Program Design and Management Manual

Section 1 - About this Manual

Introduction

(1) This manual supports the Governance Rule, the Awards and Graduation Policy and their associated Schedules. In the event of an inconsistency between lower-level policy documents and a Rule(s) or Schedule to the Rule(s), the Rule(s) made by Council prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

(2) This manual has been developed in accordance with the Awards and Graduation Policy and its relevant Schedules.

(3) For information on designing, managing, and reviewing courses, please refer to the Course Design and Management Manual.

(4) For information on admission to a program, please refer to the Admissions Manual - Coursework and Enabling Programs.

(5) For information on enrolment, please refer to the Enrolment Manual.

Purpose

(6) This manual is designed to provide clear and concise directions for the staff of the University of Newcastle (University) when designing, managing, and revising coursework programs, and to provide information to students.

Scope

(7) This manual applies to enabling, undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs that are created and offered by the University, including those in which students enrol through a partner institution.

(8) This manual does not apply to Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs. Please refer to the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

(9) This manual applies generally to the Joint Medical Program (JMP). In the event of an inconsistency between this Manual and the policies and procedures specific to the JMP, the policies and procedures of the JMP prevail to the extent of the inconsistency, unless the matter relates to a Rule or delegation of authority.

(10) This Manual makes references to College structures and positions. Equivalent structures and positions may exist in Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre and are referenced where relevant.

Section 2 - Program Design Policy

Part A - General Program Principles

(11) The following principles should be met for all programs offered by the University:

a. a broad range of coursework programs will be available to meet the needs of our students and the community;

b. program structure requirements will be clearly defined and outlined in the Awards and Programs Schedule;
c. there will be equitable access to all programs, and policies and procedures will encourage students to utilise learning support (see Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy);
d. demonstrable learning outcomes will be associated with all coursework programs, including enabling programs;
e. program design will foster progressive achievement of expected learning outcomes through coherent arrangement of teaching, learning and assessment activities;
f. engaged learning opportunities will be facilitated in all coursework programs;
g. academic pathways will maximise opportunities for students to receive credit for learning already undertaken (in accordance with the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy);
h. a robust system of quality assurance will ensure the academic integrity and viability of all programs;
i. systems will be in place to support student progression;
j. transparent and accountable processes for amendment, review and disestablishment of programs will exist;
k. coursework program offerings and the strategic goals of the University will be aligned;
l. the nomenclature for programs and awards will reflect the level and content of the program, communicate pathways to employment, and conform with the Awards and Programs Schedule and the AQF (Second Edition) Qualification Issuance Policy; and
m. where applicable, majors, minors and specialisations should be named in a manner which communicates pathways to employment.

(12) Coursework programs must ensure that graduates will:

a. meet the program learning outcomes, graduate attributes and the generic skills defined by the relevant College and the University;
b. have completed appropriate assessment throughout the program to reliably demonstrate attainment of program learning outcomes; and
c. have had the opportunity to:
    i. receive recognition for relevant prior learning;
    ii. participate in different modes of educational delivery;
    iii. investigate or research topics both independently and co-operatively; and
    iv. undertake engaged learning opportunities, such as leadership courses, work integrated learning, overseas exchange programs or similar, that contribute to their breadth of experience and knowledge.

(13) All non-AQF programs (for example, enabling programs) offered by the University must satisfy the following criteria:

a. a demonstrable industry, professional, community or student need;
b. a sound educational rationale as the basis for offering the program;
c. comparability with AQF qualifications - this will be achieved by describing the program requirements using the AQF taxonomy of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, application of knowledge and skills, and generic learning outcomes);
d. a clearly defined volume of learning; and
e. an appropriate title that does not use nomenclature that is already used for an award leading to an AQF qualification.

Graduate Attributes

(14) The University's Graduate Attributes inform curricula, co-curricula and extra-curricula activities and guide the development of our students. ‘Graduate Attributes’ are a key initiative of the Life-Ready Graduates pillar in the

University of Newcastle's Looking Ahead Strategic Plan.

(15) Graduate Attributes are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 – Graduate Attributes

Graduate Attribute	Description
Culturally responsive	Our graduates apply their knowledge to provide the best opportunities for all, embracing the benefits of inclusiveness and diversity. They value and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Our graduates will embrace culturally affirming environments and respectful relationships across diverse populations in Australia and around the world.
Community Ready	Our graduates understand their role in our regions, communities and society. They are committed to ensuring that they build sustainable local capacity, social equity and connectedness, with a sense of kindness and collective belonging.
Connected Leaders	Our graduates are clear communicators who are connected to their surroundings and understand the interdependence of the medium and the message. They exercise professionalism and ethical judgement to communicate with influence.
Shaped by industry	Our graduates are creative and entrepreneurial, adaptive to career opportunities, resilient and agile in their future-focused thinking for career and life ambitions.
Create solutions	Our graduates are curious critical thinkers and collaborators. They use their ability to analyse situations and data, interpret scenarios, and gather evidence to create solutions for an uncertain world.

