

## COURSE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE

<b>Policy Code</b>	OPS04
<b>Policy Lead</b>	Director Learning and Innovation
<b>Approving Authority</b>	Board of Directors
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<b>Relevant legislation or external requirements</b>	<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>
<b>Related ASA Documents</b>	<p>Course Design and Development Policy 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 Procedure is to outline the practices associated with the *Course Design and Development Policy*, the intent of which is to provide a framework for the design and development of courses delivered by the ASA Institute of Higher Education (**ASA**) to ensure quality and relevance of the courses.

### 2. Scope

This Procedure 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. Course design and development requirements

All courses designed and developed by ASA must meet the following requirements:

- All ASA courses must incorporate the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (**HESFs**) related to courses.
- All ASA courses must meet the Australian Qualifications Framework (**AQF**) for the relevant qualification level.
- Where an ASA course must meet professional or discipline-based content standards, the design will be mapped against those standards.

- ASA courses that require professional accreditation must ensure to meet entry requirements for graduate eligibility for registration or employment and ensure that all professional standards are embedded in the course.
- All ASA courses must align with the ASA Graduate Attributes.
- All courses must align with the related policies and procedures to ensure that the course design meets the requirements within these policies and procedures.
- ASA course design and structure will be informed by academic best practice, industry requirements and student input and corresponding feedback.
- Course design and development are components of an iterative course life-cycle process of continuous improvement.
- Course development must include internal and/or external referencing and benchmarking activities.
- Course development is intended to enhance the quality of teaching and learning activity for the benefit of the students and other stakeholders.

## 4. Procedure

There are six steps required to obtain approval before a submission of a course is made to the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (**TEQSA**) for accreditation or renewal of accreditation. The six steps involved in course design, development, review, and approval are detailed below.

### 4.1 Step 1: Initial review of feasibility and approval to proceed

Prior to commencement of designing and developing a new course or making changes to an existing course, a feasibility study must be performed. The *Feasibility Study*, along with a *Business Case Proposal* should be presented to the Senior Management team for endorsement, followed by submission to the Board of Directors for approval.

The *Feasibility Study* and *Business Case* should include:

- A product overview;
- Market research, including:
  - a competitor analysis,
  - identification of a target market including demographics,
  - level of education and
  - expected marketing approach.
- General information regarding possible graduate careers including:
  - skill demand
  - job growth and
  - expected salary for graduates.
- Qualification level/s, including nested degrees, and naming options;
- Field of Education;
- Mode/s of delivery;
- Proposed course learning outcomes and course structure;

- **Draft Resourcing and Budget Plan**, including:
  - costs and staffing for course development,
  - future staffing costs, including initial delivery,
  - future learning resources and facilities,
  - workload allocations and future position descriptions
- **Draft Campus Support and Staffing Plan**; indicating academic and non-academic support staff and services requirements;
- **Draft Workforce Plan** for period of initial delivery and associated costings; and
- Financial forecast and project student numbers.

Once approval is received, development or changes may commence.

## 4.2 Step 2: Development of Course Rationale, Learning Outcomes, Units and Sequencing

Once the approval for the development of a new or existing course is received, the Director Learning and Innovation, in conjunction with the Academic Dean, will set up a Course Development team.

The Course Development team will commence work on designing the course, units, and unit sequencing, course and unit learning outcomes. ASA will develop a course rationale outlining the purpose for the design and development of structure of a new course or justification for recommended changes to existing courses, course learning outcomes, proposed units and sequencing.

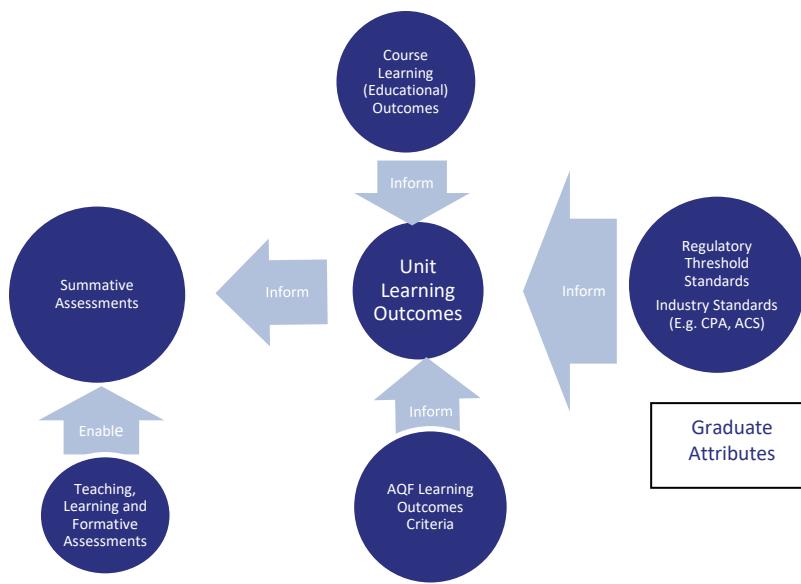
When designing the course/s, course learning outcomes, units, and unit sequence, alignment with the AQF and HESFs is essential and must be considered throughout.

