Short Courses Policy

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Administrative – Vice-Chancellor
Accountable Executive – Policy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Responsible Manager – Policy	Director, Executive Education
Review Date	26 February 2028

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:

a. the University's strategy;
b. the Higher Education Standards Framework (2021);
c. applicable published Australian frameworks or standards such as the National Microcredentials Framework (NMF).

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all short courses run by the University and its short course 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 the following types of courses (refer to the Course and Subject Management Policy):

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

Key Decisions	Role
Approval of short course business cases, proposals or grant applications	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Key Decisions	Role
Approval of short course content	Course Owner

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 Short Course Design Framework and must 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 Higher Education Standards Framework 2021. Specifically assessment tasks must:
    i. be linked with the learning objective(s);
    ii. be commensurate with the volume of learning;
    iii. support the application of the skills or knowledge;
f. where a short course is also a microcredential the following information must be explicit:
    i. the number of credit points allocated;
    ii. any 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. the initial proposal, business case and curriculum content for all short courses must be reviewed and approved by the designated authorities (see Part B of the Procedure);
c. where a short course is a microcredential it aligns with the applicable published Australian frameworks or standards (currently 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.

(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.

(9) Contractual arrangements for the delivery of all short courses are conducted according to the University Contracts Policy.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Types of Short Courses

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

Table One

Type of Course	AQF (Equivalent)Level	Assessment	Credit Bearing	Certification
Single Subjects	As in award offering	Yes	Yes	Transcript of academic record
Microcredentials	Any level – the 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 published Australian frameworks or standards). 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

(11) While individuals may choose to enrol in a Single Subject as a type of short course, the governance, fees and quality assurance of Single Subjects falls within the scope of legislation and 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. Specific provisions for Single Subject students are referenced in this Procedure where distinctions from other short courses are necessary.

Part B - Approvals for Short Courses

New Short Courses

(12) Proposals for new short courses may be initiated by academic or professional staff, schools, centres or other divisions of the University, or may be commissioned by an external organisation.

(13) All short courses must have a designated owner within the University, including where courses are run in partnership with third parties as follows:

a. the relevant Dean is the owner of short courses originating in schools;
b. the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) are the owners of all other short courses.

(14) Proposals must be endorsed by the Course Owner or their nominee prior to the development of a business case.

(15) Following the development of a business case proponents of new short courses must apply for management approval from the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (see requirements in Table Two). Copies of approved proposals are submitted to the New Courses and Majors Sub-Committee (NCMSC) and the Course Portfolio and Scholarships Committee (CPSC) for noting as indicated in Table Two.

(16) Following management approval, the Course Owner or their nominee is responsible for approving the content of the short course and any proposed credit arrangements. Where a short course offers specific professional accreditation or skills certification, approval of the course content is also 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 published microcredential frameworks or standards, is maintained in the University's course management system (CourseLoop).

Changes to Approved Short Courses

(18) Changes to short courses must be approved by the Course Owner or their nominee.

(19) Where a short course is externally accredited, approval for any substantive changes must also be gained from the external accrediting authority.

Specific Approval Requirements

(20) Approval requirements for new short courses are determined by their origin as outlined in Table Two.

Table Two

Broad Type/Origin	Initiator	Endorsement to Proceed	Responsibility for Business Case, Proposal or Application	Management Approval – (all proposals to be submitted to NCSMC and CPSC for noting)	Content Approval -Course Owner (including any credit arrangements)
Ad hoc	School (Short Course Proposal)	Dean or nominee	Executive Education Team	Provost & DVCA	Dean or nominee
	Other areas of the University (Short Course Proposal)	Provost, DVCA or nominee	Executive Education Team	Provost & DVCA	Provost, DVCA or nominee
Strategic Portfolio	Executive Education Team (prioritised Course Schedule)	Provost, DVCA or nominee	Executive Education Team	Provost & DVCA	Provost, DVCA or nominee
External Organisation	Member of school leadership team	Dean or nominee	Executive Education Team (client proposal or grant application)	Provost & DVCA	Dean or nominee

Broad Type/Origin	Initiator	Endorsement to Proceed	Responsibility for Business Case, Proposal or Application	Management Approval – (all proposals to be submitted to NCSMC and CPSC for noting)	Content Approval -Course Owner (including any credit arrangements)
	Client, Executive Education Team or other area of the University	Provost, DVCA or nominee	Executive Education Team (client proposal or grant application)	Provost & DVCA	Provost, DVCA or nominee

Part C - Fees

(21) The University's Short Course Pricing Strategy provides guidelines for the setting and/or amending of fees for short courses (contact Executive Education Team). 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 the management proposal, based on the business case and with endorsement from the relevant Dean;
b. for commissioned short courses the contract fee is negotiated with the client based on a costing proposal developed in consultation with:
    i. the Dean in the case of school-owned courses;
    ii. the Director, Executive Education for all other courses.

