

Course Discontinuation and Teach-Out Policy and Procedure

Associated Information

Approving body	Governing Board
Date approved	27 Feb 2025
Date of effect	Commencement of Operation
Next scheduled review	Two years from policy commencement
Policy owner	Academic Dean
Policy contact	Academic Dean
Related Documents	Course Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure Student Fee Refund Policy and Procedure Student Appeals Policy and Procedure Student Grievance Policy and Procedure Student Support Framework
Related Legislative and Regulatory Instruments	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Standard 1.1.2c ■ Standard 6.2.1i ■ Standard 7.3.1d Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Section 46D: Obligations on registered providers in case of provider default Higher Education Support Act 2003 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Section 166-25: Obligations on registered providers in case of provider default National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Standard 3: Formalisation of Enrolment and Written Agreements Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 Part 5A—Tuition protection

Purpose

1. This Policy and Procedure sets out the approach at Zenith Innovation Institute (**Zenith** / the **Institute**) to ensure any course discontinuation fulfils regulatory requirements. This includes the obligations under the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* to have effective teach out or course transition plans in place in the event an accredited course cannot continue to be delivered and those pertaining to tuition assurance, while protecting student interests.

Scope

2. This Policy and Procedure applies to:
 - (a) all students enrolled at Zenith;
 - (b) all prospective students; and
 - (c) all Zenith's TEQSA accredited higher education courses.

Policy

Principles

3. Any proposed decision to discontinue a Zenith accredited higher education course of study will be underpinned by:
 - (a) a sound rationale taking into consideration of an evidence-base, including a range of stakeholder views;
 - (b) analysis, including impact to financial viability and sustainability of the Institute;
 - (c) impact on prospective and current students, graduates and staff;
 - (d) identification of risks arising from course discontinuation;
 - (e) a comprehensive course teach-out or transition plan that safeguard student interests and ensures all administrative, regulatory and course information requirements are met; and
 - (f) a communication plan that enables stakeholders, particularly impacted students and staff, to make informed decisions including exercising rights under tuition refund policies.
 - (g) Relevant decisions and approvals by Zenith's governance bodies and compliance requirements.
4. Information regarding the tuition assurance arrangements will be provided on the Institute's website, including:
 - (a) the name of the scheme;
 - (b) date of registration as a member of the scheme; and
 - (c) currency of coverage, if applicable.
5. Information regarding tuition assurance and student rights and obligations will be provided in the Institute's written agreement and letter of offer to students prior to enrolment and before fees are accepted, as required by HESF 1.1.2c. This information will include a plain English explanation of what happens in the event of a course not being delivered, including the role of the Tuition Protection Service (**TPS**), as required by the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code) Standard 3.4.4*.
6. If a course is discontinued at Zenith, the Institute will ensure that all impacted students will not be unreasonably disadvantaged and:

- (a) where possible, be provided with the opportunity to complete the course at Zenith within a reasonable timeframe in accordance with a developed course teach out plan;
- (b) be offered the option of receiving a refund under Zenith's *Student Fees Policy and Procedure* and *Student Refund Policy and Procedure*;
- (c) in the event of provider default, be offered to transition to a suitable equivalent unit or course offered by Zenith or with another higher education provider of equivalent standing with an equivalent course offering outlined in a developed course transition plan; and
- (d) in the event of provider default, domestic FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP students will be offered a loan re-credit for the units for which a HELP loan had been received and were being undertaken when the Institute defaulted.

7. The Academic Dean is responsible for engaging with and maintaining a list of suitable equivalent units, pathways and alternative higher education providers with equivalent course offerings.
8. The Institute will fulfill its obligations as a higher education provider under the Related Legislative and Regulatory Instruments included within the Associated Information section of this document.
9. Zenith recognises that students may experience concerns or distress in the event that a course is discontinued and it committed to ensuring the wellbeing and academic success of all affected students in accordance with the *Student Wellbeing Policy and Procedure* and *Student Support Framework*.

