Course Approval and Review

Approving authority	Academic Committee
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Description	This document specifies the processes through which the University approves the offering of new courses and reviews the offering of existing courses. These processes form an important part of the University's quality assurance framework.

Related documents

Framework for Quality Assurance
Program Approval and Review
Course Profile Requirements
Course Profile Template
Course Improvement Plan
Guidelines for Preparing a Statement of Resources
Learning Resources and Reading Lists
Student Experience of Courses (SEC) and Teaching (SET)
Course Catalogue, Coding and Other Course Attributes Policy
Role Statement Course Convenor
Role Statement Program Director
Cross Campus Consistency Guidelines
Enterprise Risk Management Policy
Structure and Governance of Academic Groups of the University
Experience@Griffith website

[Definitions] [Aim] [Course Profile] [Course Convenor] [Process for the Approval of a New Course] [Process for Review and Modification of Existing Courses] [Retention of Data]

1.   DEFINITIONS

Course Profile – a document that specifies course requirements within the format specified in the Course Profile System and the Course Profile Template.

Course Convenor – the academic staff member, designated by the Head of School, who is responsible for the management, conduct, teaching and assessment of a course.

Head of School – the academic staff member, appointed by the University Council, who is responsible for the performance of the School/Department in teaching and learning, research and external engagement; and for planning and aligning financial and staff resources with the University's strategic objectives. Reference to Head of School in this document includes **Deputy Head of School** where the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor has approved such an appointment.

Program Director – an academically qualified staff member of the relevant academic element that is the host of the program, appointed by the Group Board who is responsible for the program.

Dean (Learning and Teaching) – the academic staff member, appointed by the University Council, who is responsible for handling a range of program, student and assessment matters.

Course Profile System – a repository for storage, review and approval of Course Profiles.

Interpretation

In this procedure, reference to Academic Group, School, Group Pro Vice Chancellor, Dean (Learning and Teaching) or Head of School shall have the meaning set out in the *Structure and Governance of Academic Groups of the University*.

2. AIM

The Course Approval and Review process aims to:

- facilitate best practice in curriculum design, teaching, and assessment by requiring all academic staff use a specified Course Profile template that focuses on:
  - the course's contribution to learning in the context of the program,
  - the learning outcomes of the course in the context of graduate skills,
  - the learning activities and experiences that students undertake in order to develop these graduate skills.
- provide a number of opportunities for peer review of a new course's curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment;
- assist Schools to consider the resource implications of new courses;
- facilitate the routine review of a course to assure the University and the Program Director that the course is contributing to learning in the program as intended and that the learning outcomes are consistent with those stated for the course;
- facilitate efficient management of course documentation by requiring all academic staff use the Course Profile System to store their profiles, route them on the approval process each trimester the course is offered, and publish them on the web in accordance with the dates specified in section 2 of the Course Profile Requirements
- encourage academic staff to engage in scholarship in teaching through reflection on course design;
- encourage academic staff to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning within their courses by linking the course review process with academic staff recognition and reward processes;
- 'close the student feedback loop' by requiring course convenors to report on evaluation outcomes in the previous calendar year.

3. COURSE PROFILE

Every course requires a Course Profile. The Course Profile contains statements about:

- What the learner can expect to learn in terms of knowledge, skills and their application by successfully completing the course.
- How learners are expected to engage with the course's learning activities.
- How the course's learning objectives and outcomes contribute to attainment of graduate skills.
- How learning achievements are to be demonstrated and evaluated within the course.

The term "Course Profile" refers specifically and exclusively to a document that addresses the above questions as specified in the Course Profile Requirements and within the format specified in the Course Profile System and the Course Profile Template. The Course Profile does not comprise learning and teaching resources, students are provided with these types of resources via the course's Learning@Griffith site.

For a given trimester there shall be only one Course Profile per course code. For a course that is offered on more than one campus there is to be only one course code except where the host school is different between campuses, in which case the course will have a different code and a Course Profile specific to that code. The Course Profile allows for inclusion of all campus specific information such as the name of the campus convenor, consultation times, location of the campus convenor, the campus teaching team's details and assessment deadlines.

