Policy

Quality Assurance

1.0 Purpose

This policy guides and promotes quality assurance and enhancement activities at Griffith University. It outlines the University's academic quality assurance principles and provides an overview of the quality management system.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all academic areas and administrative elements within Griffith University. Staff and students employed by, or studying at, Griffith University are subject to this policy.

This policy applies to learning, teaching, and other activities associated with award programs that the University self-accredits that lead to higher education awards, and non-award programs (including micro-credentials and ELICOS programs). It applies to research and related activities, including government evaluations of research quality and Research Block Grant arrangements.

3.0 Policy statement

Griffith is committed to continuous quality assurance and enhancement of its academic activities, including teaching, learning, scholarship, research, and research training, as well as the administrative, management and governance structures involved in supporting these activities.

3.1 Principles

Quality assurance principles inform all activities at the University in order to maintain excellent standards as a higher education provider. Quality assurance:

- aligns with Griffith's vision and values.

- ensures University activities comply with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018,* and other relevant regulatory frameworks.

- is an inherent, visible, and enhancement-based part of the delivery of all learning, teaching and research activities.

- is coherent and streamlined.

- is evidence-based and draws on multiple sources of data, including student feedback, industry feedback and external data to compare Griffith's performance to other institutions.

- is supported by an enabling culture which engages staff and students and supports continuous improvement.

3.2 Institutional Quality Management System

Griffith's institutional quality assurance mechanisms provide for the systematic review and evaluation of academic activities and supporting functions to achieve performance improvements through a cyclical continuous improvement process of planning, implementing, reviewing, and improving. Core principles and requirements of academic activities and supporting functions are informed by relevant legislation and University quality frameworks. Quality assurance is supported through University governance structures, accountability, policies, and procedures.

3.2.1 Legislative and University Frameworks

Griffith's institutional quality assurance is informed by relevant legislation and legislative frameworks, including the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to overseas Students 2018,* and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Core principles and standards of academic activities and supporting functions are further informed by a series of University policies, processes and plans.

3.2.2 Plan & Implement

Griffith's planning framework consists of a series of linked plans and policies that guide the implementation of the University's strategic priorities. This includes:

- the University's Strategic Plan that sets targets benchmarked against publicly available sector-wide performance data;
- operational plans and key performance indicators within University-wide portfolios of research, equity and learning and teaching, and those of academic groups and administrative divisions. In turn, the strategic and operational plans and targets of each academic group inform the targets and improvement plans of the academic elements (the Schools/Departments); and
- strategic program planning that informs new and major changes to existing offerings.

The Planning and Statistics Portal provides data to inform Plans and targets.

Consideration of new coursework and higher degree programs is overseen by Program Strategy Board which assesses the strategic alignment, competitiveness, and financial sustainability of a proposed new program. The quality, academic rigour and regulatory compliance of Griffith's program suite is overseen by Programs Committee. All new programs and major changes to programs are approved by Programs Committee.

3.2.3 Review & Evaluate

The University makes provision for regular quality assurance of academic activities and supporting functions, including:

- **Assessment consensus moderation** – ensures maintenance of standards, reliability and validity of assessments and contributes to the development of a common disciplinary understanding of the course standards that underpin comparability and ensure consistency of marking.
- **External referencing** – includes benchmarking and peer review to compare Griffith's academic activities against equivalent activities in the sector to provide evidence-based insight into the University's standards and performance.
- **New program review** – monitoring of the market and financial performance of new coursework and higher degree by research (HDR) programs within the first five years of offer.
- **Annual program and course review** – interim monitoring encompassing the evaluation of the design and delivery of programs and courses, which is evidence-based and draws

on staff reflection and student feedback, performance data and external referencing against comparable programs. Where relevant consideration is given to delivery with other parties.