### 4.2.1 Course Structure

- **Course Rationale** must include the reasons as to why the course, units and learning outcomes are important.
- **Learning Outcomes** must describe the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills that a graduate has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.
- **Constructive Alignment** must be performed to ensure that the course meets all of the corresponding graduate attributes, course learning outcomes, unit learning outcomes, assessments, industry standards and the AQF and HESFs. The process requires:
  - i. Determination of the desired qualities of graduates (**Graduate Attributes**) must occur first.
  - ii. The Course Learning Outcomes (**CLOs**) can then be created and aligned to the Graduate Attributes.
  - iii. The Unit Learning Outcomes (**ULOs**) can then be created and aligned to the CLOs.

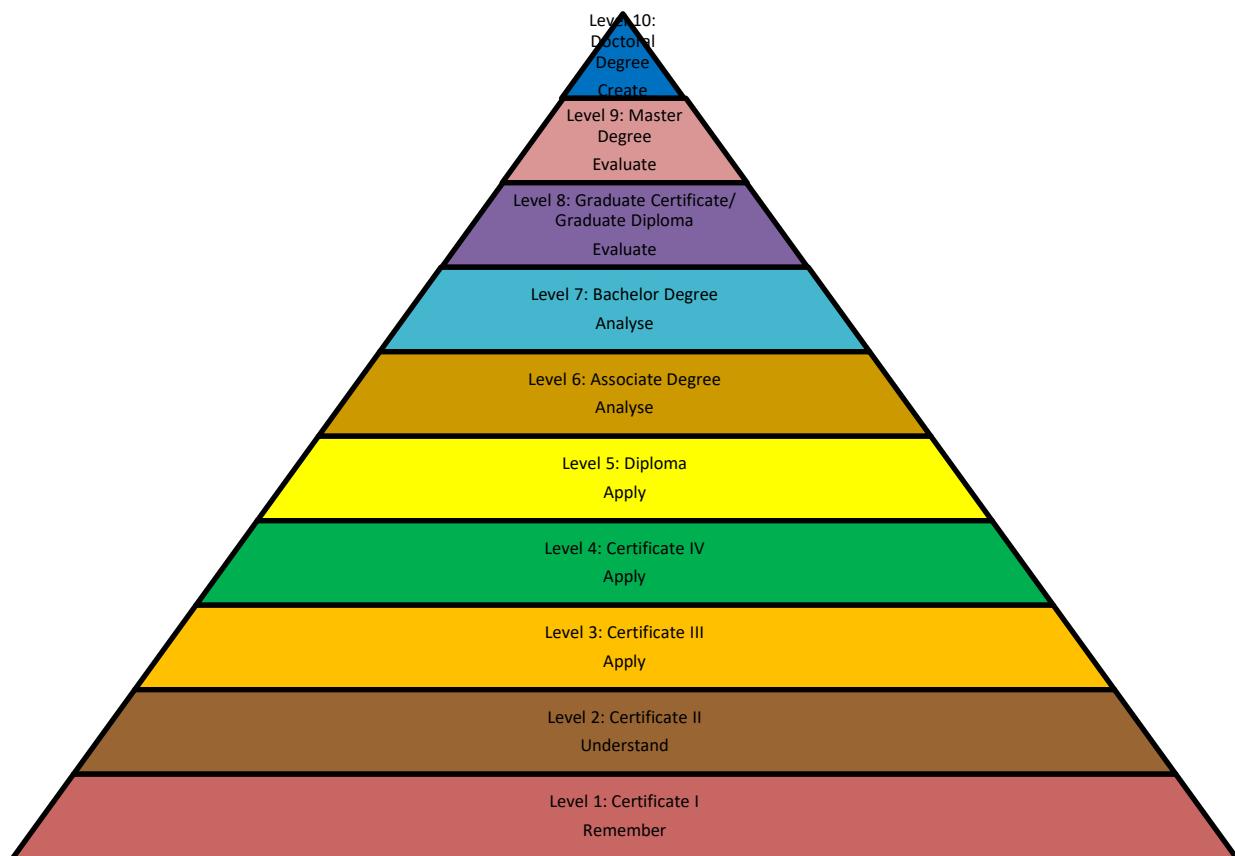
*Table provided overleaf.*

Figure 1 Constructive Alignment Process Diagram



When developing Course and Unit Learning Outcomes, Bloom's Taxonomy Framework should be utilised to ensure outcomes align with the appropriate AQF level. Figure 2 provides a diagram representing the course levels.

Figure 2 Bloom's AQF Course Levels



This figure was developed utilising information and content from the AQF <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>

Course and Unit Learning Outcome development must also ensure compliance with the HESFs and any professional body/industry standards requirements.

