

Name of Policy	Policy and Procedures on Educational Partnerships (including guidelines on Educational partnerships, Affiliations and other collaborative arrangements)
Description of Policy	To ensure that strategic arrangements, into which the University may enter with appropriate institutions, are undertaken in accordance with University policies, procedures and standards.
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Australian Catholic University

Policy and Procedures on Educational Partnerships (including Guidelines on Educational Partnerships, Affiliations and other Collaborative Arrangements)

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1.0 OVERVIEW

The University operates a number of cooperative ventures, including educational partnerships and articulation arrangements, with partner institutions within Australia and overseas. In accordance with the Australian Catholic University *Revised Strategic Plan 1999-2008*, the University aims to build opportunities for collaboration and strategic partnerships with other institutions in Australia and overseas in the following areas:

- teaching and learning;
- research, research training, scholarship and/or development;
- community, industry and regional development; and
- business development including consulting, training, sponsorships, commercialisation of intellectual property, and facilities and equipment hire.

Policy Purpose

To ensure that strategic arrangements, into which the University may enter with appropriate institutions, are undertaken in accordance with University policies, procedures and standards.

2.0 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

To establish operational definitions and facilitate ease of reference, the following terms are defined:

Affiliation – formalised relationship of a smaller institution with Australian Catholic University in relation to advancing teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and/or community engagement;

Articulation – the transfer of credit from a partner institution towards study at Australian Catholic University. Students enrol in the partner institution's program and undertake its courses and/or units of study. Students have the option of applying for admission to Australian Catholic University and potentially transferring to Australian Catholic University programs, whether with or without advanced standing. The University is not responsible for teaching courses at the partner institution. Australian Catholic University maintains its quality assurance by exercising control over the articulation/credit transfer arrangements;

Dual badging – Australian Catholic University awarding the degree, with the involvement of the partner institution being recognised on testamurs through its crest and signatories, or both institutions jointly awarding the degree and the involvement of both being recognised on testamurs through their crests and signatories, in accordance with the *Protocols for Joint Awards between Australian Catholic University and Other Institutions*. The minimum level of involvement for such recognition of the partner institution would normally be 30 percent;

Dual degree – students enrolling in two courses, usually with some cross-crediting, which enables both degrees to be completed in a shorter time than if each was studied independently. Dual degrees most commonly involve two courses offered by Australian Catholic University, but they may also be negotiated with other institutions and involve courses offered by both the participating institutions.

Joint award of a degree – both Australian Catholic University and the partner institution formally exercising their degree awarding power to confer an award;

Twinning – Australian Catholic University programs being offered with a partner institution on the basis of a pre-defined number of periods of study at Australian Catholic University and at the partner institution.

3.0 POLICY GUIDELINES

Proposals to offer programs in collaboration with local and international partner institutions and to enter into affiliation agreements must be consistent with the following **Policy Guidelines**:

3.1 The University may collaborate with educational institutions of appropriate standing, approved by Academic Board and/or Senate on a case by case basis, to deliver academic programs that meet the standard set and expected of students admitted to the University.

3.2 The University may support twinning and articulation arrangements with institutions whose programs are of appropriate quality.

3.3 Academic programs normally offered/delivered from an Australian Catholic University campus may, if strategically appropriate, be offered offshore with an approved partner institution/s and in accordance with established Australian Catholic University course or program rules, policies, guidelines and the general principles underpinning this policy framework.

3.4 As a matter of policy, where a program of study leads to an Australian Catholic University award, the University will ordinarily have sole responsibility and authority in all academic matters and the program and its units of study, learning outcomes and assessment requirements must be of an equivalent standard and quality to the University's on-campus programs.

3.5 In consortia arrangements where Australian Catholic University is the awarding institution, it will, where appropriate, acknowledge the partner institution/s on the testamur in accordance with the *Protocols for Joint Awards between Australian Catholic University and Other Institutions*.

3.6 Australian Catholic University will not dual badge testamurs with other institutions unless approved to do so by the Senate in advance as part of the approval process for the particular program, in accordance with the Principles set out in Section 5 below.

3.7 All proposals must comply with national codes and legislation and all relevant regulatory requirements affecting both the University and the partner institution/s.

