# Program Approval

## 1.0 Purpose

This Procedure details the processes for approving new programs and approving changes to existing programs. Program approval is the quality assurance process that ensures effective curriculum planning and design for new programs. This includes:

- the planning and approval of a new program and a suite of new programs (including non-award programs, and excluding credentials and badges[1]);

- the approval of changes to an existing program;

- the approval of the withdrawal of programs.

## 2.0 Scope

This Procedure applies to the award programs that the University self-accredits that lead to higher education awards and non-award programs.

## 3.0 Procedure

The University offers programs that:

- align with the strategic principles developed annually by Program Strategy Board (which provide guidance based on the University's Strategy 2020-2025 and the Academic Plan)

- respond to data about market position, competitor offerings, and market demand, to maintain relevance and currency

- are planned with advice from relevant internal and external experts and supported by resources appropriate to quality learning

- develop the Griffith Graduate attributes and achieve the learning outcomes appropriate to the qualification type

- meet employer and industry needs; and

- are consistent with University policy, external standards and requirements (including the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 and the Australian Qualifications Framework 2013).

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[1] Micro-credentials and badges are excluded from this Procedure, and are covered by the Micro-credential and Digital Badge Approval and Review Procedure

# 3.1 Approval of new programs

Approval of new programs occurs in two stages. Stage 1 assesses the strategic alignment, competitiveness and financial sustainability of a proposed new program. Stage 2 ensures the quality, academic rigour and regulatory compliance of a proposed new program.

### 3.1.1 Stage 1: Approval of New Program Strategic Brief and Business Case

A new program strategic brief provides an initial, brief overview of the strategic, market and financial case for the new program. This must be completed using the prescribed proposal template.

Academic staff may identify potential ideas for a new program. The staff member must consult the relevant Dean (Learning and Teaching) to discuss whether the new program idea should be pursued. Additionally, new transnational programs and/or new higher degree research programs require consultation with Vice President Global and the Dean (Research), respectively. This consultation should occur prior to initiating a strategic brief.

The Dean (Learning and Teaching) leads the development of the new program strategic brief, in collaboration with academic leaders (including Program Directors) within the discipline and drawing on the advice of Marketing and Communications, Griffith International, and Planning and Analytics. The Dean (Research) and Dean (Learning and Teaching) will co-lead the development of a new higher degree research program.

The Pro Vice Chancellor recommends the new program strategic brief for consideration by Program Strategy Board, or for executive approval by the Provost.

- Where a new higher degree by research program is proposed, the Dean of the Griffith Graduate Research School and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) must review the new program strategic brief and approve the use of Research Training Program funded student places before proceeding to Program Strategy Board.
- Where a new transnational coursework program is proposed, the Vice President (Global) must endorse the strategic brief before it proceeds further.

Program Strategy Board and/or the Provost approves the Strategic Brief to proceed to Stage 2 or rejects the program strategic brief.

Where the new program requires new resources (for example, new staff, significant capital expenditure), the Pro-Vice Chancellor may be requested to complete a business case for consideration and approval by the Provost before proceeding to Stage 2. A business case is required for new transnational coursework programs. This should be completed using the prescribed template.

- The minutes and decisions of Program Strategy Board are shared with the Vice-Chancellor, to provide an opportunity for feedback and input.

Marketing and Communications, and/or Griffith International may also identify an opportunity for a new product or market. This process involves:

- Marketing and Communications, and/or Griffith International prepare a partial new program strategic brief for submission to Program Strategy Board[2].
- Program Strategy Board considers the partial new program strategic brief. After consideration the Program Strategy Board may:

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[2] Note: This would exclude the academic case for the product. Marketing and Communications and/or Griffith International submissions would only include the market case for the new product. The submission would be approved by the Vice President Marketing and Communication or Vice President Global prior to submission to Program Strategy Board

- o Request a more detailed market scan from Marketing and Communications, and/or
- o Request that the relevant Academic Group(s) consider a program offering which could respond to the market opportunity, and consider whether the proposed program offering could be resourced and delivered by the discipline.

- The Pro Vice Chancellor and Dean (Learning and Teaching) consider the advice of their Academic Group(s) (including, as appropriate, Head of School/Discipline and other academic staff) on the new program offering and whether it can be locally resourced. The Pro Vice Chancellor either:
  - o approves proceeding to a new program business case; or
  - o provides a rationale to Program Strategy Board as to why the new program should not proceed to new program business case.

