

# COURSE REVIEW POLICY

## 1. Purpose

Course reviews are an essential part of Ikon Institute of Australia (Ikon's) quality assurance processes.

This policy governs the development and approval for continuous improvement of courses and subjects to ensure that they are academically sound and that they comply with requirements for qualifications prescribed by the Australian Qualifications Framework, other accrediting bodies, and industry standards. It provides information on process and guidelines for development and approval of new academic courses.

This policy outlines the procedures for the periodic review and improvement of all courses. It establishes the frequency of course reviews and the types of data that shall be used in each review for ongoing improvement of its courses.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff involved in course review and improvement processes.

## 3. Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Ikon policies:

- Course Review Schedule
- Course Development Policy
- Course Discontinuance Policy
- Glossary of Terms
- Governance Guidelines
- Delegations of Authority Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy
- Delegations of Authority Schedules
- Benchmarking Policy

This policy and related documents can be accessed via the student and staff policy libraries.

## 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.

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

**"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)"** means Australia's regulatory and quality agency 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 The continual review and improvement of courses is integral to ensuring the consistent delivery of a high-quality teaching and learning experience. It allows courses to integrate up-to-date scholarship and teaching practices and address any problems that may arise during the period of course delivery.
- 5.2 Course review covers entire academic courses in the context of overall structure and management, subjects, major and minor sequences, projects, and work experience that make up the course as well as learning outcomes.
- 5.3 Course review shall occur in accordance with the strategic goals and direction of Ikon.
- 5.4 The course review framework shall consist of four main focuses:
  - Ongoing interim monitoring of teaching and learning quality
  - Benchmarking and external referencing
  - An annual internal review of each course
  - Major external course reviews
- 5.5 Evaluation and analysis shall be based on qualitative and quantitative quality measures as determined by the Academic Board. This includes data on enrolment, student profile (full-time, part-time, commencing, continuing students), progress rates, grade distributions, withdrawals, deferrals and completions, and qualitative performance measures on the student course experience (e.g. generic skills, good teaching, overall satisfaction, learning community, curriculum, assessment, workload).
- 5.6 All subjects shall be evaluated using student feedback on teaching and learning that is collected each time a subject is taught.
- 5.7 A major course review shall also include evidence of benchmarking with comparator courses and feedback from and engagement with graduates, employers, industry, professional associations, and other stakeholders.
- 5.8 The Academic Board shall review the performance of Ikon's courses based on an agreed set of quality and viability indicators annually (the Annual Course Review). The Dean shall develop and recommend to the Academic Board standard evaluation instruments for all courses and subjects (Course and Subject Review Templates).
- 5.9 The Academic Board shall review data on teaching performance and recommend appropriate actions for improvement to the Board of Directors.
- 5.10 The Academic Board shall recommend and monitor the implementation of a schedule of major reviews for all courses such that each course has undergone an internal review every 12 months, and major external scrutiny commenced no more than four years after TEQSA re-accreditation.
- 5.11 Where the performance of a course or subject is consistently below benchmarks, the Academic Board may recommend bringing forward the scheduled course review.

5.12 Where a course is professionally accredited, Ikon will also abide by the course review requirements of the accrediting body.

5.13 The Academic Board shall report at least annually to the Board of Directors on the performance of courses and subjects and shall recommend actions for improvement of teaching and learning.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **6. Ongoing Interim monitoring of teaching and learning quality and Benchmarking**

6.1 Ongoing interim monitoring which includes evidence-based changes to course and subject delivery, such as evaluation and analysis of qualitative and quantitative quality measures and outcomes of scholarly activities, should be conducted as needed as continual improvement activities, with all changes implemented according to the Delegation of Authority Schedules.

6.2 Regular benchmarking shall be undertaken according to the principles and processes found the Benchmarking Policy.

6.3 Course and subject benchmarking or external referencing activities shall not only include comparator data, but also recommendations for the development and improvement of courses.

### **7. Course Advisory Committee**

7.1 The Course Advisory Committee shall be the primary vehicle through which annual and external course reviews are managed, as this provides a suitable level of impartiality/objectivity, expertise in the relevant fields, and experience in academic and/or quality assurance leadership.

7.2 The Course Advisory Committee shall convene annually to consider and provide feedback on the Annual Course Review, namely:

- the overall quality of the course and its ongoing relevance, value, viability, and sustainability
- the academic content and structure of the course
- teaching, learning and assessment
- feedback from students and graduates
- student demand, progress rates and attrition rates
- human, physical, IT resources, health, and safety issues
- benchmarking to other providers and comparable courses
- the 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

7.3 The Course Advisory Committee shall also convene when required to receive completed external course review reports and recommendations, and subsequent implementation plans.