For a course that is offered in more than one learning mode as specified in the Course Catalogue, Coding and other Course Attributes Policy there is to be only one course code and one Course Profile. The Course Profile allows for the inclusion of learning activities and assessment items specific to each particular learning mode.

4.   COURSE CONVENOR

Refer to the *Role Statement Course Convenor* for further details about the appointment, role and responsibilities of this position.

The Course Convenor is responsible for developing a Course Profile for every trimester in which the course is offered and providing the Course Profile to both the Program Director and the Head of School via the Course Profile system. There may be a different Course Convenor for each campus offering of the course. In this instance a 'primary' Course Convenor is to be designated who will be responsible for completing the Course Profile and sending it on the approval process to the Head of School.

The Course Convenor is also responsible for reviewing the course using the Student Experiences of Courses (SEC) instrument and for overseeing the process of teaching evaluations (SET). The University recommends that, as a matter of good practice, Course Convenors review a course after each offering, and identify improvements for subsequent trimesters. The Course Convenor may be required by the Head of School/Department to complete a Course Improvement Plan (CIP). However, completion of a CIP by all Course Convenors is encouraged as a routine activity.

The Course Convenor is expected to engage in a scholarly process of critical reflection, interpretation, and implementation of improvements to both the teaching of the course and the course itself using all relevant evaluation data that is available. This scholarly process may be documented in a range of ways. These include: self-review as part of the Principles to Promote Excellence in Learning and Teaching (refer Principle 7) and/or by completing a *Course Improvement Plan*.

Course improvements based on student feedback obtained within the last calendar year are to be summarised and reported by the Course Convenor within the Previous Student Feedback section of the Course Profile. This content is to be approved by the Head of School prior to publication of the Profile.

5.   PROCESS FOR THE APPROVAL OF A NEW COURSE

Step 1

Course Convenor in conjunction with Teaching Team prepares course documentation:
    ▪ Course Profile - refer to Course Profile Requirements and Course Profile Template, noting at this stage of the process it is possible not all information is known that will eventually be provided to students. It should contain sufficient information for judgments to be made about the course content, the inter-relationship of the course with other courses in the program, the organisation of the course and the appropriateness of the assessment requirements.
    ▪ Statement of Resources - refer to *Guidelines for Preparing a Statement of Resources.*
The Course Convenor completes the *Course Profile Template* and submits it for approval by the School Committee.

Step 2

Program Director/s review the Course Profile to ensure quality of course design and documentation, and coherence with the program/s in which it will be offered.

Step 3

School Committee considers:
- Course Profile
- Statement of Resources
- Advice from Program Director/s

to assess quality of course design and content, coherence with the program, to check resource requirements can be accommodated, and to approve other resources, including those necessary to ensure health and safety of students and staff.

Step 4

Dean (Learning and Teaching) receives Course Profile from the Head of School, on behalf of the School Committee for:
- executive approval,
- referral to Group Board, or
- referral to Head of School and Program Director for further advice.

The final dates for submitting a Course Profile for a new course for consideration by the Dean (Learning and Teaching), are as follows, taking into consideration the course needs to be approved prior to it being including in timetable scheduling and available to students during Open Enrolment:

   Trimester 1 Commencement – May of the year prior to introduction

   Trimester 2 Commencement – November of the year prior to introduction

   Trimester 3 Commencement – May of the year of introduction

Where a School is unable to meet this deadline, the School Administrative Officer should advise the relevant Group Program Partner in Student Credentials and request an extension, giving reasons for the delay.

Where the course has been executively approved the Group Board will ratify this approval at its next meeting.

Changes to program structures resulting from the addition of, or changes to, courses are submitted by the Program Director, via the School Committee and Group Board, to the Programs Committee for approval. Please refer to *Program Approval and Review*.

