Responsibilities for quality assurance in teaching and learning

This section is intended to provide an overview of the responsibilities of both university staff and students for quality assurance in teaching and learning.

The University believes that quality assurance in teaching and learning is a shared responsibility. Responsibilities for ensuring quality in teaching and learning in the University reside in structural and organisational entities as well as individual staff and students. The University’s Academic Board has broad oversight of standards, policy and processes surrounding University academic endeavour. Collectively, teaching staff and academic managers are responsible for ensuring that the design, development, management, teaching and assessment of courses and subjects facilitate effective learning, while students have responsibility to engage in the learning process.

Specific responsibilities are outlined below.

National regulatory framework

The University is subject to national regulatory and quality arrangements governing Australian higher education. There are four major components to the new arrangements being introduced by the Commonwealth Government in 2011:

- the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), which has been established as an independent body with powers to register higher education providers, monitor quality and ensure standards;
- a national Register of providers of higher education;
- a framework for standards in higher education, which sets out:
  - standards for registration (governance, management, financial viability, responsibilities and resources),
  - qualification standards through the Australian Qualification Framework
  - standards for information which providers will make available to TEQSA for regulatory purposes and to the market to support transparency;
  - standards for teaching and learning and for research, to be used by TEQSA for quality assurance and improvement purposes; and
- a My University website to assist prospective students to make choices about what and where to study.

Apart from its regulatory tasks, TEQSA will also have a quality assurance and improvement function, thus replacing the activities previously undertaken by the Australian Universities Quality Agency.

University structures

The University aims, through an outstanding curriculum and university experience, to enable its students to develop their full potential as globally-aware professionals, citizens and community leaders.¹ To ensure the continuing high quality of its programs and that these programs meet their objectives, the University as an institution has in place structures, policies and processes to:

- review and evaluate teaching and learning processes and outcomes, including related supporting services;
- ensure systematic monitoring and review of the academic management of courses, teaching and performance;

¹ The University Plan 2011-2014.
• support individual staff development, performance improvement and opportunities for innovation in teaching;
• monitor staff performance in teaching and learning;
• recognise and reward teaching excellence;
• monitor and evaluate student outcomes;
• take into account student feedback to facilitate enhanced teaching and learning performance;
• provide infrastructure to support a high quality learning environment through its libraries, systems, equipment and teaching and learning spaces such as classrooms and other facilities; and
• provide services to enrich and support students’ learning.

Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

The Provost coordinates and superintends the academic and related programs and student services across the University in accordance with the policies of Academic Board and Council. The Provost is the senior academic officer working with the Deans and Academic Board to achieve the academic vision embedded in the Melbourne Model (Regulation 2.5.R1) and has responsibility for staffing policies. The Provost leads and supports the development, delivery and excellence of the University’s curriculum, student experience and scholarly information services. The Provost has responsibility for the implementation and coordination of the Melbourne Model, the Melbourne Student Services Model and Melbourne's Scholarly Information Future.

The Provost is supported in this role by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), who has responsibility for the development of academic policy, planning and management, for programs for improvement in teaching and learning. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is also responsible for major change in academic programs and/or the delivery of those programs.

The Provost is also supported by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Participation and Engagement) who has accountabilities for student equity, staff equity and the student experience and the Provost Fellow who provides academic leadership in relation to embedding graduate attributes, particularly those of community leadership and active global citizenship, through curricular and co-curricular opportunities.

Academic Board oversight and management

Academic Board

Academic Board is responsible to Council for the supervision and development of all academic activities of the University, including the maintenance of high standards in teaching and research, as well as for communication with the academic community through the faculties and departments (Statute 4.1). Through its subcommittees, the Academic Board develops and promulgates academic and student-related policy and procedures, including academic quality assurance and standards, curriculum design, research training, knowledge transfer, teaching and learning, and all academic aspects of student management such as student entry and selection, enrolment, assessment, examination and progress, course and subject structure, awards and prizes, and graduate attributes. Academic Board achieves its work through a series of committees; of most relevance to coursework programs are:

• Academic Programs Committee which develops policies relating to all academic courses, including teaching and learning practices to ensure that academic programs are of the highest quality and standards;
• Selection Procedures Committee which develops procedures and policies relating to the admission of students into University courses, and the principles on which they are based;
• Teaching and Learning Development Committee which develops policies and programs to promote and encourage excellence, innovation and for the support and development of staff and facilities in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee

Academic Board has vested its **Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee** (TALQAC) with particular responsibility for quality assurance. TALQAC plays a key role in evaluating teaching and learning in the University by:

- providing advice to the Board and the University community on quality assurance policy and processes for teaching and learning in undergraduate and postgraduate award courses and subjects;
- having particular responsibilities in relation to quality assurance of award courses (including course structure and coherence), assessment and examination policies, processes for course management, learning support, student progress and student transition into courses and careers;
- developing, in collaboration with Faculties, Graduate Schools and related Academic Board committees, appropriate qualitative and quantitative measures of performance of teaching and learning, taking into account national and international recommended practices, and overseeing, monitoring and reviewing their use;
- advising the Provost and Academic Board on priority areas for evaluation and quality assurance of academic programs and associated student support programs, and making recommendations on areas of teaching and learning for evaluation;
- reviewing and evaluating quality in teaching and learning of all award courses and associated student support services and programs, and making recommendations to relevant authorities on actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning in those courses and programs;
- advising and making recommendations to the Academic Board and its committees, management committees, faculties, schools and departments on modifications to the structure, content, method of presentation and delivery of award courses in response to quality assessments received in the previous year in order to ensure that these programs are of the highest possible quality; and
- evaluating systems and structures for the effective interaction between faculties, graduate schools, the Melbourne School of Graduate Research, Research and Research Training Committee, relevant Academic Board committees, associated administrative supporting services and the Finance and Planning Group in the development and use of measures to encourage adoption of good practice in academic programs.

**New Generation degree (NGD) program responsibilities**

Special arrangements have been established by the University for the academic management of New Generation Melbourne Model degrees to ensure effective and collaborative partnerships among participating faculties as well as clear lines of accountability for program deliver and quality.

**Course Steering Committees**

Steering Committees have been established for each of the New Generation undergraduate degree courses. The Committees are chaired by the Provost or nominee, and membership includes the Custodial Dean, Deans of other participating faculties, and external representatives. The Steering Committee provides strategic review and direction for the degree program, and approves the program’s business plan.

**Custodial Deans**

Custodial Deans have oversight and formal accountability for program delivery, and have management responsibilities for ensuring that adequate resources are available to support the program and Program Director. Custodial Deans have responsibilities to ensure consultation and communication with contributing faculties, and fulfil decanal statutory responsibilities for the program.
Program Director

Program Directors provide a single point of accountability for the responsibilities shared by faculties participating in the New Generation degree. NGD Program Directors have responsibility, in relation to their respective degree program, for academic leadership, teaching quality, deployment of allocated resources, curriculum review, academic leadership for policy implementation and student services, and communication of information to current students and Student Advisors. Program Directors also chair the program Course Standing Committee.

Course Standing Committees

Course Standing Committees oversee the academic development of the NGD programs, and monitor their delivery to ensure they accord with University expectations and policy. Course Standing Committees also monitor the quality of teaching and learning and academic support for the Melbourne Model undergraduate courses and collaborate with TALQAC in the evaluation of course quality.

Faculty and graduate school responsibilities

Deans

Deans have responsibility for the educational and administrative business of the faculty and its departments. Accordingly, Deans are the primary accountable officer for management and delivery of teaching and learning in their faculty or graduate school. Deans have responsibilities for executing all policies of the faculty and University for the degrees and courses within their scope, and accountability for performance of individual teaching staff.

In relation to teaching and learning, Deans’ responsibilities include:

- the quality of courses and degrees and the quality of their delivery;
- ensuring the faculty has processes in place for continuing review, course evaluation and self-assessment of its academic offerings;
- consultation with TALQAC, Academic Board and other relevant committees on learning and teaching in relation to the courses in their faculty;
- all aspects of academic management for the courses offered through their faculty, including assessment, student progress, examination, graduation;
- supporting regular and systematic evaluation of courses and subjects, processes to facilitate feedback from and to students on those evaluations;
- management of physical and human resources and infrastructure to support the continuing high quality of course and subject delivery and outcomes.

