

# Guidelines for Implementation of the Program and Course Quality Assurance Framework

## Section 1 - Preamble

- (1) These Guidelines support the [Education Quality Assurance Policy](#), and the [Governance Rule](#). In the event of an inconsistency between lower-level policy documents and a Rule(s) or Schedule to the Rule(s), the Rule(s) made by Council prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.
- (2) In the event of an inconsistency between a policy document approved by Academic Senate and a College policy, Procedure or guideline, the policy document approved by Academic Senate prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.
- (3) For information on developing and managing courses offered by the University refer to the [Course Management and Assessment Manual](#).
- (4) For information on developing and managing programs offered by the University refer to the [Program Management Manual - Coursework](#).
- (5) For information on admission and enrolment at the University refer to the [Admission Procedure Manual - Coursework Programs](#) and [Enrolment Manual](#).

## Section 2 - Purpose

- (6) These Guidelines:
- Codify the Program and Course Quality Assurance Framework (PCQAF) described in Clause 11 of the [Education Quality Assurance Policy](#).
  - Supports compliance with [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) 5.3 and demonstrates how the University delivers a regular annual cycle of monitoring program and course performance linked to the cycle of comprehensive program reviews as described in the (new in 2023) Comprehensive Program Monitoring and Review Procedure (CPMR Procedure). The [Education Quality Assurance Policy](#) and its underpinning documents are available within the Policy Library.
  - Are hosted on the Education Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee SharePoint site. Refer to Section - Handy Links and Toolkits, including current, previous editions and the templates referenced in these Guidelines.
  - May be accessed by staff from the Policy Library via the Education Quality Assurance Policy - Additional Information tab.

## Section 3 - Course Quality Assurance

- (7) For details of course management including the role of Course Co-ordinator and course assessment design, refer to [Course and Assessment Management Manual](#) (Clause 101 Coordination and Section 14 - Assessment).

## New Courses

(8) Quality assurance process for approval of new courses is described in the [Course Management and Assessment Manual](#) (Clauses 17 and 18).

## Regular Course Reviews

(9) The University takes a risk-based approach to regular course reviews, with the prioritisation and depth of the review informed by the academic risk analysis and a regular cycle of performance monitoring. The methodology for risk assessment is based on three-year trend data that is aggregated across Retention, Success, and Student Feedback indicators.

(10) Refer to the Program and Course Performance Dashboard.

## Monitoring Course Performance

(11) The regular and formal course review cycle generally aligns with the University's semester offerings.

- a. The Education Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee (EQESC) will initiate a priority review when it is evident that course performance outcomes are less than optimal, based on the risk assessment (Refer to Regular Course Reviews, Clause 9-10).
- b. Courses identified for a priority review will be referred to the relevant Assistant Dean (Education) (or equivalent) by the EQESC for consideration.
- c. In consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Course Co-ordinator and Head of School, the Assistant Dean (Education) will review the available data and develop strategies for course performance improvement.
- d. The improvement strategies will be documented in a [Response and Action Plan Report](#) (RAPR) and progress reports will be provided to the relevant School Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) through to College Board (or equivalent) and EQESC.
- e. EQESC will be responsible for:
  - i. Monitoring course improvements and outcomes.
  - ii. Monitoring emerging institution-wide themes and issues; and
  - iii. Regularly reporting to TLC (Academic Senate).

## Response and Action Plan Report

(12) The [Response and Action Plan Report](#) (RAPR) will:

- a. Incorporate School level interventions/actions designed to address anomalies and gaps.
- b. Describe collaboration strategies with key internal/external stakeholders, such as student/academic services, to inform and support the improvements where necessary.
- c. Address effectiveness of proposed improvements to the course offering, ensuring due consideration is given to previous outcomes and locations.
- d. Provide a succinct summary report to:
  - i. Document the continuous improvements implemented by the Course Co-ordinator.
  - ii. Facilitate monitoring and academic governance oversight.
  - iii. Address issues for specific offering locations, as required.
- e. The RAPR will be stored in the designated TRIM9 program folder and in accordance with the [Records and Information Management Policy](#).

## Implementation of Response and Action Plans

(13) The Head of School and the Course Co-ordinator will be responsible for implementation of course improvements described in the [Response and Action Plan Report](#), with guidance from Assistant Dean (Education) (or equivalent).

## 2022 Transitional Arrangements

(14) Prior to 2022, annual course reports were conducted through the School Assessment Board under the School Assessment Body Responsibilities Guideline with evidence available in the Course Assessment Return (CAR) data base.

## Regular Course Reflections

(15) After each offering the Course Co-ordinator will have an opportunity to complete a [course reflections survey](#).

(16) The reflections survey will:

- a. Provide Course Co-ordinators with the opportunity to evaluate their own performance and consider student feedback and then document successes and areas for improvement. (This may include proposed or actual adjustments made to course artefacts.)
- b. Whenever possible, demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.
- c. Document the course adjustments to be incorporated into subsequent course offerings; and
- d. Support monitoring of outcomes.

### Drafting note:

**Once CAR is decommissioned, it is anticipated a Reflections survey will be available through the BLUE (digital) survey tool, pushed from the Learning Management System (LMS) (ie CANVAS) at the conclusion of the teaching period.**

**The Completion of the Reflections survey will be useful as a professional development resource and therefor its completion has not been mandated.**

**Any completed surveys will be made available to the relevant current and future Course Coordinators and the relevant Heads of School and ADE (and equivalent).**

**Surveys will be available from SPP upon request for Learning Designers and members of EQESC.  
1 Create separate RAPRs for course offering locations, if required.**

## Section 4 - Program Quality Assurance

(17) For details of program management including role of Program Convenor, refer to [Program Management Manual - Coursework](#) (Clause 92).