(16) Graduate Attributes will be mapped against the program learning outcomes and the AQF qualification descriptors for the relevant level, via the Curriculum Management System. This mapping must be approved by the Program and Course Approval Committee (PCAC) on behalf of Academic Senate.

(17) All core courses, or a selected subset, in new and revised programs must be mapped to the program learning outcomes and AQF qualification descriptors via the Curriculum Management System. Compulsory courses may be included in the mapping if core courses alone are not sufficient to map all outcomes and descriptors.

Modes and Campus of Offer

(18) Where a program is offered in different modes or campuses, the program learning outcomes must be consistent across all offerings. Programs must be designed to enable students to meet learning outcomes regardless of their chosen mode or campus of study.

(19) Modes of delivery for programs are specified in Table 2.

Table 2 – Modes of Delivery

Mode	Description
Face-to-face	Programs are defined as face-to-face where at least two-thirds of the courses within the program are taught face-to-face.
Online	An online program is delivered through online technology and program support is provided through this technology. There is no requirement for a student admitted to an online program to physically attend any form of teaching or learning sessions or face-to-face formal examinations, except in the case of intensive sessions.

(20) The delivery of a coursework program and the courses within that program may differ between:

a. campus of offer;
b. mode of delivery;

c. academic terms; and
d. third party providers (refer to the Third Party Arrangements – Education Policy and Procedure).

(21) In accordance with the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, programs offered to international student visa holders:

a. must be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for International Students (CRICOS) for each campus where the program will be offered;
b. must not be delivered exclusively online; and
c. may include a maximum of one-third of courses, including core courses, that are offered exclusively online. Courses within the program that are offered both online and face-to-face will not count towards that maximum, as long as it is possible for a student to complete the program without taking more than one-third of courses online.

(22) Extensive online offerings may result in some majors or specialisations not being available to international student visa holders. Such restrictions must be clearly outlined in the Program Handbook.

Maximum Time for Completion

(23) The maximum time for completing each program is detailed in the Awards and Programs Schedule.

(24) The Program and Course Approval Committee (PCAC) may specify a lesser maximum time for completion for a new or existing program, where that lesser time is required for professional accreditation.

Part B - Program Structure

(25) Approved program structures and requirements for coursework programs are defined in the Awards and Programs Schedule.

(26) Variation to the defined program structure of an undergraduate program may be approved by PCAC, if the variation is in response to an articulation agreement or external requirements.

(27) The first year of undergraduate programs should be structured to contain at least 75% core and/or compulsory courses.

Combined Programs

(28) Each combined program will require approval by PCAC as a new program.

(29) The maximum number of component programs within a combined program is two.

(30) Each component program within a combined program must be described in separate program documentation in the Curriculum Management System.

(31) Programs may be combined horizontally (i.e. at the same AQF level), or vertically (i.e. at different AQF levels).

(32) The core and minimum requirements for each component program must be met. This includes ensuring that:

a. the duration of the combined program is less than the sum of the two component programs;
b. where applicable, program accreditation for each component program is not compromised; and
c. the requirements of the Awards and Programs Schedule are met for each of the component programs.

(33) The volume of learning for a combined program:

a. should be less than the total volume of the two component programs taken consecutively; and
b. must be appropriate to justify conferral of two awards, taking into account the AQF level and program learning outcomes of each component program.

(34) Examples of combined program structures are given in Table 4, but programs may vary from these examples.

Table 4 – Examples of Combined Program Structures

Program A	Program B	If Taken Separately	Example Combined Program
40 units	40 units	80 units	60 units
80 units	80 units	160 units	120 units
160 units	160 units	320 units	240 units
240 units	240 units	480 units	320 units
320 units	240 units	560 units	400 units
320 units	320 units	640 units	480 units

(35) The relevant volume of learning information for a combined program must be provided in the Curriculum Management System and published in the Program Handbook.

(36) Where the component programs include courses with overlapping content, one of the overlapping courses may be omitted from the combined structure. Before any courses are omitted, the course content should be assessed to ensure that the:

a. learning outcomes of the courses and the methods adopted to achieve these outcomes are similar;
b. volume of learning of the courses is similar;
c. breadth and depth of the material studied in the courses is similar; and
d. assessments used are in accordance with any relevant University policy on courses and assessment.

