

Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedure

Approving Body	Governing Board (<i>consultation Academic Board HESF 6.3.2c</i>)
Date approved	AB endorsed – 12 Aug 2026; GB approved – 17 Aug 2026
Date of effect	Commencement of operation
Next scheduled review	Two years from policy commencement
Policy owner	Academic Dean
Policy contact	Academic Dean
Related Documents	Admission Policy and Procedure Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure Assessment Policy and Procedure Course Discontinuation and Teach Out Policy and Procedure Course Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure Quality Assurance Framework Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure Records and Data Management Policy and Procedure Staff Code of Conduct
Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021 (Cth)	Standard 3.1.1 Standard 5.1.1 Standard 5.1.2 Standard 5.1.3 Standard 6.3.2 Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

Purpose

1. This Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedure sets out the guiding principles and procedure for the development and approval of proposed new higher education courses at Zenith Innovation Institute (**Zenith / the Institute**). This policy is designed to ensure that course development and approval processes at the Institute are robust and satisfy legislative requirements as mandated by the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF)*, the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)*, other regulatory instruments, and relevant professional accreditation standards.

Scope

2. This Policy and Procedure applies to:
 - (a) all proposed higher education courses that the Institute offers or wishes to offer in the future; and
 - (b) all governing bodies and individuals involved in the development and approval of proposed new accredited courses on behalf of the Institute.

Policy

Policy statement

3. The Institute is committed to:
 - (a) designing high quality and coherent higher education courses that reflect current and emerging disciplinary knowledge and concepts, professional practice and skills;
 - (b) ensuring that students engage in advanced knowledge inquiry and application and demonstration of the course and unit learning outcomes, and graduate attributes upon completion; and
 - (c) authentic work integrated learning experiences and relevant industry engagement.

Principles

4. Course design and development will be aligned with the Institute's *Strategic Plan* and *Learning and Teaching Plan*.
5. The Institute intends to offer bachelor and master degree/s. In accordance with HESF Standard 3.1.2, the content and learning activities for all courses will engage with advanced knowledge, inquiry and practice consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes including:
 - (a) current knowledge and scholarship in relevant disciplines;
 - (b) study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the relevant disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course (if applicable);
 - (c) emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and where applicable advances in practice; and
 - (d) authentic work-based learning experiences across a continuum of practice from expert lectures and case studies to hands on learning by doing.
6. The Institute's graduate attributes will be integrated into the development of the course rationale, structure, and learning outcomes.

7. The Institute will not promote or advertise course/s until accredited by TEQSA and as relevant, received CRICOS approval.

Procedure – New Course

8. New course development follows four key steps. This section describes these steps.



Stage 1 – New course proposal

9. All proposals for the development of new higher education courses (including nested courses) require approval by the Governing Board (**GB**).
10. Where a proposed course includes a nested qualification or exit award, a separate Course Proposal is required for each distinct qualification. The following requirements apply:
 - (a) all proposals for a nested or exit qualification require a separate Course Proposal submitted to the Academic Board for its own approval — approval of the parent course does not satisfy this requirement and each course is considered on its own merits;
 - (b) the Course Proposal for a nested or exit qualification demonstrates that the qualification independently meets the applicable threshold standards, Australian Qualifications Framework requirements, and any relevant professional accreditation requirements; and
 - (c) the Academic Board's resolution approving a nested or exit course is separately recorded in the Academic Board minutes.
11. A template Proposal for the Development of a New Higher Education Course should be completed following consideration by the Governing Board (GB) The template is provided at Appendix 1.
12. If the GB formally approves the proposal, it will delegate responsibility for overseeing the development of the new course to the AB.

Stage 2 – Development, review and approval



13. The AB will provide direction for the course development process based on the New Course Development Template approved by the GB. The AB will then delegate the responsibility for developing the Course Proposal to the Course Development Committee (CDC), which comprises internal and external cognate disciplinary and industry experts. The CDC will focus on developing all required elements of the new course as per AB directives, ensuring alignment with academic and industry standards.
14. As part of the course development process the CDC:
 - (a) determines the qualification(s) to be awarded on completion;
 - (b) develops a Course Proposal for the proposed course;
 - (c) will be responsible for ensuring that:
 - (i) the course and related teaching and learning activities are designed to encompass:

- (A) current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines through published research and associated literature;
 - (B) study of the underlying theoretical, conceptual and professional frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course (if applicable); and
 - (C) emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and where applicable advances in practice;
 - (ii) course learning outcomes are clearly expressed, contribute to Graduate Attributes and provide adequate breadth in sub-disciplinary fields; and
 - (iii) comprehensive mapping of course and unit-level assessments to learning outcomes and the AQF (constructive alignment) is completed; and
 - (d) the development of elements of the course such as units and unit outlines are delegated as relevant, to staff who are not members of the CDC with oversight from the CDC;
 - (e) learning outcomes for the course are aligned with the Institute's Graduate Attributes;
 - (f) benchmarking and external referencing are undertaken to inform course development and design including assessment integrity;
 - (g) the Courses Proposal is completed in the context of the Institute's operations and advise the AB of any potential risks to the quality of teaching and learning or for opportunities for innovation to the Institute's approach to teaching and learning; and
 - (h) the Course Proposal aligns with the teaching and learning objectives and strategies outlined in the Institute's *Strategic Plan and Teaching and Learning Plan*.
15. The AB and CDC will present a comprehensive Course Proposal that includes all elements required for the Course Evidence Table (CET). This proposal will go beyond the New Course Development Template, incorporating key academic matters such as constructive mapping, admission requirements, and benchmarking to ensure academic rigour and alignment with industry standards.

