

## Academic Board Resolutions: Creation, Variation and Deletion of Award Courses and Units of Study

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**Course Proposal/Amendment Requirements can be found  
on the Academic Board website at  
<http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/courses.shtml>**

## 1 – Preliminary

### 1.1 Commencement

These resolutions of the Academic Board commence on 1 January 2001.

### 1.2 Purpose

**1.2.1** To assemble in one place Academic Board principles and policies related to the creation, variation or deletion of academic courses and units of study at the University of Sydney; and

**1.2.2** To describe the procedures used to maintain award courses and units of study, pursuant to both Academic Board policies and the requirements of the relevant administrative systems.

### 1.3 Authority

**1.3.1** The University of Sydney Act states that the Senate of the University “may provide such courses, and may confer such degrees (including *ad eundem gradum* degrees and honorary degrees) and award such diplomas and certificates, as it thinks fit”.

**1.3.2** Pursuant to the Act, the University of Sydney (Amendment Act) Rule 1999 (as amended) states that:

The Senate may determine the requirements to be satisfied by candidates for a degree, diploma or certificate for the award of the degree, diploma or certificate (Part 10, Division 1, Section 63 (2)).

The Senate has resolved that the procedures for the consideration, and deadline for submission of proposals for new and amended award programs and courses will be determined by the Academic Board (Part 10, Division 2, Section 64 (1)).

### 1.4 Revision

This document, and the policies and procedural pro-formas to which it is linked, is maintained by the Academic Board and by the Registrar’s Data Audit Committee.

### 1.5 Dictionary

#### **Award Course**

An award course is a formally approved program of study which can lead to an academic award granted by the university. An award course requires the completion of a program of study specified by course resolutions. Award courses are approved by Senate on the recommendation of the Academic Board. Students normally apply to transfer between undergraduate award courses through the UAC. The award course name will appear on testamurs. The University broadly classifies courses as undergraduate, postgraduate coursework or postgraduate research. The award courses offered by the University are:

Higher Doctorates  
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
Doctorates by research and advanced coursework  
Masters Degree by Research  
Masters Degree by Coursework (including the Juris Doctor)  
Graduate Diploma  
Graduate Certificate  
Bachelor’s Degree  
Advanced diploma  
Diploma  
Associate Diploma

**Combined Degree**

A **combined degree** is a single program with a single set of course resolutions leading to the award of two degrees (unless otherwise specified in the resolutions).

**Course resolutions**

Course resolutions govern the allowable enrolment of a student in a course; e.g. a candidate may not enrol in units of study having a total value of more than 32 credit points per semester. Course resolutions also govern the requirements for the award of the course; e.g. a candidate must have completed a minimum of 144 credit points. Course resolutions may be expressed in terms of types of units of study taken, length of study, and credit points accumulated.

**Coursework**

A term used to describe an award course not designated as a research award course. While the program of study in a coursework award course may include a component of original, supervised research, other forms of instruction and learning normally will be dominant. All undergraduate courses are coursework courses.

**Double Degree**

A **double degree** is a program where students are permitted by participating faculties (and/or by specific resolutions within a single award) to transfer between courses in order to complete two awards.

**Faculty**

A formal part of the University's academic governance structure, consisting mainly of academic staff members and headed by a dean, which is responsible for all matters concerning the award courses that it supervises. Usually, a faculty office administers the faculty and student or staff inquiries related to its courses. The Calendar sets out the constitution of each of the University's faculties.

**Major**

A field of study chosen by a student to represent their principal interest. This would consist of specified units of study from later stages of the award course. Students select and transfer between majors by virtue of their selection of units of study. One or more majors may be awarded upon the graduand's assessment of study.

**Minor**

Studies undertaken to support a major. Minor studies require smaller number of credit points than a major. Students select and transfer between minors (and majors) by virtue of their selection of units of study. One or more minors may be awarded upon the graduand's assessment of study.

**Postgraduate**

A term used to describe a course leading to an award such as graduate certificate, graduate diploma, a master's degree or PhD which usually requires prior completion of a relevant undergraduate degree or diploma. A 'postgraduate' is a student enrolled in such a course.

**Research**

A term used to describe certain award courses in which students undertake supervised research and report systematic, creative work in order to increase the stock of knowledge. The research award courses offered by the University are higher doctorates, Doctor of Philosophy, doctorates by research and advanced coursework, and certain degrees of master designated as research degrees. The systematic, creative component of a research course must comprise at least 66% of the overall course requirements.