- **In-depth program review** – comprehensive review encompassing overarching academic scrutiny of the design, delivery, assessment, and performance of each program, which includes external referencing.
- **Research performance monitoring** – based on University's key performance indicators and strategic priorities.
- **Annual Research Centre and Institute reviews** – monitoring and funding allocation encompassing strategy, quality, and performance.
- **Internal audits** – ad hoc independent internal evaluation of the effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal controls within the University.
- **External audits** – ad hoc independent external evaluation of the effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal controls within the University.
- **Professional accreditation** – where required, quality assurance activities are undertaken by Academic Groups to meet professional accreditation and recognition requirements.
- **University organisational reviews** – periodic comprehensive reviews that are externally referenced, encompassing academic and administrative elements and thematic elements, ensuring adherence with relevant legislation, alignment with the University's values and contribution to the achievement of its strategic goals.
- **HDR supervisor accreditation and registration** – sector bench-marked, regulatory aligned requirements that must be met by HDR supervisors.
- **Research ethics** – processes to educate and monitor that research conducted by Griffith staff, students and partners meets high ethical standards.
- **External research income activities** – highly competitive processes that include quality assurance as part of grants, contract research, and consultancy submissions and management.

These quality assurance activities are informed by:

- **Planning and statistics** – reports to enable review and evaluation activities.
- **Student feedback** – students are provided with opportunities to give feedback on their experience through scheduled surveys on courses and teaching, HDR candidate experience, and ad hoc student engagement surveys and activities on campus.
- **Stakeholder feedback** – University or sector-initiated stakeholder feedback surveys that include insights on graduate outcomes, student experience, industry relevance.
- **Industry advice** – regular engagement with Industry Advisory Boards and Reference Groups to ensure alignment with industry and professional needs.
- **Research Performance Guidelines and benchmarking** – metrics and analysis of research performance at individual, element, and institution levels.
- **External rankings** – external validation of academic quality through national and global rankings and data.
- **Government evaluations** – relevant government evaluations of research quality and outcomes, and annual Research Block Grant allocations based on key performance measures.

3.2.4 Improve & Develop

Outcomes from academic and supporting function quality assurance activities are reported and monitored in line with relevant governance and internal business processes.

Students and staff are enabled to engage in, and strive for, quality enhancement through a range of activities, including:

- **Professional development** – induction, mandatory and optional professional development is offered to professional and academic staff to ensure staff are provided with the information they require and are equipped for their roles.
- **Peer mentoring** – experienced practitioners and academic staff undergoing training have their teaching guided and overseen by peer mentors.
- **Academic and professional staff career development** – annual performance review process which may identify opportunities for development.
- **Academic orientation –** mandatory and optional orientation programs for commencing students and HDR candidates.
- **Internal Communication** for implementation of development and mentoring activities.
- **Resources** for development and mentoring activities.

4.0 Roles, responsibilities, and delegations

ROLE RESPONSIBILITY

Council	Accountable for direction setting, performance monitoring, risk identification and mitigation, monitoring financial viability and sustainability, and influencing the corporate culture of the University.
Academic Committee	Responsible to the Council for assuring the quality of the University's academic standards through its oversight of learning and teaching and research processes and outcomes, as set down in the Strategic Plan and its supporting plans, in particular its monitoring of the effectiveness of policies, systems and procedures related to program and course management and research management.
University Learning & Teaching Committee	Monitoring the University's learning and teaching performance routinely against established benchmarks and standards, including the *Higher Education Standards Framework*, and advising on their effectiveness as measures of performance.
Research Committee	Makes recommendations and provides advice to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Academic Committee on the University's research policies and strategies; monitoring progress towards the University's research goals; promoting human research and animal ethics, biosafety and the responsible conduct of research; and reviewing responses to State and Commonwealth research policies and evaluations.
Board of Graduate Research	Makes recommendations to Academic Committee and advises the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) on strategic planning, policy and quality assurance matters concerning higher degree by research (HDR) programs and candidature, research training and higher doctorate arrangements.
Programs Committee	Through Academic Committee, has delegated authority to discharge the following functions: 1. approve new awards, including degree requirements, program structure and content and changes to existing awards 2. approve the withdrawal of programs

