

Course and Subject Management Procedure - Monitoring and Review

Section 1 - Key Information

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Policy Type and Approval Body | Academic - Academic Board |
| Accountable Executive - Policy | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) |
| Responsible Manager - Policy | Director, Higher Education Standards |
| Review Date | 20 February 2028 |

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure outlines the monitoring and review activities undertaken by the University to assure and maintain the academic quality of its subjects and courses.

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

- a. governance of:
 - i. undergraduate and postgraduate coursework award courses (including those that are not recognised under the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) [AQF], such as Professional Certificates);
 - ii. coursework subjects from award courses, including those undertaken by students enrolled in graduate research courses;
 - iii. non-award enabling courses.
- b. publication and quality assurance of information for all courses.

(3) This Procedure does not apply to governance of:

- a. approval and governance of graduate research courses (see [Graduate Research Course Management Policy](#));
- b. approval and governance of short courses (see [Short Courses Policy](#)).

Section 4 - Key Decisions

| Key Decisions | Role |
|--|-----------------|
| Review and approval of Subject Action Plans for below threshold subjects | Dean or nominee |
| Review and approval of Annual Course Monitoring Action Plans | Dean or nominee |
| Oversight of Course Advisory Committees | Dean or nominee |

| Key Decisions | Role |
|--|-----------------|
| Approval of Course Review reports for Committee submission | Dean or nominee |

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(4) This Procedure forms part of the [Course and Subject Management Policy](#) suite which governs its application.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Overview

(5) La Trobe University conducts rigorous and regular course monitoring and review activities to ensure that all its courses:

- a. meet and continue to meet the applicable standards in the [Higher Education Standards Framework\(2021\)](#) (the Standards);
- b. are informed by current and emerging knowledge and concepts in relevant academic disciplines, and where applicable, advances in practice;
- c. are informed by external referencing;
- d. serve the University's educational and strategic objectives;
- e. are only re-approved where all these standards and objectives are met.

(6) The Office of the Provost undertakes viability assessment of courses through the annual load planning process, and of subjects through an annual targeted review. Steps will be taken to close subjects or courses with enrolment below viability thresholds, with consideration given to strategic need, maintenance of key discipline/skills areas and relationship to the course and subject lifecycle.

(7) The University ensures the quality of its courses at all locations and in all modes through evidence-based interim monitoring and course review at regular intervals. Interim monitoring between reviews contributes to the cumulative development of a Course Review Portfolio which forms the core data set for course reviews.

(8) Interim monitoring consists of:

- a. external referencing activities, including activities undertaken by Course Advisory Committees (CACs);
- b. the review of student survey data for the purpose of continuous improvement of subjects and teaching;
- c. Subject Monitoring (SM);
- d. Annual Course Monitoring (ACM).

(9) Course Reviews are conducted at least every five to seven years but may occur earlier in circumstances outlined in this Procedure.

(10) All monitoring and review activities for courses (including data gathering and external referencing) are undertaken in Course Groups (see definition in this Procedure and [Course Groups Guide](#)).

(11) Any recommended changes to courses or subjects arising from monitoring and review are managed under the provisions of the [Course and Subject Management Procedure - Approvals](#).

(12) Courses that are taught under agreements between the University and third-party teaching partners are subject to additional quality assurance measures through specific reporting to Academic Board, as outlined in the [Educational](#)

(13) Schools are responsible for leading and undertaking monitoring and review activities with process support from Quality and Standards.

Part B - External Referencing

Overview

(14) External referencing is the process of seeking and receiving input and feedback from external stakeholders and independent experts to identify best practice and inform continuous improvement. External referencing is a key quality assurance activity of each course and subject and occurs throughout the course and subject lifecycle as part of regular monitoring and continuous improvement.

(15) La Trobe engages in a range of external referencing activities across all courses and subjects to provide:

- a. evidence of the quality of courses, assessment models, student experience and outcomes, academic integrity, and delivery models;
- b. a broad evidence base for improvements to courses, pedagogy and student outcomes.

(16) External referencing includes both:

- a. comparison of La Trobe courses or subjects with the same or similar curriculum of other universities (benchmarking) and;
- b. direct external review, or peer review, of La Trobe courses or subjects by an individual expert or panel.