**Stream**

A stream is a defined program of study within an award course, which requires the completion of set units of study as specified by the Course resolutions for the particular stream, in addition to the core program specified by the course rules for the award course. Students enrolled in award courses that involve streams will have the stream recorded on their enrolment record.

Students normally enter streams at the time of admission, although some award courses require students to enrol in streams after the completion of Level 1000 units of study. Where permitted to do so by faculty resolution, students may transfer from one stream to another, within an award course, provided they meet criteria approved by the Academic Board on the advice of the faculty concerned. A stream will appear with the award course name on testamurs, e.g. Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering (Construction Management).

**Undergraduate**

A term used to describe an award course leading to the award of a certificate, diploma, advanced diploma or degree of bachelor and a student enrolled in such a course.

## 2 – Nomenclature

### 2.1 Glossary of terminology

#### 2.1.1 Principles

The adoption of common terminology for academic programs within the University of Sydney assists students and staff by reducing the potential for confusion and the need for wasteful translation. A glossary of the terminology used by the University's student information system (currently FlexSIS) and related academic and administrative activities is maintained under Policy OnLine at <http://sydney.edu.au/policy/>

#### 2.1.2 Policy

The Academic Board has resolved that, wherever applicable, the terminology defined in the University Glossary should be used in descriptions of the University's academic programs.

### 2.2 Combined Courses

#### 2.2.1 Principle of Management of Combined Courses

Under the *Delegations of Authority: Academic Functions*, Section 3, Part B Examination and Assessment – Coursework, Senate has delegated the authority to certify that candidates have completed requirements for admission to degrees to the deans of faculties. In the case of combined courses, such delegated authority is to be jointly exercised by the deans of the relevant faculties under an explicit and published arrangement.

### 2.3 Non-award courses

#### 2.3.1 Principles

The University offers academic programs that are not parts of award courses but are nevertheless associated with the name of the University. These often provide professional development at postgraduate level, but also include programs offered by the Centre for Continuing Education and individual departments and schools. These non-award courses do not pass through the academic approval processes required of award courses and units of study. It is important that the distinction between award and non-award courses be clear to students and other relevant parties.

#### 2.3.2 Policy

As a general principle, no certificate of completion of any non-award course should include any of the generic words used in the titles of award courses. Examples of words that should *not* be used include 'Certificate', 'Diploma', 'Graduate Certificate', etc. Phrases such as 'Certificate of Attendance' or 'Certificate of Completion' may be used. Certification of non-award courses is, of course, subject to the University's policy regarding the use of the Coat of Arms (see *Delegations of Authority: Administrative Functions*).

### 2.4 Consistent nomenclature

#### 2.4.1 Principles

2.4.1.1 The purpose of a consistent nomenclature across the University's award programs is:

2.4.1.1.1 to rationalise and streamline University policies and procedures;

2.4.1.1.2 to conform as closely as practicable to national standards derived from DEEWR;

2.4.1.1.3 to ensure that Course resolutions are readily understood, logically consistent, and can be applied by the University's student information system (e.g. by allowing automatic checking of eligibility for graduation and so forth); and

2.4.1.1.4 to facilitate the automatic production of entries in handbooks, etc., and the preparation of management information.

2.4.1.2 The name of an award course comprises one essential component (generic name) and one or more optional components (stream name). Programs of study

in award courses comprise selected units of study, chosen in accordance with published Course resolutions. Course resolutions often specify structured programs of study involving several units of study within and across levels; these structured programs are variously known as majors, minors and subject areas.

- 2.4.1.3 The components of award courses, and the policies concerning their maintenance and use, reflect the diversity of award course structures that have developed in the University. Given the existing complexity of the University and its operating environment, faculties are precluded from introducing award course components outside these descriptors, and are encouraged to simplify descriptors and structures as far as possible.
- 2.4.1.4 Faculties should recognise that the titles and structures of award courses must reflect not only the policies of the Academic Board, but also the requirements of the University's business systems, in particular its student information system, and policies emerging from Government and legislative requirements especially the Australian Qualifications Framework and its related policies.

