

Course Discontinuation and Teach-Out Policy and Procedures

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1. PURPOSE

Barton Business School (“BBS”) is dedicated to providing its students with every opportunity to finish their chosen course of study. Nonetheless, rare situations can arise where discontinuing or suspending a course is necessary. In such cases, BBS is committed to ensuring that students can either complete their course of study or transition to a mutually agreed course at no disadvantage.

The *Course Discontinuation and Teach-Out Policy and Procedures* provide a framework for teach-out arrangements and transition contingencies.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedures apply to all students and staff who are affected by the discontinuation or suspension of a higher education course at BBS, as well as all individuals, committees, and boards within BBS that are responsible for implementing the *Course Discontinuation and Teach-Out Policy and Procedures*.

3. DEFINITIONS

Refer to BBS's *Glossary of Terms*.

4. POLICY

4.1. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The key principles that underpin this policy are:

- a. BBS must ensure that the decision to discontinue or suspend a course is made with full transparency and accountability. The reasons for discontinuation or suspension will be communicated clearly to all relevant stakeholders, including students, academic staff, and non-academic staff.
- b. BBS must ensure that students can complete the course(s) in which they are enrolled or transition to a mutually agreed course at no disadvantage.
- c. BBS must make fair and equitable decisions regarding teach-out and transition plans.
- d. BBS must comply with all relevant regulatory requirements and accrediting body standards when discontinuing or suspending a course and during the teach-out period.

4.2. COURSE DISCONTINUATION, SUSPENSION AND TEACH-OUT

- a. Course discontinuation means the formal cessation and removal of a course from BBS’s offerings. BBS or TEQSA may initiate course discontinuation.

- b. Course suspension means a temporary suspension of admissions into a course for a designated period.
- c. Teach-out is a process in which a course, while remaining accredited, is phased out by BBS. During this phase, no new enrolments are accepted. Existing students are given the opportunity to either complete the course or transition to a mutually agreed alternative without any disadvantages.

4.3. BBS INITIATED TEACH-OUT

Infrequently, BBS may initiate a course discontinuation. This will occur when:

- a. BBS does not intend to renew the accreditation of a course of study. No students will be enrolled in the course at the due date for renewal of accreditation (students will have completed the course or transitioned out).
- b. BBS does not intend to continue delivering a course of study; however, some students will be enrolled past the current course accreditation renewal date. These students will either complete or transition out during a teach-out period. Under these circumstances, BBS must apply for renewal of accreditation of the course, noting that it is being taught out.

Teach-out arrangements may include students enrolled in a course that BBS plans to replace with a new course having ways to transition into the new course (subject to a TEQSA decision on whether to accredit the new course).

Infrequently, BBS may suspend a course. For instance, this might occur when BBS concludes:

- a. the course currently is not viable but nonetheless may become viable at a later time.
- b. it should close the course on one of its campuses and move it to another campus (the course might already be available on another campus or be commenced immediately or at a later time on the other campus).
- c. major work needs to be done over an extended period to improve the viability of the course and/or the quality of students' experiences in the course.

In all cases, the Board of Directors must approve the discontinuation or suspension of an accredited course upon recommendation by the Academic Board through a discontinuation or suspension proposal.

4.4. TEQSA-INITIATED TEACH-OUT

In addition to a BBS-initiated teach-out process, a course may enter teach-out mode based on a TEQSA decision. This may include TEQSA's decision to:

- a. not renew accreditation of a course while students are currently enrolled;
- b. cancel the accreditation of a course while students are currently enrolled;

- c. not accredit a course intended to replace an existing course that a provider has not sought to reaccredit.

In these circumstances, TEQSA will follow a risk-based approach and consider the interests of the enrolled students in determining the date on which accreditation ends.