(17) External referencing outcomes, such as recommendations, are reviewed as an input for Course Review at the time of internal re-accreditation.

(18) External referencing may be used to examine a range of different areas as required, including, but not limited to:

- a. course design, structure and learning outcomes;
- b. assessment design models, validation, and moderated outcomes;
- c. course delivery, including modes of delivery;
- d. student resources and facilities, including supports provided;
- e. academic integrity, at course or subject level;
- f. student progress, retention and completion;
- g. student experience as measured through internal surveys or practices;
- h. graduate outcomes.

External Referencing Requirements

(19) Each Course Group at La Trobe will plan for and undertake external referencing across the review lifecycle (five-to-seven years) comprising:

- a. an annual CAC meeting;
- b. partnered benchmarking of assessment (calibration) of at least three subjects from the Course Group. The subjects must include at least one core subject at each level of the course(s) and preferably include a capstone;
- c. desktop benchmarking of learning outcomes nationally and internationally;
- d. annual consideration of national comparator data in the ACM;
- e. a major peer (independent) review or, where appropriate, professional accreditation review.

(20) The Course Coordinator, in consultation with the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), is responsible for developing and implementing a five-year External Referencing Plan following a new course approval or a completed Course Review. New plans are uploaded and approved as part of the first ACM after each of these milestones.

(21) For the purposes of peer review, the Course Coordinator will select suitable partners that are genuine peers, offering cognate courses, subjects and disciplines. Where Course Groups have no or very few direct peer courses, Course Coordinators, assisted by Quality and Standards where required, must determine appropriate courses against which referencing can be undertaken. Comparator courses may be in the same overall discipline and related subject areas.

(22) The partner/s and La Trobe must agree on the scope, time frame, intended outcomes, and expectations of reciprocity of the referencing activity.

(23) Subject Coordinators are responsible for undertaking the benchmarking activities for their subject.

(24) The Course Quality team in Quality and Standards will assist in calibration and peer review liaison where required.

Course Advisory Committees

(25) CACs provide expertise on the currency and future readiness of courses to ensure their alignment with directions of the profession, industry, research, and discipline. While CACs provide input into any major change or new course proposals, the University reserves the right to cease to offer a course where it no longer aligns with the University's strategic or operational objectives.

(26) CACs meet at least once a year. Members are primarily external to the University and are drawn from relevant industry and/or professional associations, the discipline and course alumni (see Terms of Reference on the [External Referencing intranet site](#)).

(27) The relevant Dean or nominee is responsible for ensuring that a CAC is established for each course or Course Group within the School, and for the general oversight of all CACs within the School. Multiple Course Groups may be overseen by one CAC (such as where there is a related double degree) but it is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that each course receives appropriate input.

(28) Recommendations arising from CAC meetings are recorded in template reports by Course Coordinators and uploaded into the ACM System.

Part C - Feedback from Students

(29) The University draws on feedback from students to inform the monitoring and review of subjects and courses. The sources of feedback include surveys administered by the University at subject level, the La Trobe Student Experience Survey, and national surveys.

Surveys of Subjects and Teaching

(30) Subject-level surveys are administered for all instances of all subjects at an appropriate time late in the teaching period and normally conclude at the end of the Final Assessment Period. Timing may vary for non-standard teaching periods.

(31) Wherever feasible subjects taught under third-party arrangements are included in subject-level surveys, although in some circumstances a separate process may be agreed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

(32) Data from the surveys is collated and aggregated for institutional improvement strategies and to inform subject and course monitoring and action plans, as outlined in the relevant sections of this Procedure.

(33) Survey data is managed according to the University's [Privacy Policy](#). In accordance with this Policy:

- a. responses are de-identified for reporting purposes;
- b. response data is provided to individuals as appropriate to their role, including:
 - i. individual reporting for teaching staff
 - ii. aggregate reporting at department, school, location and university level for relevant leadership staff.

(34) Students are advised that their contribution to surveys is valued but voluntary. They are supported to understand the intent of survey questions and that they must comply with the [Student Behaviours Policy](#) when answering questions. Where inappropriate responses are found these are removed from survey reporting.

(35) Subject Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that students are provided with information about changes made to subjects on the basis of previous survey results, including through the publication of a summary on the subject site on the Learning Management System (LMS).