## 2.4.2 Policy

- 2.4.2.1 The names of award courses (undergraduate and postgraduate), and their governance rules, expressed by Senate, faculty and course resolutions, must adhere to authorised nomenclature.
- 2.4.2.2 The name of an award course comprises one essential component and one or more optional components.
- 2.4.2.2.1 Generic award. All award courses must include a generic or parent award which is an associate diploma, a diploma, advanced diploma, bachelor's degree, graduate certificate, graduate diploma, master's degree or doctorate (e.g. Bachelor of Arts).
- 2.4.2.2.2 Stream(s) within a generic award. These components are optional. Faculties are permitted to offer streams within streams, but are not encouraged to do so. The combination of a generic award with a stream is known as specialisation (e.g. Bachelor of Science (Bioinformatics)).
- 2.4.2.3 Course resolutions for award courses govern allowable enrolments and requirements for the award. Course resolutions may specify patterns of study involving several units of study, known as majors, minors and subject areas.
- 2.4.2.4 Award courses may involve combined or double degrees. Students will receive separate testamurs for the two awards.
- 2.4.2.5 The following table summarizes some key distinctions between the components of programs of study of an award course:

**Table: Components of Award Courses**

	<b>Generic Award</b>	<b>Stream(s)</b>	<b>Major(s)</b>
<b>Mandatory</b>	Yes	No	No
<b>Created/Altered/ Deleted by</b>	Academic Board	Academic Board	Academic Board
<b>Published in</b>	Calendar	Calendar	Faculty Handbook
<b>UAC Code allowed</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Printed on testamur</b>	Compulsory	Optional*	Optional*
<b>When do students enter</b>	On admission	On admission**	After 1-2 years
<b>Mode of entry</b>	Enrolment	Enrolment**	Selection of units of study

\* Course resolutions may specify whether or not the stream(s) or major(s) in which a student graduates are to appear on the testamur. If a student

becomes eligible to receive a testamur with more than one award title, the Registrar will determine the adopted form.

\*\* Course resolutions may permit students to transfer between streams within a given generic award, during the period of their enrolment in that generic award. If such transfers are permitted by Course resolutions, the resolution must specify the basis on which transfer is allowed. The purpose of this Academic Board policy is to ensure fairness and equity where entry to a particular stream is academically competitive for newly admitted students.

- 2.4.2.6 The name and abbreviation used for each award course offered by the University shall be that approved by the Academic Board on the advice of the faculty or faculties concerned.
- 2.4.2.7 The canonical descriptor of a unit of study is defined by the University's student information system. It ensures the general relevance of the descriptor to curriculum planning and organisation, both by staff and by students.
- 2.4.2.8 Award courses and units of study are related via progression and completion rules. These rules, and many other types of linkage between course and unit information and other enrolment data, are embedded in the University's student information system. They do not form part of the descriptor for units of study.
- 2.4.2.9 With respect to the eight character alphanumeric code which uniquely identifies each unit of study, no department, school or faculty may use the same alpha component for its unit of study codes as another department, school or faculty.
- 2.4.2.10 Units of study may not be duplicated by assigning different unit of study codes to essentially identical units of study. Where it is necessary to identify different mode(s) of teaching applying to a particular unit of study, this may be done by using a specified field within the University's student information system developed for this purpose.
- 2.4.2.11 Faculties must use a nomenclature for award courses that distinguishes between research courses and coursework courses. The same award should not be available by the two methods of candidature.

## **2.5 Semesterisation**

### **2.5.1 Principles**

- 2.5.1.1 Award courses and units of study at the University of Sydney are semesterised. The purpose of semesterisation is to:
  - 2.5.1.1.1 support students' progression by ensuring the orderly management of assessment across units of study;
  - 2.5.1.1.2 assist timetabling, room allocations, and so forth;
  - 2.5.1.1.3 allow sufficient administrative control (e.g. through uniform cut-off dates) of courses, units of study and students' enrolments; and
  - 2.5.1.1.4 facilitate the preparation of reports for DEEWR, etc.
- 2.5.1.2 Academic Board policies regarding periods of instruction are made pursuant to Senate Resolutions, which state that:
  - 2.5.1.2.1 The academic year shall contain such periods of instruction, commencing and concluding on such dates as the Academic Board may determine.
  - 2.5.1.2.2 Any faculty or academic college which wishes to operate according to dates which are different from those prescribed by the Board may apply to the Board for such permission. Any such application must be made by no later than the November Board meeting of the year preceding that in which the faculty or college wishes to vary the prescribed dates.

