Guidelines for Transitions 2020
Course Transformation and Student Management

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Overview

These guidelines contain information on the approaches to student management in course revision and closure commonly known as transitions. The guidelines are supportive of the implementation of Course and Subject Management - Approvals Procedure in 2020, which is in a phase of implementation during the Course Architecture Reform project.

This guide resides in the La Trobe Policy Library as an associated document. It covers the resulting shift in different approaches to transition to align with the new policy, and broadly outlines the processes for approvals, quality assurance and communication related to course and version transfer and teach out. The sections here relate to:

- key principles of course transition including advice on options
- process steps in transitions planning including documentation preparation
- regulatory compliance and quality assurance requirements
- roles and responsibilities
- frequently asked questions

All major course amendments and course closures with potential to impact student progression must be accompanied by documentation with an accompanying Transition Plan managed in CourseLoop. The plan will outline the approach, cohort analysis of impact, transition arrangements, student communications and administrative resources required to implement the plan. It will include endorsement from the College and School prior to consideration at University Coursework Committee.

Working documents with specialist advice, approvals documents, and companion checklists to these guidelines are found on the Course Management intranet page.

Key Principles

The approach to student management is aligned with the HESF (Threshold Standards 2015) and LTU policy. The evidence and controls to meet the requirements of both are embedded in the process and documentation as outlined below.

The key principles are:

- The default approach to managing students in course is to transfer students to a new course or version, pending no disadvantage.

- Reduction in courses or versions under teach out is a priority. Previously, standard approaches to revisions at LTU have been to teach out an old version. This will be available when no other viable option can be taken.

- Course and School staff will determine transition approaches after consideration of student progression data, student cohort profiles, current enrolments, and the comparative structures of the current / replacement courses.

- Under the new policy, requesting opt-in or opt-out from students is no longer necessary. In the lead up to course changes, student communications will clear and timely, and feedback documented.

- The overarching requirement for course change is that students are not negatively impacted in the approach. The principle of 'no detriment' applies for each student in the course.

- Staff from central areas work in collaboration with College Education to provide advice, support, and administrative assistance prior to approvals.

- Consultation with stakeholders through the process will provide important advice on impact and identify any areas of impact that need to be managed, such as articulation arrangements. Consultation is evidenced in the steps in CourseLoop and in the supporting material of the plan.

- Strategic approaches to transition may also include: a combination of teach out and subject replacements, concurrent teach out and transition. Study plan requests are not required under transition or teach out implementation.

Key Process Steps from Design to Approval

The transition planning process is embedded into a broader Course Architecture Process – see associated Guidelines. During the transition planning, there is a high level of collaboration and interaction required between teams, outlined here. The key teams form a working group with two streams that focus on pre-approval and implementation:

- College Education
- Clever Learning
- Academic Staff – the Course Team
- Quality and Standards

- ASK La Trobe
- Student Operations
- Admissions and Scholarships
- Business Systems Support