(36) The University's Data and Performance Analytics team is responsible for managing surveys for student feedback on subjects and teaching and for providing training and consultation services to users. The University carries out periodic reviews of survey instruments.

Part D - Monitoring

Subject Monitoring

(37) The Subject Monitoring cycle is a continuous evaluation of key quality indicators that is conducted for a subject after each teaching period.

(38) The key responsibility for monitoring and improvement of subjects lies with the owning school or equivalent academic unit.

(39) The Subject Coordinator reviews the following subject data and materials at the conclusion of the relevant teaching period for each mode and location:

- a. responses from students gathered from subject surveys;
- b. student success data including grades;
- c. academic misconduct data as available;
- d. subject design, assessment and learning materials.

Development and Monitoring of Actions

(40) Where quality indicators show areas requiring improvement the Subject Coordinator must develop and undertake a subject action plan with support from the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) as appropriate.

(41) Subject improvement actions may include full or partial subject redesign, professional development activities for teaching staff, and other support activities. Where practicable actions are implemented in the next teaching period for the subject (or within six months for intensive subjects that are delivered on high rotation), with progress reported on in the next monitoring cycle.

(42) The Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) reviews action plans for subjects that fall below expected levels of performance and makes appropriate recommendations to the Dean. Quality and Standards compile an annual summary report and make recommendations for consideration by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

(43) Quality and Standards submits relevant annual summary reports on subject monitoring to Education Committee

and the Board of Graduate Research.

Annual Course Monitoring

Approach and Timing

(44) The ACM cycle is a course quality assurance process that is undertaken each year across the course lifecycle between points of course review and reapproval. The process is facilitated by an online system that opens for a set number of weeks annually at a predetermined time approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

(45) All courses must be monitored annually through the ACM unless an exception applies. These exceptions include:

- a. new courses. New courses will run for one full year prior to the first ACM to allow for the accrual of performance data and contextual analysis.
- b. courses that are suspended or in teach-out with less than 10 student enrolments;
- c. courses that have or will be undergoing a Course Review in the relevant year;
- d. specific courses by agreement with the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching).

(46) Double degrees can be monitored separately or with their related single degrees.

(47) Courses delivered in partnership with third parties are subject to additional quality assurance measures as outlined in the [Educational Partnerships Procedure – Third Party Teaching Arrangements](#).

Monitoring Requirements

(48) The ACM system captures course performance data including:

- a. load, retention, success, progression and completion rates, student survey outcomes, equity indicators, with trend analysis at the sub-cohort level;
- b. contextual factors that may impact the course including the respective modes and locations of the course where appropriate;
- c. historical and current subject and course action plans;
- d. outcomes from external referencing, including:
 - i. reports from Course Advisory Committees;
 - ii. outcomes from any professional accreditation submissions during the period;
 - iii. innovations resulting from learning and teaching scholarship, and related research.

(49) Quality and Standards coordinates the ACM system, data, and reporting, before and during the ACM period.

Development and Monitoring of Action Plans

(50) Nominated Lead Course Coordinators are responsible for undertaking the ACM for their course and for the development, submission, and implementation and updating of action plans. This activity includes:

- a. an update on all previous actions to indicate those that are completed or still in progress;
- b. an assessment of targets and outcomes from the past cycle against current data;
- c. an evaluation of the impact of completed actions;
- d. an update on contextual factors, current findings from data, and external referencing outcomes;
- e. development of new action plans with a focus on a specified number of actions that are achievable within the next year. These must include a response to risks to quality from course data analysis, and may also include developments that are already underway, including significant actions arising from monitoring of relevant

subjects.

(51) Course Coordinators will indicate through the action plans where support is required from the Divisions of the University. Quality and Standards distributes support requirements for each school to the relevant Divisions of the University.

(52) Deans or their nominees are responsible for approval of action plans and providing advice and support to meet actions.

(53) Quality and Standards submits reports on the outcomes of each ACM cycle at school level and flags any issues as required for School Business Plans for the subsequent year.

(54) Quality and Standards provides a summary of ACM outcomes at institutional level through the ACM Annual Report to Education Committee.