Course And Unit Outlines provide a clear framework for students to achieve the learning Outcomes through teaching and learning activities and assessment. The assessments and teaching and learning activities will then be informed by the. The development of teaching and learning activities is covered in Step 5 and the development of assessments is covered in Step 6. For existing courses, the alignment of summative assessments will take place in Step 2.

#### 4.2.2 Unit development

The Course Development team designs and develops the units of study that comprise the course of study, the course content, and assessments.

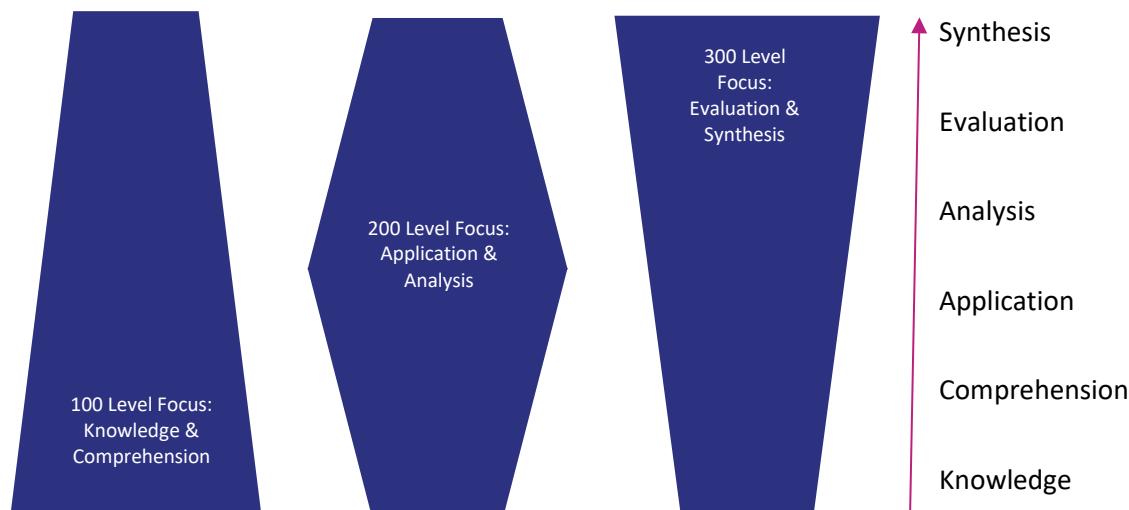
ASA has four types of units, which can be selected to meet the needs of the course. The types of units are listed below.

- i. **Core Units** – compulsory units that must be completed by all students enrolled in that particular course.
- ii. **Specialisation Units** – are units that provide specialised knowledge and skills for the degree specialisation. These units are also compulsory.
- iii. **Elective Units** – are units that may be undertaken to contribute to the number of units required to complete the degree and enhance the student learning experience.
- iv. **Integrative Units** – are units that integrate a wide selection of prior knowledge and skills drawn from units undertaken before the integrative unit. Integrative units may include Capstone, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) or project-based work. For further information on WIL, refer to the *Work Integrated Learning Policy* and associated procedure and guidelines.

Unit levels must align with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes for the course.

Undergraduate courses should utilise Bloom's Taxonomy (Fig. 3) to ensure units are at the appropriate level for the course of study.

