ACADEMIC BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Authority

The Higher Education Courses Committee (HCC) is a standing committee of the Academies Australasia Polytechnic (AAPoly) Academic Board (AB) was established by resolution at the meeting of the AB on 27 October 2017.

2. Definitions and abbreviations

AAPoly	*Academies Australasia Polytechnic*
AB	*Academic Board*
ASQA	*Australian Standards and Quality Authority*
BOD	*Board of Directors*
HCC	*Higher Education Courses Committee (standing committee of AB)*
HE	*Higher Education*
HESF	*Higher Education Standards Framework*
HQC	*Higher Education Quality Committee (standing committee of AB)*
Pathways	*the transition and opportunity to progress from VET to HE*
TEQSA	*Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority*
VET	*Vocational Education and Training*
External member	*a person not currently employed by AAPoly*
Standing Committee	*a permanent organisational group established by the AB*
Working Group	*a temporary organisational group established by the AB*

3. Purpose of the Higher Education Courses Committee

The Higher Education Courses Committee (HCC) of AAPoly has delegated responsibility to:

- develop new higher education (HE) courses;
- review existing HE courses; and
- monitor of the quality of delivery and outcomes of all HE courses while they are offered by AAPoly.

For more detail on delegations see Section 8 of this Terms of Reference and Appendix A of the AAPoly Academic Governance Framework.

4.   Activities of the Higher Education Courses Committee

The Higher CC will carry out its responsibilities through activities such as, but not limited to:

- developing and reviewing HE courses ensuring they are aligned with AAPoly's quality assurance principles, Teaching and Learning Plan, Benchmarking Plan, relevant policies and the expectations of the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF);
- liaising with the HQC and VQC to ensure thorough oversight of efficiency, effectiveness and compliance of all HE proposals and reviews;
- ensuring relevant contemporary professional standards that apply to new and old courses are applied to course development and review;
- creating regular HE course development and review reports for the AB for information and identification of emerging academic risks;
- creating complete HE course development proposals to submit to the AB for consideration prior to submission to AAPoly Board of Director's (BOD) for approval;
- applying, monitoring, reviewing and developing policies and procedures relevant to course development and review, and submitting recommendations to the AB for consideration; and
- maintaining a record of all activities and initiatives in an auditable archive that facilitates continuous improvement of processes.

The HCC is also expected to contribute to period reviews of courses and regulatory submissions as well as advice on all course matters to the AB and BOD when requested.

5.   Reporting, subcommittees, relationships and student involvement

The HCC reports on its activities to the AB.

The HCC Chair will determine the reports the HCC requires and this will be reflected in the HCC minutes and agenda.

The HCC Chair may create subcommittees, working groups and teams and make use of individual portfolio holders at AAPoly to discharge its responsibilities.

Subcommittees, working groups, teams of individual portfolio holders tasked to assist the HCC require Terms of Reference (TOR) to guide their activities. A template for TORs is found at Appendix G of the AAPoly Academic Governance Framework.

The HCC may also co-opt persons with relevant expertise whose input will assist the HCC in its work.

The HCC works closely with the operational staff and Academic Dean of AAPoly to ensure all its activities are adequately resourced to enable it to fulfil its duties and obligations as a significant part of the AAPoly academic governance system.

The HCC will provide the opportunity for student involvement in academic governance through a position on the committee as well as ensuring that where possible all subcommittees, working groups and teams include formal student input.

6.   Membership, appointment and terms

6.1   Membership

The size and composition of the HCC is intended to facilitate effective discharge of its responsibilities and obligations to good academic governance at AAPoly. The HCC membership is described in the following points.

