

Program and Course Review

1.0 Purpose

2.0 Scope

3.0 Procedure

3.1 University and Academic Group review of the suite of programs and courses | 3.2 Program review | 3.3 Course review | 3.4 Monitoring of sustainability and financial viability | 3.5

Timeframes for annual cycle of reviews

4.0 Definitions

5.0 Information

6.0 Related policy documents and supporting documents

1.0 Purpose

This Procedure describes the academic quality assurance processes and continuous improvement processes for award programs and courses offered by Griffith University.

2.0 Scope

This Procedure applies to award programs that the University self-accredits that lead to higher education awards, including undergraduate, postgraduate and higher degree by research programs.

3.0 Procedure

This Procedure provides an institutional framework for Griffith's quality assurance and continuous improvement for its programs and courses. This institutional framework details the consistent features and processes for the review of programs and courses. The institutional framework:

- is focused on the drivers of academic quality and student outcomes;
- is a continuous improvement process in which improvements are made based on review findings;
- is both strategic and operational in focus and includes: identifying University-wide and Academic Group-wide actions (including strategic initiatives to address systemic challenges and changes to policies and processes); and identifying specific improvements to the given program / course (including changes to content, teaching strategies and assessment);
- is evidenced-based and draws on multiple data sources including student feedback, industry feedback and external data to compare Griffith's performance to other institutions;
- is collaborative and collegial involving teaching teams, academic leaders and relevant central portfolios;
- ensures that Griffith's programs and courses meet the requirements under the Higher Education Standards Framework and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act.

Griffith's review of programs and courses occurs at a number of levels to ensure a wholistic approach, as detailed below. This involves a combination of point-in-time reviews and, where required, ongoing continuous improvement practices.

The subsequent sections of this procedure provide an overview of each level of review:

- **University-wide review of the suite of programs and courses** including identifying institutional initiatives to improve quality and student outcomes (see Section 3.1).
- **Academic Group review of the suite of programs and courses** including identifying Group-wide initiatives to improve quality and student outcomes (see Section 3.1).

- **Program review** which includes the in-depth review of programs every seven years, the annual review of programs and continuous improvement (see Section 3.2).
- **Annual review of courses** to identify opportunities for improvement (see Section 3.3).
- **Monitoring of low enrolment programs and courses** (see Section 3.4).
- **Timeframes for annual review cycle** (see Section 3.5).

3.1 University and Academic Group review of the suite of programs and courses

The collective performance of Griffith's suite of programs and courses will be regularly monitored at University Learning and Teaching Committee and at Group Learning and Teaching Committees. This will involve University Learning and Teaching Committee and Group Learning and Teaching Committees¹ at least once per year considering the following inputs:

- Griffith's performance against relevant goals and targets in the Strategic Plan and Academic Plan (using data provided by Planning and Analytics);
- consistent themes from student feedback (drawing on a summary prepared by the Dean (Learning and Teaching));
- consistent themes from program and course reviews:
 - For Group Learning and Teaching Committee this will involve each Deputy Head of School (Learning and Teaching) or equivalent preparing a summary of themes from program and course review using the prescribed template. This summary should be shared with the Head of School, for example, through discussion at the School Executive meeting.
 - For University Learning and Teaching Committee this will involve each Dean (Learning and Teaching) preparing a summary of themes from program and course review using the prescribed template.
- the number and proportion of programs and courses for each Academic Group that have completed the annual review.

University Learning and Teaching Committee and Group Learning and Teaching Committees will use these inputs to identify opportunities for improvement and initiatives to address performance issues.

Griffith Graduate Research School will lead the annual review of the University's Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication (PhD by Pub) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) as detailed in Section 3.2.2.2.

3.2 Program review

Griffith has a continuous improvement approach to ensuring the quality of its programs. As detailed in this section, there are two processes for the periodic review of programs: in-depth program reviews which occur at least every seven years (see Section 3.2.1); and annual program reviews (see Section 3.2.2).

These periodic reviews provide an opportunity to collate and consider the results of the ongoing critical reflection and continuous improvement that Schools and academic staff may engage in throughout the year as required (see Section 3.2.3).

