SHORT COURSES AND MICROCREDENTIALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Policy Lead	Academic Dean
Approving Authority	Board of Directors
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Relevant legislation or external requirements	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESFs: 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3) Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) National Microcredentials Framework 2021 (NMF) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act)
Related ASA Documents	Course Design and Development Policy Course Design and Development Procedure Benchmarking Policy Benchmarking Procedure Recognition of Prior Learning Policy Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure Student Assessment Policy Student Assessment Procedure Academic Integrity Policy Academic Misconduct Procedure Student Assessment Review Policy Student Assessment Review Procedure Student Grievance Policy Student Grievance Procedure Quality Assurance Framework

1. Purpose

This policy and procedure provide a framework for academic quality assurance in the development of short courses and microcredentials at Australian School of Accounting (**ASA**). It also outlines the requirements for these to be recognised for credit against other ASA award course or unit(s). The principles set out in this document shall guide the development, approval and recognition of short courses and microcredentials at ASA.

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with *the Course Design and Development Policy* and related procedure.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure apply to all short courses and microcredentials offered at ASA.

This policy and procedure apply to all staff involved in the design of short courses and microcredentials at ASA.

This policy and procedure exclude Australian Qualifications Framework (**AQF**) higher education qualifications and non-award programs comprised of units offered by ASA.

3. Principles

1. Any short course or microcredential, must have a designated volume and duration of learning expressed in the form of a total number of hours of study. This may equate to a credit point value.

2. Short courses and microcredentials may be:

   a. studied individually;

   b. stacked or aggregated with other short courses or microcredentials; and

   c. when credibly assessed, recognised for credit towards an ASA course or unit.

3. All microcredentials must be credibly assessed.

4. When stacking or aggregating short courses or microcredentials, for the purpose of Recognition of Prior Learning (**RPL**), the same principles as in the *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy* and associated procedure that relate to content covered, discipline coherence, and standard of learning will be applied.

5. Short courses and microcredentials may be recognised by external professional bodies and for Continuing Professional Development points.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
bridging program	A Bridging program is a short course which is designed to address knowledge gaps for adult learners seeking to enter a specific course. Bridging programs require assessment but are not credit bearing.
credible assessment	Credible assessment means the minimum assessment needed to reliably and validly determine achievement of defined learning outcomes.
digital badge	A Digital Badge is a verified certification signifying completion of learning providing a mechanism for sharing these accomplishments online. Digital badges may be used to recognise both informal (non-accredited learning) or formal (Microcredential accredited learning).
microcredentials	Microcredentials means a discrete learning package with appropriately articulated learning outcomes and constructively aligned learning and teaching, and assessment strategies.
short courses	Short courses are programs other than accredited courses or microcredentials that are undertaken by an individual to improve or support progress towards work, career and/ or personal goals.
stacking	Stacking is the process of bundling microcredentials together, either vertically or horizontally to provide a pathway to an award course.

5. Policy Statement

1. ASA engages in the development and delivery of short courses and microcredentials to enhance its industry engagement, to develop the skills of individuals, and to contribute to ASA's revenue. This means that short courses and microcredentials are developed that:

   a. align with the strategic direction and strengths of ASA;

   b. build critical skills for adult learners for professional, community and individual benefit; and

   c. are assessed as being financially viable for the duration of their offer.

2. All short courses and microcredentials are designed in accordance with the *Course Design and Development Policy* and associated procedure and demonstrate contemporary academic and industry relevance. This means that:

   a. The design of short courses and microcredentials are informed by industry engagement and emerging learning trends.

   b. Learning materials are designed and selected to support the application of the skill or knowledge by the participant, where appropriate.

   c. Where aligned with an industry framework, short courses and microcredentials meet registration and recognition requirements of those frameworks or accrediting bodies.

   d. Short courses and microcredentials are supported by the availability of qualified instructors and appropriate learning environments.

3. Short courses and microcredentials designs take account of the specific needs of target cohorts. This means that:

   a. The structure, delivery mode, timing and duration of short courses is tailored for target cohorts.

   b. Short courses and microcredentials are designed as self-contained units of study.

   c. The prior knowledge or experience required by participants is clear.

   d. Short course and microcredential learning objectives are explicit, designed for the designated level of the course, and describe the proficiency to be gained by participants on completion.

   e. Where short courses and microcredentials are assessed, the assessment is designed and conducted in accordance with the *Student Assessment Policy* and associated procedure and specifically:

   i. is linked with the learning objective(s);

   ii. is appropriate with the volume of learning; and

   iii. supports the application of the skills or knowledge.

   f. Where a short course is also a microcredential the following information is explicit:

   i. the number of credit points allocated; and

   ii. the possibility for stacking and the amount of credit available towards relevant award courses.

