SOUTHERN ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Southern Academy of Higher Education (SAHE)

Course Development and Review Policy and Procedure

(Effective Date: 7 August 2026)

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1. Policy Statement

The Course Development and Review Policy and Procedure (Policy) provides a framework for the design, development, approval and review of courses and units, and provides academic direction to assure the enhanced quality and continuous improvement of courses and units at Southern Academy of Higher Education (SAHE).

1.1 Regulatory Context

SAHE develops, approves and reviews its courses of study in accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF), in particular Standard 1.4 (Learning Outcomes and Assessment), Standard 3.1 (Course Design), Standard 3.2 (Staffing), Standard 5.1 (Course Approval and Accreditation), Standard 5.3 (Monitoring, Review and Improvement) and Standard 6.3 (Academic Governance), taking into account the Higher Education Standards Framework Amendment (Threshold Standards) Instrument 2026 (the 2026 Amendment).

Consistent with Standard 6.3, the Course and Industry Advisory Committee (CIAC) is delegated by the Academic Board to provide industry- and content-specific advice and guidance on course development and review, in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Course accreditation and re-accreditation with TEQSA is conducted consistent with the requirements of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

2. Scope

a. This Policy applies to all TEQSA-accredited higher education courses and the units that form part of those courses.

b. The courses and units offered by SAHE are subject to ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation of content and content delivery mechanisms.

c. As stated in the Governance Charter, the Course and Industry Advisory Committee provides guidance and expertise for the initial development of courses and the ongoing review and monitoring of those courses, in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

d. As stated in the Governance Charter, the Academic Board will consider and make decisions on all aspects of the development and accreditation or re-accreditation of higher education courses.

3. Policy Principles

The SAHE course development process includes rigorous application of standards and continuous improvement of course content, delivery and assessment. The results of regular interim monitoring, comprehensive reviews, external referencing, initial and ongoing benchmarking and student feedback are used to mitigate future risks to the quality of the education provided and to guide and evaluate improvements, including the use of data on student progress and success to inform admission criteria and approaches to course design, teaching, supervision, learning and academic support. Key principles informing this Policy and the associated Procedure are as follows:

a. SAHE supports a collaborative and benchmarked approach to the development and review of courses and units;

b. SAHE supports innovative course design by investing in current and relevant educational technology, online infrastructure, and contemporary learning spaces;

c. Continuous improvement will entail regular involvement from all stakeholders and include external benchmarking;

d. Review processes will be carried out on a regular basis to identify changes and/or modifications which, when implemented, will ensure best practice;

e. Learning technologies are embedded in overall curriculum design and logically linked to course learning outcomes;

f. SAHE Graduate Attributes are used to guide the development and review of courses and units;

g. The Governing Council will consider the proposal and development of a new course on its overall viability;

h. The Academic Board considers proposals from the Course and Industry Advisory Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee;

i. The Academic Board will consider the decision to approve a course of study by providing overarching academic scrutiny of the course of study. The Academic Board's scrutiny involves activities to assess the design, delivery and assessment of the course of study independent of the staff directly involved in those aspects of the course, and provide input that considers and assesses the academic value and merit of the course;

j. The Governing Council will assess new course proposals based on the information provided in the Strategic Plan and the Course Outline.

4. Course Design and Development

SAHE courses and units are designed in consultation with the Course and Industry Advisory Committee. All courses will comply with the qualification specifications of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 and the requirements of the relevant regulatory agencies.

4.1 Benchmarking

a. SAHE encourages benchmarking with comparable institutions as a means of identifying comparative strengths and best practice, improving performance and assuring quality and standards. In setting the expected learning outcomes for a course of study, benchmarking specifically references credible national and international comparators, consistent with HESF Standard 1.4.1. During the process of designing and developing a new course, benchmarking activities will be carried out and documented by the Dean.

4.2 Course Aim, Rationale, Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes

a. Following Governing Council approval of a preliminary new course proposal, the Course and Industry Advisory Committee and the Academic Board will determine the course structure, the units and sequence in that structure, the learning outcomes and graduate attributes. The specified learning outcomes encompass discipline-specific knowledge and skills, generic skills (reflected in the SAHE Graduate Attributes), outcomes relevant to employment and further study, including registration to practise where applicable, and skills in independent and critical thinking suited to life-long learning, consistent with HESF Standard 1.4.2. Course design also determines the indicative student workload for the course and ensures that students have equivalent opportunities to achieve the expected learning outcomes irrespective of their place of study or mode of delivery, consistent with HESF Standard 3.1.4. The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level descriptors are considered when

developing the units and learning outcomes. The AQF level descriptors are available on the AQF website (www.aqf.edu.au).