## **2.5.2 Policy**

- 2.5.2.1 The Academic Board determines the periods of instruction in standard teaching sessions named First Semester, Second Semester, Summer Session and Winter Session.
- 2.5.2.2 It is Academic Board policy that all units of study will be semesterised at the undergraduate level. This means that any undergraduate units of study in which students formally enrol must normally be established as being taught and examined in either the First or Second Semester, or in both semesters if the course is offered twice, or in the Summer Session or Winter Session if offered in the Summer School or Winter School.
- 2.5.2.3 Although they are semesterised for administrative purposes, certain components of final honours year, or postgraduate units of study relating to a thesis or other similar research-orientated project, or units of study involving field-work, clinical placements, practicums or similar activities, may be assigned two or more semesters for completion. Such assignments are approved by the Registrar on the advice of the Data Audit Committee.
- 2.5.2.4 It is acceptable to offer units of study in postgraduate award courses in non-standard teaching sessions, provided that appropriate arrangements have been made concerning facilities and other resources.
- 2.5.2.5 The Academic Board acknowledges that the increasing use of flexible teaching and learning modes for both on-campus and off-campus studies tends to conflict with defined semester times. However, students' progression and choice of unit of study options may be unnecessarily and inadvertently impaired if study programs and assessment events in flexibly-delivered units of study are not synchronised with the established Semester/Summer-Winter Session pattern. Such synchronisation is of particular importance in many undergraduate courses, but is less important in stand-alone postgraduate coursework award courses or in certain undergraduate courses that may be quarantined.

## **2.6 Credit points**

### **2.6.1 Principles**

- 2.6.1.1 The building blocks of all award courses are units of study. A course generally comprises many units of study, selected according to the resolutions of the faculty or board which controls the course. However, different units of study do not always have equal academic demands or content. Moreover, many of the units of study offered by the University may be taken as part of more than one course, including courses not controlled by the faculty which controls the unit of study.
- 2.6.1.2 The absence of a tight mapping between courses and units of study is an important aspect of academic flexibility and efficiency in the University. However, it does require that the University establish a measure of the relative quantitative contribution of a unit of study to a course. The consistency of the relativities of units of study across the University is determined by the Academic Board policy relating to credit points.

### **2.6.2 Policy**

- 2.6.2.1 Credit points indicate the relative quantitative contribution of a unit of study to an award course.
- 2.6.2.2 Units of study shared across courses are required to have the same credit point value in every course. This policy applies when units of study are shared between faculties or between undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Where units of study are available to students of more than one faculty, faculties shall design units of study to maximise compatibility and availability to students of the university.
- 2.6.2.3 The relationship between the level of student effort in a unit of study and the credit point value of that unit is articulated and defined within the context of all of the courses sharing that unit of study. Faculties shall use credit points to monitor

student work-load on the basis that 24 credit points equates to the effort expected of a full-time student, studying 36-48 hours per week. A credit point should therefore equate notionally to a minimum expectation of 1.5 – 2 hours of student effort.

- 2.6.2.4 The normal full-time load for all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework award courses is 24 credit points per semester (or 12 points for the Summer Session or the Winter Session).
- 2.6.2.5 The normal credit point load for a unit of study shall be six credit points. Such standardisation exists in an attempt to maximise student choice and flexibility. In all cases, the credit point value of a unit of study will be an integer, normally lying between 3 and 24. In assigning the level of student effort and hence the credit point value of a unit of study, faculties should be mindful of the advantages to students when credit points in preferred academic pathways add naturally to a sum of 24 per semester. This is best achieved by using credit point values that are divisors of 24 (i.e., 3, 4, 6, 8, 12).
- 2.6.2.6 Faculties introducing new units of study with a credit point value other than six shall inform the Academic Board, noting the rationale for the deviation from the standardised model and addressing issues of compatibility.
- 2.6.2.7 A faculty may, on academic grounds, propose to the Undergraduate or Graduate Studies Committees units of study with 1 or 2 credit points. Although such units of study are discouraged, they will normally be approved if the unit of study is available only within courses controlled by the proposing faculty.