Stage 3 – Independent review



16. The AB oversees development of the course materials and Course Proposal during the development and self-assurance process and endorses materials prior to submission to independent reviewers.
17. The AB is responsible for approving the appointment of independent reviewers. The reviewers will be independent academics and/or industry representatives with significant knowledge in the discipline of the course, appropriate qualifications combined with relevant and recent professional experience, and be recognised as an expert by peers as evidenced by relevant publications, memberships, academic grants and/or awards. The AB:
- (a) will implement recommendations from the CAC relating to feedback from independent reviewers;
 - (b) will consult with key stakeholders, including relevant professional associations, to ensure course relevance and compliance;
18. The reviewers will be provided with course materials and relevant policies and procedures, including unit outlines, and a TEQSA approved external review template to complete. Among other things the external review template and scope will seek verification from the reviewers that the proposed new course:

- (a) aligns with contemporary professional practice;
- (b) reflects industry and employment trends; and
- (c) meets the relevant provisions of the HESF.

Stage 4 – Approvals and submission



19. The AB will consider feedback from the independent reviewer/s and refer implementation of endorsed recommendations to the CDC as appropriate. Upon rectifications of recommendations from the independent reviewers, the CDC will re-submit the Course Proposal and relevant course materials back to the independent reviewers until all the course accreditation Standards are met and signed off by the independent reviewers.
20. Final versions of the Course Proposal and all course materials, including the final letter of recommendation from the independent reviewers, as endorsed by the CDC are submitted to the AB for final review and over-arching scrutiny.
21. Following the AB's internal approval of the course's materials, the AB will ensure all facilities and resources and support necessary to deliver the course will be available when required.
22. The AB will then recommend that the GB approve submission of an application for the course's accreditation to TEQSA.
23. As part of the Stage 4 approval, the Academic Board establishes and documents measurable institutional academic benchmarks for the course. These benchmarks are approved as part of the Stage 4 resolution, cross-referenced in the Learning and Teaching Plan and the External Referencing and Benchmarking Policy and Procedure, and reviewed by the Academic Board at least annually with corrective action recommended where targets are not met. Benchmarks include:
 - (a) target student progression rates for each year of the course, expressed as the percentage of students progressing to the next study period without academic intervention;
 - (b) target course completion rates, expressed as the percentage of commencing students completing the qualification within the expected duration plus 50%;
 - (c) target student satisfaction scores based on the Institute's student satisfaction survey instrument; and
 - (d) target graduate outcome rates, where data is obtainable, expressed as the percentage of graduates employed in a field related to their qualification or enrolled in further study within six months of graduation.

Accountabilities

24. The CDC is responsible for:
 - (a) Developing curriculum and course materials on delegation by the AB; and
 - (b) Implementing any changes to new course proposals as recommended by the independent reviewer/s and endorsed by the AB.
25. The AB is accountable for:
 - (a) overseeing the academic governance processes for course development, including approval of the appointment of independent reviewers;
 - (b) prior to internally approving the course:

- (i) ensuring the course complies with the requirements of the AQF and relevant academic provisions of the HESF; and
 - (ii) ensuring the course satisfies the accreditation standards of relevant professional associations; and
 - (c) internally approving the Course Proposal template; and
 - (d) recommending approval by the GB in relation to submission an application for course accreditation to TEQSA.
26. The GB is accountable for:
- (a) Providing approval for the development of new course/s;
 - (b) Delegating oversight of course development to the AB;
 - (c) Consideration of the viability and resourcing of the course/s; and
 - (d) Approving the submission of the whole course accreditation application(s) to TEQSA.
27. The Academic Dean is responsible for monitoring implementation of this Policy and Procedure.

Definitions

There are no specific definitions for this Policy.

28. The Academic Dean presents an annual report to the Academic Board and Governing Board on course development and approval activity, including any nested or exit courses approved during the period and the academic benchmarks established for each course. The Governing Board reviews this report and approves any amendments to this Policy required to maintain ongoing compliance.