3.2.1 In-depth program review

All programs offered by Griffith undergo an in-depth review that feeds into the organisational review process, in line with the *University Reviews Policy*. The in-depth review of programs is a

¹ Where a Group does not have a Group Learning and Teaching Committee, an equivalent governance group will be selected by the Dean L&T.

comprehensive review that is informed by annual program reviews and evaluates the continued relevance and fit-for-purpose of programs, with a focus on program quality, student success, program design, demand and market performance. The Groups may review programs in depth individually or combine similar programs into suites to review in depth collectively and simultaneously.

Programs or program suites are reviewed by the Program Director or appointed nominee, respectively, who undertakes the review in consultation with the teaching team, the Deputy Head of School (Learning and Teaching) and, for HDR programs, the Deputy Head of School (Research), or equivalent.

Prior to the organisational review, the Head of School or equivalent collates and approves the in-depth program review submission. The submission comprises of an executive summary highlighting relevant key findings tailored to the context and specific requirements of the School. The summary draws on, and the submission includes copies of:

- the *In-depth Review Report(s)*;
- the *Annual Program Review Reports*; and
- professional accreditation outcome(s) (if applicable)

The above items are then provided to the Organisational Review Panel as part of their consideration for the organisational review process. The outcome of this review is provided to Academic Committee and University Council for consideration. Following the outcomes of the Organisational Review, the School must ensure it has processes in place to monitor the implementation of recommendations emerging from the in-depth program review. Programs Committee re-accredits programs upon recommendation from the Organisational Review Panel.

Where a program has Transnational delivery, Programs Committee may undertake a Transnational Program Audit as part of the in-depth review to assure compliance with the Higher Education Standards.

3.2.2 Annual program review

3.2.2.1 Annual program review

The annual program review provides an opportunity for reflection on the quality and student outcomes of the program. It is led by the Program Director (or, for HDR programs, the academic staff member responsible for management of the HDR program), and involves a collaborative approach of drawing on the expertise of Course Convenors, Learning and Teaching Consultants, Deputy Head of School (Learning and Teaching), Head of School, Dean (Learning and Teaching) and, for HDR programs, the Dean (Research).

The annual program review will:

- Draw on a data dashboard provided by Planning and Analytics.
- Draw on the findings from academic staff's continuous reflections on improvements (see Section 3.2.3).
- Draw on the findings of reviews of relevant courses, particularly core courses and courses involving Work Integrated Learning (see Section 3.3).
- Assess the program's alignment with strategic initiatives (e.g. Career readiness).
- Monitor continued alignment with approved structures as per the *Program Structure Design Principles Schedule*.
- Identify opportunities for improvement in the program and relevant courses.
- Be completed using the prescribed templates to ensure consistent documentation.

The Dean (Learning and Teaching) may determine that:

- a single program review should be conducted for related undergraduate suites (Bachelor, Undergraduate Diploma and End-on Honours), and postgraduate suites (Masters, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas);
- an annual program review is not required where a professional accreditation review or an in-depth program review has recently occurred.

The Dean (Learning and Teaching) will receive the data and findings from the annual program review and may determine that a program improvement plan is required. For HDR programs, this determination will be made in collaboration with the Dean (Research). The program improvement plan will be collaboratively developed by the Dean (Learning and Teaching), Deputy Head of School (Learning and Teaching), the Program Director, Learning and Teaching Consultant(s) and, for HDR programs, the Dean (Research).

The Dean (Learning and Teaching) will provide the University Learning and Teaching Committee with an annual list of programs where performance issues have been identified. The University Learning and Teaching Committee may refer HDR programs where performance issues have been identified to the Board of Graduate Research to jointly monitor. The Dean (Learning and Teaching) will update the University Learning and Teaching Committee on the progress and outcomes of improvements made. If after two years performance has not sufficiently improved, the Dean (Learning and Teaching) will refer the program to Group Board to consider whether the program should be withdrawn.²

3.2.2.2 Annual program review – PhD, PhD by Prior Publication and MPhil

The annual review of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programs is led by the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School and involves a collaborative approach of drawing on the expertise of the Element HDR Convenors, Group HDR Directors, Deans (Research), Learning and Teaching Consultants and the Griffith Graduate Research School. The annual program review will draw on:

- a data dashboard provided by Planning and Analytics;
- findings and themes from the Academic Group and Element annual audit of provision against the *HDR Minimum Standard of Resources, Facilities and Other Support*;
- HDR candidate feedback as provided through the annual HDR Candidate Experience Survey and the findings from Academic Group and Element as well as central business units review of survey data, in accordance with the *HDR Candidate Experience Survey Local Protocol*.

