

COURSE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Policy Code	OPS04
Policy Lead	Director Learning and Innovation
Approving Authority	Board of Directors
Approval date	21 November 2024
Commencement date	28 November 2024
Next Review Date	December 2026
Version	2024.2
Relevant legislation or external requirements	<p>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESFs: 1.1, 1.3.3, 1.4, 1.5.3, 2.1, 2.2.1, 3, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 6.2.1(i), 6.3.2, 7.1, 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.3.2)</p> <p>Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) Core Plus model for regulatory assessments policy (TEQSA)</p>
Related ASA Documents	<p>Course Design and Development Procedure Benchmarking Policy Benchmarking Procedure Quality Assurance Framework Student Assessment Policy Student Assessment Procedure Academic Integrity Policy Academic Misconduct Procedure Student Admissions Policy Student Admissions Procedure Recognition of Prior Learning Policy Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure Short Courses and Microcredentials Policy and Procedure Work Integrated Learning Policy Work Integrated Learning Procedure</p>

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the design, development, review and approval of courses within the ASA Institute of Higher Education (**ASA**) in order to ensure:

- best practice in curriculum design, delivery of teaching and learning, assessment, and the provision of Work Integrated Learning (**WIL**) activities.
- that the qualifications ASA awards are designed to meet the standards for the AQF level they purport to meet.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all courses developed and delivered at ASA and to all staff, directors, officers, external appointees on any ASA board or committee, volunteers, and contractors.

3. Principles

The core principles of this policy and the related procedure are based on the following:

- Courses are designed to enable students to achieve course learning outcomes and graduate attributes of ASA through contemporary pedagogies and assessment strategies.

- Courses are designed to enrich employment opportunities for graduates.
- Courses are designed to include a range of content including current knowledge and scholarship in the relevant academic discipline, underlying frameworks and emerging concepts.
- Courses are designed to meet and exceed regulatory requirements of the regulatory bodies and standards of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (**HESFs**) and the Australian Qualifications Framework (**AQF**).
- The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (**TEQSA**) apply the Core Plus model to assess course accreditation and re-accreditation applications by registered providers. A provider's compliance with a set of core standards, relating principally to governance, internal quality assurance, student performance and student experience will be the focus of this assessment. The core standards will be: [...]

3. *For new course accreditation for existing providers, TEQSA has selected the core Standards on the basis of that:*

- a. *the provider is established and TEQSA has already undertaken a comprehensive assessment the provider' governance arrangements and internal quality assurance processes; and*
- b. *the focus is on ensuring that the content and learning activities of the new course are consistent with the level of study and expected learning outcomes.*

4. *For renewal of course accreditation, TEQSA has selected the core Standards the basis of:*

- a. *TEQSA has already undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the accredited course against the relevant standard in the HES Framework; and*
- b. *the focus at this stage of the assessment cycle for the course is on ensuring that the provider's monitoring, review and improvement processes have been effective, including the extent and robustness of independent review by a subject matter expert, and the nature of the provider's response to expert findings and recommendations i.e. consideration of the review report and, where appropriate, action taken. [...]*

- Courses must be evaluated using external referencing and external/internal benchmarking, student and staff feedback, data analysis of progression, retention, attrition, and completion rates as well as reflections on best teaching and learning practices.
- Course development is an ASA-wide process with constructive alignment of learning outcomes, assessments, and student learning experiences. ASA governance bodies are required to oversee and quality assure the development of courses, and seek expert academic advice as required.
- Systematic and cyclic approaches to review, delivery and evaluation of courses and units form part of course monitoring, review, and improvement.
- Course development and improvement is a collaborative process and engages a range of internal and external specialist knowledge.
- Courses are designed, where relevant, to include WIL through authentic partnerships within the field or industry.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
academic quality assurance	A framework that provides principles and processes directed to ensure the academic quality aligns with the overall strategic planning and policy of the provider.
assessment (noun)	An item of academic work aligned with defined learning outcomes which enables students to demonstrate academic achievement, proficiency, and capacity.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.
benchmarking	An external referencing activity that typically consists of focused improvement through relationships with a benchmarking partner or partners, but can also include comparing course design against publicly-available information and market intelligence. Benchmarking may vary depending on context. For example, in the context of course accreditation, benchmarking involves comparing performance outcomes and/or processes of similar courses of study delivered by other providers. 'Internal benchmarking' against other relevant courses offered by the provider may also be undertaken.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO) / Principal	The Chief Executive Officer is the highest organisational role for ASA and performs the role of Principal as well as their other duties.
corequisite	A corequisite is a unit or other requirement that a student must satisfactorily complete simultaneously during the same study period in a given course.
course design	The content, duration, and sequencing of the elements (units) of a course of study.
development	The design and creation of new courses and units.
graduate attributes	Are generic learning outcomes that refer to transferable, non-discipline specific skills that a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts.
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESFs)	The Higher Education Standards Framework is the foundation for regulating higher education providers and courses by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).
learning outcomes	What students are expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate on completion of a unit or course.
Microcredentials	Is a discrete learning package with appropriately articulated learning outcomes and constructively aligned learning and teaching, and assessment strategies
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code)	The National Code is a legislative instrument made under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) and sets nationally consistent standards to support providers to deliver quality education and training to overseas (international) students.
prerequisite	A prerequisite is a unit or other requirement that a student must satisfactorily complete prior to the start of a given unit.
review (academic)	The formal evaluation and assessment of an existing unit/s or course taking into consideration feedback from stakeholders including employers, staff and students, internal committees, and external reviewers, which is informed by cohort analysis, academic data, benchmarking and contemporary knowledge regarding unit/course matter, pedagogies, and assessment strategies.

