Policy Document Administrator	Quality Manager
Policy Document Approver	Academic Quality Committee
Responsible Body/Person	Quality Manager
Next Review date	February 2029
Superseded documents	Quality Management System
Related documents	Academic Governance Policy Academic Governance Procedure Academic Integrity Policy for Coursework Awards Academic Quality Response Guidelines Affiliated College Changes Policy Academic Staff Approval of Requests Processing Rules Affiliated College Appeal Policy Affiliated College Campuses with Collaborating Organisations Policy Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Alert Protocols Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework Annual Course Evaluation Procedure Committees of the Academic Board Policy Course Development, Approval and Review Procedures Course Review and Reaccreditation Policy Course Review and Reaccreditation Procedure Faculty Qualification Policy Financial Alert Protocols Institutional Approval Criteria Moderation Policy Moderation Procedure Policy Document Register Register of Identified Risks and Concerns (RIRAC) Representations Rules Research Integrity Policy Unit Categories Policy Unit Quality Assurance Form (UQAF) Units Policy
Related HE Standards	5.1.3, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.3.4, 5.3.5, 5.3.6, 5.3.7, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.1.4, 7.1.5, 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.3, 7.3.1, 7.3.2
Student Lifecycle Stage/s	NA
Related National Code Standards	National Code Standards: 1-11

1. PURPOSE

To maintain and improve the quality of **University** awards across the **consortium** by:

- Supporting the processes for internal approval, review, and delivery of courses of study to ensure compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework. Including: Analysis of student experience and feedback on quality of teaching and supervision of **research** students; Progression, attrition, and completion rates; Resourcing, and moderation of **assessment**. To enable the review of students' achievement of **learning outcomes** for the purpose of institutional monitoring, review, and improvement.

- Ensuring the processes to uphold academic and research integrity of courses and units of study, research and research training activities, procedures addressing misconduct and allegations of misconduct by University students at Affiliated Colleges are reviewed and monitored. Extending to

preventative action to mitigate foreseeable risks to academic and research integrity for the purpose of institutional monitoring, review, and improvement.

- Monitoring risks to the quality of education provided by Affiliate Colleges including the use of data on student progress and success for the purpose of institutional monitoring, review, and improvement including informing admission criteria, approaches to course design, teaching, supervision, learning and academic support, ensuring continuing compliance of the courses of study with the standards in the Higher Education Standards Framework as outlined in the Affiliation Agreement

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the [Policy Glossary](#).

3. SCOPE

This **policy** applies to all the officers and Affiliated Colleges of the Australian University of Theology.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The University's commitment to continuous quality improvement is clearly expressed in its *Strategic Plan 2021-2025*:

In all things, to give glory to God, by serving ACT students through:

1. Excellence in Christian Teaching, Research and Scholarship,

2. A Healthy **Consortium**

3. Regulatory compliance that is a Witness to our faith.

4. Becoming more like Christ

The Quality Management Policy provides a framework to particularly achieve:

- The Pro-active understanding and implementation of regulatory requirements and quality improvement processes.

- Transparent risk management, good governance and financial sustainability.

To this end, the University will:

1) Maintain, review, monitor and improve stated quality assurance procedures as stipulated in the *University Risk Appetite Statement* arising from the *University **Affiliation Agreement*** as they are expressed in the *Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework* and via their enforcement

in the *Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Alert Protocols* to ensure compliance with the Higher Educations Standards Framework.

2) Monitor each **Affiliated College**'s attention to quality improvement, provision of resources that support scholarly and research endeavour, and each college's continued compliance with University criteria; and

3) Monitor and analyse performance outcomes and data to identify quality issues for the purpose of institutional monitoring, review, and improvement with focus on:

   a) courses;

   b) student cohorts; and

   c) Affiliated Colleges.

4) Through its committees set and review benchmarks for compliance, investigate variations by use of a *Register of Identified Risks and Concerns (RIRAC),* and develop where warranted action plans in response to identified quality issues. These action plans will be oversighted by an appropriate board or committee of the University and the results of implementation noted on the RIRAC.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 Third-party quality assurance

Institutional approval and affiliation

5.1.1 Applications for institutional approval to deliver University courses are approved by the **Council** on the recommendation of the **Academic Board (AB)** and the **Finance, Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee (FRAC)**. These applications are evaluated against the **Institutional Approval Criteria.**

5.1.2 A review of the Institutional Approval Criteria is undertaken periodically by the **AUT Office.**

5.1.3 Affiliation arrangements with third-parties are formalised with the signing of an Affiliation Agreement, which sets out the obligations for the University and Affiliated Colleges.

