

Learning and Teaching Policy

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Purpose

Learning and teaching is the foundation of Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SIHE)'s higher education operations. SIHE is dedicated to providing students with an academically rigorous and scholarly learning environment and continually improving students' learning and teaching experiences.

The *Learning and Teaching Policy* establishes foundational principles and sets out a framework for learning and teaching activities at SIHE. It draws together the approaches to quality assurance, governance, and maintaining a supportive learning and teaching environment that are articulated in SIHE's overall policy framework. Additionally, the policy defines the process of developing SIHE's *Learning and Teaching Plan*.

Scope

This policy applies to all learning and teaching activities conducted at the SIHE, and to the staff and students engaged in learning and teaching at SIHE.

Principles

Learning and teaching practices

Learning and teaching practices at SIHE must be informed by the scholarship of learning and teaching, and are reflect best pedagogical practice.

Learning and teaching activities conducted at SIHE are responsive to student learning needs and styles and encourage collaboration amongst students so to maximise student academic opportunity and outcomes.

Learning and teaching activities conducted at SIHE must encourage students to engage with advanced levels of critical inquiry appropriate to the AQF level at which their program is taught.

SIHE is committed to providing learning and teaching resources and facilities that adequately support students critical engagement with their fields of study, and academic and non-academic support services to support full participation for all students.

Students will be offered the chance to provide feedback on the quality of learning and teaching activities, resources, facilitates and services provided at SIHE. The *Academic Board* will monitor this

feedback and use the findings to inform improvements in order that learning and teaching activities are responsive to and reflect the needs of the student cohort.

Outcomes of learning and teaching

Learning and teaching activities conducted at SIHE will be designed to facilitate the accumulative development of academic and professional knowledge and skills by students throughout their program and the progressive achievement of a program's learning outcomes. The learning outcomes of individual units and the learning outcomes of coursework programs in which units are delivered must align. All learning and teaching activities of SIHE used to deliver and support programs must ultimately foster SIHE's defined *Graduate Attributes*.

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.

Quality assurance of Work Integrated Learning

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) activities administered by SIHE are part of SIHE's learning and teaching operations, and as such, SIHE assumes responsibility for the quality of all WIL activity conducted as part of a SIHE program. The *Academic Board* is responsible for maintaining quality assurance processes that govern WIL activities and monitoring the quality of WIL activities as per the SIHE's *Work Integrated Learning Policy*. The *Academic Board* will advise the *Corporate Governance Board* of any risks arising from WIL activities, along with a recommended course of action.

Procedures

Curriculum Quality Assurance

SIHE will ensure that all higher education programs are compliant with regulatory and legal requirements, and delivered in line with the *Learning and Teaching Plan* to ensure programs are delivered and supported to a high level of quality. Programs will be monitored on an ongoing basis, with a major review occurring a minimum of once every five years.

For a full list of requirements for program approval and re-approval internal to SIHE, and the associated principles and procedures, see the *Program Development and Approval Policy* and the *Program Review and Continual Improvement Policy*.

Academic management committees

The *Academic Board* delegates various responsibilities to the three academic management committees:

- *Learning and Teaching Committee*

- *Program Advisory and Review Committee*

For specific information on each, please see the *Academic Governance Policy* and the *Academic Board Terms of Reference*.

The learning and teaching environment

Academic Freedom and Critical Inquiry

The SIHE *Academic Freedom Policy* and *Critical Inquiry Policy* implement procedures which enable students to actively engage with their studies and pursue advanced levels of inquiry within their discipline.

Student Support and Wellbeing

To ensure students receive adequate academic support throughout their studies, SIHE makes a range of student support available and deploys intervention strategies when students are at risk of not making satisfactory progress through a program. To do this, SIHE implements the processes contained in the *Academic Support Policy* and *Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy*.

In recognition that student learning can be affected by non-academic factors, SIHE also implements wellbeing support as per the procedures contained in the *Student Welfare Policy* and *Student Counselling Policy*. SIHE must provide students with a range of non-academic support services that promote a supportive and accommodating learning environment.

In addition, SIHE has a range of policies and procedures in place through which to ensure the safety of the learning and teaching environment. Refer to the *Critical Incident Response Policy* and the *Work Health and Safety Policy*.

Equity in learning and teaching

SIHE is committed to building a learning and teaching environment that is supportive to all students, and thus implements equity measures to ensure SIHE provides adequate support to students who are facing disadvantages or are underrepresented in the SIHE student cohort throughout their studies. The processes for implementing, reviewing, and approving these measures are defined in the *Special Consideration Policy*, *Disability Support Policy*, the *International Student Services Policy*, and the *Anti-Discrimination Policy*.

