

## Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Award Courses and Units Approval Policy

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<b>Summary</b>	To set out the principles and procedures for the creation, variation, suspension, retirement and termination of award courses and units.
<b>Keywords</b>	Quality standards, approval processes, academic governance, learning outcomes, interactive learning partnership, delivery standards, support standards, graduate attributes, workforce, evidence-based, course proposal, students, specialisation
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<b>Review date</b>	July 2023
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	As per Attachment 1 to this document.

**Issued under the authority of the Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Governing Council**

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# Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Award Courses and Units Approval Policy

## Policy Statement

The award courses of Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) Higher Education are the primary means by which HETI Higher Education strives to achieve its vision of providing contemporary, evidence based higher education that is responsive to NSW Health's current and emerging workforce needs, and builds its reputation for the quality of its graduates. The quality of a course is critical to HETI Higher Education. As the key academic quality assurance agency of HETI Higher Education, the HETI Higher Education Academic Board must be able to assess quality through the approval process and by monitoring course performance.

## Aims and Objectives

1. This policy guides the development and approval of courses and units, taking into account HETI Higher Education's strategic plans for academic development and its Academic Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Assurance Policy.
2. The information collected through the approval process is used for student recruitment, for unit learning guides, for timetabling, for setting fees, the acquisition of library materials and for government reporting and approval. It is critical therefore, that courses and units are finalised by the specified dates.
3. This policy mandates that course and unit approval occurs through the relevant academic governance and management structures of HETI Higher Education.

## Overview

4. HETI Higher Education courses must:
  - a. align with HETI Higher Education Plan and Teaching and Learning Plan;
  - b. support the achievement of HETI Higher Education graduate attributes;

- c. incorporate HETI Higher Education's standards for course design, delivery and support;
- d. provide opportunities for health sector learning experiences; and
- e. provide quality outcomes for students.

## Definitions

5. For this policy:
  - a. Award Course: a program of study consisting of at least 600 hours of study leading to an award of HETI Higher Education (Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master's Degree) which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by the HETI Higher Education Governing Council.
  - b. Core: a mandatory set of units to be completed by all students enrolling in the award course.
  - c. Learning Pathways Manager: the member of staff designated to develop or modify a course.
  - d. Community-Engaged or Applied to Practice Learning: a unit or component of a unit that enables a student to participate in an approved learning activity that involves an interactive learning partnership with a provider in the health care sector. The learning activity can be done individually or in groups, must provide a clear knowledge benefit to student(s) and the partner(s), and is linked to specific learning outcomes including the demonstration of academic knowledge/ professional skills related to the course of study.
  - e. Course Design Standards: the characteristics of a course that allow students to achieve an appropriate set of course learning outcomes, including HETI Higher Education's graduate attributes. These include active learning (including e-learning), theory-practice links, flexibility and accessibility, and appropriate assessment throughout the course. Course learning outcomes should be related to external reference points such as professional accreditation standards and other relevant external reference points (where these are applicable).
  - f. Course Delivery Standards: the staff expertise and availability, and consistency and quality of delivery of support materials, which are required for successful delivery of the course.

- g. Course Support Standards: the infrastructure, resources, professional and technical support that is required for successful and consistent delivery of the course.
- h. Graduate Attributes: the characteristics each HETI Higher Education graduate should have developed by the time they have completed their course. Refer to the HETI Higher Education Graduate Attributes Policy.

## **Procedures**

### **Courses and Specialisations**

#### **Course Development and Approval**

- 6. The development of a new course is a significant project requiring: consideration of the rationale for development with emphasis on targeting the current and emerging needs of the NSW Health workforce (including accreditation of courses by professional bodies) as well as the needs of the health sector generally.

#### **New Courses**

- 7. A new course requires:
  - a. Course Concept Proposal. The purpose of the Course Concept Proposal is to allow HETI Higher Education to consider how well the proposal fits with its vision and goal of providing contemporary, evidence-based higher education that is responsive to NSW Health's current and emerging workforce needs through courses tailored to enhance learning and the student experience. The Course Concept Proposal includes the intended size of the course, the resource requirements and evidence-based "business case" (development and capital costs, income and expenditure for at least the first three years), an analysis of the expected effects on unit offerings and enrolments, significant impacts on support areas, risks associated with the initiative and how they will be addressed, and a description of how it will meet academic quality standards and compliance with the Australian Qualifications Framework. Formulation of a Course Concept Proposal will routinely incorporate in principle advice on the concept from the HETI Higher Education Academic Board. A Course Concept Proposal will be submitted for approval to the HETI Higher Education Governing Council by the HETI Higher Education Executive Group, following consultation with relevant

stakeholders. Following approval by the Governing Council, the Full Course Proposal can then proceed.

