
Changing Mode of Delivery of Existing Courses Policy

Academic Policy

1 Purpose

The University has clearly defined procedures governing the initial form that courses take when approved. This policy creates a framework to support the process of modifying and adapting existing University courses while also ensuring that the high standards of the University are maintained.

Nothing in this policy should be considered as advocating any particular mode of delivery as being preferred or superior to other modes of delivery.

2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide policy.

3 Definitions

For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

- Substantial: Substantial is defined as the complete deletion or replacement of any significant course component (lectures, tutorials, laboratories or assessment programme) with one that significantly changes the quality and nature of that contact for example by:
- (a) removing face-to-face contact with teaching staff;
 - (b) requiring use of new forms of technology (including the WWW) purchased or supplied by the students;
 - (c) substantially changing the timeframe or duration of teaching such as reducing a full year course to one trimester or a single trimester course to 6 weeks over summer.

- Moderate:** Moderate is defined as the addition of new elements in the course teaching that supplement but do not replace existing modes of delivery and which place additional requirements or costs upon students. Examples include:
- (a) provision of a second, optional, stream making use of a new mode of delivery (for example the use of online tutorials);
 - (b) requiring the use of new technology by students during an existing teaching practice (i.e. computer simulations in labs rather than hands-on use of equipment);
 - (c) replacing discussion-based tutorials with supervised, self-paced laboratory sessions;
 - (d) requiring the use of an electronic “drop box” or receptacle for assignments where the course requires use of computers for existing assessment and teaching.
- Minor:** Minor is defined as the use of new course elements as part of existing delivery to supplement teaching and provide additional forms of learning or access to information. This includes:
- (a) making notes available to students via the WWW;
 - (b) changing the text book;
 - (c) providing organised (but not assessed or taught) student study groups;
 - (d) the introduction of regular and ongoing use of new technology by teaching staff during other modes of delivery (i.e. using PowerPoint to deliver lecture slides).
- UTDC:** University Teaching and Development Centre.

4 Policy Content and Guidelines

4.1 Approval

- (a) Substantial changes to courses must be reviewed and approved fully by the appropriate Faculty Board, including the Toihuarewa representative to each board, or delegated authority (such as an Associate Dean or faculty committee) in consultation with the school to ensure that the proposal effectively addresses the items listed below in this policy. Approved changes shall be reported to the Academic Committee. Academic Committee may, at its discretion, restrict to the Committee approval for changes which are particularly novel or require special attention, for example all distance courses. This restriction shall be notified in writing to all Faculty Boards and to Toihuarewa. The effects of the changes must be formally evaluated as set out in section 4.6.
- (b) Moderate changes to courses must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Head of School or delegated authority (such as Programme Director) to ensure that the proposal effectively addresses the items listed below in this policy. The effects of the changes should be formally evaluated as set out in section 4.6.
- (c) Minor changes should be reviewed and approved by the Course Coordinator using this policy as a checklist, and can be formally evaluated as set out in section 4.6.

4.2 Teaching and Learning

- (a) Consequent to any changes in the mode of delivery, each course shall continue to provide opportunities for reasonable, personal, and timely interactions between academic staff and students and among students, including the use of formal and informal feedback and evaluation.
- (b) Where substantial or moderate changes are proposed to course delivery, proposals shall demonstrate that an appropriate balance is kept between the interests of any students who are disadvantaged substantively by an inability to make use of the new mode of delivery and those students who obtain the benefit from that change.
- (c) Where substantial or moderate changes are proposed to course delivery, proposals shall ensure that programmes and courses shall be supervised and delivery controlled by academic staff employed by the University who remain responsible for the programme or course and will ensure:
 - (i) that material used is current and of similar quality to existing material;
 - (ii) that the technologies and/or modes of delivery suit the nature and objectives of the course;
 - (iii) that a safe learning environment is maintained at all times during the delivery of University courses and degrees, including the maintenance of the confidentiality and privacy of student information; and
 - (iv) that student support needs are addressed.
- (d) Where substantial or moderate changes are proposed to course delivery, any impact on or need for change in assessment procedures shall be identified, and criteria to ensure against plagiarism and other forms of misrepresentation clearly defined. Particular care shall be taken when face-to-face contact is reduced or removed to ensure that the integrity of assessment is preserved.
- (e) Where substantial or moderate changes are proposed to course delivery, contingency plans shall be identified to ensure that the change can be reversed during course delivery if the consequences merit this.

