



## **COURSE DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Policy**

The objective of this policy is to provide a framework for the design, development and evaluation of courses delivered by SGA ("the Institution") within the context of continuous improvement and quality improvement.

### **Course Design and Development**

In designing courses, Study Group Australia Pty Ltd (SGA) adheres to the training and professional development standards indicated by academic research in its fields of expertise and by the standards and guidelines established by peer institutions of higher education, professional bodies and peak industry associations. In line with these principles courses are designed to:

- provide students with accredited qualifications in their chosen field of study;
- provide a critically reflective theoretical and experiential learning context;
- extend students' abilities to apply for and engage in a range of career options;
- integrate theory and practice in a dynamic learning environment;
- provide support to promote and foster personal and professional development.

To ensure quality in course design and content, courses are developed in consultation with a Course Advisory Committee which will be comprised of members from amongst the following constituencies:

- representatives from professional bodies and peak industry associations;
- academic staff from other higher education institutions;
- academic staff of the Institution;
- those with curriculum design and development expertise;
- graduates and enrolled students of the Institution.

The Course Advisory Committee is commissioned by the Academic Board to contribute advice and expertise to the initial development of courses and to support their ongoing review and monitoring.

A Course Advisory Committee assists in identifying need and demand for the course and to assist the Institution with industry and content specific advice and guidance in the development of courses.

Course development is grounded in an educational philosophy that emphasises the centrality of the learner within the learning process and which supports the personal and professional development of each student to foster innovation, critical thinking, and ethical and professional practice. SGA's courses are structured to enable students to expand their professional interests across a range of related disciplines and enhance their future employment prospects.

Courses are approved by the Academic Board before submission for accreditation.

### **Course Evaluation**

All courses offered by SGA are subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation of content and course delivery mechanisms.

### **Feedback Mechanisms**

SGA employs a range of quality assurance practices and mechanisms to inform the process of continual improvement to course delivery. These practices and mechanisms are formal and informal, internal and external. Processes for monitoring and evaluating courses and units of study include: student feedback; teacher feedback; review of assessment strategies at appropriate points throughout the delivery of courses; ongoing monitoring by the Course Advisory Committee; and oversighting by the Academic Board.

Feedback mechanisms include questions relating to unit delivery and assessment arrangements. Data collated will be analysed by the Teaching and Learning Committee and regular reports submitted to the Academic Board for review along with an implementation plan addressing recommendations emerging from student and teacher feedback. Implementation of recommendations will be the responsibility of the National Academic Director in liaison with relevant Course Coordinators.

*Student feedback:* Students provide continuous feedback throughout the duration of a course. Feedback Forms are distributed at the conclusion of each unit and at the conclusion of a course and are anonymous. The forms are analysed by the State Course Coordinators who, in turn, provides teachers with a comprehensive summary on feedback received from students.

*Student representation on the Teaching and Learning Committee:* SGA fosters input and feedback on course content and delivery mechanisms, and administrative and support systems via student representation on the Teaching and Learning Committee.

*Student Surveys:* SGA conducts surveys to ensure quality of service delivery and to respond proactively to issues identified. Enrolled students are surveyed annually. Feedback from surveys is analysed and reported on by the State Academic Directors. An annual survey of graduates of the Institution is also conducted by the National Academic Director, analysed and reported on to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

*Teacher Feedback:* Teachers are provided with opportunities for evaluation of the teaching and learning environment. Teachers have direct and frequent access to their peers and their State Course Coordinators to facilitate the exchange of information and to maximise communication. Academic and professional development meetings of teachers are opportunities to review policy and procedure in relation to course delivery and assessment. Teachers are supervised by the State Academic Directors in liaison with the State Course Coordinators on a regular basis and participate in annual performance appraisals.

*Moderation of Assessment:* Moderation of assessments is conducted to ensure consistency, equity and fairness in all teaching and learning practices.

*The Institution's Committee Structure:* SGA's committee structure is a further mechanism designed to ensure the quality of the Institution's courses, their delivery and their support infrastructure.

*Teaching and Learning Committee:* the Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for monitoring student progress; reviewing outcomes of student feedback; reviewing student results and reporting to the Academic Board. The Teaching and Learning Committee makes recommendations to the Academic Board on changes to existing courses, including matters pertaining to delivery.

*Course Advisory Committee:* This Committee reviews, monitors and assesses the achievement of the course's aims and learning outcomes and ensures the ongoing currency and relevance of curriculum and course objectives.

*Academic Board:* The Board is responsible for the achievement of educational objectives, the development and implementation of academic policy and monitoring of the teaching and learning environment.

### **Evaluation of Units of Study**

SGA is committed to the annual review of each unit of study offered in accredited courses. The Academic Board requires the Teaching and Learning Committee to implement annual feedback mechanisms to assess the content, learning and assessment methodologies, the quality and adequacy of information provided to students and teachers, and resources for each unit of study. The review should also take into account the

clarity of purpose of the unit within the course, and information related to grade distributions and student progress.