4. ASA assures the quality of its short courses and microcredentials through appropriate mechanisms for the type of course. This means that:

   a. The design and delivery of short courses and microcredentials are consistent with the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021.

   b. All short courses and microcredentials are subject to review and approval of both the business case and the curriculum content prior to further development.

   c. Where a short course is a microcredential it aligns with the National Microcredentials Framework (NMF).

d. All short courses and microcredentials are subject to regular review through participant surveys and peer review and the outcomes of this monitoring are used to inform the ongoing development of the course/microcredential.

e. Short course or microcredential participants are made aware of the requirement for academic honesty in any assessed work and the requirement for them to abide by the provisions in the *Academic Integrity Policy* and the *Academic Misconduct Procedure*.

f. Short courses and microcredentials that are designed and/or delivered in partnership with an educational partner of ASA are subject to all relevant ASA policies.

5. ASA seeks to maximise the experience of short course and microcredentials participants by:

a. Ensuring participants have timely access to quality learning resources and appropriate support.

b. Providing clear information in advance to participants of their entitlements and obligations.

6. Procedure

6.1 Strategic Alignment

ASA offers short courses and microcredentials to provide study opportunities for learners seeking relevant knowledge and skills in smaller, more flexible, and more accessible components. The key intent of these offerings is to provide accessible options for rapid re-skilling, upskilling, and complementary or lifelong learning in line with industry and community needs.

Additional strategic objectives are to:

a. increase enabling pathways for entry into award programs;

b. leverage new education opportunities that emerge through partnerships with industry, employers, professional bodies, and other higher education providers;

c. test new markets, models, and disciplines;

d. build awareness and reputation; and

e. generate new revenue opportunities, to act as lead generators where appropriate, and increase ASA's market presence.

6.2 Types of Short Courses and Microcredentials

Type of Course	AQF Level	Assessment	Credit Bearing	Certification
Single units	As in award offering	Yes	Yes	Transcript of academic record
Microcredentials	Any level	Yes	Yes, in multiples of 5 credit points that can be stacked	Digital credential
Bridging Programs	Any level	Yes	No	Certificate of achievement
Other Assessed Short Courses	Any level	Yes	No	Digital badge or certificate of achievement

Type of Course	AQF Level	Assessment	Credit Bearing	Certification
Non-Assessed Short Courses	Any level	No	No	Certificate of Attendance

6.3 Design, Development, and Approvals for New Short Courses and Microcredentials

Proposals for new short courses and microcredentials may be initiated by academics or management or may be commissioned by a third party. Any proposal originating within ASA must be endorsed by the Director Learning and Innovation or Academic Dean, prior to the development of a business case.

Business cases for all new short courses and microcredentials must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors.

Short courses and microcredentials must be approved in accordance with the internal approval process outlined in the *Course Design and Development Policy* and associated procedure.

6.4 Certification

The successful completion of a short course or microcredential leads to the award of the relevant type of certification as outlined in Section 6.2 of this Procedure, and as advertised in course information. All certification includes information pertaining to course duration and content and is issued to participants under the authority of the Academic Dean.

Individuals who participate in a credentialled course but who do not complete any assessment will receive a certificate of attendance on request.

Appropriate records are kept for any certification issued to participants to facilitate verification, reissuance, or applications for credit where required.

6.5 Credit Towards Award Courses

Successful completion of microcredentials and Single Units may be used for credit towards award courses at ASA. Credit may be given for multiple microcredentials that meet the credit point and study level requirements for a unit, referring to the *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy* and associated procedure for more information.

Completion of microcredentials does not automatically entitle a person to entry to an award course or unit except where specifically stated in course outcomes.

6.6 Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance

6.6.1 Annual Performance Monitoring

Short courses and microcredentials will be reviewed each time they are offered and include some form of student evaluation to inform quality improvements.

The performance of short courses will be monitored on an annual basis, both from the perspective of financial viability and participant feedback via student evaluation surveys. Survey data will be provided to the Course Advisory Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee. A summary of outcomes will be reported to the Academic Board.

Short courses deemed to be non-viable will be suspended pending further analysis of demand and/ or revision of course structure to be more market oriented. A renewed business case must be submitted.

6.6.2 Quality Assurance

Course academic content and assessment are reviewed on a periodic basis, as follows:

a. Short courses that carry external accreditation are reviewed as part of the formal review that takes place as outlined in the *Benchmarking Policy* and associated procedure.

b. All other short courses are reviewed every three years and to determine whether they should continue to be offered. Reviews should include an assessment of financial viability, delivery against market intelligence, performance metrics, credit and student completion and satisfaction rates. Offerings that do not meet identified measures of success at a three-year review, will cease to be offered. A summary of outcomes will be reported to the Academic Board.

Where a unit in an award course that has microcredentials that stack into it is revised or amended as an outcome of unit monitoring, refer to the *Benchmarking Policy* and associated procedure for more information. The microcredentials are included in the scope of the revision and consultation process to ensure continued alignment.

Where applicable, short course curricula may be presented to the Course Advisory Committee to validate their continued industry relevance and applicability.

Where appropriate remediations arising from participant feedback may be implemented by ASA.

