

Design, Development, Review and Approval of Programmes

[Re-approval, Accreditation and Related Aspects]

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Applies From:	Immediately		

Major changes/additions since the last version was approved are indicated by a vertical line in the left-hand margin.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

To provide a set of principles, procedures and good practice guidelines to inform educational design, development, review and approval of programmes.

1.2 Scope and Application

This policy applies to all courses and programmes offered by Ara Institute of Canterbury¹, including those delivered in collaboration with or under contract to another organisation/provider in New Zealand or overseas and regardless of type of delivery (e.g. face to face/classroom based, distance or eLearning, or at satellite sites).

1.3 Formal Delegations

- a The Ara Council delegates the Academic Board to:
 - i Approve new and existing programmes and courses which are in accordance with the Ara Strategic Plan and Investment Plan
 - ii Admit students to approved programmes and courses
 - iii Grant awards
 - iv Develop, monitor, review and maintain policies on academic matters, including research.

- b To the Programme Approval Committee (PAC):
 - i Approval of existing, previously approved programmes submitted for re-approval, provided there are no significant changes (September 2003).
 - ii Approval of Training Schemes.
 - iii Approval of short, non-assessed courses, approved under delegation at Department level, which for any reason deemed appropriate by the Programme

¹ From herein referred to as Ara

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- Approval Committee are being submitted for approval to an external body (February 2004).
- iv Approval of programmes already approved by the Academic Board of any ITP (December 2011) or CTA partners (June 2004).
 - v Approval of replacement programmes related to New Zealand certificates and diplomas.
- c The International Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that all international delivery intentions meet internal and external requirements before approval.
- d Refer Section 3 of this policy for details related to specific responsibilities and delegations.
- e Variations:
- i Variations to this policy and/or procedures may be required for reasons such as contractual arrangements with other providers, relationships with industry or professional bodies, programme developments requiring urgent approval or unexpected changes to Government policy. It also is acknowledged that internal circumstances such as staff vacancies, illness or subsequent changes in Ara policy can alter the sequence of timeframe described in Section 3.
 - ii Depending on the particular situation, the Chief Executive or Director Academic have the authority to approve a variation to this policy. They will consult with others as needed before making a decision.
 - iii If any significant departure from policy is envisaged, a recommendation is taken to the Academic Board (or relevant committee acting under delegation), Management and/or executive before being finalised. Variations will be recorded in Academic Division's central file for future reference.

<p>Related Ara Procedures and Forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval for Programme Development template • Programme Design, Development and Approval Flowchart • Qualification and Programme Design, Development, Review and Approval Guidelines (including Work Integrated Learning) • Programme Document template • Consent to Assess Standards template • Capability Document template • Checklist for Collaborative Arrangements • Programme Status Change form 	<p>Related Ara Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APP503 Naming and Awarding Qualifications and Recognising Achievement • APP505 Assessment • APP507 Credit Recognition • APP508 Moderation • APP604 Programme Consultation Networks • CPP309 Principles and Practices Governing All Contractual Arrangements
<p>Related Legislation or Other Documentation</p> <p><u>NZQF Offshore Programme Delivery Rules</u> <u>NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules</u></p>	<p>Good Practice Guidelines</p>
<p>References</p>	
<p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The previous policies that are now incorporated into this consolidated policy are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a 'Programme Approval, Accreditation & Follow-up' (dates of previous versions as per the details in the panel at the top of this policy). b 'Offsite/Workplace Components' (first produced 11/12/07 and updated 13/12/01). c 'Educational Relationships, Articulation & Other Co-operative Ventures' (first produced 30/06/97 and updated 26/03/98, 13/12/01 and 19/09/03). • The initial criteria for approval of degree programmes were adopted by the Academic Board in June 1991 and revised in June 1997. Subsequent revisions were made after the policy 	

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'Development & Approval of Degree Programmes' was developed (1993, 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2001). Consultation was held with Management Team, Strategic Development Group and staff currently teaching in degree programmes.

