

# Academic Quality Assurance Policy

<b>Category</b>	<b>Policy</b>		
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### 1. PURPOSE

Academic quality assurance is a vital part of the Institute’s strategic planning and is built into the general business planning and reporting processes. The Institute’s (or IMC) Academic Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) is designed to ensure a high standard of academic integrity, to minimize risks and to continuously improve the quality of teaching, learning and research activities. The AQAF reflects a strong commitment to evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement and is designed to meet regulatory and legislative requirements. The AQAF is implemented via a coordinated system of processes that ensures academic quality assurance for the Institute.

### 2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all members of the Institute’s governing bodies, management, and all academic and administrative staff, including full-time and sessional staff. The Policy applies to the Institute’s courses and campuses both within Australia and offshore and to parties with which the Institute has Third Party Arrangements. It also applies to online delivery.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Academic Activities** means teaching, learning, scholarship, research and research training, and broader community, professional and industry engagement.

**Academic Quality Assurance** means a demonstration or verification that a desired level of quality of an academic activity has been attained or sustained or is highly likely to be attained or sustained.

**Benchmarking** means the process of comparing processes and performances with comparable educational institutions. It enables valid and relevant comparisons and provides an external

reference point for the achievement of educational standards.

**External Referencing** means a process through which a provider compares an aspect of its operations with a comparator's operations or seeks input from external experts.

**HES Framework (2021)** means the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

**Internal Referencing** means a process through which a provider compares an aspect of its operations with another part of operations to ensure a consistency in approach and quality.

**National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students** means a set of nationally consistent standards that govern the protection of international students and delivery of courses to those students by providers registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). The National Code is established under *the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)*

**Quality Assurance Systems** means the mechanisms, processes and activities employed to verify the attainment of academic quality assurance.

**Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)** means Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education.

#### **4. THE INSTITUTE'S ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK**

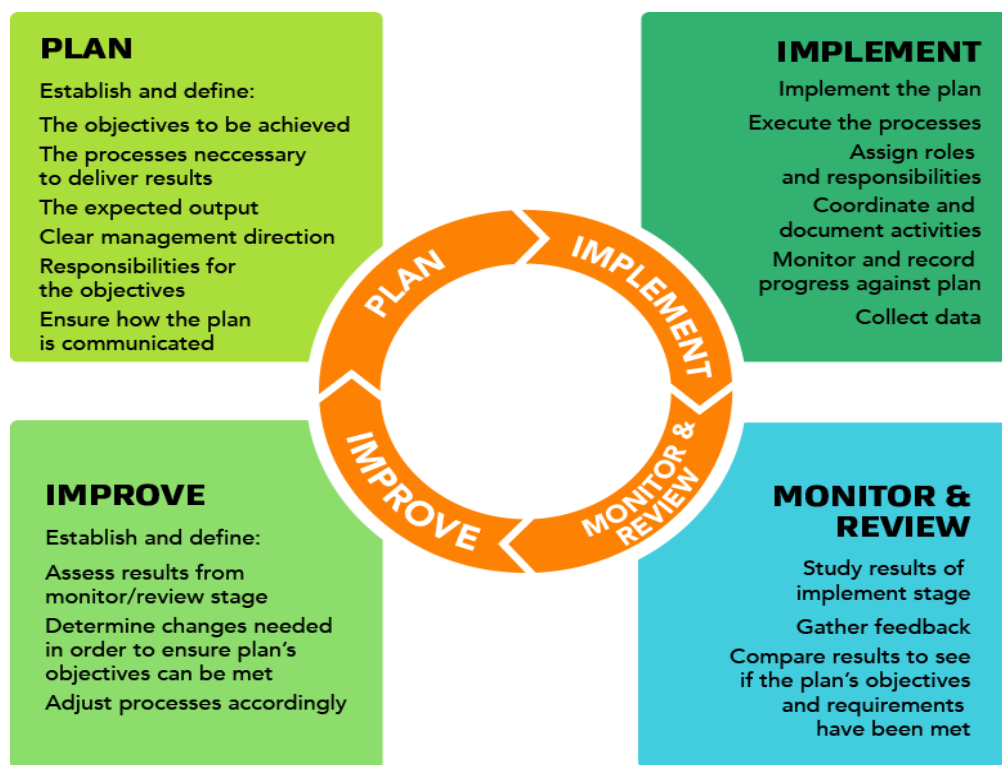
The AQAF has three components:

- i. Integrated Planning, which sets the focus for what the Institute aims to do;
- ii. Integrated Review, which establishes the balances and measures to verify if the Institute has achieved what it has set out to do;
- iii. Risk Management, which ensures that the Institute remains cognizant and responsive to risks and their potential impact.