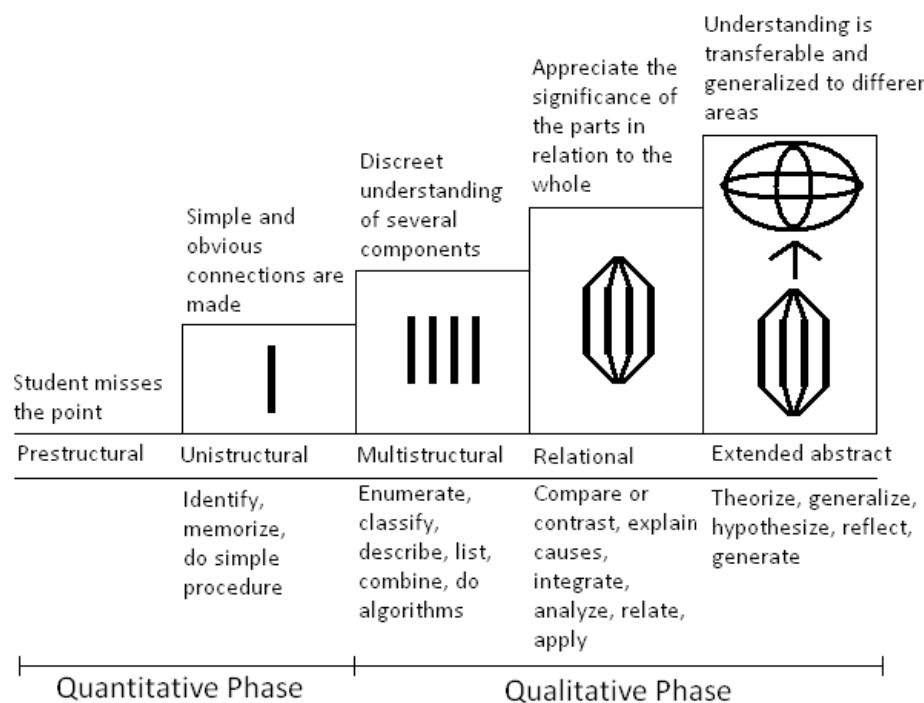
Figure 1: Guide to Application of Bloom's Taxonomy



*This diagram was developed by Ms McPhee to conceptualise the relationship.*

Postgraduate courses should use the Biggs & Tang SOLO Taxonomy (*Fig. 4*) to ensure units are at the appropriate level for the course of study.

Figure 2: SOLO Taxonomy by Biggs and Tang)



Source: Biggs, J & Tang, C 2007, *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Maidenhead, Open University Press.

One of the most effective ways of stimulating students to work at the different learning levels is the use of what is often termed Bloomian Action Verbs. For example, the use of the verb 'list' in an assessment question will trigger a knowledge response. Similarly, an instruction to 'describe' will bring a response at the comprehension level. Bloomian Action Verbs are also used in learning outcomes and these verbs inform and help form the alignment between unit learning outcomes and summative assessments. Bloomian Action Verbs are available from a variety of academic and popular sources.

Unit levels are made explicit in the unit naming codes. Award courses will consist of units from the levels indicated in the table below.

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

**100 level units:** designated by the leading numeral 1, are defined by assessment tasks and learning outcomes that refer to the development of knowledge and comprehension of subject matter taught. Learning outcomes of these units include being able to define the knowledge area, being able to relate and review different areas of the unit's content area, the ability to discuss and recognise principles and topic areas taught, and the ability to explain and identify specific content knowledge.

**200 level units:** designated by the leading numeral 2, are defined by assessment tasks and

learning outcomes that refer to the application of knowledge and the ability to analyse and distinguish between different bodies of knowledge. The learning outcomes include being able to criticise and debate between opposing and contrasting areas and therefore prepare reports purporting to support these arguments.

**300 level units:** designated by the leading numeral 3, are defined by assessment tasks and learning outcomes that synthesise and evaluate the unit's content areas. The learning outcomes include being able to construct new implications and understanding stemming from the learnt body of knowledge and being able to apprise and compare different areas of knowledge.

**400 level units:** designated by the leading numeral 4, are defined by assessment tasks and learning outcomes that allow a student to extend their knowledge in a discipline and apply this knowledge. At this level, the lecturer fulfils more of a facilitator and mentor role. Learning outcomes are aimed at high level thinking, often student driven and related to an area of specialisation or new knowledge.