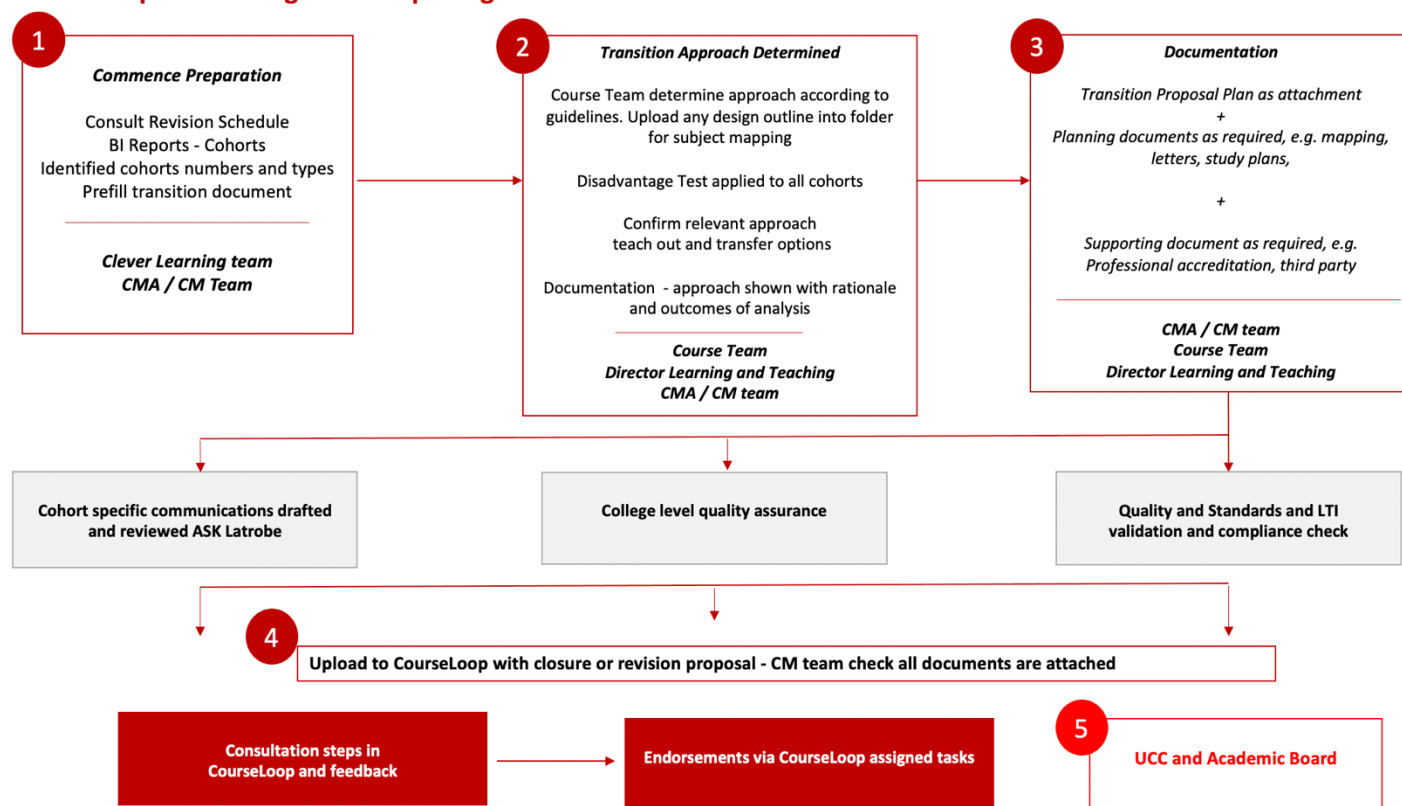## Process Steps – Planning and Completing Transition Documentation

1 Commence Preparation

Consult Revision Schedule
BI Reports - Cohorts
Identified cohorts numbers and types
Prefill transition document

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Clever Learning team
CMA / CM Team

2 Transition Approach Determined

Course Team determine approach according to guidelines. Upload any design outline into folder for subject mapping

Disadvantage Test applied to all cohorts

Confirm relevant approach
teach out and transfer options

Documentation - approach shown with rationale and outcomes of analysis

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Course Team
Director Learning and Teaching
CMA / CM team

3 Documentation

Transition Proposal Plan as attachment
+
Planning documents as required, e.g. mapping, letters, study plans,

+

Supporting document as required, e.g. Professional accreditation, third party

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CMA / CM team
Course Team
Director Learning and Teaching

Cohort specific communications drafted and reviewed ASK Latrobe

College level quality assurance

Quality and Standards and LTI validation and compliance check

4 Upload to CourseLoop with closure or revision proposal - CM team check all documents are attached

Consultation steps in CourseLoop and feedback

Endorsements via CourseLoop assigned tasks

5 UCC and Academic Board

Figure 1 – the transition planning process

Approaches

Any approach to transitioning students commences with the best outcome for students in the consolidation of the student cohort onto one study plan with an improved course. As a strategy across the School and College, the approach will bring a reduction of the number of versions of the course and an efficient teach out timeline, where possible.