### 3.1.2 Stage 2: Approval of Curriculum Proposal

After the new program strategic brief has been approved, the Dean (Learning and Teaching) is responsible for the quality of the program proposal and for overseeing the Curriculum Proposal. Where the new program is a Higher Degree by Research program, the Dean (Learning and Teaching) and Dean (Research) should co-lead the development of the New Program Proposal. Academic leads, including Program Directors, will support this process.

The New Program Proposal describes the program's curriculum including the consistency with the requirements of University policy and procedure, and legislative requirements. This must be completed using the prescribed proposal template.

The New Program Proposal as recommended by the Dean (Learning and Teaching) is considered by the Group Board of the host Group. For double/vertical degrees with a component offered by a different Academic Group, the other relevant Group should also consider the New Program Proposal.

Following Group Board consideration:

- for coursework programs, the New Program Proposal must be considered and approved by Programs Committee;
- for Higher Degree by Research programs, the New Program Proposal must be considered by the Board of Graduate Research, and then must be recommended for approval by Programs Committee.

## 3.2 Approval of major changes to an existing program

### 3.2.1 Step 1: Major changes with strategic and financial implications

Program Strategy Board will consider changes to existing programs that have strategic and financial implications for Griffith (refer to Appendix 1 for guidelines).

Program Strategy Board will require the proposed changes to be detailed in the strategic brief template (and business case template where required).[3] Following approval by Program Strategy Board, the Academic Group will progress to step 2.

### 3.2.2 Step 2: Approval of Major Change Proposal

Major changes to existing programs require consideration by Group Board. If the existing program is Higher Degree by Research, the Board of Graduate Research must also consider and recommend the major change. Following this, Programs Committee considers and approves

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[3] The Chair of Program Strategy Board will determine if only a strategic brief is required, or if both a strategic brief and a business case are required.

major changes. Major changes must be documented in the Major Change to Program Proposal template.

### 3.2.3 Changes to program requirements and program title

Programs Committee may approve changes to the program requirements and/or program tile. The revised program normally applies to students admitted in a future dated trimester/teaching period. Transition arrangements for continuing students should be identified where relevant. Transition arrangements may require students to transfer to a different program to complete their requirements.

## 3.3 Approval of other program changes

### 3.3.1 Approval of minor changes to programs

Deans' (Learning and Teaching) approve minor changes to programs using the prescribed proposal template. A minor change may include renaming an academic plan, adding or withdrawing a course within a program, changing the campus and/or trimester of offer of a course, and changing the position of a course within a program.

Approval of changes to courses follow the processes outlined in the Course Approval Procedure.

### 3.3.2 Administrative change to an existing program

Administrative changes that Program Directors identify are actioned by the Group Program Partner. An administrative change can include, for example:

- correcting errors or updating due to changes in, for instance, role titles or terminology;
- updating text on the Programs and Courses /Degree Finder websites;
- changes that are approved per other processes e.g. credit, pathway programs.

## 3.4 Approval of program withdrawal

Programs may be withdrawn using the prescribed template. A teach out plan must be included where there are current enrolments. The Pro Vice Chancellor will consider the program withdrawal and recommend the change to Programs Committee. Higher Degree by Research programs must be considered by the Board of Graduate Research prior to Programs Committee.

**Teach-out arrangements:** Teach-out arrangements for withdrawn programs will be approved with the maximum period being the standard length of the program, from the last admit term for commencing students. Arrangements for currently enrolled students may require them to transfer to a new program to complete their degree requirements. Arrangements should be communicated to students.

The teach-out plan must identify last offerings for relevant core courses and address implications for student progress in the withdrawn program.

In some cases, a program withdrawal may have funding and/or financial impacts on the University. This includes changes that impact the University's Funding Agreement. In these instances, Programs Committee will recommend the program withdrawal to the Provost for consideration and approval.

## 3.5 Approval of Non-Award Programs

Programs Committee is responsible for approving non-award programs identified in the *Program Attributes and Requirements Procedure*.

# 4.0 Definitions

**Award program** is an approved course of study that leads to a qualification located at levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework and meets the corresponding specifications (including the levels criteria and qualification type descriptors).

