Course and Unit Design and Approval Policy

Section 1 - Overview & Scope

(1) This Policy provide a framework for the creation, amendment, suspension and withdrawal of courses and units at the University of New England (UNE). This Policy is designed to ensure that:

a. continuous improvement and quality assurance processes are maintained in the development, continuance and cessation of academic programs; and

b. courses and units meet or exceed the appropriate academic standards and are aligned with the University's Strategic Plan and values.

(2) This Policy applies to all undergraduate, postgraduate award and non-award courses, offered by the University in regard to:

a. the creation of new courses and units;

b. amendments to existing courses and units; and

c. the suspension and withdrawal of courses and units.

(3) This Policy does not apply to higher degree by research courses.

(4) Within this Policy:

a. Part A covers the design of courses and units; and

b. Part B covers the approval process for courses and units.

Part A - Design of courses and units

UNE award structure

(5) The coursework award structure at UNE is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 – UNE coursework award structure

Course Type	AQF Level	Credit Points	Unit Composition
Undergraduate Certificate	N/A*	24	N/A
Diploma	5	48	All 100 level or scaffolded 100, 200, 300.
Advanced Diploma	6	72-96	Between 36 cp and 48 cp at 100 level and remainder at 200 and 300 level.
Associate Degree	6	96	Between 36 cp and 48 cp at 100 level and remainder at 200 and 300 level.

Course Type	AQF Level	Credit Points	Unit Composition
Bachelor Degree (3 years)	7	144	Maximum of 60 cp at 100 level, at least 36 cp at 300 level and maximum of 12 cp at 400 level.
Bachelor Degree (4 years)	7	192	Maximum of 60 cp at 100 level and at least 72 cp at 300 level; 400 level units may be included to a maximum of 24 cp.
Combined Bachelor Degree (4 years)	7	192	Maximum of 72 cp at 100 level to allow sufficient scope for introductory units in both components of combined degree; at least 24 cp at 300 level in each component of degree, and maximum of 24 cp at 400 level.
Double Degree (5 years)	7	240	Maximum of 72 cp at 100 level, and at least 24 cp at 300 level in each component of degree; maximum of 24 cp at 400 level.
Embedded Honours Degree	8	144-192	(6) Maximum of 60 cp at 100 level, minimum of 36 cp at 300 level, minimum of 36 cp at 400 level, maximum of 12 cp at 500 level. Must demonstrate knowledge of research principles and methods and application of knowledge and skills to plan and execute project work and/or piece of research and scholarship (minimum 12 cp) at 400 level or above. Calculation of Honours level should be on final year results or must be justified by benchmarking with other universities that offer same program.
Bachelor with Honours Degree	8	48	At least 36 cp at 400 level, and maximum of 12 cp at 500 level. Must demonstrate knowledge of research principles and methods and application of knowledge and skills to plan and execute project work and/or a piece of research and scholarship (minimum 12 cp) at 400 level or above.
Graduate Certificate	8	24-48	Minimum of 18 cp at 400 level, and maximum of 6 cp at 500 level.
Graduate Diploma	8	48-96	Minimum of 30 cp at 400 level, and maximum of 18 cp at 500 level. May include lower level units to facilitate admission from a different discipline.
Masters Degree (Coursework)	9	48-96	Minimum of 36 cp at 500 level, and maximum of 12 cp at 600 level. Graduates must demonstrate knowledge of research principles and methods and application of knowledge and skills to plan and execute substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship.

* The Undergraduate Certificate is a higher education qualification of six months duration that is not located at a particular Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level but is covered by AQF levels 5, 6 or 7. The Undergraduate Certificate certifies completion of 0.5 equivalent full time study load toward an existing qualification at AQF levels 5, 6, or 7. It qualifies individuals with knowledge and skills for further study, professional upskilling, employment and participation in lifelong learning.

