Course Design Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Policy sets out the principles and requirements that inform the structure and design of courses offered at The University of Queensland (UQ or the University).

Section 2 - Principles and Key Requirements

Course Design Principles

(2) The design and structure of UQ courses will be aligned to the University's values and will:

a. contribute to the development and assessment of the program learning outcomes of the program(s) in which they are offered;
b. have a defined set of course learning outcomes that support those program learning outcomes;
c. constructively align learning activities and assessment tasks to ensure the development and attainment of those learning outcomes;
d. build on clearly stated prerequisite knowledge and/or assumed background;
e. comply with UQ's alpha-numeric coding system that identifies the discipline area and level of the course; and
f. have an expected student workload that corresponds to the unit value of the course.

(3) The Executive Dean will ensure:

a. courses are consistent with the University's academic and/or strategic priorities;
b. courses incorporate appropriate:
    i. learning experiences,
    ii. teaching methods, and
    iii. methods of assessment of student learning;
c. the quality and integrity of UQ's courses meet the highest academic standards;
d. direct consultation occurs with:
    i. all relevant academic units that can contribute to respective areas of discipline expertise, including adherence to the requirements of the Collaborative Service Teaching Policy,
    ii. all relevant organisational units and their leaders in relation to resource implications (e.g. UQ library, schools, institutes and faculties teaching into the course),
    iii. the Graduate School, where applicable, and
    iv. relevant external and accreditation bodies, where applicable;
e. compliance with all relevant legislation, such as the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act), and mandatory government requirements; and
f. approved courses are listed in the Course Catalogue.

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(4) The University-wide framework for approval of courses is outlined in the Program Approval Procedure.

(5) The University ensures the systematic and regular review of curriculum, teaching and program quality and risk in parallel with the requirements of this Policy. All courses undergo annual review as per the Annual Programs, Plans and Courses Quality Assurance Procedure process, and are also considered as part of the Academic Program Review Procedure.

Course Unit Value and Durations

(6) All courses must be assigned a fixed unit value and the same proportion of a full-time enrolment, regardless of the program in which they are offered.

(7) Courses will normally have a value of 2 units or a multiple of 2 units. The unit value of any course is determined by the Executive Dean of the Faculty to which the Coordinating Unit or academic discipline teaching the course belongs.

(8) Courses of 0 units, or an odd number of units, or with a unit value greater than 8 units are permitted in some circumstances, but specific justification for their introduction must be provided to the Academic Board through the Committee for Academic Programs Policy (CAPP).

(9) A unit represents the same student workload (contact plus study) in all faculties. The University does not equate unit value with hours of contact or study per week. However, enrolment in 8 units in a semester is typically equivalent to 40 hours per week.

(10) Wherever possible, courses will be no longer than a semester in duration. Where a course is longer than a semester (e.g. year-long courses) it must be academically justified. For example, a substantial project undertaken over an entire year.

Course Coding System

(11) The course coding system must be:

a. intelligible to students; and
b. consistent with Commonwealth Government legislation.

(12) All courses must be assigned a unique and identifiable course code consistent with the requirements below.

Course Code Elements

(13) Each course code must comprise of 8 characters as follows:

a. 4 letters followed by 4 numbers;
b. the 4 letters identify the discipline;
c. the 1st numeric character identifies the level of the course offering (refer to below “Course Level Identifiers” table); and
d. the 2nd to 4th numeric characters may be allocated at the discretion of the faculties, provided that each course has a unique identifier.

(14) Courses offered by UQ College and the Virtual Exchange Program are permitted to use an additional alpha character at the end of the course code to distinguish those course codes (e.g. ECON1901D, WRIT1101X).

Course Discipline Descriptors

(15) Courses are coded on a discipline basis (i.e. discipline descriptors), not on the organisational unit offering the

course.

(16) Discipline descriptors for course coding are aligned with the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) codes.

Course Level Identifiers

Level	Classification	Description
1	Undergraduate	Introductory or foundation courses typically found in the first year of an undergraduate program and usually, but not always, requiring no prerequisites.
2	Undergraduate	Courses which develop knowledge or skills beyond introductory or foundation courses. These courses are typically found in the second year of an undergraduate program.
3	Undergraduate	Courses which have learning outcomes which build on level 2 courses and/or are designed for students in the third year of an undergraduate program.
4	Undergraduate	Courses with advanced learning outcomes, typically found in the fourth year of an undergraduate program or in a 16-unit bachelor's honours program.
5	Undergraduate	Courses with advanced learning outcomes, typically found in the fifth year of an undergraduate program.
6	Undergraduate or Postgraduate coursework	Courses with advanced learning outcomes, typically found in the final year of a four year or longer undergraduate program and/or the first part of a postgraduate coursework program. Level 6 codes are intended for courses which might be used in both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs. Level 6 codes can also be used for courses which are part of Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma programs but are not used in other programs.
7	Postgraduate coursework	Courses intended for master's programs and postgraduate coursework program suites.
8	Postgraduate coursework/research	Courses intended for Professional Doctorate programs.
9	Postgraduate research	Courses intended for master's degree (Research), PhD or higher doctorate programs.

