

Policy Title: ECU Excellence Framework

Policy Owner: Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor

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Policy Code: PL248 [ad088]

[Intent](#)

[Organisational Scope](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Policy Content](#)

[Related Documents](#)

[Contact Information](#)

[Approval History](#)

1. INTENT

To outline the framework that governs ECU's approach to quality assurance, quality management and performance improvement. The [Excellence Framework](#) is flexible and can be applied to legislation, regulatory requirements and policy development.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

All ECU staff.

3. DEFINITIONS

| TERM | DEFINITION |
|------------------------|--|
| Annual Review | Annual evaluation of the operational performance of schools and service centres, based on the commitments made in their operational plan. |
| Benchmarking | A continuous and systematic process of comparing products, services, processes and outcomes with other organisations or exemplars (either internal or external) for the purpose of improving outcomes by identifying, adapting and implementing good practice. |
| Consultative Committee | A committee made up of representatives from industry, employers and the community which meets regularly to provide feedback and advice on courses, teaching, research and professional and community engagement. |

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| Operational Planning | A process undertaken by schools and service centres whereby an annual plan (1 to 3 years) is developed that sets out the activities of the unit. An operational plan is aligned with higher level strategic, functional and action plans (see also strategic planning). |
| Professional Accreditation | The formal accreditation of a course by, or on behalf of, a professional body, based on an assessment of the course that includes the attainment of profession-specific competence and/or practice by graduates. |
| Professional Body | An independent corporate entity, industry association, private organisation, or government agencies, and collectives of such entities, that represents a profession. |
| Research Institute/Centre Reviews | A self-assessment and validation by an external expert panel based on the research and operational performance of Research Centres and Institutes every five years. |
| School | An academic organisational unit of the University including WAAPA but not including Graduate Research School. |
| School Review | A self-assessment and validation by an external expert panel based on the academic and operational performance of Disciplines every five years. |
| Stakeholder | Any person/s, group, organisation, membership or system who affects or can be affected by ECU. Stakeholders may have a broad interest in the operations of the University (such as the Federal, State and Local government and their agencies) or a student focus interest (such as professional bodies, graduates and alumni, research partners, work placement providers, etc.). |
| Strategic Planning | The process undertaken by the ECU community whereby a medium to long-term plan is developed and sets out the strategic directions of the University over a three to five year period. |
| TEQSA | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency |

4. POLICY CONTENT

4.1 Application of the Excellence Framework

This policy provides the basis upon which quality assurance, quality management and performance improvement is carried out at the University. The Excellence Framework applies to all development, implementation, review and improvement activities relating to processes, products and services used, produced or offered by the University. It is not limited by the focus areas within this policy.

4.2 Course Accreditation

Roles and responsibilities for course accreditation include:

- Compliance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#) and [TEQSA](#) regulatory processes;
- Designing, accrediting and setting final curricula for courses through rigorous internal processes based on defensible benchmarks, evidence and research;

- Setting and measuring course learning outcomes and the standard of attainment; and
- Allocating resourcing and deciding staffing profiles for courses to ensure that students achieve course learning outcomes, including the appropriate levels of staff and reporting and management lines.

Refer to the *Curriculum Approval, Amendment and Accreditation Policy and related procedure*

4.3 Professional Accreditation

Professional accreditation may be one of four types:

- professional recognition of a course, by a professional body, from which students must graduate in order to apply for registration to practice in their field;
- (professional) recognition of a course which does not lead directly to registration, but is required to be eligible to sit examinations or other assessments which lead to registration;
- recognition of a course which is considered by employers to be required for them to consider employing graduates; and
- recognition of a course which indicates that the course is judged to be of value by some body, but which is not required for employment.

Refer to the [Professional Accreditation Guidelines](#)

4.4 Quality Reviews

A list of quality reviews undertaken are as follows:

1. TEQSA Provider Registration and other audits
2. Annual Reviews of Schools and Centres (annually)
3. School Reviews (5 year cycle)
4. Research Institute/Centre Reviews (5 year cycle)
5. Offshore Program Reviews (3 year cycle)

4.5 Benchmarking

The [TEQSA Guidance Note on Benchmarking](#) outlines the characteristics of benchmarking in higher education. The broad types of benchmarking include:

- Organisational benchmarking in which comparisons are made at the organisational level (institution, faculty/department, school, course and unit levels)
- Course benchmarking course design and student performance
- Process benchmarking involving comparisons of particular processes and practices
- Outcomes benchmarking is about the comparison of outcomes data, especially student outcomes
- Best practice benchmarking in which the provider selects a comparator thought to be at the forefront in the area to be benchmarked.

Refer to the *Curriculum Evaluation and Review Policy and related procedures*

4.6 Academic Benchmarking

All higher education institutions are required under the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#) to undertake **comprehensive reviews** of all accredited courses of study. These reviews must include external referencing or benchmarking activities, which can include moderation of assessment against other programs, benchmarking of student success and course design against other higher education providers and feedback from students.

