactivation

(57) Course Review

(58) Course transition

(59) Credit

(60) Further Education (FE)

(61) Higher Degree by Research (HDR)

(62) Higher Education (HE)

(63) Industry Recognition

(64) Non-Award Courses

(65) Micro-credential

(66) Micro-credential stack

(67) Pathways

(68) Professional Accreditation

(69) Scope of Registration

(70) Student

(71) Vocational Education (VE)

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Status and Details

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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

"Student" - - a person enrolled at the University in a course leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, licence or other award; or - a person whose study performance is being or is to be assessed by the University, notwithstanding that such a person is not enrolled at the University in a course leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, licence or other award. (The above definition of student is from section 3 of the Victoria University Act 2010 and Council Resolution C2010 - 070).

"Course Approval" - The endorsed process for development, consideration and verification of new or replacement courses of study. The process of approval involves consideration of both educational and financial matters by governance and management committees.

"Advanced Standing" - Refer to Credit definition. Advanced Standing term is being phased out and referred to as Credit.

"Accreditation" - Educational accreditation is a type of quality assurance process under which services and operations of educational institutions or programs are evaluated by an external body to determine if applicable standards are met. If standards are met, accredited status is granted by the appropriate agency. For Victoria University (VU), the relevant accreditation bodies are the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Authority (TEQSA) for higher education, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) for vocational education, and the National ELICOS Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) for English language intensive programs.

"Course" - The overall program of study in which the student is enrolled.

"Non-Award Course" - A course of study that does not lead to the issuance of an Award of the University.

"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.

"Pathways" - Formally agreed structures by which students may move through qualification levels and between courses with full or partial recognition for the qualifications and/or learning outcomes they already have achieved.

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"Higher Degree by Research (HDR)" - A Higher Degree by Research (HDR) is a postgraduate award at Master or Doctoral level at AQF 9 or 10 respectively, of which two thirds or more is research and research training. The major part of assessment of these courses must be in the form of reporting the outcomes of a research project/s conducted as the research component of the degree. A HDR may also include a coursework component, which is one or more accredited units of study designed to address and area(s) of content and/or skill development within the HDR program.

"Scope of Registration" - The training products for which a Registered Training Provider (RTO) is registered to issue AQF certification documentation. It allows the RTO to provide either training and/or assessment resulting in the issuance of AQF certification documentation.

"Course Cessation" - The process undertaken to discontinue offering an Award or Non-Award course, major (HE) or specialisation (VET).

"Industry Recognition" - A form of non-mandatory industry recognition that is undertaken at the discretion of the University.

"Vocational Education (VE)" - VET provides skills and knowledge for work through a national system of registered training organisations, provided by a network of industry, public and private training providers that work together to provide nationally consistent training across Australia. Registered VET training organisations are listed on Training.gov.au

"Professional Accreditation" - Accreditation intended to ensure that a course of study meets essential criteria in the training and education of its students in the relevant professional discipline, and that graduates from that discipline achieve the professional competencies and learning outcomes necessary for entry into the relevant level of professional practice. Courses must be accredited by the relevant accrediting body for course graduates to be registered or otherwise licensed to practice in a regulated profession.

"Micro-credential stack" - A cohesive group of micro-credentials, intentionally designed to achieve an overarching description and set of learning outcomes, which may be counted together for credit towards an AQF award course.

"Micro-credential" - An assessed certification of an individual’s discrete learning and achievements. Micro-credentials are often aligned to industry or other professional needs and, in some instances, can be combined to provide credit towards formal qualifications.

"Higher Education (HE)" - Universities and higher education institutions listed in subdivision 16-B of Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) and providers as determined by the Minister under section 16-25 of the HESA.

"Further Education (FE)" - Training and programs focused on core skills education: literacy, numeracy, English language, employability and digital skills. It also covers preparation and contextualised learning for study and work. It encompasses the accredited Certificates of General Education (CGEA).

"Course transition" - The process of transitioning students from a superseded course to a current course.

"Course Review" - Course review includes the design and content of each course of study, the expected learning outcomes, the methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students’ achievement of learning outcomes, and also takes account of emerging developments in the field of education, modes of delivery, the changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study.

"Course deactivation" - The course status change on CAMS when a course or major in teach out is clear of all student obligations.

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