

TABOR

COURSE DESIGN AND APPROVAL POLICY

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Related Documents:	Scholarship Committee Terms of Reference Academic Board Policy Academic Quality Assurance Committee Academic Governance Policy Course Closure Policy Benchmarking Policy	
Responsible Officer:	Chief Academic Officer	
Review:	Academic Quality Assurance Committee	

Any person who requires assistance in understanding any aspect of this document should contact the Responsible Officer

1. Overview

The Course Design and Approval Policy describes the quality assurance process that ensures:

- 1.1 effective curriculum planning and design of Tabor's award courses;
- 1.2 Tabor's courses satisfy the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF), and
- 1.3 that clear specifications are in place to govern the internal processes which Tabor will comply with in designing and internally approving proposed new courses.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the development of new higher education courses proposed to be offered by Tabor subject to TEQSA accreditation.

3. Policy Principles

- 3.1. Proposed new courses must:
 - 3.1.1. demonstrate alignment with Tabor's strategic principles;
 - 3.1.2. be financially viable;
 - 3.1.3. encompass the principles of best practice in curriculum design and utilise learning technologies and flexible teaching approaches; and
 - 3.1.4. be adequately resourced.
- 3.2. Prior to internal approval of a new course:
 - 3.2.1. learning outcomes of the course, including the units, must be aligned to the relevant AQF level of the course, including:
 - 3.2.1.1. the qualification type descriptor and specification;
 - 3.2.1.2. the volume of learning; and
 - 3.2.1.3. AQF policies.
 - 3.2.2. the course must be aligned to the requirements of any applicable professional accreditation body.
- 3.3. Processes set out in this Policy are designed to assure Tabor's stakeholders, including employers of graduates and professional bodies, that its courses:
 - 3.3.1. advance Tabor's mission and strategic principles;
 - 3.3.2. are able to produce graduates who are equipped with knowledge and skills which will specifically contribute to the wider Christian community and society in general and which promote life-long learning;
 - 3.3.3. are planned and developed with advice from internal and independent experts;
 - 3.3.4. are aligned to available resources;
 - 3.3.5. take account of current best practice; and
 - 3.3.6. are aligned to the needs of industry and professions.
- 3.4. All higher education courses made available for student enrolment at Tabor must be accredited by TEQSA before being promoted and offered.
- 3.5. Course design must demonstrate alignment between AQF course learning outcomes, unit learning outcomes and assessment tasks.

Course design requirements

- 3.6. The standard annual workload for award courses is **eight** standard units or 1200 hours.
- 3.7. A standard semester workload for award courses is **four** standard units or 600 hours.
- 3.8. A standard unit workload is 6 credit points or 150 hours.
- 3.9. The *minimum* units required and the *minimum* full time equivalent for undergraduate awards are as follows:

AQF Level and Qualification	Qualification title	Minimum units	Minimum duration of FTE study
5 Undergraduate Certificate	Undergraduate Certificate in (field of study)	4	1 semester

AQF Level and Qualification	Qualification title	Minimum units	Minimum duration of FTE study
5 Diploma	Diploma in (field of study)	8	1 year
7 Bachelor Degree	Bachelor of (field of study)	Range 24 - 32	3 – 4 years

3.10. The *minimum* units required and the *minimum* full time equivalent for postgraduate awards are as follows:

AQF Level and Qualification	Qualification title	Minimum units	Minimum duration of FTE study
8 Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate in (field of study)	4	Typically 0.5 year
8 Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma in (field of study)	8	Typically 1 year
9 Masters (Coursework)	Master of (field of study)	16-24	2-3 years

3.11. Masters level courses (AQF 9) are designed to include specific capstone experiences that integrate key aspects of the learning outcomes at AQF 9 and enable demonstration of critical analytical skills required to enter professional practice at the appropriate level.

3.12. Masters programs should not include more than 50% parallel taught subjects, with the exception of postgraduate awards which are accredited to provide entry to a profession.

4. Procedures

Initial Course Proposal

4.1. The first step for the initiation of a new course is the development of an Initial Course Proposal. The Head of Program (HOP), supported by the Chief Academic Officer's Office, and under the oversight of the Dean of Faculty, prepares this proposal which outlines the following:

- 4.1.1 the contribution of the course to Tabor's strategic direction;
- 4.1.2 an analysis of the need for the course (industry or student demand), and market demand, including the intended graduate destinations;
- 4.1.3 the qualification to be awarded on completion;
- 4.1.4 benchmarking against comparable courses at other Australian higher education providers (with a particular view to direct and indirect competitors), and international comparators;
- 4.1.5 enrolment and fee projections to demonstrate financial viability;
- 4.1.6 staffing requirements including continuing and new, and academic support; and
- 4.1.7 facilities and resources required, including specialist teaching facilities, library and electronic resources.

4.2. The Initial Course Proposal is first considered by the Tabor Executive, which evaluates the strategic importance of the proposed course and the operational (financial and resource investment) requirements.