### **2.6.3 Notes**

- 2.6.3.1 Student transcripts and student record files will record a single result and a single credit point value for each unit of study attempted by a student. In those cases where the textual description of a unit of study includes reference to options within that unit, the transcript will not include a result or a credit point value for any specific option. Any option for which a result and credit point value is required must be identified as a stand-alone unit of study, with a distinct descriptor.
- 2.6.3.2 The requirement that each unit of study have a single unique credit point value, even if it is available in a range of courses (e.g. a mathematics unit in the BSc, the BE and the Combined Arts/Law degrees), may lead in principle to different minimum total credit point values for different degrees, or to different full-time study requirements per semester according to the award course chosen. In general, faculties are expected to construct undergraduate degree programs on the basis that a normal full-time load is 24 credit points per semester and, if necessary, to use this as a minimum credit point value for the construction of academic programs for entire award courses.
- 2.6.3.3 The credit point terminology refers to the value of a unit of study towards meeting award course completion requirements. While it may be expected to relate in a reasonably direct way to the amount of work in a unit of study, or to the load generated by a unit of study, these are matters to be determined by the faculty or faculties involved. There is no underlying necessity that “equal credit points” imply “equal amounts of work” or “equal load” across different courses of study offered by the University. However, faculties are encouraged to develop clear and consistent guidelines regarding how they define a credit point in terms of the student workload, contact hours, assessment and examination requirements applying to their own discipline and courses.

### 3 - Levels of approval for changes to courses and units of study

#### 3.1 Principles

- 3.1.1** Levels of approval for the creation, variation or deletion of courses and units of study are established to:
- 3.1.1.1 ensure that proposals for new or amended award courses and units of study are examined in the appropriate University-wide context, while reflecting the delegation of academic authority to approve certain amendments, additions or deletions to academic courses and units of study;
  - 3.1.1.2 where necessary, to align the academic development of the University with the provision of resources to sustain new or changed courses and units of study;
  - 3.1.1.3 establish time-scales and cut-off dates in the procedures for creating and maintaining award courses and units of study, to ensure that important deadlines can be met (such as the publication of the Universities Admissions Centre Guide and faculty handbooks) while allowing time for proper review of the academic and administrative implications of proposed changes; and
  - 3.1.1.4 exploit wherever possible the power and flexibility of the University's information management systems to facilitate and streamline the consideration of proposals.
- 3.1.2** So far as possible, the approval processes will be identical for undergraduate and postgraduate award courses and units of study. Where necessary, the specific needs of undergraduate or postgraduate courses will be mentioned separately.

#### 3.2 Policy

Approval levels for the creation, variation or deletion of award courses and units of study are classified as follows:

##### 3.2.1 Senate approval

- 3.2.1.1 Senate resolutions relating to the list of award courses offered by a faculty, including additions, alterations and deletions of courses on the list.
- 3.2.1.2 New award courses and major alterations to existing courses approved by the Academic Board are subject to Senate endorsement.

##### 3.2.2 Academic Board approval

- 3.2.2.1 New award courses, including combined/double degrees.
- 3.2.2.2 Alterations to existing award courses involving:
  - 3.2.2.2.1 a change to the name, or deletion, of an award course;
  - 3.2.2.2.2 addition, modification or deletion of a stream that is specified in the award course name on the testamur;
  - 3.2.2.2.3 a change in the duration of an award course; or
  - 3.2.2.2.4 addition or deletion of an honours component in the award course.
- 3.2.2.3 Substantial revision to the academic content of an award course including:
  - 3.2.2.3.1 additions, modifications or deletions of majors or subject areas;
  - 3.2.2.3.2 additions, modifications or deletions of mandatory components, including core units of study;
  - 3.2.2.3.3 adoption of a new mode of delivery (e.g. web-based, off-campus, change of campus, interstate or offshore) in all or part of a course;
  - 3.2.2.3.4 significant alterations of academic pathways through the award course resulting from a review of the award course; or
  - 3.2.2.3.5 any change to an award course that has not been reviewed at course level within the past 5 years.
- 3.2.2.4 Changes having an impact on the study options available to prospective students, including changes to:
  - 3.2.2.4.1 selection/admission procedures and standards
  - 3.2.2.4.2. the table of units of study for a course; or

- 3.2.2.4.3 prerequisites, co-requisites and assumed knowledge for courses or units of study within courses.
- 3.2.2.5 Changes having a significant impact on the professions, employers or the wider community, including:
  - 3.2.2.5.1 enhancement or diminution of employment opportunities;
  - 3.2.2.5.2 entry into a new segment of the education system or higher education sector; or
  - 3.2.2.5.3 new mode of delivery e.g. off-shore or distance education delivery modes.

