

Professional and Continuing Education Policy

Introduction

Because various types of professional and continuing education activities are conducted in the University's name and use the University's resources, a policy is needed to define the procedures and approval process for such activities. The aim is not to restrict professional and continuing education activities, but rather to provide a quality assurance framework which ensures protection of the individuals involved and the University's name.

This policy is effective from 1 October 2001 for any newly contracted professional and continuing Education (PaCE) courses or services. Any currently contracted PaCE courses and services may continue under the terms of existing contracts, but these must all be reviewed at the earliest opportunity to ensure compliance with this policy.

This policy applies to all University employees both academic and general. For the purposes of this policy, Honorary Research staff will be treated as employees.

This policy will be applied in the context of related University policies concerned with outside activities. These include the relevant policies specified in the *Financial Services Policies* manual; policies relating to conflict of interest; human resources management; the Intellectual Property policy and provisions of Enterprise Bargaining agreements and Industrial awards.

Objectives

The objectives of the Professional and Continuing Education Policy are:

- To provide a framework for the development, approval and management of these programs.
- To encourage and broaden the scope of professional and continuing education activities and to promote the benefits of these activities to the University and the community.
- To provide advice and guidance to staff and external clients about the appropriate usage of the University's name and resources in the provision of teaching and teaching related services outside standard University award programs.
- To minimise risks to the University, and employees in terms of legal and taxation issues, insurance coverage and competitive neutrality. Competitive neutrality in this case means that University staff should not have (or be seen to have) a competitive advantage over private providers attributable to staff access to University resources.
- To ensure an adequate return to the University for the deployment of its resources, and to generate additional income from these activities.

Definitions

An *award course* is a program of study formally approved/accredited by the institution or any other relevant accreditation authority and which leads to an academic award granted by the institution. Award courses are normally delivered on a HECS-liable or fee-paying basis.

A *non-award program of study* is a program which does not lead to an award and which comprises a unit or units of study from an award course at the institution which can be counted as credit towards an award course at the institution by all students who complete the program of study.

Commonwealth guidelines for charging fees for non-award programs of study state that higher education institutions must charge students a fee for participating in a program of study on a non-award basis.

*The fee charged will be determined by individual higher education institutions **subject to the requirement that the fee be equal to or greater than the contribution** that the student would have been required to make under section 39[of the Higher Education Funding Act] had such a contribution been payable.*

Students undertaking non award units must be charged at least the non discounted differential HECS rate for each unit. This requirement is different from the guidelines for charging fees for undergraduate courses, where the Commonwealth does not impose a minimum fee level.

Professional and Continuing Education

Professional and continuing education is used broadly to describe a range of teaching programs and teaching related services, other than standard operating grant award courses of the University, provided by the University, or by an employee or associate of the University, in return for a benefit to the University. Benefit is construed to include other than direct financial return, although the aim is not to require formal approval for community service or professional activities such as those in which staff give talks to community or professional groups.

Private course delivery in return for a benefit to the employee, addressed under 3.2 Private Consultancies in the *Consultancy Policy*, where the conditions and approval process are specified in detail, is excluded from this policy.

The University is the proper party to a University PaCE commitment, whether or not the documentation refers to any individual employee as the principal provider. A University PaCE course or service is usually conducted using University staff time, resources and infrastructure.

PaCE programs and services, which can be provided to internal and external clients, may include:

- University award unit content or course components packaged and delivered to meet the needs of the client;
- Course content and materials developed and delivered to the specification of the client;
- Bridging and supplementary programs, not fitting the DETYA requirements to attract Commonwealth funding;
- Skill development programs for students, such as IT skills, shorthand etc;
- Recruitment and taster programs (not one-off talks to school or community groups);
- Formal community service programs which attract fees and/or some form of University certification;
- Seminars and formal presentations developed and delivered to the specification of the client;
- Provision of university teaching services and infrastructure to deliver course content developed by a third party;
- Accrediting course content, developed internally or by a third party, for delivery by another party that may be used to gain a University of Tasmania award [accrediting

delivery and assessment staff and quality control over assessment is essential in such circumstances];

- Assessment and/or moderation services etc.

Benefit to the University

These programs are generally conducted on a fee for service basis with the fee based on full cost recovery and profit. All such programs must be formalised through appropriate documentation that should include a business plan outlining full costs and expected outcomes and benefits. Where programs involve packaging of award course units, potential Commonwealth funding should be considered in the business plan. Programs that have a recruitment, student support or community service objective may be subsidised by the relevant school or department but the business plan for the program should indicate the full costs and expected financial and non-financial benefits.