- The criteria for post-graduate delivery were drafted by the Education Strategy Group in May 2001 and are consistent with TEC's report The Distinctive Contributions of Tertiary Education Organisations (2004, 2006).
- The template for the required Annual Degree Reports and guidelines for appointing external advisors were developed by the Academic Board's Degree Monitoring Group. They have been revised several times for consistency with ITP Quality requirements.
- In 2004, it was agreed that the Academic Division would not accept programme documents for evaluation until the Development Centre process, introduced in 2003, had been completed. This is to ensure that time and resources are not devoted to programme development until the viability, strategic relevance and market demand are evaluated.
- The 2010 version removes the Development Centre process and replaces it with the Centre for Educational Development process. Responsibility for ensuring viability, strategies, relevance and market demand has shifted to the Deans/Senior Managers. Accreditation Review and Programme Follow Up references have been removed. Self-Assessment and External Evaluation Review (SA & EER) processes included. The Additional Degree Approval requirements section has been reduced as our experience in degree approvals has increased since the policy was first developed.
- The 2014 version. Responsibilities have changed from Faculty Boards to Heads of Departments/Department Boards of Studies. The procedures have been reordered into a more logical sequence. Removed from the policy are the sections Centre for Educational Development Process, Additional Degree Changes section. Additional Degree Approval Requirements now under one heading. Wording change "reapproval" replaced with "review". Council delegation to Chief Executive reviewed and delegated powers to Academic Board endorsed. Consistency of Graduate Outcomes added to the Review Cycles section.
- 2016 - new branding

2 Principles

- 2.1 Programme development will be informed by the Ara Strategic Plan and Investment Plan, the Government's Tertiary Education Strategy and the Ara Policy Framework for Teaching and Learning.
- 2.2 Programme design will be based on current educational philosophies, including active learning, constructive alignment and learning-centred approaches, scholarly approaches utilising self-assessment of existing practice and Ara strategic priorities.
- 2.3 Programme design is a collaborative process involving industry/stakeholders, Departments, and Academic Division, drawing upon appropriate discipline and pedagogical expertise and the knowledge of external compliance factors.
- 2.4 Programme design will address the need for learners to achieve the appropriate levels of independence and self-management for their programme of study through scaffolding and contextualisation of academic literacies.
- 2.5 Programme design will consider consistency of course credit size, a mix of core, compulsory, and elective components (specified and unspecified) where appropriate.
- 2.6 Programme design will consider transportability and make transparent pathways between programmes.
- 2.7 Programme design will ensure purposeful opportunities for students to engage with industry, and professional and community organisations through work integrated learning activities where appropriate.
- 2.8 Programme design will inform staff professional development needs.

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- 2.9 Programme approval processes will involve evaluation by teams to ensure a quality product, adherence to internal and external academic approval guidelines/regulations, NZQA Rules, other regulatory body requirements, and that legislative and funding compliance requirements are met.
- 2.10 Programme reviews will be undertaken to ensure a continuous cycle of improvement.

3 Associated procedures for Ara Academic Policy on: Design, Development, Review and Approval of Programmes

Contents:	3.1	Programme Design, Development and Approval Responsibilities, Delegations and Requirements
	3.2	Work Integrated Learning
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	3.5	Ongoing Review Cycle
	3.6	Programme Changes
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	3.8	Sub-Contracting and Consortium Arrangements
	3.9	Status of Qualifications and Programmes
	3.10	Approval of Short Courses and Training Schemes

3.1 Programme Design, Development and Approval Responsibilities, Delegations and Requirements

- a Approval for programme development for all existing and new programmes must be gained from Senior Management before programme design proceeds.

The design and development process will follow the *Qualification and Programme Design, Development, Review and Approval Guidelines*. The process will be led by the Department working in conjunction with Academic Division. (*Refer to APP603a programme Design, Development and Approval Flowchart and Guidelines*)

The Department and Academic Division will work together to identify and develop staff capability requirements to offer the programme.

Heads of Department are responsible for (i) evaluating and endorsing programmes and training schemes (qualifications less than 40 credits) before forwarding the documents to the Programme Approval Committee and (ii) approving short courses not leading to a qualification according to the criteria set by the Programme Approval Committee.