5.1.4 Compliance of the University and Affiliated Colleges with the obligations of the agreement is monitored and reported to the **Council**through FRAC. This monitoring occurs ostensibly via the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework. The Council oversees necessary action to be taken in response to any non-compliance in accordance with the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Alert Protocols.

5.1.5 Committees of the Council such as FRAC, and the AB such as **Academic Quality Committee (AQC)** and **Research Committee,** may set additional benchmarks aligned with the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework. The operational management of these items shall occur through engagement with RIRAC. Reporting in relation to RIRAC is also supplied in the Annual Review of College Risk and Compliance Reporting.

5.1.6 The Affiliated College Changes Policy describes how Affiliated Colleges may

receive approval for changes including delivery in Off-campus mode, delivery in a **Language other than English** (LOTE), an addition of a delivery site and additional **course** delivery.

Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting

As per 5.1.4 and 5.1.5

5.1.7 Each Affiliated College is to participate in the **Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting** system established by the AUT Office to demonstrate that it continues to meet the Institutional Approval Criteria, aspects of the Affiliation Agreement, and other requirements as set out in the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework informed by **TEQSA**'s Guidance Note: Third Party Arrangements expectations for "a systematic process of periodic monitoring and review".

This compliance reporting includes supplying financial and insurance information, including profit and loss data, total assets, and total borrowings. The reporting process also involves responses to academic data, student experience data, moderation reports, and details of professional development activities and research outputs. The assessments are reported to FRAC and the **Principal** of each Affiliated College via the Annual Review of College Risk and Compliance Reporting. FRAC reports the outcomes of risk and compliance reporting to the Council , highlighting any concerning risks or non-compliance. Affiliated Colleges are provided with the outcomes of risk and compliance reporting and provided an opportunity to provide feedback on the report and assessments.

5.1.8 The Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Alert Protocols are applied to the outcomes of the risk and compliance reporting process each year and determine the kind of response required of Affiliated Colleges. The possible responses are:

   i.   continue with standard monitoring and reporting under the *Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework*,

   ii.   in addition to i, the Principal provides a formal response to the Dean on identified risk and compliance concerns, and

   iii. in addition to i, the Principal provides a formal response to FRAC on identified risk and compliance concerns.

   Where a formal response is considered inadequate, the level of response may be escalated including to the **Council** .

5.1.9 Reporting tasks will be scheduled throughout the year and data will generally be received using the the risk management software -**Tickit** Administration of this software will be coordinated within each Affiliated College by one or more designated users and will be coordinated in the AUT Office by the **Quality Manager**.

5.1.10 The Director of Finance analyses and summarises the information provided in the finance reports, monitoring whether any Affiliated College's financial

performance falls within the risk parameters specified in the Financial Alert Protocols. If any Affiliated College is at risk, the AUT Office will draw this to the attention of the Principal and **Finance Officer** of the Affiliated College and seek an account of strategies to be taken. A report of college responses, along with an overview of the Affiliated Colleges' annual finance workbook, is submitted to FRAC and matters falling outside benchmarks in the Financial Alert Protocols are placed on RIRAC and noted in the Annual Review of College Risk and Compliance Reporting.

Affiliated College affiliation review

5.1.11 Where the response of an Affiliated College under the *Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Alert Protocols* is deemed inadequate by the Council in two or more reporting years, the Council may require the college to participate in a detailed review of compliance with the obligations of the Affiliation Agreement. The review will include all aspects of compliance with University policy, the college risk profile, the college's quality management system and the college's academic performance. An element of the review will be a self-assessment by the college of its compliance with the obligations of the Affiliation Agreement.

