

# Short Courses Policy

## Section 1 - Key Information

<b>Policy Type and Approval Body</b>	Administrative - Vice-Chancellor
<b>Accountable Executive - Policy</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
<b>Responsible Manager - Policy</b>	Director, Executive Education
<b>Review Date</b>	9 November 2025

## Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Policy provides a framework for the development, approval and management of short courses offered by La Trobe University, in accordance with the University's strategy and external requirements such as the Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) and the National Microcredentials Framework (NMF).

## Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all short courses run by the University and its educational partners. The short course category covers all non-award courses offered by the University, unless specifically excluded, and includes:

- a. short courses that incorporate assessment and that culminate in a certificate of achievement, transcript, digital badge or microcredential
- b. short courses in which there is no assessment and participants receive a certificate of attendance.

(3) This Policy excludes:

- a. award courses of the University, including higher education awards under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and other courses accredited by Academic Board (such as Professional Certificates)
- b. pathway programs that are specifically designed to prepare school leavers for admission to tertiary study (such as the Tertiary Preparation Program).

## Section 4 - Key Decisions

<b>Key Decisions</b>	<b>Role</b>
Approval of short course business cases	Course Portfolio and Scholarships Committee (or relevant sub-committee)
Approval of short course content	Dean or nominee
Issue of short course certification	Director, Student Administration
Quality assurance of short courses	Dean or nominee

## Section 5 - Policy Statement

(4) The University engages in the development and delivery of short courses to enhance its industry engagement, to develop the skills of individuals, and to contribute to the University's revenue. This means that short courses are developed that:

- a. align with the strategic direction and strengths of the University and its individual schools and research centres
- b. build critical skills for adult learners for professional, community and individual benefit
- c. are assessed as being financially viable for the duration of their offer.

(5) All short courses are designed in accordance with the La Trobe Short Course Design Framework and demonstrate contemporary academic and industry relevance. This means that:

- a. the design of short courses is informed by industry engagement and emerging scholarship
- b. learning materials are designed and selected to support the application of the skill or knowledge by the participant, where appropriate
- c. where aligned with an industry framework short courses meet registration and recognition requirements of those frameworks or accrediting bodies
- d. short courses are supported by the availability of qualified instructors and appropriate learning environments.

(6) Short course design takes account of the specific needs of target cohorts. This means that:

- a. the structure, delivery mode, timing and duration of short courses is tailored for target cohorts
- b. short courses are designed as self-contained units of study
- c. the prior knowledge or experience required by participants is clear
- d. short course learning objectives are explicit, designed for the designated level of the course, and describe the proficiency to be gained by participants on completion
- e. where short courses are assessed, the assessment is designed and conducted in accordance with the University Assessment Policy and specifically:
  - i. is linked with the learning objective(s)
  - ii. is commensurate with the volume of learning
  - iii. supports the application of the skills or knowledge
- f. where a short course is also a microcredential the following information is explicit:
  - i. the number of credit points allocated
  - ii. the possibility for stacking and the amount of credit available towards relevant award courses.

(7) The University assures the quality of its short courses through appropriate mechanisms for the type of course. This means that:

- a. the design and delivery of short courses is consistent with the [Higher Education Standards Framework 2021](#)
- b. all short course proposals are subject to review and approval of both the business case and the curriculum content
- c. where a short course is a microcredential it aligns with the NMF
- d. all short courses are subject to regular review through participant surveys and peer review and outcomes are used to inform the ongoing development of the course
- e. short course participants are made aware of the requirement for academic honesty in any assessed work and the requirement for them to abide by the provisions in the [Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

- f. short courses that are designed and/or delivered in partnership with an educational partner of the University are subject to all relevant university policies.

(8) The University seeks to maximise the experience of short course participants by:

- a. ensuring participants have timely access to quality learning resources and appropriate supports
- b. providing clear information in advance to participants of their entitlements and obligations.