(7) Courses will comprise of a number of units with a specified credit point value and may contain majors and minors. A standard unit is six credit points, although units may consist of different number of credit points. The unit structure at UNE is outlined in Table 2:

Table 2: UNE unit structure

UNE Unit Level	AQF Level
100	5
200	6
300	7
400	8
500	9

Course and unit design

(8) A course must be structured so that students progress from introductory material to more advanced material. This will be reflected through the learning outcomes in each unit which will align with the AQF level, course aims and graduate attributes. While units should correspond to the relevant AQF level, some learning outcomes may be more closely aligned with a higher AQF level.

(9) To ensure quality in UNE's courses and units, proposals for new, amended, suspended or withdrawn courses or units must demonstrate adherence to an evidence-based curriculum design and continuous improvement cycle. Relevant considerations include, but are not limited to:

   a. UNE's Strategic Plan and values;
   b. UNE's [Course Design Framework](), [Assessment Policy](), [Graduate Attributes Procedures](), [Intensive School Procedures]() and guidance through the Curriculum Management System;
   c. recommendations or advice from course and unit reviews, Course Advisory Boards, disciplinary bodies or peer reviews;
   d. research into the scholarship of teaching and learning, and pedagogic and discipline-based standards;
   e. societal needs and public good (which may be identified by partners, industry, employer groups or independent research among others);
   f. inclusion of indigenous knowledges;
   g. external regulation, including the [Higher Education Standards Framework]() and the AQF;
   h. requirements of external accreditation bodies (where relevant); and
   i. in the case of joint courses, any additional requirements agreed with partner institutions.

Part B - Approval process for new, amended, suspended and withdrawn courses and units

(10) To ensure academic quality assurance is maintained in UNE's courses and units, the processes outlined in this Part B must be followed for the approval of new and amended courses and units, and the suspension and withdrawal of courses and units. These processes are managed through the Curriculum Management System.

(11) Proposers of new and amended courses and units, and the suspension and withdrawal of courses and units must provide all required information at each stage of the approval process as outlined in the Curriculum Management System. This includes consultation undertaken for the purposes of establishing a business case or building curriculum quality. Those consulted may include academic and professional leaders and administrators of the courses and units (such as Discipline Conveners, School Education Committee Chairs or Conveners, Course Coordinators, Course Managers and Faculty Academic Managers), Curriculum and Academic Management, UNE International (for all Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students course), all relevant schools, faculties and directorates, and any accrediting bodies or partners.

(12) All proposals will be assessed with reference to this Policy and adherence to an evidence-based curriculum design and continuous improvement cycle.

New courses

(13) The process for design and approval of a new course has two stages - an initial proposal stage and the full proposal stage.

(14) The initial proposal stage involves the development and consideration of a business case and is undertaken through a management governance process. The full proposal stage involves development and consideration of the academic rationale, curriculum design, and compliance with legislative requirements such as the AQF and Higher

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Education Standards Framework, and is undertaken through an academic governance process.

(15) The proposer of a new course must complete the process outlined in the [New Courses Workflow](#).

Course amendments

(16) Course amendments are categorised as either significant or minor.

(17) Significant course amendments include:

a. changes to course title;
b. replacement or redesign of 30% or more of the program of study in one year or incrementally over time between course reviews;
c. amendment to 30% or more of units within a course in one year or incrementally over time between course reviews;
d. changes to admission rules;
e. changes to credit points for units within the course;
f. changes in external/professional accreditation status;
g. credit assessments linked to course admission rules; and
h. new or withdrawn majors.

(18) Minor course amendments include:

a. replacement or redesign of less than 30% of the program of study in one year or incrementally over time between course reviews;
b. amendment to 30% or fewer of units within a course in one year or incrementally over time between course reviews;
c. amendment to existing majors, new or amended minors, or units contributing to the program of study;
d. changes to course-level inherent requirements;
e. changes to exit pathways;
f. amendment to admission periods;
g. amendment to course-level modes of offering;
h. amendment to course-level learning outcomes; and
i. editorial changes that do not alter the overall intent of course information.

(19) The Chair of Curriculum Committee will monitor whether amendments are significant or minor and where amendments have been incorrectly classified, may determine that the amendments go through the alternative workflow.

(20) The proposer of significant or minor course amendments must complete the process outlined in the [Course Amendments Workflow](#).