Transfer

Student transfer will be the primary transition approach when the replacement version or course is the same or similar to that being closed or revised. Transfer may also be undertaken in combination with a reduced teach out) with a combination of student transfer and subject mapping between versions.

A replacement version or course must be equivalent in terms of **cognate content, outcomes, cost, mode, progression and duration.** Where there are differences between versions or courses, there must be no disadvantage to the student in the replacement.

- **Cognate content**. Skills and knowledge between the current and the replacement course must be cognate. This includes the ability for students to finish the primary major. It does not necessarily include the same hours of clinical practice, WBL or other course opportunities such as mobility. In most cases, it also does not include the same minors or electives.

- **Outcomes**. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) must be similar so that a transitioning student can complete any new CILOs with learning already completed. Outcomes includes accreditation outcomes and, more broadly, the graduate capabilities, although the new course can have a diverse way of meeting these. A new course structure or version may result in multiple subject changes, but if it retains similar CILOs, it is deemed equivalent.

- **Duration / cost**. The equivalent full time or part time load of the enrolled student must not lengthen but can be reduced so long as outcomes are met. If, for example, the closing or revised course has part time, the replacement course must also have part time options for a transitioning student.

- **Mode** includes where and how the student is studying the course - online, flexible, or one of La Trobe's campus locations. Where location changes in a revision or closure, options for students to complete in other locations or online must be considered with student consultation. In most cases, fully online course cannot be replaced with a face to face course.

- **Progression** - transfer to a replacement course must not result in the student being compelled to under- or overload, therefore the delivery of subjects in the new structure must be confirmed. In the case of international students, this situation would result in provider default under ESOS regulations.

Teaching out

Teaching out a course or version is a viable approach if there a few students in the course, when the majority of the subjects in the current version will still be available, and if there are no other impediments such as expiring professional accreditation or expiring partnership agreements. The teach-out period will normally equate to the length of time required for all remaining students to complete the course. There will need to be planning for LOA and deferred students. Transfer for these students will be preferable, in which case a combination of teach out and transfer is the most appropriate approach.

A decision to teach out a course will need to consider the following questions:

- Is there a replacement course option?
- Will core subjects continue to be delivered or are there viable replacements as alternative?

— Would the University be at risk of Provider Default under HESF and ESOS?
— Will the replacement version/course structures leave gaps in knowledge and skills?
— Is the replacement version/course not equivalent in terms of graduate opportunities and course outcomes?
— Would the transition to the new course impose a longer study duration for the student? Or cost?
— Will transfer be viable for some but not all cohorts of students?

Documentation

Transition Plans and supporting documents are required for approval and are found on the Course Management page. The Transition team and CMAs will prepare all documents for CourseLoop and UCC.

For transfer of students to a new version or course, the transition plan will:

- Identify all students currently enrolled in the course or major by key indicators such as status, completed credit points, location, mode
- Recommend the approach to transition into a replacement using a clear rationale based on the cohort analysis
- Identify all cohorts by load for whom individual transition arrangements are required, including international students and pending pathway students
- Identify the range of cohort communication required and provide the exemplars of accurate communication for each.

For teach out in the current version course, the transition plan will include confirmation that all subjects in the course structure are still available and will show that students enrolled are able to complete in the expected duration timeframe.

- The length of the teach-out period is determined by identifying those students remaining in the current (or earlier) versions of the course, considering the mix of full-time and part-time enrolments, and developing a reasonable timeline for cessation of delivery of affected subjects.

Support and Consultation for Proposals

The Course team, generally the proponents of course revisions and closures, will notify the CMAs and seek early advice from the School Director Learning and Teaching when changes to a course are scheduled – this will trigger work on a transition plan by associated teams of staff – see roles and responsibilities. All teams will be informed and involved from an early point up to consultation process prior to submission for approval.