	3. establish standing sub-committees from time to time and approve proposed changes to the respective constitution for each sub-committee.
Program Strategy Board	On behalf of Executive Group ensures Griffith's program portfolio of programs are strategically aligned, successful in the market and financially sustainable.
Group Board	Advise on learning and teaching policy and practice and the management of learning and teaching, including strategies for promoting high quality and innovative teaching across the Group. Advise on research policy, the management of research and research training, including development of strategies to enhance the impact of the Group's research and the quality of research publications.
Provost	Establishing clear accountabilities for the monitoring and review of academic and administrative elements, programs, courses, and teaching. Ensuring University reviews of academic elements and administrative divisions take place (i.e., that policies and guidelines are implemented).
Chief Operating Officer	The management of data systems to collate and report performance data at the levels of group, school, program, course, and individual teacher in a useable form. The management of administrative support for implementation of the University's planning and review policies and processes.
Group PVCs, Deans, Heads of Schools, Directors	Ensuring implementation of quality assurance and enhancement activities within academic or administrative elements. Ensuring preparation of the review submission, implementation of recommendations, monitoring and reporting.
Program Director, Course Convener	Ensuring program and course monitoring and review takes place. Provide constructive analysis and feedback on content, assessment, performance of teaching, and other academic activities.
Students	Under the Griffith University *Student Charter Framework,* students are expected to provide constructive feedback on teaching, learning and other academic activities.
Staff	Under the *Code of Conduct*, staff are expected to conduct themselves with integrity in a way that upholds the values and reputation of the University and comply with ethical standards and legal requirements. The University expects its staff to remain informed about, act within the spirit of, and comply with University policies, directions and relevant legislation, as well as any regulatory requirements of their discipline or profession.

5.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

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Elements include Schools, Departments, Research Centres, Colleges, Institutes, other budget elements in which students are enrolled, as well as central administration and support units.

Academic Group is the highest and largest element in the academic structure of the University. The Academic Group is the administrative owner of programs offered by its academic elements. There are four Academic Groups: Arts, Education and Law (ARG), Business (BUS), Health (HTH) and Science, Environment, Engineering and Technology (SCG).

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 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.

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).

Quality assurance is the maintenance of a desired level of quality that has been attained or sustained, or is highly likely to be attained or sustained.

Quality enhancement is the improvement of quality brought about through ongoing cycles of continuous improvement and innovation which is embedded in the culture of an organisation.

Continuous improvement is based on an on-going reflective feedback cycle involving monitoring, review and consequent evidence-based improvements both of courses and of major controls on academic quality such as assessment policies and procedures.

Externally referenced is the comparison of internal controls with others within or beyond the institution. 'Benchmarking', 'moderation' and 'peer review' are common methods of external referencing used for particular purposes.

Research is the concept of research is broad and includes the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

6.0 Information

Title	Quality Assurance Policy
Document number	2023/0000402
Purpose	This policy guides and promotes quality assurance and enhancement activities at Griffith University. It outlines the University's academic quality assurance principles and provides an overview of the quality management system.
Audience	Staff; Students
Category	Academic
Subcategory	Learning and Teaching
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Policy advisor	Registrar
Approving authority	Academic Committee

7.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	Griffith University Act 1998
	Higher Education Standards Act 2011
	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to overseas Students 2018
	Australian Research Council Act 2001
	Public Sector Ethics Act 1994
	Integrity Act 2009
	Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018
Policy	University Reviews Policy Legislative Compliance Policy
	Risk and Resilience Management Policy
	Code of Conduct
	Student Charter Framework
	Responsible Conduct of Research Policy
Procedure	Programs and Course Policy
	Research Quality Framework
	Program and Course Review Procedure
	Program Approval Procedure
	Legislative Compliance Procedure
	Student Breaches of Academic Integrity Procedure
	Staff Direction: Identifying and Preventing Breaches of Academic Integrity
	Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Supervision Procedure
Local protocol	Griffith University Research Ethics Manual