**500 level units:** designated by the leading numeral 5, are defined by assessment tasks and learning outcomes that provide a student with advanced knowledge in a discipline and the ability to apply knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline. At this level the unit is about advanced knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge.

**600 level units:** designated by the leading numeral 6, are defined by assessment tasks and learning outcomes that are student-directed and reflect a sophisticated understanding of the discipline area. At this level the unit requires the development of advanced and integrated understanding of a complex body of knowledge in a specialist area, and a student working at the forefront of an academic discipline.

### **Modes of Delivery**

ASA has a range of course delivery models to provide choice for applicants and students. ASA courses and units will specify what mode of delivery is available.

- i. **Face-to-Face (F2F):** A Face-to-Face (F2F) unit is delivered in the physical classroom setting. F2F classroom interaction takes the form of in-person, real-time interaction between the lecturer and the students, with technology used as part of this delivery. Educational technologies such as the Learning Management System (LMS) can be used to help students learn and collaborate. Web-based learning is integrated into F2F time, rather than substituting for it.
- ii. **Online:** Units are offered in a web-based environment with no physical classroom. Learning resources may be available any time and place, however, the course / unit may be a blend of synchronous, and asynchronous learning experiences. Unit Outlines specify scheduled hours that are equivalent to F2F units and are made up of online learning activities. Students have the flexibility to complete activities and engage with the LMS as suited to their personal schedule. The LMS provides comprehensive guidance and instructions for the course learning and teaching activities online. The emphasis is on maintaining engagement and a sense of belonging to the student community. Students have access to an online lecturer, and online discussions/collaborations with other students. They also have access to online learning resources e.g. library, databases.
- iii. **Blended:** Blended courses have most units as a face-to-face unit, with some units offered online. Online resources are available and required for successful completion, including academic activities, support, learning resources, assessment information, and other services. Onshore international students will not exceed more than one-third of the units by online learning as stated in the National Code's Standard 8.
- iv. **Offshore:** Offshore courses may be offered as Face-to-Face, Online, or Blended. Students

enrolled in an ‘offshore course’ will remain outside of Australia for the entirety of their coursework and will not be offered a Confirmation of Enrolment for Australian Student Visa purposes.

All Work Integrated Learning content and processes, must be delivered face-to-face, onshore in Australia.

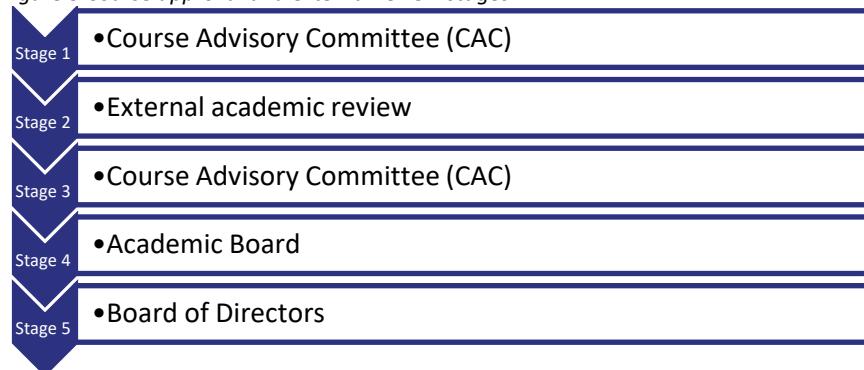
### Design of Short Course and Microcredentials

Consideration will be given to the design of units which can be enrolled in by students as a non-course short course or stackable and credit-bearing Microcredentials units. This allows students to complete a short course and/or stackable and credit-bearing Microcredentials unit without being enrolled in an ASA degree. Refer to the *Short Courses and Microcredentials Policy and Procedure* for further information.

## 4.3 Step 3: Internal Course Approval and External Review

The internal course approval and external review process includes five stages. The stages are outlined in Figure 5: Course approval and external review stages. Feedback is obtained in each stage on the course development documentation and process, and changes and improvements are made throughout the process.