Development, approval and management of PaCE programs

A streamlined and timely approach to program review and approval is necessary to ensure market responsiveness if the University is to take advantage of the increasing opportunities to offer these programs on a commercial basis. Given the need to protect the University's reputation in this field, the approval process must also involve rigorous review of quality assurance, assessment and certification arrangements. To this end, it is necessary for Academic Senate to have responsibility for the quality assurance of all professional and continuing education programs. In practice, responsibility for approval and oversight of professional and continuing education programs not articulating with award courses and not involving formal certification by the University may be delegated to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning).

A Professional and Continuing Education Advisory Committee, consisting of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), the Chair of Academic Senate, and the Academic Registrar, will be established to provide advice on course development and approval arrangements. This committee will monitor the range of course proposals and develop guidelines as necessary in relation to course approval, quality assurance, assessment, articulation and certification arrangements.

PaCE course and service proposals and business plans, supported by the appropriate Head of School and Dean, should be submitted to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), or delegate. The proposal documentation should indicate whether assessment or certification is involved, or if the program entails possible recognition for award course credit, or articulation with an award course. It should also indicate how income other than direct costs to the program will be disbursed on completion. This may include direct payments to internal or external course delivery and support staff for delivery (in excess of normal duties for internal staff) and/or payments to Schools/Sections through the School Development Fund.

The PaCE Advisory Committee will develop guidelines for ensuring proposals are handled in a timely way. These guidelines will specify the types of continuing and professional education programs which may be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), those which will be referred to the PaCE Advisory Committee and those which require Senate approval. Proposals referred to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (T&L) should normally be reviewed within seven days of referral. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) will provide brief reports to the Teaching and Learning Committee on those proposals not requiring formal presentation to Senate. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) will provide an annual report to the University's Teaching and Learning Committee on course developments, approval arrangements and implementation issues related to PaCE.

Final documentation, noting any changes recommended during the review process, will be referred back to the proposer and the appropriate Head of School for sign off, before formal agreements or contracts are signed on behalf of the University.

The University's Legal Office will review all contracts and agreements outside standard templates.

Matters that should be addressed in all agreements, where they are relevant, include:

- Term of agreement, and appropriate mechanisms for renewing or cancelling agreement
- Record keeping and enrolment arrangements, timeliness of administrative processes
- "Student" status of the participants, relevant services and amenities fees, eligibility to use student support services and IT and Library resources
- Application of University academic policies, such as assessment and recognition of credit, to the participants and third party providers
- Nature of certification of participants and/or course
- Protocols for communicating with the participants about enrolment and assessment issues where both the University and third parties are involved in delivery, administration or assessment
- Protocols for accreditation of delivery and assessment staff where third parties are involved
- Protocols for University review and approval of promotional and other course-related material developed and disseminated by third party providers.

Each approved University PaCE program will be managed through a separate account. This will be arranged as part of the approval process.

It is the responsibility of the principal provider to ensure all relevant costs are charged to this account. Charges must be billed and collected on a timely basis.

On completion of the project the principal provider and the Head of School will be required to sign off that all expenses for the program have been accounted for. Only after this point will any distribution be made, in accordance with the approved proposal, and the account will then be closed.

School Development Fund (SDF)

The SDF is an account, which is available for the management of consulting and research funds generated by staff in that school. It can be used to fund any school activities within university guidelines. For example, it may be used to fund books, journals, research activities, secretarial staff, capital equipment, or staff travel to conferences. It cannot be used for remuneration to consultants.

Conditions

The Head of School controls the SDF. Normal university purchasing policy and procedures will apply to this account, including the procedure that all items of equipment purchased from these funds remains the property of the university.

Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) may grant exceptions from the terms of this policy.

Staff may make written applications on the above grounds to the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).

Authority and Implementation

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) has overall responsibility for the implementation and operation of this policy.

Non-compliance

Because of potential exposure of the University's name, failure to comply with the terms of this policy may render the employee liable to disciplinary action for misconduct or serious misconduct in accordance with the disciplinary provisions applicable under the University's enterprise agreements and industrial awards.

Employees should also note that in appropriate cases the University could pursue recovery of any costs and damages to which the University has been exposed as a result of a breach of this policy.