3.8 Proposals are to be submitted in accordance with the *Policy on Course Approval, Amendment and Review*. They must address key academic, strategic and operational principles and must be accompanied by the appropriate sign-off on resource issues, including appropriate and documented consultation and agreement with the relevant Faculty/ies, Student Administration, University Relations, University Library, Information Technology and Communication Services (ITCS), Student Services and other relevant Directorates before submission to Academic Board.

4.0 PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The following **Principles** apply to all forms of educational partnerships, including proposals to offer programs off-campus and offshore and/or twinning with approved partner institutions:

4.1 Programs offered in the name of Australian Catholic University remain the responsibility of the University's Academic Board and will be conducted in accordance with the policies and procedures, regulations and standards of Australian Catholic University.

4.2 The requirements set out in the *Policy on Course Approval, Review and Amendment* must be satisfied. Part of such processes is ensuring appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Faculty/ies, Student Administration, University Relations, University Library, ITCS, Student Services, and other relevant Directorates.

4.3 Australian Catholic University courses are subject to the University's quality assurance processes and teaching, learning and assessment policies, are taught by persons approved by Australian Catholic University, and are subject to academic directions set by Australian Catholic University.

4.4 Australian Catholic University will not regard as its own, or give its name or authority to, courses of study offered and taught by a partner institution.

4.5 Demonstration of the academic credibility of a proposed partner institution in a particular discipline/s or area of study, as appropriate, is required.

4.6 Any proposal for joint award or dual badging of a qualification will include the details of any proposed notation or other recognition to be afforded to the partner institution on the testamur, in accordance with the *Protocols for Joint Awards between Australian Catholic University and Other Institutions*.

4.7 Entry requirements for the proposed course will be consistent with entry standards for Australian Catholic University programs, including demonstrated English language proficiency.

4.8 Where a program is proposed to be taught off-campus or by distance or electronic means, evidence must be provided of the availability and quality of the necessary infrastructure to support the delivery of the program and to support the students studying in the proposed program.

4.9 Academic credit may be given for courses or units of study offered by a partner institution in accordance with Australian Catholic University policies and regulations. In relation to educational partnerships and/or consortia arrangements, the relevant memorandum of understanding will include the details of any credit transfer, enrolment processes, teaching and assessment arrangements, and/or resource provision necessary to offer the courses or units of study, fee distribution, and the quality assurance arrangements for the overall program.

5.0 SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

5.1 Initiation and progressing of discussions

Initial contact regarding educational partnerships can be undertaken by formal or informal approaches, normally by the Dean or nominee, or in response to initiatives by another educational institution. The Dean or nominee may lead or participate in the resultant discussions or negotiations or may request another staff member/s to act on his/her behalf.

In some cases it may be appropriate to establish a working party, including representatives from Australian Catholic University and the other institution/s, to develop details of the proposed partnership or collaborative arrangement.

The Australian Catholic University representatives involved in any such discussions or collaborative working party should ensure that all relevant persons are kept informed of progress in the discussions.

The Dean should be satisfied as to the financial viability of the proposed partner and a business plan should be attached to the proposal before final approval. Advice should be sought from the Director of Finance who may provide a written statement on the financial status of the institution to accompany any recommendation for progressing the partnership.

As issues under discussion may well have academic, policy and procedural implications for other Faculties and administrative units (e.g. Student Administration, ITCS, Research Services, International Education), wider consultation and collaboration, as appropriate, should occur at the early stages of development of any proposal.

5.2 Agreements with other institutions

The level at which agreements and/or memoranda of understanding are executed on behalf of Australian Catholic University will depend on the nature of the agreement or partnership, and the particular circumstances and complexities of each case. However, any agreement which affects the educational profile of Australian Catholic University and/or has significant financial implications (in terms of projected income or expenditure) should be directed by the Dean to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

Proposals should define the intended duration of any such arrangement and the terms of an agreement and its continuation (or otherwise) in respect of any course should be reviewed within a maximum of five years. Normally interims reviews would occur on an annual basis.

A copy of signed agreements and memoranda of understanding are to be placed on file in the office of the Executive Director, University Services.

5.3 Approval processes

5.3.1 Articulation arrangements

Proposed articulation arrangements require approval by the relevant Dean(s) or nominee(s).