Figure 3 Course approval and external review stages



### 4.3.1 Documents to be presented for academic scrutiny (Stages 1, 3, and 4)

Documentation required for each stage of the review and approval process are as follows:

- **Course Proposal** which includes:
  - rationale,
  - structure, duration, and modes of delivery,
  - the qualification offered and the Field of Education,
  - course admission information, including entry requirements, pathways, and credit / RPL arrangements,
  - exit pathways and further learning,
  - the units of study that comprise the course,
  - study patterns,
  - delivery mode details,
  - the course learning outcomes,
  - facilities and resources required for the course/s of study,
  - staffing profile, including academic and non-academic staff,

- compulsory requirements for completion, and
- professional accreditation requirements, if applicable.
- **Constructive Alignment** mapping, indicating how the Graduate Attributes are supported by the CLOs and ULOs, and how CLOs and ULOs map to external standards and requirements.
- **Assessment Schedule and Mapping** to provide oversight of the type and distribution of assessment.
- **Unit Outlines** for all units including learning outcomes and the methods for assessment of those outcomes.
- A designated number of **fully developed units** as specified by TEQSA.
- Examples of **Testamurs and transcripts**.
- **A list of all required resources and facilities** required by the units within the specific course/s of study.
- **A Risk Assessment** that identifies risks to the quality of the course of study and how these risks will be managed.
- **Board of Director Meeting minutes excerpts** confirming that the course has been approved for development and that appropriate draft budgets have also been approved as per section 4.1.
- **External Review Reports** by external academic experts.
- **Rolling Action Items**, a spreadsheet which summarises the actions recommended or required on the course documents, the source of the recommendation, the status of these actions, and the impacted documents.
- **External referencing** or other benchmarking activities.

#### 4.3.2 External Academic review (Stage 2)

Course documentation as listed in section 4.3.1 is submitted to a minimum of one, but preferably two, suitably qualified and available external reviewers (with appropriate qualifications and professional experience). The external reviewers review the documentation against the HESFs and the AQF. The external reviewers are required to prepare a report outlining their feedback and recommendations to the Course Development team.

The Course Development team then reviews and revises, if appropriate, the course documentation. The reviewed and revised documentation with the external reviewers' reports is presented to the CAC (Stage 3) before submitting to the Academic Board (Stage 4), and Board of Directors for approval (Stage 5).

#### 4.3.3 Documents presented to the Board (Stage 5)

In addition to the documents listed within 4.3.1, the CEO will **also** present the following documents to the Board within Stage 5 of the process outlined in Figure 5:

- **A Draft Budget**, including
  - the costs of course development and accreditation,
  - future staffing for course delivery, including academic leadership
  - professional development and scholarly activity support,
  - course learning resources,

- facilities required for course delivery, and
- workload allocations.
- **A Draft Campus Support and Staffing Plan** indicating how appropriate staffing and student support services will be resourced.
- **Draft Workforce Plan** for course development and for initial course delivery;
- **Financial forecast** of the projected number of students and associated revenue for the first 5 years.
- New or revised **Position descriptions** for all staff required for course delivery.
- **Projected staff numbers**, their qualifications and units they would be expected to teach.
- Relevant **ASA policy suite documents**, if not publicly available.

#### **4.4 Step 4: Submission for Accreditation**

Once the course has been reviewed and approved internally and by independent external review, the templates provided by TEQSA will need to be populated for course accreditation or re-accreditation of existing courses. ASA's TEQSA Case Manager will provide specific details on what is required for submission. The information required may include:

- Information on the intellectual property ownership of the courses.
- Delivery mode details.
- Proposed commencement date.
- Study patterns.
- Evidence relating to HESFs including:
  - Student Participation and Attainment Standards (1.1, 1.3.3, 1.4 and 1.5.3).
  - Learning Environment Standards (2.1).
  - Teaching Standards (3.1, 3.2 and 3.3) which may include:
    - a. Projected staff numbers,
    - b. Projected student numbers,
    - c. Constructive alignment mapping,
    - d. Course admission information,
    - e. Abbreviated CVs of Academic staff,
    - f. Unit outlines.
  - Institutional Quality Assurance Standards (5.1.2, 5.1.3, and 5.4 (if applicable)).
  - Governance and Accountability Standards (6.2.1(i)).
  - Representation, Information, and Information Management Standards (7.1. 7.2.1-2)
- External Expert Reports.
- CAC membership and minutes relating to course approval, created in Stages 1 and 3.
- Academic Board membership and minutes relating to course approval, created in Stage 4.
- An excerpt of the Board of Directors minutes confirming their approval of appropriate budget and resources provided within Stage 5 and approval to submit the application to

TEQSA.

