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# **Award Courses and Subjects Approval and Review Policy**

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# **Award Courses and Subjects Approval and Review Policy**

## **Policy Statement**

The award courses of Governance Institute of Australia (hereafter referred to Governance Institute) are the primary means by which Governance Institute strives to achieve its vision of providing contemporary, evidence based higher education that is responsive to current and emerging workforce needs and builds its reputation for the quality of its graduates. The quality of a course is critical to Governance Institute. As the key academic quality assurance agency of Governance Institute, the Academic Board of Governance Institute must be able to assess quality through the approval and review process and by monitoring course performance. Governance Institute's education offerings are delivered under the brand Governance Academy.

## **Aims and Objectives**

1. This policy guides the development and approval of courses and subjects, taking into account Governance Institute's Teaching and Learning Plan.
2. The information collected through the approval process is used for student recruitment, for subject learning guides, for timetabling, for setting fees, the acquisition of library materials and for reporting and approval. It is critical therefore, that courses and subjects are finalised by the specified dates.
3. This policy mandates that course and subject approval occurs through the relevant academic governance and management structures of Governance Institute.

## Overview

4. Governance Institute courses must:
  - a. align with Governance Institute Teaching and Learning Plan;
  - b. support the achievement of Governance Institute graduate attributes;
  - c. incorporate Governance Institute's standards for course design, delivery and support;
  - d. be reviewed on a periodic basis to maintain their currency and relevance; and
  - e. provide quality outcomes for students.

## Definitions

5. For this policy:
  - **Academic Lead:** a person engaged by Governance Institute to provide academic leadership that includes mentoring academic staff in their teaching and academic scholarship; and responsibility for academic quality assurance at the subject and course levels.
  - **Award Course:** a program of study consisting of at least four subjects or 40 credit points leading to an award of Governance Institute Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by Governance Institute's Academic Board.
  - **Core:** a mandatory set of subjects to be completed by all students enrolling in the award course.
  - **Executive Management Team (EMT):** Governance Institute's most senior operational decision-making forum comprising the CEO of the Institute and their direct reports.
  - **General Manager, Education:** the member of staff designated to manage the development or modification of a course.
  - **Course Design Standards:** the characteristics of a course that allow students to achieve an appropriate set of course learning outcomes, including Governance Institute's graduate attributes. These include active learning (including e-learning), theory-practice links,

flexibility and accessibility, and appropriate assessment throughout the course. Course learning outcomes should be related to external reference points such as professional accreditation standards and other relevant external reference points (where these are applicable).

- **Course Delivery Standards:** the staff expertise and availability, and consistency and quality of delivery of support materials, which are required for successful delivery of the course.
- **Course Support Standards:** the infrastructure, resources, professional and technical support that is required for successful and consistent delivery of the course.
- **Graduate Attributes:** the characteristics each Governance Institute graduate should have developed by the time they have completed their course. (Refer to Governance Institute's Graduate Attributes Policy).

## Procedures

### Courses and Pathways

#### Course Development and Approval

6. The development of a new course is a significant project requiring: consideration of the rationale for development with emphasis on targeting the current and emerging needs of the governance workforce (including accreditation of courses by professional bodies).

#### New Courses

7. A new course requires:
  - a. A Course Concept Proposal that allows Governance Institute to consider how well the proposal fits with its vision and goal of providing contemporary, evidence-based higher education that is responsive to current and emerging governance workforce needs through courses tailored to enhance learning and the student experience.
  - b. The Course Concept Proposal includes the intended size of the course, the resource requirements and evidence-based "business case" (development and capital costs, income

and expenditure for at least the first three years), an analysis of the expected effects on subject offerings and enrolments, significant impacts on support areas, risks associated with the initiative and how they will be addressed, and a description of how it will meet academic quality standards and compliance with the Australian Qualifications Framework.

- c. Formulation of a Course Concept Proposal will routinely incorporate in principle advice on the concept from Governance Institute's Academic Board.
- d. A Course Concept Proposal will be submitted for approval to the Course Approvals Sub-Committee of the Academic Board after the Business Case is approved.
- e. A Business Case that justifies the course's development that includes benchmarked performance measures, and projected enrolments, revenue and expenses will be provided to the Academic Board after endorsement by Governance Institute's Executive Management Team (EMT).
- f. Following approval by the, Academic Board the Full Course Proposal can then proceed.
- g. A Full Course Proposal that includes the Course Concept Proposal as the first part of the documentation and identifies the structural elements of the proposed course, such as core subjects and pathways; admission requirements; course learning outcomes with external reference points, including any professional recognition and/or registration; and resource requirements.
- h. The full course proposal will explain how the Course Design Standards are satisfied, including provision for attainment of Governance Institute graduate attributes. The course proposal will also explain how the Course Delivery and Curriculum Support Standards will be satisfied. The full course proposal will be developed by a constituted External Advisory Committee on behalf of Governance Institute's Academic Board for approval by Governance Institute's Academic Board. (See External Advisory Committees Policy).

