

Education Quality Policy

Purpose

This policy specifies the principles that underpin UNSW's framework for enhancing and assuring the quality of the student education experience. The [Education Quality Procedure](#) section describes UNSW's education quality framework and specifies processes and responsibilities for implementing the framework.

Scope

The policy applies to all aspects of student success, curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment in coursework programs and coursework components of higher degree research programs and to non-award courses offered by or on behalf of UNSW.

Overview

The UNSW Scientia Education Experience aims to provide students with a distinctive, innovative and globally relevant education experience. This policy specifies the principles that underpin UNSW's approach to ensuring the quality of this experience and the outcomes for students.

For the purpose of this policy and procedure, 'quality' is viewed as being both an aspiration and a judgement about current or past performance in the domains of: programs, courses and curriculum; learning, teaching and assessment; and student success.

Quality as an aspiration involves examining what is currently being done and looking for ways to improve and innovate using a quality enhancement process.

Quality as a judgement about performance involves determining if certain standards or requirements have been met and/or the level to which they have been met and is an outcome of a quality assurance process.

UNSW's education quality framework and responsibilities for implementing the framework are described in the [Education Quality Procedure](#).

Education Quality Principles and objectives

1. Education quality processes will support UNSW's strategic and legislative requirements

- 1.1. Establishing the criteria and standards against which judgments about education quality are made ensures that there is a shared understanding about what quality is and if it has been attained.
- 1.2. Aligning UNSW's education quality processes with the 2025 strategy will assist in its implementation and provide information on progress.
- 1.3. UNSW must also comply with all elements of the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency – Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) and higher education qualifications offered by UNSW must align with the Australian Qualifications Framework.

2. Staff, student and stakeholders will be involved as partners in enhancing and assuring education quality

- 2.1. UNSW views staff, students, alumni industry and professional bodies as partners in the enhancement and assurance of the education experience.
- 2.2. This partnership approach ensures that decisions about quality are informed by the people who are the closest to it. It also supports the development of a culture of continuous improvement, with everyone oriented towards a common goal.

3. Processes and practices will be systematic, sustainable and transparent.

- 3.1. The [Education Quality Procedure](#) describes UNSW's education quality framework. Central to the framework is the education quality cycle which supports the systematic collection and use of qualitative information and quantitative data to monitor impact, identify improvement opportunities and judge the effectiveness of quality enhancement actions.
- 3.2. To ensure that education quality enhancement and assurance processes are sustainable and cost effective, they will be embedded in existing systems and practices and will utilise existing sources of information wherever possible.
- 3.3. Roles and accountabilities for implementation of the education quality framework will be assigned and clearly communicated to assist in developing a culture of continuous improvement.

4. Decision-making will be evidence-based and externally referenced

- 4.1. Judgements about performance and decisions about improvements will be informed by data and formal feedback collected from a range of sources, both internal and external.
- 4.2. Examples of internal sources of information include survey findings, assessment grades, myExperience Survey results, program and course review reports. Examples of external sources of information include Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) data, registration or accreditation reviews and benchmarking, such as the Go8 Quality Verification System (QVS) process.

5. Findings will be used to identify future improvements (closing the loop)

- 5.1. Findings from quality enhancement and assurance processes will be used to identify changes that need to be made to further improve education quality. Once implemented, these changes will be assessed to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes. The closing the loop process supports evidence-based decision making and transparency and is central to the culture of continuous quality improvement.
- 5.2. Responsibilities for making and monitoring improvements will be clearly identified in quality action plans.

6. Outcomes from quality enhancement and assurance processes will be disseminated.

The outcomes of education quality enhancement and assurance processes will be communicated to students, staff and other stakeholders, thereby ensuring ongoing engagement in the delivery of a quality education experience.

Dissemination channels include formal reporting channels, quality action plans, targeted communications, feedback and the student learning system.

Responsible: Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality

Lead: Pro Vice-Chancellor Education

Version: 2.1

Education Quality Procedure

UNSW Education Quality Framework

An education quality framework, or model, supports a shared understanding of what constitutes quality in the education context. UNSW's education quality framework will drive and support continuous enhancement of the education experience and outcomes for students and provide evidence to demonstrate that legislative, accreditation and UNSW governance requirements have been met.

