

AFTRS CURRICULUM POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy specifies the principles, definitions and parameters used to regulate the design, approval, delivery and review of award course curriculum at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS). It maps against the Threshold Standards as expressed in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*; particularly Threshold 5: *Institutional Quality Assurance* which sets out the standards for course approval, accreditation, monitoring, review and improvement.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all AFTRS Award courses.

3. Policy Statement

AFTRS is a self-accrediting Higher Education Provider that delivers specialist education for the screen and broadcast industries. The Curriculum Policy provides the framework for the AFTRS Curriculum for courses delivered at the following levels, aligned with relevant standards and guidelines as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):

- Bachelor (AQF Level 7)
- Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8)
- Masters (AQF Level 9).

This policy requires that the design, approval, accreditation, delivery, review and discontinuation of the AFTRS Curriculum adhere to relevant policies, procedures and guidelines.

4. AFTRS Curriculum Design

AFTRS Award courses utilise experiential learning models at the heart of their curriculum.

All Award course curricula must include: graduate capabilities, course and subject aims and learning outcomes, course structure including credit points, hours of study, delivery mode, and the number of assignments at course and subject level. AFTRS Award course curricula must comply with the parameters set out in this policy and the *AFTRS Curriculum Design Guidelines*. All Award courses must also be delivered in accordance with the specific Academic Year and the Volume of Learning and Credit Points parameters set out below.

4.1 Academic Year

The standard Academic Year at AFTRS is 32 weeks in duration and is comprised of two semesters of 16 weeks each. All designed learning activities must take place within this period of study, unless due to special circumstances or by special arrangement as detailed in the course guidelines. (For instance, professional placements may be required of the course but may not be able to be realised during term time due to availability of placement opportunities.)

4.2 Volume of Learning and Credit Points

At AFTRS, one Credit Point is equal to 24 hours of study (across all teaching and learning activities). AFTRS determines the standard full-time study load per annum as 48 credit points = 1 EFTSL. This equates to a volume of learning of 1,152 hours per annum for a full-time course.

Each AFTRS Award course must appropriately balance the volume of hours of course delivery and student workload relevant to the subject matter, AQF level and mode of delivery. This is determined on a course-by-course basis.

The Credit Point value of the AFTRS Curriculum for each Award course is as follows:

	Credit Points	EFTSL	Part-time/Full-time	Duration
Bachelor Degree	144 48 per annum	1	Full-time	96 weeks
Graduate Diploma	48	1	Full-time	32 weeks
Graduate Diploma Part-Time	48 24 per annum	0.5	Part-time	32 weeks
Master of Arts: Screen (Coursework)	96 48 per annum	1	Full-time	64 weeks
Master of Screen: Business & Leadership (Coursework)	56	0.5	Part-time	64 weeks

4.3 Hours of Study per Credit Point

Each course guide and each semester / subject outline will articulate clearly to students how contact hours and self-directed hours are apportioned and what is expected of the student.

Credit Points provide the framework for the allocation of *contact hours* and *self-directed learning hours* required for students to successfully complete their course. *Contact hours*, where students engage in mediated and designed learning activities, can be comprised of a range of modes of teaching, including blended learning, lectures, workshops, mentoring and online activities. *Self-directed learning* allows students to consolidate and expand on what they have learned by taking charge of their own learning outside scheduled class-time. This includes time for students to complete assignments, group work, readings / viewings and research, and to access AFTRS equipment and facilities in accordance with availability and in compliance with relevant School guidelines.

4.4 Graduate Capabilities & Course Learning Outcomes

Graduate Capabilities are defined at each Award *level*. Course Learning Outcomes are defined for each Award course and included in the course guide. Both Graduate Capabilities and Course Learning Outcomes are mapped against the relevant AQF.

Subject Learning Outcomes are defined for each subject.

5. Course Approval & Change

5.1 Course Approval

New courses and curriculum are reviewed and approved by the Academic Board following approval by the Executive. The development and approval process for new courses must follow the procedure set out in the *Course Approval and Change Procedure*.

There must be a period of at least 18 months from the date of Executive approval of a Business Case to the date of the start of the proposed/approved course. This will enable all divisions at AFTRS to plan and prepare for delivery of the new course. This timeframe will also enable consultation with and review by internal and external stakeholders to be incorporated into the development of the course.

There must be a minimum period of 9 months from the date of Academic Board approval of a New Course Proposal before the start date of the proposed/approved course.

These minimum periods for new course development may be varied in exceptional circumstances. These may include, but are not limited to, the following situations: instruction from the Minister regarding a strategic initiative, recommendations from TEQSA following re-registration or audit. In such instances, the Academic Board and AFTRS Council should approve the proposed course as soon as is practical.

5.2 Major Changes

Major Changes require ultimate approval by the Academic Board and are detailed as changes to the following:

- Course title (name of the Award)
- Graduate Capabilities
- Course Learning Outcomes and Aims
- Mode of delivery, EFTSL and credit points at the course and subject level
- Course structure as it affects delivery mode, delivery pattern and resources
 - including new and deleted subjects
- Assessment strategy as it affects student workload.

5.3 Minor Changes

Minor Changes require the approval of the Director of Curriculum and Student Registrar and the Chair of the Academic Board.

Minor Changes include changes at subject level:

- Subject name
- Subject learning outcomes.

In a circumstance where there are a substantial number of minor changes to subjects in a single course, it may be determined that the changes constitute a Major Change.

