

Name of Guidelines	Guidelines for the development of ACU National UniStep-up Programs	
Description	ACU National supports the establishment of a small number of high-quality programs that enable year 11/12 secondary school students to study nominated ACU National introductory units. Such students may be participants in UniStep-Up programs.	
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GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACU NATIONAL UNISTEP-UP PROGRAMS

1. Introduction

ACU National supports the establishment of a small number of high-quality programs that enable year 11/12 secondary school students to study nominated ACU National introductory units.

Such secondary school students may be participants in ACU National UniStep-Up programs that either:

- (a) enable year 11/12 secondary students from situations of disadvantage to experience tertiary study or
- (b) that provide for year 11/12 secondary students demonstrating excellence in designated areas of study

2. Objectives and scope of UniStep-Up programs

It is anticipated that most UniStep-Up programs will be developed through external partnership arrangements – for example with secondary schools, Catholic Education Offices or other diocesan agencies, TAFE or private VET providers. The term ‘partner’ in this document refers to any one or more organizations which fit this context. Wherever possible, sponsorship for the programs should be developed, and the term extends to relevant sponsoring organizations.

3. Purpose of Guidelines

These Guidelines are designed to:

- (a) assist ACU National Faculties that may be contemplating the development of UniStep-Up programs by providing a framework for such development; and
- (b) establish a structure within which such programs should operate.

4. Proposal to offer an ACU National UniStep Up Program

4.1 There will be a preliminary and final proposal developed for all approved ACU National UniStep-Up programs. The preliminary proposal should be endorsed by the Dean of the Faculty before entering the detailed negotiation stage. The final proposal should be submitted to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) through the Dean and be approved, before any formal agreement is reached with or commitment made to any secondary school or other partner.

4.2 The preliminary proposal will address such of the following as are relevant:

- (a) The purpose of the program
 - For whom the program is to be offered and a rationale for its introduction/continuation;
 - The key stakeholders, particularly partners in the proposed program;

- The equity or excellence issues that the program aims to address;
 - The relationship of the University with the nominated partners.
- (b) Relationship of the program to the strategic directions of the University
- How the intent and design of the program will fit with the strategic direction of the Faculty;
 - How the program will support the Mission/ethos and enhance the reputation of the University;
 - The benefits to the Faculty offering the program.
- (c) Relationship to the strategic directions of relevant partners
- The anticipated educational benefit to partner organisations, students and their communities.
- (d) Preliminary financial plan
- Anticipated costs including coordination;
 - Anticipated fee income, sponsorship or other manner of ameliorating costs.
- 4.3 The final proposal will address such of the following as are relevant:
- (a) Operational plan
- The intended location and mode of teaching, both of which should support the strategic directions of the Faculty and partners and be appropriate to the needs of the intended students;
 - Entry requirements/selection criteria;
 - Units to be offered;
 - Recognition of the program by State education board/university tertiary entry authority;
 - Credit to be granted by ACU National in the event of subsequent enrolment;
 - Anticipated enrolments;
 - Co-ordination and management arrangements;
 - Marketing strategies;
 - Review and evaluation methodologies.
- (b) Financial plan
- Anticipated costs including coordination;
 - Funding through fees, sponsorships, partnerships or otherwise;
 - How the program will be sustained for at least five years in total, and its sustainability and potential independence from association with one or more staff members who initially establish the program, particularly if the proposer should no longer be able to support it.
- 4.4 Approval will normally be given for a maximum of two years in the first instance, with annual review and the possibility of annual extension.

5. Potential participants

ACU National UniStep-Up programs are available to students undertaking concurrent year 11/12 secondary school studies.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Participation in tertiary studies concurrently with senior secondary school studies creates a significant workload for students. Therefore students must be carefully selected and fully supported, within each of their university, secondary school/TAFE/VET and family environments. The respective roles and responsibilities of these parties and of sponsoring organizations are:

ACU National:

- Provides/negotiates details of the program and the roles and responsibilities of all parties.
- Nominates its UniStep-Up program co-ordinator with whom any partner organisation will liaise: normally this will be the Assistant Head of School or the Course Co-ordinator responsible for the corresponding tertiary course in which relevant units are offered.
- Identifies the credit that will be granted to students who successfully complete the UniStep-Up program and thereafter gain entry to the nominated tertiary course.
- In conjunction with the partner(s) provides and implements clear criteria for the selection of students: where relevant, such criteria must be consistent with relevant State education authority requirements.
- Enrols the students on a non-award basis.
- Provides details of units to be offered, their time, mode and place of offering, learning objectives, content, assessment and related requirements (eg equivalent to information contained in tertiary Unit Outlines).
- Publicises the program, eg through School/Faculty website and, in conjunction with partners, in the formulation of relevant informational or marketing materials.
- Provides relevant organizational/administrative/academic information and an orientation program for students.
- Provides students with an ID card and library access.
- Provides ongoing support to students through the academic staff member responsible for each available unit and the program co-ordinator.
- Maintains a record of the students' results and notifies the result (via a certificate of completion) to each student, but does not retain such a record as part of its student record system.
- Initiates a review of the program.

Secondary School, TAFE or VET provider:

- Nominates a contact person who liaises with ACU National, co-ordinates the program within the secondary school/institution and assists with the facilitation of organisational aspects of the program (eg ensuring students are enabled to attend information/orientation sessions, student completion of feedback surveys, contribution by the school/institution to review of the program).
- Publicises/promotes the program within the school and to families as considered appropriate, and invites applications which must be endorsed by the student and the principal (and, if the student is under 18 years of age, by a parent or guardian of the student).
- In conjunction with the University provides and implements clear criteria for the selection of students: where relevant, such criteria must be consistent with relevant State education authority requirements.

- Advises applicants of the outcome of the selection process.
- Nominates a school/institution mentor for each student: the school mentor will normally be a teacher in a discipline area relevant to the ACU National UniStep-Up studies: they will monitor the student's progress at school, as well as in their UniStep-Up studies; provide assistance/guidance (eg re obtaining references, texts, overcoming logistical problems); where appropriate provide/arrange counseling; and monitor inter-relationships with school colleagues not participating in the UniStep-Up program.
- Participates in a review of the program.

Other partner with a sponsorship/funding role:

- Liaises with ACU National and the secondary school/institution regarding the proposed program and funding issues.
- Liaises with the secondary school/institution regarding policy and organisational issues from their respective perspectives.
- Assists in publicizing/promoting the program.
- Participates in a review of the program.

Student:

- Applies to participate in the ACU National UniStep-Up program and in doing so undertakes to abide by the program rules.
- If selected –
 - chooses his/her unit from those available;
 - attends the UniStep-Up program orientation and makes him/herself familiar with the associated details/requirements;
 - attends classes and undertakes associated unit requirements, including submission of assessment and attendance at examinations;
 - complies with relevant ACU National policies, procedures and provisions of the Student Code of Conduct;
 - maintains regular communication with both the University and school/institution coordinators of the UniStep-Up program and his/her school/institution mentor regarding their progress in university and school studies;
 - participates in a review of the program (eg through a feedback survey or interview or focus group discussion).

Family:

- If the student is under 18 years of age, endorses student's application if agreeable to the student participating in the ACU National UniStep-Up program.
- Supports the student and monitors his/her progress in relation to both his/her secondary and university studies.
- Maintains contact with the school/institution mentor regarding the student's progress and contacts the mentor if they perceive any problems arising.
- Where necessary, arranges adequate transport to and from relevant venues (eg ACU National campus) for classes and examinations.

7. Negotiations with partners

Establishment or facilitation of student participation in an ACU National UniStep-Up program should normally be undertaken as a result of an approach to the University

from a secondary school or other partner, or an initiative by a member of academic staff in negotiation with a secondary school/other partner.

The resultant agreement for an ACU National UniStep-Up program must be signed normally by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on behalf of the University and the secondary school/institution Principal or equivalent on behalf of the school/institution and other partners. Where a partner offers financial support, the partner must normally also sign the agreement to that effect.

Negotiations with proposed partners should result in a clear specification of matters such as:

- (a) the criteria and processes for selection of students to participate in the ACU National UniStep Up program;
- (b) the units available to such students and their semester and mode of offering; such units will be limited to nominated first year units;
- (c) the number of student places available in the UniStep-Up program generally and in individual units offered within the program;
- (d) the place at which the students will pursue the program;
- (e) any constraints regarding class times when the units will be available;
- (f) the support to be provided to participants by the school/institution or other partner and ACU National;
- (g) financial responsibilities of partners and participants;
- (h) promotional/marketing responsibilities of all parties.

