

COURSE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1 Purpose

This policy outlines the framework for the development and approval of new higher education academic programs including new courses and new subjects to ensure Ikon Institute of Australia (Ikon) continues to deliver high quality, academically sound, compliant and financially viable education.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all higher education accredited courses to be offered by Ikon regardless of delivery mode or location, including any courses or subjects delivered through third-party arrangements.

3 Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Academic Standards Policy and Procedures
- Course Review Policy
- External Referencing Policy
- Governance Guidelines
- Delegations of Authority
- Learning Resources Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy
- Copyright Policy
- Preparation for New Course Launch Guidelines

All policies and associated forms referenced in this document can be found in the staff policy library.

4 Definitions

"Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)" is the framework that identifies learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification, policy requirements, educational and economic objectives, and governing and monitoring arrangements for courses.

"Benchmarking" means the process of comparing practices, processes and performance outcomes for the purpose of identifying comparative strengths and weaknesses in order to develop and improve academic and institutional quality and performance.

"Copyright" is defined in the *Copyright Act 1968* and includes the legal right of the creator to reproduce, communicate, publish, sell, or distribute content and intellectual property exclusively for a fixed number of years.

"Course" means the sequenced program of subjects that a student enrolls in and for which they receive an award upon graduation.

"Development" means the design and creation of new subjects and/or courses.

"Learning Resources" are the physical and virtual resources that are needed to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of their academic program.

"Learning Support" are the support services offered to students to help them effectively read, understand, write and engage with academic learning, including workshops, seminars and individual sessions.

"Review" means the formal evaluation and assessment of an existing subject and/or course taking into consideration feedback from employers and key stakeholders, staff and students, and responsive to contemporary knowledge regarding subject matter, pedagogies and assessment strategies.

"Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)" is the Australian national regulator for higher education. TEQSA's primary aim is to ensure that students receive high quality education at any Australian higher education provider.

POLICY

5 Principles

- 5.1 New courses are developed having regard for strategic priorities, resources and facilities, and the overall capacity to deliver a high-quality and sustainable academic program.
- 5.2 New course development will be guided by an Academic Product Development Plan, approved by the Board of Directors.
- 5.3 Subsequent course and subject development are the responsibility of the Dean. However, new ideas for program innovation and development are encouraged from all Ikon stakeholders.
- 5.4 Where a concept is in line with the Academic Product Development Plan, an Initial Business Case shall be prepared for approval by the Board of Directors that includes the following documentation:
 - Rationale;
 - Market research related to the proposed field of study, e.g., labour market trends, opportunities, competition;
 - Basic course details;
 - Financials;
 - Applicable industry specific standards and accreditation requirements;
 - Resourcing implications including facilities, staff and specialist resources;
 - Timelines for development, accreditation and implementation;
 - Evidence of preliminary consultations with key stakeholders;
 - Key risks and mitigation strategies.
- 5.5 Once a Business Case is approved, courses and subjects are designed, developed and delivered within a framework comprising clearly identified educational aims and learning outcomes, a structured curriculum program and an appropriate assessment strategy (HESF 1.4.1-1.4.7, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.4.1). These elements provide an educational framework which:
 - forms the basis for teaching and assessment activities,
 - relates to the mission and goals of the Ikon Institute of Australia,
 - is oriented towards the development of students as independent, lifelong learners,
 - demonstrably constitutes a clear progression towards expertise in a discipline or field,
 - makes explicit the generic and discipline-specific capabilities students will gain,
 - promotes critical reflection and encourages engagement in intellectual enquiry.
- 5.6 Educational aims are expressed as the broad educational intentions of the course or subject and the progressive acquisition of knowledge and skills, and their application.

5.7 Learning outcomes are specified as the expected achievements that can be demonstrated by students in the areas of knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes as a result of their successful completion of a course or subject. Course-level learning outcomes must inform the development of subject-level learning outcomes, which in turn must guide the design of assessment to ensure the valid and appropriate measurement of student achievement of those outcomes.