(37) The structure of a combined program will require the completion of each separate component program. This means that a student should be able to:

a. complete both required programs within the combined program and receive a testamur for each of the two degrees, simultaneously; or
b. complete the requirements for one program and receive the relevant testamur, then continue studying until the requirements of the second component program are met and receive that testamur; or
c. complete the requirements for one program and not the requirements for the other, receive a testamur for the completed degree, and then leave the combined program.

(38) For programs combined vertically, students may be required to complete the requirements for the lower-level program before progressing to the higher-level program requirements.

Nested and Integrated Programs

(39) Integrated programs are sets of purposefully designed programs that enable explicit articulation pathways and encompass more than one AQF level and/or qualification type.

(40) Nested programs are the programs within an integrated program set that provide articulation pathways from a

lower-level qualification into a higher-level program, to enable multiple entry and/or exit points.

(41) Examples of integrated program sets are given in, but are not limited to, Table 5.

Table 5 – Examples of Integrated Program Sets

Nested Program 1		Nested Program 2		Highest Level Program	
Level	**Unit**	**Level**	**Unit**	**Level**	**Unit**
Diploma	80	Associate Degree	160	Bachelor	240
Graduate Certificate	40	N/A	N/A	Master	80
Graduate Certificate	40	Graduate Diploma (Exit Only)	80	Master	120

(42) All programs within an integrated set must be described in separate program documentation in the Curriculum Management System.

(43) A lower-level nested program within an integrated program set may be offered as either a stand-alone program, or as an exit award only.

(44) Integrated program sets should be designed to align sequentially so that:

a. students who are initially admitted to a lower-level program within the set have the option to continue to the higher-level program with full credit for the courses they have completed; and
b. students who are admitted to a higher-level program within the set will meet the requirements to exit with a lower-level nested award.

(45) Students who are initially admitted to a higher-level program within an integrated set are not permitted to progressively take out lower-level nested awards while only being enrolled in the higher-level program.

(46) Students who exit with a lower-level nested award are required to reapply for admission into the higher-level program if they wish to continue their studies.

Part C - Program Components

Core Courses

(47) Core courses are courses within a program that all students must successfully complete in order to meet the requirements to be eligible to graduate from the program.

(48) In exceptional circumstances, the President Academic Senate may amend the program requirements for an individual student, to allow the student to undertake an alternative course in place of a specified core course. Approvals will be noted on the internal transcript.

Course Lists

(49) Course lists are lists of courses from which students must choose a designated number of courses.

(50) Course lists may be program specific or may form part of a major, minor or specialisation.

(51) The composition of course lists should be informed by the suitability of the course options to:

a. satisfy the curriculum needs of the program, major, minor or specialisation;
b. support the pedagogical requirements of different student cohorts with equivalent options; and

c. support students to effectively tailor their learning journey.

(52) The Program Convenor may approve a minor program variation, on a case-by-case basis, to allow an individual student to undertake a course that is not on the course list to meet the requirement for the course list. Approvals will be noted on the internal transcript.

(53) The Program Convenor may approve the substitution of courses within a course list, on a case-by-case basis, to allow an individual student to undertake a course at a higher level in place of a course at a lower level, provided the request does not impact on the level of study requirements for the program as a whole. Approvals will be noted on the internal transcript.

Electives

(54) Elective courses are unrestricted courses which may be taken as part of a program.

(55) A student can choose any course offered by the University for which they are eligible to enrol to fulfil an elective course requirement.

Majors

(56) A major is an 80-unit sequence of courses in a specific discipline of study, only available in an undergraduate program. The requirements for a major are outlined in the Awards and Programs Schedule.

(57) All majors must be approved by PCAC as part of the program approval or revision process.

(58) A double major consists of two majors taken within a single program. Each major must conform to the requirements described in the Awards and Programs Schedule. Each major must have 60 unique units.

(59) The maximum number of majors which a student may complete in a program will be specified as part of the program documentation approved by PCAC.

(60) Majors will be included on a student's official academic transcript. A major will not be included on a student's testamur.

Minors

(61) A minor is a 40-unit sequence of courses in a specific discipline of study, only available in an undergraduate program. The requirements for a minor are outlined in the Awards and Programs Schedule.

(62) All minors must be approved by PCAC as part of the program approval or revision process.

(63) A double minor consists of two minors taken within a single program. Each minor must conform to the requirements described in the Awards and Programs Schedule. Each minor must have 40 unique units.

(64) The maximum number of minors which a student may complete in a program will be specified as part of the program documentation approved by PCAC.

(65) Students are not permitted to complete a minor in the same discipline area as any major they are completing.

(66) Minors will be included on a student's official academic transcript. A minor will not be included on a student's testamur.

Specialisations

(67) A specialisations may only be offered in a postgraduate program. The requirements for a specialisation are

outlined in the Awards and Programs Schedule.

(68) All specialisations must be approved by PCAC as part of the program approval or revision process.