4.3 Course Structure and Sequencing

a. Units are categorised as core units or electives.

b. Core units must be undertaken by all students in a course unless the student has been granted credit transfer or advanced standing for the unit.

c. Elective units are not core units but must be undertaken to complete the required number of units for the course. Elective units may be selected from an approved list for each course.

d. Compulsory requirements for completion of the course, and any exit pathways, articulation arrangements and pathways to further learning, including entry and exit points for nested qualifications, are specified as part of the course design, consistent with HESF Standard 3.1.1(f)-(g).

4.4 Professional Accreditation

a. Where professional accreditation of a course of study by a relevant professional body is required for graduates to be eligible to seek registration to practise, the course design identifies that requirement, and the course is accredited, and continues to be accredited, by the relevant professional body, consistent with HESF Standard 3.1.5.

b. The Dean liaises with the relevant professional body, and with TEQSA where appropriate, to align the timing and evidentiary requirements of TEQSA course accreditation with those of professional accreditation processes.

5. Internal Approval and External Review

a. The Course and Industry Advisory Committee reviews the proposed course structure, aim, learning outcomes and graduate attributes, and makes recommendations.

b. The Committee reviews the documented course and units to ensure that they meet standards of rigour and depth appropriate to the award and that the rationale, aims and content of the course and units are consistent and reflect best practice.

c. After required amendments are made, the Course and Industry Advisory Committee reviews and provisionally approves the course proposal.

d. The provisionally approved course proposal is sent to the Academic Board for feedback.

e. Following consideration of Academic Board feedback, the proposed course is sent for external review, where one or two senior independent external academic(s) may suggest additional changes.

f. Once the suggested changes are made based on the external academic reviewer's feedback, a final Course and Industry Advisory Committee meeting is held to finalise the revised course.

6. Institutional Approval and Submission to TEQSA

a. The externally reviewed and revised proposed course is presented to the Academic Board for final approval.

b. On the Academic Board's recommendation, the Governing Council endorses the submission of the proposed course to TEQSA.

c. The Dean is responsible for submitting the required documentation to TEQSA.

7. Development of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

a. SAHE will follow the guidance available on the TEQSA Website for the details of the specific evidence required. Teaching and learning activities need to be developed to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.

b. Development of the teaching and learning activities can be carried out once TEQSA approves the course accreditation or re-accreditation.

c. When developing assessments, there is a requirement for assessment tasks to be scheduled early in the teaching period to enable prompt feedback and early detection of students at risk.

d. Refer to the Assessment Policy and Procedure for further information on assessment requirements.

8. Continuous Improvement of Teaching and Learning

a. The Dean and the Teaching and Learning Committee will be accountable to the Academic Board for continuous improvement of the processes associated with teaching and learning.

b. Regular and scheduled external reviews and benchmarking are part of SAHE's ongoing monitoring, review and improvement process.

c. The Dean and the CIAC will be accountable to the Academic Board for the continuous review of the curriculum to maintain relevance and rigour

9. Documentation Requirements

The following documents are required for each stage of the review and approval process:

a. Course rationale;

b. Constructive alignment mapping;

c. Unit outlines;

d. Course admission information;

e. Delivery mode details;

f. Study patterns;

g. Projected student numbers for 5 years;

h. Projected staff numbers, their highest-level qualification and skillsets;

i. Benchmarking information, including national and international comparators informing the specification of learning outcomes (HESF Standard 1.4.1).

j. Indicative student workload;

k. Compulsory requirements for completion, and exit pathways, articulation arrangements and pathways to further learning;

l. For courses leading to a Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral qualification, the proportion and nature of research or research-related study included in the course;

m. Assessment mapping demonstrating that all specified learning outcomes are assessed prior to completion of the course, whether at unit level, course level, or in combination (for example, via a capstone unit), consistent with HESF Standard 1.4.4; and

n. Professional accreditation requirements and status, where applicable, consistent with HESF Standard 3.1.5.