5.8 All accredited courses shall comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework.

5.9 The Academic Board shall consider the academic quality of course accreditation submissions and make recommendations to the Board of Directors, taking into consideration the following criteria:

- compliance with the requirements of the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)*, the *Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021* and accreditation standards of any professional bodies,
- specific and clearly identified general and discipline-related learning outcomes,
- academic quality and alignment of the course with appropriate academic standards, having regard for the qualification level, expected learning outcomes and methods of assessment,
- pathways to employment and further study,
- appropriateness of the proposed teaching and learning environment,
- availability and accessibility of proposed teaching and learning and information resources, including suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff.

5.10 When naming courses and subjects, the following principles should apply:

- Course titles should include both the AQF level and a descriptor that is direct and meaningful to the course and reflective of the discipline area and accepted standards e.g. Bachelor of Arts Therapy. The nomenclature should be easily recognisable by prospective students, employers and stakeholders, and ensure no possibility of misinterpretation.
- Undergraduate Certificates and Graduate Certificates will include "in", e.g. Graduate Certificate in Counselling. All other course types will include "of", e.g. Graduate Diploma of Counselling.
- The AQF level should be referred to in the singular, e.g. Master not Masters.
- Brackets can only be used to describe the type of course, e.g. (Qualifying), (Extended), or information to distinguish the discipline e.g. (Early Years) and can only be used when they apply to the course in its entirety and not for majors or specialisations.
- Specialisations or majors will not form part of the award title or be recognised on the testamur or Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS), but will be shown on the transcript, e.g. Master of Business Administration, specialisation in Human Services Management.
- Subjects require a title and a subject identifier. This identifier should be comprised of a 3-letter subject area prefix and a 3-digit number, e.g. ART102. Existing subjects created pre-2025 that use 4 letters or digits can remain as is, under a 'grandfathering' provision.
- The identifier and title will appear on a student's final academic transcript.

5.11 Course and subject development shall incorporate principles of inclusive curriculum design, accessibility, and equity to support diverse student cohorts and ensure compliance with institutional Inclusion, Diversity and Equity commitments and relevant regulatory standards.

6 Roles & Responsibilities

Corporate Board

- 6.1 Responsibility for conferring awards rests with the Board of Directors, the corporate governing body.
- 6.2 The Board of Directors approve initial Business Cases, after receiving feedback from the Academic Board on the academic merit of a new course.
- 6.3 The Board of Directors shall consider the Business Case with regard to strategic priorities, resources and facilities and provide approval to seek accreditation where Ikon's overall capacity to deliver a high quality and sustainable academic program is evident.
- 6.4 The Board of Directors is responsible for providing final approval for course accreditation submissions.

Academic Board (HESF 5.3.1-5.3.3, 6.2.1, 6.3.2)

- 6.5 Responsibility for academic quality rests with the Academic Board, the academic governing body of Ikon.
- 6.6 The Academic Board receives reports on the status of any new course under development from the Dean.
- 6.7 The Academic Board undertakes a review of each new course (or subject) in terms of design, delivery, resources and assessment strategy including learning outcomes, content and delivery, teaching and learning resources, staffing qualifications and experience, and facilities.
- 6.8 Academic Board shall give feedback on all initial Business Cases to the Board of Directors to seek approval to proceed with a detailed program of course development and the process of accreditation with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

Course Advisory Committee

- 6.9 The Course Advisory Committee is a delegated committee of the Academic Board convened to be representative of industry, sector, and discipline expertise as part of the course development and course review processes, according to the terms of reference stated in the Governance Guidelines.
- 6.10 The Course Advisory Committees provides both external and internal expertise to monitor and assure academic currency, relevancy and quality and ensure alignment with regulatory standards, best practice and the directions of industry and professional bodies.
- 6.11 The Dean is responsible for presenting member nominations to the Academic Board for endorsement.

Senior Academic Leaders

- 6.12 The Dean, along with senior discipline leaders, are responsible for ensuring currency and relevancy of the academic programs at Ikon. Ikon will ensure that, ahead of all course development, there is sufficient discipline expertise in order to develop sound academic programs.
- 6.13 New course development is the responsibility of the Dean however new ideas for program innovation and development are encouraged from all stakeholders. The Dean and respective Heads of School may then present new course ideas to the CEO for consideration where they are in line with strategic objectives.