## Section 6 - Procedures

### Part A - Range of Short Courses

(9) The University offers a range of short course types that can be classified according to their key characteristics:

Type of Course	AQF Level	Assessment	Credit Bearing	Certification
Single Subjects	As in award offering	Yes	Yes	Transcript of academic record
Microcredentials	Any level -majority are Level 8 or above	Yes	Yes, in multiples of 5 credit points that can be stacked	Digital credential (includes all metadata to align with NMF as may be varied from time to time). Where required by accrediting bodies a certificate of achievement may also be issued.
Bridging Programs	Any level	Yes	No	Certificate of achievement
Other Assessed Short Courses	Any level	Yes	No	Digital badge or certificate of achievement
Non-Assessed Short Courses	Any level	No	No	Certificate of attendance

(10) The governance, fees and quality assurance of Single Subjects falls within the scope of policies governing award courses of the University. Individuals who undertake Single Subjects are enrolled as students of the University and are subject to policies governing all award students. Provisions for Single Subject students are referenced in this Procedure where distinctions are necessary.

(11) All other short courses and their participants are subject to the following procedures.

### Part B - Approvals for New Short Courses

(12) Proposals for new short courses may be initiated by academics, Schools, centres or other units of the University, or may be commissioned by a third party. Any proposal originating within a School or unit of the University must be endorsed by the Dean or nominee or equivalent prior to the development of a business case.

(13) Instances of short courses funded by grants for development and delivery, or for a client, are not required to undergo financial assessment apart from that required for the preparation of a submission, tender or quote.

(14) Proponents of any other new short courses must submit a business case for the course to the Office of the Provost. Business cases for all new short courses must be reviewed and approved by a sub-committee of the Course Portfolio and Scholarships Committee.

(15) Following approval of the business case, the Dean or their nominee is responsible for approval of the academic content of short courses offered by their School, as outlined in the [Course and Subject Management Procedure -](#)

## [Approvals.](#)

(16) Where short courses offer specific professional accreditation or skills certification, approval is required from the relevant professional body or industry partner.

(17) Information on the attributes of all short courses, including where appropriate metadata required for alignment with the NMF, is maintained in the University's course database (CourseLoop).

## **Part C - Fees**

(18) Guidelines for the setting and/or amending of fees for short courses are available through referral to the University's Short Course Pricing Principles. Final fees for the initial offer of short courses are determined as follows:

- a. for proposals initiated by a School of the University fees are recommended at the time of course approval, based on the business case and with approval from the relevant Dean or nominee
- b. for commissioned short courses the contract fee is negotiated with the client based on a costing proposal approved by the Dean or their nominee.

(19) The pricing of existing short courses is reviewed annually, based on course performance, data and insights relating to economic, competitor and other factors affecting demand. Based on this review the Director, Executive Education will make any recommendations for change to Deans or nominees for approval.

(20) The Director, Executive Education may, from time to time, waive or discount fees based on specific marketing or strategic objectives, in consultation with key stakeholders and with the approval of the relevant Dean or nominee.

## **Refunds**

### **Cancellation by the University**

(21) The University reserves the right to cancel a short course where circumstances necessitate and will endeavour to do so at least 10 business days prior to the scheduled course commencement date. Where it is not possible to transfer participants to an equivalent course the University will refund any fees paid by participants or clients.

### **Cancellation by Client or Participant**

(22) Subject to the terms and conditions of their registration clients or participants may:

- a. substitute, cancel or transfer to another course
- b. receive a course credit, or a full, partial or no refund contingent on meeting such terms and conditions.

## **Part D - Registration**

### **Entry Requirements**

(23) Entry requirements for some short courses may include a requirement for professional registration, or a specified level of experience or proficiency in a relevant area. Applicants seeking registration in a short course of the University:

- a. are advised of any required prior knowledge or experience
- b. must meet the pre-requisites of that course, where they exist.

(24) Domestic and Non-Resident applicants are eligible to apply for short courses.

(25) International participants are not eligible for a student visa based on their registration in a short course.

International students on a student visa who seek to register in a short course:

- a. must also be enrolled in a CRICOS-registered course
- b. are not eligible to register in a short course in addition to their award course enrolment where they intend to apply for credit towards any AQF qualification.

## **Application and Registration**

(26) Applications for short courses are made directly via the University website.

