Learning and Teaching Plan

Version number	3
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Executive Summary

Sydney Institute of Higher Education (**SI**) will launch a new degree offering to become an innovator in private higher education in Australia in the business and technology fields. SI has developed a structure of academic leadership and governance that allows academic oversight. This framework enables internal SI staff who have a day-to-day engagement with teaching students and research to advise governing bodies via management committees on the efficacy of SI academic policy as it is implemented.

As a guiding document for the execution of SI's academic vision and strategies, this *Learning and Teaching Plan* sets the framework and the academic priorities for higher education at SI and allows SI to set benchmarks of academic quality. SI's academic vision and purpose as a higher education provider is to build and cultivate an academic environment that promotes, above all, the freedom of intellectual inquiry across all aspects of the organisation, and within this, the protection of the highest possible quality of student experience.

In articulating this vision, SI has defined the graduate attributes it seeks to develop as a result of the higher education they have undertaken as SI students. SI graduates will be:

- Substantial knowledge of their chosen discipline
- The capacity to reason critically
- Sound analytical and problem-solving skills
- An aptitude for effective collaboration
- An aptitude for effective communication
- An awareness of the ethical dimension of decision making

Along with defining outcomes for individual students, the most critical element of this *Learning and Teaching Plan* is the academic objectives SI has set for itself under approval from the *Academic Board*. These are for SI to:

1. Design and deliver an outstanding curriculum that leads to the best possible outcomes for graduates
2. Conduct all teaching within an authentically scholarly intellectual climate
3. Align SI's overall monitoring of academic quality with student participation outcomes
4. Build an externally-facing and critically self-aware community of academic practice

Each objective is described in detail in the *Learning and Teaching Plan* along with strategies to achieve them and measures of their success.

The SI *Learning and Teaching Plan* will be implemented through the operation of SI's academic oversight

and reporting structure, with the *Academic Board* taking a leading role, informed by the advice of the three academic management committees that report to it. As a result of such monitoring and reporting, this *Learning and Teaching Plan* will be redeveloped a minimum of once every five years, designed to coincide with the redevelopment of a new SI *Strategic Plan*.

Introduction

Learning and teaching is the intellectual heart of Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SI)'s higher education operation. Constituting a major central pillar of SI's strategic vision is the objective to be recognised as a provider of higher education that offers outstanding opportunities to students and staff alike. For that reputation to develop, and for SI to build that recognition among its academic and industry peers, SI must be assured of offering the highest quality learning and teaching and articulating for itself an academic vision as an authentic scholarly organisation.

This *Learning and Teaching Plan* provides the framework, at an institutional level, for achieving this over the initial proposed period of operation. It is part of SI's planning framework (see Section 8) that sets out agreed organisational priorities and guides decision-making in setting targets with day-to-day staff. The vehicle for deploying the strategies, achieving the objectives and outcomes for staff and students is SI's initial proposed degree program, the Bachelor of Business (BBus).

The *Learning and Teaching Plan* begins by outlining at the highest level what SI has articulated for itself as its guiding academic vision and purpose for higher education. This vision is agreed and commended by the *Academic Board* to SI's highest governing body, the *Corporate Governance Board*. In defining this vision, SI under the academic leadership of the *Academic Board* has also articulated what it sees as defining characteristics for SI graduates, regardless of the specific study program embarked upon. These are discussed in Section 4, SI *Graduate Attributes*.

Knowing its vision for itself and the defining attributes of its graduates, the *Learning and Teaching Plan* then provides a discussion of the key academic objectives for SI over the initial period. These have been developed and workshopped in consultation with and approved by SI's *Academic Board*. Achieving these objectives will ensure SI's graduates are given every opportunity to succeed and for SI to realise its academic vision. Along with a description of the objectives, the *Learning and Teaching Plan* describes strategies for achieving those academic objectives and measures for their success. The plan concludes with a discussion of how these objectives and strategies are to be implemented, monitored, reported on, and how they will inform future decision-making of the *Academic Board* and *Corporate Governance Board*.

When and where operational priorities change and academic objectives have to be realigned in the face of new program offerings or feedback from stakeholders, the *Academic Board* may advise the *Corporate Governance Board* of the need to set new academic objectives and redevelop this *Learning and Teaching Plan*.