### **3.2.3 Senior Executive Group (SEG) endorsement**

- 3.2.3.1 In September 2009, SEG agreed to establish the Course Profiles Steering Committee (CPSC) to develop policy and oversee coordination of Faculty and University priorities in relation to course offering, fee setting and student load profiles in the context of the University's Strategic Plan, student demand, the University's ability to support that demand and its government obligations. The Committee will also seek to ensure closer integration of these strategies with academic planning, budget development, financial forecasting, and student marketing and admissions processes. The aim is to bring greater strategic planning and coordination in the area of load management, course planning and fee setting.
- 3.2.3.2 The CPSC has responsibility for reviewing proposals for new courses in terms of strategic positioning, how a proposal will meet faculty and University goals, how it maximises potential internal collaborations, its load implications and financial viability. CPSC recommends to SEG whether or not new courses should be endorsed by SEG. For further information on the role of the CPSC see: [www.planning.usyd.edu.au/CPSC/cpsc.php](http://www.planning.usyd.edu.au/CPSC/cpsc.php)

### **3.2.4 Faculty approval**

- 3.2.4.1 All additions, modifications or deletions to units of study under the academic direction of the faculty, provided that adequate notification of changes has been given to the deans of all other faculties offering award courses in which the unit is listed in the unit of study table.
- 3.2.4.2 In approving the actions described in 3.2.4.1, faculties must be mindful of advice regarding the resource implications of such approval, normally provided by the Dean. Boards of Studies may approve the actions described in 3.2.4.1 only with the permission of the dean of the faculty responsible for the relevant unit of study.
- 3.2.4.3 Faculties are required to inform the Chair of the Academic Board before making a change to the mode of delivery of a unit of study. This step is required to allow appropriate monitoring of the impact of flexible delivery modes on University-wide teaching resources such as the Library and information technology systems. This requirement also applies to any proposal to offer a unit of study at another location (including off-shore) other than the University.
- 3.2.4.4 The Data Audit Committee has specified those aspects of an existing unit of study which a faculty may change and those which it may not. Those aspects which may be changed are: the semester in which the unit is offered; the description of the unit in the faculty handbook; pre- and co-requisites; departmental split; course associations applying to the unit; the title of the unit. Those aspects which may not be changed are: the eight character alphanumeric unit of study code which functions as a unique identifier for the unit; the unit's credit point value; the Field of Education code; HECS band; fees band; the level of the unit; mode of delivery. In exceptional circumstances a dean may present a case to the Data Audit Committee to change the alphanumeric code, having first obtained the agreement of those other deans in whose award course(s) the unit is offered.
- 3.2.4.5 Faculty approved variations must be reported annually to the Undergraduate or Graduate Studies Committee, as appropriate. Such reporting will normally occur

simultaneously with finalisation of the Unit of Study Master File for the following year.

### **3.2.5 Determining approval levels**

Where doubt exists, the Chair of the Academic Board shall determine the level of approval required after consultation with the relevant dean(s). Changes requiring ultimate approval by the Academic Board will normally require prior approval by the relevant faculties. The fact that an academic governance regulation appears in a faculty handbook, or is published as a faculty resolution, is not of itself evidence that only faculty approval is required for any proposed change.

### **3.2.6 Timescales for approvals**

Academic Board approval for proposed changes in award courses and units of study may be requested at any time. Approval procedures will include information on the normal time to process a request. Except as permitted by the policy and procedures regarding late, urgent approval, no course or unit of study may be advertised or offered until it has been duly approved. Faculties are encouraged to ensure proposals are submitted in time to meet the printing deadlines for the next year's faculty handbook.

### **3.2.7 Preliminary approval**

3.2.7.1 Provision exists for a faculty to seek Preliminary Approval for a new award course or for changes to an existing course where the proposed changes may affect students' subject choices for Year 11 and Year 12. This provision reflects the long lead time required to give notice to Year 10 students about changes to University admission requirements. Such approval may be given by the Provost who will consult with the Chair of the Academic Board to evaluate the academic implications of the proposal. All award courses given Preliminary Approval must be advertised with the qualification "subject to approval".

3.2.7.2 Deans will inform the Academic Board, through a faculty report, when Preliminary Approval has been granted for a new course. A full proposal must be approved before students enrol in such a course.

### **3.2.8 Late, urgent approval**

3.2.8.1 Late urgent approval for variations in award courses and units of study may be given by the Provost, who will consult with the Chair of the Academic Board and the Registrar to determine the implications of such approval. Examples of Late, Urgent Approval include authorisation to insert a proposed new course into the UAC Guide. All award courses given Late, Urgent Approval must be advertised with the qualification "subject to approval".