4.5. TEACH-OUT PLAN

- a. BBS must create a Teach-Out Plan irrespective of whether a course will be placed in teach-out mode as a result of a BBS decision or a TEQSA decision.
- b. A Teach-Out Plan must be developed collaboratively by the CEO, Dean, and Course Coordinator.
- c. When developing a teach-out plan, the CEO, Dean, and Course Co-ordinator must consult with students and staff who will be affected by discontinuation or suspension of a course.
- d. Before it is initiated, a Teach-Out Plan must be approved by the Board of Directors on recommendation by the Academic Board.

4.6. COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

- a. BBS must advise all relevant stakeholders (such as students, staff, TEQSA) who are impacted by a course discontinuation, course suspension, and teach-out plan.
- b. Communication with prospective students must be managed as specified in the approved Teach-Out Plan.
- c. The CEO is responsible for communications with all stakeholders as specified in the approved Teach-Out Plan.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1. BBS-INITIATED TEACH-OUT

- a. In consultation with the CEO, the Dean is responsible for developing and submitting to the Academic Board (“AB”) a Course Discontinuation Proposal (“CDP”) for the discontinuation of a course or Course Suspension Proposal (“CSP”) for the suspension of a course.
- b. The CDP or CSP must include at least the following:
 - i. Rationale for discontinuing or suspending the course.
 - ii. Impact on BBS and stakeholders.
 - iii. Stakeholder consultation.
 - iv. Student support that is required in the process.
 - v. Financial consequences.
 - vi. Strategic consequences.

- c. The AB must carefully consider the CDP or CSP and recommend the CDP or CSP to the Board of Directors (“BoD”) for approval.
- d. The AB chair must present the CDP or CSP to the BoD.
- e. If the BoD supports the CDP or CSP, it must formally approve the CDP or CSP.
- f. Upon approval of the CDP or CSP, the BoD must commission the AB to oversee the preparation of a Teach-Out Plan (“TOP”).

5.2. TEQSA-INITIATED TEACH-OUT

A course may be forced into teach-out due to a regulatory decision made by TEQSA. The following procedures must then be undertaken:

- a. If necessary, the AB must develop a TOP, based on the regulatory decision made by TEQSA and any imposed restrictions. This TOP must be approved by the AB and endorsed by the BoD.
- b. All affected students must have the option to:
 - i. accept an offer to enrol in an equivalent course, with prepaid tuition fees transferring across to the replacement course;
 - ii. receive a refund of prepaid tuition fees, or re-crediting of FEE-HELP balance, for any unit the student is unable to take due to course discontinuation.
- c. All affected students must be notified as per the TOP, the timeline of teach-out, and their options to complete the course.
- d. Affected students must be notified as soon as reasonably possible of the discontinuance of the course and the TOP.
- e. In the case where affected students are unable to complete their course of study through a TOP, contingency arrangements must be made through the [Tuition Protection Service](#) (TPS) to ensure that students are able to transition into the equivalent course at another provider.

5.3. TUITION ASSURANCE

- a. BBS must maintain tuition assurance protection through the [Tuition Protection Service](#) (TPS) for international students and domestic FEE-HELP students.
- b. The TPS is an Australian Government initiative that supports international students on student visas and eligible domestic students whose education providers are unable to fully deliver their course of study.
- c. The TPS supports four student cohorts enrolled at private education providers:
 - i. international students on student visas;
 - ii. domestic Vocational Education and Training (VET) students receiving VET Student Loan (VSL) assistance;
 - iii. domestic higher education students receiving FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP loan assistance;

- iv. domestic higher education students who pay their tuition fees up-front.
- d. Following a BBS default, the TPS ensures that affected students can either:
 - i. complete their studies at another education provider; or
 - ii. receive a refund of the tuition fees paid up-front for the affected unit(s) of study; or
 - iii. receive a loan re-credit for the loan amount used to pay tuition fees for the affected unit(s) of study.
- e. For further information about TPS, refer to the [TPS website](#).