Working Party

- 6.14 The Associate Dean (Academic Programs) shall convene a Working Party consisting of the relevant discipline experts, accreditation & development staff members, and other appropriate members of the academic and operational staff.
- 6.15 The Working Party is responsible for curriculum development and preparation of the application for accreditation. A Project Manager shall be appointed from the Accreditation & Development Group to lead the Working Party.

Teaching & Learning Resources

- 6.16 Ikon is committed to the regular and systematic review and development of teaching and learning and information resources. To this end, Ikon commits a dedicated budget for the procurement of on-campus and online materials including digital library and academic database subscriptions.
- 6.17 As part of the course development process, the Academic Board shall consider the availability of teaching and learning resources to ensure they are current, relevant and sufficient to support the achievement of the proposed learning outcomes and shall be reviewed again as part of the preparations for the commencement of delivery.

All proposed subjects shall have a subject outline for consideration by external experts and the Academic Board as part of the course development process.

PROCEDURE

7 New Courses of Study

Planning

- 7.1 The Head of Strategic Initiatives, in consultation with senior academic leaders, shall prepare an initial Business Case providing justification for course development and the investment in infrastructure such as staffing, facilities, teaching and learning resources, and any specialist resources to support delivery of the proposed course. An outline of information required as part of the Business Case is provided in Schedule A.
- 7.2 The Head of Strategic Initiatives and Dean shall seek endorsement from the CEO for the initial Business Case. Where it aligns with strategic objectives, the Dean is given approval to present the proposal to the Academic Board for feedback.
- 7.3 The Academic Board Chair shall present an endorsed initial Business Case to the Board of Directors for approval to seek accreditation.
- 7.4 On approval from the Board of Directors, the Quality Assurance Manager shall write to the TEQSA Case Manager advising Ikon's intention to accredit and seek confirmation of any evidence in addition to the core requirements as outlined in [TEQSA Application Guide for Accreditation \(and Re-Accreditation\)](#) (HESF 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 7.3.1, 7.3.2).

Course Design

- 7.5 The Working Party shall manage the course development process, including curriculum development, the preparation of curriculum documentation and the preparation of the application for accreditation. Curriculum design must demonstrate engagement with current scholarship.

- 7.6 Following approval to proceed, the Associate Dean (Academic Programs) shall establish a Course Advisory Committee consisting of internal and external discipline, sector and industry experts to consider the curriculum program, including course structure, expected learning outcomes, methods of assessment and delivery arrangements.
- 7.7 The Working Party shall develop the expected general and discipline related course learning outcomes, the assessment strategy to measure the achievement of these learning outcomes, calculate indicative student workload expectations, benchmark the course program against appropriate national and international comparators at a similar AQF level, discipline focus, and map the subject learning outcomes and assessments to ensure alignment with the course outcomes, the AQF level and all relevant academic standards including those of any related professional associations (HESF 1.4.1-1.4.7, 3.1.1-3.1.3, 3.2.3).
- 7.8 The Dean shall provide regular updates to the Academic Board, and present course documentation (including the Course Proposal drafts providing the information outlined at Schedule B as per TEQSA accreditation requirements) for review, and relevant actions shall be recorded in the *Change & Quality Register*.
- 7.9 The Working Party is responsible for the consideration of all feedback during the course development process, including that from the course external reviewer(s), Course Advisory Committee, Academic Board, professional bodies, TEQSA, and any other experts who may have provided external validation of the proposed course of study.