The participation, academic progression, and completion rates of students in the following identified underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups will be monitored to ensure they are receiving sufficient support to succeed in their studies:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Students who are part or full-time carers
- Students with disabilities
- Students experiencing mental or physical health concerns
- Mature-age students
- Students who are single parents
- International students

- Students for whom English is a second language.

Support strategies at SIHE may be adjusted in response to the findings of monitoring activities. Additionally, this data will be fed into program review and improvement processes and may precipitate change in assessment strategies and admissions processes to ensure that program content reflects SIHE's values of diversity and equity.

Student complaints and appeals

SIHE will ensure that all students have full access to complaints and appeals mechanisms through which they can address any issues they face in the learning and teaching environment. Refer to the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy* for more information.

Academic Staff

The qualifications of all academic teaching staff at SIHE will ensure that academic staff have the capacity to appropriately engage with high-level learning and teaching activities. At a minimum, academic staff will hold a qualification that is one AQF level above the program into which they teach or hold current and significant industry experience or expertise.

Academic teaching staff will remain active in scholarship in their field of teaching. Staff will set performance targets with their supervisors annually that will include a commitment to scholarship that informs their teaching, as per the *Academic Staff Supervision and Performance Review Policy*.

Academic staff will dedicate a minimum of one hour formal consultation per week to student consultations with additional informal consultation as it arises, allowing students to discuss any concerns they may have regarding their studies and progression. Consultation may be face to face, via telephone, zoom sessions or through email or discussion blogs. Details of academic and professional staff emails will be provided to students in each unit they undertake to facilitate effective consultation.

Current approaches to academic staffing arrangements are detailed in the *Workforce Policy* and current *Workforce Plan*.

SIHE will ensure academic staff are offered opportunities to receive feedback on the quality of their learning and teaching practices so as to encourage staff to actively reflect on their role as educators and adapt to the learning needs of their student cohorts. Feedback on learning and teaching practices will be collected through student Feedback Survey results, peer review of teaching and informal reviews of teaching materials and learning activities. All feedback will be collected and discussed in performance review meetings, as per the *Student Feedback Policy* and *Academic Staff Supervision and Performance Review Policy*.

SIHE will ensure academic staff are supported in the development of their learning and teaching skills according to the SIHE's *Professional Development Policy*. Staff are required to engage with professional development activities pursuant to the *Professional Development Policy*.

Student Feedback

Students are to be encouraged to provide feedback on the learning and teaching environment at the end of each subject undertaken and at the end of their entire program. Program Directors are responsible for

monitoring the results of the SIHE's student feedback survey, the UTES, for all units delivered within their program. For more information please see the *Student Feedback Policy*.

SIHE's Learning and Teaching Plan

SIHE's *Learning and Teaching Plan* will guide the learning and teaching operations of SIHE over a five-year period. The *Learning and Teaching Plan* sets SIHE's organisational academic objectives, and describes strategies to achieve them.

Development of a *Learning and Teaching Plan* will consider:

- Strategies to assist students in the transition to higher education programs offered by SIHE
- How learning and teaching activities will be developed to correspond with and enable the demonstration of learning outcomes
- How learning and teaching must integrate advanced and emerging concepts in the given field of study and the scholarship of learning and teaching
- Whether staffing is appropriate to the needs of students
- Staff qualifications and engagement in ongoing scholarship
- Availability of teaching staff to students through consultation
- Feedback on teaching quality and support to improve (refer to the *Professional Development Policy*)
- Work-integrated learning quality assurance (refer to the *Work Integrated Learning Policy*)
- How learning and teaching activities are monitored.

Development of the Learning and Teaching Plan

The *Learning and Teaching Committee* will work in conjunction with senior-level teaching staff to develop a new *Learning and Teaching Plan* a minimum of every five years. Final review and approval of the plan is the responsibility of the *Academic Board*.

The *Learning and Teaching Plan* will be developed as follows:

- The Dean will consult with the *Academic Board* regarding future program offerings and the strategic direction of SIHE
- The Dean will review the most recent annual reports from Program Directors
- Following this, the Dean will draft a new *Learning and Teaching Plan*.
- The Dean will seek feedback on the draft. Senior academic staff will be required to provide feedback, while junior and/or sessional staff will be encouraged, but not required, to provide input.
- Taking feedback into account, The Dean will redevelop the draft *Learning and Teaching Plan* and submit it to the *Learning and Teaching Committee* for review and further development if necessary
- After review by the *Learning and Teaching Committee*, the new *Learning and Teaching Plan* will be submitted to the *Academic Board*
- The *Academic Board* may approve the new *Learning and Teaching Plan* with or without amendments
- If necessary, the Dean will amend *the Learning and Teaching Plan* and resubmit it to the *Academic Board* for final approval.