7. Grievances

Short course applicants or students may lodge a complaint about any aspect of their engagement with ASA, including services or administrative issues, under the provisions of the *Student Assessment Review Policy* and procedure, and the *Student Grievance Policy* and associated procedure.

8. Relevant HESFs

This Policy and the associated Procedure comply with Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) which specifies that:

Standard 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment […]
2. The specified learning outcomes for each course of study encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, including:
    a. specific knowledge and skills and their application that characterise the field(s) of education or disciplines involved,
    b. generic skills and their application in the context of the field(s) of education or disciplines involved,
    c. knowledge and skills required for employment and further study related to the course of study, including those required to be eligible to seek registration to practise where applicable, and
    d. skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning.
3. Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment. […]

Standard 3.1 Course Design
1. The design for each course of study is specified and the specification includes:
    a. the qualification(s) to be awarded on completion
    b. structure, duration and modes of delivery

c.   the units of study (or equivalent) that comprise the course of study

d.   entry requirements and pathways

e.   expected learning outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative student workload

f.   compulsory requirements for completion

g.   exit pathways, articulation arrangements, pathways to further learning, and

h.   for a course of study leading to a Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral qualification, includes the proportion and nature of research or research-related study in the course.

2.   The content and learning activities of each course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:

a.   current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines

b.   study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course, and

c.   emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice.

3.   Teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.

4.   Each course of study is designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery.

5.   Where professional accreditation of a course of study is required for graduates to be eligible to practise, the course of study is accredited and continues to be accredited by the relevant professional body.

Standard 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation

1.   There are processes for internal approval of the delivery of a course of study, or, where a provider has authority to self-accredit, internal accreditation, of all courses of study leading to a higher education qualification.

2.   Course approval and self-accreditation processes are overseen by peak institutional academic governance processes, and they are applied consistently to all courses of study, before the courses are first offered and during re-approval or re-accreditation of the courses. […]

Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement […]

2.   A comprehensive review includes the design and content of each course of study, the expected learning outcomes, the methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes, and also takes account of emerging developments in the field of education, modes of delivery, the changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study. […]

4.   Review and improvement activities include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including:

a.   analyses of progression rates, attrition rates, completion times and rates and, where applicable, comparing different locations of delivery, and

b.   the assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses of study.

5.   All students have opportunities to provide feedback on their educational experiences and student feedback informs institutional monitoring, review and improvement activities. […]

7.   The results of regular interim monitoring, comprehensive reviews, external referencing and student feedback are used to mitigate future risks to the quality of the education

provided and to guide and evaluate improvements, including the use of data on student progress and success to inform admission criteria and approaches to course design, teaching, supervision, learning and academic support.

9. Version Control

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by the Australian School of Accounting Board of Directors as at March 2024 and is reviewed every three years.

The Policy, with associated Procedure, are published and available on the Australian School of Accounting website https://www.asahe.edu.au/policies-and-forms/.

Change and Version Control				
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved:	Effective Date:
2024.1	Director Learning and Innovation	Updated policy to include HESF references, changes in regulatory compliances. Benchmarked against 4 other Higher Education Providers.	01/03/2024	08/03/2024
Previous version archived. New Policy code and numbering system implemented.				
1.0		Academic Board approval draft	22/11/2022	

Appendix 1: Microcredentials Checklist

Category	Criteria	Y/N
Relevance	Does this microcredential address a specific current or emerging industry or professional skill need?	
	Is it relevant to the professional development and skills enhancement of the target audience?	
	Is this microcredential based on thorough market research and competitor analysis?	
Quality	Does this microcredential meet the highest educational standards (how can you demonstrate this)?	
	Is it recognised by employers as a learning and assessment activity that ensures those who complete it have the knowledge, skills and capabilities it purports to guarantee?	
Accessibility	Is this microcredential easy for individuals to access and complete, considering factors such as cost, delivery mode, and scheduling?	
	Is it available on-demand or does it have both varied start dates and of a short duration (days rather than weeks or months)?	
Flexibility	Is this microcredential designed to fit into the busy schedules of working professionals or employees?	
	Does it allow learners to progress at their own pace?	
Credibility	Does this microcredential build on the strong reputation and track record of the college, university, Indigenous institute or training provider in this discipline-area?	
	Does it carry the necessary accreditation and approvals for the fields of study represented?	
Outcomes	Does this microcredential clearly articulate the specific skills, capabilities and knowledge to be gained upon completion?	
	Is the assessment of the knowledge, skills and capabilities legally defensible?	
Assessment	Does this microcredential have robust skills or a competency-based assessment process that accurately measures the achievement of learning outcomes?	
	Does this microcredential provide meaningful feedback to learners?	
Alignment	Does this microcredential align with existing certificates, diplomas or degrees – does successful completion "count" towards a certificate, diploma or degree?	
ROI	Does this microcredential (or suite of microcredentials) look like it produces a financial return on the costs of design, development, and deployment?	
Revision Cycle	Is there a plan to revise the microcredential based on learner and employer feedback?	
	What is this revision cycle, and are resources in place to ensure it can take place?	