Once the five stages of internal course approval and external review have been completed, and approved by the Board of Directors, the course is ready for submission. The documentation is then submitted to TEQSA for accreditation. The CEO is responsible for submitting the required documentation to TEQSA through the TEQSA provider portal and communicating with TEQSA's case manager.

#### **4.5 Step 5: Development of Engaging Teaching and Learning Activities**

Teaching and learning activities need to be developed to enable students to be able to master the concepts and skills defined in the course and unit learning outcomes. The teaching and learning activities should be interactive and provide students with opportunities to deepen their understanding.

ASA may continue to develop unit material and teaching and learning activities in order to be well-prepared for delivery if course accreditation is received. TEQSA may require a sample of teaching and learning activities as part of the course accreditation or reaccreditation process (Step 4). ASA's TEQSA Case Manager will provide details of the specific evidence required.

Once TEQSA has approved the course accreditation or reaccreditation, the teaching and learning activities can be finalised. Required readings or resources are to be reviewed once accreditation has been received and prior to commencement of the first delivery to ensure that the material remains contemporary and relevant since initial development.

#### **4.6 Step 6: Development of Information Assessments**

Please note, TEQSA may require a sample assessment as part of the course accreditation or re-accreditation process (step 4). ASA's TEQSA Case Manager will provide details of the specific evidence required.

Assessments need to be developed to allow students to be able to demonstrate their understanding of the course and unit learning outcomes and allow for the provision of meaningful feedback to students. For further information on assessment requirements, refer to the *Student Assessment Policy* and related procedure.

For existing courses where assessment tasks have already been created, summative assessments should be mapped against the learning outcomes to ensure constructive alignment as part of step 2. This will allow for the identification of gaps or areas for improvement.

### **5. Review and Renewal of Accreditation**

#### **5.1 Ongoing review processes**

ASA is committed to continuous improvement of courses and units. Course and unit learning outcomes, learning activities and assessments will be continuously evaluated and benchmarked to allow for continuous improvement.

Refer to the following policies and procedures for further information regarding continuous improvement: *Quality Assurance Framework*, *Benchmarking Policy* and associated procedure.

#### **5.2 Comprehensive Course Review**

Comprehensive course reviews are conducted for each course within two to five (2-5) years of accreditation, to ensure that each course is reviewed at least once every 5 years in an accreditation period. The following process outlines the steps:

1. ASA conducts ongoing and annual courses and units review based on data collected from the course and teacher evaluation surveys and performance outcomes.

2. A comprehensive internal review evaluating the design and content of each course of study, the expected learning outcomes; assessments and how they meet the learning outcomes, student outcomes, emergence of developments within the field of education, modes of delivery, changing needs of students/graduates, and identifying risks of the quality of the course.
3. Benchmarking and external referencing with other higher education providers.
4. Reporting the findings and recommendations to the Course Advisory Committee (**CAC**).
5. Reporting the CAC's endorsement of the findings and recommendations to the Academic Board.
6. The Academic Board puts forward endorsement of all findings and recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval.

## 6. **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Industry Consultation Groups (ICG)**

Provide feedback on the key features of proposed new courses or recommended changes to existing courses and the graduate attributes most sought after by employers.

### **Course Advisory Committee (CAC)**

Oversees the development and ongoing review of all ASA's courses and provides advice and recommendations on course development and design, ensuring alignment with course objectives and contemporary theory and practice. The CAC will make recommendations and endorsements where appropriate regarding course documentation and development.

### **External Reviewers**

Provide reviews, gives feedback and recommendations on course design, content and documentation prior Stage 3 of the Internal Course Approval and External Review.

### **Academic Board**

Oversees the design, development, and comprehensive review of academic courses and units ensuring alignment with the AQF, regulatory and professional accreditation requirements, and industry needs before submission to the Board of Directors for approval.

### **Board of Directors**

Considers and approves, if appropriate, course development proposals and the final submission of course accreditation/reaccreditation applications to TEQSA.

## 7. **Version Control**

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

<b>Change and Version Control</b>				
<b>Version</b>	<b>Authored by</b>	<b>Brief Description of the changes</b>	<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b>
2024.2	Director Quality and Compliance	Updated to provide additional detail regarding documents to be presented for governance oversight, modes of delivery, references to pedagogical models. Some reordering of content for clarity and linkages.	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.				
1.0		Academic Board approval	14/07/2021	