

University of Ballarat

POLICY ON THE EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF COURSES, UNITS, COMPETENCY UNITS, AND MODULES

Please note: the underlining of some words in this policy refers to future “clickables” on a web page. Most of these are not there yet!

PREAMBLE

The University is committed to creating excellent learning opportunities for its students, members of the community and other learners through the provision of high quality, relevant and up-to-date programs.

The University is also committed to establishing and maintaining conditions that are conducive to the ongoing quality improvement of its programs. This includes a framework for the systematic evaluation and improvement of its courses, units, competency units and modules.

COURSE, UNIT, COMPETENCY UNIT, AND MODULE EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Courses are programs of study leading to the award of a formal certificate or qualification. Courses are made up of subsidiary elements, variously referred to as units, competency units or modules. All courses, including the units, competency units, or modules of which they are comprised, will be reviewed regularly for the purposes of quality assurance and continuous improvement. Such evaluations, along with the description of changes that have been made, or recommended, as a result of the review, will be reported to the Academic Board or Board of Technical Studies through their respective Curriculum Committees.

Course Evaluation and Improvement

All courses will undergo a major Course Review at least once every five years depending on the length of the course. In special circumstances, such as newly emerging or rapidly changing fields of study, the Academic Board or the Board of Technical Studies may require a course to undergo course reviews more frequently.

The results of such reviews will be reported to the Academic Board or the Board of Technical Studies via their respective Curriculum Committees. The Curriculum Committees, in collaboration with the relevant Course Committee(s), or Program Team(s), will ensure that the processes occur on an appropriate schedule and that they meet the minimum requirements laid down for Course Reviews.

In addition to cyclical Course Reviews, all courses will also be subject to Annual Course Reports. Such reports will necessarily be less comprehensive than Course Reviews, but will nevertheless give an indication of the main strengths and weaknesses of the course, and will form the basis of continuous improvement of the course and will contribute to the Course Review.

Course Reviews will be informed by and based on the following sources of feedback and other information:

- Annual Course Reports;
- Comments by the Course Team or Program Team, and Course Coordinator or Program Manager;
- Reviews by relevant Heads of School;
- Input from graduates and members of relevant professional and industry communities;
- Input from colleagues and peers from other institutions;
- Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and other relevant Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA) data; and
- Student Evaluation of Units (SEU).

Unit, Competency Unit, and Module Evaluation and Improvement

It is expected that units, competency units, and modules will be evaluated, and consequent improvements made or recommended, at least every two years on a cycle determined and managed by Heads of School on advice from relevant staff.

As the basic building blocks of courses, units, competency units, and modules are expected to be subject to more frequent and detailed reviews than entire courses. Such reviews may take account of good practice in Australia and elsewhere, the requirements of professional, industrial and accrediting bodies, and expectations of, and feedback from, significant stakeholders such as staff, students, graduates and employers.

The University has made available a Unit, Competency Unit and Module Evaluation Checklist that may be used by staff in reviewing units and modules. Assistance with unit, competency unit and module evaluation is also available from the Scholarship and Educational Development Services (SEDS) Branch.

To further assist with the process, the University operates a comprehensive scheme of Student Evaluation of Units (SEU). This enables staff members to obtain feedback from their students through questionnaires comprising certain standard items and up to ten optional questions selected from an item bank. Such questionnaires are administered under controlled conditions and the results, once processed, are provided to the staff member(s), the Course Coordinator or Program Manager, and the supervisor or any other mutually acceptable person.

If individual Course Coordinators or Program Managers wish or need to use an alternative to the standard Student Evaluation of Units protocol, they must make a case (normally in advance) to have the alternative approach approved by the Academic Board or Board of Technical Studies through the relevant Curriculum Committee.