Procedure

Course Discontinuation

10. Discontinuation of a course can be:
 - (a) initiated by Zenith, if the course is no longer relevant, strategically aligned or financially viable. This would be a decision made by the Institute's Governing Board in consultation with the Academic Board and Executive Management Committee; or
 - (b) initiated by an external accreditation decision of the course, or the Institute's registration as a higher education provider, as regulated by Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (**TEQSA**).
11. The process to follow under the two above scenarios are different and are set out below:

Course Discontinuation initiated by Zenith

12. The Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) with input from the Academic Dean will develop a proposal outlining the rationale for discontinuing delivery of a course supported by a course teach-out plan or course transition plan, which will include:
 - (a) an impact analysis and risk assessment;
 - (b) an action plan to address relevant regulatory requirements; and
 - (c) a communication plan, including a letter to students and course applicants.
13. The proposal will be provided to the Academic Board for consideration with a final decision by the Governing Board.
14. If the Governing Board approves the discontinuation of a course, the CEO must:
 - (a) within 14 days of approval by the Governing Board, submit a Material Change Notification to the TEQSA; and
 - (b) after receiving TEQSA's confirmation of the Material Change Notification, notify students and staff about the decision to discontinue delivery of the course.

15. Zenith will then do the following:

- (a) new enrolments into the affected course will cease immediately, current applicants will be advised of alternative course options;
- (b) local and domestic agents are to be notified the course is closed to future enrolments;
- (c) a communication plan is developed and consultation with stakeholders including students, stakeholders, and affected staff will be implemented;
- (d) Zenith will develop an action plan to address regulatory requirements;
- (e) public statements about the status of affected course will be published on the Institute's website;
- (f) counselling and other support services will be offered to students and staff; and
- (g) individual consultation will be held with students and stakeholders to confirm financial matters, including tuition refund.

Course Discontinuation initiated by TEQSA

16. If the course is discontinued due to a decision from TEQSA:

- (a) new enrolments into the affected course will cease immediately, current applicants will be advised of alternative course options;
- (b) local and domestic agents are to be notified the course is closed to future enrolments;
- (c) a communication plan is developed and consultation with stakeholders including students, stakeholders, and affected staff will be implemented;
- (d) Zenith will develop an action plan to address regulatory requirements;
- (e) public statements about the status of affected course will be published on the Institute's website;
- (f) counselling and other support services will be offered to students and staff; and
- (g) individual consultation will be held with students and stakeholders to confirm financial matters, including tuition refund.

Course Teach Out Plans And Course Transition Plans

Preparation of course teach-out plans or course transition plans

17. The Academic Dean with oversight of the Academic Board and Governing Board, is responsible for ensuring that student interests are adequately protected, and for preparing detailed course teach-out or course transition plans. This will consist of the following key steps:

- (a) the review of existing student enrolments in the course and estimation of continuing student load for the teach out period;
- (b) identification of available and appropriate alternative equivalent pathways or courses, both within the Institute and with other higher education providers; and
- (c) the development of detailed plans and schedules. Such plans should include:
 - (i) any planned accelerated study periods and unit streaming to make class sizes viable. This should be undertaken in ways that ensure the integrity of the course is not compromised, learning outcomes are not compromised and students' progress or visa conditions are not negatively impacted;

- (ii) the management of students with exceptional circumstances such as those with Leave of Absence or serious illness. Such strategies may include contingency units or alternative study modes (such as independent study); and
- (iii) the preparation of course progress plans to ensure that students are supported to complete the course within the planned completion date without disadvantage.

Implementation of course teach-out plans or course transition plans

18. Course teach-out plans will be implemented following discontinuation of a course as follows:

- (a) all students and stakeholders affected by the decision will be advised within 24 hours of the reasons for course discontinuation and the options available;
- (b) an information session will be organised for all students, staff and other key stakeholders;
- (c) no new enrolments will be accepted once a decision or notification for course discontinuation is confirmed;
- (d) monitoring of student progression and identification of risks to ensure successful student outcomes;
- (e) for courses in teach-out mode:
 - (i) maintenance of resources to deliver the course for courses in teach-out mode; and
 - (ii) the teachout period will be defined and approved and will not exceed two years; and
- (f) a dedicated nominated contact person for all enquiries related to the course discontinuation from individual student and other stakeholders.

Students unable to complete the course during the transition period

19. Affected students who are unable to complete the course during the transition period will be offered the following relevant options:

- (a) enrolment in an alternative Zenith course, at no additional charge to the student for units to be completed?; or
- (b) a refund of tuition fees under the *Student Fees Policy and Procedure* and *Student Refund Policy and Procedure*.