(22) 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 in consultation with the relevant Course Owner or their nominee.

(23) 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 the relevant Course Owner or nominee.

Refunds

Cancellation by the University

(24) 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

(25) 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

(26) 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.

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

(28) 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

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

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

(31) 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.

(32) 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

(33) 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 (individuals participating in short courses taught by La Trobe University are regarded as students for the purposes of access to learning materials under the University's Statutory Licence (refer Part IVA Division 4 of the Copyright Act 1968) or otherwise access materials as 'authorised users'of commercially licensed material;
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 through drop-in sessions or other fora, 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.

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

Course Information

(35) Any short course information or promotional materials must not imply that short courses are awards of the University or recognised within the AQF.

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

a. any applicable entry requirements (see Part D of this Procedure);
b. information about course content;
c. details of any assessment, timelines and intended learning outcomes;
d. the nature of the certification to be provided on completion of the course;
e. whether completion of the course may be considered for credit upon successful admission to an award course at La Trobe;
f. relevant fees, any associated costs, and cancellation and refund policies;
g. the rights and responsibilities of short course participants.

(37) 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.

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

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

Part F - Assessment

Adjustments to Assessment

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

Academic Misconduct

(41) 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

(42) The certification provided for the successful completion of different types of short courses is outlined in the table in Part A of this Procedure and is made clear in all course information and marketing material. All certification includes

information pertaining to course duration and content and is issued to participants under the authority of the Director, Executive Education.

(43) Certification issued to participants who successfully complete a short course does not in any way imply that the course is an award of the University, nor that it is recognised under the AQF. The AQF logo does not appear in any short course certification.

(44) Individuals who participate in a credentialled course but who do not complete assessment may receive a certificate of attendance on request where there is evidence of their participation in the course.

(45) The Executive Education team ensures that appropriate records are kept in designated University record-keeping systems for any certification issued to participants to facilitate verification, reissuance, or applications for credit where required.

Part H - Credit Towards Award Courses

(46) 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 and the Admissions Standard – 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.

(47) 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

(48) The performance of short courses is 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 is provided to Course Owners and is independently reviewed by the Executive Education team to identify trends and ongoing relevance to participants.

(49) Short courses deemed to be non-viable are suspended pending further analysis of demand and/or revision of course structure to be more market oriented. Any proposal to resurrect a suspended course must be subject to a review of financial viability and be approved by the Course Owner.

Quality Assurance

(50) Course academic content and assessment are reviewed by the nominee of the Course Owner, 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 nominee of the Course Owner for approval by the Dean, or the Provost or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) as appropriate.

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

(52) Where applicable, short course curricula may be presented to Course Advisory Committees to validate their

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continued industry relevance and applicability.

(53) Where appropriate, remediations arising from participant feedback may be implemented by the nominee of the Course Owner.

(54) Outcomes of all short courses are reported twice a year to Education Committee.

Part J - Review of Decisions

(55) 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.

(56) 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.

(57) 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

(58) 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. Course Owner: the role or individual ultimately responsible for the content of a course. Where a course originates in a school this is the Dean (or nominee). In other instances this is the Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or nominee.
d. digital badge: a digital representation that an individual has successfully completed a short course;
e. digital credential: a form of certification that is awarded to an individual that has successfully completed a microcredential;
f. 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;
g. 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;
h. 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 qualification that is awarded on successful completion of the course.
i. non-assessed course: a short course where there is no formal assessment, but for which a certificate of attendance may be issued;
j. 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);

k. participant: an individual registered in a short course of the University;

l. 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;

m. registration: the process by which an individual's participation in a short course is confirmed;

n. 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;

o. Single Subject: a subject of an award course of the University in which a student enrols independently of a direct enrolment in the course and which may be used to apply for credit towards an award;

p. 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

(59) This Policy is made under the La Trobe University Act 2009.

(60) Associated information includes:

a. Short Course and Microcredentials intranet page (staff only)

b. Short Courses webpage

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	26th February 2025
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Responsible Manager - Policy	Sue Bennett Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Enquiries Contact	Quality and Standards

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