Support for Course teams will include:

- gathering student data in a central folder
- performing a cohort analysis and detriment testing
- completing documentation
- providing advice, feedback and reviewing proposals in the CourseLoop workflow.

The business operations staff in this group manage implementation of the plan after approval. They will be able to provide advice on all aspects of the and the student experience as it applies to key administration processes – admissions, enrolments, results processing, systems, resourcing implications.

Communication with Students

In the first instance, where significant changes to existing courses are planned, general communications may be developed by the course team as part of consultation concurrent with seeking feedback on revised courses or

subjects. Note: ASK Latrobe will monitor all communications with the impacted students throughout the process.

Cohort analysis on impact will determine the number and types of communications in the first instance by cohort type, which may include:

      i. Domestic enrolled
      ii. International onshore enrolled
      iii. Online enrolled
      iv. Leave of Absence
      v. Part time
      vi. Deferred
      vii. Applications
      viii. Offers Pending
      ix. Accepted Offer
      x. International pathway arrangement
      xi. Domestic pathway arrangement

Standard sample letters for each type will form the basis for communications with specialised information included by the Course Coordinator prior to approvals. All letter samples must be attached to the Transition Plan.

Students involved in a course or version change must be advised as a minimum, of the following:

- the reasons for the proposed change
- what is being changed
- time of change
- no disadvantage especially in relation to professional accreditation
- where to go for further information on changes or study plans
- if in teach out, replacement subjects for the specified period
- a nominated contact staff member who can assist with queries or concerns

After approval of the transition plan at Academic Board, when the implementation phase begins, students will be advised by ASK Latrobe of the outcome of the course changes or closure with the approved communications, via the CRM.

Policy Alignment and Assurance

The La Trobe Course and Subject Management - Approvals Procedure for management of closure and revisions changed in 2020 and these guidelines are supportive of the implementation. Each of the steps in this guide are designed to produce the evidence and controls required for HESF alignment. The revised policy reads:

(37) All students have a right to timely notice of all major changes to courses. This includes students that: have been made an offer to a course – including acceptances, deferred, and have been admitted to a course – enrolments, including Leave of Absence or academic suspension.

- **Evidence**: Student Communications – Letters / Student Consultation Sections 8.1 and 7.1 respectively
- **Controls:** Process steps for consultation and communication, and implementation.

(38) Where it is intended that students transfer to a changed course version, student consultation activities and outcomes must be documented in the proposal prior to submission to the University Coursework Committee.

- **Evidence:** Course amendment / closure / suspension / proposal
- **Controls:** Process steps 2 - 5

(39) For major changes, transition and analysis must be undertaken to determine whether all or some students may be moved to the changed course version without detrimental effect to the substance of their educational experience or outcomes.

- **Evidence:** Load and Cohort analysis, proposal sections on Consultation and Impact approved by UCC
- **Controls:** Process Steps 1 – 3

(40) Where it is proposed to close or suspend intakes for a course for which there is an active pathway the University is bound to provide a viable alternative and to notify pathway partners and students of the change

Evidence: Load and Cohort analysis in process, Consultation and impact Section A(3) – Partners and pathways
Controls: Process Steps 1 – 2

