COURSE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

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

2. Scope

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

3. Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:
- Course Development Process Checklist
- Learning Resources Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy
- Copyright Policy
- Delegations Policy

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 enrols 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 Course Proposal shall be prepared for approval by the Board of Directors that includes the following documentation:

- Business case.
- Rationale.
- Evidence of preliminary consultations with key stakeholders.
- Suggested program structure outcomes.
- Resourcing implications including facilities, staff and specialist resources.
- Timelines for development, accreditation and implementation.

5.5   Once a Course Proposal 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 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 orientated 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 demonstrated by students in the areas of knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes as a result of their successful completion of a course or subject.

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 recommendation to the Board of Directors taking having consideration for the following criteria:

- compliance with the requirements of the *Australian Qualifications Framework*, the *Higher Education Standards Framework 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 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.

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 approved Initial Course Proposals, 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 each new course under development from the Accreditation & Development Manager, where new courses are under development.

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 Course Proposals 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 and Heads of School are responsible for the currency and relevancy of the academic programs at Ikon. Heads of School are required to report to the Dean on all matters related to academic quality and the maintenance of teaching and learning resources, including proposals for new course development.

6.13 Teaching staff may also provide recommendations for new course or subject development to their Head of School and/or Dean. The Dean and respective Heads of School may present new course ideas to the CEO for consideration where they are in line with strategic objectives.

6.14 New course development is the responsibility of the Dean however new ideas for program innovation and development are encouraged from all stakeholders.

Working Party

6.15 The Dean shall convene a Working Party consisting of the relevant Head/s of School, Accreditation & Development Manager, and appropriate members of the academic and operational staff.

6.16 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

6.17 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 a budget for the procurement of on-campus and online materials including electronic books and external library subscriptions.

6.18 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.

6.19 All proposed subjects shall have a subject outline for consideration by external experts and the Academic Board as part of the course development process. The Project Manager can provide a copy of the accreditation application template for subject outlines (summarised outline).

6.20 All new accredited courses shall have detailed subject outlines available via the learning management system at the time the course is open for student enrolment. The detailed subject outlines is prepared using the institutional template based on the summarised outline submitted as part of the application for accreditation.

PROCEDURE

8. New Courses of Study

Planning

8.1 The Dean, in conjunction with the Accreditation & Development Manager, shall prepare an Initial Course Proposal providing justification for course development and the investment in infrastructure such as faculty and staff, 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 at Schedule B.

8.2 The Dean and Accreditation & Development Manager shall seek endorsement from the CEO for the Initial Course Proposal. Where the it aligns with strategic objectives, the Dean is given approval to present the proposal to the Academic Board for feedback.

8.3 The Academic Board Chair shall present an endorsed Initial Course Proposal to the Board of Directors for approval to seek accreditation.

8.4 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

8.5 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.

8.6 Following approval to proceed, the Dean shall establish a Course Advisory Committee consisting of internal and external discipline and higher education experts to consider the curriculum program including course structure, expected learning outcomes, methods of assessment and delivery arrangements.

8.7 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 national and international comparators, 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).

8.8 The Accreditation & Development Manager shall provide regular updates to the Course Advisory Committee and Academic Board, and present course documentation (including the Course Proposal template providing the information outlined at Schedule C as per TEQSA accreditation requirements) for review and actions shall be recorded in the *Change & Quality Register*).

8.9 The Working Party is responsible for the consideration of all feedback during the course development process including that from the 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

8.10 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, students and graduates 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)

8.11 All meeting discussions and feedback shall be recorded in formal minutes.

8.12 The Working Party is responsible for the consideration of feedback from the Course Advisory Committee.

Accreditation Application

8.13 The Working Party shall manage the course accreditation process including the preparation of the accreditation application and supporting evidentiary documentation.

8.14 New course accreditation applications shall be prepared in accordance with the TEQSA Application Guide for Accreditation (and Re-Accreditation) and submitted via the online TEQSA Portal.

8.15 All evidentiary requirements for the proposed course/s of study shall be listed in the Confirmed Evidence Table provided by TEQSA in response to Ikon's 'Notice of Intention to Accredit' (HESF 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 6.3.2).

