

APPROVAL TO DELIVER NEW AWARDS POLICY

Approved	Council/Academic Board
Approval Date(s) (from most recent)	21/05/2018, 05/11/2018, 03/09/2018
Date for Review (no more than five years from last approval)	2023
Responsible Officer	Academic Director
Author(s) and Role(s) from most recent	D. Speed (Dean), P. Bolt (Academic Director).
Related Documents (explicitly cross-referenced)	SCD Handbook
Higher Education Standards (2021)	5.1
National Code (2018) (if directly relevant)	

CONTEXT

Coverage

This document pertains to the English-medium coursework awards, which are delivered by the Member Institutions (MIs) of the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD). SCD's Korean-medium courses are covered by a separate, parallel policy: their development and delivery by the SCD's Korean School of Theology do not involve the MIs.

Memorandum of Understanding

Every Member Institution (MI), when it becomes a part of SCD, signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SCD that includes a list of the English-medium courses it is approved by the SCD Council to deliver. Council's determination is based on the due diligence and recommendation of the Institutional Membership Committee in respect of academic, institutional, and financial factors. While the MI may choose not to deliver a course at any time and so notify the Office of the Dean, it must seek and be granted approval to add more courses to the list.

Once additional courses are approved from an academic point of view by Academic Board and the recommendation of Academic Board has been accepted by Council, alongside its own approval from an institutional and financial point of view, a sheet is added to the original MoU, containing the relevant information and signed by the Dean and the MI Principal concerned.

Ongoing Capacity of the MI

Strategies to assure the ongoing capacity of the MI to deliver the awards agreed in the MoU at the standard expected by SCD are set down in the MoU, which requires the MI to submit two key documents annually:

1. Reports for the previous academic year detailing the following:

- faculty, their teaching responsibilities, qualifications, status (full-time, part-time, sessional), and academic position occupied (for example, Principal, Academic Dean);
 - professional development activities for every accredited SCD faculty member including sessional faculty, with indications of institutional expenditure on professional development;
 - student numbers by award level;
 - number of books in the MI's own library and number of accessions in the previous twelve months relevant to the teaching of SCD awards, *and/or* details of any other library (libraries) made systematically available to students as a supplement to/substitute for the MI's own library;
 - student access to relevant IT;
 - administrative staff engaged in the delivery of the SCD award(s) and responsibilities.
2. An annual report for the previous year consisting of the audited financial statements for the previous financial year (including the balance sheet), the budget for the current financial year, and statements regarding long-term financial plans once approved by the governing body of the Member Institution (to be examined by the SCD Audit Committee).

In practice, the first requirement is met through submission to the Academic Director, each semester, of the Register of Teachers. The Academic Director identifies any significant issues and pursues these with the MI.

The ongoing capacity of the MI is assured also by the following regular exercises, whose outcomes are reported to Academic Board for any further action:

- Institutional Academic Moderation: every five years, by a mainly external panel
- Discipline Moderation: one discipline each year, by an external panel (Christian Life and Ministry is moderated across two years)
- checks of the Course Unit Booklets: each semester, by the MI Academic Dean reporting to the Discipline Coordinators, with select checking by the Discipline Coordinators
- monitoring of all students' results: each semester, by the Coursework Committee.

The second requirement is met through submission of the MI's annual audited report when that becomes available. The Chief Operating Officer identifies any issues and reports the situation to the Audit Committee, which undertakes any appropriate further action.

Historical Developments in Approval to Add Courses

The TEQSA Accreditation process to which SCD was subject for all its awards prior to 22 June 2016 included satisfactory demonstration of the capacity of MIs to deliver particular SCD awards. With the granting of Self-Accrediting Authority (SAA) to SCD in 2016, SCD recognizes that it has an increased responsibility for assuring the quality of the delivery of its awards, both the previously existing awards whose content and delivery were previously accredited by TEQSA and are now covered by SAA and the awards developed under SAA.

New courses have been proposed, processed, and approved for addition to the SCD curriculum at a higher rate than prior to gaining SAA, since the process leading to approval of new awards by SCD's own Academic Board provides the opportunity both to introduce more specialist awards and to provide for the study of wider concerns within ASCED 0917 with a less costly and burdensome process than that of applying for Accreditation by TEQSA.

The *SCD Handbook* previously listed the MIs delivering each award within the award's Regulations on the basis of the MoU together with TEQSA's acceptance of demonstrated capacity. The Academic Board at its meeting on 9 July 2018, however, ruled that award Regulations should not include a list of the MIs delivering them. At the same time, the Board affirmed that MIs should apply in writing to the Board for permission to deliver new awards.

This latter provision applies to the delivery of new awards under SAA the previous practice whereby an MI seeking to add to its approved list in the MoU a further existing award, 'new' to the MI operation, sought the permission of Academic Board directly. With the increased responsibility for quality assurance under SAA, the increased development of new awards under SAA, and the likelihood of multiple MIs seeking to deliver any new award, it is appropriate to establish a specific policy and governance procedure for processing applications and approvals both to deliver the new awards and to add other previously existing awards 'new' to the MI.

POLICY

1. In order to deliver either a new SCD award or an existing SCD award not previously listed in its MoU with SCD, the MI must have the approval of Academic Board from an academic point of view and of Council from an institutional and financial point of view.
2. The MI will seek these approvals via a letter to the Dean, setting out the proposal with regard to the matters specified in the *Delivering New Academic Awards Procedures*.
3. Academic Board and Council will consider the proposal, together with a report on the proposal from the Dean, from their respective points of view.
4. When the proposal has been fully approved, the Dean will arrange for the appropriate amendment to the MI's MoU with SCD and the relevant notifications to TEQSA.