Step 5

Upon approval by the Dean (Learning and Teaching) the Course Profile is updated in the Course Profile System after Profiles are imported for the relevant trimester and published on the web in Learning@Griffith and on the Student Portal for enrolled students by the dates specified in section 2 of *Course Profile Requirements*.

After a Course Profile is published in accordance with those dates no further changes can be made to the profile, with the exception of teaching staff details in the *Course Staff* section which may be updated until the end of week 4 of the relevant trimester.

6. PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND MODIFICATION OF EXISTING COURSES

The focus of a course review is on:
- the quality of the course (e.g. content, coherence, relevance and currency);
- purpose, scope and timing of assessment for the course,
- the moderation of the course in relation to both other courses offered during the trimester and the program; and
- the quality of teaching and learning in the course (e.g. learning mode, student-teacher interactions, learning outcomes and educational resources used to support teaching and learning in the course);

with a view to improving the course's effectiveness as a learning experience and its contribution to the degree program.

6.1   Student Experience of Courses and Teaching Instruments

Refer to *Student Experience of Courses (SEC) and Teaching (SET)* for further details.

Every course in the undergraduate and postgraduate careers, with the exception of literature review courses, research proposal courses, the first part/s of multi-sequence courses including year-long courses, theses and dissertations is to be evaluated, using the Student Experience of Courses (SEC) survey instrument, in every trimester the course is offered. The Student Experience of Courses (SEC) survey instrument may be accompanied by a number of Student Experience of Teaching (SET) survey instruments to evaluate individual instructors/teachers associated with a course.

6.2   Previous Student Feedback

Refer to *Course Profile Requirements* for further details.

Each time a course is offered, the Course Convenor is required to reflect on feedback about the course with a view to improving it. This process of reflection may be documented in a range of ways. However, there is a requirement to report on Previous Student Feedback obtained from Student Experiences of Courses (SEC) in the last calendar year. Key issues identified for improvement and changes made to the course as a result of student feedback are to be included in section 1.2 of the Course Profile. There may be a different Course Convenor for each campus offering of the course. In this instance the 'primary' Course Convenor is responsible for completing the Previous Student Feedback section in the Course Profile. There is no requirement to report student feedback in a Course Profile for a course taught in the trimester subsequent to the one in which the course has been evaluated.

The Head of School is responsible for:

- ensuring course reviews take place and any issues identified are addressed
- approving the feedback contained in the Previous Student Feedback section of the Course Profile and provided to future students undertaking the course.

The Centre for Learning Futures provides assistance in this process, through its resource material available in the evaluation and student experience section of the Learning & Teaching website.

6.3   Modifying an Existing Course

Following course review, the Course Convenor updates the Course Profile and communicates relevant information or outcomes to the Program Director and to the Head of School.

Where revisions to the Course Profile are minor - updating dates for assignments, updating texts and reference materials, and adjusting the sequence of the course content - the Course Convenor submits the Course Profile via the Course Profile System to the Head of School as a minor change for approval and publication.

Where revisions to the Course profile are major - a change in the course content, teaching methods, assessment strategy and/or resource requirements - the revised Course profile and Statement of Resources must proceed through Steps 2 to 5 of the approval process for a new course (refer Section 5 above).

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7.   RETENTION OF DATA

Course Profiles are stored and retained permanently in the Course Profile System identified by course code, course title, location, learning mode, year and trimester. Profiles for current teaching terms are accessible to all staff via the Course Profile System and to enrolled students via Learning@Griffith and MyGriffith. They are also accessible to the public via the course profile search facility on the University's Programs and Courses website.

Where a Course Improvement Plan has been prepared upon request from their Head of School/Department, Course Convenors are required to submit a copy of the Plan to Corporate Records

and Digitisation Services (email address recopy-cip@griffith.edu.au) with a cc to their Head of School/Department.

Electronic copies of the On-line Student Experiences of Courses (SEC) and Student Experiences of Teaching (SET) mandatory and optional question scores, as well as responses to open-ended questions, are retained permanently within Experiences@Griffith.