**Course** refers to a component of a qualification, normally undertaken over a single trimester, in which the student enrols and on completion of which the student is awarded a grade, such grades appearing on a student's academic transcript. Learning outcomes, assessment tasks and achievement standards are specified for each course appropriate to a level and qualification type.

**Coursework** is a method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that does not include a major research component.

**Higher Degree by Research** refers to a Research Masters or Research Doctorate where a:

- Research Masters means a Level 9 qualification as described in the AQF and where a minimum of two-thirds of the program of learning is for research, research training and independent study
- Research Doctorate means a Level 10 qualification as described in the AQF and where a minimum of two years of the program of learning, and typically two-thirds of the qualification, is research.

**Non-award program** is an approved course of study that does not lead to an award of the University. The non-award program may comprise courses normally taken as part of an award program but is a non-AQF qualification. Non-award programs include continuing education, executive education, professional development, tertiary preparation, enabling, and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) programs.

**Program** is an approved course of study. A student is admitted to a program.

**Program Director** is the academic staff member (normally Level D or above), appointed by the Dean (Learning and Teaching) to provide curriculum leadership for and quality enhancement of one program or a Program Cluster while working collegially with the Head of School/ Deputy Head of School, academic and professional staff to ensure an effective and positive student learning experience. There shall only be one Program Director for a program. The Program Director may lead one or more program clusters.

**Teach Out** refers to a program with a sunset clause in which no commencing students can be enrolled, and arrangements are in place to ensure that all existing enrolled students can either complete the program of study within a specified timeframe or transition to a replacement program.

# Appendix

## 5.1 Guidelines for identifying major changes with strategic and/or resourcing implications

| GUIDELINES | EXAMPLES |
| --- | --- |
| Program changes with implications for Griffith's strategic direction, reputation, and international partnerships / footprint | Adding an additional campus to an existing program, including offshore delivery.<br><br>Changing an existing program in a manner that involves Griffith entering a new discipline (even if the Academic Group can fund it within their budget).<br><br>Changing the international partnership arrangements for an existing program.<br><br>Withdrawal of a program from a campus. |
| Program changes which involve costs/investments that cannot be funded within existing budgets. | Changes to a program which require investment in new teaching spaces.<br><br>Changes to a program which require investment in additional staff, resources or new equipment which cannot be funded within existing budgets. |
| Program changes with implications for Griffith's load planning, or which shift students from one funding source to another funding source. | Changes to a program that move students from full fees to funded places (e.g. CGS or RTP), or that move students from funded places to full fees.<br><br>Replacement or redesign of more than 50% of the courses within a program.<br><br>Suspension of an intake for a program. |
| Program changes which seek to substantially alter the target markets of the program. | Adding an online offer to an existing program.<br><br>Adding a new major to an existing program.<br><br>Changes to the name of a program that substantially impacts the target markets.<br><br>Changes to admission requirements that substantially impact the target markets.<br><br>Changes to program design which impact on international students' ability to meet student visa requirements.<br><br>Changes to the level or duration of a program that impact the target markets. |

# 5.0 Information

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| Title | Program Approval Procedure |
| Document number | 2024/0000028 |
| Purpose | This Procedure details the processes for approving new programs and approving changes to existing programs. Program approval is the quality assurance process that ensures effective curriculum planning and design for new programs. This includes:<br><br>• the planning and approval of a new program and a suite of new programs (including non-award programs, and excluding credentials and badges);<br>• the approval of changes to an existing program;<br>• the approval of the withdrawal of programs. |
| Audience | Staff |
| Category | Academic |
| Subcategory | Learning and Teaching |
| Approval date | 27 May 2024 |
| Effective date | Trimester 1, 2024 |
| Review date | 2028 |
| Policy advisor | Senior Manager, Student Credentials |
| Approving authority | Provost |

# 6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

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| Australian Government Legislation and Policy | Australian Qualifications Framework 2013<br><br>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021<br><br>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 |
| Policy | Academic Awards and Graduations Policy<br><br>Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy<br><br>Quality Assurance Policy<br><br>Higher Degree by Research Policy<br><br>Programs and Courses Policy |
| Procedure | Course Approval Procedure<br><br>Course Attributes and Requirements Procedure<br><br>Micro-credential and Digital Badge Approval and Review Procedure |

| | Program and Course Review Procedure |
| | Qualifications Procedure |
| Schedule | Academic Awards Schedule |
| | Course Attributes Schedule |