(69) A specialisation cannot include any undergraduate courses.

(70) The maximum number of specialisations which a student may complete in a program will be specified as part of the program documentation approved by PCAC.

(71) Specialisations will be included on a student's official academic transcript. A specialisation will not be included on a student's testamur.

Compulsory Program Requirements

(72) A compulsory program requirement is a course within a program that is:

a. defined as compulsory in the approved program documentation and included in the Program Handbook entry;
b. either graded or ungraded;
c. required to be completed satisfactorily to either progress in the program or satisfy program requirements; and
d. monitored for the purposes of academic progress.

(73) Failure in or withdrawal from a course designated as a compulsory program requirement will result in students academic progress being managed under the Student Academic Progress Procedure.

(74) Courses identified as compulsory program requirements will typically involve a career-ready placement or Work integrated learning component. However, other courses may be identified as compulsory program requirements where successful completion is of significant importance to the program.

Work Integrated Learning and Career-ready Placements

(75) Work integrated learning (WIL) is an umbrella term that refers to a range of practical experiences designed to give students valuable exposure to work-related activities during and relevant to their study.

(76) Career-ready placements include student experiences of work within the curriculum that are undertaken in partnership with and for industry, business, or community partners, through engagement with authentic and genuine activities, and which are credit-bearing and assessed.

(77) Where a program requires students to complete compulsory work integrated learning experiences (for example, a placement embedded in a core or compulsory course, or a Work in Industry (WEI) course), the details of this requirement must be recorded in the Curriculum Management System for publication in the Program Handbook and CRICOS register (if applicable).

(78) For information on the design, delivery, management and supervision of WIL experiences within courses and programs, refer to the Work Integrated Learning Policy and the Work Integrated Learning and Career-ready Placement Management Procedure.

Section 3 - Program Approval

Part D - New Program Policy

(79) New programs may be developed:

a. in response to the strategic directions of the University, College, or Division; or
b. to meet projected market or student demand as identified by the relevant College, School or Division.

(80) Any proposed new coursework program, except enabling programs, must be linked to an existing or new award (refer to Schedule 1 of the Awards and Graduation Policy) and must comply with the:

a. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (Second Edition); and
b. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

(81) Any proposed new coursework program, including enabling programs, must also:

a. align with the strategic directions of the University as described in the current University Strategic Plan;
b. ensure a breadth of expertise and stakeholder input by the inclusion of external representatives in the program planning team; and
c. ensure input from other Colleges and Divisions which may be involved in or affected by the introduction of the new program.

(82) Where a new program is being developed to replace an existing program, the existing program must be discontinued. Refer to the Program Discontinuation and Suspension Procedure.

(83) The relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor and Associate Dean (Education) are responsible for oversight of the program approval process when a new program is being proposed, and they must ensure:

a. the appropriate consultation and approval mechanisms take place – evidence of this consultation must be included within the program documentation to be considered by PCAC; and
b. adequate time is built into the development of the program proposal to allow for strategic and academic approval prior to the intended first offering.

Part E - Procedure for Strategic Approval of New Programs

(84) The Portfolio Strategy Group (PSG) is responsible for strategic analysis of new programs to determine their viability and consistency with the priorities and profile of the University.

(85) A pitch paper and subsequent business case must be submitted to PSG for any proposed program which will:

a. be a new offering;
b. replace an existing offering and have an increase in the number of units at the same or higher AQF Level;
c. replace an existing offering and be offered at a higher AQF Level; or
d. be offered in conjunction with another provider or a new location of offer for the University.

(86) A pitch paper and business case may also be required, on advice from the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global), for any:

a. proposed replacement program that may impact upon:
    i. the program viability;
    ii. staffing;
    iii. resources required to offer the program;
    iv. accreditation; or
    v. viability of other offerings due to internal competition with an existing program offered by the University;
b. proposal to offer an existing program at an additional location of offer; or

c. proposed new combined degree program.

(87) The relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor will support the development of the pitch paper and subsequent business case for submission to PSG, using the Curriculum Management System.

(88) The Chair of PSG may endorse pitch papers and/or business cases between meetings of the PSG and in such cases the endorsement will be noted at the next meeting.

(89) Following endorsement by PSG, pitch papers and business cases will be considered for approval by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global).

(90) The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) may waive the requirement for a business case for a new program.

(91) If, once developed, the structure of the new program, implementation timelines, location or target cohorts differ from the details outlined in the approved business case, the College is required to provide a revised business case to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) for consideration and approval, before submission to PCAC.

Part F - Procedure for Academic Approval of New Programs

(92) The Program and Course Approval Committee (PCAC) is responsible for approval of new programs on behalf of Academic Senate, after strategic endorsement by PSG.