- 4.3. In the event Executive endorses the Initial Course Proposal, it is tabled at the Academic Board, which reviews the proposed course with a particular view to its alignment with the academic strategy and capacity of the College.
- 4.4. In the event Academic Board endorses the Initial Course Proposal, it is tabled at the Board of Governors for their review and approval, ensuring that the proposed course will be financially viable and align with the College's overall strategic direction and priorities. The Academic Board authorizes development of a Full Course Proposal.

Full Course Proposal

- 4.5. Following BoG approval of the Initial Course Proposal, a Course Design Team, under the guidance of the Chief Academic Officer's Office, develops a Full Course Proposal with the following attached: benchmarking documents, constructive alignment, and unit outlines.
- 4.6. The Chief Academic Officer will notify TEQSA of Tabor's intention to submit a new award for accreditation.
- 4.7. Membership of the Course Design Team consists of the following:
 - 4.7.1. the Head of Program or Dean of Faculty (Chair)
 - 4.7.2. two lecturers from the College,
 - 4.7.3. the Quality Assurance and Innovations Officer,
 - 4.7.4. at least two stakeholders/industry representatives, and
 - 4.7.5. at least two independent academics.
- 4.8. The Course Design Team considers the following aspects of the course design:
 - 4.8.1. the course rationale;
 - 4.8.2. structure, duration and modes of delivery;
 - 4.8.3. the units of study titles that will comprise the course of study and any work-based placement requirements. A three-year bachelor degree should include at least three subjects drawn from Tabor's common core curriculum, with one-year courses including at least one;
 - 4.8.4. entry requirements and pathways;
 - 4.8.5. expected course learning outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative student workload, ensuring these meet the relevant AQF requirements of the level of study;
 - 4.8.6. benchmarking against comparable courses at other Australian higher education providers and international comparators; including rationale, course learning outcomes, course structure, content, and entry requirements and pathways;
 - 4.8.7. the unit outlines (including methods of assessment);
 - 4.8.8. any relevant requirements for graduates to be eligible for professional practice or to satisfy professional accreditation by the relevant professional body; these are to be included in the course learning outcomes and/or course completion requirements;
 - 4.8.9. the teaching and learning activities and course design, ensuring the achievement of the expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or mode of the delivery;
 - 4.8.10. exit pathways, articulation arrangements, and pathways to future learning;
 - 4.8.11. input from industry experts, academics and graduates and students including the outcomes of inter-faculty conversations; and
 - 4.8.12. any advice or additional requirements communicated or required by TEQSA.
- 4.9. The course documentation, in addition to the contents of the Full Course Proposal, need to demonstrate how the content and learning activities of the course meet the AQF requirements of the

level of study and engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:

- 4.9.1 current knowledge and scholarship in the relevant academic discipline(s);
- 4.9.2 study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic discipline(s) or fields of education or research represented in the course; and
- 4.9.3 emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice.

Independent Review

- 4.10. The course documentation is then provided for review by an independent discipline expert. The Chief Academic Officer, working with the Course Design Team, identifies experts with the relevant disciplinary expertise, in line with TEQSA's *Independent Experts engaged by providers* guidance, to conduct the review.
- 4.11. Feedback will be included in the final draft which is submitted to the Course Quality Committee and subsequently the Academic Board.

Course Approval

- 4.12. The Academic Board considers the proposed course. It may approve, reject, or require changes to the course. When the Academic Board is satisfied the course meets the requirements of the HESF, the AQF, and the needs of Tabor, it recommends approval for the course submission to the Board of Governors.
- 4.13. The Board of Governors reviews the Academic Board's recommendation and approves final submission to TEQSA.
- 4.14. Once internal approval of the course is final, the documentation is provided to the Office of the Registrar, which will:
 - 4.14.1. ensure compliance with other external requirements where relevant (including for example, the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003, and the ESOS Framework);
 - 4.14.2. assign a course code;
 - 4.14.3. ensure consistent use of unit codes;
 - 4.14.4. be checked for any anomalies; and
 - 4.14.5. submit the finalised course documentation to the TEQSA portal.
- 4.15. A [Course Development Flow Chart](#) depicts Tabor's process for developing a new course in light of the description above.

Responsibilities

- 4.16. The Chief Academic Officer manages the processes for course development including:
 - 4.16.1. supporting the development of an initial course proposal with Heads of Programs (HOP);
 - 4.16.2. establishing the Course Design Team;
 - 4.16.3. liaising with relevant regulatory authorities, including TEQSA; and
 - 4.16.4. support the Course Design Team during the independent review process.
- 4.17. The Chief Academic Officer reports to the [Course Quality Committee](#), [Scholarship Committee](#), the Course Advisory Panel (where appropriate), as overseen by the Academic Board.
- 4.18. The Tabor Academic Board considers and makes a decision on the development of all new courses.
- 4.19. The Tabor Board of Governors approves submission of applications to TEQSA for accreditation of new courses.

5. Definitions

See [Global Definitions](#)

6. Communication and Training

- 6.1 The Chief Academic Officer will provide the necessary training for completing a course submission to the Deans of Faculty, Heads of Program / Course Coordinators, Design Teams and Course Advisory Panels as required and appropriate.
- 6.3 This policy will be made available on Tabor's website.

Appendix: Diagrammatic Representation of the Course Approval Process