Units will be evaluated at least once each year according to the following procedure:

- student and teacher feedback will be collated on each unit of study annually;
- feedback results will be collated and analysed by the National Course Coordinators who will generate unit-specific reports which will be presented to the Teaching & Learning Committee;
- The Teaching & Learning Committee makes recommendations to the Academic Board for endorsement;
- Endorsed recommendations will be implemented by the National Academic Director in liaison with the National Course Coordinators.

### **Evaluation of Delivery and Assessment Methods**

Course delivery and assessment methods are evaluated systematically to:

- enable students to have access to fair and regular feedback on progress;
- provide students with opportunities to provide feedback on unit delivery and assessment arrangements;
- ensure that student feedback is considered and utilised by the Institution;
- employ internal and external benchmarking of assessment procedures and instruments including external marking or moderation by other higher education institutions.

Monitoring and reviewing course delivery and assessment enables SGA to:

- evaluate the quality of delivery methods;
- monitor and review the assessment system and instruments;
- identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, and strategies to address these;
- document improvements over time.

SGA is committed to ensuring that the processes for course delivery and the monitoring of assessment systems lead to continuous improvement. This is achieved through four quality assured procedures:

- the provision to students of fair and regular feedback on progress;
- the provision to students of opportunities to give feedback on unit delivery and assessment arrangements;
- the inclusion of input from student feedback in quality assurance mechanisms;
- the use of internal and external benchmarking of assessment procedures and instruments.

### **Annual Review of Courses**

SGA is committed to an annual process of monitoring and reviewing courses. This review process will be conducted by the National Course Coordinators under direction of the National Academic Director.

The annual review will generate a course-specific report for the relevant Course Advisory Committee based on data collated from student and teacher feedback. The annual review cycle will address the following criteria:

- student need and demand for the course;
- the range, depth, and currency of units of study available within the course;
- the quality and scope of course-related information provided to students;
- the appropriateness and flexibility of the course's methods of delivery in relation to student need and demand;
- analysis of significant trends drawn from student, graduate and teacher evaluation and feedback data;
- Statistical analysis including student performance, attrition rates, completion rates.

The National Academic Director is responsible for implementing annual course reviews in collaboration with the National Course Coordinators. Based on student and teacher feedback, the Course Coordinators will write an evaluation report for review by the relevant Course Advisory Committee. The Course Advisory Committee will decide on recommendations to be endorsed by the Academic Board. Endorsed recommendations will be implemented by the National Academic Director in liaison with the National Course Coordinators.

### **Biennial Benchmarking Review**

The Institution endeavours to form partnerships with other higher education institutions to develop and implement ongoing benchmarking relationships. To this end, the Academic Board requires the Teaching & Learning Committee to undertake a biennial benchmarking process and analysis to inform SGA, at a whole-of-institution level, of the following criteria:

- student need and demand for course offerings based on student enrolment statistics, market research and analysis;
- critical review and assessment of the range and diversity of units of study within a course;
- the adequacy and appropriateness of course-related information provided to students;
- ongoing evaluation of the modes of study and the course delivery method;
- comprehensive data analysis (based on unit and course feedback/evaluation data) to indicate significant trends.

The Teaching & Learning Committee will adhere to the following procedures when undertaking institutional benchmarking:

- the Academic Board will determine the benchmarking partner and specify the terms of reference for benchmarking activities to be undertaken by the Teaching & Learning Committee;
- benchmarking will include comparative data, performance indicators, and evaluate the processes by which results are collated and analysed;
- the benchmarking partner will work in collaboration with the Teaching & Learning Committee to develop a report highlighting course and curriculum-related strengths and/or weaknesses;
- the final report developed by the Teaching & Learning Committee will be presented to the Academic Board and will include recommendations for improvements and changes for the Board's endorsement.

### **Three-Yearly Review of Courses and Units of Study**

SGA is committed to a cyclical review of its courses by discipline-specific Course Advisory Committees. The objective of these reviews is to ensure that a particular course's aim, structure, units of study, learning objectives, assessment activities, resources, study modes and delivery methods are monitored, evaluated and changed when and where necessary according to the principles of continuous improvement and quality assurance.

A review of courses offered by the Institution is conducted by the Course Advisory Committee triennially in accordance with the course review schedule established by this Committee and approved by the Academic Board. Course review processes will focus on the following criteria:

- review of course aims, structure, units of study, learning objectives, assessment activities, resources, study modes and delivery methods with reference to the AQF level for the course;
- adequacy, currency, and appropriateness of assessment practices and criteria;
- accountability for the conduct and delivery of the course;
- quality of student and teacher support services;
- role of the course within the Institution's educational profile and its ongoing contribution to the mission of the Institution;
- The impact of similar courses on the Institution's course offerings by competitor institutions;
- The systematic collection and analysis of data relating to admission and enrolment statistics, deferral, withdrawal and retention rates, student results per unit of study, graduate employability, feedback from professional bodies and peer review processes.