Academic Vision

As per SI's current *Strategic Plan*, SI's purpose for higher education is to build and cultivate an academic environment that promotes, above all, the freedom of intellectual inquiry across all aspects of the organisation, and within this the protection of the highest possible quality of student experience. The academic vision for SI is to build a community of academic practice where staff and students continue to

learn from each other within an intellectual climate that is recognised for its expertise.

The student experience for SI is outcomes-based, with education delivered and the service provided designed to prepare students with the knowledge and skills for a range of career pathways and lifelong learning. The delivery and refinement of SI's initial program offering, the BBus, will be the first major undertaking that will allow this vision to be realised.

Ensuring the development of SI *Graduate Attributes* (described in Section 4) and the achievement of SI's stated academic objectives (described in Section 5), are the most effective way for SI to achieve its purpose and academic vision for higher education.

SI Graduate Attributes

SI's academic management and *Academic Board* have defined a set of graduate attributes that SI intends all students who complete their study to have developed, regardless of an individual study program. These institutional graduate attributes are commended to the *Corporate Governance Board* for approval. All new proposed programs and subjects at SI will be evaluated for approval on the basis of their likelihood to develop SI graduate attributes in students.

All graduates of SI will complete their studies with a deep understanding of their chosen discipline that encompasses a breadth and depth of current research on theory and practice. In addition to this, all graduates of SI will:

1. **Demonstrate substantial knowledge of their chosen discipline**

The acquisition of deep disciplinary knowledge lies at the core of the SI learning journey. It is on this foundation and in this context that the other attributes that mark out a graduate of a SI undergraduate degree program are developed.

2. **Demonstrate the capacity to reason critically**

The work and social environment into which SI graduates will emerge subsequent to completion of their programs will be defined by ambiguity and complexity. It is therefore of fundamental importance that over the period of their studies, SI students develop the capacity to engage with stimulus material not merely as recipients of information and knowledge but through a rigorous, evaluative frame of reference. This enables SI students not only to understand their chosen discipline as it is, but to contribute to the formulation of what it may become.

3. **Demonstrate sound analytical and problem-solving skills**

It is critical that throughout the program of their studies, SI students systematically develop and can consistently demonstrate the capacity to deploy the tools embedded through their acquisition of disciplinary knowledge towards the resolution of a range of pertinent problem sets.

4. **Demonstrate an aptitude for effective collaboration**

The nature of the professional settings for which SI is preparing its graduates dictates that they accumulate experience and develop competency in techniques for effective collaboration. This is critical not only from the point of view of their capacity to resolve problems more effectively by drawing upon the complementary skills and ideas of others, but also from the point of view of their potential for

future leadership responsibilities.

5. Demonstrate an aptitude for effective communication

In order to effectively contribute in a professional context, SI graduates will exhibit a capacity to communicate in the written form and to competently deliver oral presentations. It is a core tenet of SI, however, that it is just as important that students learn to listen well as to write and speak. This aids critical reasoning, analysis and problem solving and the capacity to effectively collaborate and is therefore central to the achievement of the attributes of a SI graduate.

6. Demonstrate an awareness of the ethical dimension of decision making

It is critical that SI graduates are equipped with the means to effectively approach decision making in the many contexts in which questions requiring the exercise of value judgments arise. To enable this, SI graduates will develop an awareness of a variety of ethical frameworks that relate to business decision making, in order that these be an explicit and robust frame of reference for them.

Academic Objectives

SI has defined and approved a set of academic objectives to guide how teaching and learning is implemented at SI, to best realise SI's strategic and academic vision for higher education, and to best ensure that all students who complete their study with SI develop the SI *Graduate Attributes* described above.

Each of the objectives is described here, along with approaches to achieving them and measures of their success.

In order to achieve its academic vision for higher education, SI must:

- 1. *Design and deliver outstanding curriculum that leads to the best possible outcomes for graduates*

Central to the ability of SI graduates to develop SI's defined graduate attributes is SI designing and delivering truly exceptional curriculum. It is critical that content and learning outcomes of subjects and programs must progress in depth and complexity, be academically rigorous and informed by the latest scholarship within the discipline, yet also professionally relevant and responsive to the demands of the current global knowledge economy.