Course & Application Approval

8.16 The Academic Board shall review the course curriculum as endorsed by the Course Advisory Committee and developed by the Working Party.

8.17 The Academic Board shall provide feedback for consideration of both the Course Advisory Committee and Working Party.

8.18 Satisfied the course meets the standards for academic quality, the Academic Board shall approve the Application for Accreditation for submission.

8.19 On approval from the Dean, shall finalise the application by signing the required declarations before submitting the application to TEQSA via the TEQSA Portal.

Application Assessment

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

Notice of Decision

8.21 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

8.22 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 Head of Faculty (if required) or Program Leader,

- brief the marketing and recruiting 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,

8.23 The CEO and the Dean are responsible for the preparation and submission of the any application through the TEQSA Portal to add to the CRICOS scope.

9   New Subjects

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

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

9.3   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.

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

   a)   Head of School submits a proposal for the new subject to the Dean,

   b)   Dean endorses the new subject,

   c)   Head of School develops the new subject and prepares the subject outline (in line with the Course Design process outlined above),

   d)   Academic Board reviews and approves the new subject,

   e)   new subject is entered into the student management system as an active subject under the supervision of the Registrar,

   f)   new subject is entered into the learning management system as an active subject under the supervision of the Head of School,

   g)   Academic Board receives notification from the Dean that the new subject is available for teaching to students.

10   Publication

10.1 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	01 October 2025
Endorsed by	Dean
Date of Endorsement	September 2025
Previous Versions	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.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT FLOWCHART

Planning

New course concept presented to CEO to confirm alignment with strategic direction and seek endorsement to develop a New Course Proposal to present to the Academic Board

New Course Proposal presented for the endorsement of the Academic Board

Academic Board endorsement presented to the Board of Directors for approval to seek accreditation

Board of Directors approves course development and an Application for Accreditation with TEQSA

Course Design & Accreditation Application

Formation of Working Party and Course Advisory Committee

Quality Assurance Manager writes to TEQSA Case manager advising the intention to accredit and requesting confirmation of evidentiary requirements

Working Party prepares course documentation and application evidence (broad content, chart of course progression, and rationale, proceeding to the development of subject outlines

Course documentation including subject outlines considered by Course Advisory Committee and Academic Board for review and scrutiny. The Working Party considers and actions any feedback. This cycle of development, review and action continues until the course and accreditation documentation reaches the final draft stage.

Approval

Final course documentation considered by Course Advisory Committee and Academic Board.

Final documentation sent for external validation (where applicable)

Academic Board endorses the course and presents the application to the Board of Directors for approval for submission.

Final draft Application for Accreditation presented to the Board of Directors for approval to submit. Where immaterial amendments have been requested, the Dean (or the Chair's nominee) may be authorised to provide the Final Approval to Submit having reviewed the requested amendments have been actioned by the Working Party.

Submission of the Application for Accreditation to TEQSA via the online TEQSA Portal.

Accreditation Assessment

Dean coordinates development, review and submission of all RFI responses on behalf of Ikon. Review shall be conducted by the Academic Board (or nominated representatives depending on the nature of the questions)

Notice of Decision

On receipt of TEQSA's decision confirming or rejecting the application for accreditation, the CEO and the Dean shall circulate the notification to key stakeholders.

Preparation for Delivery

On confirmation of accreditation, the Dean commences a program of implementation in preparation for the commencement of delivery

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 and abbreviation
- AQF level and descriptor
- Course duration
- Year of proposed introduction
- Proposed delivery location(s)
- Rationale and objectives
- 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
- Requirements for professional accreditation (if applicable)
- Pathways for articulation and credit transfer
- List of suggested subjects/units of study, where known
- Identified consultation requirements including any nominations for membership of the Course Advisory Committee and Working Party
- Resource implications over and above standard requirements
- Delivery responsibilities and mode for transnational delivery
- Project partners and third parties (if applicable)
- Education Plan (proposed pathways, target markets, proposed teaching facilities, proposed sources of teaching staff, projected enrolments)
- Proposed course delivery methodology

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 course coordinator 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