(21) If a significant course amendment is approved, the relevant Associate Dean Teaching and Learning must ensure that impacted students and relevant internal and external stakeholders are advised of the change. This includes providing advice on any alternative arrangements or options, which may involve transferring to another course or continuing under the previous rules for a designated period to allow completion.

Course suspension

(22) A faculty wishing to cease admission to a course for a period of up to two years must provide a strong business case and risk assessment for the suspension, including a proposed timeframe for reinstatement of admissions to the

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course. If there is no proposal to reinstate admissions, the faculty must consider withdrawing the course.

(23) During an approved suspension period, the faculty must decide whether to reinstate admissions or withdraw the course.

(24) The proposer of a suspension or lifting of a suspension must seek approval through the process outlined in the Course Suspension Workflow.

Course withdrawal

(25) A faculty wishing to permanently cease admissions to a course must provide a strong business case, risk assessment, and transitional and teach out arrangements for the withdrawal, and seek approval through the process outlined in the Course Withdrawal Workflow. The faculty should note the requirement for Commonwealth Government approval to withdraw certain courses. The Academic Portfolio Executive Committee will confirm whether the withdrawal requires Government approval and if so, request the approval.

(26) If a course is withdrawn, the relevant Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning must ensure that impacted students and relevant internal and external stakeholders are advised of the change. This includes providing advice on alternative arrangements or options, which may involve transferring to another course or continuing under the previous rules for a designated period to allow completion.

(27) The proposer of the withdrawal must seek approval through the process outlined in the Course Withdrawal Workflow.

New, amended, not offered and withdrawn units

(28) In proposing new, amended, temporarily not offered or withdrawn units, the proposer must consider the impact on any relevant course and units and detail this consideration in their proposal. For a new unit, this includes consideration of whether there are other units of a similar nature, including those offered by other schools or faculties. Evidence of consultation with relevant schools and faculties should be provided as appropriate.

(29) If units that are compulsory for a student to complete in order to satisfy course requirements are not offered or withdrawn, the relevant Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning must ensure that impacted students and Student Experience are advised of the change and alternative arrangements or options.

(30) If units are withdrawn after the commencement of the enrolment period:

  a. the relevant Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning must ensure that impacted students and Student Experience are advised of the change and alternative arrangements or options; and
  b. compensation may be payable to students who demonstrate that they have entered into non-refundable commitments.

(31) The proposer of a new, amended, temporarily not offered or withdrawn unit must complete the process outlined in the Units Workflow.

Deadlines

(32) Admissions for each calendar year open on 1 August of the preceding year. To ensure courses are ready to accept applications for admission from that date, faculties must provide Curriculum & Academic Management with the approved course information by 30 May of the preceding year. Course information may be submitted after this date but the opening of admission may be delayed as a result. Faculties should plan their course development and approval processes to meet the 1 August deadline.

School schedule of units

(33) It is acknowledged that schools have their own processes for confirming their schedule of units. Core units must be offered every year. Where there is no choice, a prescribed unit must be offered every year. The schedule of units for the following year should be submitted to the Faculty Education Committee for noting once they are finalised and approved by the Head of School (or delegate).

Changing the delivery mode of a unit after the commencement of the enrolment period

(34) Units may be delivered in multiple modes of delivery within one teaching period (e.g. on-campus (ON) or online (ONLINE)).

(35) The Head of School (or delegate) may approve changes to the delivery mode after the commencement of the enrolment period of a unit where there are sound academic and/or administrative reasons such as (but not limited to):

   a. changes in student enrolment;
   b. more efficient or effective teaching;
   c. availability of teaching expertise; and
   d. unforeseen circumstances (e.g. damage to facilities or equipment).

(36) In making a decision to change the delivery mode, a Head of School (or delegate) in conjunction with the Unit and Course Coordinator should consider the impact of any decision on the following:

   a. the cost to UNE of maintaining two delivery modes with fewer than six students in one mode;
   b. professional registration and/or statutory accreditation issues with students completing units in ONLINE mode;
   c. the investment made by ON Students, most of whom relocate to Armidale;
   d. potential impact on scholarship and early-entry students;
   e. potential impact on student visa holders due to limits on the number of ONLINE mode units they can complete as part of their course (in accordance with the ESOS Act 2000 — schools must liaise with Student Experience);
   f. potential impact on students' graduation timelines if their remaining enrolment is affected; and
   g. the potential impact on any partnership arrangements.