Refer to the *Curriculum Evaluation and Review Policy and related procedures*

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

5.1 The procedures and guidelines listed below are to be followed when implementing the quality assurance, quality management and performance improvement processes:

| Procedures and Guidelines |
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| ECU Excellence Framework |
| Professional Accreditation Guidelines |
| Annual Course and Unit Reviews |
| Benchmarking |
| Consultative Committees |
| Moderation of Assessment |
| Offshore Program Reviews |
| Operational Planning – Planning Framework |
| Role Based Development Framework |
| Discipline Reviews |
| Strategic Planning |
| Student Evaluation of Units and Teaching |
| Research Centres and Institutes Reviews |

5.2 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

| Policies |
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| Academic Staff Performance Expectations and Outcomes Framework |
| Curriculum Approval, Amendment and Accreditation Policy |
| Curriculum Design Policy |
| Assessment Policy |
| Curriculum Evaluation and Review Policy |
| Research Centres and Institutes Policy |
| Management for Performance System |

Higher Education Standards

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#)

[TEQSA Guidance Note on Benchmarking](#)

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

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|------------------------|--|
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7. APPROVAL HISTORY

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|-----------------------------|--|
| Policy Approved by: | Vice-Chancellor |
| Date Policy First Approved: | 14 June 2013 |
| Date last modified: | August 2017 |
| Revision History: | 14/06/2013 – This policy replaced the following rescinded policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark Policy; • Consultative Committee and Industry/Employer Advisory Mechanism Policy; and • Quality Reviews Policy. |
| Minor Revision | April 2016 - Minor revision update to reflect academic organisation re-design only February 2017 - Minor revision update to reflect academic organisation re-design only August 2017 – Minor revision for title changes April 2018 – Minor revision update to reflect changes in other policies and guidelines. |
| Next Revision Due: | December 2019 |
| TRIM File Reference | SUB/49266 |

Appendix - ECU REVIEW CYCLE

| Continuous Improvement Area | Activity Description | Responsibility |
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| UNIVERSITY REVIEWS | | |
| TEQSA Provider Registration | | Vice Chancellor |
| QUALITY REVIEWS | | |
| Professional Accreditation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All courses must be accredited by the relevant professional body to ensure graduates are eligible to apply for registration to practice. - All other courses where students, graduates and the University would derive positive outcomes from professional accreditation should be accredited by their relevant professional body | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships) - Executive Dean/s - Course Coordinator/s - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| Benchmarking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools and Centres benchmark performance against suitable partners as an ongoing review of their practices; and - The delivery of all academic courses involves international and pro-active benchmarking as part of ongoing quality improvement processes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive Dean - Course Coordinator/s - Centre Directors - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| Consultative Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultative committees review and make recommendations on all ECU undergraduate and postgraduate coursework awards (excluding VET). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive Dean - Course Coordinator/s - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| Curriculum Delegations (Curriculum Approval, Amendment and Accreditation Policy) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The authority to make academic decisions relating to courses, unit sets and units as delegated by Council. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council - Academic Board - Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) |
| Course and Unit Reviews ECUonQ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECUonQ supports the annual review of units and courses for the purposes of continuous quality improvement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) - Executive Dean - Course Coordinator/s - Unit Coordinator/s - Chair, Academic Board - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |

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| <p>Moderation of Assessment (Curriculum Design Policy and the Assessment Policy)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moderation of assessment is intended to guide the process of ensuring equivalence in learning outcomes among all unit offerings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) - Executive Dean - Unit Coordinator/s - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| <p>Student Evaluation of Units and Teaching Curriculum Evaluation and Review Policy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Methodology and principle applied in the evaluation and review of courses and units. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) - Course Coordinator/s - Associate Deans Discipline - Manager, Strategy and Performance |

| Continuous Improvement Area | Activity Description | Responsibility |
|--|---|--|
| OPERATIONAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEWS | | |
| Annual Reviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All schools and centres will undergo an annual review of operational performance. This review will assess performance and progress against the existing operational plan as well as evaluate the operational plan for the upcoming year. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive Dean - Centre Directors - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| Offshore Program Reviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three year review will be undertaken of all ECU teaching programs delivered through, or in collaboration, with an external partner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) - Dean, International Office - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| Operational Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All schools and centres will develop an annual operational plan which is aligned to the University's strategic directions. This plan will be reviewed as part of the annual review process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive Dean - Centre Directors - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| Research Centres and Institutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All research centres will undergo a review of operational performance based on the schedule as set out in the guidelines. This review will assess performance in relation to the objectives of the research group, research centre or research institute. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) - Director, Office of Research and Innovation - Executive Dean - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| School Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All schools will undertake a five-yearly review conducted by an external panel, to assess outcomes with respect to curricula and approaches to learning and teaching, research and research training, engagement and support. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive Dean - Manager, Academic Governance and Standards |
| Strategic Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five year plan that guides and sets the strategic goals for the University. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council - Vice-Chancellor - Executive Leadership Team |