

PROGRAM AND COURSE APPROVAL COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Standing Committee of Academic Senate



1. Establishment

- 1.1 The Committee was established as a Sub-Committee of the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee (under the name of Program and Course Appraisal Sub-Committee) at the November 2005 meeting of Academic Senate. The Committee was re-constituted as a Committee of Academic Senate (under the name of Program and Course Approval Committee) at the November 2007 meeting.
- 1.2 Following the outcomes of the 2009 External Review of Academic Senate, the functions and membership of this Committee were shaped using the following principles in accordance with the Review Report:
 - 1.2.1 The membership of each committee should, in general, be based on expertise rather than a representative model;
 - 1.2.2 The membership of each committee should be kept to a minimum, with the proviso that the membership should be large enough to ensure a creative diversity of views; and
 - 1.2.3 The terms of reference of a committee must be crafted so that the work of the committee falls within the boundaries of the responsibilities of the Academic Senate.
- 1.3 The Terms of Reference for the Committee were amended and approved by Academic Senate 16 June 2010, with effect from 1 July 2010.

2. Purpose and Functions

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Program and Course Approval Committee is to:

- 2.1.1 be the principal academic committee for reviewing programs and courses and ensure consistency with the strategic directions of the University;
- 2.1.2 approve, on behalf of Academic Senate, the academic content and structure of new and revised programs and associated courses and their discontinuation;
- 2.1.3 advise Academic Senate on issues related to the academic content and quality of new and revised programs and courses;
- 2.1.4 provide strategic advice to Academic Senate on program and course related matters;
- 2.1.5 recommend to Academic Senate the establishment of new, and the disestablishment of existing, awards for approval by Council;

- 2.1.6 have oversight of the number and uniqueness of courses across the University;
and
- 2.1.7 exercise the responsibilities located in the relevant legislation and University policies in relation to programs and course related matters.

2.2 Functions

The functions of the Program and Course Approval Committee are to:

- 2.2.1 review and approve all new and revised program proposals;
- 2.2.2 following an external program review:
 - a. approve the proposed Faculty Response and Action plans recommended by the relevant Faculty Board(s); and
 - b. monitor the implementation and progress of the approved plan.
- 2.2.3 provide advice and guidance to Faculties on the academic aspects of all new and revised program proposals, including compliance with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and relevant University policies;
- 2.2.4 advise Academic Senate on the framework and structure of the programs and courses offered by the University;
- 2.2.5 review and consider the annual summary report on programs from each Faculty;
- 2.2.6 notify the Academic Senate of new program approvals and any major changes to existing programs;
- 2.2.7 advise the Teaching and Learning Committee or the Research Committee of any program and course related issues arising from current policy, practice and procedures;
- 2.2.8 approve the discontinuation of programs or program elements including any relevant teach-out plans, on the recommendation of the relevant Faculty Boards;
- 2.2.9 recommend to Academic Senate the establishment of new, and the disestablishment of existing programs and awards for approval by Council;
- 2.2.10 be responsible for all courses offered by the University, excluding the approval of the academic content of a course which is the responsibility of Faculty Board in accordance with clause 2.2.7 of the Faculty Board Terms of Reference. This responsibility includes:
 - a. undertaking periodic reviews of the number of courses offered by the University;
 - b. approving the addition of new courses to the University's Course Availability List;
 - c. monitoring course content particularly where revisions to courses are made to address and minimize any duplication of content identified in courses;

2.2.11. undertake any other program and course related matters as requested by the President of Academic Senate or the Chairs of the other Academic Senate Standing Committees.

2.3 Meetings

2.3.1 The Committee will meet a minimum of five (5) times each calendar year; and

2.3.2 Standing Orders of the Academic Senate will apply.

3. Reporting

3.1 The Program and Course Approval Committee is required to report to Academic Senate in accordance with *Section 2.2 Functions* as listed in this Terms of Reference and any annual cycle of business requirements.