In addition to the content of all curriculum meeting a high standard of quality that SI students should expect, curriculum should also be designed with innovative approaches to pedagogy and adult learning clearly at the forefront. Students must be enabled to take an active and independent role in their own learning, and be exposed to teaching that encourages them to think critically about the theoretical foundations of their chosen field. Program assessment should be strategic and scaffolded, placing the student and their progress through a discipline at the centre of learning and teaching.

The success of this objective relies upon an in-depth program development and approval framework. SI must make full use of the *Academic Board* that must operate under an approved Terms of Reference for program review and critique, which will in turn rely upon the advice *Academic Board* receives from the staff and committees that report to it (see Objective 3, below.) SI must approve and implement a

program review and development policy framework that ensures all programs internally approved for delivery meet all required external regulatory requirements, along with SI's own rigorous standard of quality. The program development process must be designed to incorporate consultation with disciplinary and industry experts, who can critique based on best practice. Students will thus be exposed to a variety of theoretical frameworks and contexts, with the ability to apply them with current thought to solve the problems of the modern world.

As a new entrant into the higher education sector, SI is uniquely positioned to develop curriculum using the best practice pedagogical approaches and the latest evidence-based teaching and learning technologies. Blended learning techniques that utilise a combination of face-to-face learning, collaborative and individual work, as well as online learning tools, will encourage students to actively engage with program material. Fostering critical thought in students, who are not just passive recipients but are active participants in the scholarly environment, will be an essential component of all subjects.

Online learning

In response to COVID-19, SIHE will make flexible class timetables to accommodate face-to-face teaching and/or online delivery until further notice. SIHE aims to continue to deliver a high-quality educational experience and exceptional student engagement through interactive online and face-to-face learning.

Where required, all SIHE programs are available in an online delivery mode where face-to-face teaching is not possible. This decision is to ensure the safety of SIHE staff and students as well as the wider community and is made in accordance with the current government health advice and regulations.

In order to **design and deliver outstanding curriculum that leads to the best possible outcomes for graduates**, SI will undertake the following approaches:

- SI to finalise and have *Academic Board* review and approve a policy framework that defines how program development and approval is to be conducted at SI. Approval of curriculum by *Academic Board* should consider the alignment of subject and program learning outcomes with assessment strategies and the likelihood of the program to develop SI's intended graduate attributes for all students.
- Academic teaching staff will be recruited on the basis of their experience with delivering curriculum in a higher education environment. Staff with demonstrated experience in making regular improvements and innovations to curriculum will be preferred.
- At the conclusion of each subject taught within every program, SI to administer a standardised quality of teaching survey instrument to seek student feedback as the major stakeholders of SI higher education. Student feedback on teaching to be used to inform the improvement of individual teaching staff performance, in addition to the institutional performance of SI overall.
- programs are to undergo a major program review a minimum of once every five years. Criteria of the major review are to be captured in a program review policy but will include data on enrolments, completions, assessment outcomes, innovations, benchmarking with other providers and be informed by annual interim reporting.

Indicators of success:

- *Academic Board* approving a policy framework for program development and review, and the initial proposed SI program – BBus – being submitted for review under that policy framework.

- The development and submission to *Academic Board* for approval of a new Bachelor-level program by the end of year 3 of operation.
- Maintaining an average 4/5 score across all criteria on quality of teaching feedback from students, with defined strategies in place to address issues for any individual subject that falls below an average 2.5/5 in quality of teaching scores.
- Maintaining a student retention rate of 85% from enrolment to program completion.
- The BBus to be comprehensively reviewed after 4.5 years, informed by interim reporting and with evidence gathered to support external program re-accreditation applications.

1. ***Conduct all teaching within an authentically scholarly intellectual climate***

SI must develop its capabilities across all aspects of the higher education operation and build an authentic academic scholarly environment. A central and essential element of this is the quality and calibre of SI's staffing to deliver and support higher education. A key aspect of this teaching staff is that they be engaged in scholarship with their teaching being informed by recent developments in their respective discipline. The requirement for SI staff to remain research active is a major component of SI's ability to develop its intellectual climate. In addition to program content being based on recent scholarship, students benefit in other ways by regular access and support of academic staff who are active scholars within their field. SI must develop a climate where staff members feel empowered to innovate and share their effective teaching practices with each other.