The annual program review will identify opportunities for improvement in the program and will be completed using the prescribed templates.

The Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School will present the data and findings from the annual program review to the Board of Graduate Research, including any proposed action with regard to opportunities for improvement identified. The Board of Graduate Research will determine any action required as a result of the program review, except where actions proposed have strategic or financial implications for Griffith; in which case the Board will make a recommendation for the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)'s consideration.

Following Board of Graduate Research consideration, the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School will provide the University Learning and Teaching Committee with a report setting out high-level findings from the annual program review.

² Following the program withdrawal processes in the Procedure for Program Approval.

3.2.2.3 Annual new program monitoring (within first five years of offer)

Program Strategy Board will annually monitor the market and financial performance of new coursework programs within the first five years of offer.

Where a new program is not meeting a benchmark set in the business case, the Dean (Learning & Teaching) and the Pro Vice Chancellor will make a recommendation to Program Strategy Board on whether a market and financial performance improvement plan should be developed.

All new coursework programs that have entered performance improvement processes will have a continuation review after 3 and 5 years of offer. This will involve the Pro Vice Chancellor making a recommendation to Program Strategy Board on whether the new program should continue. Where the Pro Vice Chancellor is recommending the program continue, the Program Strategy Board may request that a new business case for the program be developed before they approve continuation of the program.

3.2.4 Ongoing continuous improvement of programs

Throughout the year, academic staff may engage in continuous reflection on improvements that can be made to programs to ensure quality and student outcomes. The findings and outcomes of these continuous improvement activities should be captured as part of the annual review of programs.

3.3 Course review

Griffith has a continuous improvement approach to ensuring the quality of its courses. As detailed in this section, this involves a 'point in time' annual review of each course and, as required, continuous improvement activities.

3.3.1 Annual course review

Each course will undergo review once per year and this review will include all instances of the course delivered since the last review. The annual course review can occur immediately following the final instance of the course in the academic calendar.

The annual course review will be led by the primary Course Convenor and will involve collaboration with other Course Convenor(s), the teaching team, and the relevant Program Director(s).

The annual course review:

- uses data provided by Planning and Analytics on student feedback and student outcomes;
- draws on the reflections and findings from the ongoing continuous improvement activities of the teaching team, including academic integrity and third party arrangements;
- identifies improvements that should be made to the course;
- identifies insights and findings which should be considered as part of the program review;
- use the prescribed templates to ensure documentation.

Where a course involves Work Integrated Learning this review should ensure that students are having valuable learning experiences and assure that the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework are met.

In making improvements to the course, the Course Convenor should collaborate with relevant Program Director(s) to ensure that the program remains constructively aligned and coherent.

The Deputy Heads of School (Learning and Teaching) (for Science, AEL and Health) or Program Directors (for GBS) will receive the data and findings from course review. They, or a delegate, may identify that a course improvement plan is required. The course improvement plan will be

collaboratively developed by the Course Convenor, the teaching team, the Program Director and Learning and Teaching Consultant(s).

Where a course has recently participated in Innovative Research Universities (IRU) Academic Calibration Process (ACP), the Deputy Head of School Learning and Teaching (for Science, AEL and Health) or Program Directors (for GBS) may determine that a course review is not required.

3.3.2 Continuous improvement of courses

Throughout the year, academic staff may engage in continuous reflection on improvements that can be made to courses to ensure quality, enable student success and address student feedback. A collegial and collaborative approach should be adopted, drawing on relevant data and expertise of staff. The findings and outcomes of these continuous improvement activities should be captured as part of the annual review of courses.

3.4 Monitoring of sustainability and financial viability

Academic Groups will have local processes in place to monitor the financial viability of their program and course offering. This will include monitoring:

- the total volume of programs and courses offered to ensure it is sustainable; and
- low enrolment and low margin programs and courses to determine if they should continue to be offered.

PVCs, Deans (Learning and Teaching) and the DVC(E) will be provided with a list of courses and programs that:

- have a low number of enrolments; and/or
- are performing poorly in the course profitability analysis; and/or
- have not had enrolments for the previous two years.

Honours, independent study courses, placements and industry experience courses required for professional accreditation, and clinic courses would be excluded from this monitoring.