(27) The University may decline registration in a short course where an applicant fails to provide evidence that they meet any relevant prerequisites.

(28) Applicants are registered in a short course upon receipt of the course fee or a fee waiver voucher. Acceptance of a place in a short course at the University constitutes agreement to abide by relevant policies of the University.

(29) The University reserves the right to withdraw or cancel a place in a short course where:

- a. the acceptance of registration was based on incomplete or inaccurate information supplied by the applicant or certifying authority
- b. there are insufficient registrations to make the course viable
- c. an error was made in assessing or processing the application.

## **Part E - Rights and Responsibilities of Short Course Participants**

(30) For the purposes of institutional and government reporting, participants in short courses are regarded as follows:

- a. individuals enrolled in a Single Subject that forms part of any award course of the University are considered students of the University, with all attendant entitlements and obligations
- b. individuals enrolled in any other short course are not regarded as students as defined by the University's legislation.

(31) Short course participants are advised of, and agree to, their specific entitlements and obligations through the registration in their short course. Participants are required to abide by all key University policies governing student and participant behaviours, and are entitled to the following:

- a. access to the La Trobe Learning Management System (LMS) and all learning materials required for their short course
- b. attendance or participation in teaching sessions and other scheduled activities for the duration of their short course or for a limited period by negotiation where required
- c. academic guidance from their instructor, and where the short course includes assessment, an assessment of their learning and performance
- d. certification of their attendance or achievement according to the nature of their course
- e. access to the Safer Community program for support should they encounter inappropriate, concerning, or unacceptable behaviour (bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual harm, stalking, threats, or violence) from students or staff of the University while engaged in their short course.

(32) Participants who successfully complete short courses are considered short course alumni of the University.

## Information for Participants

(33) Prior to the commencement of a course participants are provided with published information including:

- a. information about course content, any assessment and expected learning outcomes
- b. educational background and expertise of the lead educators
- c. the nature of the certification to be provided on completion of the course
- d. whether completion of the course may be considered for credit upon successful admission to an award course at La Trobe
- e. relevant fees, any associated costs, and cancellation and refund policies
- f. the rights and responsibilities of short course participants.

(34) Where a short course is a microcredential, course information clearly identifies:

- a. the volume of credit available where a participant has successfully completed the assessment
- b. the AQF level of the course
- c. the potential award pathways where the microcredential can be used for credit, including where a microcredential must be stacked with another microcredential in order to be recognised for credit
- d. where the microcredential is recognised by a professional body, satisfies, or aligns to an industry standard or professional development requirement, or constitutes recognition towards an industry or vendor certification.

(35) Participants are provided with course information, content and learning materials two weeks prior to the commencement of a short course.

(36) All communications with short course participants are sent through the email address nominated at the point of registration.

## Part F - Assessment

### Adjustments to Assessment

(37) Where a participant is experiencing short-term adverse circumstances that affect their ability to complete an assessment they should submit an application for an appropriate adjustment via the LMS.

### Academic Misconduct

(38) Allegations of academic misconduct against short course participants are reported, investigated and managed under the relevant provisions of the [Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

## Part G - Certification

(39) The successful completion of a short course leads to the award of the relevant type of certification as outlined in the table in Part A of this Procedure and as advertised in course information. All certification includes information pertaining to course duration and content and is issued to participants under the authority of the Director, Student Administration.

(40) Individuals who participate in a credentialled course but who do not complete assessment may receive a certificate of attendance on request.

(41) Appropriate records are kept for any certification issued to participants to facilitate verification, reissuance, or applications for credit where required.

## Part H - Credit Towards Award Courses

(42) Successful completion of microcredentials and Single Subjects may be used for credit towards award courses at La Trobe, under the provisions of the [Admissions Procedure - Credit](#). Credit may be given for multiple microcredentials that meet the credit point and study level requirements for a subject, as specified in course rules.

(43) Completion of microcredentials does not automatically entitle a person to entry to an award course or subject except where specifically stated in course outcomes.