So important is the role of staff—particularly academic teaching staff—in the ability of SI to achieve this objective that SI has developed a wholly separate planning document detailing specific requirements and defined approaches to securing that workforce. This is contained in the SI *Workforce Plan*.

However, intellectual climate goes beyond staffing. It also requires the staff who operate within that environment to have the full range of tools and infrastructure to be able to deliver teaching that achieves the stated learning outcomes of the program or subject. SI must have appropriate infrastructure to support teaching, including electronic learning and teaching and infrastructure on site, an LMS, library support, and access to electronic peer-reviewed literature for student research. Professional development opportunities for training in new educational techniques and technologies will allow staff to continue to themselves learn and innovate as educators.

An effective intellectual climate also requires that an effective array of student support exists to counteract challenges individual students face that may impact their education. Academic student support and pastoral care in the form of student counsellors are examples, along with an effective approach to new student orientation and international student support given SI's target student demographic.

In order to **conduct all teaching within an authentically scholarly intellectual climate**, SI will undertake the following approaches:

- Academic staff recruited to SI are to fulfil position descriptions that show a record of research publication outcomes relative to opportunity, the maintenance of which is a key responsibility for academic staff, as appropriate to appointment level.
- Implement formal and informal approaches to support improved research performance of SI. SI to implement a policy framework governing how research is to be conducted, outcomes recorded, and institutional performance reported. Senior academic staff to have requirements

in their position description of mentoring junior academic staff in research development and co-authorship.

- SI to develop detailed plans for infrastructure needed to be implemented to support learning and teaching at SI, including infrastructure in class-rooms and lecture theatres on campus, the LMS (including functionality), the range of library resources offered, subscriptions to electronic journal databases, Wi-Fi and internet accessibility on campus, computer labs, and any specialist resources needed to deliver either of the initial proposed Bachelor programs at SI.
- *Corporate Governance Board*, under advice from *Academic Board*, to approve a detailed range of plans for student support at SI. This will include student academic support, student wellbeing, new student orientation, library and IT support, international student services, English language support, and support for careers and transition out of SI. Plans will include a policy framework to govern how these services are to be developed, supported, evaluated, and improved, and relevant position descriptions for additional staffing needed.

Indicators of success:

- Academic staff to publish scholarly outcomes as peer-reviewed academic literature with specific targets agreed during the staff member's performance planning meeting. It is expected that the senior staff level will produce two publications per year, whilst staff at Lecturer level will produce one publication per year.
- Detailed plans for all learning and teaching infrastructure with approvals from the *Corporate Governance Board* for implementation before the commencement of operations.
- The *Academic Board* and *Corporate Governance Board* to have approved detailed plans for the full range of student support mechanisms at SI by January 2019.
- Once operational, SI must demonstrate how early intervention strategies have been deployed for students whose assessment falls below 55% pass mark average for any individual subjects, with the impact of that support reported to *Academic Board* in an annual report at the end of the first year of operation, and every year thereafter.
  1. ***Align SI's overall monitoring of academic quality with student participation outcomes***

SI must have effective oversight and intervention strategies for every stage of the student lifecycle. A strong internal structure must exist whereby teaching staff and student administrative staff are able to monitor risks and effectiveness of SI policies regarding student progression and feed this back to the *Academic Board*. *Academic Board* then advises the *Corporate Governance Board* on academic quality and student outcomes, empowered at all times to request further advice from monitoring committees or individual staff, with a view to making improvements to policy or infrastructure.

Student admissions will be a key area of focus for SI's academic quality monitoring systems. Student participation in the first year of study will be reviewed closely, along with the provision of academic and orientation support for new students, especially international students. Data from these review processes will inform admissions policies and criteria. A further priority will be the range of ongoing academic and pastoral support students are offered throughout their study to ensure that challenges faced do not negatively impact on their ability to participate in education. SI will develop and approve a policy framework of formative assessment and early intervention for students who are at risk of not progressing satisfactorily through programs. Student attrition, along with open cases of student grievance, will be a major risk factor and a standing item on the agenda of the *Academic Board* and

Corporate Governance Board, as both present a risk to achieving SI's intended outcomes for students. Program completion data will be reviewed by a committee with the delegated authority to monitor and report on student program progression data, grievance data, quality of teaching feedback, and program completion rates. This data will be provided in regular reports to *Academic Board* and will inform advice that the *Academic Board* gives to the *Corporate Governance Board* about policy, effective staffing, and requisite investment in infrastructure and learning resources. In this way, SI will have a closed loop of monitoring student performance and the effectiveness of SI systems to best enable student participation and outcomes at all stages of the student lifecycle.

