New Course Design, Development and Approval at RMIT

A Handbook

HIGHER EDUCATION

Courses Committee
Higher Education – Purpose and Scope

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1. NEW COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL AT RMIT: Overview and Introduction

1.1 Designing Courses for Quality

Designing and developing a curriculum is an exciting time for those involved. A vision for future professional practice is being created and the first concrete steps towards achieving that vision are being taken.

This vision is not limited to the course development and teaching teams: it is shared by the Faculty and RMIT. It is informed by the larger contexts of Faculty, RMIT and the wider community.

The success of the program for students, industry and, indeed, the wider community, will depend, in the first instance, on the curriculum as accredited. The critical foundation of course quality is established during course design, development and approval.

Aiming high, course design and development at RMIT will involve:

- rigorous investigation of potential stakeholders’ needs (including industry and prospective students);
- thorough surveying of potentially competing courses, including overseas-based programs;
- building on international best practice;
- conscious application of principles of learning, teaching and curriculum design;
- building on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses of RMIT in the metropolitan, national and international contexts;
- contributing to the achievement of the strategic priorities of RMIT and its Faculties (this includes the RMIT Teaching and Learning Strategy and other priorities as decided by Academic Board from time to time);
- articulation of desired graduate attributes;
- comprehensive analysis of costs and sources of funding as well as design for effectiveness and efficiency;
- full consultation and resolution of issues with all relevant groups at RMIT including prospective course team members;
- endorsement and commitment of all parties to later course implementation and delivery;
- succinct, clear and complete descriptions and explanations of the purpose, learning outcomes and nature of the course (to help later gauge its impact and demonstrate its value for accountability purposes).

1.2 Course Design and the RMIT Process for Approval: Overview

Figure 1 describes the process of course design necessary to create an award program of the highest quality. RMIT’s approval processes comprising the two stages of New Course Advice and New Course Approval have evolved to support and provide direction for the course development team. These stages are summarised in Figure 1 with reference to the relevant parts of this handbook.
Course Development is a complex process which needs to be structured to achieve the high goals being set for the program and the students upon graduation. Here follows a set of activities and decisions which will lead to a curriculum and associated course documentation consistent at least, in principle, with the spirit and detail of RMIT course approval processes.

There are four broad phases of curriculum design:

The **first phase** involves: researching the future of the profession in society; investigating the needs of employers and likely demand; reviewing the strengths and weaknesses, as well as, the opportunities and threats within the university and the wider contexts; establishing the purpose of the course and the role of graduates in the workforce; deciding upon the general attributes desired of graduates; deciding upon the market of the course and nature of the program (including course length and mode of study). Throughout this phase, there is active identification of potential interests across RMIT with consultation and involvement if necessary. Relationship to the Teaching and Learning Strategy (RMIT and Faculty) is a key consideration.

This phase is undertaken, in large part, during the New Course Advice stage though it necessarily continues into the New Course Approval stage.

The **second phase** establishes the key characteristics of the course: detailing and confirming the purpose and role of the course as well as the desired graduate attributes; developing the desired learning outcomes for the whole program; establishing the attributes of the desired applicants for the course and their needs for learning; deciding upon the crucial learning outcomes desired at key stages in an effective learning sequence; establishing the key learning experiences and assessments which are likely to facilitate the student learning outcomes; framing these outcomes, experiences and assessments as a course structure.

The overlapping **third phase** interprets those key dimensions of the course at a subject level: developing a linked hierarchy of learning outcomes related to subjects (desired student learning outcomes for each subject); establishing the key learning experiences, assessments and broad topic areas of each subject with links to the learning expected in other subjects; determining the resource and support demands; confirming the costing and fee structures.

The final, **fourth phase** involves detailed subject description.

Throughout the process, there is extensive consultation and reference to potential stakeholders to ensure that the program as designed reflects their anticipated needs. Extensive discussions and negotiations are needed to reach agreement within RMIT to ensure maximum support and total commitment to the course and its delivery. During the second and third phase, the course development team establishes the teaching responsibilities and likely course team. The anticipated course team should be involved in decisions if possible because it will ultimately take responsibility for the new course.

Also, through the latter phases of course development, key decisions are made about student selection and other course management issues including initial mechanisms for continual quality improvement.

Each stage of the process involves documenting the decisions with a rationale in a form which meets the requirements of the New Course Advice and, subsequently, the New Course Approval. (This documentation, with background papers, becomes a key reference-point for course team continual quality improvement according to RMIT’s Educational Quality Assurance (EQA) system and therefore forms the beginning of the course log.)
Overview of Course Development at RMIT

The four phases of the course design, development, and consultation process (see opposite) – refer to Chapter 1

- Conduct market investigation, determine purpose and broad parameters of the proposed course. Obtain endorsement of relevant Faculty Board. Circulate throughout RMIT. Gain approval of RMIT’s Courses Committee.