Term	Definition
short courses	Are programs other than accredited higher education awards or Microcredentials that are undertaken by an individual to improve or support progress towards work, career and/or personal goals.
Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA)	The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is Australia's independent national regulator of the higher education sector.
work integrated learning	Encompasses any arrangement where students undertake learning in a workplace outside of ASA as part of their course of study.

5. Policy Details

ASA is committed to the design, development, and improvement of high-quality courses that enable students to develop and demonstrate attainment of the ASA's Graduate Attributes.

ASA qualifications will only be awarded when students have met all academic requirements which assures that students meet the standards for the AQF level. Each ASA graduate will be ready to commence careers in their field with appropriate knowledge and skills that make them eminently employable.

5.1 Course design and development

ASA will request approval to design and develop courses through submission of a *Business Case* and Feasibility Study as specified in section 4.1 of the *Course Design and Development Procedure* to the Board of Directors.

Once approval is granted, ASA staff will develop the course/s and follow the processes outlined in the *Course Design and Development Procedure*.

Course design and development will be overseen by the Academic Board and its standing committee, the Course Advisory Committee. This will include external expert academic advice and, as relevant, industry and/or professional consultation. A full list of course documents to be presented for scrutiny is listed within section 4.3.1 of the *Course Design and Development Procedure*.

5.2 Course Structure

5.2.1 Course Duration

All award courses must have a course duration that meets the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements.

5.2.2 Mode of Delivery

All award courses must have a course mode of delivery that meets the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, particularly Standard 8.

5.2.3 Credit Points and Workload

All units at ASA must be assigned a fixed unit value and the same proportion of a full-time enrolment, regardless of the course in which students are offered.

To facilitate AQF alignment, the correlation between unit levels and AQF levels (Table 1) enables clear demonstration that unit learning outcomes are the appropriate level and that the relationship between units and course learning outcomes are transparent.

Table provided overleaf.

Table 1 Correspondence between ASA Unit Levels and AQF Levels

ASA Unit Level	AQF Level
100	Diploma
200	Associate Degree
300	Bachelor
400	Graduate Certificate
500	Graduate Diploma
600	Master

5.2.4 Course Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

When developing courses, as a matter of principle, pre-requisite units should be minimised and only introduced when crucial to increase flexibility in course progression. The use of co-requisites may increase the flexibility of course progression.

5.2.5 Assessments

When developing assessments, there is a requirement for early assessment tasks with prompt feedback for introductory units to enable the early detection of students at risk. Refer to the *Student Assessment Policy* and associated procedure for further information on assessment requirements.

5.2.6 Work Integrated Learning

When developing courses which include a Work Integrated Learning unit, there are requirements that must be considered when designing this unit. Refer to the *Work Integrated Learning Policy* and associated procedure and *Guidance Manual* for further information.

5.2.7 Short Courses and Microcredentials

When developing courses or short courses, consideration should be given to:

- i. how these Microcredentials or short courses meet ASA's quality assurance framework,
- ii. how these Microcredentials or short courses meet the Higher Education and Qualifications Standards,
- iii. the relevance to learners, to the labour market and to ASA.

Refer to the *Short Courses and Microcredentials Policy and Procedure* for further information on short courses and Microcredentials.

5.3 Course Monitoring, Review, and Improvement

ASA is committed to the continuous improvement and updating of each unit to improve the academic quality of courses and the student learning experience.

ASA values feedback in its continuous improvement processes and seeks feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

ASA will review the performance of the courses and units on an ongoing and annual basis. This review will be based on the data collected from the course and teacher evaluation surveys as approved by the Academic Board and other evaluative mechanisms as recommended by the Learning and Teaching Committee.

Comprehensive course reviews will be conducted within two to five (2-5) years of initial accreditation, and thereafter every five (5) years. For each course of study the review should include:

- the course design, including:
 - structure, duration, and modes of delivery
 - the units of study that comprise the course
 - entry requirements, pathways, and credit
 - exist pathways and further learning
 - compulsory requirements for completion
 - the qualification and Field of Education
- the expected learning outcomes,
- the quality of the content and learning activities,
- the methods for assessment of those outcomes,
- the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes and whether the course fosters progressive and coherent achievement of learning outcomes
- emerging developments in the field of education,
- professional accreditation requirements, if applicable,
- the changing needs of students,
- identified risks to the quality of the course of study, and
- include external referencing or other benchmarking activities.

