

# Program and Course Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy establishes the principles governing RMIT's program and course lifecycle. Together with associated procedures and instructions, it encompasses design, development, approval (self-accreditation), reaccreditation, management, monitoring, review, discontinuation, changes to the national register of vocational education and training, and professional accreditation of programs, courses and non-award offerings.

## Section 2 - Overview

(2) RMIT is a self-accrediting university and Registered Training Organisation (RTO) offering [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#) accredited and non-AQF programs and courses in Australia, at overseas campuses and domestic and international partner locations.

(3) RMIT University is a CRICOS registered provider delivering programs to international students that hold or intend to hold a student visa whilst studying onshore in Australia. RMIT University Pathways (RMIT UP) is separately registered as a CRICOS registered provider.

- a. Other RMIT entities which are not CRICOS registered cannot deliver programs to international students to study onshore in Australia on a student visa.

(4) Through this policy and related procedures, RMIT provides assurance that all offerings of programs, curriculum structure blocks, courses, units of learning and micro-credentials are designed and sequenced to support acquisition of knowledge, skills and their application in life and relevant work.

(5) This policy, related procedures and guidance material sets out clearly articulated responsibilities, accountabilities and instruction for the approval and lifecycle management of all RMIT programs, courses and micro-credentials.

## Section 3 - Scope

(6) This policy applies to all award, preparatory and non-award programs, training products, courses, micro-credentials and units of competency offered by the RMIT Group, partners and affiliated third parties.

## Section 4 - Policy

### Principles

(7) RMIT's programs, courses and micro-credentials are designed, reviewed and approved to align with its curriculum architecture profile of a streamlined, adaptive, and high-quality suite of offerings to our communities.

- a. Refer to the [Curriculum Architecture Principles and Design Standards](#).

(8) All program and course offerings submitted for endorsement, approval and/or reaccreditation to the defined

internal governance or accrediting agency are expected to comply with the Program and Course Policy provisions that are relevant to the type of offering.

(9) RMIT programs and courses adhere to principles of best practice curriculum design, including the provision of equitable learning opportunities, appropriate learning support and access to reasonable adjustments where applicable.

(10) Award programs and courses at RMIT:

- a. are designed to comply with AQF specifications and ensure students graduate having achieved the specified program learning outcomes appropriate to the award level
- b. include the skills, theoretical and technical knowledge and competency in application of knowledge and skills within the discipline area of the award program
- c. have a specified structure that enables the achievement of the program's stated learning outcomes and RMIT Capabilities
- d. may be contextualised, in a manner that ensures equivalency, to accommodate global perspectives and requirements
- e. include opportunities, where relevant, to undertake micro-credentials that augment skills and/or learning outcomes.

(11) New and amended RMIT programs and their structural components including courses, micro-credentials and units of learning are designed, delivered and reviewed in accordance with:

- a. RMIT policies and their underpinning principles and frameworks
- b. RMIT's Education and Research Plans.

(12) Programs and their structural components including courses, micro-credentials and units of learning are designed and delivered in accordance with relevant national qualifications frameworks, standards and requirements set by the Federal Register of Legislation:

- a. Higher education award programs: Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (HESF)
- b. Vocational education and training programs: training package or accredited course design rules as required by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#) and the [National Register of Vocational Education and Training](#)
- c. Foundation Studies programs and courses: [Education Services for Overseas Students \(Foundation Program Standards Instrument 2021](#) (Foundation Program Standards 2021)
- d. English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) courses: the [ELICOS Standards 2018](#)
- e. Programs intended to be CRICOS registered: the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) (ESOS Act) and the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (National Code 2018)
  - i. CRICOS legislation is currently not applicable to offshore delivery.
- f. In addition to the above, the design, delivery, and review of offshore offerings may need to observe legislative instruments relevant to the delivery location.

(13) Where a program is accredited by a professional body, colleges assure that it meets the professional accreditation standards.

(14) Programs and their structural components, including courses, units of learning and micro-credentials are subject to continuing academic oversight, including regular monitoring, review and improvement by Academic Board and its

sub-committees. Continuous improvement processes are informed by academic moderation, peer review, and benchmarking in accordance with RMIT defined frameworks, standards and requirements.