4. Membership

The Program and Course Approval Committee shall consist of the following members:

4.1 In accordance with the Constitution of the Academic Senate, the Vice-Chancellor is, by virtue of office, a member of all Academic Senate committees.

4.2 Ex Officio

4.2.1 Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for teaching and learning (Chair);

4.2.2. President of the Academic Senate (Deputy Chair);

4.2.3. the Assistant Dean (Teaching and Learning) from each of the Faculties;

4.3 Other Members

4.3.1. At least two and up to five elected academic members from Academic Senate nominated by the Chair and Deputy Chair and endorsed by the Program and Course Approval Committee, to ensure an appropriate diversity of skills, experience and representation in the membership;

4.3.2. Academic Registrar (or nominee);

4.3.3. Director, English Language and Foundation Studies Centre (or nominee from the Centre's academic staff); and

4.3.4. Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning (or nominee).

4.4 Attendance with Rights of Audience and Debate

4.4.1. the Quality Assurance, Teaching and Learning Officers for each Faculty;

4.4.2. the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for research; and

4.4.3. In accordance with the Academic Senate Standing Orders, the Committee may grant rights of audience and debate for a specific meeting or item(s) in

a meeting to such a person, persons or categories of person as deemed appropriate.

4.5 Terms of Office for Academic Senate Elected Members:

4.5.1 The terms of office for members in category 4.3.1 will usually be two years or until their Academic Senate membership expires (whichever is shorter).

4.5.2. The terms of office for these members will be staggered by lot so that no more than half of the members in this category are expiring at the same time.

4.6 Quorum

In accordance with the Academic Standing Orders, the quorum for meetings of the Program and Course Approval Committee shall be at least one half of total members. The Vice-Chancellor is not counted as part of the quorum.

5. Subsidiary Bodies

5.1 The Committee may establish sub-committees or working parties in respect of specific issues to assist it to meet its obligations.

5.1.1 The Committee must establish and approve Terms of Reference for any other sub-committees or working groups as required to facilitate the work of Research Committee, ensuring that the Terms of Reference are consistent with the policies of Academic Senate.

5.2 Such subsidiary bodies will report to the Program and Course Approval Committee. The report will provide advice, make recommendations and notify the Committee of action taken under appropriate delegated authority.

6. Authorities (Delegations)

6.1 As per the authority vested in this Committee and its Chair by Council, Academic Senate and relevant University policies.

6.2 In accordance with Council Resolution of 3 March 2006, the Program and Course Approval Committee has the delegated authority of Council to approve the following:

- i) the academic content of new and revised programs;
- ii) the establishment of courses; and
- iii) the Faculty Action Plan following an external program review.

6.3 On behalf of the Program and Course Approval Committee, the Chair is authorised to approve urgent business which must be scheduled meetings of the Committee.

6.3.1. Where the Chair is also a Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Chair can approve urgent business relating to programs and courses for that Faculty.

6.4 The Chair will notify the Committee of any action taken under delegated authority between meetings, at the next meeting of the Committee and where appropriate, Academic Senate.

7. Contact

Program and Course Approval Committee Secretary, Governance and Policy Unit

8. Essential Supporting Documents

Constitution of the Academic Senate (000402)

Standing Orders of the Academic Senate

Universities and their students: Principles for the Provision of Education by Australian Universities: AVCC August 2005

9. Related Documents

University of Newcastle Act 1989 (NSW)

University of Newcastle By-Law 2005 (NSW)

Document Sponsor: President of Academic Senate

Document Owner: Academic Senate

Document Contact Position: Chair, Program and Course Approval Committee

For Official Use:

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Amendment History:

Changes made to Clause 4.2, 4.5 and update of functions approved by Academic Senate 03 August 2011 (AS11:110).

Amended Clause 2.3.1 – requirement to meet a minimum of five times per year instead of six. Approved by Academic Senate 28 September 2011 (AS11:169)