### New Programs

(18) Quality assurance process for approval of new programs is described in the [Program Management Manual - Coursework](#) (Clause 23).

### Regular Program Reviews

(19) The University takes a risk-based approach to regular program reviews, with the prioritisation and depth of the review informed by the academic risk analysis and a regular cycle of performance monitoring. The methodology for risk assessment is based on three-year trend data that is aggregated across Retention, Success, and Student

Feedback indicators

(20) Refer to the Program and Course Performance Dashboard.

## **Monitoring Program Performance**

(21) The regular interim program review cycle aligns with a calendar year.

(22) The EQESC initiates a priority review of a program when it is evident that Program performance outcomes are less than optimal, based on the risk assessment (Refer clauses 19-20).

- a. Programs identified for a priority review are referred to the relevant Assistant Dean (Education) (or equivalent) by the EQESC for consideration.
- b. In consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Program Convenor and Pro Vice-Chancellor, the Assistant Dean (Education) will review the available data and either:
  - i. Develop strategies for Program performance improvement; or
  - ii. Refer the Program for a panel review under the CPMR Procedure.
- c. The improvement strategies and progress reports will be provided to the College Board (or equivalent) and EQESC.
- d. EQESC will be responsible for
  - i. Monitoring the Program improvements and outcomes;
  - ii. Monitoring emerging institution-wide themes and issues;
  - iii. Regularly reporting to Teaching and Learning Committee (Academic Senate), noting that Program and Course Approval Committee will also provide regular reports recommendations and outcomes from program reviews.

## **Response and Action Plan Reports**

(23) The Program [RAPR](#) is the same as that used for courses. For Programs, the [RAPR](#) will be prepared by the relevant Program Convenor and Assistant Dean (Education) (or equivalent) for approval by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation.

## **Institutional Reporting on Continuous Improvement**

(24) The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation will report annually to the Teaching and Learning Committee and provide an institutional perspective of the Program quality enhancement activities. The report will sample Programs based on 4th quartile performance rankings and include insights into effective education practices and collaborations.

(25) The reports will be retained in accordance with the [Records and Information Management Policy](#) and available for use in comprehensive program reviews including when required for professional re-accreditation.

## **2022 Transitional Arrangements**

(26) Prior to 2022, annual reports were conducted under the leadership of Program Convenors. Reports are stored in an ad hoc manner either in Program Folder TRIM9 or by the College.

## **Regular Program Reflections and Evaluations**

(27) At the end of a calendar year, Program Convenors will have an opportunity to complete a [reflections survey](#).

(28) The reflections survey will:

- a. provide Program Convenors with the opportunity to evaluate overall performance issues, consider student feedback and document successes and areas for improvement. This may include proposed or actual program adjustments.
- b. Whenever possible and appropriate, demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement,
- c. Document adjustments for incorporation into subsequent Program reviews and support monitoring of outcomes.

**Drafting note - it is anticipated a Reflections survey will be available through the BLUE (digital) survey tool, pushed from the Learning Management System (LMS) (ie CANVAS) at the conclusion of the calendar year.**

**The Completion of the Reflections survey will be useful for Program Management Groups, although its completion has not been mandated (by Senate).**

**Any completed surveys will be made available to the relevant current and future Program Convenors and the relevant Heads of School, Discipline and ADE (and equivalent).**

**Surveys will be available from SPP upon request for Learning Designers and members of EQESC.**

### **Comprehensive Program Reviews conducted under Threshold Standards (5.3(1))**

(29) For the conduct of Program Reviews refer to the CPMR Procedure.

## **Section 5 - Management of Schools**

(30) Management of Schools is a responsibility of the College Pro Vice-Chancellor (CPVC).

### **School-based Priority Improvement Reviews**

- a. The criteria for selecting a school for a Priority Improvement Review is based on a decision by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the College Pro Vice-Chancellor (CPVC) and other members of the Executive Committee.
- b. The Priority Improvement Review is a strategic initiative to address key concerns and/or issues that may arise from time to time through a program and course periodic review, or external benchmarking.
- c. Specific Terms of Reference (TOR) will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor and CPVC with a focus on:
  - i. Quality of teaching and learning.
  - ii. Quality of research and research training.
  - iii. Student experience.
  - iv. Management of strategic relationships including industry partnerships and community engagement.
  - v. Strategic and operational planning priorities; and
  - vi. Management of school resources both financial and human.
- d. Information packs prepared for a Priority Improvement Review panel will include:
  - i. A self-assessment report.
  - ii. An auditor report (either internal or external as specified in the TOR).
  - iii. Consideration of data and interview findings will be conducted by panel members including representatives from Academic Senate, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation, Pro Vice-Chancellor, external stakeholders (as specific in TOR).

### **Evaluations and recommendations for improvement.**

(31) Relevant issues, actions and plans will be monitored at a College-level by the College Board under the auspices of the College Pro Vice-Chancellor.

(32) An interim six-monthly report to be provided the University Executive Committee.

(33) Records of outcomes and deliberations will be reported to Academic Senate through the College Board.

## **Section 6 - Attachments**

(34) [Response and Action Plan](#) (for use after program, course, and school reviews)

(35) [Course Coordinator and Educator Reflections Survey](#)

(36) [Program Reflections Survey](#)

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Not Yet Approved
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<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Mark Hoffman Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Risk"** - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

**"Risk assessment"** - The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.

**"Course"** - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"Program"** - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Program Convenor"** - The academic staff member with overall responsibility for the management and quality of a program.

**"Research"** - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

**"School"** - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

**"College"** - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.