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
University Coursework Committee / Academic Board	• Approves the Course Closure and Revision Proposals, inclusive of Transition Plans and all supporting documentation
Associate Provost LT	• Endorses Course Closure Proposal, Course Transition Plans • Provides advice to central teams during the revision/design process
Clever Learning	• Schedule revisions and closures • Oversee resource folders and liaise with DAPR for Power BI reports on student cohorts
Quality and Standards	• Manage and monitor transition planning processes • Confirm approach meets policy and regulatory requirements, as required • Provide advice in consultation on Third Party and Professional Accreditation • Provide advice to School and College and Associate Provosts, as required • Provide supplementary documentation in folders as required
La Trobe International	• Monitor international student plans against ESOS compliance • Provide additional advice on communications to international current students and offers • Confirm 'no disadvantage' to international students in liaison with the CMA / CM staff undertaking transition planning
Student Administration Business Operations ASK Latrobe	• Implement enrolment-related aspects of the transfer process • Manage overall implementation of transfer to new version / course • Manage student communication throughout planning and implementation • Provide advice on implementation in the consultation phase to UCC • Manage study plans as required
College Education and Course Management staff	**Documentation** • College CMA manages all documentation for the course amendment and closure, suspension, including transition documentation • College CMA has oversight and quality assurance of transition documentation **Transition Planning** • Gather cohort information into resources folder following scheduled revisions • Conduct detailed analysis of student cohorts with data for 'no disadvantage' • Complete supporting documents for approvals • Liaise with LTI on international students and ESOS compliance • Liaise with ASK Latrobe on student communications
Course Coordinator	• Provide new course design and relevant details for transition planning • Proposes the approach to transition at initial stages of revision and closure • Reviews documentation – transition plan as attachment in CourseLoop • Confirms communication is accurate
Director Learning and Teaching	• Gives advice to course coordinator on approach / endorses the approach • Reviews proposal documentation as part of School endorsement

Frequently Asked Questions

Do we need always to teach out a course?

No. The default approach under the new 2020 policy is to transfer students to an equivalent course or version to reduce the courses in teach out and consolidate student cohorts into the revised versions of courses to improve outcomes of students. The course structure, subjects and elective choices do not need to be the same. As a baseline, a student must exit with a relevant degree title, similar outcomes, and professional accreditation where it exists.

In what cases do we need to transfer all students to a new course?

Where the student has access to advantageous course learning in a new version or replacement course, it is advisable to transfer all or as many students as possible. More importantly, where the student will no longer be accredited in the existing course because of accreditation expiry, all students **must** be transferred.

Does the replacement course need to have all the same choices, e.g. majors?

No, but if the student has commenced studying a discipline area, we need to provide a relevant equivalent or we teach out in some format. In some cases, we might be able to convert to a minor – particularly if the major has not been a tagged award.

Do we need to get consent from the students?

From August 2020, the process of opt-in or opt-out / student consent is not required. This assumes that a replacement course with a clear justification of no disadvantage to any cohort is available and that students have been informed.

Who manages the teach out and transition pre-approvals documentation?

The CMAs manage the multi-team effort for transition planning. At the outset, course coordinators will require information about the cohort from a specialist team in Q&S, and then, based on the cohorts with the existing course, will plan the approach with the Director Learning and Teaching. The ASK Latrobe and SSA teams are involved in implementation.

What documentation is needed, where do you find it, and who does it?

Documentation management is processed through the relevant workflows in CourseLoop. The documents handled by the CMA and Transition Team are

- Transition Plan – Primary Document
- Letters samples for student cohorts
- Teach-out plan – timeline document
- Subject substitution map
- Individual student mapping

The requirements of relevant professional accrediting and disciplinary bodies and/or the approved agreements with any with external partners may also be required as supporting documents.

Are Alternative Study Plans required for each student?

Study plan changes outlined in the transition proposal are part of a course revision and do not require Alternate Study Plan Requests. When transferred however, students will have a new study plan.

What is in the communication to students? When does this happen?

Students will be advised of the University's intention to cease the course or major as soon as possible after the approval of the Course Closure Proposal and Transition Plan at Academic Board. The University will also advise any students who have been offered a place in a course or major approved for cessation that the course or major will no longer be on offer. Consultation and feedback on the revisions may happen prior to UCC. Care should be taken that no pre-emptive communications around teach out or transfer are made until the approach is confirmed.

What if the courses under revision and closure have a third party instance or articulation?

The transition plan must identify any third party and/or articulation agreements, and must determine whether commencing students will enrol into the revised version of the course or the previous version (e.g. when 1st year is no longer available or if students have 1 year of credit and need to go into the previous versions 2nd year). These agreements should be reviewed at the same time the course revision and transition plan are being developed. For more information on this, or to initiate a review of these agreements, contact the Educational Partnerships team in the College Education Teams.