Recommendations arising from the review process will be presented to the Academic Board for endorsement. Endorsed recommendations will be implemented by the National Academic Director in liaison with the National Course Coordinators.

### **Course and/or Delivery Change Process**

In reviewing courses and their units of study, reviewers (nominated Committee members and relevant academic staff) are provided with the following review guidelines to assist in monitoring and evaluation processes. The review guidelines provide a standardised format to facilitate analysis of data and the generation of critical issues for reporting purposes.

Reviewers should begin evaluation processes by asking the following questions:

- what are the intended outcomes of the course?
- how do course outcomes relate to external benchmarking standards, the AQF, and professional and industry body requirements?
- how do the units of study contribute to the overall aim of the course?

Reviewers should assess the planning and deliberative processes through which course outcomes were originally determined and how the course was designed to enable outcomes to be achieved. To this extent, reviewers should ask:

- how does the Institution ensure that course content enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- how does the Institution ensure that the design and organisation of the course is effective in promoting student learning and achievement of the intended learning outcomes?

Reviewers should consider the information available to students, teachers and staff. They should consider how unit specifications are used to promote understanding about the unit outcomes and the other strategies used to communicate information. Reviewers should ask:

- how are the intended outcomes for a unit and its constituent parts (eg: assessment methodology) communicated to students and teachers?
- do students know what is expected of them?

Reviewers should evaluate how the assessment process enables the unit outcomes to be demonstrated and assessed objectively. Reviewers should ask:

- does the assessment process enable learners to demonstrate achievement of the specified learning outcomes?
- are there criteria that enable examiners to distinguish between different categories of achievement?
- is the reviewer confident in the security and integrity of the assessment procedures employed?
- does the assessment strategy have an adequate formative function in developing student abilities?

In the final report, reviewers should provide a critical evaluation of the course and its units of study backed by supporting documentation. Reviewers should address the following questions:

- does the design and content of the course encourage achievement of the intended learning outcomes in terms of: knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, unit-specific skills (including practical/professional skills), transferable skills, progression to employment and/or further study, and personal development?
- is there documentation that the course content and design is informed by recent developments in techniques of teaching and learning, by current research and scholarship, and by any changes in relevant occupational and professional requirements?

The following procedures are in place to effect changes to the course and delivery system. The National Academic Director drives the change process.

*Step 1:* Reviewers consult stakeholders regarding the proposed changes. Stakeholders include: students; teaching staff; administration staff; student support staff; the Course Advisory Committee; and the Academic Board.

*Step 2:* Reviewers submit a proposal to working committees of the Institution for input. Depending on the nature of the change, these committees include the following:

- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Course Advisory Committee

*Step 3:* Reviewers submit proposals to the appropriate committee for formal endorsement and approval. This would require a submission to the Course Advisory Committee for advice, a report to the Teaching and Learning Committee for endorsement, and then final approval by the Academic Board.

*Step 4:* Reviewers liaise with the National Academic Director to ensure that all administrative processes and requirements are completed for implementation of changes. This includes changes to the Student Handbook, the website and marketing and promotional materials. All changes must comply with College policies and Academic Board directives.

*Step 5:* The National Academic Director ensures that appropriate notification is communicated to students prior to implementation. The minimum information that is communicated concerns: a rationale for the changes, details of the specific changes, and changes to the student's database records if required.

*Step 6:* Throughout the change process, the National Academic Director monitors risk management implications, including: the relationship of the changes to the Institution's mission; issues related to course resourcing; the impact on compliance with legislative and statutory requirements; consistency with The Institution's policies; impact of changes on teaching staff and students and the provision of sufficient notification and support.

### Summary of Evaluation Process

Process	Timeframe	Coordinating body/person	Evaluation mechanism
Review of units	Annually	Course Coordinator	Student feedback, Student Evaluation Of Instruction And Unit Questionnaire Lecturer Feedback, Lecturer End Of Session Evaluation Of Unit Survey
Review of courses	Annually	Course Coordinator/ Academic Director	Student feedback, Student Evaluation Of Instruction And Unit Questionnaire Lecturer Feedback, Lecturer End Of Session Evaluation Of Unit Survey Analysis of student results.
Benchmarking of courses	Biennially	Teaching & Learning Committee	Analysis of student enrolment statistics, market research, student results. Evaluation of course information and delivery.
Review of units & courses	Three Year	Course Advisory Committee	Review of course and benchmarking reports, support services, strategic positioning and competitor analysis. Analysis of data relation to admission, retention and graduate employability

## Version Control

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