(93) Before submission to PCAC, the creation and academic content of the proposed new program must have been endorsed by the relevant College Board(s) or Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre Board.

(94) To be included in the undergraduate UAC guide or the University's prospectus for the following year, a new program must be submitted to and approved by PCAC no later than the February meeting of the preceding year.

(95) The following matters must be considered as part of the program planning process and included in the program documentation for submission to PCAC for approval:

a. the rationale for the new program and its relationship to the College and University Strategic Plan, and outlining the time planned to market the program post-approval;
b. evaluation of the program by industry and/or professional body representatives;
c. evidence of consultation, or information on consultation undertaken, with accrediting bodies and a timeline of the accreditation process (where relevant);
d. the Graduate Attribute Mapping of the program;
e. the structure of the program including:
    i. the sequence of courses and recommended enrolment pattern;
    ii. honours;
    iii. majors/minors/specialisations;
    iv. core, compulsory and courses on course lists; and
    v. elective courses;
f. compulsory program requirements, including any prerequisites. Prerequisites will be approved only where there is an evidence-based requirement such as safety;
g. the mode(s) of delivery of the program;
h. frequency of program intake for each target cohort. Undergraduate programs should be designed to allow students to commence at multiple points across the academic year, subject to viability factors;
i. campuses where the program will be offered;

j. whether the program and its courses will be offered in semesters, trimesters, or other delivery arrangements;
k. any proposed articulation and credit transfer arrangements (please also see Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy);
l. admission requirements including any special selection procedures; and
m. where applicable, transition or teach-out arrangements where the new program is replacing an existing offering.

(96) PCAC is responsible for ensuring programs comply with all relevant University policies.

(97) PCAC is responsible for approving the Graduate Attribute mapping for each program and will oversee and monitor program compliance with the Graduate Attributes for all academic programs offered by the University.

Part G - Procedures Following Approval of New Programs

(98) New programs approved by PCAC will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Senate by the PCAC Chair.

(99) Where a new program requires the creation of a new Award, the new Award must be endorsed by PCAC and submitted to the next meeting of the Academic Senate by the PCAC Chair for approval.

(100) The official program documentation for the new program must be approved and made available in the Curriculum Management System by the PCAC Secretary.

(101) New courses associated with any new programs must be added to the Course Availability List (CAL) by no later than May in the year before the first offering, in line with the Course Design and Management Manual.

Professional Accreditation

(102) Where relevant, the College, in partnership with the relevant School, will be responsible for establishing and maintaining professional accreditation for its approved programs.

(103) Details of professional accreditation must be submitted to PCAC for approval as a major program revision (see Part N), prior to publication in the Program Handbook or any marketing materials.

(104) Relevant documentary evidence of professional accreditation must be provided to PCAC as part of the submission for approval.

(105) All professional accreditation details approved by PCAC must be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Senate.

CRICOS Registration

(106) A proposal to CRICOS register an existing program that is to be offered to international students onshore must be approved by PCAC to ensure:

a. the University meets the requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth) and National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018; and
b. the decision to commence intake of international onshore students aligns with the strategic direction of the University.

(107) Before the proposal to CRICOS register an existing program may be considered by PCAC, and where the admission of international onshore students may impact on program viability (quality, profitability, market, and strategy), the Chair of PCAC may require the College to:

a. provide a statement of reassurance that can be noted by the PSG; or
b. submit an abbreviated business case to the PSG.

Section 4 - Program Delivery

Part H - Program Handbook Policy

(108) Each program must have a published Program Handbook. The Program Handbook is the official record of program requirements available to students, the community, and the Commonwealth Government.

(109) The Program Handbook is populated from relevant data fields in the Curriculum Management System.

(110) Updates to Program Handbooks for the following year will be published no later than 1 October each year. This includes publication of:

a. any new programs being offered in the following year;
b. revisions to existing programs; and
c. any transition arrangements as approved by PCAC.

Part I - Program Marketing Procedure

(111) Following PCAC approval of the program, preliminary marketing of a new program is permitted. This marketing:

a. is restricted to targeting domestic students and students studying offshore; and
b. must have appropriate disclaimers.

(112) Marketing of a proposed new program that will be offered to onshore international students must not commence until:

a. the program is approved by PCAC;
b. where relevant, the new award is established by Academic Senate; and
c. CRICOS registration has been obtained.

(113) Marketing and/or promotion of the professional accreditation of a program:

a. must only occur following:
    i. the receipt of written advice from the accrediting authority; and
    ii. PCAC approval of the relevant major program revision (see Part N); and
b. must match the approved accreditation details in the Program Handbook and Curriculum Management System.

Part J - Student Progression and Completion Policy

(114) A student will not be permitted to count any course towards a program where the course is substantially equivalent to one that the student has previously counted towards the same program.