- The HCC will normally have at least eight (8) members comprised as follows:
    - At least two persons, external to AAPoly
    - Academic Dean (ex officio)
    - Academic Scholarship Portfolio Holder (ex officio)
    - AAPoly Courses Portfolio Holder (ex officio)
    - Student Engagement Portfolio Holder (ex officio)
    - Library and Information systems nominee
    - Student nominee
- The AB will appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of the AB from the membership. The Chair should normally be an external member.
- All members of the HCC are voting members.
- The HCC will also invite the convenors of any subcommittees, working groups or teams or other portfolio holders that have been tasked with duties to attend HCC meetings to report on progress and inform the HCC on maters arising.
- The HCC will also permit the Chair or Deputy of AAPoly AB to attend all meetings of the HCC or any of its subcommittees, working groups or teams if they request it.

6.2   Appointment and terms

External members are appointed and reappointed by the AAPoly AB. Appointments are normally for a period of two (2) years. Appointees serving effectively are eligible for re-appointment by the BOD for a maximum of five (5) consecutive terms.

The student nominee is appointed by the AB normally for a period of two (2) years, and after effective service, may be reappointed for a further term. Student nominees serving on subcommittees, working groups or teams created by the HCC are appointed by the Chair of the HCC.

The Chair and Deputy Chair are appointed by the AB normally for a period of two (2) years and if serving effectively are eligible for re-appointment by the BOD for a maximum of five (5) consecutive terms.

6.3   When membership ceases

A person ceases to be a member of the HCC if that person at any time during their term of office:

- resigns from the HCC;
- no longer holds the relevant position that entitles the person to be on the HCC;
- in the case of a person occupying a specific role, when the person ceases to occupy that role;
- is absent from three consecutive meetings of the HCC, and has not been given leave by the Chair; or
- the member dies.

6.4   Profile of Higher Education Courses Committee Members

It is a general expectation that all persons, regardless of their position, involved in academic governance do so with independence of thought and with the best outcome for AAPoly in mind and for a proper purpose. Conflicts of interest that may interfere with this capacity are called for at every meeting.

6.4.1   General members

The enabling attributes and skills categories, that all internal and external appointees to and ex officio members, of the HCC collectively bring to deliberations and the exercise of responsibilities include but are not limited to:
- A mix of current specialist, discipline-based knowledge and general academic expertise.
- Substantive familiarity with education, teaching and learning at a senior level.
- Familiarity with the operation, opportunities and risks of the local and global graduate employment market.
- Well established networks in Higher and Vocational Education and relevant employment sectors
- Knowledge and understanding of current and future trends in the Higher and Vocational Education sector.
- Substantive experience with risk management, decision making, governance and compliance at a senior level, preferably Board level.
- Knowledge of employer expectations and the relevant employment market opportunities for AAPoly graduates.
- Professional contact with a relevant network of individuals and organisations.

6.4.2   Chair of the HCC

The Chair of the HCC will normally be a person external to AAPoly, and the following attributes and skills are desirable and should guide the choice of a suitable chairperson:
- Experience in leadership on or chairing of governance boards or committees
- Well-developed communication, analytical and decision-making skills
- An ability to contribute to at least three of the categories of qualities and skills in the list in 6.4.1 above.

6.4.3   Deputy Chair of the HCC

The Deputy Chair of the HCC may be selected from either the internal or external members of the HCC, other than the student member. Ideally, given the demands of the role, the Deputy Chair will have similar attributes to the Chair as detailed in 6.4.2

6.5   Member duties and functions

The roles of all members of the HCC require them to engage in the work of the HCC with a focus on the best academic performance possible for the benefit of students and staff of AAPoly. In carrying out this work the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary of the HCC have particular responsibilities.

6.5.1   The Chair of the HCC:
- chairs all meetings of the HCC;
- Is responsible for managing and supervising the work of the HCC;
- Is responsible for reporting on HCC activities to the AB; and
- Is subject to any delegations of authority given by the AB and the BOD.

6.5.2   The Deputy Chair of the HCC:
- is responsible for carrying out the duties expected of the Chair in the absence of the Chair;
- supports the role of the Chair as delegated by the Chair; and
- Is subject to any delegations of authority given by the AB and the BOD.