(15) Staff involved in the design of programs, training products, courses, micro-credentials and units of learning are expected to maintain a high level of disciplinary and teaching and learning expertise, and exercise professional judgement in keeping with:

- a. the expectations of their discipline
- b. current and emerging industry practice
- c. standards relating to the scholarly practice of teaching and learning
- d. professional accrediting bodies.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Academic Board**

(16) Academic Board is responsible for:

- a. overseeing and monitoring the compliance and quality of programs and courses with RMIT's policy and quality standards
- b. approving and reaccrediting higher education and higher degree by research awards conferred by RMIT
- c. reviewing and monitoring of RMIT's academic quality assurance framework.

### **Vocational education**

(17) Education Committee is responsible for:

- a. providing recommendations to Academic Board for the quality assurance monitoring, standards and outcomes for all vocational education and training (VET) programs, training packages, skill sets, units of competency and embedded micro-credentials
- b. providing oversight and monitoring of the ASQA Delegations Panel subject to the ASQA delegated functions.

### **Higher education**

(18) Education Committee is responsible for:

- a. providing recommendations to Academic Board for the quality assurance monitoring, standards and outcomes for higher education coursework programs and courses and embedded micro-credentials.

(19) Programs Committee is responsible for:

- a. academic review of higher education programs
- b. providing recommendations to Academic Board for the approval, re-accreditation or discontinuation of higher education coursework awards pursuant to the delegations defined by the [Program and Course Schedule - Approval and Discontinuation](#)
- c. professional accreditation governance.

### **Higher degree by research**

(20) The Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Training and Development is responsible for:

- a. maintaining internal governance and quality processes to assure standards and outcomes for all higher degree

by research programs, courses, and micro-credentials

- b. maintaining all higher degree by research resources that support this policy.

(21) Research Committee is responsible for:

- a. academic review and making recommendations to Academic Board for the approval, re-accreditation or discontinuation of higher degree by research awards pursuant to the delegations defined by the [Program and Course Schedule – Approval and Discontinuation](#).
- b. providing recommendations to Academic Board for the quality assurance monitoring, standards and outcomes for higher degree by research programs and courses, and embedded micro-credentials.

### **RMIT University Pathways (RMIT UP)**

(22) RMIT UP Academic Quality Committee is responsible for:

- a. maintaining internal governance and quality processes to assure standards and outcomes for all ELICOS and Foundation Studies programs and courses
- b. maintaining all resources for ELICOS and Foundation Studies that support this policy.

### **Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education**

(23) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education is responsible for:

- a. ensuring compliance with relevant legislative and regulatory obligations, including quality assurance, and identifying any areas of concern for all higher education coursework programs and courses
- b. managing the program and course policy framework, as defined by the scope of this policy
- c. developing and maintaining RMIT design, delivery, approval and quality review principles and frameworks with the support of College Learning and Teaching Leadership.

### **College Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

(24) College Deputy Vice-Chancellors are responsible for:

- a. maintaining internal governance and quality processes to assure standards and outcomes for all college owned programs, courses, micro-credentials and non-award products
- b. providing strategic leadership to ensure that all higher education programs and courses offered by the college are aligned to RMIT's strategy.

(25) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor College of Vocational Education is responsible for:

- a. maintaining internal governance and quality processes to assure standards and outcomes for all vocational educational and training products, skill sets, units of competency and college owned programs, courses and micro-credentials
- b. providing strategic leadership to ensure that all vocational education and training products, skill sets, units of competency and college owned programs, courses and micro-credentials are aligned to RMIT's strategy
- c. approval of amendments to RMIT's scope of registration authorised by the Delegation Agreement, and to act as the Delegate's Representative
- d. maintaining all supporting documents to this policy for vocational education.

### **University Secretary and Academic Registrar**

(26) The University Secretary and Academic Registrar is responsible for maintaining the program and course

procedures, processes and guidance materials for coursework programs and courses, including research components in coursework programs.

## Compliance

(27) Staff who are responsible for the design, delivery, review, monitoring and administering of program and course offerings must follow this policy, procedures, schedules and supporting materials.

(28) Breaches of this policy are managed via the [Compliance Policy](#) and the [Compliance Breach Management Procedure](#).

