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## Purpose

This procedure sets out the processes for the preparation and submission of professional accreditation documentation to professional bodies and the requirements around the follow up and monitoring of any subsequent recommendations for the improvement of courses.

## Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
<a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), 2021</a>	Domain 7 – Representation, Information and Information Management	N/A
<a href="#">Quality Assurance Policy</a>	1. Quality Assurance	All

## Background

The primary purpose of professional accreditation is to ensure that graduates of specific courses are professionally qualified and competent.

During the process of professional accreditation, a course is assessed against predetermined criteria within certain specified categories (for example, objectives, learning outcomes, curriculum content, resourcing, staff profile), with the aim of reaching a conclusion about whether the course meets minimum standards set by the relevant professional body. To facilitate this process, the University will:

- a) recognise the independence of all organisations conducting the professional accreditation of a course;

- b) support the seeking of professional accreditation of a course where and whenever such accreditation improves the quality of a course and/or enhances the employment opportunities of graduates;
- c) require that all issues identified through professional accreditation are reported to the appropriate University committee(s);
- d) maintain a schedule of all impending professional accreditations;
- e) maintain accurate records of past accreditations;
- f) require that information obtained from professional accreditations is available for quality assurance purposes, particularly periodic course reviews and external assessments; and
- g) require that issues identified through accreditation processes are addressed promptly and systematically.

The accreditation processes used by the various professional bodies vary significantly. Some are very formal, involve lengthy site visits and require significant input by staff members, whereas others are less formal and involve limited staff input.

For this reason, it is recommended that Colleges consult with professional bodies about specific professional accreditation standards and requirements well in advance of the preparation of the accreditation submission and ensure that guidance from the relevant body is current.

The process typically involves an accreditation submission, which details the ways in which the externally mandated standards are being met by the course, and this is often followed by a physical site visit by an accrediting team of discipline experts.

Some accreditation activities, such as annual safety registrations, may not be subject to the detailed approval processes outlined in this procedure. Advice should be sought on this from the Academic Division.

Although the University has no control over the actual accreditation process of an individual professional body, the University requires that this procedure be observed for all courses being accredited.

## Procedure

### 1. Accreditation process overview

In summary, the professional accreditation process involves the preparation and provision of an accreditation submission to the relevant professional body (according to their timeframe and specifications), followed by site visits and meetings with University staff. The professional body then provides the University with an accreditation report, to which we provide a formal response, develop action plans, implement these initiatives, and report outcomes to University committees. This process is expressed in Schedule A.

### 2. Professional accreditation register

The University will maintain a register of completed and planned professional accreditation exercises. This register will be reviewed at least twice annually by Heads of Schools and Institutes. This responsibility is non-delegable.

Academic Quality and Standards will contact each Executive Dean during semester two (2) of each year to confirm the scheduled accreditations for the following calendar year and record any postponements or deferrals.

A copy of any professional accreditation guidelines from the professional body should be supplied to Academic Quality and Standards and updated as new versions are created.

### **3. Accreditation submissions to professional bodies**

Accreditation submissions must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) before submission to the professional body. (Note that some professional bodies may require additional authorisation, for example from the Vice-Chancellor.)

Documentation required by professional bodies will be prepared within the relevant School or Institute and the final draft will be endorsed by the Executive Dean.

The Executive Dean will ensure that a copy of the draft submission is provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) at least four (4) weeks prior to the planned sign-off, to provide the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) with opportunity to provide comment on the submission and to ensure that senior management are aware of the accreditation.

### **4. Site visits**

Individual Schools and Institutes will coordinate site visits and meetings with staff in accordance with the requirements of the professional body.

On completion of the site visit, the members of the professional body will meet with the Executive Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) to discuss any major issues identified during the visit.

### **5. Accreditation reports, responses and action plans**

Upon completion of the accreditation submission, the professional body considers the information that it has received and typically provides both an outcome notification and a report that identifies any issues that may need attention by the University to satisfy the requirements for accreditation.

An outcome of full accreditation without conditions may be obtained, and there may be no issues that require addressing with the professional body.

Upon receipt of the accreditation report from the professional body that does contain issues to be addressed, the relevant Executive Dean will ensure that a response addressing any issues is forwarded to the professional body in the timeframe specified by the professional body.

Within three (3) months of receiving the report, the Executive Dean will ensure that an action plan to resolve any identified issues is developed and implemented/addressed by the end of the following major study period.

### **6. Communication of outcomes within the University**

The outcome/s of any professional accreditation process must be notified to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) as soon as they are received from the professional body.

The Executive Dean will ensure that copies of the outcome notification and/or accreditation report are provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Academic Quality and Standards at [academic.quality@utas.edu.au](mailto:academic.quality@utas.edu.au) at the same time as they are provided by the professional body.

The College's response and action plan (if required) must also be provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Academic Quality and Standards at [academic.quality@utas.edu.au](mailto:academic.quality@utas.edu.au) when completed.

Periodic summary reports on accreditation outcomes will be provided to University Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Senate by the Academic Division.

## 7. Marketing of accredited courses

Heads of Schools and Institutes have a responsibility to ensure that all publicly available statements about the professional accreditation status of courses are accurate and in no way misleading to students.

Colleges, Schools, and Institutes must not state that a course is professionally accredited in any marketing or promotional material (including, but not limited to, the Course and Unit Handbook, or other University web page, flyer/brochure) until professional accreditation confirmation is received from the professional body.

If a course or major is provisionally accredited, due to its relative newness and the lack of a representative graduate cohort, this provisional status must be made explicit to students.

### Related procedures

[Compliance Breach Management Procedure for Heads of Schools, Institutes and Executive Deans](#)

### Versions

<u>Version</u>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Business Owner/s</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
1	Approved	Provost	Academic Executive Director	14 October 2021
2	Minor amendment approved (position title changes)	Director Governance and Compliance	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	16 May 2022
2	Reconfirmed, unchanged	Pro Vice-Chancellor Strategic Projects	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	16 May 2023
3	Approved	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Excellence) as delegate for Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	14 May 2024

Schedule A: Process Diagram

