



Higher Education Course Design and Development Policy

Effective Date: 2025.12.08

Last Reviewed: 2025.11.13

Version: v2.1 2026.10.02

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the guidelines for designing and developing a new Alphacrucis University College (AC) course of study.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Higher Education (HE) awards.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):** the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australia's education and training system, providing a comprehensive framework that sets out the levels and types of qualifications offered across the higher education, vocational education and training (VET), and school sectors.
- 3.2. **Accreditation Committee (A/C):** a sub-committee of the Academic Board responsible for overseeing the design, development, and approval process for new courses of study.
- 3.3. **Constructive Alignment:** an educational design principle where learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment tasks are aligned to support systematic student learning.
- 3.4. **Course Development Committee (CDC):** a committee appointed by the Accreditation Committee to design and develop a new course of study.
- 3.5. **Course of Study:** a sequence of learning that leads to the awarding of a qualification or part thereof, such as a degree, diploma, or certificate.
- 3.6. **Double Degree:** an approved study pathway that enables students to undertake two distinct qualifications concurrently, allowing for a reduced combined course duration while meeting the requirements of both awards.
- 3.7. **ESOS Framework:** the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework, including the National Code, which sets out the legal framework governing delivery of education to overseas students in Australia on a student visa.
- 3.8. **Graduate Attributes:** the knowledge, skills, and values that AC aims to develop in all its graduates through its educational offerings.
- 3.9. **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:** the minimum standards that all Australian higher education providers must meet to be registered and offer accredited courses.
- 3.10. **Independent Expert (Course Review):** an external academic or professional with no material relationship to AC, appointed to conduct an objective and comprehensive review of a new course of study.
- 3.11. **LOTE (Languages Other Than English):** courses delivered and assessed in a language other than English.
- 3.12. **Nested Course of Study:** a lower-level accredited qualification that is fully embedded within a higher-level course of study, allowing for multiple entry and/or exit points while meeting AQF requirements as a stand-alone award.
- 3.13. **Professional Course Accreditation:** the formal approval granted by a professional or regulatory authority to a course that meets specific professional standards and requirements.



4. Policy Statement

4.1. Development of a New Course of Study

4.1.1. The development of new courses of study is overseen by the Accreditation Committee as a sub-committee of Academic Board. All new course design and development at AC adheres to the following principles:

- a. alignment with the AC Strategic Plan or other strategic priorities;
- b. integration of the AC Graduate Attributes, considered in developing the course rationale, course structure, course learning outcomes and subject outlines;
- c. compliance with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the ESOS Framework, and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021;
- d. requirements of professional accrediting bodies where applicable, as well as any other relevant national or international protocols;
- e. compliance with AC's academic standards and approach to pedagogy; and
- f. systematic development and advancement of students' knowledge and skills through a scaffolded design of assessment tasks demonstrated through the constructive alignment between outcomes and assessments.

4.2. Provisions Related to Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Course Delivery

4.2.1. The development of new courses of study in LOTE is permitted if the following conditions are met:

- a. support systems for students are available in the language of delivery; and
- b. the specific subjects being delivered have been translated, the translation has been verified, and evidence of that verification has been submitted to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

4.2.2. The following principles apply to all courses delivered in LOTE:

- a. all students enrolling in subjects delivered in LOTE must demonstrate capacity in the language of instruction prior to commencement;
- b. where there is an equivalent English course available at AC, the development of a course in LOTE shall be based on and dynamically equivalent to the existing English subject or course in: admission; learning outcomes; assessment; resources; and student information and services;
- c. all courses and subjects will comply with AQF requirements, and other state and federal quality criteria as required;
- d. all AC testamurs and transcripts of results will be produced in English;
- e. all learning resources must be of an equivalent standard as an English equivalent;
- f. AC faculty involved in LOTE delivery will normally be fluent in both English and the language of delivery and assessment and will be competent in the discipline area of the course.

4.3. Nested Awards

4.3.1. AC recognises the value of nesting lower-level courses of study within existing higher education courses to allow multiple entry and/or exit points for the higher qualification. A nested course of study must meet all the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework as a stand-alone qualification in its own right, including the specifications for each level of the AQF.



4.4. Development of New Specialisations and New Courses

4.4.1. Where necessary, new specialisations within an existing accredited course, or a new course of study, may be proposed to respond to changing market conditions and needs. Academic Board may accredit an existing course with an alternative title to meet the needs of AC third parties.