The AQAF has implemented the Plan, Implement, Monitor/Review, and Improve (PIMI) quality assurance and continuous improvement model as shown below.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The PIMI quality insurance and continuous improvement model is used by several Australian and international universities as a basis for facilitating academic quality assurance. It is based on the original Plan-DoCheck-Aact TQM model developed by W. Edwards Deming



The AQAF helps the Institute to achieve its strategic objectives, ensure quality outcomes, minimize risks, and meet its statutory and regulatory obligations. The AQAF is predicated on the following principles.

- i. A continuous improvement approach embedded at all levels of the Institute.
- ii. Evidence-based and inclusive decision-making processes.
- iii. Monitoring outcomes against stated goals, performance indicators and targets.
- iv. Using internal and external review mechanisms to assess performance, identify improvement opportunities and implement action plans and mitigation strategies.
- v. Developing a culture of ownership, participation and responsiveness where all staff understand their individual and collective responsibility for quality processes and outcomes.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AQAF

### 5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Institute's governance bodies, and senior academic staff are responsible for quality assurance and implementation of the AQAF. All staff involved in the delivery and/or support of teaching and learning are responsible for ensuring the quality of the student education experience and contributing to the Institute's culture of continuous improvement.

### 5.2 Council

The Council is the supreme corporate governing body of the Institute. It exercises governance

oversight and is accountable for all of the Institute's operations and is responsible for meeting the requirements of the HES Framework (2021) and achievement of Institute goals including academic quality.

### **5.3 Academic Board**

The Academic Board (AB) upholds the academic quality standards and academic integrity of higher education provided by the Institute and ensures that they are in line with the HES Framework (2021), National Code and other professional accreditation body requirements.

### **5.4 Course Advisory Committee**

The Course Advisory Committee (CAC) is a committee of the AB and assists the AB in the processes of accreditation, course development, course change and course review, giving due regard to consistency, HESF standards, the AQF framework, quality indicators, academic scrutiny and resources. Emphasis is placed on benchmarking with similar programs in the Australian Higher Education Sector and external referencing.

### **5.5 Learning, Teaching and Scholarship Committee**

The Learning, Teaching and Scholarship Committee (LTSC) has responsibility for developing and monitoring the various Institute's Teaching and Learning Plans. To fulfil its quality assurance function, the LTSC.

- Develops appropriate qualitative and quantitative measures of performance of teaching and learning (including student progression), which is benchmarked against international best practice
- Implements quality assurance measures of academic programs and associated student support programs (including mode of delivery, appropriate assessment, moderation of assessment, unit outlines and unit learning material)
- Reviews and evaluates quality in teaching and learning of all award courses (including and associated student support services and programs)
- Monitors the quality and effectiveness of programs designed to facilitate the transition of students into undergraduate and postgraduate courses and from courses into careers
- Advises and liaises with the Deputy President (Education) or delegate on all matters related to student and administrative support programs and services for teaching and learning

### **5.6 Research Academic Quality Assurance Principles**

The following are some key Academic Quality Assurance principles related to research.

- Ethical Compliance - Adhere to national ethical standards for all research activities
- Research Integrity - Uphold the principles of responsible research conduct as outlined in the Australian Code
- Collaborative Engagement - Foster national and international collaborations to enhance research impact
- Researcher Development - Provide comprehensive training and development for researchers
- Data Management - Maintain robust practices for the secure handling and sharing of research data

- Regular Evaluation - Conduct periodic reviews to monitor and evaluate research quality and compliance
- Impact Assessment - Evaluate the broader societal, economic, and environmental impacts of research

### **5.7 Senior Academic Management**

Senior Academic Management are charged with the implementation of the policies approved by the AB. The Deputy President (Education) or delegate provides regular reports to the AB and its sub-committees on the implementation of quality assurance. Reports will provide evidence for the AB to identify continuous improvement initiatives. Reporting to the AB is on a regular and frequent basis as directed by the AB. Reports address the following areas.