## Review

(29) This policy will be reviewed at least once every five years in accordance with the [Policy Governance Policy](#).

# Section 5 - Procedures and Resources

(30) Refer to the following documents which are established in accordance with this policy:

- a. [Program and Course Work Integrated Learning Procedure](#)
- b. [Program and Course Review Procedure](#)
- c. [Program and Course Design Procedure - Higher Education Coursework](#)
- d. [Program and Course Academic Management Procedure - Higher Education Coursework](#)
- e. [Program and Course Approval Procedure - Higher Education, Short Courses and Micro-Credentials](#)
- f. [Program and Course Approval Procedure - Vocational Education and Training](#)
- g. [Program and Course Approval Procedure - Higher Degree by Research](#)
- h. [Program and Course Qualifying for an Award and Grade Point Average Procedure](#)
- i. [Program and Course Weighted Average Mark Procedure](#)
- j. [Program and Course Schedule - Approval and Discontinuation](#)
- k. [Program and Course Configuration Instruction](#)
- l. [Program and Course Guide Instruction](#)
- m. [Program and Course External Referencing and Benchmarking Procedure](#).

# Section 6 - Definitions

(Note: Commonly defined terms are in the RMIT Policy Glossary. Any defined terms below are specific to this policy).

Accreditation	A type of quality assurance process under which programs, services and operations of educational institutions are evaluated by an external body or institutional governing body to determine if relevant standards are met. If standards are met, accredited status is granted by the appropriate agency. For RMIT, the relevant external regulatory bodies are the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Authority (TEQSA) for higher education and Foundation Studies, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) for vocational education and training products, and the National ELICOS Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) for English language intensive programs. The relevant self-accrediting institutional bodies at RMIT are the Academic Board and the ASQA Delegation Panel.
Accredited course	A VET program that has been developed and independently assessed by ASQA or a State regulator to fill skills and knowledge gaps that are not covered by training packages. An accredited course (RMIT program) may lead to a qualification or a statement of attainment.

Award	A qualification that is conferred on a student upon successful completion of a program of study. Includes a degree, diploma, certificate, licence, honorary degree or other award.
Award program	A program that may lead to an award as defined by the policies and objectives of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
Contextualisation	The adaptation of one or more elements in an offering to increase its cultural, personal, professional and global relevance to students.
Course	A unit of learning represented by a minimum of 12 credit points (or equivalent in VE and English Preparatory programs) that has more than one learning outcome and includes one or more assessment tasks. A course must have at least one course offering and may be undertaken as a component of a program.
Coursework program	A type of program that is not a higher degree by research (HDR) program focused on a single research project, but rather comprises a variety of courses each with several assessment tasks. Also, any course in a coursework program that is not a research component of an HDR program.
Credential	An abbreviated reference to a micro-credential. Refer to 'Micro-credential' for the full definition.
Curriculum structure block	Consistently sized units of learning with distinct credit point structures that when combined form a program.
CRICOS	The Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) is the official register of all Australian education providers that are permitted to offer courses to students studying in Australia on student visas. It's a searchable database, run by the Australian Government, which lists all Australian education providers (and their courses) for people studying in Australia on student visas. The CRICOS database operates under the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) legislative framework.
Disciplinarity	Learning that spans disciplines incorporating but not exclusive of: Cross-disciplinarity: Parallel study undertaken in two or more disciplines (e.g. double major from two different disciplines) Inter-disciplinarity: Integrated study undertaken in two or more disciplines (e.g. combined degree). Trans-disciplinarity: Problem-based learning that spans two or more disciplines (e.g. combined degree with combined Industry Partnered Learning).
Disaggregation	A process in which the structural components (e.g. first year block/ major/ minor/ capstone/IPL/ micro-credentials) of a program are broken down into smaller components (e.g. unit of learning level) according to criteria (e.g. such as knowledge, skills, application of knowledge and skills, learning outcomes, assessments, activities) so that they can be reused or regrouped to form a new structural component (e.g. first year block/ major/ minor/ capstone/ IPL/ micro-credentials) or units of learning (e.g. 1CP or more).
Equivalence	A measure of quality determined by maintaining defined standards for capabilities and learning outcomes, work integrated learning (WIL), internationalisation strategies, teaching quality and management for all offerings of a single program or course.
Higher degree by research	A postgraduate degree that involves a student load comprising of two-thirds or more research and will either be a Master by Research (AQF level 9), or a Doctoral Degree (AQF level 10), or a Higher Doctorate degree.
Industry Embedded Activities (IEA)	Engagement with industry and community partners in the curriculum through activities that fall outside of Work Integrated Learning, such as guest industry/community lectures and panels, industry networking events, mentorships and joint research projects.
Industry Partnered Learning (IPL)	Embedding industry and connecting with professional communities in the curriculum structure. IPL experiences are designed in partnership with industry to be authentic and are a critical link between technical knowledge and the real world. IPL is made up of three components: work integrated learning (WIL), career development learning (CDL) and industry embedded activities.
Learning outcomes	The set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a student is expected to have achieved in the courses (referred to as course learning outcomes) and in their program (referred to as program learning outcomes) on successful completion.
Micro-credential	A certification, usually in the form of a digital badge, that assesses learning or competency, with a minimum volume of learning of one hour and less than an AQF award qualification, that is additional, alternate, or complementary to an AQF award qualification. Learning products referred to as 'micro-credential' or 'credential' are recognised collectively at RMIT as a 'micro-credential' for this definition and for all policy, governance, and approval pathways.