3.2.8.2 Where an award course or unit of study has been given Late, Urgent Approval, a full proposal must be approved as soon as possible, according to the normal procedures.

## 4 – Guidelines for approval for changes to courses and units of study

### 4.1 Principles

- 4.1.1** Senate and Academic Board policies relating to the maintenance of award courses and units of study require that all changes be formally approved, by faculties, or the Academic Board, depending on the nature of the change.
- 4.1.2** This Part provides guidelines to be followed in seeking formal approval for proposed changes requiring approval by the Academic Board. The guidelines aim to:
- 4.1.2.1 ensure conformity with all relevant policy;
  - 4.1.2.2 encourage coherence and consistency in the expression of Faculty and Course resolutions relating to award courses and units of study;
  - 4.1.2.3 provide all of the information required by the relevant approving authorities, especially information associated with academic quality assurance; and
  - 4.1.2.4 minimise administrative workload, and streamline the procedures as far as possible while respecting collegial values and the views of stakeholders.
- 4.1.3** The Guidelines and related pro-formas are revised and updated from time to time, by staff in Secretariat, working with advice from the Chair of the Board, the chairs of the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees, deans and faculty managers.

### 4.2 Roles and Authorities

#### 4.2.1 Heads of Schools/Departments

In faculties with a school/department structure, the head of school/department is required by Resolution of Senate to consult with the school/department board and with the professors in the school/department concerning the units of study offered by the school/department. Proposals to change units of study offered by the school/department will normally be prepared by the head or the head's agent, working with the advice of the school/department board, the professors, and, in many cases, a committee or working party with special expertise and interest in the specific academic area.

#### 4.2.2 Chairs of Boards of Studies

In respect of academic matters, boards of studies report to Senate through the Academic Board. However, academic decisions made by boards of studies may have resource implications for faculties and departments. To align academic development with the provision of resources, a chair of a board of studies must obtain the agreement of the relevant dean before the board of studies determines a change in academic program.

#### 4.2.3 Deans and Directors of Colleges and Academic Centres

Deans and directors of colleges and academic centres, in consultation with faculty secretaries, are responsible for:

- 4.2.3.1 establishing policies and procedures, consistent with University policies and procedures, for managing all aspects of faculty-approved changes. In particular, these policies and procedures will cover the creation, variation and deletion of units of study under the academic supervision of the faculty;
- 4.2.3.2 preparing proposals for changes requiring approval by the Academic Board; and
- 4.2.3.3 ensuring that all proposed changes to award courses and units of study are formally approved by faculty boards or boards of studies.

#### 4.2.4 Academic Board

4.2.4.1 Proposals requiring approval by the Academic Board and endorsement by Senate normally will be considered first by the Undergraduate Studies Committee or the Graduate Studies Committee as appropriate. The respective chairs of these committees may form small working parties to consider proposals that are complex or potentially controversial.

- 4.2.4.2 Provision exists for minor changes, of a typographical or editorial kind, to be made to Faculty or Course Resolutions without the formal approval of the Academic Board.
- 4.2.4.3 It is not the role of the Academic Board or its standing committees to assess, in detail, the specific academic content of a proposal to introduce or change an award course or unit of study. Nor is it the role of the Academic Board or its standing committees to assess, in detail, the resource needs and implications of new teaching initiatives. However, the Academic Board does advise Senate and the Vice-Chancellor on all matters relating to the University's educational programs. The Board and its committees will concern themselves principally with matters relating to:
  - 4.2.4.3.1 the academic need for, and merit of, the proposed change;
  - 4.2.4.3.2 the extent to which a proposed change has been the subject of appropriate consultation and approval within faculties, and between all faculties having an academic interest in the proposed change;
  - 4.2.4.3.3 the consistency of the proposal with relevant University policies;
  - 4.2.4.3.4 the potential impact of the proposed new course or change on University resources, including the Library, central information technology resources, and the resources of other faculties and schools/departments, and
  - 4.2.4.3.5 the presence of appropriate mechanisms to evaluate the quality of delivery and academic outcomes of the proposal, and to make any improvements if required.
- 4.2.4.4 It is important to recognise that by their terms of reference and by convention, the Academic Board and its committees are not authorised to reject proposals for reasons related to the provision of resources. However, the committees may comment on resource-related matters when reporting to the Academic Board. Such comments may be of particular importance in framing the Board's advice to Senate.
- 4.2.4.5 Frequently, Academic Board standing committees will suggest or require changes be made by faculties to proposals before submission to the Academic Board.
- 4.2.4.6 Academic Board will normally receive proposals from its standing committees with a recommendation to approve the proposed new course or change.