- Research, design and develop full curriculum including full subject descriptions. Seek comment and endorsement from a specially constituted Accreditation Committee and then Faculty Board. Subsequently, seek endorsement of Courses Committee, Academic Board and, finally, Council.

This is the New Course Advice stage – refer Chapter 2 (Figure 2)

- Faculty decision to design and develop a new course pursuant to the RMIT and Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Course implementation and delivery. Continual course quality improvement.

New Course Approval stage – refer Chapter 3 (Figure 4)

Continual Course Quality Improvement – refer to Chapter 5 (Figure 8)

(ONGOING)
1.3 How to Design a Course and Develop a Curriculum

Course design and development is a time for learning and applying new, valuable skills as part of a team of professionals. High order skills of scholarship, market analysis, consultation and synthesis drawing on teaching and learning principles are required. This is not to mention the management of a design and development process to successfully achieve all the outcomes mentioned earlier and to meet all the commitments to the university. It is a rewarding time for all concerned.

While this handbook does not introduce the whole process of course design (its focus is the requirements for RMIT approval), the following tips may be useful starting points.

- Staff of the EPI Group (contact: 9660 3072) are available to advise and work with course development teams on any aspect of curriculum development including all aspects as described in Figure 1. Teams can also be advised of references as appropriate. Contact the EPI Group. This is a service of the RMIT Division of Education and Training.

- Faculty DoTQs have a role supporting quality course development in their respective faculties and so are available for consultation. Your DoTQ is a member of the Accreditation Committee which considers the New Course Approval document (Chapter 3).

- The new course will need to be consistent with the University and Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategy – refer to your Faculty DoTQ.

- Teams who have designed and developed recently-approved courses could provide valuable suggestions as well as tips to avoid problems they encountered! It may also be helpful to review previously endorsed New Course Approval documents, particularly Section 2, which will include a description of the consultation processes. These documents can be perused by arrangement with the Secretary, Courses Committee at Academic Administration. The Secretary can also provide names of coordinators of recently-approved courses.

1.4 Managing Course Development

Faculties and course development teams are advised to allow a full twelve months for course design, development and approval. This permits a thorough investigation and synthesis, appropriate consultation and involvement as well as time to address concerns raised by RMIT and accreditation committees. Clearly, consultation and involvement (preferably prior to formal consideration by committee) will help the course team to identify and address potential issues. Smooth passage of the course documentation through the RMIT committees is more likely if there has been thorough prior analysis and consultation.

Note that new courses building on current programs can be designed, developed and endorsed in less than twelve months when they draw on previous investigations, deliberations and documentation. Previous experience can reduce the time needed by the course design team to develop the course and to prepare the appropriate documentation. However, in all cases, the time demands for university approval processes remain.
2. NEW COURSE ADVICE:
Initial Development of Your Course Proposal

2.1 Overview
The course development team prepares a New Course Advice which summarises initial plans for the course, its rationale and relationship to the RMIT and Faculty strategic plans, including the RMIT Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategy. The funding source is noted.

Once endorsed by the originating Faculty’s Board, the New Course Advice is circulated to each Faculty Board through the University. Courses Committee’s endorsement of the course proposal is required. Comments are then addressed by the responsible Faculty during its subsequent detailed course design (refer to New Course Approval stage).

2.2 Purpose
This process is intended to guide and support the development of a quality award course which is clearly meeting a market need and addressing the RMIT and Faculty priorities.

The early wide consultation helps course development teams quickly identify potential areas of collaboration and overlap with other teaching areas of RMIT.

The extensive circulation of a New Course Advice document helps the course development team find out if the University will support the design and development of the course idea. Constructive comment will also improve the subsequent detailed design.

2.3 Process
The process of New Course Advice is described in the flowchart and accompanying notes (Figure 2). This process is formally described in Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.2 (also included in this handbook as Appendix E).

Course development teams consult widely with industry and other potential stakeholders before preparing the New Course Advice document. Systematic analysis of course need will lead to both a definition of the market of the program and initial clarification of the role and purpose of the course.

Consultations within RMIT will ensure the proposed course clearly reflects the strategic priorities of both RMIT and the Faculty concerned.

Careful thought is given to the basic parameters of the course including purposes, structure and content, length, study mode and source of funds. Educational principles as well as market, access and equity considerations are drawn upon.