- The overall quality of a course relative to a professional discipline and educational standards
- The educational aims and learning outcomes of the course and whether these remain appropriate
- Student data in terms of admissions, progression, attrition, completion, student satisfaction and graduate outcomes
- Student feedback
- Whether courses are based on current knowledge and research and effective learning strategies
- Adequacy of staff profile, teaching and learning space and learning resources and support
- Equivalence of education standards, service delivery and student experience across all Institute campuses, including those offshore, those that deliver in a language other than English, and third parties with which the Institute has an Arrangement

### **5.8 Lecturers/ Discipline Coordinators**

Lecturers and Discipline Coordinators will review and update the units in accordance with Institute Policies and Procedures and report directly to the Deputy President (Education) on all matters relating to the units they lecture or coordinate. As part of their contribution to the academic quality assurance of the Institute, lecturers and discipline coordinators will:

- Deliver lectures and ensure other lectures within a unit they are coordinating are delivered in a professional manner
- Lecture and coordinate units and assume responsibility for developing pedagogy within units
- Ensure the quality and appropriateness of assessment by constructing examination questions and assessment tasks; ensuring students are monitored and provided with relevant and timely feedback; marking and supervising follow-up activities; and moderating the marking of other lecturers
- Follow up on reports of student attendance, provide adequate consultation and take responsibility for maintaining standards that ensure the quality of the student experience
- Undertake scholarship in their discipline area

## **6. KEY COMPONENTS OF ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE**

### **6.1 Quality Learning and Teaching**

The Institute’s Constitution of Governance (clause 5) states the “*purpose of the Institute is to advance knowledge through the provision of high-quality tertiary education, and to build a high-quality academic environment to international standard in which students acquire lifelong learning and research skills that prepare them for their professional careers and general community roles.*”

Academic Quality Assurance, which includes course development and course review, is embedded in this commitment. The Institute’s courses are designed and developed by senior academics with previous senior-level experience and appointments in Australian universities, supported by the Institute’s academic staff members, under the supervision of the Deputy President (Education), or delegate, the Director Learning and Teaching, the Academic Integrity Officer and the Discipline Coordinator. The courses are reviewed regularly (or new courses are developed) via the sub-committees of AB to comply with all regulatory and quality standards and in line with sector expectations. External referencing against other like education providers, including Australian and overseas universities and by external experts in the field, ensures that reviews of academic standards are evidence-based analyses.

## **6.2 Academic Staff**

The Institute is committed to having academic staff who are appropriately qualified at the requisite academic level and/or have professional experience to ensure that students are given the highest quality of education to facilitate their learning. Staff undergo regular professional development and receive research funding to ensure that courses are contemporary and academically rigorous.

## **6.3 Legislative and Regulatory Requirements**

In conjunction with the achievement of academic quality, the Institute is cognizant of, and responsive to, regulatory and professional requirements including:

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011;
- Educational Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000;
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF);
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF);
- Professional Accreditation requirements of; CPA Australia, Chartered Accountants ANZ, Institute of Public Accountants, and NSW Legal Profession Admissions Board.
- Local jurisdictions, including those offshore.

## **6.4 Policies and Procedures**

The Institute’s Academic Policies and Procedures are key to ensuring that educational activities meet appropriate academic standards and accord with regulatory and professional body requirements. Quality assurance of policies and procedures includes regular review and improvement to ensure that they remain current and appropriate to changing operations within the Institute and consistent with best practice in the Higher Education Sector. Quality assurance also encompasses regular review of all aspects of the Institute’s educational delivery operations in order to ensure adherence to the principles and processes contained within policies and procedures.

## **7. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- i. *Academic Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Policy*
- ii. *Artificial Intelligence Policy*
- iii. *Assessment Policy and Procedure (Coursework)*
- iv. *Blended Learning Policy*
- v. *Course and Unit Development Policy*
- vi. *Course and Unit Development Procedure*
- vii. *Course and Unit Review Policy*
- viii. *Course and Unit Review Procedure*
- ix. *Course Delivery in A Language Other than English Policy*
- x. *Moderation Policy and Procedure*
- xi. *Offshore Course Delivery Policy*
- xii. *Online Course Delivery Policy*
- xiii. *Staff Promotions Policy*
- xiv. *Student Academic Integrity Policy*
- xv. *Third Party Arrangements Policy*

## 8. VERSION CONTROL

<b>Historical Version</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
2024.10	Academic Board	10 October 2024
2021.09	Academic Board	2 September 2021
2017.08	Academic Board	29 August 2017
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2009.03	Academic Board	03 March 2009