6.5.3   A Secretary of the HCC will be appointed by the CEO, and will:
- provide administrative support and resources to the HCC;
- support the role of the Chair and Deputy Chair as delegated by the Chair and Deputy Chair; and
- have specific secretarial functions related to HCC meetings (see Section 7.3 here and Schedule 2 of the AB Charter)

7.   Meetings

7.1   Ordinary meetings

Ordinary meetings are those held on a regular basis, usually scheduled in advance on the annual Academic Board Calendar and have a standard agenda which reflects the work program for the HCC for the year. Ordinary meetings normally follow these principles.

1. The HCC will meet at least four (4) times a year.
2. The quorum for meetings of the HCC is 50% of the members (if the full membership is an even number), or the membership divided by 2, and add 1 (if the membership is an odd number), but it is essential that there is at least one external, and one internal member present.
3. The Chair, or in their absence, the Deputy Chair, or in the case of both these members being unavailable, the Academic Dean will convene all meetings.
4. Dates of the meetings of the HCC will be published (in print and electronically) in the annual Academic Board Calendar which will normally be finalised at the first meeting of the calendar year.
5. Meetings are normally held in person but may be facilitated by communications technology to enable attendance.

7.2   Special meetings

The Chair may at any time convene a special meeting of the HCC. The AB or BOD can also request a special meeting which will not normally be refused. A special meeting will also be arranged if a majority of members indicate in writing a request for a special meeting.

7.3   Procedures of meetings

These are general procedural aspects of ordinary meetings of the HCC. For further information about the role of Secretary of the HCC, which are similar to those of the Secretary of the AB, see Schedule 2 of the AB Charter.

1. Notice of meeting will normally be given at least fourteen (14) working days in advance of the meeting specifying the date, time, venue and agenda of the business to be transacted at that meeting.
2. The Chair and the HCC may inform itself in any way it finds effective and efficient for its work, including requesting reports from AAPoly operational individuals, working groups or other teams.
3. The Chair and HCC determine standing items on the HCC agenda.
4. The only routine reports to the HCC are those of HCC subcommittees, working groups or teams, as specified in their terms of reference, while other reports on the HCC agenda are by specific request by the Chair and HCC on matters required by the HCC for its deliberations.
5. Motions require a proposer and seconder unless introduced by the Chair.
6. Decisions will be the outcome of debate and collaborative intent.
7. When a vote is required it will be based on a simple majority.
8. No vote may be taken at a meeting which does not have a quorum.
9. The Chair will have a deliberative and casting vote.
10. Decisions will be formally recorded in the minutes.
11. Any member may request a decision be deferred to allow them to seek more information on the matter being decided.
12. Members may abstain from voting or discussing a decision for reason of conscience or conflict of interest.
13. The HCC Secretary will normally take the minutes of HCC.
14. Minutes of meetings must be kept in a secure and accessible place and will be maintained by the Secretary to the HCC.
15. In appropriate circumstances the HCC may delegate its powers to the Chair and these decisions will be ratified at the next meeting. This will usually only occur if a decision is urgent and required outside the regular meeting cycle, and convening a

8.   Delegations to the Higher Education Courses Committee

The HCC has the delegated responsibility from the AB to:

1. create subcommittees, working groups or teams to develop new HE programs and courses or review existing programs and courses;
2. create formal terms of reference for all subcommittees, working groups or teams that are generated by the HCC;
3. prepare fully developed new HE course proposals for submission to the AB for consideration;

4. conduct full or partial reviews of existing HE courses to ensure academic integrity and rigour, industry currency and relevance and compliance with regulatory standards for submission to the AB for consideration;
5. prepare documentation for HE course accreditation and/or re-accreditation for submission to the Academic Board for consideration;
6. collaborate in the preparation of marketing material and the launch of new courses;
7. ratify and check the accuracy and completeness of the results of each semester/term of all HE programs and courses;
8. recommend the granting of awards, including HE awards to the AB for consideration;
9. develop, monitor and review policies and procedures for articulation and credit arrangements and make recommendations to the AB; and
10. develop, monitor and review policies and procedures for entry to courses, including special entry and make recommendations to the AB.

VERSION CONTROL

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