National Academy of Professional Studies (NAPS)
Academic Course and Unit Development and Review Policy

Contents

1. Policy Rationale

The National Academy of Professional Studies (NAPS) is committed to professionalism and quality. The NAPS leadership, executive and Academic experts have worked together to try to ensure that all our courses and units are top quality and comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), industry standards, Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) standards, The Higher Education Standards Framework 2015 and relevant professional standards.

The development of all courses and units will adhere to the principles and practices in this policy. This policy applies to both the introduction and modification of all academic courses and units. It also sets the approval protocols.

The aim of the principles and procedure in this policy is to ensure that:

- courses and units developed for the Academy are relevant to the current needs of students and employers and also flexible enough to be able to respond to developing needs promptly;

- courses and units comply with the standards of the AQF and TEQSA;

- courses and units are developed consistently and fit into the strategic directions of NAPS; and

- courses and units reflect professional standards, competencies and learning outcomes.

2. Overview and Application

All new NAPS courses and units as well as all amendments, including structural changes, are covered by this policy. It documents the NAPS Course and Unit Design Principles and Course Development Procedure including introducing and designing courses, design structure and content and the Approval Process.

This policy and its procedures must be adhered to by all NAPS staff involved in course and unit development, including NAPS' academic and administrative staff, which includes sessional staff.

3. Definitions

AQF: Australian Qualification Framework.

Courses: units of study which comprise a program leading to a qualification being awarded.

Units: subjects within a course leading to the award of a qualification.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): is defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework as a process through which eligibility for the award of credit is assessed, through assessment of formal, informal and non-formal learning. See NAPS Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedures for how this applies at NAPS.

Sessional Staff: staff engaged and paid on an hourly or sessional basis, and who have no entitlement to paid annual, sick or long service leave.

Course Consultative Committee (CCC): a committee comprised of internal and external members designed to provide professional and educational guidance consistent with the aims and objectives of this policy.

4. Course and Unit Design Principles

4.1 Ensuring the course or unit has academic merit (evidence required) and meets the appropriate learning outcomes. Courses and units must take into account: current knowledge, research-led approaches to education and the professional context in which a particular course or unit is situated.

4.2 Proposals should focus on:

- Ensuring appropriate graduate learning outcomes;

- Specifying appropriate learning activities and assessment of achievement of learning outcomes; and

- Ensuring that the outcomes of each individual unit contribute to the required outcomes of the entire course.

4.3 Courses should:

- be challenging to attract students and maintain their interest throughout, including adequate support, to help ensure high course retention;

- be flexible enough to have several exit points and/or nested option available where appropriate;

- anticipate, in consultation with the relevant professions, changing national or international workforce needs and demonstrate evidence that they can adapt to meet those needs;

- have procedures in place to ensure high quality by being evaluated at all stages of their development and having procedures to ensure improvement can follow in response to those evaluations;

- include constructive and two-way consultations with both internal and external experts in the field, including potential employers where possible;

- identify necessary learning resources and utilise NAPS' traditional teaching and e-learning resources to enhance delivery;

- take into consideration NAPS' access and equity strategies so therefore provide pathways of demonstrated efficacy and aim to improve access for under-represented cohorts, and

- align with NAPS' mission and the targeted professions.

5. Course Development Procedure

5.1 Introducing and Designing Courses

As part of its oversight of the Academy and the strategic direction of NAPS and in the start up phase, the Board of Directors and Council may request the Academic Board to initiate the development of courses in accordance with the NAPS Strategic Master Plan. Where the Academic Board is so requested, the course development process shall be in accordance with the procedures provided in this policy and include consultation with the relevant professions.

Any NAPS department may also propose changes to an existing course or propose a new course for development. It is also possible that a new course proposal could come from outside NAPS, for example from a professional body or other key external stakeholder.

5.2 Design Structure and Content

To ensure it confirms with TEQSA requirements, a Course Proposal will clearly state the following:

Course design

    a.   course name, field of education, AQF Level and qualification to be awarded on completion;

    b.   course rationale;

    c.   course prerequisites and progression;

    d.   anticipated graduate employment opportunities;

    e.   due recognition of professional accreditation where relevant;

    f.   course duration; and

    g.   projected student numbers over a four-year period.

Course delivery methods and learning outcomes

    a.   the units of study that comprise the course of study;

    b.   course structure, duration and mode of delivery;

    c.   course learning outcomes;

    d.   course content; and

    e.   course information for students.