5.4 Variations to Procedure

In a circumstance where there are a substantial number of minor changes to subjects in a single course, it may be determined that the changes constitute a Major Change. The determination will be made by the Director of Curriculum and Student Registrar. These may include, but are not limited to, the situations listed below:

- If more than 50% of subject learning outcomes or subject names are changed or proposed to be changed, then these minor changes should be treated as a Major Change and must follow the procedure for Major Changes.
- If more than 50% of Course Learning Outcomes or of course structure; or if the mode of delivery or if ETFSL or if the course name is changed or proposed to be changed, then these as Major Changes may be treated as a new course and require a New Course Proposal form and the Course Approval and Change Procedure to be followed.

6. Course Suspension and Discontinuation

Decisions to suspend or terminate a course of study are determined by the AFTRS Executive. Details of the procedure are set out in the *Course Suspension, Termination and Closure Procedure*.

7. Continuous Improvement Process and Curriculum Review

7.1 Curriculum Review

The HESF (2015) requires all accredited courses of study to be comprehensively reviewed periodically by peak academic governance processes (at minimum, every seven years). Working to the schedule reviewed and approved by the Executive and the Academic Board, a comprehensive review of a course of studies curriculum will be undertaken between every five to seven years following the process set out in the *Curriculum Review Procedure*.

7.2 Course Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The AFTRS Curriculum is evaluated annually as part of an ongoing quality assurance and quality enhancement process. This evaluation process is documented in the *Continuous Improvement of Curriculum Procedure*.

8. Changes to AFTRS Curriculum

Changes to the approved AFTRS Curriculum must be conducted through a timely and transparent process. Changes to curriculum cannot be implemented while a course is being delivered: that is, no changes to a course during the semester of delivery.

There are two types of changes – Major Changes and Minor Changes. For courses that have been run, changes will only be considered upon the completion of a Course Report. For course, that are yet to run, the Course Change request form should include specific reasons and evidence for the change. Course Leaders are to work with lecturers and education specialists to supply a Course Change form detailing any suggested changes.

Supporting documentation may include research into the scholarship of teaching, relevant disciplinary research, as well as evidence drawn from a Course Leader or Lecturer's reflective practice maintained for the duration of the delivery of the subject/course.

Major Changes and Minor Changes follow the procedure set out in the *Course Approval and Change Procedure*.

9. Definitions

Credit Point: A basic unit of measure of workload. Credit points are a means of identifying the relative value of a unit of study. It is derived from the calculation of EFTSL (Equivalent Full-Time Study Load). Each higher education provider determines the standard credit point values for its degrees. Students gain credit points when they pass subjects within the degree in which they are enrolled and when accumulated, credit points form one measure of the total requirements of a degree.

Contact hours: The number of hours that it is scheduled for a student to engage in designed learning activities. These can be comprised of face-to-face teaching, blended learning both synchronous and asynchronous or purely online study.

- Face-to-face teaching takes place during supervised hours and involves instruction through lecturer-student interactions conducted in lectures, tutorials, exercises and workshops, mentoring and feedback as distinct from mediated instruction in the form of distance or online learning.
- Blended Learning: a model of course design that combines traditional (face-to-face) class time with online course work.
- Online Learning: the delivery of a course or an individual subject solely online.
- Tutorial: a workshop, demonstration or discussion group that follows a large group lecture.

Course: A single program of study with a defined set of Graduate Attributes and Course Learning Outcomes.

Course Guide: A descriptive document that provides an overview of the course including subject structure and credit points, Graduate Attributes, Course Learning Outcomes, elective options (if applicable), mentoring and/or learning plan requirements, as well as other key information that assists students in understanding the requirements of their course.

Degree: A program of study into which students are admitted comprising of a program of subjects that, when satisfactorily completed, lead to the Award of an approved qualification recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL): A measure of the study load (or volume of learning), for a year, of a single student undertaking a course of study on a full-time basis. EFTSL is used by Centrelink and the Department of Home Affairs in part to determine if a student is eligible for benefits.

Semester or Subject Outline: The outline is the key syllabus document that outlines to students the content, assessment tasks, duration and delivery of the subject in which they are enrolled.

Subject: A subject is a discrete, self-contained unit of study that is recognised as a component of a degree. A subject is allocated a specified number of credit points as a measure of the workload for that subject.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA): is Australia’s regulatory and quality agency for higher education. TEQSA requires higher education providers to meet the threshold standards outlined in the Higher Education Standards Framework. All higher education providers are required by TEQSA to comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Volume of Learning: The total number of hours required for a student to complete a course of study, including both contact hours and self-directed study. Volume of Learning is a key component in determining the EFTSL. Authorisation and Distribution.

Authorisation	Chief Executive Officer
Date	21 October 2019
Responsible Officer	Director of Curriculum and Student Registrar
Minor Amendment Authorisation Date	N/A N/A
Contact Officer	Director of Curriculum and Student Registrar
Effective Date	21 October 2019
Distribution	Intranet and AFTRS website
Review Date	Annually. 21 October 2020
Current version	<i>Curriculum Policy v3.0, 21 October 2019</i>
Supersedes	Curriculum Policy v2.1, 9 February 2019 Curriculum Policy v.2.0, 11 October 2017
Associated Documents	<i>Curriculum Design Guidelines Continuous Improvement of Curriculum Procedure Academic Governance Framework Course Approval and Change Procedure Course Suspension, Termination and Closure Procedure Major Changes to Course Minor Changes to Course Business Case for New Course New Course Proposal Form</i>