(115) All coursework students are expected to maintain an acceptable standard of academic progress in each term. The University must monitor student academic progress to appropriately support those students who are at risk of not maintaining acceptable progress.

(116) Student academic progress will be monitored from a student's first term of study.

(117) Students who are suspended or excluded as a result of monitoring their academic progress:

a. are not permitted to undertake studies in a different program during their period of suspension or exclusion;
b. will be permitted to continue on probation following completion of their suspension period if suspended; and
c. will be required to re-apply for admission for whatever programs are on offer at the time of application if excluded.

(118) Please refer to the Student Academic Progress Procedure.

International Students

(119) International students who hold an Australian student visa are required to complete a program within the 'expected duration of their Confirmation of Enrolment', which is the minimum duration specified. Exceptions to this may be approved subject to approved compassionate or compelling circumstances (see clause 120), or an intervention plan. Refer to the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

(120) Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the overseas student and which have an impact upon the overseas student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the overseas student was unable to attend classes;
b. bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided);
c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the overseas student's studies; or
d. a traumatic experience, which could include:
    i. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
    ii. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the overseas student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports);
e. where the registered provider was unable to offer a prerequisite unit, or the overseas student has failed a prerequisite unit and therefore faces a shortage of relevant units for which they are eligible to enrol.

(121) These are only some examples of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances. The University will assess each case on its individual merits by considering documentary evidence to support the claim. Copies of provided documents will be retained in the student's file in accordance with the Records Governance Policy and Privacy Management Plan.

Section 5 - Program Management

Part K - Program Management Policy

(122) All programs are required to have a Program Management Group (see Generic Program Management Group Terms of Reference).

(123) Each program or suite of programs (i.e. group of coursework programs from the same discipline or program area) with professional accreditation is required to have an External (Professional or Industry) Advisory Group (see External (Professional or Industry) Advisory Groups Terms of Reference).

(124) The resourcing of programs is the responsibility of the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor. Where the program

is offered by a third-party provider, the College Pro Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Third Party Arrangements – Education Policy and its associated procedure where relevant.

Part L - Program Convenors

Program Convenor Policy

(125) Each program is required to have a Program Convenor. A Program Convenor is the academic staff member of the University appointed by the College Pro Vice-Chancellor. The following principles and provisions apply to the appointment of Program Convenors:

a. where more than one College is involved in a program (for example, combined programs) the appointment of the Program Convenor should be based on decisions of the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellors;
b. where a program is offered on several campuses or in conjunction with a third-party provider the College Pro Vice-Chancellor may appoint Assistant Program Convenors for each campus to assist the Program Convenor;
c. a Program Convenor will typically be a Level C academic or above;
d. the usual term of office for a Program Convenor will be two years;
e. the College Pro Vice-Chancellor may designate an alternate academic staff member to act as Program Convenor in the absence of the appointed Program Convenor; and
f. the Program Convenor must be appointed at least six weeks before the start of any teaching period.

Program Convenor Responsibilities

(126) The Program Convenor is responsible to the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor for program management, quality, and performance of the program, including but not limited to:

a. compliance related checks, where a program is offered in conjunction through a third-party arrangement (see Third Party Arrangements – Education Policy);
b. supporting peer review of teaching into the program;
c. ensuring that program content, through the inclusion of specific courses, meets the program learning outcomes, and that course objectives are consistent with Graduate Attributes mapping;
d. ensuring that expected learning outcomes are specified, consistent with the AQF level and field of education of the qualification awarded, and informed by national and international comparators;
e. identifying possible student timetable issues;
f. identifying possible issues in the recommended enrolment pattern for the program;
g. identifying and addressing issues that may affect student success;
h. monitoring program performance including admission criteria, rates of attrition, progression, any articulation arrangements and professional or accreditation requirements; and
i. regularly reviewing and evaluating the performance of the program.

(127) Program Convenors are responsible for contributing to the experience of students in the program, including but not limited to:

a. engaging in student orientation activities;
b. engaging with students and providing an approachable and supportive environment;
c. endorsing aspects of a student's program of study if an amended program of study is required;
d. providing recommendations on matters pertaining to the progress of students through the program, in consultation with the relevant Course Co-ordinators;
e. facilitating active engagement by relevant academic staff in student orientation and transition activities for the

program;

f. developing effective means of communicating with students about the program and being responsive to their feedback;
g. considering applications for credit and articulation in consultation with the Course Co-ordinator and in accordance with the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy; and
h. making and keeping appropriate written or electronic records of advice provided to students.

Part M - Monitoring, Review and Improvement Policy

(128) All programs are subject to periodic (at least every seven years) comprehensive review and regular interim monitoring in accordance with the Education Quality Assurance Policy and its procedures.

