TABOR

PARALLEL TEACHING POLICY

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Related documents:	Risk Management Policy Assessment Policy Academic Quality Assurance Committee	
Responsible Officer:	Registrar	
Review:	Academic Quality Assurance Committee	

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

1. **Overview**

   Parallel teaching is the teaching of students at different AQF levels with different learning goals in a single learning situation. It usually includes "any form of teaching that involves a significant component of undergraduate content forming part of a postgraduate course, or any form of teaching that involves undergraduate and postgraduate students being located in the same class" (University of Adelaide, 2006). Because of the risks to academic quality inherent in such a practice, it is important that any parallel teaching occurs within the context of a well-established policy framework, including clear guidelines for lecturers, Deans and the College's Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

2. **Scope and Applications**

   This Policy applies to all Academic employees (staff) with respect to the delivery of course content.

3. **Policy Principles**

   3.1   All Tabor subjects are accredited for teaching at a specific AQF level.

3.2 The learning outcomes, the assessment tasks, the level of analysis required, and the types of assigned reading must all conform with the specific accredited AQF level.

3.3 Similar content can be explored at more than one AQF level, especially when students are encountering this material for the first time. This often applies to postgraduate students who have not completed an undergraduate degree in the same field.

3.4 Parallel teaching is restricted to "broadening" postgraduate awards as opposed to "deepening" ones, i.e., those which require an undergraduate degree in the same field unless prior approval is received from the Academic Board.

3.5 Parallel teaching can provide positive educational opportunities for students undertaking courses at different AQF levels to jointly participate in learning experiences.

3.6 It is imperative, however, that the learning experiences of students studying at different AQF levels is not compromised by any form of parallel teaching.

3.7 Parallel teaching should be restricted to subjects delivered at three adjacent AQF level courses if spanning the AQF 7 and 8 boundary (e.g., AQF level 7 and 9 may be co-delivered) unless an exemption is granted by the Academic Board.

4. **Procedures**

   4.1 Responsibilities of the lecturer

   4.1.1. Familiarise themselves with the distinctive requirements of the AQF levels at which they will be teaching. In particular, lecturers must be able to identify both the AQF levels at which each student is studying and the relative distinctiveness of the two levels.[1]

   4.1.2. Familarise themselves with the subject learning outcomes (SLO) for the subjects they are teaching. SLOs are written for a specific AQF level.

   4.1.3. Ensure that the assessment tasks specifically test the student's achievement of the AQF level aligned SLOs. The complexity of assignments and volume of learning are AQF level specific. Typically, the higher AQF level assignments will require greater complexity in order for students to demonstrate advanced research and analytical skills.

   4.1.4. Prepare a reading list that involves students in exploring the material at an appropriate level of complexity. Again, the SLOs will give guidance as to how the student is meant to engage with the content of the subject.[2]

   4.1.5. Ensure that students engage with the presented content at an AQF appropriate level across the course of the subject. In parallel taught subjects, masters students shall be offered extension material by way of a minimum quantum of separate or additional delivery set at 25%, with lecturers encouraged to achieve a typical quantum of 33%. This separate or additional delivery should take the form of tutorials, discussions, or lectures at masters level.

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[1] Details about the various AQF levels can be found at https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf-2nd-edition-january-2013.pdf

[2] Lecturers should assume that, if they use a textbook for their subject, the assigned textbook for the two AQF levels will be different. If this is not possible, lecturers should be able to demonstrate (as part of the pre-semester review with the Dean) how the two AQF levels of students will engage with the text at the appropriate level.

4.2 Responsibility of the Dean of Faculty

4.2.1 Before semester:
   a. When reviewing the Subject Descriptions with the lecturer, ensure that each is AQF level appropriate.
   b. In addition, compare and contrast the two Subject Descriptions before signing off on either.
   c. Discuss with the lecturer their teaching strategy for engaging both cohorts at their distinct AQF level of learning.

4.2.2 After semester:
   a. Ensure that Student Subject Evaluations and Grade Distribution charts are revised separately and comparatively in the review with the lecturer.
   b. As part of the end of semester subject review, the Dean should discuss the parallel delivery of subjects and make sure that identified strengths, weaknesses or suggested changes are recorded for future reference.

4.3 Responsibility of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC)

4.3.1 The AQAC will undertake an audit of the College's parallel teaching practices each semester.

4.3.2 This will involve a review of at least one lecturer from each faculty per semester, ensuring that, within three years, all permanent lecturers engaged in parallel teaching across AQF levels are moderated in all aspects of the guidelines.[3]

4.3.3 This review will include an interview with the lecturer regarding their parallel teaching practices (see appendix for suggested interview questions), a review of the subject descriptions, an examination of the Student Subject Evaluations for the subjects (differentiated by AQF levels) and an analysis of the grade distributions of the subjects (differentiated by AQF levels).

4.3.4 The AQAC will discuss the reviews at the next AQAC meeting and the conversation shall be minuted.

4.3.5 Any concerns related to the design or delivery of specific subjects should be communicated directly to the lecturer and to their Dean who will report back to the AQAC on any actions taken, if required.

4.3.6 Any concerns, particularly if they point to potentially larger, systemic issues, will be forwarded to the Director of Scholarship and the Scholarship Committee as an action point for the committee. This may involve the creation of professional development sessions addressing any parallel teaching practices identified as problematic.

4.3.7 The Academic Board will receive copies of minutes from the AQAC and SC. Any particular risks to academic quality, however, should be brought directly to the attention of the Academic Board, as per the College's Risk Management Policy.

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[3] This is in addition to any regular moderation of subjects undertaken as part of the QA processes.

5. **Definitions**

See Global Definitions

6. **Communication and Training**

The Chief Academic Officer and Deans of Faculties are primarily responsible for implementing the requirements of this policy.

Appendix: Interview Questions for Parallel Teaching Audit

1) How did you seek to differentiate the work for assessment to ensure that each cohort was achieving their specific learning outcomes?
Response

2) How did you differentiate the learning resources / material? How did you help students engage with these?
Response

3) How did you differentiate the learning experiences (e.g., distinct learning activities, distinct tutorial sessions, additional lectures)?
Response

4) Do you have any observations you'd like to share regarding your experience of parallel teaching, particularly with regards to the quality of student experience?
Response