The *Learning and Teaching Plan* must be reviewed annually, and a new plan must be re-developed a minimum of once every five years.

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The *Academic Board* is responsible for the quality of the learning and teaching operations of SIHE and delegates the implementation of this policy to the positions and bodies identified in 'Procedures' above, including the academic management committees, the Dean, and Program Directors.

The *Academic Board* will monitor the implementation of this policy primarily through the periodic review and revision of the *Learning and Teaching Plan*, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*. Through this process, the Board will use relevant records and data to determine whether *learning and teaching policies* and procedures have been carried out effectively, and where improvements can be made in the upcoming five-year period.

The *Academic Board* will review all reports submitted by academic committees and senior academic staff members.

Additionally, the *Academic Board* will monitor student complaints and appeals, and any concerns raised by academic staff, on an ongoing basis.

Based on these monitoring activities, The *Academic Board*, in line with the *Compliance Calendar*, must provide a report to the *Corporate Governance Board* and ensure that findings are taken into account in planning, quality assurance and improvement processes.

Definitions

Academic Board: the SIHE governing body responsible for academic oversight, including SIHE learning and teaching environment and practices, program development and approval, workforce planning, research and scholarship, and academic policies and procedures. The *Academic Board* advises the *Corporate Governance Board* on academic matters.

Academic staff: Staff employed at SIHE in program delivery or research roles.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): The national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education at all levels.

Corporate Governance Board: The SIHE governing body responsible for the oversight of all SIHE operations, including the direction-setting, quality assurance, monitoring, and improvement of academic and non-academic operations. It delegates responsibility for academic matters to the *Academic Board*.

Program Director: A senior academic staff member responsible for the delivery of a specific program at SIHE. The Program Director, working in conjunction with other senior academic staff, must plan and develop the program, particularly program curriculum.

Graduate attributes: The characteristics and qualities that SIHE expects students to develop throughout their program and embody on graduation.

Dean: A senior member of academic staff at SIHE who liaises between the *Corporate Governance Board*, *Academic Board*, and academic staff as required.

Learning and Teaching Plan: a document that outlines the SIHE's academic objectives over a five-year period, corresponding strategies to achieve the objectives, and measurements of progress.

Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the *Academic Board* every three years.













| Version History | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Version number: | Approved by: | Approval date: | Revision notes: | Next review date: |
| 1 | Academic Board | 25/10/2017 | | 25/10/2020 |
| 2 | Academic Board | 17/09/2020 | Minor changes to include online delivery of program | 17/09/2023 |
| 3 | Academic Board | 18/01/2021 | No change. Periodic Review. | 18/01/2024 |
| 4 | Academic Board | 28/08/23 | Periodic review on the start of teaching operations. Addition of online learning during pandemic response. Update of committees to reflect merging of Program advisory and Program Monitoring Committees. | 28/10/2025 |

End of document: "Learning and Teaching Policy"

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Related Documents

| | | |
|---|---|--|
|  |  | Academic Freedom Policy |
|  |  | Academic Governance Policy |
|  |  | Academic Integrity and Conduct Policy |
|  |  | Academic Support Policy |
|  |  | Academic Staff Supervision and Performance Review Policy |
|  |  | Anti-Discrimination Policy |
|  |  | Assessment Policy |
|  |  | Program Development and Approval Policy |

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|  |  | <u>Program Review and Continual Improvement Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Critical Incident Response Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Critical Inquiry Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Disability Support Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Workforce Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>International Student Services Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Professional Development Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Complaints and Appeals Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Counselling Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Student Feedback Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Student Welfare Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Students at Risk and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Work Integrated Learning Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Work Health and Safety Policy</u> |
|  |  | <u>Unit and Teaching Evaluation Methodology</u> |
|  |  | <u>Graduate Attributes and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)</u> |
|  |  | <u>Learning and Teaching Plan</u> |
|  |  | <u>Workforce Plan</u> |
|  |  | <u>Teaching and Learning Community of Practice - Terms of Reference</u> |
|  |  | <u>Academic Quality Committee - Terms of Reference</u> |
|  |  | <u>Academic Board - Terms of Reference</u> |