(129) For quality assurance of programs and courses, refer to the Education Quality Assurance Policy.

Section 6 - Program Revision and Discontinuation

Part N - Program Revision

Program Revision Policy

(130) Program revisions may constitute either a major revision or a minor revision.

(131) A major revision to an existing program is any change that impacts on students, and

a. may require additional resources from the College, another College of the University, or a support area; or
b. requires consultation external to the University.

(132) Types of major program revisions include:

a. revisions to core or compulsory course lists;
b. addition, suspension or discontinuation of a major, minor or specialisation;
c. amendments to approved transition arrangements;
d. addition or amendment of program-based credit limits and currency arrangements;
e. revision of program requirements (including prerequisites, inherent requirements, or compulsory program requirements);
f. addition or amendment of professional accreditation details, including accrediting bodies, accreditation dates, descriptions and marketing materials;
g. addition or discontinuation of an Exit Award;
h. changes to the attendance pattern (e.g. removal or addition of full or part-time attendance);
i. changes to the delivery mode (e.g. addition of face-to-face or online delivery);
j. changes to the term type (e.g. moves from semester-based to trimester-based offerings);
k. addition, suspension or discontinuation of a campus of offer;
l. revision of the admission and selection criteria, including the English language proficiency requirements;
m. changes to the admission terms or frequency;
n. changes to the maximum time to complete, to set a lesser maximum time or return to the standard maximum time; or
o. any other changes to the program deemed by the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor to be a major revision.

(133) A minor revision to an existing program is any change that:

a. has minimal impact on academic content;
b. does not impact the mode of delivery of a program;
c. may affect Graduate Attribute/learning outcome mapping;
d. involves changes to the curriculum management system that do not impact on the program delivery, including amendments to the following Curriculum Management System text fields:
    i. program description; and
    ii. assumed knowledge and/or recommended studies;
e. involves the addition and/or deletion of a course to a course list; or
f. changes the descriptors used for marketing purposes.

(134) The following general principles apply to all program revisions:

a. if a program is accredited this will need to be considered before revising the program, including any timeline, re-accreditation and graduate employability/registration issues;
b. the impact of the revision will need to be considered for all offshore or multi-campus offerings, ensuring course availability on all campuses and to ensure that program learning outcomes can be met regardless of location or mode of delivery; and
c. continuing students should not be required to extend the length of time to complete their degree because of a program revision.

Procedure for Major Program Revisions

(135) Major revisions to academic programs must be approved by PCAC, following endorsement by the relevant College Board(s) or Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre Board.

(136) Major revisions must be submitted to and approved by PCAC no later than the May meeting of the year prior to the intended implementation.

(137) In exceptional circumstances, submissions for major program revisions will be considered by PCAC outside of the above timelines. In these circumstances, related amendments:

a. may not appear in advertising materials if publication timelines have passed; and
b. may not be timetabled clash-free or be allocated to preferred rooms.

(138) Colleges are responsible for the communication of related amendments to prospective students, including UAC applicants and school leavers.

(139) When submitting a major revision that includes changes to core and, where relevant, compulsory courses, the submission must include a mapping of the program to the current Graduate Attributes, AQF descriptors and program learning outcomes.

(140) All proposals for major program revisions must include sufficient information to allow the merits of the proposal to be assessed. This should include information on:

a. the intention and nature of the proposed change, including:
    i. the rationale for the change;
    ii. any associated changes to the structure of the program or program requirements; and
    iii. the revised sequence of courses or recommended enrolment pattern;

b. the likely effects of the proposed change, including:
    i. the number of students impacted;
    ii. any possible disadvantages;
    iii. any impacts on accreditation, where applicable;
    iv. any impacts on pipeline or pathway students, including existing articulation arrangements;
    v. the anticipated duration of any transition or teach-out arrangements; and
    vi. any resource implications of the proposed change;
c. any potential impacts of the proposed change on other programs, Schools, Colleges or other areas of the University; and
d. evidence of appropriate consultation.

(141) Detailed transition arrangements that indicate how the revision will apply to existing students must be included in the program documentation submitted to PCAC for consideration and approval.

(142) Where a major program revision includes suspension or discontinuation of a major, minor or specialisation, a campus of offer, or a mode of delivery, refer to the Program Discontinuation and Suspension Procedure.

Procedure for Minor Program Revisions

(143) Minor revisions to programs must be approved by the relevant College Board or Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre Board.

(144) The relevant Education and Innovation team is responsible for the implementation of minor revisions and notifying other College(s), Divisions, and other relevant staff of any impact caused by a minor revision.

Part O - Program Suspension and Discontinuation

Program Suspension and Discontinuation Policy

(145) The suspension or discontinuation of a program, at the request of the relevant College Board or Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre Board must be approved by PCAC.