### **Major Changes to a Course or Pathway**

- 8. Major changes to an existing course or pathway are treated as a new course for the components being changed. Major changes include:

- a. the introduction or discontinuation of a pathway/s;
  - b. changes affecting external accreditation;
  - c. substantial changes to the resource requirements for the course (e.g. changes to delivery mode, numbers of subjects);
  - d. changes affecting graduation; and
  - e. changes to admission requirements.
9. Major change proposals must be accompanied by a Full Course Proposal, submitted for approval to Governance Institute's Academic Board on the recommendation of the Course Review and Accreditation Sub-Committee, explaining the rationale for the change, an assessment of the risks of changing and not changing and an assessment of the continued financial viability of the changed course.

### **Course or Pathway Discontinuation**

10. Discontinuation of a course or pathway may have significant impact on students and the governance sector generally, as well as relationships with partners, professional, accreditation and regulatory bodies.
11. Proposed discontinuation of a course or pathway must, in the first instance, be discussed by Governance Institute's Executive, with the General Manager, Education as the sponsor, and a recommendation made to the Governance Institute's Academic Board.
12. Proposals for discontinuation of a course or pathway (and the stages leading to discontinuation) must take into account the students currently enrolled in the course and must specify arrangements for them to transfer to a new course including the amount of advanced standing they will receive based on the studies at Governance Institute; or complete the existing course or pathway including if the professional accreditation / recognition of the course is affected by the course discontinuation (if applicable); the timeframe for completion and a strategy for communication with affected students.

13. Details of proposed transitional arrangements should be developed by General Manager, Education or delegate and, if endorsed, will be forwarded via Governance Institute's Course Review and Accreditation Sub-Committee to Governance Institute's Academic Board for approval.
14. Transition arrangements may include but are not limited to pathways that Governance Institute has with other higher education providers in a cognate course discipline; Memoranda of Understanding for course transfer purposes or similar instruments that facilitate a course transfer.
15. Students who choose to remain in the course of study will be provided with a variation of enrolment letter that outlines the remaining subjects they need to complete to be eligible to graduate from the course within the minimum part-time completion time; the remaining fees payable; the status of the course's professional accreditation / submission, post-completion and other relevant matters. This will include a teach-out plan that details the subjects the student is required to complete and in which semester/their credit point values and other relevant information. These students will be required to formally sign and return their Variation of Enrolment.
16. Students who choose to transfer to a new course will be provided with details of the course including its duration, fees, amount of advanced standing to be awarded based on their studies at Governance Institute, delivery mode, and professional accreditation status and other particulars. Students will receive a formal Offer of Admission for the course from the designate provider.

### **Suspension of Intake to a Course or Pathway, and Retirement or Termination of a Course or Pathway**

17. Governance Institute may wish to suspend an intake of students to a course for a period of up to two years. The impact of suspending an intake is similar to course discontinuation (see above).
18. The proposed suspension of an intake in the first instance is discussed by Governance Institute's Executive as recommended by the General Manager, Education as the sponsor, in consultation with stakeholders and a recommendation made to Governance Institute's Academic Board.
19. The proposal for suspension should provide the rationale for suspension, the arrangements to accommodate students currently enrolled in the course or an approved pathway to that course



and a strategy for communication with affected students, as well as the effect on other courses that may share subjects with the course.

20. Normally, a course will be retired at the end of the period of suspension. If the suspension is to be lifted, advice should be provided to Governance Institute's Academic Board.
21. Retirement of a course or pathway occurs where there will be no further intake of students and will no longer be available for admission:
  - a. following a period of suspension in the case of a course; or
  - b. when a course or pathway is being replaced; or
  - c. when Governance Institute decides it will no longer offer the course or pathway; or
  - d. when major changes to a course or pathway result in the creation of a new course or pathway version.
22. Where there is no replacement course or pathway proposed, Governance Institute will identify the arrangements and timeframe for continuing students to complete their study.
23. Where a replacement course or specialisation is proposed, the proposal must detail the transition arrangements for continuing students.
24. A course or pathway will be terminated when there are no students enrolled in the retired course or pathway. Any former student presenting for completion of the course after termination has taken effect, will be advised to seek admission to a current course and subjects previously studied will be transferred to the new course.

## **Course Reviews**

25. Course Reviews at Governance Institute comprise:
  - a. an annual "Health Check"; and
  - b. a Formal Quinquennial Course Review.

### **Annual “Health” Check**

26. An annual "Health Check" is conducted for each course annually under the direction of the Academic Board, which will be formulated by the Course Review and Accreditation Sub-Committee, to monitor the viability and quality assurance of the course that occurs between the Quinquennial Course Review cycle.
27. An annual health check may include and/or as otherwise approved by the Academic Board these data with relevant benchmarks:
  - a. student load
  - b. first year attrition,
  - c. progression rate
  - d. completion rates,
  - e. student feedback,
  - f. financial viability data
  - g. marketing data
  - h. Currency of the content
  - i. Graduate outcomes; and
  - j. Key risks and their controls and treatments
28. A course review may further include: assessment items moderated and the outcomes; any changes to subjects and their effectiveness; and / or any other matters as requested by the Academic Board.