In order to **align SI's overall monitoring of academic quality with student participation outcomes**, SI will undertake the following approaches:

- Establish academic sub-committees with their own Terms of Reference who report to the *Academic Board* on academic quality, outcomes, and overall performance. Committees should have delegated authority to monitor programs, effectiveness of teaching and learning, and data on performance and risks.
- Encourage the formation of a higher education student representative group who can articulate from the student perspective issues impacting students.
- Student admissions policy and specific program admission criteria to remain a standing item of *Academic Board* meetings.
- Benchmarking partnerships to be established with multiple higher education providers to benchmark student progression and outcome data.

Indicators of success:

- Academic management committees to provide periodic reports to the *Academic Board*, with the Board to show policy improvements based on the advice of the committees in the *Academic Board*'s annual report to the *Corporate Governance Board* on academic quality at SI.
- Student representative group to be established by the end of the first year of operation, in addition to the appointment of a student member of the *Academic Board*.
- Focus group discussion to be conducted with student representative group each year on the adequacy of student support and impacts of current policy settings on students.
- SI to have identified benchmarking partners and established benchmarking criteria focused primarily on academic quality, processes, and student outcomes, by the commencement of teaching in the second year of operation as a higher education provider.
  1. *Build an externally-facing and critically self-aware community of academic practice*

A central objective for SI as discussed in the *Strategic Plan* is for SI to become a recognised and respected academic organisation. In order for this to happen, SI must internally build a culture that is externally-facing. That is, from an operational point of view, SI must take account of best practice approaches to undertaking higher education, from resourcing and staffing to policy and improving outcomes. Academic staff in particular must be recruited to SI on the basis of significant experience (relative to role) of teaching and scholarship, which includes evidence of collaboration with external academic peers. SI academic staff will build and maintain networks of research and pedagogical practice with academic colleagues at other higher education providers and throughout industry. This has the dual aim of both establishing SI's research profile and demonstration of capabilities as an academic organisation, and ensuring that all teaching and research at SI is informed by the latest developments in

scholarship and industry.

Having a strong externally-facing focus based on partnerships with peers and partner organisations brings other benefits. An example is enabling SI to explore internship and work-integrated learning opportunities for students to enhance learning and teaching within programs. It also informs internal reviews and annual work-in-progress and planning days at SI where immediate priorities for the forthcoming year are charted. A strong and current knowledge of wider sector trends in higher education, developments in scholarship, and industry needs allows SI to critically reflect on its own future directions and approaches to maintaining quality outcomes for students. If SI is to be continually improving, a robust network of external linkages intelligently informs SI in what ways it needs to improve. Critical self-awareness of perspectives and weaknesses to strengthen is an attribute SI seeks to foster in students – the same characteristic developed an organisational level will enhance educational opportunities for students and staff, as per SI's *Strategic Plan*.

In order to **build an externally-facing and critically self-aware community of academic practice**, SI will undertake the following approaches:

- Academic staff to have built into position descriptions responsibilities to present conference papers or other publications that represent SI. Staff must also show evidence of collaboration on teaching innovation, research, and/or developing grant bids.
- Senior non-academic staff should have as a professional development option support for attending and presenting at relevant higher education conferences to learn and develop in their roles.
- SI to conduct annual planning and work-in-progress days for all staff where management discuss and develop immediate strategic priorities and academic staff can share innovations and developments in practice, particularly to mentor junior staff. Plans to be implemented will be informed by staff presentations on developments in the wider sector and industry.
- SI overall to develop partnerships with relevant professional associations for input and feedback into SI program provisions, and for input into SI learning and teaching where appropriate, such as guest lecturing and work-integrated learning.