Admission requirements

    a.   standard requirements for both domestic and international students;

    b.   recognition of prior learning (RPL) credit arrangements;

    c.   permissible exit pathways, articulation arrangements, and pathways to further learning; and

    d.   alternative admission criteria.

Detailed unit outlines

    a.   course code;

    b.   weight in credit points;

c.   unit overview;

d.   weekly lecture schedule;

e.   reading guide including prescribed and recommended texts;

f.   unit and course learning outcomes;

g.   graduate attributes;

h.   assessment tasks; and

i.   student workload.

Content and learning activities

These also need to be consistent with the learning outcomes for each unit.

a.   current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines;

b.   study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course;

c.   emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice;

d.   a design which fosters progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes; and

e.   a design that is authentic, that is has practical tasks from relevant careers, and reflects the needs of the relevant professions and society in general.

This design will be informed by consultation with profession representatives to improve authenticity and check expectations of graduates in line with the NAPS' Mission and Quality Assurance policy.

Learning outcomes

a.   learning outcomes of both courses and units, as well as assessment tasks, will be mapped against the relevant AQF level criteria, and

b.   arrangements for moderating and benchmarking student assessment and achievement of student learning outcomes will be noted.

People resources

To ensure that courses are adequately planned for and resourced, the course proposals should include and consider:

a.   a workforce plan that demonstrates sufficient educational, academic support and administrative supportive to meet the needs of student cohorts undertaking the course;

b. plans to ensure an academic staffing profile that provides academic oversight and has the teaching capacity needed to meet students' needs, including their need to develop the intellectual inquiry suited to the nature and level of the expected learning outcomes;

c. details of qualification required by staff;

d. access to curriculum vitae of key staff members;

e. specify academic leaders involved in the course development; and

f. clarify which staff are responsible for academic oversight.

Learning Resourcing and Educational Support

a. that all learning resources are ready to meet student requirements by being directly relevant to the learning outcomes, up-to-date and accessible (e.g. website and library links working);

b. that all users have timely access to the electronic learning management system and that training is available in its use;

c. that all students are able to access to learning resources ie there are no unexpected barriers, costs or technology requirements, including for students with special needs and those who study off-campus;

d. students have access to learning support services that are consistent with the requirements of their course of study, their mode of study and the learning needs of student cohorts;

e. financial arrangements and specific resource requirements are clearly identified and costed; and

f. the impact of the course or existing units or existing courses are explained.

The course development process is to include evidence of external inputs or, where relevant, reports from professional members or accreditation bodies.

5.3 Approval Process

The Course Advisory Committee (CAC) initially evaluates all course development and revision proposals and makes its recommendation to the Academic Board (AB) which then considers if it will grant approval. The approval process is as follows:

i. The Board of Directors and Council issues a directive in pursuance of the NAPS Strategic Master Plan for the Academic Board to initiate the development of a course or a unit; or a professional body makes a suggestion to the NAPS Management and Academic Board to consider the development of a unit of a course; or an academic department or division in NAPS consults the Chair of Academic Board to introduce a unit or a course.

ii. If it is a directive from the Board of Directors or a suggestion from a professional body to develop a course/unit, the Academic Board through the Chair appoints a panel of experts to develop the course/unit. If it is a proposal by a NAPS academic department or division, the department or unit making the proposal shall develop unit/course.

iii. The developers shall prepare a detailed proposal based on the criteria in this policy for submission to Academic Board.

iv. The Academic Board conducts a preliminary review or discussion of the proposal and if approved forwards the proposal to the CAC for a detailed review and report.

v. The Academic Board sends proposal to Courses Consultative Committee for comment focusing on any relevant industry related standards and issues.

vi. The NAPS' President CEO notifies TEQSA through the Case Officer, of the Academy's intention to submit an application for a course/unit accreditation.

vii. The CAC conducts preliminary review of the proposal for compliance with NAPS internal requirements under this policy and then appoints a panel of experts to review the proposal. Where only two experts are appointed, at least one must be an external expert. Where more than two experts are appointed, the majority of the experts must be external.

viii. The reviewers must use NAPS external reviewers' report template based on the TEQSA external reviewers form.

ix. On receipt of the reviewers' reports, CAC consolidates the reports into a master document indicating each reviewer's comment under specific headings in the reviewers' template. This allows for ease of comparison of the comments. This will then be sent to the developers for comment.