(146) Proposals for the suspension or discontinuation of a program must be submitted to and approved by PCAC no later than the June meeting of the preceding year.

(147) Academic Senate may direct PCAC to discontinue a program.

(148) Before approving the suspension or discontinuation of a program, PCAC is required to ensure that:

a. students enrolled in the program are not disadvantaged;
b. appropriate teach-out or alternative arrangements have been made for current students; and
c. consideration is given to international students and our obligations under the ESOS legislation.

Program Suspension and Discontinuation Procedure

(149) Please refer to the Program Discontinuation and Suspension Procedure.

Part P - Procedure for Communication of Program Changes

(150) Students are to be advised about program changes with a personalised email, where relevant. General communications may also occur to cohorts through email, student portal, forums, or via the Learning Management

System. The type of communication will depend on the extent of the changes.

(151) All communications relating to program changes are to be approved by the Program Convenor, and facilitated by the Academic Division General Manager and Academic Registrar or the Program Advice Team.

(152) All individualised communication to students is to be recorded and kept on the student's electronic student file. This communication should include details of the courses required for completion and/or the courses they have received credit for in the new program or new program structure.

(153) The Academic Division General Manager and Academic Registrar or the Program Advice team are responsible for storing all relevant documents in accordance with the Records Governance Policy, including any files on the transition arrangements, correspondence sent, students contacted, and cohort identification where applicable.

Section 7 - Relaxing Provision

(154) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any case, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) and President Academic Senate, in a joint capacity and on the recommendation of a College Pro Vice-Chancellor, may relax a provision of this manual provided that the relaxation:

a. does not compromise compliance with external obligations (including but not limited to contractual, legislative or accreditation requirements);
b. does not override a decision made under a formal delegation of authority;
c. does not replace a decision that is subject to a formal delegation of authority; and
d. gives due consideration to the principles of procedural fairness.

Section 8 - Appendices

(155) Generic Program Management Group Terms of Reference

(156) External (Professional or Industry) Advisory Groups Terms of Reference

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	10th September 2026
Review Date	10th July 2028
Approval Authority	President Academic Senate
Approval Date	11th August 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance Student Central

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Academic transcript" - An official record of studies at the University.

"Enabling program" - A tertiary preparation program offered to domestic students.

"Graduate" - (Noun) Has the same meaning as in section 3(2) of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

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

"Joint Medical Program (JMP)" - The Bachelor of Medicine or Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine as delivered in partnership by University of Newcastle and University of New England.

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

"Core course" - A course within a program which is necessary to fulfil the requirements of that program.

"Course Availability List (CAL)" - The list of courses approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellors of the Colleges, and under some circumstances by the President of Academic Senate, for offer in a particular term.

"Academic staff" - A person employed as an academic staff member or appointed as an academic honorary appointee (including adjunct, clinical conjoint, visiting, honorary and conjoint appointments), but does not include persons who are employed solely as teachers or professional staff.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"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.

"Credit" - When referring to course credit, credit is the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit can reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. 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.

"Volume of learning" - Identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type. It is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

"Discontinuation" - When used in relation to a program, this refers to a program for which no new intakes are to be accepted. For all other uses the generic definition applies.

"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.

"Level C academic" - Senior Lecturer.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"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.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"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.

"Term" - When referring to an academic period, term means a period of time aligned to an academic year for the delivery of a course in which students enrol and for which they are usually charged fees for example semesters, trimesters, summer, winter or full-year term. The academic year for a term is determined by the academic year in which the course commences, not concludes. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Testamur" - A ceremonial document presented to a graduate upon the successful completion of their program.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

"Unit" - When referring to an academic unit, unit means the proportional amount of academic credit allotted to a course. This term is used to define the requirements for a program award of the University and indicate a student's enrolment load. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Major" - When referring to a program major, this is a sequence of courses approved by the Program and Course Approval Committee, which students may be required to complete as part of their undergraduate program (except undergraduate Diplomas). Each major will contain at least 80 units with at least 60 unique units. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Domestic student" - A student (as defined by the University) who is an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent

Humanitarian visa holder, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand).

"International student" - A student (as defined by the University) who is not an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand). This includes students who will be studying offshore and those who will be studying onshore and have a student visa, provisional residency, temporary residency, bridging visa, or any other category of non-permanent visa for Australia.

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

"Learning Management System" - The web-based system used to help facilitate online interactions between staff and students in their learning and teaching activities.

"Work integrated learning" - In the context of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HES Framework), work-integrated learning (WIL) encompasses any arrangement where students undertake learning in a work context as part of their course requirements. WIL can be undertaken as part of coursework or research training.