- b The Academic Board is responsible for ensuring each programme meets approval and accreditation requirements, and the specification(s) for the qualification(s) as listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. The Programme Approval Committee (PAC), whose terms of reference and membership are confirmed by the Academic Board, evaluates Programme and Training Scheme proposals on behalf of the Board, co-opting others as required. Specific delegations to PAC are attached to the terms of reference of the Academic Board.
- c The Academic Division is responsible for managing the Academic Board approval process, maintaining central records and covering costs of external approval and accreditation. The Director Academic or delegate is responsible for 'signing off' Programme Approval Committee recommendations, submitting applications for external approval and accreditation, and approving variations related to this aspect of policy.
- d The Programme Approval Committee evaluates programmes according to published criteria. The Committee forwards its recommendations to the Academic Board for approval and reports to the Board decisions carried out under formal delegation.

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- e The Ara Kaiārahi as a Senior Manager is included in the Proposal to Develop Phase. It is the Kaiārahi's prerogative to determine which programmes require iwi involvement or further consultation. The Kaiārahi in consultation with the Head of Department will also identify programmes that are to be assessed by NZQA under the Matauranga Māori Evaluative Quality Assurance criteria.
- f Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that Ara does not guarantee delivery of any programme or course(s) until the required approval is obtained. All prior publicity must include a 'pending approval' notice. Students are not eligible to enrol until all approval steps (including confirmation of TEC funding) are completed.
- g Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring Ara participation in any consistency arrangements required for the qualification(s) to which a programme leads. Feedback received will be used to improve delivery, assessment and consistency of student outcomes.
- h Refer Section 3.3 for accreditation requirements, Section 3.5 for ongoing review cycles and Section 3.10 for approval of short courses/ACE and Training Schemes.

3.2 Work Integrated Learning

- a Work experience, practicum components, degree research projects, field education, clinical placements, internships, co-operative education or any other work integrated learning arrangements are subject to the same approval and other quality assurance processes as any other aspect of the programme (see Section 3.1). Learning outcomes are stated clearly and where formal assessment is used, assessment strategies and responsibilities are fully documented and assessment results moderated.
- b The respective responsibilities and accountabilities of staff, students and offsite supervisors are clearly defined in writing. Workplace contracts/agreements are developed based on standard templates. Departments are responsible for:
 - i Ensuring requirements set out in the Development, Review and Approval Guidelines.
 - ii Ensuring contractual agreements are documented. Note that in cases where it is difficult to obtain a signed contract from employers (especially when each student is responsible for securing the placement and/or the contractual obligations of the employer are minimal), the following statement can be included in the introductory letter to the employer:

Acceptance of this student on a work placement is confirmation that you accept the conditions and responsibilities as set out in this document. If you have any queries, please contact the person identified below.
 - iii Informing students of the regulations stipulating that they are ineligible for student allowances during any period of programme-related paid work.

3.3 Accreditation Requirements

- a Accreditation is the process by which Ara is evaluated for its capacity and capability to provide an approved programme or parts of an approved programme by NZQA. Accreditation may also involve a regulatory body, e.g. Nursing Council of New Zealand, Social Workers Registration Board, and Institute of Professional Engineers New Zealand.

Where the programme or part of the programme includes assessment standards listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards, Ara must hold consent to assess those standards.

- b Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that Ara does not guarantee delivery of any programme or course(s) until the required accreditation is obtained. All prior

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publicity must include a 'pending accreditation' notice. Refer Section 3.1 for details regarding programme approval.

- c A sub-group of Programme Approval Committee evaluates the accreditation application to confirm the criteria are met. Academic Division submits the application to the accreditation body and covers the external costs.
- d The Department is responsible for ensuring that the delivery, assessment, consistency arrangements/moderation and reporting requirements as set out in the accreditation application are met. 'Contributing Departments' (other Departments that offer some components of the programme) are expected to meet the standards associated with those components.