Associate Deans (Academic)

Associate Deans with responsibility for learning and teaching operate in each faculty or graduate school under delegated authority from the Dean. Responsibilities will vary from faculty to faculty dependent on the level and scope of those delegations.

In addition to their delegated decanal responsibilities Associate Deans (Academic) have responsibilities for:

- providing advice to the Dean on all matters related to teaching and learning in the faculty; and communications within their faculty, and for interactions with other faculties and entities on academic and student management issues.

Committees or other entities with learning and teaching responsibilities

All University faculties have established structures within their faculty led by the Dean or Faculty Associate Dean (Academic) under delegation. Such committees normally have representation from the disciplines which make up the faculty as well as senior management and student representation.
They have general responsibilities for advising faculty management on all aspects of the academic programs offered by the faculty and for the quality of learning and teaching within those programs, including selection, curriculum, assessment and examination. They also have oversight of the development of policy and review measures to improve learning and teaching. The structure and functions of such committees serve to ensure that all award courses are developed, reviewed and evaluated with the benefit of advice from relevant communities. In terms of curriculum design, input should be sought (where appropriate) from advisory committees that include relevant stakeholders such as prospective employers and professional accrediting bodies. Larger faculties also have separate discipline or course specific committees or committees with interests in a group of related courses which feed into faculty academic program committees.

**Heads of academic units**

Heads of academic units, as executive officers of the unit, have responsibilities for teaching and assessment offered through their unit. These responsibilities include quality assurance of all subjects, maintaining documentation relating to subjects, monitoring staff performance, appraisal of teaching staff, and providing opportunities for individual staff development. They are also responsible for providing appropriate resources to support all teaching undertaken by the academic unit.

**Teaching staff**

Teaching staff at all levels – including tutors, demonstrators and other instructional and supporting staff – have a responsibility to incorporate appropriate methods and processes to ensure high quality of learning and teaching.

**Lecturers and tutors**

Staff appointed to teach at undergraduate and postgraduate level have responsibilities to:

- collaborate with colleagues to ensure that subjects and courses in which they teach achieve agreed learning outcomes and graduate attributes;
- use approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn;
- develop high quality curricula and resources in order to maximise students’ command of their discipline area;
- use approaches to timely assessment and feedback that foster independent, reflective learning;
- assist students to develop as individuals;
- ensure and demonstrate that their learning and teaching functions are informed by high quality research participation; and
- commit to their own learning through self-reflection, review and evaluation of their teaching, through a range of methods, including student feedback.

**Course and subject co-ordinators**

In addition to their responsibilities as members of teaching staff of the University, course and subject co-ordinators have responsibilities to ensure that:

- the design of the course or subject meets clearly defined learning and teaching objectives;
- processes are in place for achieving effective course or subject management and co-ordination, particularly where teaching is contributed across department and faculties or has an off-campus or off-shore component;
- these responsibilities include student and teaching staff management, including tutors, demonstrators and other instructional and supporting staff, in order to ensure the coherence and high quality of courses or subjects;
- a range of appropriate strategies are in place to facilitate the evaluation of learning and teaching outcomes;
- feedback on subject evaluations is provided to students; and
• course or subject objectives are reviewed and evaluated to take into account new knowledge and developments.

Supporting services
Students are supported by a range of services at central and faculty levels. Among these supporting services are:

• Student Centres which provide a first point of contact for advice on administrative and transactional services as well as course planning and graduate study;
• dedicated and specialist services to support students’ learning and academic skills development, and language development;
• dedicated services to facilitate enrichment of students’ academic and social experience through study abroad and exchange programs, volunteering and community engagement;
• careers advice and support;
• specialist services, such as health and counselling, financial and housing assistance, to support students’ well-being.
• Faculty Learning Units

Students
Students are expected to participate fully in their study, taking responsibility for their learning and for moving toward intellectual independence as a member of the learning community of the University. This includes:

• engagement in the learning process, through creating dynamic partnerships with peers, teachers and researchers;
• providing considered, honest and timely feedback to the University and its staff on the quality of teaching and University services; and
• full participation in the University community through their representatives on academic and student liaison committees at University, faculty and academic unit level.

A full statement setting out students’ and the University’s responsibilities is given in Student Expectations and Responsibilities (UOM0446)

Principles and approach
Process for review
Evaluation questions for self-assessment
Special topics
Resources