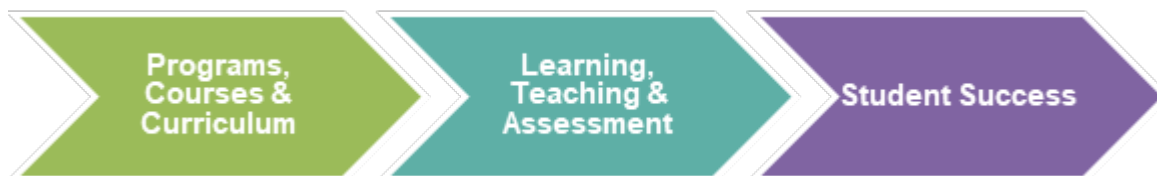
The education quality framework supports achievement of the education quality principles listed in the *Education Quality Policy*. The framework comprises:

- Three domains of education quality;
- An education quality cycle; and
- University-wide quality processes.

1. Education quality domains

Quality domains represent the primary high-level and interrelated areas that comprise the Scientia Education Experience. Quality domains are the different aspects that together comprise education quality. Quality is assessed against defined standards and benchmarks in each domain. Standards are the aspects or levels of performance required which may be benchmarked against comparable higher education providers. Indicators are what is measured and involve the gathering and analysis of information and evidence to determine if a standard has been achieved and/or to what level.

The education quality domains are shown in **Diagram 1**, below.



1.1. The **Programs, courses and curricula domain** is concerned with the quality of education content and design. Elements of this domain are:

- Program and course curriculum design and approval; and
- Comprehensive and interim program and course reviews.

1.2. The **Learning, teaching and assessment domain** is concerned with the quality of processes in place for education delivery, and for supporting learning. Assessment is relevant to all three domains but has been included with Learning and teaching for the purposes of simplicity. Elements of this domain are:

- Academic integrity;
- Education delivery (including teaching, digital and physical learning environment, technology and resources); and
- Assessment design and outcomes.

1.3. The **Student success domain** is concerned with the quality of educational outcomes for students and the support in place to ensure student success. Elements of this domain are:

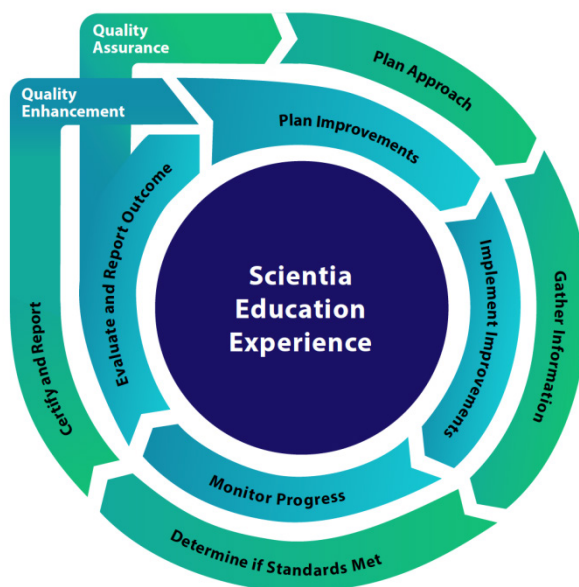
- Student admission, participation, progression, and completion;

- Student achievement of intended learning outcomes;
- Graduate outcomes; and
- Student experience.

2. UNSW education quality cycle

UNSW's education quality cycle is a planned sequence of systematic and documented activities aimed at improving and assuring the quality of the student educational experience. Adapted from the Approach-Deploy-Review-Improve (ADRI) quality cycle, the UNSW education quality cycle incorporates related cycles for quality enhancement and quality assurance.

UNSW's Education Quality Cycle is illustrated in **Diagram 2** below.



2.1. Education quality enhancement

Education quality enhancement involves a series of systematic and continuous actions that lead to improvements in education outcomes for students. The process is cyclical and iterative and involves planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It may also incorporate smaller iterative steps within the larger cycle, where incremental improvements are made.

Outcomes of the quality enhancement process may be used as evidence in education quality assurance processes.

Quality enhancement processes are determined at the Faculty-, School- or Unit-level.

3. Education quality assurance

The purpose of quality assurance is to certify that regulatory, accreditation and other internal and external requirements and standards for education quality have been met.

The quality assurance process is linear and aligned to legislative, accreditation, and UNSW academic governance reporting requirements. Outcomes of the quality assurance process provide important information for consideration in education quality enhancement processes.

4. University-, Faculty- and School-level quality processes

UNSW has a set of core quality processes in place to support education quality. These University-wide processes and supporting policies are outlined in [Appendix A](#).

