

COURSE REVIEW POLICY AND METHODOLOGY

A. Underlying Principles

All courses and awards of the Sydney College of Divinity are developed in accordance with the SCD Strategic Plan, particularly its Vision, Mission and Values statements.

Curriculum development refers to all aspects of the formal curriculum process including review of the current situation; development of aims and objectives; decisions on content, structure and sequencing; detailing learning activities and teaching methodologies; developing assessment strategies, evaluation and review procedures. Therefore, the College has established various fundamental principles which undergird all aspects of the development and review of courses.

Principles Undergirding the Curriculum are:

- Its development is informed by:
 - the most recent scholarship,
 - church and ministry needs,
 - graduate attributes,
 - the contribution of the theological disciplines to society in general,
 - student experience,
 - the provision for lifelong learning and reflective practice
- Progression through the awards leads to higher levels of scholarship and more independent scholarly research by students
- The curriculum allows for articulation into higher awards
- There is a recognition of and respect for the faith dimension in the study of theology and related disciplines
- There is recognition of and respect for the denominational nature of the study of theology and where applicable related disciplines
- The curriculum accommodates the requirements for adequate ministry training in the particular denominations by ensuring that the overall mission of the Sydney College of Divinity and the particular expression of mission in each Teaching Body is given localised expression in the interpretation of the curriculum by each Teaching Body.
- All aspects of the curriculum are adequately resourced, including appropriately qualified faculty and fair and even workloads for faculty and students
- Whilst the curriculum is designed to provide maximum flexibility, it demonstrates breadth, depth and coherence of content and process
- Diversity in the student bodies is respected and valued.

Principles Underpinning Course Units included in the Curriculum are:

- All course units are available to relevant students from all Teaching Bodies
- Foundational units as appropriate are taught across Teaching Bodies
- Each course unit is taught at an equivalent academic standard across the Teaching Bodies
- There is no unnecessary duplication of coursework units
- Majors and sub-majors show progression through the discipline and cover questions of methodology
- There is opportunity for students to undertake research during coursework programs
- There is sufficient flexibility to take advantage of visiting lecturers, experts and the like

In light of the above principles, individual coursework units should:

- Introduce students to the best contemporary scholarship in the field, both denominational and interdenominational where applicable
- Utilise Australian resources and research where possible
- Exemplify a particular methodology/ies while informing students of other methodologies in the field
- Build the research skills of students
- Be named in a way that directly indicates their content and place in the curriculum rather than a name which is designed primarily for marketing purposes.

B. Roles in Curriculum Development and Review

Curriculum development and review involves the:

- Academic Board and two of its committees: the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Standards Committee
- Teaching Bodies of the College
- Academic Faculty Members within their Respective Disciplines
- Director (Coursework)
- Discipline Coordinators
- External review panels and consultants

Responsibility for the structure, content, development and review of the curriculum belongs to the Academic Board and its sub-committees, in particular the Learning and Teaching Committee, the Academic Standards Committee, with additional input from the Distance Education Committee, the Professional Development Committee and the Libraries Committee. These committees oversee the development and review of the curriculum, particularly through the processes of reaccreditation.

With regard to new course units these committees ensure that any new coursework unit aligns with the requirements as listed in Part A above and that it

- does not duplicate current offerings,
- makes an ongoing contribution to the offerings within a Discipline or meets ministry training needs, and
- has been appropriately benchmarked.

The Teaching Bodies of the College propose new coursework units to the Academic Standards Committee, including the responsibility for appropriate benchmarking through consultation. Any new units should be developed with the approval of the Discipline Coordinators in light of

the criteria that will be applied to them by the Academic Standards Committee. Teaching Bodies have a responsibility to induct members of the academic faculty into the nature and structure of the curriculum and train them to teach and develop it.

The members of the academic faculty teach within the Discipline/s for which they are accredited in light of their qualifications and expertise. As the teachers in the Discipline they have a collective responsibility to uphold the integrity of the curriculum, to maintain the standard of scholarship, to use and develop Australian resources, and to apply denominational and methodological approaches within the broader context of the Discipline as a whole. This responsibility is best met through regular contact and occasional meetings.

The role of the Director (Coursework) is to maintain and enhance the quality of the College's coursework programs. In particular, the Director sits on the Academic Board and its Academic Standards Committee and, with the assistance of Discipline Coordinators, coordinates the development, implementation and review of the curriculum. The Director also has oversight of the training of faculty in the teaching and development of the curriculum. The Director (Coursework) is a member of the benchmarking group of Directors of Learning and Teaching (currently comprising Australian College of Theology, Sydney College of Divinity and University of Divinity), which meets at least annually to consider all aspect of course benchmarking.