10. Course Review Levels and Unit-Level Review

SAHE undertakes course and unit review through three hierarchical levels of intervention, consistent with HESF Standard 5.3. A review at a higher level encompasses the lower levels; because lower levels are evaluated continually through monitoring, they are subject to review more frequently than the Course Level.

Course Level: a comprehensive review of an accredited course of study, including its approved course structure. Conducted after five years of delivery and completed within seven years, consistent with HESF Standard 5.3.1 (see section 11).

Unit Level: a review of discrete units of study within a course. Units may be core or elective; successful completion of a unit contributes to a student's progress toward the course. Unit-level reviews occur at least every three years, or more frequently as required (see below).

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Level: a review of the pedagogic components of a unit of study, such as teaching and learning materials, and assessment design and delivery. This occurs continuously as part of SAHE's interim monitoring and continuous improvement processes (see section 12).

a. SAHE is committed to a unit-level review of its courses and units, conducted at least every three years, or more frequently as required. This review process will be carried out by the Course Director(s) under the direction of the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Course and Industry Advisory Committee and the Academic Board.
b. The unit-level review will address the following criteria, including but not limited to:
    i. admission criteria;
    ii. student need and demand for the course, including course design;
    iii. the quality and scope of course-related teaching, learning and academic support resources provided to students;
    iv. the appropriateness and flexibility of the course's methods of delivery in relation to student need and demand;
    v. analysis of trends drawn from student survey and feedback data, including teaching quality survey, graduate outcome survey and student experience survey;
    vi. statistical analysis including student performance, attrition rates and completion rates.

11. Course-Level Review

a. SAHE is committed to a formal, comprehensive course-level review of each course of study, conducted after five years of delivery and completed within seven years, consistent with the minimum required by HESF Standard 5.3.1. This review process will be carried out by the Course Director(s) under the direction of the Course and Industry Advisory Committee and the Academic Board. The course-level review will include external academics as reviewers.
b. SAHE will conduct a comprehensive review of its courses which includes the design and content of courses, course learning outcomes, unit learning outcomes, methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes, and also takes account of

emerging developments in the field of education, developments in the respective professional fields, modes of delivery, educational technology, the changing needs of students, and identified risks to the quality of the courses.

c. In the course-level review, additional information will be gathered through a summary of student surveys, staff surveys and student key performance trends, and external benchmarking.

d. In addition to the scheduled cadence in (a), a Unit-Level or Course-Level review may be brought forward at any time in response to: monitoring that finds a course or unit continuing to underperform despite earlier intervention; significant concerns that have otherwise arisen about the pedagogic performance or academic integrity of the course; direction from the Dean following other quality assurance or performance concerns; concerns regarding the continuing commercial viability or industry-sector suitability of the course; or the course no longer meeting current or planned regulatory or professional body requirements.

e. Recommendations from the review will be considered by the Course and Industry Advisory Committee. An improvement plan will be approved by the Academic Board for actioning in the next calendar year.

f. Following a Unit-Level or Course-Level review, SAHE may decide that a course or unit should continue unchanged, be refreshed, be redesigned, or be discontinued. Where discontinuation is recommended, implementation requires approval by the Governing Council (course level) or the Academic Board (unit level), and is carried out in accordance with SAHE's relevant policies and procedures.

12. Interim Monitoring and Benchmarking Review

This section describes SAHE's Teaching, Learning and Assessment level of review (see section 10). It occurs continuously from course launch and is the primary source of evidence informing Unit-Level and Course-Level reviews.

a. Comprehensive Unit-Level and Course-Level reviews are informed and supported by regular interim monitoring of teaching and student progress and the overall delivery of units within the course of study.

b. SAHE endeavours to form partnerships with similar higher education institutions to develop and implement ongoing benchmarking relationships. A Course Monitoring report with recommendations is presented to the Academic Board for approval. Recommendations arising from the review are to be implemented by Course Director(s).

c. Review and improvement activities involve regular external referencing and benchmarking of different student cohorts' available performance data against comparable courses of study, including:

   i. analyses of progression rates, attrition rates, completion times and rates; and

   ii. assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within the course of study, and parameters used for granting advanced standing and credit for prior learning.