- b. Full Course Proposal that includes the Course Concept Proposal as the first part of the documentation and identifies the structural elements of the proposed course, such as core units and specialisations; admission requirements; course learning outcomes with external reference points, including any professional recognition and/or registration; and resource requirements. The full course proposal will explain how the Course Design Standards are satisfied, including provision for health sector applied to practice learning, and attainment of HETI Higher Education graduate attributes. The course proposal will also explain how the Course Delivery and Curriculum Support Standards will be satisfied. The full course proposal will be developed by the Teaching and Learning Committee on behalf of the HETI Higher Education Academic Board for approval by the HETI Higher Education Governing Council.
- c. Business Case that demonstrates the financial viability of the proposed course including evidence of current and projected demand; cost of delivery; employability of graduates; details of any partners to be involved and proposed related contracts that will require approval by HETI Higher Education Governing Council.

### **Major Changes to a Course or Specialisations**

8. Major changes to an existing course or specialisations are treated as a new course for the components being changed. Major changes include:
  - a. the introduction or discontinuation of specialisations;
  - b. changes affecting external accreditation;
  - c. substantial changes to the resource requirements for the course (e.g. changes to delivery mode, numbers of units);
  - d. changes affecting graduation; and
  - e. changes to admission requirements.
9. Major change proposals must be accompanied by a Full Course Proposal, submitted for approval to the HETI Higher Education Governing Council by the HETI Higher Education Academic Board, explaining the rationale for the change, an assessment

of the risks of changing and not changing and an assessment of the continued financial viability of the changed course.

### **Course or Specialisation Discontinuation**

10. Discontinuation of a course or specialisation may have significant impact on students, NSW Health and the health sector generally, and other courses as well as relationships with partners, professional, accreditation and regulatory bodies and the community.
11. Proposed discontinuation of a course or specialisation, must, in the first instance, be discussed by the HETI Higher Education Executive Group, following consultation with HETI Higher Education Academic Board and other relevant stakeholders, and a recommendation made to the HETI Higher Education Governing Council.
12. Proposals for discontinuation of a course or specialisation (and the stages leading to discontinuation) must take into account the students currently enrolled in the program and must specify arrangements for them to transfer to a new course or complete the existing course or specialisation including the timeframe for completion and a strategy for communication with affected students. Details of proposed transitional arrangements should be developed by the Teaching and Learning Committee and, if endorsed, will be forwarded via the HETI Higher Education Academic Board to the HETI Higher Education Governing Council for approval.

### **Suspension of Intake to a Course or Specialisation, and Retirement or Termination of a Course or Specialisation**

13. HETI Higher Education may wish to suspend an intake of students to a course for a period of up to two years. The impact of suspending an intake is similar to course discontinuation (see above).
14. The proposed suspension of an intake in the first instance is discussed by the HETI Higher Education Executive Group in consultation with stakeholders including HETI Higher Education Academic Board and a recommendation made to the HETI Higher Education Governing Council.
15. The proposal for suspension should provide the rationale for suspension, the arrangements to accommodate students currently enrolled in the course or an

approved pathway to that course and a strategy for communication with affected students, as well as the effect on other courses that may share units with the course.

16. Normally, a course will be retired at the end of the period of suspension. If the suspension is to be lifted, advice should be provided to the HETI Higher Education Academic Board.
17. Retirement of a course or specialisation occurs where there will be no further intake of students and will no longer be available for admission:
  - a. following a period of suspension in the case of a course; or
  - b. when a course or specialisation is being replaced; or
  - c. when HETI Higher Education decides it will no longer offer the course or specialisation; or
  - d. when major changes to a course or specialisation result in the creation of a new course or specialisation version.
18. Where there is no replacement course or specialisation proposed, HETI Higher Education will identify the arrangements and timeframe for continuing students to complete their study.
19. Where a replacement course or specialisation is proposed, the proposal must detail the transition arrangements for continuing students
20. A course or specialisation will be terminated when there are no students enrolled in the retired course or specialisation. Any former student presenting for completion of the course after termination has taken effect, will be advised to seek admission to a current course and seek advanced standing for previous study.

## **Units**

21. Unit Facilitators are responsible for the quality of unit content and delivery for the courses in which the units are located.
22. The Unit Proposal outlines how the unit contributes to any course or specialisation in which it is offered, the learning outcomes for the unit, assessment requirements, its relationship to other units, including the contributions that it makes to the Course Design Standards, course learning outcomes and assessment schedules of the

relevant courses, the resources required to deliver the unit, as well as when and how it is to be taught.

23. Unit Proposals require a detailed resource assessment, and proposers must consult with the supporting service areas (library and information technology services) and include a statement from the designated officer in that area that the unit can be supported or the nature of the support issues.
24. All units must adhere to the provisions of the Assessment Policy – Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment.

### **New Units**

25. A new unit requires the completion of a New Unit or Variation to a Unit Form.
26. For the purposes of this policy, a new unit is a unit that:
  - a. introduces curriculum content and related learning outcomes that are not currently offered; or
  - b. replaces one or more existing units and substantially changes their curriculum content and/o learning outcomes; or
  - c. changes the AQF level of a unit; or
  - d. changes the discipline code to a new band; or
  - e. changes the academic credit value expressed as hours of study per unit;

A change in unit code and/or title does not automatically constitute a new unit for the purposes of this policy, as some curriculum changes may be minor. The Director, Education and Training will resolve any questions about whether a unit is new or not.