3.4 Additional Degree Approval and Monitoring Requirements

- a A Capability Document (supplement to the Programme Document), is also submitted to NZQA for approval and accreditation purposes for new degrees and new specialisations/majors.
- b Academic Division liaises with NZQA regarding the evaluation process for new degrees.
- c Degree programmes are externally monitored by the person(s) appointed by NZQA when the degree is first approved. External monitoring usually continues for a minimum of three years, at which time NZQA may recommend the institution apply for 'self-monitoring'. External monitoring fees are paid by the Academic Division.
- d The usual procedure for handling self-monitoring is to appoint an external advisor(s), under similar conditions to that of the NZQA monitor. External advisors are appointed for a specified time, with a primary focus depending on issues identified for the particular degree. Selection of external advisors is done in consultation with the outgoing monitor/advisor and endorsed by the Director, Education and Applied Research. Annual visits are followed by a report to a standard Ara template. The report and the Department's responses are tabled annually at Department Board of Studies and Academic Board. External Advisor fees are paid by the relevant department.
- e NZQA's Annual Programme Evaluation and Review reports are collated by the Academic Division following the Ara internal process of Programme Evaluation. The Academic Division will forward the reports to the appropriate Quality Assurance body by the end of June each year.

3.5 Ongoing Review Cycles

Review cycles for qualifications from Level 1 to Level 6 will be specified for each qualification at the time of listing on the NZQF and programme reviews will align to these cycles. For programmes at Level 7 and above, the standard review cycle is five years. Cycles however, can be varied by Academic Board for reasons such as: significant issues identified via self-assessment; alignment with external review/accreditation requirements (e.g. Nursing Council of New Zealand).

Programmes are monitored annually through the Programme Evaluation process. This involves the collection of evidence, analysis of programme data and evaluative conversations involving staff, students and stakeholders including employers.

There are two NZQA requirements for managing consistency of the graduate outcomes:

- i To include a focus in Self-Assessment on how well Ara graduates meet the qualification outcomes including the evidence of "next users" such as employers.
- ii To participate in periodic "consistency reviews" to ensure collective evidence meets the stakeholder and graduate outcomes requirements.

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Programme Evaluation reports are monitored through the Department Board of Studies and trends reported to Academic Board twice a year.

3.6 Programme Changes

a Changes may be made to courses or programmes before the review date provided they are approved via Academic Division.

b NZQA definitions of Changes:

Type 1

A Type 1 change means one or more changes to courses of an approved programme which **do not** impact on the programme as a whole. These changes do not require approval by NZQA. Type 1 changes are approved by the Head of Department/delegate and Academic Division. Academic Division notifies NZQA of any website changes.

Type 2

A Type 2 change means one or more changes to components of an approved programme which **do** have an impact on the programme as a whole. These changes do require NZQA approval before being implemented. Type 2 changes are evaluated and actioned by a sub-group of the Academic Board, under the direction of the Director, Academic or delegate. Decisions are reported to Academic Board. Academic Division submits the online change application to NZQA.

All changes, regardless of type and including those impacting on TEC funding are reported to both the Programme Approval Committee and relevant Department Boards of Studies.

3.7 Variation to Programme

a A student may be granted an exemption for prescribed core or compulsory courses because they are unable to complete all the requirements of a prescribed course due to factors outside their control (e.g. disability or other acceptable reason). In such cases, the student is not awarded credit for the prescribed course, but is given the opportunity to complete an approved alternative course of the same or higher credit value at the same or higher level via approval of a 'variation to programme'.

b 'Variation to a programme' is approved by exception, on a case by case basis, usually for reasons as outlined above. In all cases, a variation is approved only if the graduate profile for the programme in which the student is enrolled is achieved.

c Applications for a 'variation to a programme' are submitted to the Academic Board via Academic Division by the relevant Head of Department/delegate, both of whom must endorse the variation.

d Approval of the variation is via a sub-group operating under delegation of the Academic Board and consisting of two members of the Programme Approval Committee and two additional members of the Academic Board who are not members of the PAC. All decisions are reported to the Academic Board, and a central file is maintained by the Academic Division.

