

APPROVAL AND ACCREDITATION OF NEW AWARDS POLICY

Approved	Academic Board
Approval Date(s) (from most recent)	01/11/2021
Date for Review	2026
Responsible Officer	Academic Director
Author(s) and Role(s) from most recent	D Hall (Quality Officer), P Bolt (Academic Director)
Related Documents (explicitly cross-referenced)	Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) Credit Policy Curriculum Policy Consultant's Report on New Awards
Higher Education Standards (2015)	3.1, 5.1.1, 5.3.1-4, 6.3.2(c,f)
National Code (2018) (if directly relevant)	11.1-4

1. Introduction

Sydney College of Divinity currently has self-accrediting authority for awards in AQF levels 5-10, and in ASCED Narrow Code 0917: Philosophy and Religious Studies. This means that SCD is able to develop new courses, and undertake significant revisions of existing courses, without seeking approval from TEQSA. This also means that SCD assumes full responsibility for quality assurance in such developments and revisions, particularly that they comply with the requirements of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (2021)*.

This policy provides guidance for the development and introduction of new awards, to ensure that they are consistent with SCD's mission and goals, and with its established policies.

2. Principles

2.1 SCD will continue to identify and develop new awards as part of SCD's mission and strategic plan.

2.2 SCD's primary purpose is to offer a broad theological education to those seeking to prepare for Christian service. SCD will however, investigate the potential for offering awards in areas of specialisation, which may address the needs of certain niches within the Christian community.

2.2 Approvals of new awards are given to make use of new opportunities for theological education, in response to identified needs, or to proactively further the Christian mission according to innovative strategies.

2.3 Approvals of new awards are based on a thorough assessment of their value in the context of theological education, and of possible risks associated with their introduction.

2.4 Awards offered by the Sydney College of Divinity will be of high educational quality, be sustainable, and be in line with SCD's mission, values and goals.

2.5 Awards offered by the SCD will be based on sound curriculum design in line with current educational theory and practice, and be consistent with SCD's Curriculum Policy.

2.6 Awards offered by the SCD will be subject to ongoing review as part of quality assurance and compliance with the Higher Education Standards.

3. Policy

3.1 Proposals for new awards

3.1.1 A proposal for a new award may be made by any SCD stakeholder who identifies the strategic importance and/or the need for a new area of theological education to be developed within the scope of the SCD, and the opportunity to do so. Such stakeholders typically include:

3.1.1.1 Approved representatives of the SCD's teaching bodies

3.1.1.2 Members of the Office of the Dean, such as the Dean, Academic Director, Research Director

3.1.1.3 Members of the Academic Board, SCD Council or relevant committees

3.1.1.4 Others within the broader SCD network who have the position and capacity to make such proposals

3.1.2 Proposals for new awards will set out a case for acceptance that includes

3.1.2.1 A statement of the rationale for such an award, in terms of strategic significance or need

3.1.2.2 A statement of how the proposed award will meet that rationale

3.1.2.3 A statement of how the award supports SCD's mission, goals and values

3.1.2.4 A description of the award's design (see 3.1.4 below)

3.1.2.5 Evidence that all possible planning issues have been, or are being, considered

3.1.2.6 Evidence for the viability and sustainability of the award (e.g. Accredited Faculty; Student Numbers: Administrative Capacity)

3.1.3 Proposals for new awards will be addressed through the Academic Director to the SCD Dean and the Discipline Coordinators Committee for consideration, endorsement and further development.

3.1.4 Proposals for new awards will include draft regulations according to the SCD's *New Award Proposal* template

3.1.5 Proposals for new awards related to fields that do not have an inherent connection with the ASCED Code 0197: Philosophy and Religious Studies.

3.1.6 New awards related to areas of professional specialisation should aim to provide candidates already qualified in those areas with theological studies that help them apply their professional training in a Christian context. These should also include scope for recognition of prior learning in the area of professional training, consistent with SCD's credit policy.

3.2 Approval of new awards

3.2.1 The Discipline Coordinators Committee will oversee the development of new awards towards a form suitable for presentation to the Academic Board.

3.2.2 Upon recommendation from the Discipline Coordinators Committee the Academic Board will have responsibility for the approval of new awards.

3.3 Accreditation of new awards

3.3.1 Once final approval has been given by the Academic Board and Council, the new award will be an accredited SCD award.

3.3.2 Accreditation will be for a period of 7 years

3.4 Commencement of new awards

3.4.1 A new award will commence when the teaching body/bodies intending to deliver the award have been approved to do so

3.4.2 A new award cannot commence until sufficient time has been given for information about the new award to be made public, and for new students to enrol

3.5 Review of new awards

3.5.1 A new award will be reviewed after its first year of delivery.

3.5.2 Following its first-year review, the award will be subject to the normal review process governing all SCD awards.

3.6 Non-award course Units

Non-award course units that may lead to admission to an award require approval by the Academic Board.

4. Revision or Development Process

4.1 The proposer prepares a draft set of regulations using the Award Regulations template and submits these regulations to the Academic Director

4.2 The Academic Director informs the Academic Dean of each SCD Teaching Body of the proposed new award and invites expressions of interest in its development

4.3 The Academic Director appoints a consultant to review the draft award. The Consultant will

- 4.3.1 be external to the SCD;
- 4.3.2 normally be qualified at doctoral level or equivalent;
- 4.3.3 have recognised academic and/or professional expertise in Course Design;
- 4.3.4 complete the SCD form 'Consultant's Report on New Awards'.

4.4 The Academic Director will provide the appointed Consultant(s) with the following documents:

- 4.4.1 the SCD form 'Consultant's Report on New Awards';
- 4.4.2 an overview of other SCD awards;
- 4.4.3 a rationale for the proposed award;
- 4.4.4 draft regulations for the proposed award;
- 4.4.5 a Schedule listing all approved SCD course units to be utilised by the proposed award, AND new units to be designed and accredited.

4.5 Upon receipt of the completed Consultant(s) Report form, the SCD Academic Director will forward to the Discipline Coordinators Committee:

- 4.5.1 the original draft of the regulations for the proposed new award together with the rationale sent to the Consultant(s);
- 4.5.2 a copy of the completed Consultant report;
- 4.5.3 a response to the Consultant Report recommendations;
- 4.5.4 and the final (draft) regulations.

4.6 The Academic Director will report to the Discipline Coordinators Committee, offering a series of recommendations graded in the following manner, together with notes, that the award be:

A = Approved as is

B = Approved with minor alterations

C = Reviewed and clarified by the Discipline Coordinators Committee

D = Returned to teaching body with comments for further development

4.6 The Discipline Coordinators Committee, upon consideration of the report of the Academic Director, will make a recommendation to the Academic Board when it is satisfied that the proposed new award meets the standard for accreditation.

5. Related Documents

Approval to Deliver New Awards Policy (English)

Approval to Deliver New Awards Policy (Korean)

Credit Policy

Curriculum Policy

6. Monitoring and Review

6.1 This policy will be reviewed no more than five years after its approval date

6.2 This policy may be amended as required

6.3 Reviews and amendments of this policy will be undertaken in light of current industry practice, up-to-date information from credible sources, and/or consultation with those having expertise in the field.