Discipline Coordinators are available to offer advice to the teachers in Teaching Bodies on the development of new coursework units and the requirements for teaching the curriculum. The Discipline Coordinators have been directed by the Academic Board to conduct a continuous monitoring of the implementation of newly accredited awards, which they do at their quarterly meetings with the Director (Coursework) and by means of annual Discipline based Professional Development Days.

External review panels are convened and external consultants are engaged at pivotal times in the review process.

C. Process of Review

Given the extended period of seven years of course accreditation (2014-2020), curriculum review will involve two phases: continuous monitoring and review; and formal re-accreditation review and development.

Continuous monitoring and review has been delegated by the Academic Board to the Discipline Coordinators working in conjunction with the Director (Coursework). The Academic Board regularly reviews the College's Academic Plan and gives direction and makes recommendations to its various committees and the Discipline Coordinators. Course monitoring and review is thus a standing item on the agenda of the Discipline Coordinators' quarterly meetings. This panel is informed by the Director (Coursework) of any concerns, requests or benchmarking issues that have arisen from TEQSA, teaching bodies, faculty or external consultants, moderators and benchmarkers. The task of this review process is to monitor the implementation of the new awards to gauge satisfaction and suitability levels and to make informed recommendations from time to time to the Academic Board and, in particular, to give leadership to the formal re-accreditation phase. Courses are monitored to ensure, *inter alia*, that:

- any new coursework unit proposed by a teaching body aligns with the conditions of accreditation and with the College's principles of approving new units
- any coursework unit not taught over a three year period is reviewed
- any coursework unit not taught over a five year period is deleted from the curriculum unless there is a compelling reason to retain it.

The Discipline Coordinators present an Annual Work Plan to the Academic Board and report to the Academic Board at least four times per year.

The formal re-accreditation review and development phase will flow out of the continuous review process, with a full curriculum review undertaken with a view to each re-accreditation. The Discipline Coordinators will provide an interim report to the Academic Board in the third year of the accreditation cycle on observations and emergent curriculum issues. Then, after four-five years of implementation and following further advice from the Discipline Coordinators, wide-ranging consultation and discussion with all stakeholders - SCD committees, faculty and students; significant church leaders; external benchmarkers and consultants – will take place with a view to further refinement and development of courses for further accreditation. The Academic Board will take oversight of this process, which will be largely managed by the Director (Coursework).

The overall review process will be further informed by the biennial SCD Learning and Teaching Conference successfully inaugurated in 2013.

D. Review Timeline

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Action</i> | <i>Responsibility</i> |
|-------------|---|---|
| 2014 | Continuous monitoring of course implementation in teaching bodies (ongoing) | Director (Coursework); Discipline Coordinators |
| | Mapping of current offerings in each Discipline (ongoing) | Director (Coursework) |
| | External Moderation of specified Discipline under new criterion-based assessment (annually) | Director (Coursework); Discipline Coordinators; Academic Standards Committee |
| | Benchmarking with ACTh, UD (annually) | Director (Coursework); Director (Research) |
| | Learning and Teaching Conference | Director (Research); Director (Coursework) |
| 2015 | Discipline based colloquium | Discipline Coordinators |
| | Review of Academic Plan | Academic Board |
| 2016 | Interim Review Report to Academic Board | Discipline Coordinators |
| | Learning and Teaching Conference | Director (Research); Director (Coursework) |
| 2017 | Discipline based colloquium to discuss the integrity of the offerings in light of the “mapping exercise” and, in light of the Curriculum Policy, to make recommendations for changes and improvements | Director (Coursework); Discipline Coordinators |
| | Review of Discipline rationales, coordination and coherence | Director (Coursework); Discipline Coordinators |
| 2018 | Commence informal consultation | Academic Board and its committees; Teaching Bodies: faculty, students, church leaders |
| | Strategic Planning Day review of courses | The Dean; Directors; Strategic Planning Committee |
| | Discipline based meetings (ongoing) | Discipline Coordinators |
| | Learning and Teaching Conference | Director (Research); Director (Coursework) |
| | Commence external consultation process | The Dean; Director (Coursework); Academic Board; Discipline Coordinators |
| | Draft awards for accreditation | Director (Coursework); Discipline Coordinators; Academic Board and its committees |
| 2019 | Design award structures and develop required course units | Director (Coursework); Discipline Coordinators; Teaching Bodies, faculty; Academic Board and its committees |
| | Convene external review panels | Academic Board; Director (Coursework) |

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| | Submit courses for re-accreditation | The Dean; Directors; Council |
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| Author (Role) | Les Ball (Director of Coursework) Responsible from 2015: Evelyn Hibbert (Academic Director) |
| Approval (Date) | Academic Board (3 March 2014) |
| Date for Review | 3 March 2019 |
| Amendments | |