SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY

COURSE REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

Scope

These Terms of Reference apply to the review of a single course or suite of courses within a discipline area under the Course and Unit Accreditation Policy. They may be used for Course Reviews that form part of a School/College Review. Unless otherwise specified, the review should relate to the past seven years of the course both in its current form and in its previous iterations.

Aim of Course Review

The aim of a Course Review is to review the academic quality of a course, as well as its currency, financial viability (including appropriate resourcing), and performance over time. This is achieved by applying a process of overarching academic scrutiny to the course.

At its conclusion, a Course Review will recommend to the University that the course:

- be re-accredited in its current form; or
- be re-accredited following amendments; or
- not be re-accredited.

In addition, the Course Review may include any commendations, affirmations and recommendations for change.

Conduct of the Review

The Review will be conducted in line with the Course and Unit Accreditation Policy. This will involve the appointment of one or more external experts as the Course Reviewer(s). Where a Course Review is incorporated into a School/College Review, then the Course Review may be conducted as a 'desktop' review with the Course Reviewer drafting a written report (aligned with the Course Review Terms of Reference) prior to the School/College Review Panel Meeting. The Course Reviewer may also be a member of the School/College Review Panel and, if so, will have the opportunity during the School/College Review Panel Meeting to clarify aspects of the Course Review with relevant stakeholders.

All Course Reviewers are expected to be competent to assess the design, delivery and assessment of the course of study independently of the staff directly involved in the course and independent of the university.

Course Review Submission

The relevant Head of School/College, following consultation with staff, is responsible for compiling the Course Review Submission document. This document must be provided to the Office of Planning, Quality and Review by the date set. If the course review comprises part of a School/College Review, the date for submission will be at least 4 weeks prior to the School/College Review Panel Meeting.

The required components of the Course Review Submission are provided in Appendix A.

Terms of reference

The Course Reviewer(s) will be required to assess and make comment on the following criteria in the Course Review Report. These criteria align with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 , and specifically those standards which are relevant at the course level.

1. *Admission and Student Transition*

    Are the course's admission requirements transparent and appropriate?

    Are students provided with appropriate assistance in their transition to their studies?

2. *Course Financial Viability*

    Is the course financially viable?

    How has the course performed over time? Consider demand, student count, EFTSL, success and retention over a seven-year period.

3. *Course Design and Delivery*

    Does the structure and overall design of the course provide a clear, distinct and coherent program of study? Consider:

    a) alignment of learning outcomes and graduate attributes;
    b) appropriate balance in the sequencing of core units, majors, minors and electives to achieve learning outcomes;
    c) appropriate entry pathways (e.g., advanced standing) and exit points;
    d) alignment with the Australian Qualifications Framework and the University's Course Structures and Levels of Learning Policy;
    e) appropriateness of the course delivery model;
    f) extent to which the curriculum and resources are innovative, engaging and leverage technological advancements in education;
    g) success in meeting, and relevance to, industry needs.

4. *Course Content*

    Does the content and learning activities of the course engage with advanced knowledge and practice consistent with the AQF level and the expected learning outcomes? This will include consideration of the extent to which the course:

    a) engages with current and emerging knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines;
    b) addresses the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the relevant academic disciplines;
    c) uses appropriate and current unit materials, including readings, topic selection, supporting materials, case studies, tutorial exercises etc.; and
    d) has a real world focus derived from the professions which with the course is aligned.

5. *Course Alignment*

Does the course align strategically with:

- other courses of the School and the University;
- the School's Operational Plan; and
- the University's Strategic Plan and/or other priorities articulated by the University?

6. *Professional Accreditation*

Does the course meet the Professional Accreditation/Recognition standards appropriate for the course?

Where professional accreditation of a course is required for graduates to be eligible to practise, has the course maintained appropriate certification by the relevant external agency?