3.5 Timeframes for annual cycle of reviews

The below table outlines the annual timing for each level of review.

Academic Groups may determine when annual course review will occur throughout the year, with course review templates submitted by the deadline. For example, courses offered in a single trimester may be reviewed immediately following the trimester of offer and the course review submitted by the below deadline.

Level of review	Completion timeframe
Course review including completion of the course review template by primary Course Convenor (See section 3.3).	For T3, T1 and T2 courses completed each calendar year, reviews are due prior to the commencement of T1 the following year. One consolidated review is required for courses delivered more than once per year.

Level of review	Completion timeframe
Program review including completion of the program review template by the Program Director (See section 3.2) or by the Dean (GGRS) (see section 3.2.2.2). <i>Note: Dean (L&T) to review program dashboard to identify program based on program performance heatmap.</i>	<p>Week 7 T1 - program review templates completed by Program Directors.</p> <p>Week 10 T1 - Dean (L&T) identifies programs that require improvement plans.</p>
Academic Group program suite review including Deputy Head of School/Program Directors collating themes of coursework program and course review using the prescribed template ['Group-based outcomes and themes' template] for discussion at Group Learning and Teaching Committee (See section 3.1). Board of Graduate Research review of findings and recommendations from the PhD and MPhil annual program review.	Process to be completed to conform with review by Group LTC meeting and BGR meeting no later than June.
University program suite review including Deans L&T collating themes of coursework program and course review using the prescribed template ['Group-based outcomes and themes' template] (See section 3.1) and the Dean (GGRS) collating themes from the PhD and MPhil annual program review for University Learning and Teaching Committee consideration.	Revised/finalised Group LTC summary report to be submitted by Dean (L&T) to: DVC-E Forum (July meeting) Uni LTC (August meeting)
Academic Group course enrolment review including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Analytics providing a list of low enrolment courses / course instances to the DVC E, PVC and Deans L&T. Academic Groups considering where courses / course instances should be discontinued. 	During T1 of following academic year.

4.0 Definitions

Australian Qualifications Framework 2013 (and updates) is the Australian Government policy for regulated qualifications. It defines the learning outcomes for each level of AQF and each qualification type.

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 set out the minimum acceptable requirements and standards for the provision of higher education in or from Australian registered higher education providers.

The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) sets out the legal framework governing delivery of education to international students in Australia on a student visa.

Program is an approved course of study leading to an award of the University (a higher education award). A student is admitted to a program, and on successful completion of all program requirements is awarded the degree to which the program relates.

Course refers to a component of a qualification, normally undertaken over a single trimester, in which the student enrolls 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.

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.

Award program is an award which 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).

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 (HDR) refers to a Research Masters or Research Doctorate where a:

- Research Masters means a Level 9 qualification as described in the Australian Quality Framework (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.

Third party arrangement is an arrangement between Griffith and another party (in Australia or overseas) to deliver some or all of a program or course that leads to the award.

Student Experience of a Course is a survey instrument to provide feedback from students to teaching staff and the University about student satisfaction with key elements of every course.

Student Experience of Teaching is a survey instrument that provides feedback from students to teaching staff and the University about student satisfaction with key elements of teaching.

5.0 Information

Title	Program and Course Review Procedure
Document number	2024/0001035
Purpose	This Procedure describes the quality assurance process that ensures the regular monitoring and review of Griffith's programs and courses.
Audience	Staff
Category	Academic
Subcategory	Learning and Teaching
Approval date	30 September 2024
Effective date	1 January 2025
Review date	2026
Policy advisor	Director, Student Credentials

Approving authority	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)
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6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	<u>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</u> <u>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</u>
Policy	<u>Course Profile Requirements Procedure</u> <u>Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy</u> <u>Quality Assurance Policy</u> <u>Higher Degree by Research Policy</u> <u>Admission Policy</u> <u>Program and Course Policy</u> <u>Student Experience of Courses (SEC) and Teaching (SET) Policy</u> <u>University Reviews Policy</u>
Procedure	<u>Higher Degree by Research Admission Procedure</u> <u>Program Approval Procedure</u> <u>Course Approval Procedure</u> <u>Qualifications Procedure</u> <u>Program Structure Design Principles Schedule</u>
Local protocol	<u>HDR Candidate Experience Survey: Local Protocol</u>