4.5. Transition Arrangements

4.5.1. A new course replacing another course and all variations to courses must be accompanied by a transition plan for continuing students. Transition arrangements must ensure students are able to continue their studies without disruption to their duration of study. Program Directors are responsible for communicating transition details to affected students.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. **Academic Board (AB):** The AB is responsible for approving a new course of study; reviewing and endorsing courses for submission to relevant external accrediting agencies where necessary; and, if necessary, appointing an ad hoc panel (including an external member) to make approval decisions.

5.2. **Accreditation Committee (A/C):** The A/C is responsible for overseeing the design, development, and approval process of all new courses of study; reviewing course proposals and recommending approval or revisions to the Academic Board and Executive; and appointing the Course Development Committee (CDC).

5.3. **Chair, Accreditation Committee:** The Chair of the Accreditation Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring timely review and revision of the policy in line with AC's Policy Development and Review Policy.

5.4. **Council:** Council is responsible for providing final approval for new courses of study based on recommendations from the Executive and Academic Board; and authorising additions to AC's scope of offerings.

5.5. **Course Development Committee (CDC):** The CDC is responsible for developing all components of the proposed course of study in accordance with relevant external Standards and AC guidelines; coordinating external reviews; and ensuring alignment with AQF levels, AC Graduate Attributes, and other academic standards.

5.6. **Head of School (HoS):** HoS are responsible for submitting a proposal for a new course of study to the Accreditation Committee; participating in Course Development Committees (usually as Chair); and submitting professional accreditation applications where required.

6. Procedures

6.1. Proposal

6.1.1. A proposal for a new course of study (including nested courses) must first be submitted by the Head of School to the Accreditation Committee using the Course of Study Development Proposal Template. This proposal should include:

- a. proposed course of study title(s);
- b. proposed start date;
- c. proposed delivery sites, including existing and/or potential new sites;
- d. proposed delivery options, including whether for domestic and/or international students, online or offshore delivery, and language of delivery;
- e. proposed rationale, including how the proposed course aligns to AC's Strategic Plan, employment opportunities for students and graduates, and professional accreditation details if applicable;
- f. viability of delivery, including a business case for the development of the course (including market research and costs associated with development and delivery).



6.2. Approval to Proceed

- 6.2.1. If the proposal is accepted by Accreditation Committee, it is sent to both Executive and Academic Board for review. If course development is recommended by both Executive and Academic Board, it will then proceed to Council. It will then either be approved or not approved by Council.
- 6.2.2. If a course of study is approved by Council, Accreditation Committee will be tasked with overseeing the development of the course. Accreditation Committee will appoint a Course Development Committee (CDC) which will usually be chaired by the Head of School (or delegate) and consist of disciplinary experts from the relevant School.

6.3. Design of Course of Study

- 6.3.1. The CDC is responsible for overseeing the design and development of all elements of the proposed course. This may include delegation of the development of components, such as the development of subject outlines, to staff outside the committee. Subject outlines will be externally peer-reviewed by an academic with disciplinary expertise.

6.4. Independent External Course Review

- 6.4.1. AC will appoint a current independent expert to conduct a holistic and comprehensive review of all new courses of study. The independent expert must hold academic qualifications and/or professional experience relevant to the course; must not have any material dealings with AC; and must not have a direct or indirect material financial interest with AC.

7. Responsible for Implementation

- 7.1. Chair, Accreditation Committee.
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8. Related AC Policies or Documents, Standards and Legislations

8.1. AC Policies or Documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following AC policies available at ac.edu.au/ppm/:

- 8.1.1. Course Review Policy;
- 8.1.2. Graduate Attributes Policy;
- 8.1.3. Research Ethics Policy.

8.2. Relevant Standards and Legislation

- 8.2.1. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021;
 - 8.2.2. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF);
 - 8.2.3. Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework;
 - 8.2.4. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.
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9. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee on a regular basis in accordance with the Policy Development and Review Policy. Any proposed changes will be tabled at the Accreditation Committee for endorsement and Academic Board for approval. Revisions will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders upon approval.

10. History of Approval and Amendments

Policy owner	Chair, Accreditation Committee
Policy category	Academic: Course Design
Policy status	Approved



Approval Body	Academic Board
Endorsement Body	Accreditation Committee
Approval Date	2025.12.08
Last Review Date	2025.11.13
History of Policy Amendments	
V1 2022.12.20	Original policy approved.
V2 2025.06.24	Major revision; updated LOTE provisions, nested awards, and roles.
V2.1 2026.10.02	Reformatting changes

Add a new row for each version of the policy. Do not remove previous changes.

Appendices

- N/A