4.3 Library and Learning Resources

- (a) Where substantial changes in delivery are proposed, students must be explicitly informed of the contact process which enables them to continue their entitlement to library services and other learning resources as required.
- (b) Where changes of mode can be reasonably predicted to involve access restrictions, or to create Victoria University costs beyond normal operating budgets, these should be notified in good time. Notifying such library implications will enable solutions to be addressed which ensures that no student will be disadvantaged compared to their library access under campus-mode delivery.
- (c) Where a change in mode of delivery involves accessing copyright or licensed material, the proposal shall identify and address any reduction in the ability of students to effectively access and use those materials in their study resulting from the terms of any license or copyright agreement.

4.4 Student Services and Admissions

- (a) Irrespective of any change in mode of delivery, students shall have appropriate access to student services.

- (b) Irrespective of any change in mode of delivery, students shall still have access to a standard grievance procedure which shall be readily accessible.
- (c) Students shall always be informed prior to completion of the first week of a course of all requirements of that course relating to method and modes of delivery. Requirements shall be clearly identified in informational material related to the course.

Note: see section 4.1 with respect to computers and the Internet.

- (d) Academic admissions criteria for courses shall be comparable for students irrespective of the mode of delivery and should not be affected by any change in mode of delivery proposed.
- (e) An inability for students to be able to meet access requirements including technology capability and understanding shall constitute sufficient grounds for non-admission.
- (f) Where a substantial change introduces a requirement for the use of technological or complex modes of delivery, competent and appropriate advice and support will be available to students in a timely manner.
- (g) Where substantial changes in delivery are proposed, the impact of the change shall be discussed with the Director, Student Services and a written statement in support of the change shall be presented to demonstrate that students have appropriate access to student services.
- (h) Where a change in mode of delivery introduces the need for a change in existing enrolment procedures or systems, the impact of that change will be discussed with the Director, Central Student Administration, and a written statement in support of the change shall be obtained.

4.5 Facilities and Finance

- (a) Where substantial or moderate changes are proposed, Heads of School shall ensure that the workload impact on individual academics is properly identified and addressed.
- (b) Where substantial or moderate changes are proposed, Heads of School shall ensure that the school possesses or has access to the equipment and technical expertise required to deliver the program. Written statements of support shall be included where changes could impact on other University units including:
 - (i) Library.
 - (ii) ITS for impact on Student Computing Services, network and other IT systems.
 - (iii) Facilities Management for space utilisation.
 - (iv) Support facilities such as UTDC, and ITS Teaching Services for impact on their services.
- (c) Where substantial or moderate changes are proposed, Heads of School shall ensure that the long-range planning, budgeting, and strategic development processes reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the course, both within the School and also in any other University unit impacted on by the operation and delivery of the course.

4.6 Evaluation

- (a) All formal evaluations of courses undertaken in the context of this policy shall be done in a timely manner by an independent, qualified evaluations unit such as the UTDC which is authorised to do so by the appropriate Faculty.

- (b) Formal evaluations shall comprise an appropriate range of instruments to measure the impact of the specific change proposed and implemented, and shall include appropriate opportunities for student feedback.
- (c) Informal evaluations and collection of feedback should be conducted with the consultation and advice of the UTDC.

5 Legislative Compliance

Though the University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework, there is no specific legislation directing this policy.

6 References

[archived Changing Mode of Delivery of Existing Courses Policy 20090322.pdf](#)

7 Appendices

None

8 Approval Agency

Academic Board

9 Approval Dates

This policy was originally approved on: 28 November 2002

This version was approved on: 23 March 2009

This version takes effect from: 23 March 2009

This policy will be reviewed by: 23 March 2012

10 Policy Sponsor

Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

11 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

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