e No more than 25% of the total credit value of any programme can be varied (equivalent to one standard 15-credit course in a 60-credit qualification). If multiple applications are received for students in the same programme, this can signal a need for the programme and/or the entry criteria to be reviewed.

f *Refer also to the policy, APP507 Credit Recognition.*

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3.8 Sub-Contracting and Consortium Arrangements

- a The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) requires all sub-contracting and consortium arrangements for delivery of programmes or parts of programmes to be described in a formal contract. Special considerations apply to arrangements with overseas institutions. *(Refer Guidelines and Rules NZQF Offshore Programme Delivery. Oct 2012.)*
- b NZQA must also be notified of any sub-contracting intention prior to the programme being offered where both parties hold accreditation. NZQA must give approval for the engagement of a sub-contractor that does not hold accreditation, prior to provision of the programme or consortium agreement, to be submitted when applying for external programme approval. *(Refer to NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules.)*
- c The number and type of partner institutions depend on the educational and business plans put forward and the institute's ability to manage the relationship professionally and in a timely manner. Relationships are transparent, fully documented and expected to be of ongoing benefit, regardless of changes in personnel.
- d Agreements are entered into only after a full proposal, including a business plan setting out details on initial and ongoing costs, has been prepared and considered by the appropriate person(s) or group(s), evaluated by the Senior Management if needed and endorsed by the Academic Board.
- e Ara requires that all sub-contracting and consortium arrangement contracts are vetted by the Senior Management to ensure all legal responsibilities and obligations are specified and the financial arrangements are viable. The Director International evaluates contracts related to arrangements with overseas institutions. *(Refer to CPP309 to Principles and Practices Governing All Contractual Arrangements.)*
- f The Ara Academic Policies require that all course and programme developments, delivery intentions and articulation arrangements are approved by the Academic Board (or Programme Approval Committee/Department Board of Studies under delegation) to ensure internal and external requirements are met. This includes both international and domestic arrangements.
- g If the arrangement involves or affects an institution(s) with whom Ara already has a partnership or relationship (e.g. CTA, TANZ, Te Tapuae o Rehua, some international providers), the existing protocols are followed and the contact person(s) for that relationship consulted before proceeding with the arrangement.

3.9 Status of Qualifications and Programmes

a Qualifications:

To ensure that the NZ Qualifications Framework provides the public with clear information about the status of qualifications there will be a requirement to regularly review the status of qualifications according to the following:

- i Current (in current use).
- ii Expiring (available to existing students but no new students may be enrolled).
- iii Discontinued (qualification can no longer be awarded unless all requirements were completed prior to its discontinuation).

NZQA will be notified of any change in status to Ara qualifications by Academic Division.

b Programmes:

In cases where the Department opts to cease offering a programme, an application will be made to the Academic Board, with details that include the rationale for the status and a transition plan if any students are still enrolled or likely to return at a later date

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to the complete the original qualification. A standard template is provided for this purpose. Academic Division will notify NZQA of any change in status to an Ara programme. (*Refer to Programme Status Change Form.*)

3.10 Approval of Short Courses and Training Schemes

- a There are two categories of 'short courses': those delivered under the Adult and Community Education (ACE) provisions and those that are funded other than by TEC. Short courses usually are non-assessed. The Academic Board delegates approval of 'short courses' to Department Boards of Studies via the Head of Department. It also delegates to Heads of Department authority to approve short courses for delivery under ACE provisions and/or Summer School.
- b Training Schemes, i.e. study or training of less than 40 credits that leads to an award but does not of itself lead to an award of a qualification listed on the NZQF, are treated in the same way as any other programme (refer to Section 3.1). (*Refer to NZQF Training Schemes Rules.*)
- c The criteria and documentation requirements for the above are set by the Programme Approval Committee. Details of approval at Department level are forwarded to the Academic Division and reported to the Academic Board annually.
- d Planned ACE delivery is approved by the Academic Board on an annual basis. The Director Academic or delegate is responsible for ensuring that ACE criteria are met.

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