Non-award program	A program that enables students to enrol in courses or micro-credentials but which does not lead to a qualification.
Preparatory program	A program designed to prepare students for further study in tertiary education.
Professional accreditation	Granted to programs of study that have been assessed by and meet the knowledge and skills competencies required by the granting professional body. Professional accreditation status of a program of study may be required for a graduate to be eligible to practice within that profession, also known as statutory accreditation.
Program	A curriculum of study that provides a structured approach for a student to achieve defined learning outcomes that may lead to one or more awards and must have at least one offering.
Program offering	An instance of a program that is offered at a specific location or offered via a specific delivery mode.
Qualification	A formal certification that will substantiate the achievement of all learning outcomes of an accredited program by a graduate.
Re-accreditation	A process designed to ensure that the program of study continues to meet all quality assurance measures put in place by the provider, remains a viable program of study and fits with the overarching aims and goals of the provider. RMIT reaccredits programs, in its self-accrediting capacity, utilising the academic scrutiny conducted through the Comprehensive Program Review process ensuring the program of study continues to meet regulatory requirements. May also be described as reapproval.
Scope of registration	The VET qualifications, accredited courses and units of competency that an RTO has been registered to deliver and assess. Recorded on the National Register of VET.
Self-accreditation	Where a registered tertiary education provider is permitted by the appropriate Agency to accredit (approve), via its internal governing body, some or all of its programs of study.
Short course	A course that does not feature an assessment nor contribute credit points towards a program and is not recorded on an academic transcript. Students who complete a short course are provided with an RMIT Certificate of Completion.
Skill set	One or more VET units of competency on RMIT's scope of registration that have been bundled together to address a specific industry need or specific licensing/regulatory requirement recognised through a Statement of Attainment.
Structural components	The units of learning, micro-credentials and blocks in the form of first year, capabilities, capstones, minors and/or majors that form a program.
Training package	A curriculum document for VET in relation to an industry, endorsed by an Industry or Skills Council, which defines qualifications, units of competency, assessment requirements for each unit of competency, and credit arrangements.
Training product	A VET program that may include an AQF qualification, skill set, unit of competency, accredited course or module.
Unit of competency	A unit of study that will provide a student with a volume of learning and will have specified performance criteria, elements, foundational skills and will include one or more assessment tasks defined through the required performance evidence, knowledge evidence and assessment conditions and may be undertaken as a component of a program.
Unit of learning	A measurement of learning using credit points and must be at least 1 credit point minimum.

## Status and Details

Status	Current
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Policy Owner	Sherman Young Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education
Policy Author	Connie Merlino University Secretary and Academic Registrar
Enquiries Contact	Academic Policy

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"RMIT Group"** - RMIT University and its controlled entities (RMIT Europe, RMIT Online, RMIT Vietnam, RMIT University Pathways)