### **Quinquennial Course Review**

29. The Quinquennial Course Review is the major course review that will occur every five (5) years, which will be facilitated by the Course Review and Accreditation Sub-Committee of the Academic Board. The Quinquennial Course Review will include:
- a. analysis of the course's viability in terms of its annual enrolment EFTSL, income, operating costs, strategic alignment to Governance Institute's mission and strategy; and its competitiveness to other institutions based on benchmarked information;
  - b. the students' experience of the course and ideas on how the course can be improved that may comprise consultation with current students in the course in the form of focus groups or individual student interviews;
  - c. analysis of continued currency, accuracy and relevance of content (e.g. legislative changes, new technology etc.);
  - d. a review of the curriculum and the course's annual course performance review reports by a senior academic leading or teaching in a similar course at another tertiary education institution; and / or a report from the perspective of the External Advisory Committee;
  - e. demonstration that the course review has been cognisant of the course accreditation guidelines of the professional accrediting body (if applicable).
  - f. the academic staff profile, that includes the appropriateness of the number and percentage of academic leaders relative to EFTSL and external benchmarks; the scholarly activity undertaken per the Academic Staff Scholarship Policy.
  - g. a review of the support staff profile including academic and welfare support available to students relative to EFTSL and available external benchmarks.
  - h. compliance with the standards of the HESF (2021).
  - i. the effectiveness of the governance arrangements for the course.
  - j. the key risks to the course, their ratings, controls, and treatments.

- k. any other matters or variations to the above the Academic Board determines are appropriate; and
- l. a report for the Academic Board that includes the commendations and recommendations of the review.

## **Subjects**

- 30. Academic Leads are responsible for the quality of subject content and delivery of the subject.
- 31. The Subject Proposal outlines how the subject contributes to any course or pathway in which it is offered, the learning outcomes for the subject, assessment requirements, its relationship to other subjects, including the contributions that it makes to the course design standards, course learning outcomes and assessment schedules of the relevant courses, the resources required to deliver the subject, as well as when and how it is to be taught.
- 32. Subject Proposals require a detailed resource assessment, and proposers must consult with the supporting information technology services and include a statement that the subject can be supported or the nature of the support issues.
- 33. All subjects must adhere to the provisions of the Assessment Policy.

## **New Subjects**

- 34. A new subject requires the completion of a New Subject or Variation to a Subject Form.
- 35. For the purposes of this policy, a new subject is a subject that:
  - a. introduces curriculum content and related learning outcomes that are not currently offered; or
  - b. replaces one or more existing subjects and substantial changes their curriculum content and/or learning outcomes; or
  - c. changes the AQF level of a subject; or
  - d. changes the credit point value.

36. A change in subject code and/or title does not automatically constitute a new subject for the purposes of this policy, as some curriculum changes may be minor. The General Manager, Education or delegate will resolve any questions about whether a subject is new or not.
37. The Academic Lead considers the academic quality of the proposal and forwards a recommendation to Governance Institute's Academic Board for approval.

### **Changes to a Subject**

38. Proposals for changes to a subject require the resubmission of the approved proposal with changes highlighted.
39. Minor variations to subjects are approved by the Academic Lead.
40. Major variations to subjects are considered by the Academic Lead who forwards a recommendation to Governance Institute's Academic Board for approval.

### **Retirement or Deletion of a Subject**

41. Proposals to retire or replace a subject must take into consideration students in all courses where the subject is offered or is an integral part of a pathway.
42. Proposals to retire a subject should provide:
  - a. the arrangements to accommodate students currently enrolled in the course or pathway where the subject is offered as a core subject; and
  - b. the effect on other courses that may include the subject as part of a pool of alternate elective subjects.
43. Where a subject will be replaced by a new subject, the request for retirement will accompany the proposal documentation of the new replacement subject.
44. Any continuing students affected by the decision to retire a core subject should be given a minimum of one teaching session notice that the change will occur.

45. Advice to affected students should include a formal letter from the General Manager, Education which includes, where appropriate, the available options or alternative arrangements.
46. Authority to approve the retirement or deletion of a subject rests with the Governance Institute's Academic Board.

## Timing of Approvals for and Reviews of Courses and Subjects

47. Annual Curriculum Review and Approval Calendars are set by Governance Institute to ensure that externally imposed deadlines are met and that internal processes depending on the approved course and subject data, can be completed.

## Related Documents

- Governance Institute of Australia Assessment Policy
- Governance Institute of Australia External Advisory Committees Policy
- Governance Institute of Australia Graduate Attributes Policy
- Governance Institute of Australia Teaching and Learning Plan

## External Legislation

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)

## Version History

Policy title	Award Courses and Subjects Approval and Review Policy
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\*\*\*\*\*END OF POLICY\*\*\*\*\*