External Input and Review

- 7.10 The Working Party engages a minimum of one (1) external, independent reviewer to provide constructive feedback on the new course proposal. External reviewers must possess appropriate higher education credentials and/or significant professional expertise relevant to the discipline, and are appointed following a review of their qualifications and experience. The Institution ensures that all external reviewers meet [TEQSA's expectations for independent experts](#) and are free from conflicts of interest.
- 7.11 Following receipt of the reviewers' feedback, the Working Party and/or Project Manager incorporates revisions as appropriate. The consolidated recommendations and updated course documentation are then submitted to the Course Advisory Committee (CAC) for further consideration and endorsement.
- 7.12 The Course Advisory Committee shall consider and report on (HESF 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.4.1):
- overall quality of the course and its ongoing relevance, value, viability, and sustainability
 - academic content and structure of the course
 - teaching, learning and assessment strategies and resources
 - feedback from employers and professionals
 - industry demand and future trends
 - human, physical, IT resources, health and safety issues
 - comparability of standards and other relevant factors that may affect the teaching and learning environment where a course is delivered in a flexible mode of delivery
 - any external course reviews (as relevant)
- 7.13 All meeting discussions and feedback shall be recorded in formal minutes.
- 7.14 The Working Party is responsible for the consideration of feedback from the Course Advisory Committee.

Accreditation Application

- 7.15 The Working Party shall manage the course accreditation process including the preparation of the accreditation application and supporting evidentiary documentation.
- 7.16 New course accreditation applications shall be prepared in accordance with the [Application guide for course accreditation \(registered providers\)](#) and submitted via the online TEQSA Portal.

Course & Application Approval

- 7.17 The Academic Board shall review the course curriculum as endorsed by the Course Advisory Committee and developed by the Working Party.
- 7.18 Satisfied the course meets the relevant HESF standards for academic quality, the Academic Board shall endorse the Application for Accreditation to Board of Directors for approval to submit to TEQSA.
- 7.19 On approval from the Board of Directors, the Quality Assurance Team shall finalise the application by signing the required declarations before submitting the application to TEQSA via the TEQSA Portal.
- 7.20 To ensure robust academic governance and transparent decision-making within the course development, all proposed course content must be evaluated and progressed in accordance with the Institution's *Delegations of Authority*.

Application Assessment

- 7.21 The Dean is responsible for any Requests for Information (RFI) received during the assessment process. In conjunction with the Associate Dean (Academic Programs) and any other relevant stakeholders, the Dean shall coordinate the development, review and submission of all responses on behalf of lkon. Review shall be undertaken by the Academic Board (or nominated representatives depending on the nature of the questions).

Notice of Decision

- 7.22 On receipt of the Statement of Findings and Notice of Decision confirming or rejecting the accreditation application, the CEO shall circulate all notification documentation to key stakeholders.

Preparation for Delivery

- 7.23 According to the Preparation for New Course Launch Guidelines, the Dean shall have overall responsibility for the preparations for the commencement of delivery of all new courses and subjects, which includes, but is not limited to:
- appoint new Heads and Course Leaders,
 - brief the marketing and student recruitment teams for market launch,
 - brief the Registrar and Enrolment Team in order to organise the student and learning management systems,
 - engage suitably qualified and experienced academic teaching staff,
 - prepare detailed subject outlines and develop teaching and learning materials,

- procure teaching and learning resources, library collections, equipment, etc.,
- create timetable/s for the first intake,
- add course to the course review schedule for monitoring and evaluation in accordance with the Course Review Policy.

7.24 The CEO and Quality Assurance Team are responsible for the preparation and submission of any application through the TEQSA Portal to add to the CRICOS scope.

8 New Subjects

8.1 New subjects for existing accredited courses or new courses shall be reviewed, scrutinised and approved by the Academic Board before any student may enrol in the new subject.

8.2 Approval for the new subject shall have the endorsement of the Academic Board such that the new subject conforms to the Australian Qualifications Framework and aligns with the level of study and course outcomes (HESF 1.4.1-1.4.6, 3.2.3).

8.3 The Dean shall advise the Academic Board that there are sufficient resources and suitably qualified and experienced staff to support the introduction of the new subject.

8.4 The process for the development of new subjects for an accredited program is outlined below:

- a) Senior academic leaders submit a proposal for the new subject to the Dean,
- b) Dean endorses the new subject,
- c) Senior academic leaders develop the new subject and prepare the subject outline (in line with the Course Design process outlined above),
- d) Academic Board reviews and approves the new subject,
- e) The new subject is entered into the student management system as an active subject under the supervision of the Registrar,
- f) the new subject is entered into the learning management system as an active subject under the supervision of the senior academic leader.