13. Benchmarking Procedure

13.1 Phase 1

a. The Dean, in association with the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Academic Board, will initiate a benchmarking project.

b. Benchmarking will be undertaken collaboratively with a partner higher education institution, and against available national data as a desktop benchmarking exercise.

c. The first step will be to identify and document:

   i. the Project Lead for the benchmarking project;

   ii. whether any additional performance indicators will be benchmarked;

   iii. the possible partner(s) for collaborative benchmarking; and

   iv. the proposed timeframe for the project.

d. The second step will be to identify potential benchmarking partners by considering:

   i. those higher education institutions which are most comparable to SAHE in terms of size, profile, and any other relevant factors; and

   ii. those higher education institutions which are perceived as having good practices or which achieve at a higher level in the area identified for benchmarking.

e. The Project Lead will establish a shared commitment and understanding of the benchmarking goals with the proposed partner(s).

13.2 Phase 2

a. Agreement will be reached with the partner(s) regarding:

   i. the inclusion and wording of any additional performance indicators to be benchmarked;

   ii. use of a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed by all partner organisations (where student performance data is shared); and

   iii. the data or information required by each organisation.

b. The Project Lead will advise the Dean and the Teaching and Learning Committee on a regular basis of progress relating to the benchmarking project.

13.3 Phase 3

a. The Project Lead will develop a benchmarking report in consultation with the Dean and the Teaching and Learning Committee. The report will outline:

   i. the process and methods used for the benchmarking project;

   ii. an assessment of the course for each performance indicator;

   iii. the priority areas for the course to address, including weaknesses, gaps and areas of strength to build upon; and

   iv. recommendations for action.

b. The report will be scrutinised by the Teaching and Learning Committee who will then develop an Implementation Plan to present to the Academic Board for approval.

c. The Implementation Plan will be implemented in a reasonable timeframe and will outline:

   i. specific actions, who is responsible for each action, and the target dates for completion of each action; and

   ii. staff members with specific responsibilities.

d. The Teaching and Learning Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the benchmarking exercise, including how the process could be improved.

14. Implementation

a. The Teaching and Learning Committee may direct that some teaching and learning issues be addressed and that specific data be gathered to inform these issues, pertinent to quality management, monitoring, and continuous improvement.

b. Upon receiving a final report, the Academic Board, in consultation with the Course and Industry Advisory Committee, will, if necessary, alter a policy or practice within the academic environment of SAHE.

c. Endorsed recommendations will be implemented by the Course Director(s).

d. A range of quality assurance practices and mechanisms are used to inform the process of continual improvement to unit content and delivery. These practices are formal and informal.

15. Notification of Implementation

a. The Course Directors will notify all relevant stakeholders about any changes to the courses before implementation begins.

b. The Course Directors will ensure that staff are notified of the changes and advised of any requirements that they must undertake in respect of the changes.

c. The Course Directors will ensure that all administrative processes and requirements are completed for implementation, including:

   i. updating the website;

   ii. updating the learning management system;

   iii. updating marketing and promotional materials;

   iv. ensuring that students are not disadvantaged and are notified about the changes, including details of the specific changes, a rationale for the changes and the impact of the changes on students.

16. Monitoring

The Dean and Course Director(s) will monitor the risk management implications of changes, including but not limited to:

a. the relationship of the changes to SAHE's mission and goals;

b. issues related to course resourcing;

c. the impact of the changes on compliance and regulatory requirements;

d. consistency with SAHE's policies;

e. the impact of changes on academic staff and students;

f. the Dean must provide the Academic Board and the CIAC with the updated Implementation Plan for review at their regularly scheduled meetings.

17. Outcome of Reviews

a. The results of regular interim monitoring, comprehensive Unit-Level and Course-Level reviews, external benchmarking and student feedback and surveys are used to mitigate future risks to the quality of the education provided and to guide and evaluate improvements.

b. The use of data collected on student progress and success, as per the Student Support Services Policy, will be used to inform future admission criteria and approaches to course design, development, review, teaching and learning and academic support.