## Part I - Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance

### Annual Performance Monitoring

(44) The performance of short courses will be monitored on an annual basis, both from the perspective of financial viability and participant feedback via a post-completion quantitative and qualitative survey. Survey data will be provided to the Schools and be independently reviewed by the Executive Education team to identify trends and relevance to the audience.

(45) Short courses deemed to be non-viable will be suspended pending further analysis of demand and/or revision of course structure to be more market oriented. A renewed business case must be submitted.

### Quality Assurance

(46) Course academic content and assessment are reviewed by the relevant School, on a periodic basis, as follows:

- a. short courses that carry external accreditation are reviewed as part of the formal review that takes place as part of re-accreditation by the Dean's nominee for managing external accreditation
- b. all other short courses are reviewed bi-annually by the relevant short course coordinator for approval by the Dean or their nominee.

(47) Where a subject in an award course that has microcredentials that stack into it is revised or amended as an outcome of subject monitoring (see the [Course and Subject Management Procedure - Monitoring and Review](#)), the microcredentials are included in the scope of the revision and consultation process to ensure continued alignment.

(48) Where applicable, short course curricula may be presented to Course Advisory Committees to validate their continued industry relevance and applicability.

(49) Where appropriate remediations arising from participant feedback may be implemented by the owning School.

## Part J - Review of Decisions

(50) Participants are entitled to seek a review of any decision made in relation to their participation in a short course of the University where they can demonstrate that a decision has not been made in accordance with this policy or another relevant policy of the University.

(51) Participants should first discuss their concerns with the Coordinator of their course. Where this is not possible, or participants are unsatisfied with the outcome, they should contact the Director, Executive Education.

(52) Short course participants may also lodge a complaint about any aspect of their engagement with the University, including University services or administrative issues, under the provisions of the [Student Complaints Management Policy](#).

## Section 7 - Definitions

(53) For the purposes of this policy and procedure:

- a. assessed short course: a course that is not an award of the University, but in which assessment attainment is recorded and certification of achievement is provided
- b. bridging program: a short course which is designed to address knowledge gaps for adult learners seeking to enter a specific course. Bridging programs require assessment but are not credit bearing.
- c. digital badge: a digital representation that an individual has successfully completed a short course
- d. digital credential: a form of certification that is awarded to an individual that has successfully completed a microcredential
- e. domestic applicant: a student who is an Australian citizen, New Zealand citizen, the holder of a permanent visa for Australia or holder of an Australian humanitarian visa.
- f. international student: a student who is not a domestic student at the time of the relevant study, who will be studying in Australia on a temporary student visa.
- g. microcredentials: short courses consisting of multiples of five credit points that are assessed and which, in approved sequences, may be used to apply for credit towards an award of the University. In this Policy the term is also used to denote the subject or course that attracts the microcredential.
- h. non-assessed course: a short course where there is no formal assessment, but for which a certificate of attendance may be issued
- i. non-resident applicant: all applicants/students who are not classified as domestic or international as defined in this Policy in relation to their visa/citizenship and location status. Non-Residents include:
  - i. non-domestic students who are studying in a domestic course that is delivered entirely online, where they do not need a student visa for their enrolment
  - ii. non-domestic students studying on campus within Australia while on any temporary visa other than the student visa
  - iii. any student enrolled in a non-domestic course (including Australian domestic students studying overseas in a course delivered by an offshore partner institution)
- j. participant: an individual registered in a short course of the University
- k. Professional Certificate: a non-AQF award of the University consisting of 30 credit points that may consist of subjects from an AQF award of the University and/or microcredentials
- l. registration: the process by which an individual's participation in a short course is confirmed
- m. short course: non-award courses of short duration run by the University or with a third party that are designed for experienced learners for professional, individual or community benefit
- n. Single Subject: a subject of an award course of the University in which a student enrolls independently of a direct enrolment in the course and which may be used to apply for credit towards an award
- o. stacking: the process of bundling microcredentials together, either vertically or horizontally to provide a pathway to an award course.

## Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(54) This Policy is made under the [La Trobe University Act 2009](#).



## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	9th November 2023
<b>Review Date</b>	9th November 2025
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