Version control

Version	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	Original	Governing Board (<i>consultation Academic Board HESF 6.3.2c</i>)	
1.1	Point 23 added “The Academic Dean is responsible for monitoring implementation of this Policy and Procedure” Moved “review the New Course Development template in the context of the Institute’s operations and advise the AB of any potential risks to the quality of teaching and learning or for opportunities for innovation to the Institute’s approach to teaching and learning; and ensure the New Course Development template aligns with the teaching and learning objectives and strategies outlined in the Institute’s <i>Strategic Plan and Teaching and Learning Plan</i>” to Stage 2 Point 18 amended from “facilities and resources necessary” to “facilities and resources and support necessary”	Governing Board	22 Feb 2024



	Point 14 added “The AB a) Will implement recommendations from the AB relating to feedback from independent reviewers; b) will consult with key stakeholders, including relevant professional associations, to ensure course relevance and compliance;”		
1.2	Under Higher Education Standards added “Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)” Reworded Point 12 “The AB will set parameters for the design and development process and delegate the course development responsibility to a Course Development Committee (CDC), which comprises internal and external cognate disciplinary and industry experts” Replaced 13 b) from “completes” to “develops” Added point 14 “The AB and CDC will present a comprehensive Course Proposal that includes all elements required for the Course Evidence Table (CET). This proposal will go beyond the New Course Development Template, incorporating key academic matters such as constructive mapping, admission requirements, and benchmarking to ensure academic rigour and alignment with industry standards”	Governing Board	27 Feb 2025
1.3	Added Nested Courses, Institutional Benchmarks, and Self-Assurance section per HESF 5.1.2/6.3.2(c): separate course proposals required for all nested/exit qualifications; per HESF 6.3.1(b)/6.3.2(e): Academic Board must establish measurable benchmarks (progression, completion, satisfaction, graduate outcomes) at Stage 4 of course approval; and annual Governing Board self-assurance review. Added Nested Courses, Institutional Benchmarks, and Self-Assurance section per HESF 5.1.2/6.3.2(c): separate course proposals required for all nested/exit qualifications; per HESF 6.3.1(b)/6.3.2(e): Academic Board must establish measurable benchmarks (progression, completion, satisfaction, graduate outcomes) at Stage 4 of course approval; and annual Governing Board self-assurance review. Added Nested Courses, Institutional Benchmarks, and Self-Assurance section per HESF 5.1.2/6.3.2(c): separate course proposals required for all nested/exit qualifications; per HESF 6.3.1(b)/6.3.2(e): Academic Board must establish measurable benchmarks (progression, completion, satisfaction, graduate outcomes) at Stage 4 of course approval; and annual Governing Board self-assurance review. Added Nested Courses, Institutional Benchmarks, and Self-Assurance section per HESF 5.1.2/6.3.2(c): separate course proposals required for all nested/exit qualifications; per HESF 6.3.1(b)/6.3.2(e): Academic Board must establish measurable benchmarks (progression, completion, satisfaction, graduate	Governing Board	



	outcomes) at Stage 4 of course approval; and annual Governing Board self-assurance review.		
1.4	Accountabilities section amended to clearly state AB responsibility for approval of appointment of independent reviewers in the course development and approval process, consistent with the Delegations Policy and Schedule.	Governing Board	
1.5	Point 16 added “The AB is responsible for approving the appointment of independent reviewers.”. Point 18 and 19 replaced “independent” with external Point 23 a) added “including approval of the appointment of independent reviewers” amended d) to read “recommending approval by the GB in relation to submission an application for course accreditation to TEQSA”		
1.6	Restructured misplaced end-of-document content to integrate within the policy body. Nested and exit qualification requirements moved into Stage 1 (alongside existing nested course approval paragraph). Institutional academic benchmarks moved into Stage 4 (as part of what the Academic Board completes before recommending submission). Annual self-assurance reporting obligation moved to after Definitions. All content rewritten in plain declarative policy voice, removing inline legislative references and prescriptive ‘must’ language.	Governing Board	17 August 2026



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Appendix 1 – New Course Development Template

[NAME OF QUALIFICATION TO BE AWARDED ON COMPLETION]
RATIONALE
Describe the rationale for the proposed course e.g. the proposed course prepares students to be information technologists... refer to strategic plan, teaching and learning plan and graduate attributes
OVERVIEW
e.g. summary of the features and design of the course
STRUCTURE, DURATION AND DELIVERY MODE
e.g. the proposed course is XX years full-time, comprising of XX compulsory units and will be delivered XX.
UNITS AND MAPPING
e.g. list the units that comprise the proposed course e.g. mapping of core and elective component unit structures including pre-requisite and co-requisite conditions and any specialisations e.g. to graduate attributes
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND PATHWAYS
e.g. Include details from Admission Policy and Procedure
EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE PROPOSED COURSE
COMPULSORY REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETION
EXIT PATHWAYS, ARTICULATION ARRANGEMENTS AND PATHWAYS TO FURTHER LEARNING
e.g. summary of pathways arrangements
BENCHMARKING
e.g. benchmarking has been undertaken against [other higher education providers].... Results of the benchmarking show...
FACILITIES
e.g. outline teaching facilities and resources required for delivery of proposed course



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[NAME OF QUALIFICATION TO BE AWARDED ON COMPLETION]
LIBRARY RESOURCES
e.g. outline databases and requirements, and/or agreements
SPECIALIST TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT
e.g. list any specialised technology resources are required for the proposed course
STAFFING
e.g. proposed teaching and student support staff required for delivery of proposed course
BUDGET
e.g. proposed budget for course development, including staff resources