5.3.1 Benchmarking

During the process of designing and developing an existing or new course, benchmarking activities will be carried out and documented in accordance with the *Benchmarking Policy* and associated procedure.

6. Relevant HESFs

This Policy and the associated Procedure comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021. The following are relevant excerpts and specify that:

Standard 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment

1. The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded and informed by national and international comparators.
2. The specified learning outcomes for each course of study encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, including:
 - a. specific knowledge and skills and their application that characterise the field(s) of education or disciplines involved,
 - b. generic skills and their application in the context of the field(s) of education or disciplines involved,
 - c. knowledge and skills required for employment and further study related to the course of study, including those required to be eligible to seek registration to practise where applicable, and
 - d. skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning.
3. Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.
4. On completion of a course of study, students have demonstrated the learning outcomes

specified for the course of study, whether assessed at unit level, course level, or in combination. [...]

Standard 3.1 Course Design

1. The design for each course of study is specified and the specification includes:
 - a. the qualification(s) to be awarded on completion
 - b. structure, duration and modes of delivery
 - c. the units of study (or equivalent) that comprise the course of study
 - d. entry requirements and pathways
 - e. expected learning outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative student workload
 - f. compulsory requirements for completion
 - g. exit pathways, articulation arrangements, pathways to further learning, and
 - h. for a course of study leading to a Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral qualification, includes the proportion and nature of research or research-related study in the course.
2. The content and learning activities of each course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:
 - a. current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines
 - b. study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course, and
 - c. emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice.
3. Teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.
4. Each course of study is designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery.
5. Where professional accreditation of a course of study is required for graduates to be eligible to practise, the course of study is accredited and continues to be accredited by the relevant professional body.

Standard 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation

1. There are processes for internal approval of the delivery of a course of study, or, where a provider has authority to self-accredit, internal accreditation, of all courses of study leading to a higher education qualification.
2. Course approval and self-accreditation processes are overseen by peak institutional academic governance processes, and they are applied consistently to all courses of study, before the courses are first offered and during re-approval or re-accreditation of the courses.
3. A course of study is approved or accredited, or re-approved or re-accredited, only when:
 - a. the course of study meets, and continues to meet, the applicable Standards of the *Higher Education Standards Framework*,
 - b. the decision to (re-)approve or (re-)accredit a course of study is informed by overarching academic scrutiny of the course of study that is competent to assess the design, delivery, and assessment of the course of study independently of the staff directly involved in those aspects of the course, and
 - c. the resources required to deliver the course as approved or accredited will be available when needed.

Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement

1. All accredited courses of study are subject to periodic (at least every seven years) comprehensive reviews that are overseen by peak academic governance processes and include external referencing or other benchmarking activities.
2. A comprehensive review includes the design and content of each course of study, the expected learning outcomes, the methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes, and also takes account of emerging developments in the field of education, modes of delivery, the changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study.
3. Comprehensive reviews of courses of study are informed and supported by regular interim monitoring, of the quality of teaching and supervision of research students, student progress and the overall delivery of units within each course of study.
4. Review and improvement activities include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including:
 - a. analyses of progression rates, attrition rates, completion times and rates and, where applicable, comparing different locations of delivery, and
 - b. the assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses of study.
5. All students have opportunities to provide feedback on their educational experiences and student feedback informs institutional monitoring, review and improvement activities.
6. All teachers and supervisors have opportunities to review feedback on their teaching and research supervision and are supported in enhancing these activities.
7. The results of regular interim monitoring, comprehensive reviews, external referencing and student feedback are used to mitigate future risks to the quality of the education provided and to guide and evaluate improvements, including the use of data on student progress and success to inform admission criteria and approaches to course design, teaching, supervision, learning and academic support.

7. Version Control

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by the ASA Institute of Higher Education's Board of Directors as at November 2024 and is reviewed every three years.

This Policy, and associated procedure, is published and available on the ASA Institute of Higher Education's website <https://www.asahe.edu.au/policies-and-forms/>.

Change and Version Control				
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved:	Effective Date:
2024.2	Director Quality and Compliance	Updated the clarity of Section 3. Changes to titles of section 5 and added detail from HESFs 3.1 to section 5.1 Updates to 5.2.3 to allow operational flexibility with credit point weightings.	21/11/2024	28/11/2024
2024.1	Project Officer	Document formatting updated to reflect change of Trading Name to ASA Institute of Higher Education	28/06/2024 by CEO	01/07/2024
2023.1	Director Learning and Innovation	Updated policy to include HESF references, changes in regulatory compliances. Benchmarked against 8 other Higher Education Providers.	12/12/2023	18/12/2023
Previous version archived. New Policy code and numbering system implemented.				
5.0		Annual review – AB approval	06/10/2021	

4.0		Academic Board approval	14/07/2021	
3.0		Academic Board approval	04/11/2020	
2.0		Academic Board approval	23/09/2019	
1.0		Council approval	08/12/2017	