Monitoring of quality concerns and breaches

5.1.12 Identified and reported quality concerns or breaches of University policy or the Affiliation Agreement are recorded on the *Register of Identified Risks and Concerns (RIRAC)*. The categories of identified risks and concerns include but are not limited to:

- Academic performance concern,
- Student satisfaction concern,
- Compliance with relevant legislation,
- Affiliation agreement compliance,
- Faculty Qualification policy compliance,
- Moderation policy compliance, and
- Other University policy compliance

5.1.13 Individual Affiliated Colleges are notified when a RIRAC entry is recorded related to their college and are given the opportunity to make rectifications as part of the review process. The results of any review are reported back to the relevant committees FRAC, AQC, Research, along with any recommendations by the relevant **AUT staff**.

Unit field moderation reports and review of the Moderation Policy and Moderation Procedure

5.1.14 External moderators for each of the fields of study are to be appointed by the AUT Office for fixed but renewable terms.

5.1.15 **Unit field** moderators evaluate the appropriateness of the grades awarded by markers in accordance with the University **grade descriptors** and the level of the course. Moderators' reports include comments on the appropriateness of

marking, the quality of teaching and learning (as far as that can be gauged by the scripts), and for Category C **coursework** units, recommendations for raising or lowering marks or grade bands. Moderators will flag a report where they consider there to be an issue requiring action from an Affiliated College.

5.1.16 Moderation reports are reviewed by the AQC. In addition, in the case of Category C coursework units, reports on individual instances of the delivery of units are reviewed by the **Assessment and Moderation Committee (A&MC)**. The AQC will monitor the response of Affiliated Colleges to issues flagged by the Moderator. The College will be placed on the RIRAC if the University benchmark for issues flagged is exceeded.5.1.17 The AQC is to review the *Moderation Policy* and *Moderation Procedure* prior to the expiry timeframe listed on the policy document. Feedback from Colleges will be taken into consideration.

5.1.18 The **Moderation and Inclusion Manager** prepares a report on moderation for the Annual Review of College Risk and Compliance Reporting which reviews moderator feedback regarding - feedback to students; marking accuracy/quality; application of penalties; administration error; assessment design; **plagiarism**; and other noted matters; against comparative benchmarks in RIRAC. AQC sets and reviews these benchmarks.

5.1.19 The AB is responsible for ensuring the academic and research integrity of courses. Further information can be found in the *Academic Integrity Policy for Coursework Awards* and the *Research Integrity Policy*.

Quality assurance of campuses and teaching locations

5.1.20 The delivery location of where on-campus students undertake each **unit** of study is recorded in **Paradigm**. Where students may enroll in units at a delivery site other than the main campus of an Affiliated College, the delivery site will be recorded with the unit enrolment in Paradigm.

5.1.21 Academic outcomes for student cohorts enrolled in units at a delivery site other than the main campus of an Affiliated College will be monitored and compared to those at the main campus of the Affiliated College as well as to the consortium. Action will be taken in response to any identified concerns.

5.2   Governance

5.2.1   The University **academic governance** structure is determined under the terms of the *Academic Governance Policy* and the *Committees of the Academic Board Policy*.

Policy review

5.2.2   **Policies** are to be reviewed by the identified staff member responsible as set out in the Policy Document Register, with any proposed changes to be approved by the relevant governance body responsible for the policy. Further details can be found in the Policy Framework Policy. Relevant policy changes are disseminated by the AUT Office through the University website.

Board/Committee minutes

5.2.3 Minutes of each board, committee or subcommittee are to be received by the governance body which established it. For example, the minutes of the **standing committees** of the AB are to be received by the AB; and the minutes of the AB are to be received by the Council.

5.3 Course and unit review

Monitoring and review of units of study and course curriculum

5.3.1 All coursework units are initially reviewed by the **Coursework Unit Review Committee (CURC)**. Any necessary changes to be made will be proposed by CURC prior to approving the units. As a subcommittee of the **Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC)**, CURC approves changes to unit outlines. For further detail, see the *Units Policy.*

Evaluations of the courses linked to course review and re-accreditation

5.3.2 The AB is responsible for the course review and re-accreditation process. Detail of this is outlined in the Course Development, Approval, Review and Accreditation Policy and the Course Review and Reaccreditation Procedure.

Interim monitoring of unit and course quality

5.3.3 The AB is responsible for interim monitoring of units and courses. Further detail is outlined in the Annual Course Evaluation Procedure.