Some Faculties and certain disciplines have formal processes in place to meet the requirements of professional and accreditation bodies. Regardless of these requirements, all faculties and schools are required to develop, document and implement quality processes consistent with the UNSW framework set out in this document, and with the relevant policies, procedures and processes set out in Appendix A.

Implementation of the Education Quality Framework

5. Education quality governance

- 5.1. The Academic Board, as the principal academic governance body of the University, is responsible for approving academic proposals and for providing advice on academic policy, academic strategy and academic standards.
- 5.2. The University Academic Quality Committee (UAQC) is the University-wide committee responsible for conducting detailed examination of matters related to academic quality of learning and teaching and making recommendations to the Academic Board, as set out in the Terms of Reference – University Academic Quality Committee. [_](#)
- 5.3. Governance of education quality at the Faculty-level rests with Faculty Board and Quality Committees, and School Boards and Committees.

6. Roles and responsibilities

All staff involved in the delivery and/or support of learning and teaching are responsible for ensuring the quality of the student education experience. A summary of key governance and management roles and their responsibilities is provided in [Appendix B](#).

Faculties will implement the **UNSW education quality cycle** (shown in **Diagram 2**) for enhancing and assuring quality across the three domains of education quality domains as described in 6.1 – 6.3, below.

6.1. Quality enhancement

Faculties will embed quality enhancement cycles within existing processes for the design, delivery and evaluation of the student education experience and have appropriate process and procedures and systems in place to support quality enhancement.

The Faculty, School or Unit may determine the timing, systems and processes of their quality enhancement approach according to their requirements. However, it is expected that it will support the quality principles outlined in the Education Quality [Policy](#), in particular the use of:

- Standards / metrics used for evaluating performance;
- Feedback from students, staff and stakeholders;
- Benchmarking against national and international comparators (where appropriate); and
- A quality action plan to close the loop on previously identified issues and actions.

6.2. Quality assurance

UNSW and Faculty governance bodies and senior positions at School, Faculty and Division levels are responsible for quality assurance.

In addition to supporting the education quality principles, quality assurance cycles will:

- Specify a set of standards for education quality. These will incorporate requirements specified in UNSW policies and procedures and any applicable mandatory requirements specified under legislation or by accreditation bodies. They may also include context-specific clarification, refinement or supplementation;
- Gather and examine information to determine if standards have been met; and

- Result in the certification and reporting of compliance against standards.

The quality assurance cycle and processes will be supported by University-level policy and institutional data, analytics and reporting.

Faculties will have quality assurance processes in place addressing:

- Regular teaching reviews;
- Annual professional development and planning for academic staff;
- Assessment practices;
- Interim program review; and
- Student outcomes in programs.

UNSW will have quality assurance processes in place addressing:

- Assessment benchmarking;
- Academic program approval; and
- Comprehensive academic program review, including a set of standards and indicators for reviewing and reporting on program quality.

6.3. Monitoring and reporting

Faculty Boards and Committees will monitor quality in the Faculty and will report to the UAQC on major issues. Reports will identify the key Faculty quality enhancement and assurance processes in place and will cover:

- Assessment outcomes and trends in grade distribution;
- Results from myExperience Surveys;
- Retention, progression and completion rates; and
- Outcomes of teaching reviews.

Faculties will report to UAQC and the Academic Board on their Academic Program Review implementation plans and closing the loop reports. Faculties, with the input of Associate Deans (Education) or equivalent, will identify Faculty-led initiatives to address issues, such as participation in contemporary discipline-based debates and investigation of current and emerging industry needs.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) portfolio will provide regular reports to the University Academic Quality Committee on quality, including learning analytics, Learning & Teaching Dashboard analysis, Quality Indicators in Learning and Teaching (QILT) Student Experience Survey and Graduate Outcomes Survey data and evaluation of learning spaces. Reports will provide an evidence base for the identification and funding of centrally-led quality enhancement initiatives, including exploration of, investment in and evaluation of new technologies and innovative pedagogies, in consultation with the University Academic Quality Committee.

Support

The portfolio of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) will provide support and advice in relation to the implementation of the *Education Quality Policy* and *Education Quality Procedure*, and a range of services and resources on curriculum design, first year experience and assessment.

UNSW Planning and Performance will provide institutional data warehousing, analytics, scorecards, dashboards and reporting.