Indicators of success:

- Academic staff to show on annual performance development plans research publications, research grants and other professional development activities.
- Senior non-academic staff to undertake professional development activities that involves external engagement, such as presentation at conferences, attendance at workshops or symposia based in higher education administration, skills development and best practice.
- The first SI annual work-in-progress and planning day to be held shortly after the conclusion of semester 2's teaching period in year one of operation, with it and every other planning day to have implementable recommendations for executive management and the *Corporate Governance Board* concerning the following year's activities.
- SI to periodically hold an industry higher education roundtable where perspectives of potential employer groups are considered against SI's learning and teaching priorities, and opportunities for integration of industry perspectives in SI curriculum is explored, subject to *Academic Board* approval.

Governance and Implementation

The highest level of academic oversight at SI is invested in the *Academic Board*, operating under a Terms of Reference approved by the *Corporate Governance Board*. Reporting to the *Academic Board* are three academic management committees. These can be seen in the diagram below:

Each of the academic management committees operates under its own Terms of Reference, approved by the *Academic Board*, and each is responsible for a different yet overlapping aspect of monitoring and reporting on academic quality at SI. The purpose of each committee is as follows:

Program Advisory Committee: The *Program Advisory Committee* advises the *Academic Board* on the quality of current or proposed curriculum at Sydney Institute of Higher Education **(SI)**. It will take into account external advice, current stages of development, review, or re-approval of curriculum delivered at SI. The *Program Advisory Committee* provides advice to the *Academic Board* on policy implementation and future planning, liaising as relevant with other academic management committees.

The *Program Advisory Committee* reports to the *Academic Board* on the continuing compliance of curriculum and program design with the *2015 Threshold Standards*.

The *Program Advisory Committee* will respond to requests for advice on any area within its remit.

Learning and Teaching Committee:

The *Learning and Teaching Committee* monitors and reports on standards and quality of teaching and learning at Sydney Institute of Higher Education **(SI)**.

The *Learning and Teaching Committee* advises the *Academic Board* on aspects of teaching and learning that can be improved at SI, including resourcing, student support, policy frameworks and future planning.

Program Monitoring Committee:

The *Program Monitoring Committee* at Sydney Institute of Higher Education **(SI)** collects diverse data on the performance of programs and students, providing an annual report to the *Academic Board*, with minor interim reporting each quarter.

The *Program Monitoring Committee* compiles, reviews, and advises on a range of metrics and quality benchmarks about SI's academic performance, to inform SI policy and planning, including reviews of open cases of student grievance and appeal.

The *Program Monitoring Committee* works with *Program Advisory Committee* on benchmarking projects and quality assurance.

A key focus of the *Program Monitoring Committee* is that SI demonstrates continuing compliance with the *2015 Higher Education Standards Framework* and the *ESOS National Code*.

All three committees provide regular interim advice to the *Academic Board* and can be directed by the *Academic Board* to report on an identified issue, to review the effectiveness of academic policy and provide recommendations, or to form ad hoc working groups as needed. Additionally, each committee provides a annual report on the areas in their purview, which informs the work of the *Academic Board*, particularly in setting policy, and aids the *Academic Board*'s advice to the *Corporate Governance Board*. A focus of the reporting to *Academic Board* will be progress against the achievement of the Academic

Objectives of SI (described in Section 5), highlighting any risks of underperformance so that the *Academic Board* can take action (or advise the *Corporate Governance Board* to take action) to address and correct that underperformance.

Review

The *Academic Board* reviews the *Learning and Teaching Plan* a minimum of once per year, with the full redevelopment and rewriting of a new *Learning and Teaching Plan* to commence from at least six months before the end of 2022, or sooner if the *Academic Board* advises and the *Corporate Governance Board* approves the early redevelopment.

Version History				
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval date:	Revision notes:	Next review date:
1	*Academic Board*	04/10/2018		
2	*Academic Board*	11/09/2019	Removal of BICT program	11/01/2022
3	*Academic Board*	17/09/2020	Minor changes to allow for 100% online delivery	17/09/2023

▲ Linked Documents
➡ Graduate Attributes
➡ Strategic Plan
➡ Workforce Plan
➡ Corporate Governance Board – Terms of Reference
➡ Learning and Teaching Committee – Terms of Reference
➡ Program Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference
➡ Program Monitoring Committee – Terms of Reference
➡ Academic Board – Terms of Reference