Development of new courses

5.3.4 The Course Development, Approval, Review and Accreditation Policy and *Course Development and Approval Procedures* outline the development and approval process for any proposed new courses for the University

Approval of academic staff

5.3.5 See Academic Staff Approval of Requests Processing Rules and Faculty Qualification Policy.

5.4 Surveys and Academic Data

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching

5.4.1 Surveys belonging to the **QILT** suite, which is administered by the **Social Research Centre (SRC)**, survey students and graduates. Each year currently enrolled students will be surveyed in the **Student Experience Survey (SES)** and graduates of the University in the **Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS)** and Graduate Outcomes Survey – Longitudinal (GOS-L) and **Employer Satisfaction Survey (ESS)**

5.4.2 The AUT Office is responsible for coordinating contact with the SRC, collating the survey population, and implementing strategies to maximise response rates. The SRC distributes surveys, follows up students and graduates to encourage participation in the survey, and creates a data file which is then returned to the University for analysis.

5.4.3 The **Academic Quality Officer** is responsible for analysis of the data and reporting to the AQC. Reports are disseminated to Affiliated Colleges as well

as to boards and committees of the University as appropriate. The Affiliated Colleges report on their response to the data using a form in Tickit, and the AQC monitors and evaluates the responses.

Unit of Study Evaluation Survey (USES) and Fieldwork Supervision Survey (FSS)

5.4.4 **USES** are to be conducted by the University for the selected Category A units: Old Testament, New Testament and Church History on a rotating schedule as determined by the AQC.

5.4.5 **FSS** is implemented in response to the Higher Education Standards, 2015 pertaining to the quality assurance of supervision for students involved in work-integrated learning, placements, other community-based learning.

5.4.6 The Academic Quality Officer distributes the survey and collates and analyses the results. A report is presented to the AQC which may identify issues requiring a response by particular colleges or within the consortium as a whole. Affiliated Colleges report on their response to the data using a form in Tickit and the AQC monitors and evaluates the responses.

5.4.7 Students enrolled in LOTE units will be provided with the USES in the delivery **language** and may provide written responses in the delivery language.

Reviews of the performance

5.4.8 The AUT Office is to undertake surveys of the members of its boards and committees biennially and attendees of the **Consortium Conference** annually. These surveys are administered by the **EO** of the committees, the COO, and the Vice-Chancellor respectively. Results of the surveys are to be supplied to the committees themselves for internal review and where existent forwarded to their managing body.

5.4.9 A review of University Staff is to be undertaken annually, using processes approved by the Dean.

5.4.10 Reviews of the performance of the Dean are conducted as determined by the Council.

5.4.11 The Director of Teaching and Learning reviews the performance of moderators, with support from the Moderation and Inclusion Manager using the Moderation portal. The Moderation and Inclusion Manager will report on the outcome of the review process to the AQC annually

Attrition, completion and progression rates

5.4.12 The AQC reviews attrition and completion rates annually. The committee formulates recommendations where the data suggests that action is required in relation to a course, student cohort or at a particular Affiliated College. Affiliated Colleges provide feedback on their own data to the AUT Office, and the AQC if requested, using a form in Tickit. These matters of concern are placed on RIRAC.

5.4.13 The AQC reviews progression rates biannually along with the review of grade arrays. Affiliated Colleges are required to respond to the data and outline action to be taken if their progression rates do not meet AQC determined

benchmarks. These matters of concern are placed on RIRAC.

5.5 Review of compliance with HESF (2021) and National Code

5.5.1 The University's compliance with the **HESF 2021** and **National Code** is reviewed biannually by the Higher Education Standards Review Group. The Group consists of The Dean, the **Deputy Dean/Director of Research**, the **University Registrar**, the **Director of Teaching and Learning**, **Director of Academic Services** and the Quality Manager. The results of the review are recorded in the University's Register of Compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework and the National Code Register. These are reported to the AB.

5.5.2 The representations made by Affiliated Colleges of the relationship to the University and about University courses are monitored against the *Representations Rules*. This occurs as part of the Annual Review of College Risk and Compliance Reporting.

5.6 Monitoring of incidents

5.6.1 Summary reporting of incidents is routinely made to the AB for academic incidents and to FRAC in relation to workplace health and safety incidents. Reporting includes critical incidents including those involving sexual harassment and assault, formal grievances, and **academic misconduct**. The Council receives summary reporting on whistleblower disclosures.