5.3.2 New courses or specialisations

All proposals for the introduction of a new course or specialisation within Australian Catholic University or to which the University is a party must be formulated and approved in accordance with the *Policy on Course Approval, Amendment and Review*. Relevant Australian Catholic University procedural and approval requirements should be drawn to the attention of the other party/ies at the earliest possible stage of negotiations. It should be made clear that no commitment can be made on behalf of Australian Catholic University until Academic Board and/or Senate approval is obtained for any new course or specialisation to which the University is a party. No action should be taken to advertise or recruit into the proposed course or specialisation until such approval is obtained.

5.3.3 Collaborative cross-enrolment of students

Arrangements between institutions for sharing of units offered by one or other of the institutions and structured arrangements for cross-enrolment of students will normally require endorsement by the Dean. Before these arrangements are approved, the Dean will seek advice from the Academic Registrar to ensure that the proposed arrangements comply with the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) and any other relevant legislation. Depending on the potential impact on the educational profile of Australian Catholic University and/or financial implications, the Dean may need to refer the matter to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

5.4 Registers of educational partnerships

Each Faculty and, as appropriate, the Office of Articulation and/or Office of Catholic Partnerships should maintain a register of educational partnerships/collaborations entered into, and reference should be made to these, as appropriate, to facilitate achievement of consistency of approach and outcomes (to the extent that this is desirable). The register should also record establishment date of the partnership, by whom, term of agreement, date for review, reason for establishing each partnership, and expected benefits/outcomes.

5.5 Collaboration in presentation of units for other institutions

Australian Catholic University staff may be invited to contribute to the development and/or teaching of units of another institution. The staff member/s concerned should keep his/her Head of School/Institute fully informed of such discussions and should obtain approval in accordance with the *Policy on Paid Outside Work*.

5.6 Cross-institutional studies for cohorts of students

It is not uncommon for individual students to seek to undertake studies at another institution on a cross-institutional basis and this is covered by the Academic Regulations. However, there may also be circumstances when it is considered desirable to facilitate such arrangements for cohorts of students at an institutional level.

If the other institution is a university, the standard arrangements outlined below will normally suffice. However, if the other institution is not a university and its units are not available on a HECS-liable basis, special considerations will apply. These are best determined having regard to the circumstances of the particular arrangement. Early consultation by the Head of School/Institute with the Dean and Academic Registrar is necessary.

5.7 Collaboration in course offerings

5.7.1 Course name and code

The institution that will be the awarding authority should be identified. Normally it would be expected to be the institution at which the student will undertake the majority of his/her units. The title and abbreviation of the award/s, to be approved by each participating institution's Senate or equivalent, should be identified (see *Guidelines for Nomenclature of Awards*. Note: There is no provision in Australian Catholic University policy or practice to include in a course title reference to the name of another collaborating institution).

5.7.2 Recruitment

Agreement should be reached as to who will be responsible for devising and authorising the content of recruitment information. Responsibility for preparing and printing recruitment information, and associated financial/cost-sharing issues, should be agreed. Arrangements for promotion of the program and for dissemination of recruitment information should be agreed, with input from University Relations.

5.7.3 Application for admission¹

Applications for undergraduate courses will normally be lodged through the relevant Tertiary Admissions Centre (TAC). In exceptional circumstances, determined after consultation between the Academic Registrars (or equivalent) of the respective institutions, undergraduate admissions may be handled by direct application to one of the participating institutions. For applications through a TAC, consideration needs to be given to issues such as:

- a. whether the course will be promoted by each partner institution that is delivering the course or by one of them;
- b. whether there will be a single TAC code for the course and, if so, to which partner institution it will be coded;
- c. in the case of inter-institutional dual degrees, whether applicants will be made one offer and, if so, whether an offer and acceptance at that one partner institution will mean an offer and acceptance at the other partner institution;
- d. when applicants are made an offer via a TAC, the processes to be set in place for them to enrol at both partner institutions.

In the case of direct applications, it should be agreed whether applications will be made to each partner institution or just to one, which has been nominated to process applications on behalf of the partner institutions. Consideration should be given to the possible need for special application procedures to

apply in the first year of operation (particularly if courses are approved after the publication of TAC material).

Consideration also needs to be given to admission processes for international applicants, for whom relevant policies and procedures, regulations and standards of Australian Catholic University will apply.

5.7.4 Deferment

Australian Catholic University permits deferment of offers in undergraduate courses before the initial semester commences. Discussion should occur as to the acceptability of this process with any partner institution. If deferment is to be permitted, it should be made clear whether students have to apply for deferment at both partner institutions.