20. Alternative unit options and cross-institutional enrolment may also be determined for students on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Dean.

Appeals

21. A student (or relevant representative) may appeal a decision made under this Policy and Procedure, under the *Student Appeals Policy and Procedure*. Not sure what a student can appeal about – no decision has been make about the student. Perhaps more relevant is the Student Complaint Policy and Procedure.

Responsibilities

22. The responsibilities across Zenith are as follows:

Responsibility	Description
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The CEO is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ liaising with the Academic Dean concerning any proposals to discontinue a course;

Responsibility	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ liaising with TEQSA concerning a course discontinuation, whether initiated by Zenith or TEQSA; ■ liaising with the Tuition Protection Service regarding Zenith or TEQSA-initiated course discontinuation or matters regarding provider default; ■ preparing and completing proposals for course discontinuation, including course teach-out plans or course transition plans, in consultation with the Academic Dean; ■ overseeing student communication and support; ■ implementing relevant plans, in collaboration with relevant staff, including the Academic Dean; and ■ reporting to the Governing Board as part of monitoring course discontinuation and teach out processes.
Academic Dean	<p>The Academic Dean is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ engaging with and maintaining a list of suitable equivalent units and alternative higher education providers with equivalent course offerings; ■ supporting the CEO in developing a proposal outlining the rationale for discontinuing delivery of a course; and ■ preparing and implementation of detailed course teach out plans or course transition plans in consultation with Course Coordinators and the Student Services Manager and oversight from the Academic Board and Governing Board.
Course Coordinator	<p>The Course Coordinator is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ implementation of the course teach-out plan; and ■ providing assurance to the Academic Dean that the plan is being implemented effectively and student learning outcomes are not at risk over the teach out period.
Student Services Manager	<p>The Student Services Manager is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ identification of completion dates, management of load and enrolment issues; and ■ any refunds or tuition protection arrangements associated with the discontinuation of courses.
Marketing and Student Recruitment Officer	<p>The Marketing and Student Recruitment Officer is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensuring that all course information and marketing materials for the discontinued course are withdrawn; and ■ agents are notified when a decision to discontinue a course has been made.
Academic Board (AB)	<p>The Academic Board is accountable to the Governing Board for advising the Governing Board on academic matters, issues and risks on course discontinuation and teach-out processes and ensuring that this Course Discontinuation and Teach-Out policy is implemented, in particular ensuring the rights of students are maintained and students are supported.</p>

Responsibility	Description
Governing Board (GB)	The Governing Board is responsible for decision-making on course discontinuation, overseeing teach-out processes in conjunction with the Academic Board including assurance that resources are in place to maintain the quality and integrity of courses and outcomes as part of teach-out processes.

Definitions

23. The following terms for this Policy and Procedure are defined as follows:

Term	Definition
Course discontinuation	A decision to discontinue a course of study leading to circumstances that results in the Institute not accepting new student enrolments after a designated date
Default	Where the Institute: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ fails to start providing a course to students at the location on the agreed starting day; ■ after the course starts but before it is completed, the course ceases to be provided to the student at the location; and ■ and where the student has not withdrawn from the course before the day that the Institute defaults.
Domestic student	A student who is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or who holds an Australian permanent visa.
Executive Management Committee	This committee comprises of the CEO, Academic Dean, Registrar, Finance Manager, Marketing Manager, IT Manager
International student	Any overseas student, including those who have student visas, temporary residency, bridging visas and provisional residency (as applicable under the <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i>).
Leave of absence	A suspension of enrolment initiated by a student.
Teach out	Refers to the special arrangements that apply when a course or unit is discontinued, where no new students are allowed to enrol, and where enrolled students continue to complete the unit, course, or equivalent.
Tuition Protection Service (TPS)	An initiative of the Australian Government to assist students whose education providers are unable to fully deliver the enrolled course of study.

Version History

Version #	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	Original version	Governing Board	23 May 2024



1.1	Added Point 15 Point 10 a) replaced “Senior Management Team” with “Executive Management Committee”	Governing Board	27 Feb 2025
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