5.7 Policies and procedures to ensure Quality Assurance

5.7.1 There are several documented policies and **procedures** which ensure overall quality assurance at University. Each of these are governed by the *Policy Framework Policy* approved and managed by the Council. The *Policy Framework Policy* outlines requirements for all University policies, their review process and review timeframes.

5.7.2 Policies which ensure quality assurance at University include:

- *Academic Governance Charter* which establishes the functions, purpose and terms of reference for the AB University board or committee, or University Office.

- *Affiliated College Changes Policy*, which ensures that any significant change or new action undertaken by affiliated colleges relating to the delivery of University courses is reviewed and approved by an appropriate body.

- *The Committees of Academic Board Policy* owned by the Academic Council outlines the Standing Committees of the AB and their subcommittees, establishes their Terms of Reference and reporting obligations;

- *Faculty Qualification Policy* ensures that University complies with the TEQSA requirements that academic staff are qualified at one or more **Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)** level/s higher than the course of study being taught (N+1) or have equivalent professional experience;

- The *Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework*, and the associated *Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Alert Protocols* and *Financial Alert Protocols* outline the manner in which affiliated colleges are to report to University on various quality assurance matters and the way in which these are assessed by University, and how instances of identified concerns are to be engaged with by University and the affiliated colleges.

- The *Moderation Policy* and *Moderation Procedure* outline the moderation system, designed to ensure that the quality of learning and teaching within the University is maintained across all units of study undertaken in University courses regardless of a student's choice of Affiliated College, delivery location, attendance mode or language of delivery.

- The *Register of Identified Risks and Concerns (RIRAC)* is an operational tool that enables items of concern, or breaches of University policy, reporting benchmarks or matters relating to the Affiliation Agreement, enabling relevant University governance bodies to track issues of concern, college engagement with these matters, and ensure improvement on items of concern.

- *Representation Rules* outline the requirements to be met by Affiliated Colleges in representing the University and its courses to students and in providing information to students about studying in University courses.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATIONS

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018

Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA)

7. REFERENCES

TEQSA Guidance Note: Third-Party Arrangements

8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	AQC	24 February 2017	24 February 2017	Re-format of Quality Management System, adjustments made to align with the Moderation Policy 2017 and Moderation Procedure 2017
2	AQC	2 March 2018	2 March 2018	Removal of External Advisory Panels. Colleges to provide feedback on performance of ACT Office rather than particular staff. Change in

				name from Annual Report to College Risk and Compliance reporting.
3	AQC	14 December 2018	14 December 2018	Delegated duties updated according to office structure and responsibilities of roles. Timing and nature of reporting to A&RMC clarified.
4	AQC	13 December 2019	13 December 2019	Added paragraph in policy statement to focus analysis of academic data in quality management. Added section on reporting of incidents.
5	AQC	11 December 2020	11 December 2020	Minor formatting and editorial changes. Reference to the Representations Rules. USES delivered in LOTE. Quality measures for delivery sites. Mention of Register of Quality Concerns and Breaches, the Affiliation Agreement and monitoring compliance with the agreement.
6	Dean and Chair of FRAC	16 November 2021	16 November 2021	6.1.11 reframed as an escalation response to recurring quality concerns. Additional detail provided in 6.1.9 & 6.1.10 on these annual review processes and the means of escalating concerns.
7	Academic Board	28 November 2022	28 November 2022	6.7 introducing a specific section which identifies and describes the policies central to quality assurance at ACT; minor operational updates
8	AQC	24 February 2023	24 February 2023	Streamlining the layout of policy content; update to include the current strategic plan; update to current practice in areas outlined in other policy documents (such as course review and development); expansion of HE areas through clarification of policy purpose; and the review of college compliance with the Representation Rules in Annual Review of College Risk and Compliance Reporting.
9	AQC	21 February 2025	21 February 2025	6.3.2 & 6.3.3 Replaced Bord of Directors with Academic Board; 6.4.1 Added Employer Satisfaction Survey (ESS); 6.4.5 Added information pertinent to the Fieldwork Supervision Survey (FSS); 6.4.10 Updated the new process via the moderation portal. 6.7.2 Academic Governance policy replaced with Academic Governance Charter;

				Minor formatting and editorial changes. Coursework Committee (CC) is replaced by Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC). Updated policy to implement University status and name.

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the ACT regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at aut.edu.au/documents.