5.7.5 Transfer

Australian Catholic University students who wish to transfer to another Australian Catholic University course should do so in accordance with the standard transfer processes published at the time.

Consideration should be given as to how transfer between courses will be accomplished:

- a. if students at Australian Catholic University or a partner institution desire to enter an inter-institutional dual degree program; or
- b. if students undertaking a joint program wish to change their nominated home institution (from which they will graduate).

If it is a highly competitive course, it may be more appropriate for transfers to be treated as applications for entry via a TAC, and not directly through an internal transfer process.

5.7.6 Appeals

Any appeals would normally be dealt with according to the processes of the partner institution having principal responsibility for the decision or action, which is the subject of the appeal. If the nature of the arrangement may lack clarity in this regard, an appropriate appeals procedure should be agreed.

5.7.7 Enrolment¹

For jointly taught courses, a 'regular' or typical curriculum plan should be developed, identifying the partner institution offering each unit or component and the students' place of enrolment in each semester. In the case of inter-institutional dual degrees, the curriculum plan should also identify clearly which units count towards which award and the requirements for completion of one only of the dual awards (e.g. if the student discontinues enrolment in the dual degree but wishes to complete one award). Such information should be produced in accordance with the *Policy on Course Approval, Amendment and Review*. Where the partner institutions' credit point systems differ, a clear statement of and rationale for unit value equivalences should be developed and included in the course proposal. In any semester in which the student undertakes units at more than one institution, the student should enrol in the appropriate load at each institution. Credit will be applied in accordance with the relevant section below. In any semester in which the student studies entirely at another institution, then for that semester the student will remain active on the Australian Catholic University student system, but will have no enrolment and so will not incur any financial liability. The Course Coordinator should notify Student Administration of relevant students' status for appropriate recording in the student system.

Students are required to provide authority for Australian Catholic University to release their results to any other institution.

5.7.8 Credit

Consideration needs to be given to the approval and processing of credit (e.g. in advance through the cross-institutional study procedure, or after the event via an Application for Credit and/or Recognition of Prior Learning). The cross-institutional study method would normally be adopted as it makes clear a student's study intention each semester, and allows units/status to be recorded in the Australian Catholic University student system when the student may not be attending the University. For students enrolled at Australian Catholic University, results in studies undertaken at partner institutions may be recorded on the Australian Catholic University student system as specified credit or unspecified credit, with a "Credit Granted" notation, in lieu of a grade. Where specified credit is granted, the Australian Catholic University

equivalent unit must be identified. It is not possible to identify the partner institution on the transcript, though details may be captured in the credit notations on the Australian Catholic University student system. When students undertaking units at another institution for credit towards an Australian Catholic University award are in their final semester, it is essential that this be flagged and the credit recorded promptly, so that finalisation of their eligibility for graduation is not delayed.

5.8 Tuition Fees¹

If studies may be taken on a fee-paying basis, consideration should be given as to how the tuition fees will be set and invoiced, especially where fee differences exist between partner institutions.

5.9 ID cards

Students will normally obtain/require ID cards from each of the institutions at which they are enrolled in any particular year of study. Australian Catholic University students normally attend campus to have an image captured and card generated; however, off-campus students may send in a photo or electronic image for production and mail-out of a student ID card.

Where students require evidence of full-time enrolment (based on studies undertaken concurrently at two partner institutions), agreement should be reached as to which partner institution will be responsible for providing evidence of effective full-time study (e.g. for various concession purposes).

5.10 Graduation, transcripts and testamurs

As indicated above, clarity must be obtained as to which partner institution/s will be the awarding authority. Normally it would be expected to be the institution at which the student has undertaken the majority of his/her units and the name of that institution only will appear on the testamur.

An Australian Catholic University transcript will record units studied at the University and results achieved therein, together with a credit notation for units studied cross-institutionally. Normally the transcript would be badged with the Australian Catholic University logo only.

In some situations, a case may be made for joint badging of courses. This may occur only where specifically approved by Senate, as set out in the **Policy Guidelines** in Section 3 above. Criteria to be met include that:

- a. the nature of the institution and of the course are compatible with the Mission of Australian Catholic University (in accordance with the *Protocols for Joint Awards between Australian Catholic University and Other Institutions*);
- b. the course is jointly developed and presented by the partner institutions, and Australian Catholic University has the status of equal partner with the other institution in such course development and presentation;
- c. the course is approved by Senate and the curriculum plan by Academic Board as being of a standard, structure and content appropriate to the level of the qualification and in accordance with the *Policy on Course Approval, Amendment and Review*.