x. Where deemed necessary, CAC may make any revisions suggested by the reviewers. While reviewers' comments are important, it is open to developers to rebut reviewers' comments or to defend their proposals. The CAC shall submit the consolidated report and any comments by developers to Academic and make recommendations to the Academic regarding the proposal.

xi. The Academic Board shall examine the review master document and any comments from the CCC and make a determination whether to approve the course/unit. Academic Board may demand further revisions to be made to the proposal before final approval.

xii. After final approval by Academic Board, the Chair of Academic Board includes the newly approved proposal in his report to the Board of Directors and Council.

xiii. Board of Directors and Council gives authorisation for submission of course/unit accreditation application to TEQSA.

xiv. President and CEO and NAPS compliance team who check compliance with TEQSA requirements and submit the proposal through the TEQSA portal.

6. Review of Existing Courses and Units

Course Reviews will be completed every four years. Units will be reviewed progressively, commencing in year two. At least three units will be reviewed each trimester.

The terms of reference for course and unit review are approved by the Academic Board and include inter alia a review of the educational aims and learning outcomes; analysis of student progression data; analysis of student destination data; analysis of student feedback; and adequacy of the staff profile, teaching and learning space, learning resources and support.

The findings will be summarised and reported using NAPS A001S Course and Unit Review Schedules.

Course reviews will be led by the Dean of the relevant faculty and seek input from all relevant stakeholders, including academic and support staff, members of the relevant profession or industry, and current and past students.

Findings and recommendations from the course review will be submitted to the Executive as well as Academic Board and ultimately to the Board of Directors and Council.

7. Policy Review

NAPS may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to their supervisor.

8. Further Assistance

Any staff member who has questions about or requires more details about any part of this policy should consult the NAPS' Registrar.

9. Additional Resources

TEQSA Guidance Note: *Course Approval, Design and Delivery*, Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011, 22 October 2013: https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/teqsa-guidance-note-course-approval-design-and-delivery

Guidance Note: *Technology-Enhanced Learning*, Beta version 1.1 (Consultation Draft), 11 October 2017: https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-technology-enhanced-learning

Guidance Note: *Nested Courses of Study*, Beta version 2.1 (Consultation Draft), 11 October 2017: https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-nested-courses-study

Guidance Note: *Work Integrated Learning*, Version 1.2, 11 October 2017: https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-work-integrated-learning

Guidance Note: *Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning.* Version 1.1 15 March 2019. https://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/resources/guidance-note-credit-and-recognition-prior-learning
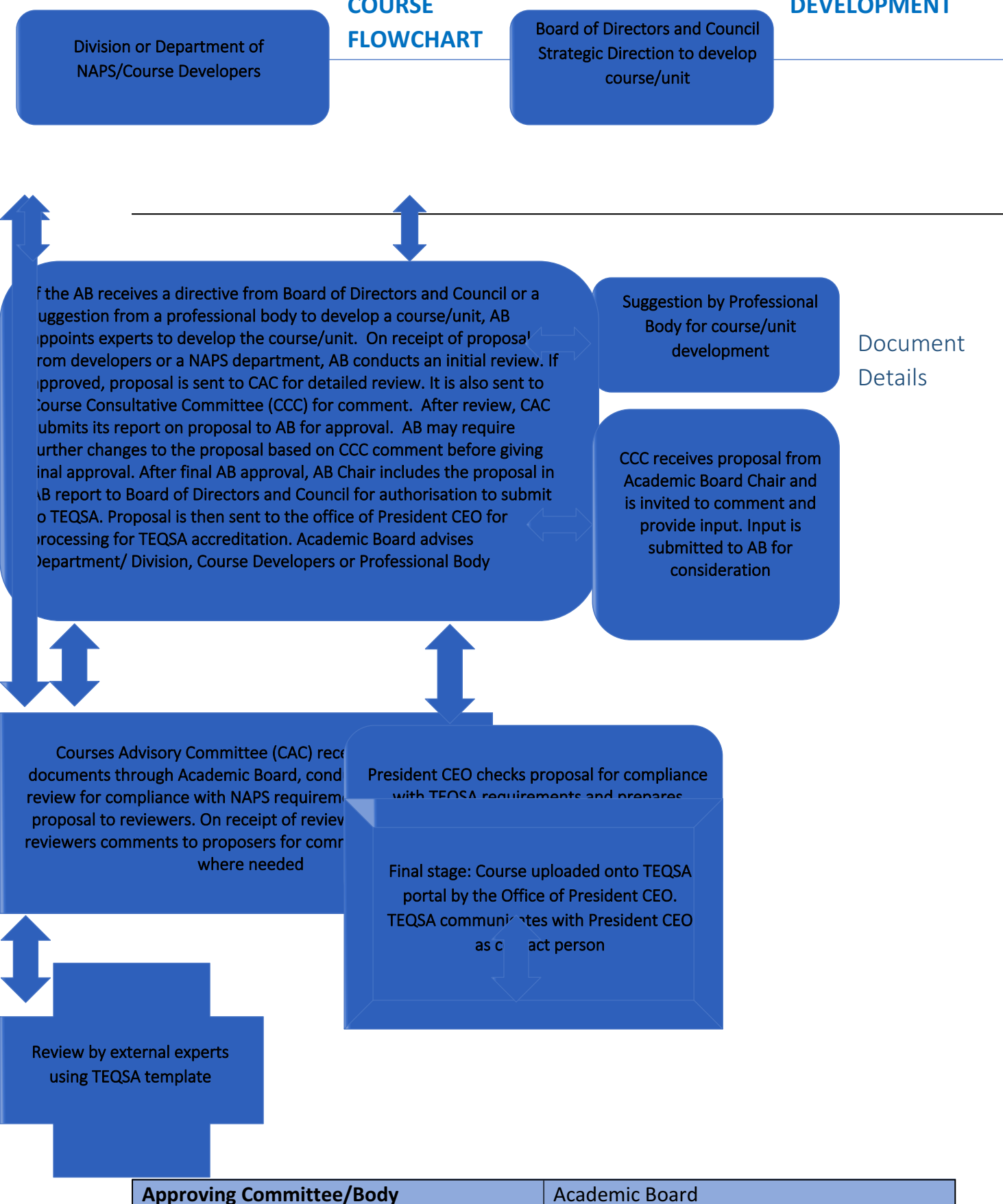
See also:

Appendix A: NAPS Course Development Flow Chart

and NAPS A001S Course and Unit Review Schedules. NAPS

COURSE FLOWCHART

Division or Department of NAPS/Course Developers

Board of Directors and Council Strategic Direction to develop course/unit

Document Details

If the AB receives a directive from Board of Directors and Council or a suggestion from a professional body to develop a course/unit, AB appoints experts to develop the course/unit. On receipt of proposal from developers or a NAPS department, AB conducts an initial review. If approved, proposal is sent to CAC for detailed review. It is also sent to Course Consultative Committee (CCC) for comment. After review, CAC submits its report on proposal to AB for approval. AB may require further changes to the proposal based on CCC comment before giving final approval. After final AB approval, AB Chair includes the proposal in AB report to Board of Directors and Council for authorisation to submit to TEQSA. Proposal is then sent to the office of President CEO for processing for TEQSA accreditation. Academic Board advises Department/ Division, Course Developers or Professional Body

Suggestion by Professional Body for course/unit development

CCC receives proposal from Academic Board Chair and is invited to comment and provide input. Input is submitted to AB for consideration

Courses Advisory Committee (CAC) rece documents through Academic Board, cond review for compliance with NAPS requirem proposal to reviewers. On receipt of review reviewers comments to proposers for comm where needed

President CEO checks proposal for compliance with TEQSA requirements and prepares

Final stage: Course uploaded onto TEQSA portal by the Office of President CEO. TEQSA communicates with President CEO as contact person

Review by external experts using TEQSA template

Approving Committee/Body	Academic Board

Date of Initial Approval	7 February 2019
Date of Effect	1 July 2020
Review Schedule	Every 3 years from commencement
Policy Owner	Academic Board
Policy Contact	Registrar
Delegated Actor (include if applicable)	Chair of Academic Board
Related Documents	A001S Course and Unit Review Schedules 024 Teaching and Learning Operational Plan 2020-2023 A008 Course Teach Out Policy and Procedure A010 Academic Integrity Policy Australian Qualification Framework[1] 011 Quality Assurance and Standards Framework
Applicability to Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth)	1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment 3.1 Course Design 5. Quality Assurance 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement 6.3 Academic Governance

Document History

Version	Author	Changes	Approval Date
1.0	Academic Board	Original Version	7 February 2019
2.0	Academic Board	No changes document	1 July 2023
3.0	Registrar	Delegations section ad	13 May 2025

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[1] "Australian Qualifications Framework." https://www.aqf.edu.au/. Accessed 21 Mar. 2018.