Restricted changes

(37) A unit that is a core or prescribed requirement in any course offered in multiple modes may not be changed to ON mode only. Only listed or elective units may be changed to ON mode only. A unit with a mandatory intensive school cannot be changed to ON mode only.

(38) Units with mandatory intensive schools are only to be changed from ON to ONLINE mode if the intensive school is already scheduled during the ON mode teaching session. This is to ensure that ON mode students are not required to incur additional costs for staying in Armidale.

Changing to ONLINE mode only

(39) Units offered in multiple modes that have an ON mode enrolment of fewer than six students may be considered for changing to ONLINE mode only, provided that such a change does not impact on students as outlined in clause 35.

(40) The last date for seeking a change to ONLINE mode only is the final working day of the first week of the teaching period.

(41) The school is required to contact all ON mode Students and consult with them — ideally obtaining their consent if possible but obtaining their views and taking these into account before making a decision.

Changing to ON mode only

(42) Units offered in multiple modes that have an ONLINE mode enrolment of fewer than six students may be considered for changing to ON mode only, providing that such a change does not impact on a student as outlined in clause 35.

(43) The school is required to contact all ONLINE mode students and consult with them to check the effect of the change on the anticipated graduation timeline and to counsel the students on alternative choices. In general, where students' graduation timeline are adversely affected, the unit should not be changed to ON mode only. However, this can be relaxed where the anticipated graduation timeline is sufficiently long to allow the changed unit to be completed in a subsequent year.

(44) The last date for seeking a change to ON mode only is two weeks before the start of the teaching period. This is to minimise any costs arising from the cancellation of pre-paid travel costs to a non-mandatory intensive school and to ensure that ONLINE mode students have access to alternative enrolments.

(45) Generous consideration should be given to allowing students permission to enrol elsewhere in alternative units (noting, however, that the timelines for such applications will be inevitably tight).

Notification

(46) After approval has been granted for a change to a unit delivery mode, the Head of School must ensure Student Experience and impacted students are notified.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate)	Approves initial proposals for new courses, full proposals for new courses, significant course amendments, and course suspension and withdrawals. Notes minor amendments to courses.
Academic Board	Endorses new course proposals, significant course amendments, and course suspension and withdrawals. Notes minor amendments to courses.
Academic Board Standing Committee	Endorses full proposal for urgent new courses, urgent significant course amendments and urgent course suspension and withdrawals.
Curriculum Committee	Endorses new course proposals, significant course amendments and urgent significant course amendments, and course suspension and withdrawals. Notes minor amendments to courses and units.
Chair of Academic Board	Decides on requests to progress urgent new course proposals, urgent course amendments and urgent course suspension or withdrawals.
Chair Curriculum Committee	Monitors whether course amendments are significant or minor and where required, requests that amendments progress through an alternative process.
Faculty Education Committee	Endorses new course proposals, significant course amendments, and course suspension and withdrawals. Approves minor course amendments and urgent minor course amendments, new and amended units, and not offered and withdrawn units.
School Education Committee	Endorses new course proposals, minor and significant course amendments, course suspension and withdrawals, and new, amended, not offered and withdrawn units.
Dean (or delegate)	Endorses initial proposals for new courses. Supports proposals for new and amended units, and not offered and withdrawn units. Decides on requests to progress urgent proposals for new and amended units, and not offered and withdrawn units.

Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning	Approves urgent new and amended units, and not offered and withdrawn units. Ensures impacted students are notified of significant course amendments, and course and unit withdrawals. Provides advice to proposers of new and amended courses and units, course suspension and withdrawal, and not offered and withdrawn units
Head of School	Supports initial proposal for new courses. Provides advice to proposers of new and amended courses and units, course suspension and approval, and not offered and withdrawn units. Decides on changes to delivery modes of units after enrolment period commences. Ensures students and Student Experience are informed of changes.
Academic Portfolio Executive Committee	Endorses initial proposals for new courses and urgent new courses. Endorses proposals for course withdrawals. Confirms whether Government approval is required for course withdrawals.
Chair Academic Portfolio Executive Committee	Decides on request to progress a new course or course withdrawal through an urgent approval process.
Heads of Department, Course Coordinators, Discipline Convenors, Education Futures, UNE International	Provides advice to proposers of new and amended courses and units, course suspension and withdrawal, and not offered and withdrawn units.
Proposers of new and amended courses and units, course suspension and withdrawal, and not offered and withdrawn units.	Follows the processes outlined in this Policy.

Section 2 - Authority and Compliance

(47) The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, consistent with the [Vice-Chancellor Functions Rule](#), makes this Policy.

(48) UNE Representatives must observe this Policy in relation to proposals for new, amended, suspended and withdrawn courses and units.

(49) This Policy is consistent with the requirements under the [Higher Education Standards Framework](#) and the AQF.

(50) Records of evidence-based curriculum design (for example course and unit blueprints), consultation and decisions of management and committees regarding all course and unit development and changes must be recorded in UNE's Records Management System (RMS).

(51) This Policy operates as from the Effective Date. Previous procedures on course and unit approvals are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Policy.

(52) Notwithstanding other provisions of this Policy, the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer may approve an exception to this Policy where the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer determines the application of this Policy would otherwise lead to an unfair, unreasonable or absurd outcome. Approvals by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer under this clause must

- a. be documented in writing;
- b. state the reason for the exception; and
- c. be registered in the approved Records Management System (RMS) in accordance with the [Records Management Rule](#).

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Section 3 - Quality Assurance

(53) The implementation of this Policy will be supported through:

a. advice and support on the development and approval process for courses and units through the Curriculum Management System;
b. assurance through the Curriculum Management System that the design and approval process has been followed; and
c. the Executive Principal Education Futures regularly monitoring and providing an annual report to the Curriculum Committee and Academic Board on the operation of, and compliance with, this Policy.

Section 4 - Definitions

(54) Amended unit: An amendment to a unit may include changing:

a. the UNE level of the unit; and/or
b. the unit code and number; and/or
c. the credit point value; and/or
d. the unit description, learning outcomes and/or the assessment requirements; and/or
e. the mode of delivery and/or the teaching period.

It does not include changing:

a. a Unit Note;
b. the Unit Coordinatordetails;
c. textbook information; and
d. the Important Information section of the Unit.

(55) Curriculum Management System: the system used by UNE to manage governance of the development and approval of courses and units and changes to courses and units for publication.

(56) New unit: A new unit is a unit that:

a. introduces curriculum content and related learning outcomes that are not currently offered by the School, or any other School; or
b. replaces one or more existing unit/s and substantially changes their curriculum content and/or learning outcomes.

(57) Urgent: urgent in this Policy means that the proposal must go through an alternative process because of factors including but not limited to: the gravity of the need for change, genuine risks and threats of not progressing urgently, external requirements, and genuine reasons for not being able to meet deadlines of the normal process. The Chair of Academic Board and Chair of Academic Portfolio Executive Committee (for new courses and course withdrawals only) must approve requests for urgent proposals involving courses and the relevant Dean must approve requests for urgent proposals involving units.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	5th January 2023
Review Date	5th January 2025
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer
Approval Date	20th December 2022
Expiry Date	18th May 2023
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"UNE Representative" - Means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

"AQF" - Means the Australian Qualifications Framework.

"Records Management System (RMS)" - The University of New England installation of HP TRIM, or equivalent replacement system, under the control of the Records Management Office.

"Course" - Course means a syllabus, a curriculum, a training package, units of study, or structured workplace learning, the successful completion of which leads to the conferral of an award on the student by the University (including but not limited to a regulated qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework).

"Unit" - Is a part of a course with a code, title and credit point value for which a result is recorded on a student's academic record.

"Effective Date" - means the Rule/Policy takes effect on the day on which it is published, or such later day as may be specified in the policy document.