18. Course and Unit Review Schedule

Type of Review	Focus of Review	Overseen By	Managed By
Unit-level review (at least every three years)	• Student need and demand for the course, including course design. • The quality and scope of course-related resources provided to students. • The appropriateness and flexibility of the course's methods of delivery in relation to student need and demand. • Analysis of trends drawn from student surveys and feedback data. • Statistical analysis including student performance, attrition rates and completion rates.	Academic Board and the Dean	Course Director(s)
Course-level review (after five years, within seven years)	• The design and content of the course of study. • Course learning outcomes. • Unit learning outcomes. • Methods for assessment of learning outcomes. • The extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes. • Emerging developments in the field of education, modes of delivery and educational technology. • The changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study. • Graduate outcomes.	Course and Industry Advisory Committee, Academic Board, and the Dean	Course Director(s)
Teaching, Learning and Assessment level review (continuous)	• Continuous monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment quality (see Section 12). • Quality and currency of teaching and learning materials, and the efficacy of formative assessment. • Moderation and reliability of marking, and timeliness of feedback to students.	Teaching and Learning Committee	Course Director(s)

19. Records

Records relating to course development, approval, accreditation and review will be created, stored, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Records Management Policy, consistent with HESF Standard 7.3.3(a).

Version Control

Version	2.0
Category	Academic
Approving Body	Academic Board
Approval Date	7 August 2026
Policy Owner	Dean
Details of Changes	• Rewritten into SAHE's current policy template, aligned to the structure and drafting conventions of the Academic Progression and Graduation Policy. • Replaced 'Program' with 'Course' throughout, including the policy title (now the Course Development and Review Policy and Procedure). • Renamed the 'Program Manager' role to 'Course Director', consistent with the terminology used in SAHE's other academic policies. • Standardised references to the 'Course & Industry Advisory Committee' to the 'Course and Industry Advisory Committee (CIAC)', consistent with its current Terms of Reference, and standardised references to the 'Teaching and Learning Committee'. • Added a new Regulatory Context subsection (1.1), citing the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, in particular Standards 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.3 and 6.3, taking into account the Higher Education Standards Framework Amendment (Threshold Standards) Instrument 2026. • Restructured the former single 'Procedure' table into discrete numbered sections (Course Design and Development, Internal Approval and External Review, Institutional Approval and Submission to TEQSA, Development of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, and Continuous Improvement of Teaching and Learning) for clarity and consistency with SAHE's current policy template. • Added a new Records section, consistent with HESF Standard 7.3.3(a) and SAHE's current policy template. • Removed the previous stand-alone 'Higher Education Standards Frameworks', 'Benchmarking Institutes', 'Related Documents' and 'Related Legislations' version-control fields, consistent with the current policy template, and incorporated the relevant references into the body of the Policy (Section 1) and relevant procedural sections. • Removed the named list of specific benchmarking partner institutions from the version-control metadata, as operational partnership details are not appropriate to record in the Policy itself and are subject to change. • Corrected the Course and Unit Review Schedule so that the major review cycle is described consistently as three- to five-yearly throughout the Policy (the previous version labelled this row 'Three-year review' inconsistently with the body text). • Added a Version History table, consistent with SAHE's current policy template. • Corrected the broken pagination and Table of Contents cross-references present in the previous version.

Version History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Revision notes	Next review
1.5	Academic Board	1 December 2022	Approved version 1.5.	
2.0	Academic Board	7 August 2026	Rewritten into SAHE's current policy template; Program terminology replaced with Course throughout; committee references aligned to the Course and Industry Advisory Committee's current Terms of Reference; regulatory references realigned to the HESF 2021 as amended by the 2026 Instrument; former stand-alone version-control fields removed and incorporated into the body of the Policy.	[2029]

Appendix A: Course Development and Review Procedure

This Appendix sets out the sequential flow of the course development and review process described in this Policy, from initial endorsement by the Governing Council through to the commencement of teaching and learning activities.

1. Governing Council endorses development of a new course.
2. Course and Industry Advisory Committee begins developing units, learning outcomes and course structure.
3. Course and Industry Advisory Committee reviews and provisionally approves the course proposal.
4. Academic Board considers and provides feedback.
5. Proposed course is sent for review to a senior independent external academic.
6. Course and Industry Advisory Committee considers the external review's comments and revises the course.
7. The Academic Board approves, and Governing Council endorses, the submission of the reviewed and internally approved course.
8. The Dean submits the course documentation to TEQSA.
9. After TEQSA approval, the teaching and learning activities commence.