5.4. TEACH-OUT PLAN

- a. The CEO, in consultation with the Dean and Course Coordinator, is responsible for developing and submitting a detailed TOP to the AB for approval.
- b. The TOP must include at least the following:
 - i. The expected number of students in each cohort, along with the final teach-out and graduation dates.
 - ii. A course delivery map that shows students will have a reasonable opportunity to complete the discontinued course and will not be disadvantaged.
 - iii. Details of student support and advice arrangements, including provision of individual course completion plans.
 - iv. An anticipated timeline, including the effective date of the course termination or suspension. Typically, this will be the full-time duration plus one further year or part-time equivalent. (This period cannot extend beyond full-time duration plus two years or part-time equivalent.)
 - v. Staffing arrangements for the teach-out course.
 - vi. Contingency plans for the absence or early departure of staff teaching or providing technical support to the teach-out course.
 - vii. Any special arrangements with respect to courses run by collaborative partners, or where some provision (e.g., optional units) has an impact on student progression.
- c. The TOP must be approved by the AB and endorsed by the BOD.

5.5. COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

- a. The Dean, in consultation with senior management, must develop a plan to contact and communicate with all the relevant stakeholders. The CEO must approve this communication plan.
- b. The CEO is responsible for ensuring that all stakeholders are contacted and receive communications in accordance with the approved communication plan.
- c. All affected students must be advised in writing. They must be informed about the reasons for discontinuation or suspension of their course and various options that are available to them.

- d. Where necessary, students must be provided with an opportunity to have face-to-face meeting(s) with the relevant staff to answer any questions and obtain further advice and reassurance about progression.
- e. The CEO must notify relevant staff of the approved discontinuation or suspension of a course.
- f. The CEO must notify other stakeholders of the approved discontinuation or suspension of a course. This may include notifying the broader BBS community, relevant media outlets (where the discontinuation or suspension may be considered to be of strategic interest or potential public relations risk), potentially interested community groups, and student associations, clubs, and societies.
- g. In accordance with TEQSA's [Material Change Notification Policy](#) and its guidance on [material change notification](#), BBS must notify TEQSA, in writing, no later than 14 days after the day the decision was made by the BoD to approve the CDP or CSP.

5.6. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

- a. Students and staff must have the opportunity to use BBS's complaints and appeals handling processes.
- b. Students who wish to lodge a complaint or an appeal must refer to and follow instructions given in the BBS's *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures*, which are located on the BBS website.
- c. Staff who wish to lodge a complaint or an appeal must refer to and follow instructions given in the BBS's *Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures*, which are located on the BBS website.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

| Action Item | Responsibility |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Preparing the CDP or CSP. | Dean |
| Recommending the CDP or CSP to the BoD. | AB |
| Approving the CDP or CSP. | BoD |
| Overseeing the preparation of the TOP. | AB |
| Approving the TOP. | AB |
| Endorsing the approved TOP. | BoD |
| Preparing the communication plan. | Dean and Senior Management Team |
| Approving the communication plan. | CEO |
| Communicating the discontinuation or suspension decision to all staff and students. | Dean and Senior Management Team |
| Contacting BBS's case manager in TEQSA. | CEO |
| Reporting regularly progress of teach-out plans to AB. | Dean |
| Reporting regularly on the progress of teach-out plans to BoD. | AB Chair and CEO |

7. VERSION CONTROL

| Document title | Course Discontinuation and Teach-Out Policy and Procedures | |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Approved By | Board of Directors and Academic Board | |
| Date of Review | This document is to be reviewed every two years at a minimum from the date of final approval. | |
| Related Documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedures • Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures • Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures • Student Fees and Refund Policy and Procedures • Learning and Teaching Plan | |
| Related Legislation and References | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</i> • <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011</i> • <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i> • https://www.teqsa.gov.au/course-accreditation/withdrawing-course-and-teachout • <i>Tuition Protection Service</i> | |
| Version | Notes | Date Approved |
| 1.0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC discussed policy principles and procedures to ensure satisfaction of ARC for recommendation. | |
| 2.0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AB approved the document subject to minor changes in Section 4.2 Course Discontinuation, suspension or Teach-Out and minor editorial changes. | 10/11/2023 |
| 2.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor formatting changes made. The BoD approved the document with the changes made by the AB. | 13/11/2023 |