In such cases, graduates receive a single jointly-badged testamur which may be presented at a graduation ceremony of either of the partner institutions. Any such joint award may be recognised by incorporation of the logos and names of both institutions on course information and award testamurs, and the inclusion of the seals and signatories on behalf of both institutions on testamurs. Discussions should be held with University Relations before any commitment is entered into in this regard, and University Relations and Student Administration must be notified once any agreement is finalised.

In the case of an inter-institutional dual degree:

- a. students will normally graduate from Australian Catholic University with the relevant University award, and also graduate from the partner institution with its relevant award;

b. each testamur will refer only to the single award being granted by the relevant awarding institution.

5.11 Austudy, Abstudy, Youth Allowance, HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP

In general, if students are enrolled concurrently at two institutions, they will have a total load that should satisfy Austudy, Abstudy and Youth Allowance eligibility requirements. Each partner institution should assist students by providing confirmatory letters for submission to relevant bodies, if required.

In general, cross-institutional study is an accepted mode for Department of Education, Science and Training reporting and for incurring/recording HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP eligibility and liability, i.e. load at each partner institution contributes to the total load and liability for the student. HECS Payment Option Forms or Loan Request Forms are required to be lodged at each partner institution.

Special arrangements may be necessary where the other partner institution is not an approved Higher Education Provider under Table A and/or B of the Higher Education Support Act.

6.0 SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AFFILIATIONS

Australian Catholic University is prepared to contemplate affiliation arrangements with smaller institutions or organisations, which are pursuing educational and/or research activities that are consistent with the Mission of the University and that are of an appropriately high standard. The **Policy Guidelines** set out in Section 3 above will apply.

Any affiliation will be subject to a specific agreement with the partner organisation and approved by the Academic Board and/or Senate. Each such approved agreement will be reviewed at least once every five years or sooner, as appropriate. Normally interims reviews would occur on an annual basis.

The content of affiliation agreements may vary from case to case but may include and provide for the following:

- collaboration with another institution in the development, delivery and evaluation of academic programs;
- Australian Catholic University assessment of courses developed elsewhere by another institution or organisation;
- Australian Catholic University approval of persons who teach courses or units of study for the University elsewhere;
- collaboration with another institution in research, research training, scholarship and/or development;
- Australian Catholic University representation in the academic management of other institutions or organisations; and
- the establishment of a joint management committee or similar body between Australian Catholic University and another institution or organisation.

It will be a condition of affiliation or continued affiliation that:

- the partner during its affiliation with Australian Catholic University will provide such information to the University and permit such inspection of its premises on behalf of the University as the University may from time to time require; and
- the constitution or objects of the partner and any amendments thereto are made known to Australian Catholic University.

In the case of affiliations involving twinning, students enrol in Australian Catholic University programs and specific units of study owned and developed by Australian Catholic University, and the partner institution

and Australian Catholic University provide the teaching staff. Australian Catholic University is responsible for overall quality assurance of the program, which is jointly administered by the University and the partner institution.

7.0 POLICY AND PROCEDURES REVIEW

The University may make changes to this Policy and Procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of their operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this Policy and Procedures may forward their suggestions to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

8.0 FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy and Procedures should first consult his/her nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in the work area. Should further advice be needed, the staff member should contact the relevant Dean.

Associated documents

Admission Rules

Admissions Policy

Arrangements for Australian Catholic University – Theologate (Approved HEP) Enrolments

Arrangements for Australian Catholic University – Theologate (Non-approved HEP) Enrolments

Guidelines for Postgraduate Coursework Programs (other than Professional Doctorates)

Intellectual Property Policy

Policy on Commercial Research Conducted by Academic Staff

Policy on Course Approval, Amendment and Review – Accredited Higher Education Courses and Non-Award Courses

Policy on Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

Policy on Integrity of Courses

Policy on Quality Online Teaching and Learning

Policy on Quality Teaching and Learning

Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning

Protocols for Joint Awards between Australian Catholic University and Other Institutions

Student Administration Processes for Partner Organisations Sponsoring their Staff to Undertake Study at Australian Catholic University

¹ See also document, "Student Administration Processes for Partner Organisations Sponsoring their Staff to Undertake Study at Australian Catholic University".