27. The Teaching and Learning Committee considers the academic quality of the proposal and forwards its recommendations to HETI Higher Education Academic Board for approval.

### **Changes to a Unit**

28. Proposals for changes to a unit require the resubmission of the approved proposal with changes highlighted.



29. Minor variations to units are approved by the Teaching and Learning Committee.
30. Major variations to units are considered by the Teaching and Learning Committee which forwards its recommendation to the HETI Higher Education Academic Board for approval.

### **Retirement or Deletion of a Unit**

31. Proposals to retire or replace a unit must take into consideration students in all courses where the unit is offered or is an integral part of a specialisation.
32. Proposals to retire a unit should provide:
  - a. the arrangements to accommodate students currently enrolled in the course or specialisations where the unit is offered as a core unit; and
  - b. the effect on other courses that may include the unit as part of a pool of alternate elective units.
33. Where a unit will be replaced by a new unit, the request for retirement will accompany the proposal documentation of the new replacement unit.
34. Any continuing students affected by the decision to retire a core unit should be given a minimum of one period of study notice that the change will occur. Advice to affected students should include a formal letter from the Director Education and Training which includes, where appropriate, the available options or alternative arrangements.
35. Authority to approve the retirement or deletion of a Unit rests with the HETI Higher Education Academic Board.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Timing of Approvals for Courses and Units**

36. Annual Curriculum Approval Calendars are set by HETI Higher Education to ensure that externally imposed deadlines are met and that internal processes depending on the approved course and unit data, can be completed.

## **Related Documents**

- HETI Higher Education Academic Quality Assurance Framework
- HETI Higher Education Assessment Policy – Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment
- HETI Higher Education Graduate Attributes Policy
- HETI Higher Education Quality Assurance Policy
- HETI Higher Education Student Support (Rights and Responsibilities) Policy
- HETI Higher Education Teaching and Learning Plan 2015 – 2018

## **Acknowledgement:**

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## DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Issued	Status	Author	Reason for Change
v0.1	30 November 2015	Draft	Geoff Murphy	Draft document
v0.2	13 January 2016	Draft	Geoff Murphy	Consolidation of feedback
v0.3	21 January 2016	Draft	Mark Wilbourn	Incorporating feedback from the Policy Review Workshop 21 January 2016
v0.4	25 January 2016	Draft	Geoff Murphy	Post review amendment
v0.5	27 January 2016	Draft	Mark Wilbourn	Amendment to Clause 7b
v0.6	28 January 2016	Draft	Mark Wilbourn	Incorporating feedback from the Policy Review Workshop 28 January 2016
v1.0	24 February 2016	Final	Mark Wilbourn	As approved by HETI Higher Education Governing Council
v2.0	31 August 2016	Final	Paul van Hauen	As approved by HETI Higher Education Governing Council
v1.0	22 August 2018	Final	Valerie Rhodes	Updated logos, template and new TRIM Reference
v1.1	03 February 2020	Noted	Susan Grimes	Organisational changes; new position title, and responsibilities. Noted by the T&L Committee.
v1.1	14 February 2020	Final	-	Published
V1.2	02 June 2020	Draft	Susan Grimes	Used 'credit point value expressed as hours of study per unit'
v1.2	02 July 2020	Final	-	Published  Approved by the DET. Noted by T&L Committee and HEAB.

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST – COMPLIANCE SELF ASSESSMENT

<b>Assessed by:</b>	<b>Date of Assessment:</b>		
<b>IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>Not commenced</b>	<b>Partial compliance</b>	<b>Full compliance</b>
1.			
	<b>Notes:</b>		
2.			
	<b>Notes:</b> <b>Relevant Director</b>		
3.			
	<b>Notes: TRIM reference number -</b>		
4.			
	<b>Notes:</b>		
5.			
6.			
	<b>Notes:</b>		

## Attachment 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT

### <Document Title>

1.	Policy/Process being assessed	Notes
	Award Courses and Units Approval Policy v1.0	
	Document Number	
	Publication date	
	Scheduled review date	December 2018
	Date of this risk assessment	
	Name & position of assessing officer	
2.	<b>Summary of policy purpose (from PD Cover Page)</b>	
	To set out the principles and procedures for the creation, variation, suspension, retirement and termination of award courses and units.	
3.	<b>Agency (HETI) key roles &amp; responsibilities as per PD</b>	
4.	<b>Risk Assessment</b>	
4.1	<b><u>Identification of risks</u> – what might happen &amp; how?</b>	
	1.	
	2.	
4.2	<b><u>Analysis of risks</u> – combined estimate of the consequence &amp; likelihood of the risk, using NSW Health Risk Matrix (attached)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequence:</li> <li>• Likelihood:</li> <li>• Risk rating:</li> </ul>	
4.3	<b><u>Evaluation of risks</u> – comparison of the level of risk as determined against a predetermined criteria to determine whether a level of risk is acceptable or needs to be treated.</b> Risk level assessed after implementing treatment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequence:</li> <li>• Likelihood:</li> <li>• Risk rating:</li> </ul> <b>Evaluation –</b>	

### Risk Assessment Approval

<b>Name &amp; position of approving T2 Officer:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	