7. *Academic Quality*

Do the assessment content, weighting, type and variety across all units in the course support students' achievement of learning outcomes and acquisition of the University's graduate attributes? This will include consideration of:

a) appropriateness and relevance of the assessment materials, including assessment volume and context;
b) appropriateness of scaffolding of learning;
c) methods for assessment and assessment moderation; and
d) integration of community-engaged learning and work-integrated learning.

Are the teaching and learning approaches and course delivery effective with regards to location, mode(s) of delivery and student entry pathways? In part, effectiveness is demonstrated through:

- success rates;
- progression rates;
- attrition rates;
- completion times.

How does the Course perform with regard to student and graduate satisfaction, including experiences of Blackboard (Learning Management System)? Comparison with University and sector averages should be made.

Have the Course Coordinator and Unit Assessors responded appropriately to student feedback on their educational experiences?

Are there any identified risks to the quality of the course?

8. *Staffing and Other Resources*

Is the staffing complement for the course sufficient to meet the educational, academic support and administrative needs of the various student cohorts undertaking the course?

Is the academic staffing profile for the course appropriate and sufficient to provide the level and extent of academic oversight and teaching capacity needed to lead students in intellectual inquiry necessary for level of expected learning outcomes?

Are academic staffing resources and expertise utilised effectively?

Is there effective engagement of Unit Assessors in each Unit, and timely development and availability of unit materials?

Is there timely grading of assessment, finalisation of grades and notification of grades to students?

9. *Learning Resources and Educational and Other Support*

Do the learning resources (e.g., library collections and services, creative works, notes, laboratory facilities, studio sessions, simulations and software) that are specified or recommended for the Course relate directly to the learning outcomes? Are they up to date and, where supplied as part of the Course, accessible when needed by students?

Do students have access to learning support services that are consistent with the requirements of their Course, their mode of study and the learning needs of student cohorts, including arrangements for supporting and maintaining contact with students who are off campus?

10. *Any Other Matters*

These may include: *Quality and appropriateness of the School's relationship with its professional community, locally and internationally, in the context of the Course; Work integrated learning and other Industry or business links (existing, proposed or potential); Articulation arrangements or pathways (existing, proposed or potential); Relevance of the Course to other courses offered by the School, to the School Plan, the Academic Plan and the Strategic priorities of the University.*

Appendix A: Course Review Submission Guidelines

The relevant Head of School/College, in consultation with staff, will produce a Course Review Submission. The Course Coordinator will develop a Course Summary Report (maximum 500 words) as per the Course and Unit Accreditation Policy. The Head of School/College must consult with other relevant Schools to ensure that all the issues relevant to double degrees and combined degrees are reviewed.

The Course Review Submission will address the Course Review Terms of Reference:

1. Admission and Student Transition
2. Course Financial Viability
3. Course Design and Delivery
4. Course Content
5. Course Alignment
6. Professional Accreditation
7. Academic Quality
8. Staffing and Other Resources
9. Learning Resources and Educational and Other Support
10. Any Other Matters

The main body of the Course Review Submission (i.e., not including the supporting documents) should be no more than 2500 words.

Supporting documents should be attached to the submission and include, at a minimum:

Document	Source
1. Previous Course Review Report	School
2. Action Plan and Status of the Previous Report Recommendations	School
3. Course Structure Documents, including a) Overview of course structure b) Brief description of each unit in the course c) Graduate Attribute Report (including assessment tasks) d) Levels of Learning	Unit and Course Management System (UCMS) Report
4. Evidence of Benchmarking	From previous Accreditation Committee submission if not completed more recently
5. Course Summary Report (referencing Annual Course Reports and Course Performance Reports) – maximum 500 words	Course Coordinator
6. Survey Reports (First Year Survey; Graduates Outcomes Survey; Beyond Graduation Survey)	Office of Planning Quality and Review
7. Staff Profiles including workload allocations	Head of School/Course Coordinator
8. Summary of Unit and Teaching Feedback – Unit Feedback Survey	Office of Planning Quality and Review