An ACU National UniStep-Up program is not normally available to individual students, independent of an ACU National partner agreement.

8. Units that may be taken

Units offered within an ACU National UniStep-Up program will be the same in regard to objectives and content as the relevant tertiary units and UniStep-Up students will normally attend the same classes as the undergraduate students and will undertake the same assessment, including examinations.

Except in exceptional circumstances approved by the Head of School, an ACU National UniStep-Up student may undertake only one unit in a semester.

9. Co-ordination within ACU National

To avoid multiple approaches from different ACU National Schools, any proposals to offer an ACU National UniStep-Up program should be discussed by the Head of the initiating School with other Heads on the relevant campus and with the Dean. Planning to develop a program should normally commence a year in advance of its commencement. The initial intentions should be notified to other Schools and reported at the campus co-ordination/management meeting and the final proposal should progress through Faculty structures at least six months in advance of the program commencing.

Where more than one School is intending to offer a program to any particular school community, a joint initiative should be developed. Where necessary or appropriate,

the relevant Associate Vice-Chancellor or Campus Dean with responsibility for that campus may assist to ensure that appropriate co-ordination occurs. The relevant Dean(s) should also be fully informed of the initiation of such proposals and will monitor and, if necessary, manage co-ordination across campuses.

10. Scholarships and fees

- 10.1 Students accepted in an equity-based ACU National UniStep-Up program will be granted a scholarship by either ACU National and/or a sponsor to cover the cost of tuition fees and the Student Services Fee.
- 10.2 Students accepted into an excellence-based ACU National UniStep-Up program may be required to pay tuition fees or may be granted a scholarship.
- 10.3 All students in both equity- and excellence-based ACU National UniStep-Up programs will be expected to meet other costs normally incurred in association with such study (eg costs of books, materials, field trips etc).

11. Academic record

On successful completion of unit requirements, ACU National UniStep-Up students will be issued with a certificate of completion of the requirements for the relevant unit.

If a UniStep-Up student withdraws from or fails a unit, the result will not be formally recorded in University records.

12. Consideration of ACU National UniStep-Up results for university entry purposes

The secondary school accreditation authorities in each state/territory have different regulations regarding the calculation of students' tertiary entrance scores. Where provision exists for year 11/12 programs to be recognized by the state authority for tertiary entrance score purposes, ACU National will complete the relevant processes to make application for such recognition in advance of the program being publicized or offered.

13. Credit for ACU National UniStep-Up studies

In accordance with the ACU National Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning, if a student completes satisfactorily a unit as part of an ACU National UniStep-Up program and subsequently gains entry to a course in which credit for the same or an equivalent unit is required, subject to the rules for that course, the student may be granted credit towards the course on the basis of a pass in an ACU National UniStep-Up unit. The relevant credit notation will be recorded on the student's academic record.

14. Annual review

At the conclusion of each program cycle, the ACU National UniStep-Up co-ordinator, together with representatives of all partner organizations, will review the

operation and outcomes of the program and identify issues and opportunities for improvement. The review process will include the result of a survey of participants.

The Head of each School that has offered a UniStep-Up program will provide an annual evaluation report to the Dean on the program offered. Such a report will include information such as:

- uptake levels and completions (eg number of applications, offers, enrolments, completions);
- performance/success rates internally among the year 11/12 participants and in comparison with students undertaking the unit(s) as part of a bachelor degree program;
- costs incurred and income generated;
- analysis of evaluations by students and representatives of partner organizations;
- benefits gained by the University or reported by the students, parents, representatives of partner organizations or other relevant personnel;
- subsequent enrolment patterns of students, if known;
- impacts on staff workloads;
- recommendations regarding future offerings.

15. Indicative timeline

The timing of the offering of units will differ for different programs and between states as year 11/12 students commence at different times. The following is an indicative timeline:

<u>Activity</u>	Timing
Planning and preliminary discussions with partner organizations	Typically commence by February and no later than April
Co-ordination with other Schools, through campus management/co-ordination committee and progression through Faculty structures	No later than June
Finalisation and approval of program	July
Promotion of availability to students selecting subjects for year 11 and again when selecting subjects for year 12	Commences following approval of final proposal
Orientation of participants prior to first unit offered	February – Semester 1 unit June – Winter school or Semester 2 unit November – Summer School unit

Review of program	Each unit is evaluated and the program reviewed when results are finalized
Submission of review report to Dean	Within two months of program completion