Related documents

Legislation

This policy supports the University's compliance with the following legislation:

- *Educational Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* (Cth)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015

- *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)*

Related policy documents

[Code of Conduct and Values](#)

[Academic Offerings Approval Procedure](#)

[Academic Offerings Governance Policy](#)

[Academic Offerings Nomenclature Procedure](#)

[Academic Offerings Review Procedure](#)

[Academic Progression and Enrolment Policy](#)

[Academic Progression Procedure](#)

[Admissions Policy](#)

[Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure](#)

[Assessment Design Procedure](#)

[Assessment Implementation Procedure](#)

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Complaints Management and Investigations Policy and procedure](#)

[Dual Award Programs with International Partners Guideline](#)

[myExperience Survey Procedure](#)

[International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Policy](#)

[International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Procedure](#)

[Plagiarism Management Procedure](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

Definitions and acronyms

Quality assurance: An evidence-based approach which involves certifying that regulatory, accreditation and other internal and external requirements are met.

Quality domain: A specific aspect of quality that can be measured or assessed against defined standards and benchmarks. A domain may be comprised of related elements.

Quality enhancement: A series of systematic and continuous actions that lead to improvements in education outcomes for students

Responsible: Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality

Lead: Pro Vice-Chancellor Education

Revision history

Year	Policy document in effect	Approval	Change
2015	Learning and Teaching Policy (1.0) 2 February 2015 to 17 February 2016	VC	New policy
2016	Learning and Teaching Policy (1.1) 18 February 2016 to 5 May 2017	Director of Governance	Administrative
2017	Education Quality Policy (2.0) 6 May 2017 to 23 May 2024 Education Quality Procedure (1.0) 4 May 2017 to 6 July 2020	VC DVCE	Full review New procedure
2020	Education Quality Procedure (1.1) 7 July 2020 to 23 May 2024	Director of Governance	Administrative
2024	Education Quality Policy (2.1) 24 May 2024 to	Director of Governance	Administrative

Appendix A – University-Wide Education Quality Processes

The following tables describe the UNSW-wide core quality processes and related policies by education quality domain. The lists are not intended to be exhaustive. Some processes address more than one education quality domain. Note that Faculties, Schools and Units are required to have local processes and procedures in place for quality enhancement and assurance.

Programs, courses and curricula

Area	Core quality processes	Related policy documents
Program and course curriculum design and approval	<p>Program approval process. Academic Board approves new and major program changes. Courses and streams and minor changes to programs are approved at Faculty-level.</p> <p>Program and course approval process is supported by Academic Information Management System (AIMS).</p> <p>Some faculties, specific disciplines or courses undergo an accreditation process with international or professional accreditation bodies.</p>	<p>Academic Offerings Governance Policy</p> <p>Academic Offerings Approval Procedure</p> <p>Academic Offerings Nomenclature Procedure</p>
Comprehensive and interim program review	<p>Academic Program Review. Results in an implementation plan and closing the loop report. (Outcomes reported to the Academic Board).</p> <p>Faculty interim program review processes, including implementation of the closing the loop report.</p>	<p>Academic Offerings Review Procedure</p>

Learning and teaching

Area	Core quality processes	Related policy documents
Academic integrity	<p>Preventative education programs, monitoring, reporting processes at Faculty level supported by central Academic Integrity Unit, Learning Centre).</p>	<p>Code of Conduct and Values</p> <p>Plagiarism Policy</p> <p>Plagiarism Management Procedure</p> <p>Complaint Management and Investigations Policy & Procedure</p>
Education delivery (including teaching, learning environment, technology and resources)	<p>School quality enhancement plans developed in response to student feedback (myExperience Survey).</p> <p>Recognition of teaching excellence (Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Teaching Excellence).</p> <p>UNSW promotions process.</p> <p>Regular reviews of Teaching (conducted by Head of School and Deans).</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting against Council Key Performance Indicators: KPI 17 - People and Culture (education focused staff).</p> <p>Annual professional development and planning process for academic staff.</p> <p>Planning and implementation process for new integrated learning environments (oversight and governance by Learning Environments Steering Committee; Learning Environment Strategy; Design Principles and Standards for Learning Environments).</p> <p>Analysis and reporting of outcomes of QILT Student Experience Survey data on teaching quality, learner engagement and learning resources and QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey data on good teaching (PVCE Portfolio)</p> <p>Regular evaluation of learning spaces and reporting on outcomes (PVCE Portfolio).</p>	<p>myExperience Survey Procedure</p> <p>International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Policy</p> <p>International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Procedure</p> <p>Dual Award Programs with International Partners Guideline</p>