#### **4.2.5 Senior Executive Group (SEG) and Course Profiles Steering Committee (CPSC)**

- 4.2.5.1 All proposals for new courses require the early submission of an Expression of Interest (EoI) to the CPSC of SEG prior to the commencement of course development. The EoI should be brief (1 – 2 pages maximum) outlining the strategic rationale for introducing the course and a concise outline of the business case. This step of the course approval process will assist by flagging any potential issues at the commencement of the development phase. The aim is to provide early feedback on optimal strategic and academic outcomes and to encourage early and meaningful collaboration between faculties, which should assist in development of the course and help speed completion of necessary documentation for final consideration and approval.
- 4.2.5.2 Once the EoI has been endorsed by SEG, a full course proposal is developed and approved by the Faculty or College Board and is then submitted to CPSC. If endorsed by CPSC and SEG, the proposal is then referred to the Academic Board for approval. The proposal should include a more detailed business case, with the focus being on the financial sustainability of the course, expected mix of enrolments and load, market research, inter-faculty collaboration and the rationale for how this proposed course fits the overall mission of the faculty (particularly its research profile) and the University.

### 4.3 Transitional Arrangements

#### 4.3.1 Major amendments to an existing course

- 4.3.1.1 The Academic Board acknowledges that students have the right to complete a course under the Faculty and Course resolutions in force at the time of their enrolment. In stating this, students are expected to comply with either the general time limit for the completion of course requirements (ten years, as stated in the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000* (as amended)) or any other time limit specified in the Faculty and Course resolutions for that course.
- 4.3.1.2 Any proposal to make major amendments to an existing course must include detailed information on the transitional arrangements which will apply.
- 4.3.1.3 As part of introducing amended resolutions for an existing course, faculties are to provide students who are currently enrolled in that course an option of electing to transfer to the new resolutions or to continue under the existing resolutions.
- 4.3.1.4 As stated in the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000* (as amended):

A student who enrolls after suspending candidature shall complete the requirements for the award course under such conditions as determined by the dean.

#### 4.3.2 Deletion of an existing course

- 4.3.2.1 In addition to the points under Section 4.3.1 above, any faculty proposing to delete an existing course should follow the principle that no student should be disadvantaged by the deletion of an existing course.

### 4.4 Timelines

#### 4.4.1 Approval of changes

- 4.4.1.1 It is Academic Board policy that proposed changes requiring approval by the Academic Board will be considered at any time. The time scale for approval is dependent upon the calendar of meeting dates of the relevant standing committee (Undergraduate or Graduate Studies) and the following meeting of the Academic Board. The Calendar of meeting dates is published on the internet at:

Academic Board:

<http://sydney.edu.au/ab/about/dates.shtml>

Undergraduate Studies:

[http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/UG\\_studies/meeting\\_dates.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/UG_studies/meeting_dates.shtml)

Graduate Studies:

[http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/grad\\_studies/grad\\_studies\\_mtg\\_dates.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/grad_studies/grad_studies_mtg_dates.shtml)

- 4.4.1.2 It is the responsibility of faculty managers and deans to monitor the calendar of meeting dates, to take account of the consideration of proposals by working parties, and to ensure that approvals are in place by appropriate key dates.

#### 4.4.2 Key dates

Key dates are normally established by the Registrar, and include:

- 4.4.2.1 cut-off date for notification to Year 10 students of changes that may impact on the selection of HSC subjects (e.g. changes to, or introduction of, assumed knowledge, recommended studies and/or flexible entry criteria). Proposals of this kind may be the subject of Preliminary Approval by the Provost [normally, 34 months prior to the introduction of the change];
- 4.4.2.2 cut-off date for the UAC Guide for admissions in the subsequent calendar year [normally, 10 months prior to the introduction of the change]; and
- 4.4.2.3 finalisation of the Units of Study Master File for the subsequent year [normally, by the end of September in the year preceding the year in which the change will

apply]. After this date the Units of Study Master File may be altered only with the approval of the Registrar. To facilitate the completion of the Master File a series of milestone dates for the creation of the following year's units of study schedule have been developed and published in the document *Units of Study and Award Courses: Their Creation and Maintenance*.