9 Publication

9.1 This policy shall be published in the staff policy library.

Policy Information & History

Policy Category	Academic, Quality
Policy ID	QU011A
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of Approval	04 March 2026
Endorsed by	Dean
Date of Endorsement	11 February 2026
Previous Versions	01 October 2025, 1 February 2022, 12 August 2019, 29 June 2015, 8 October 2014, 1 July 2011
Next Review Date	September 2028

Government Legislation [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#)
[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)
[National Code 2018](#)
[Australian Qualifications Framework](#)

Responsible Officer Dean

Sources:

In developing this policy, the following documents were considered:

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, [*Guidance Note: Staffing, Learning Resources and Educational Support*](#), Version 1.3, 22 November 2017

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, [*Application Guide for Accreditation \(and Re-Accreditation\)*](#)

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, [*Guidance Note: Course Approval, Design and Delivery*](#)

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, [*Guidance Note: Work Integrated Learning*](#), Version 1.2, 11 October 2017

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, [*Guidance Note: External Referencing \(including Benchmarking\)*](#), Version 2.5, 16 April 2019

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, [*Guidance Note: Course Design \(including Learning Outcomes and Assessment\)*](#), Version 1.3, 11 October 2017

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, [*Guidance Changes in a Course of Study that may lead to Accreditation as a New Course*](#), Version 1.0, 6 March 2017

HLC Consulting, Ikon Governance Review Report 2021-Final, 1 December 2021

Benchmarking:

External referencing activities were conducted against comparable providers and best practice using publicly available information, including from: University of Queensland, Southern Cross University, Charles Sturt University, Alphacrucis College, Kaplan Business School, and La Trobe University.

Schedule A

The Business Case

The Business Case is a brief proposal seeking endorsement within Ikon's strategic goals to proceed to a more detailed development of curriculum documentation. As a minimal requirement, it should address the following criteria:

- Course title
- AQF level and descriptor
- Rationale
- Relationship to Ikon's strategic objectives, including a reference to those graduate attributes and/or key generic skills which the program is expected to develop in its students
- Evidence of market demand, including competitor scan
- Anticipated job outcomes for graduates
- Course duration
- Proposed delivery location(s)
- Requirements for professional accreditation (if applicable)
- Resource implications over and above standard requirements
- Delivery mode
- Project partners and third parties (if applicable)
- Financial modelling
- Year of proposed introduction
- Identified consultation

Schedule B

Course Proposal

Course proposals (for new courses or renewal of accreditation for current courses) (HESF 1.4.1-1.4.7, 3.2.3, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.3.2, 5.3.3) are required to demonstrate how the course engages with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study, and should include:

- Course title and abbreviation
- AQF level and descriptor
- Course duration
- Rationale (including expected graduate employment opportunities)
- Qualifications to be awarded on completion
- Admissions criteria
- Course learning outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative student workload, and
- National/international comparators (consistent with Standards 1.4.1-3 and 1.4.5-7 (if applicable))
- Rationale for relationship between learning outcomes, AQF level specifications, unit learning outcomes and unit assessment and summary table mapping this alignment
- Learning outcomes should include both discipline-related and generic outcomes
- Structure, duration and modes of delivery
- List of units of study (indicating whether compulsory or elective)
- Compulsory requirements for completion
- Exit pathways, articulation arrangements, pathways to further learning
- Research content (for Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral qualifications, as applicable)
- Planned staffing complement, showing qualifications and experience of leaders and for all teaching positions as required by Standard 3.2.3, and resumes for any staff already engaged
- Positions descriptions for positions not yet filled
- Evidence of equivalent academic or professional experience relevant to policy criteria, and
- Arrangements for oversight of staff who do not fully meet Standard 3.2.3

* as listed in Appendix B of the [TEQSA Application Guide for Accreditation](#)