



# ACADEMIC STANDARDS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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## Purpose

As a higher education provider registered under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act 2011), Lincoln Education Australia (LEA) has a legal obligation and commitment to maintain high academic standards throughout all aspects of its higher education operation, in accordance with the requirements of registration and the LEA's strategic intent.

Compliance with high academic standards and TEQSA threshold standards is essential for protecting the reputation of LEA and the Australian higher education sector-

The *Academic Standards Policy and Procedures* outlines the principles and procedures that govern the establishment, maintenance, integrity and quality assurance of academic standards at LEA. It outlines the role and responsibilities of the Academic Board in setting, maintaining, and monitoring academic standards and quality assurance mechanisms at LEA, including academic standards in relation to benchmarking, course design, course development and review, learning and teaching, and assessment.

## POLICY

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students at LEA, all members of the Academic Board and all members of committees of the Academic Board.

### Principles

LEA will ensure that high academic standards are maintained throughout its higher education operations, through strong oversight by the Academic Board.

High academic standards will ensure the ongoing reputation, credibility, standing and registration of LEA as a higher education provider.

## PROCEDURES

### Academic Governance

The Academic Board, with authority delegated from the Corporate Governance Board, is responsible for ensuring that:

- Academic expertise external to LEA and input from industry representatives is sought during the curriculum development process and any major course or subject review



process (see the *Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedures* and *Course Review and Continual Improvement Policy and Procedures*);

- As an overall quality assurance mechanism, benchmarking projects will be conducted between LEA and other comparable Australian higher education providers. Criteria for comparison will include course content, along with broader academic arrangements such as admissions and course progression policies, enrolment and completion data, and the like. Approaches to Academic Governance and management will also be benchmarked (refer the *Benchmarking Policy and Procedures*);
- All higher education delivered at LEA is informed by scholarship and engages with critical inquiry. Not only curriculum, but all aspects of teaching and learning will aim to foster independent thinking and approaches to lifelong learning (refer to the *Learning and Teaching Policy and Procedures* and *Learning and Teaching Plan*);
- Major course review cycles will be conducted once every five years and be informed by annual and ongoing course reviews. These ongoing course reviews will collect and report data on student performance, attrition, and completion rates; student feedback regarding the quality of teaching; the adequacy of learning resources and student supports, amongst other criteria. The *Course Review and Continual Improvement Policy and Procedures* provides further information and guidance;
- Feedback and data from the ongoing reviews will be used for continuous improvement in all academic aspects of higher education delivered and supported at LEA, with oversight of academic standards provided by the Academic Board.
- The regular reviews and improvements will ensure compliance with the academic standards of appropriate external agencies.

## Course Development, Course Design and Review

Courses of study offered by LEA will demonstrate an academic standard of content, pedagogy and design appropriate to the relevant higher education qualification level. New courses will be assessed for delivery on the basis of an advanced level of inquiry and depth of learning and will ensure that courses appropriately and coherently progress in complexity of content, learning outcomes, and assessment standards. The development of courses of study must demonstrate external referencing of scholarship and undertake regular internal evaluation for quality assurance purposes.

All LEA courses of study will:

- be aligned with the appropriate AQF level requirements of the qualification, relevant State and Federal legislation, and industry best practice as determined by external referencing and benchmarking activities
- demonstrate the constructive alignment of course learning outcomes with study unit learning outcomes and a range of appropriate assessment activities that allow learning outcomes to be assessed throughout the duration of the course of study
- demonstrate a sequenced structure that allows for progressive and coherent achievement of the expected learning outcomes
- deliver content that is informed by rigorous academic research and relevant theories and concepts in the discipline



- be developed in consultation with relevant industry representatives, professional bodies and disciplinary experts in the field as well as learning and teaching experts
- engage with current and emerging scholarship in the field
- challenge students to engage in critical inquiry and develop lifelong learning abilities
- be innovative in design and learning and teaching methods
- reflect all relevant requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework 2015.

The *Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedures* provides further information and guidance on course development practices.

The Course Advisory Committee is responsible for providing advice to the Academic Board, Teaching and Learning Committee, course coordinators and relevant academic staff members, on new course development, course design and review. This committee is responsible for benchmarking and consulting industry and external experts in the development of new courses, new units of study, course review, changes and improvements.

The Academic Board will ensure that all courses are compliant with the Higher Education Standard Framework 2015 in order to be approved for delivery, pending external accreditation.

## **Benchmarking**

Benchmarking is a quality control mechanism that allows LEA's governing bodies to be assured that the quality of education delivered at LEA is at the appropriate standard for higher education programs. Benchmarking also provides external evidence to inform decision-making around resource allocation and/or redeployment of resources to meet internal academic objectives.

Internal benchmarking informs ongoing monitoring, review and improvement activities to maintain quality and standards within LEA whilst allowing the Institution to position its educational offerings as distinct within the higher education sector.

Benchmarking arrangements should aim to cover the following operations at LEA at minimum:

- Structural arrangements (including governance);
- Course benchmarking (including course design, learning outcomes, assessment strategies and moderation, student performance, expected graduate pathways, specific course admission criteria, fees);
- Policies and processes, particularly concerning admissions arrangements, course progression, and early intervention for unsatisfactory progress; and,
- Student outcomes (including outcomes data, student progression, attrition and completion rates, student and staff satisfaction, staff performance, student achievement in relation to course and unit learning outcomes).



The Course Advisory Committee is responsible for benchmarking of new and continuing courses taught at LEA. The *Benchmarking Policy and Procedures* provides further information and guidance on external referencing and internal benchmarking practices at LEA.

## Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning arrangements at LEA are central to maintaining high academic standards. LEA will develop a culture of academic leadership whereby more senior and experienced academic staff mentor and share teaching innovations with junior academic staff, fostering a community of academic best practice.

LEA will ensure that:

- All staff involved in developing curriculum are highly qualified and experienced in approaches to higher education pedagogy (refer to the *Higher Education Workforce Policy and Procedures* and the *Workforce Plan*);
- Academic staff are provided with opportunities to improve their practice through a program of professional development activities (refer to the *Professional Development Policy and Procedures*);
- Learning and teaching staff encourage students to engage in critical inquiry and the development of lifelong learning skills (refer to the *Critical Inquiry Policy and Procedures*);
- Learning and teaching activities are arranged to foster progressive thought and increasingly advanced knowledge in the discipline; and,
- Students are provided with a variety of learning resources to support their intellectual inquiry and research activities (refer to the *Library and Learning Resources Policy and Procedures*).

The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for overseeing and monitoring teaching and learning practices at LEA to ensure that the highest possible standards are maintained. The *Learning and Teaching Policy and Procedures* and *Learning and Teaching Plan* provide further information and guidance on teaching and learning practices at LEA.

## Assessment

LEA will ensure that all assessment activities are consistent, applied equitably, and are appropriate for the stated course learning outcomes.

As such, LEA will:

- Ensure that assessments require students to demonstrate course/subject learning outcomes;
- Ensure that assessments require students to demonstrate progressive and coherent achievement of learning outcomes; and,
- Engage in moderation activities (as per the *Moderation Policy and Procedure*) so that:
  - All student work in a given assessment is marked against the same criteria.
  - All grades awarded are an accurate reflection of students' achievement.



The Assessment and Awards Committee is responsible for defining, overseeing and monitoring the effectiveness of assessment practices employed in courses taught at LEA to ensure the highest possible standards of student outcomes. The *Assessment Policy and Procedures* provides further information and guidance on assessment practises at LEA.

## Compliance

All staff members and students at LEA are required to comply with this policy and its procedures, and with related policies and respective procedures. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

<b>File Number</b>	LEA-GEN-COR-70007-D
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Academic Dean
<b>Legislative Compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015</i></li> <li>• <i>Australian Qualifications Framework (2013)</i></li> <li>• <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</i></li> </ul>
<b>Supporting Documents</b>	
<b>Related Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Academic Governance Framework</i></li> <li>• <i>Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>Assessment Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>Benchmarking Policy and Procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Course Review and Continual Improvement Policy and Procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Critical Inquiry Policy and Procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Teaching and Learning Plan</i></li> <li>• <i>Library and Learning Resources Policy and Procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Moderation Policy and Procedure</i></li> <li>• <i>Professional Development Policy and Procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Workforce Management Plan</i></li> </ul>
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>	1 January 2022
<b>Next Review</b>	3 years from the effective date

## Definitions

**Academic Board:** Governing body responsible for academic matters, including learning and teaching, course approval, workforce planning, academic staff appointments, research and professional development, academic policies and procedures, overseeing student grievances and appeals processes.

**Academic Community:** The environment in which academics contribute to their discipline through research, writing, publication, public discussion and education. Members of the academic community are united by their dedication to maintaining academic integrity and the pursuit of ethical scholarship.



**Academic Governance:** Framework of policies, structures, relationships, systems and processes that collectively provide leadership and oversight of LEA’s academic activities, including learning and teaching, scholarship and research, at an institutional level.

**Academic Integrity:** Set of values relating to academic standards that an institution is expected to observe, uphold and promote to staff and students. These include fairness, transparency, honesty, and respect for other scholars and ethical scholarship.

**Academic Staff:** Staff employed at LEA in a learning and teaching capacity.

**Appeals Committee:** Committee of the Academic Board responsible for reviewing student complaints, grievances and appeals.

**Assessment and Awards Committee:** Committee of the Academic Board that is responsible for monitoring the quality and adequacy of assessment of student learning and outcomes and conferral of authorised certification for qualifications at LEA.

**Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):** National guidelines that regulate Australian post-compulsory education and training qualifications. The framework identifies learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification, policy requirements, educational and economic objectives, governing and monitoring arrangements.

**Benchmarking:** Process of comparing practices, processes and performance outcomes for the purpose of identifying comparative strengths and weaknesses in order to develop and improve academic quality and performance.

**Course Advisory Committee:** Committee of the Academic Board dedicated to developing the initial proposal of new higher education courses at LEA, including external benchmarking and external input.

**Course Coordinator:** Academic staff member responsible for the delivery of a specific course at LEA. The Course Coordinator is responsible for the planning and development of a course, particularly subject curriculum information, and works in conjunction with other academic staff, the Academic Board and its relevant sub-committees.

**Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015:** The national standards for higher education all higher education providers must meet as established by TEQSA.

**Teaching and Learning Plan:** Outlines LEA’s learning and teaching strategic objectives over a 5-year period.

**Teaching and Learning Committee:** Committee of the Academic Board that is responsible for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching at LEA, interpreting and reporting data on student performance and courses, monitoring progress towards achieving the objectives of the *Teaching and Learning Plan* and the adequacy of all forms of support for learning and teaching present at LEA.



**Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA):** Australia’s regulatory and quality agency for higher education. TEQSA’s primary aim is to ensure that students receive high quality education at any Australian higher education provider.

**Workforce Management Plan:** Outlines LEA’s workforce needs and priorities to meet the strategic and academic objectives of the institution over a 5-year period.

## Review Schedule

This policy shall be reviewed by the Academic Board every three years.

Version History			
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval Date:	Revision Notes:
1.0	Academic Board	16/07/2020	New policy