Student success

Area	Core quality processes	Related policy documents
Graduate outcomes	Analysis and reporting of outcomes of QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey data (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience). Monitoring and reporting against Council Key Performance Indicators: KPI 8 - Graduate Outcomes.	Code of Conduct and Values Academic Progression and Enrolment Policy Academic Progression Procedure
Student achievement of intended learning outcomes	Faculty procedures for governance of assessment outcomes (responsibility of Faculty Academic Committee or equivalent). Academic Program Review - Trends in grade distribution for program (Outcomes reported to the Academic Board). Analysis and reporting of outcomes of QILT Student Experience Survey data on skills development and QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey data on generic skills (PVCE Portfolio) See also Assessment Outcomes, below.	Assessment Policy Assessment Design Procedure Assessment Implementation Procedure Academic Offerings Review Procedure
Student admission, participation, progression, and completion	Monitoring of trends in rates of enrolment, diversity, retention, progression and completion. Monitoring and reporting against Council Key Performance Indicators: KPI 5 - Student Enrolment, KPI 6 - Student Retention and KPI 14 - International Students (distance and online learning enrolments).	Admission Policy Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure Academic Progression and Enrolment Policy Academic Progression Procedure
Student experience	School quality enhancement plans developed in response to student feedback (myExperience Survey). Analysis and reporting of outcomes of QILT Student Experience Survey data (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience). Academic Program Review - myExperience Survey outcomes across the program (outcomes reported to the Academic Board). UNSW monitoring, review and enhancement process – Learning & Teaching Dashboard. Monitoring and reporting against Council Key Performance Indicators: KPI 7 - Student Satisfaction and KPI 14 - International Students (international student satisfaction).	myExperience Survey Procedure Academic Offerings Review Procedure

Assessment

Assessment is an element of all three domains.

Area	Core quality processes	Related policy documents
Assessment design	Faculty processes for assuring and improving the quality of assessment practices. Faculty Academic Committee (or equivalent) approves assessment requirements in new and revised program and course proposals.	Assessment Policy Assessment Design Procedure
Assessment outcomes	Faculty Academic Committee (or equivalent) reviews of student outcomes in programs. Go8 Quality Verification System. Academic Program Review – Review of assessment.	Assessment Policy Assessment Design Procedure Assessment Implementation Procedure Academic Offerings Review Procedure

Appendix B – UNSW Education Quality Governance & Management

Tier of QA	University			Faculty	School	Program	Course
Governance Governance body responsible for quality assurance	Council Governing authority of the University						
	Risk Committee Advise Council (and the President & Vice-Chancellor) on areas of risk management						
	Academic Board Principle academic body of the University. Responsible for academic standards and for formulating and recommending policy						
	UAQC Make recommendations to the Academic Board on education quality matters and education policy, strategy and standards						
				Faculty Board & Committee/s Monitor education quality in the Faculty Make recommendations on academic programs and quality to University Committees		School Board & Committee Monitor education quality in the School to ensure that sound learning and teaching processes are in place	
Management Oversight Individual responsible for ensuring that mechanisms are in place to support education quality framework	President & Vice-Chancellor Overall leadership of UNSW, including strategic and operational delivery	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality Executive oversight of education quality at the University-level	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) Operational oversight of education quality framework at the University-level	Dean/Deputy Dean/Associate Dean (A/E) Oversight of education quality and strategy at the Faculty-level	Head of School Oversight of education quality at the School-level		
Implementation Individual responsible for implementation of education quality framework	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) Ensure quality issues are addressed across the University Co-ordinate University-level quality initiatives			Associate Dean (Education) (or equivalent) Work with Schools to identify and address issues Co-ordinate Faculty-level quality initiatives	Head of School Ensure quality issues are addressed in the School To review school quality reports and analysis	Program Authority Obtain program-level data to assess quality. Ensure quality issues are addressed in the program	Course Authority Obtain course-level data to assess quality. Ensure quality issues are addressed in the course
Enabling Business unit responsible for supporting the quality framework	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) Portfolio Support and advise on education quality Centrally-led quality enhancement initiatives, including exploration of and investment in new technologies and innovative pedagogies, analytics		Planning & Performance Institutional data warehousing, reporting and analysis	Faculty Faculty-led initiatives, including participation in contemporary discipline-based debates and investigation of current and emerging industry needs			