### **8. Course Review Process**

8.1 Course reviews shall include all applicable campuses, teaching locations, modes, and all specialisations within the course.

8.2 The Dean shall submit a Course Review Schedule to the Academic Board by 31 March of each year indicating when reviews should occur, the key staff members responsible for completing actions and the appropriate reporting channels.

### **9. Annual Review**

- 9.1 Schools are responsible for running an annual process to review subjects and courses, to ensure overall quality is maintained and create an environment of continual improvement.
- 9.2 For each subject, the annual review will ensure compliance with HESF Standard 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 5.3.3, namely:
  - Knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study
  - Consistency of the content with the unit learning outcomes
  - Current knowledge, underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and emerging concepts in the discipline informed by recent scholarship
  - Activities arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of the unit learning outcomes
- 9.3 Each course will be reviewed to ensure progressive and coherent achievement of the learning outcomes.
- 9.4 While benchmarking, or external referencing, can occur at any time at a subject or course level, is a required step in the annual course review process. The minimum benchmarking requirements that must be reported are: course content, structure and learning outcomes; teaching, learning and assessment methods and grading of student achievement for selected core units within the course. Benchmarking should also consider comparison against student progression, retention, success, and completion rates.
- 9.5 A report will be tabled at the Course Advisory Committee for feedback and suggestions for improvement
- 9.6 The implementation of approved proposed changes to accredited courses and subjects are to be managed by the respective Head of School in accordance with the approved Ikon process (refer to 'Schedule 3 - Academic Delegations' of GO003B Delegations of Authority Schedules).

## **10. External Course Review**

- 10.1 At least one external reviewer must be appointed to undertake the comprehensive review of a course.
- 10.2 The external course review shall address the application of learning outcomes and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) as well as the design and content of each course of study, the methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes, and also takes account of emerging developments in pedagogy and the discipline area, modes of delivery, the changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study.
- 10.3 The Dean, in conjunction with the Head of School, shall determine the scope of the review and engage the reviewer.
- 10.4 Once complete, an External Course Review report shall be provided to the Course Advisory Committee and Academic Board for endorsement.
- 10.5 The Head of School shall prepare an implementation plan addressing each recommendation and submit to the Course Advisory Committee for endorsement.
- 10.6 The Dean shall report biannually to the Academic Board on the status of all course implementation plans.

## **11. Publication**

- 11.1 This policy shall be published in the student and staff policy libraries.

### Policy Information & History

Policy Category	Academic, Quality Assurance
Policy ID	QU012A
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of Approval	26/02/2025
Previous Versions	7 September 2022, 12 April 2022, 29 June 2015, 8 October 2014, 1 July 2011
Next Review Date	February 2028
Government Legislation	<a href="#">Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</a> <a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</a> <a href="#">National Code 2018</a> <a href="#">Australian Qualifications Framework</a> <a href="#">Disability Standards for Education 2005</a>
Responsible Officer	Dean
Sources:	<p>In developing this policy, the following documents were considered:</p> <p>TEQSA Guidance Note: <a href="#">TEQSA and the Australian Qualifications Framework: Questions and answers, Version 3.1, 27 August 2019</a></p> <p>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, <a href="#">Guidance Note: Staffing, Learning Resources and Educational Support, Version 1.3, 22 November 2017</a></p> <p>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, <a href="#">Application Guide for Accreditation (and Re-Accreditation)</a></p> <p>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, <a href="#">Guidance Note: Course Approval, Design and Delivery</a></p> <p>TEQSA Guidance Note: <a href="#">Work Integrated Learning, Version 1.2, 11 October 2017</a></p> <p>TEQSA Guidance Note: <a href="#">External Referencing (including Benchmarking), Version 2.5, 16 April 2019</a></p> <p>TEQSA Guidance Note: <a href="#">Course Design (including Learning Outcomes and Assessment), Version 1.3, 11 October 2017</a></p> <p>TEQSA Guidance Note: <a href="#">Changes in a Course of Study that may lead to Accreditation as a New Course, Version 1.0, 6 March 2017</a></p> <p>HLC Consulting, Ikon Governance Review Report 2021-Final, 1 December 2021</p>
Benchmarking:	External referencing activities were conducted against comparable providers and best practice using publicly available information including from: Australian Institute of Higher Education, Victoria University, University of Wollongong, Kaplan Business School, Monash University, James Cook University.