Courses in Multiple Programs

Courses Offered in a Suite of Postgraduate Programs

(17) Where the same course is available in a suite of postgraduate programs, the course must be coded at the level of the program to which it is primarily associated. If this is unclear or if there is a choice, the course must be coded at the higher level.

Postgraduate Courses with the same Content as Undergraduate Courses

(18) Where a postgraduate course is substantially the same in content as an undergraduate course, there must be a clear and explicit distinction between the courses, including distinct assessment testing postgraduate learning outcomes.

(19) Where a postgraduate course is delivered concurrently with an undergraduate course (i.e. some learning activities are delivered jointly to both cohorts), the course profiles of each course must give notice of the shared teaching activities. If learning activities are shared they must be appropriate for both levels of studies.

Development and Release of Course Profiles

(20) Each course offered at The University of Queensland will have a course profile which provides an overview of the

course and includes a description of the course learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment items.

(21) The course profile is to be made available via the University's website no later than one week prior to the first scheduled learning activity for each offering of the course. Details of recommended and required learning resources must be confirmed no later than 8 weeks prior to the commencement of the course. The Head of the Coordinating Unit is responsible for defining a process by which all course profiles administered by the Coordinating Unit are reviewed prior to publication. Coordinating units have the option of setting an earlier date for the release of course profiles. Any exceptions to the release of the course profile after the prescribed deadline must be approved by the Associate Dean (Academic).

(22) The Course Coordinator is responsible for creating/updating the course profile in the before the start of the relevant study period. This must be done in a timely manner to allow review of the course profile before publication. The Course Coordinator is also responsible for keeping the course profile updated as required throughout the semester. Changes to the course profile must be promptly communicated by the Course Coordinator to students currently enrolled in the course. Refer to clauses 49 to 53 in section 4 of the Teaching and Learning Roles and Responsibilities Guideline for more information.

Section 3 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Academic Registrar

(23) The Academic Registrar is responsible for administration, assessment and approval of new discipline descriptors and changes to existing descriptors.

Faculties

(24) The Executive Dean approves new and amended courses administered by Schools within the Faculty and oversees the Faculty’s maintenance of the course information in the Course Catalogue.

(25) The Associate Dean (Academic) oversees the Annual Programs, Plans and Courses Quality Assurance Procedure process of the Faculty and its Schools, in consultation with the Executive Dean and the Heads of Schools, and is responsible for approving exceptions to the availability of a course profile as outlined under this procedure.

Coordinating Units

(26) The Head of the Coordinating Unit (e.g. schools) oversees the delivery and administration of courses owned by the Coordinating Unit, and review of course profiles prior to their publication for each offering of a course in a given study period.

(27) The Course Coordinator is responsible for:

a. coordinating the development, preparation, delivery and assessment of a course;
b. creating/updating the course profile before the start of the relevant study period; and
c. keeping the course profile updated as required throughout the semester and seeking the relevant approvals where required.

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Section 4 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(28) The quality of the standardised structure and design of the University's courses is assured through implementation of:

a. the annual Annual Programs, Plans and Courses Quality Assurance process overseen by the Associate Dean (Academic);
b. regular student feedback and student evaluation, such as student satisfaction surveys; and
c. course approval processes overseen by Executive Deans for their respective faculties.

(29) The Academic Board, through CAPP, is responsible for monitoring university-wide compliance with, and review of this Policy for its effectiveness and ongoing relevance with UQ strategic objectives.

Section 5 - Recording and Reporting

(30) Design features and structural details relating to all courses offered by the University are published on the University website.

(31) Records relating to the structure and design of the University's courses, including approved variations, and of proposals initiated through the Program Approval Procedure, must be lodged with Data Strategy and Governance in accordance with the Information Management Policy.

Section 6 - Appendix

Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Term	Definition
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	A single comprehensive national qualifications framework that represents the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training.
Coordinating Unit	The organisational unit that administers the course, typically a School.
Course	A distinct unit of study within a program, for which a grade is given. Each course is identified by its alphanumeric code, a title and a fixed unit value. Courses are normally completed in one or two semesters.
Curriculum	Curriculum is the intersection of knowledge, skills, and attitudes focused on what is taught, learned and created through the purposeful selection and structuring of content in courses and programs.
Program	A sequence of study leading to the award of a qualification such as an undergraduate degree or diploma, and/or a postgraduate coursework qualification.
Study Period	A semester, trimester or teaching period.
Units	The value of an individual course which contributes to the total unit requirement of a program. 16 units equals 1 EFTSL - the equivalent full-time study load for a year.

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