Education Quality Assurance Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University aims to provide students with an outstanding and inspiring student experience. This Policy describes the principles that underpin the University's approach for assuring educational quality and demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement in academic and learning outcomes.

(2) This is within the context of the University's statutory obligations under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011, the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and regulatory instruments associated with these Acts, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the University of Newcastle Act, and the University's strategic priorities.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) To provide a whole-of-institution approach to managing the quality assurance of programs and courses through systematic monitoring and continuous improvement activities.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) The Policy applies to all aspects of education including curriculum design for programs and courses, learning, teaching and assessment in coursework programs, and associated partnerships that contribute to the student academic experience.

(5) The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) has overarching responsibility for the quality assurance and regulatory requirements relating to the educational activities conducted by the University.

Section 4 - Audience

(6) Staff of the University with a responsibility for academic governance, curriculum management, compliance, risk management and reporting.

Section 5 - Definitions

(7) In the context of this document:

Defined Term	Meaning
Quality Assurance	An evidence-based approach in accordance with the TEQSA Guidance Note on Academic Quality Assurance.
Quality Enhancements	A series of systematic and continuous actions that lead to improvements in education outcomes for students.

Section 6 - Principles

(8) The University's education quality assurance principles are:

a. education quality assurance processes to support the University's strategic commitments and legislative requirements:
    i. establishing the criteria and standards against which judgments about education quality are made will contribute to a shared understanding about quality standards and their attainment;
    ii. aligning education quality assurance processes with the University strategy will assist in the achievement of University's goals and the monitoring of progress; and
    iii. as a self-accrediting organisation, the University must comply with all elements of the Higher Education Threshold Standards Framework (HESF) and the qualifications we offer must align with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
b. staff, students, and stakeholders will be involved as partners in enhancing and assuring education quality:
    i. the University values its staff, students, alumni, and industry and professional bodies as partners in the education quality assurance process.
c. processes and practices will be systematic, sustainable, and transparent:
    i. the University's Program and Course Quality Assurance Approach, which includes the Course and Program Performance Procedure and External Program Reviews, supports the systematic collection and use of qualitative information and quantitative data to monitor impact, identify improvement opportunities, and determine the effectiveness of quality enhancement actions.
d. roles and accountabilities for implementation of the Course and Program Quality Assurance Approach will be assigned and clearly communicated to assist in developing a culture of continuous improvement.
e. decision-making will be evidence-based and externally referenced:
    i. judgements about performance and decisions about improvements will be informed by data and formal feedback collected from a range of internal and external sources; and
    ii. internal sources of information may include, but is not limited to, survey findings, assessment grades, Student Survey results, Course and Program Annual Review reports. External sources of information may include, but is not limited to Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) data, registration or accreditation reviews, and external benchmarking.
f. findings will be used to identify future improvements:
g. findings from quality assurance processes will be used to identify changes required to improve education quality. Once implemented, these changes will be assessed to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes. The improvement phase of the process supports evidence-based decision making and transparency.
h. Outcomes from quality assurance processes will be disseminated:
    i. the outcomes of education quality assurance processes will be communicated to students, staff and other stakeholders to close the loop and support engagement; and
    ii. dissemination channels may include formal reporting channels, action plans, targeted communications, feedback via committees, and the student learning system (LMS).

Section 7 - Course and Program Quality Assurance Approach (the Approach)

(9) The Approach will ensure the University's education programs and courses are:

a. aligned with the Strategic Plan, and meet statutory quality standards and professional accreditation requirements, where applicable;
b. implemented in a consistent manner and undergo continuous improvement;
c. evaluated through annual quality assurance activities at course and program level; and are
d. benchmarked across Schools, Colleges, the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre (PALSC), as well as the sector, identifying areas of institutional best practice and opportunities for improvement.

Course and Programs Performance Procedure (the Procedure)

(10) Course and Programs Performance Procedure (the Procedure):

a. The Procedure will ensure regular systematic monitoring, review, and support of courses and programs.
b. The Education Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee will regularly monitor and review courses and programs using benchmarked quality performance data from the Course and Program Performance dashboard.
c. For courses and programs where quality performance standards may be at risk, the EQESC will triage (with the Associate Dean (Education), and appropriate support and action plans will be created within the College.
d. The implementation of the support and action plans will be monitored and reviewed by the EQESC.

(11) External Program Reviews (EPRs)

a. All programs are required to undertake an EPR at least every seven years in-line with Section 5.3 of the Higher Education Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.
b. All programs are reviewed against a defined term of reference.
c. A panel is assembled for each EPR. Panel membership must be external to the program under review.
d. The EPR produces a report with commendations and recommendations which may include proposed actions that require a response from the College responsible for the program.
e. If a program is accredited, a gap analysis may be conducted to evaluate the equivalence of the accreditation to the defined terms of reference.
f. actions that are implemented are monitored and reviewed.
g. A guide and templates are provided as appendices to this Policy.

Section 8 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

(12) The Course Co-ordinator is responsible for quality assurance in the delivery and management of a course, under the guidance from the relevant Head of School or Deputy Dean (Education) (PALSC).

(13) The Head of School is accountable for quality assurance of courses delivered by the School. The Deputy Dean (Education) is accountable for quality assurance of courses delivered by the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre.

(14) The Program Convenor is responsible for the quality assurance of a program offered by a College, under the guidance of Associate Dean (Education). The Program Convenor (PALSC) is responsible for the quality assurance of a program offered by the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre, under the guidance of the Deputy Dean (Education).

(15) The Associate Dean (Education) is responsible for oversight of curriculum management quality assurance activities within their College. The Deputy Dean (Education) is responsible for oversight of curriculum management

quality assurance activities within the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre.

(16) The College Pro Vice-Chancellor (CPVC) is responsible for adoption and implementation of all curriculum management quality assurance activities across their College. The Director, Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre is responsible for adoption and implementation of all curriculum management quality assurance at the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre.

(17) The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation is accountable for implementation of this policy and the Course and Program Quality Assurance Approach.

(18) The Director, Strategy Planning and Performance is responsible for data management of the University curriculum, courses and programs.

(19) The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) is responsible for strategic curriculum management as described in this Policy (Section 3 – Scope).

(20) Academic Senate and its committees are responsible for:

a. approval and maintenance of the Courses and Programs Quality Assurance Approach; and
b. monitoring compliance with the Higher Education Support Act and academic governance.

(21) The University Risk Committee are responsible for audit compliance purposes.

Section 9 - Appendices

(22) 2025 Pilot External Program Review Terms of Reference

(23) 2025 Interim External Program Review Terms of Reference

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	29th July 2025
Review Date	15th November 2025
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Approval Date	28th July 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Karen Blackmore Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation
Enquiries Contact	Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Risk management" - The co-ordinated activities of assessing, controlling, monitoring, and reviewing risk in the pursuit of the University's objectives.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Learning outcome" - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Program Convenor" - The academic staff member with overall responsibility for the management and quality of a program.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.