Part E - Course Review and Re-Accreditation

Approach and Timing

(55) In accordance with the requirements of the Standards the University ensures that every course undergoes a Course Review at least every five years and no later than seven years.

(56) Out-of-cycle Course Reviews may also be triggered by events that incorporate significant review. Such events include an application for or renewal of professional accreditation, or a significant course revision. The data collected and analysis undertaken for such events is combined with additional Standards-based analysis to meet the requirements for a Course Review.

(57) An out-of-cycle Course Review will reset the cycle for a course or Course Group so that the next Course Review will occur within five to seven years of the last.

(58) Exceptions to the requirement to undergo a Course Review include courses that have been:

- a. placed into teach-out mode following a decision by Academic Board to close the course
- b. suspended or will be closed or replaced by a substantially new course within the next 12 months

(59) Reviews of double degrees will be undertaken with the related single course of the owning school.

(60) Quality and Standards maintain and schedule dates for all Course Reviews and advise the Deans of impending review commencement. Updates to scheduling will be made when any of the factors outlined above trigger out-of-cycle or earlier reviews.

(61) Where a school does not initiate a review in the required time frame Coursework Committee will recommend to Academic Board that approval for the relevant course be revoked and that the course be suspended until review requirements are met.

Review Requirements

(62) Portfolios for Course Reviews will include at a minimum:

- a. a summary of ACM outcomes documenting cycles of continuous improvement across course quality areas of focus
- b. a five-year data snapshot of course performance trends
- c. annual CAC feedback including emerging trends in the field of education and delivery methods

- d. evidence of courses meeting the Standards in staffing, assessment, moderation, academic integrity, quality assured pathways, and learning facilities and resources
- e. evidence of external referencing, that includes comparison data with like courses at other institutions and review of course standards.

(63) Requirements for the Course Review Portfolio may be met in whole or part by a professional accreditation portfolio and outcome.

(64) Quality and Standards will facilitate the compilation of the Course Review Portfolio in collaboration with the Course Coordinator.

(65) The Course Coordinator acts as the Course Review Leader and is responsible for analysis of data in the self-review and finalising documentation in the Course Review Portfolio. This will include the development of an action plan where required, in consultation with the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) or equivalent and Quality and Standards.

Committee Review and Course Re-Accreditation

(66) The Dean will submit the final Course Review report with any proposed actions and timelines to Coursework Committee with a copy to the Provost.

(67) Coursework Committee will consider the report and submit its recommendations in relation to the course to Academic Board.

(68) Academic Board may make the following determinations:

- a. the course is re-accredited;
- b. the course is re-accredited subject to the fulfilment of conditions;
- c. the course is not re-accredited.

Review of Conditions and Actions

(69) The Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) is responsible for the submission of a report to Coursework Committee within the six-month period (or a shorter period as determined by the Committee) confirming the fulfilment of any conditions of reapproval that may have been imposed by Academic Board.

(70) Where any conditions of reapproval are not met within the required time frame, or alternate plans approved by Coursework Committee, the course will be suspended to new intakes pending resolution of conditions.

(71) Quality and Standards maintains a register of all approved reports and conditions for the purpose of scheduling, action plan monitoring, and reporting.

Section 7 - Definitions

(72) For the purposes of this Procedure:

- a. calibration: an activity that provides for the external review of assessment and grade moderation for a subject by an external academic who teaches in a similar or related subject or discipline;
- b. Course Group: a Course Group is formed by combining an active parent award with courses that have sufficient commonalities for the purposes of quality assurance and review, based on criteria outlined in the [Course and Subject Review Guidelines](#);
- c. external referencing: incorporates any process through which the University compares an aspect of its operations with an external comparator. This may include benchmarking, peer review and calibration.

Section 8 - Associated Documents

(73) Refer to guidelines and templates on the following intranet sites:

- a. [Course and Subject Review and Monitoring](#)
- b. [External Referencing](#)

Status and Details

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| Status | Current |
| Effective Date | 20th February 2025 |
| Review Date | 20th February 2028 |
| Approval Authority | Academic Board |
| Approval Date | 20th February 2025 |
| Expiry Date | Not Applicable |
| Responsible Manager - Policy | Amanda Carr Director, Higher Education Standards |
| Enquiries Contact | Quality and Standards |