2.4 Timelines
Course teams need to set a program schedule which allows ample time for research and investigation. The program needs to be disciplined in order to meet specific meeting dates for the Board of the originating Faculty and the RMIT Courses Committee. In addition, time needs to be allowed for proper consideration and comment by all Faculties and relevant resource groups.
Figure 2
NEW COURSE ADVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision to develop new course</td>
<td>Responsible Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originating Faculty proceeds with course development and prepares New Course Advice</td>
<td>Course Development Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Originating Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact DoTQ and Faculty Executive Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dean of originating Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty processes prior to Faculty consideration of New Course Advice</td>
<td>RMIT Courses Committee</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>for endorsement and comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Originating Faculty Board considers New Course Advice</td>
<td>Deans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chair of CCPC</td>
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<td>University Librarian</td>
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<td>Head, Computer Centre</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chair, Courses Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Originating Faculty Board circulates New Course Advice</td>
<td>RMIT Courses Committee</td>
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<td>Course Development Coordinator</td>
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<td>Originating Faculty</td>
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</tbody>
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Originating Faculty continues course development and proceeds to New Course Approval phase, Chapter 3, Figure 4
**Notes**

- Carefully plan ahead for course development and endorsement including New Course Approval to proceed.

- Initial course design should proceed including all appropriate consultations.
- New Course Advice should be prepared, conforming with Operating Procedures 7.28.1.2 and these guidelines (*Figure 3*). It should demonstrate rigorous initial analysis and synthesis. The document will be no larger than four pages.
- Fee-for-service courses require a fee structure approved by the RMIT Commercial and Legal Service Group. This approval must be attached to the New Course Advice.
- Course development teams must contact their Faculty DoTQ and Faculty Executive Officer to ascertain Faculty processes for consideration of New Course Advice. Common practice calls for the proposal to be discussed and endorsed by a sub-committee prior to submission to Faculty Board.
- The responsible Faculty’s timeline should allow for modification and resubmission to the relevant committee during the New Course Advice process.
- The New Course Advice must be sent to Courses Committee with the Commercial and Legal Service Group approval attached as well as evidence of Faculty Board endorsement.

- It is the responsibility of Faculties, resource and administrative centres to comment directly to the originating Faculty, with advice and requests for consultation or involvement as appropriate, particularly in terms of implications for their respective areas. Copies are to be sent to Courses Committee.
- Courses Committee must endorse the New Course Advice.

**Note on double degrees:** Where a proposal is being developed by two or more Faculties, one must act as the originating Faculty for the management and administration of the courses. In this case, the Boards of each of the Faculties must endorse the New Course Advice before wider circulation.
The timeline should allow for the possibility of rejection of the New Course Advice by the responsible Faculty Board and RMIT Courses Committee. In addition, the course development team will appreciate that time is needed to properly address the issues and concerns raised by comments. Further investigation and negotiation may be called for.

The Commercial and Legal Service Group is to be sent a cost analysis for the fee-paying courses (all fees have to be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources) on the advice of the Service). Course development teams should contact the Commercial and Legal Service Group to discuss their requirements in advance.

2.5 Double Degrees

Where a proposal, being a double degree, is being developed by two Faculties, one must act as the originating Faculty for the management and administration of the course. In this case, the Boards of each of the relevant Faculties must endorse the New Course Advice before wider circulation.

2.6 Documentation

Course teams are to prepare a formal document advising of the new course. The structure and content of the document are described in Figure 3 (Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.2, Appendix A). Annotations in italics are provided here to guide the team’s preparatory investigations and writing of the document.

The New Course Advice document is to clearly and concisely set out the rationale for the course (its role and purpose relative to market need and potential demand). It should be no longer than four pages. The team may like to refer to relevant sections of Appendix C of this handbook. This Appendix, however, relates to the later Course Approval stage and so can only help clarify some of the points raised in Figure 3.
Figure 3
ANOTATED ‘NEW COURSE ADVICE’ PROFORMA

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NEW COURSE ADVICE

(This document is intended to inform teaching and other staff around RMIT of the key characteristics of the course you are proposing. It is intended to be a short document easily scrutinised by interested staff. It will provide a clear and accurate summary of the proposed course. The fixed structure ensures that all critical points are covered.

Your intention with this document will be to make staff in other parts of the university aware of your course proposal and to provide you with constructive comment and advice of possible overlap. Your subsequent course development will address the issues raised. Moreover, potential partners in collaboration will be identified at the beginning of the development process.

The document is to be written under the following headings in the order prescribed. Assistance in preparing this document is available from the EPI Group.)

1. IDENTIFICATION
   1.1 Faculty of
   1.2 Department of
   1.3 Course title and recommended abbreviation
      (Important to state in case of confusion with other existing courses.)
   1.4 Proposed year and semester of introduction
      (It is essential to allow adequate time for the advice and the approval procedures.)

2. RATIONALE FOR INTRODUCTION
   (Briefly yet clearly explain to the University community why this course is needed, where its students will come from and what support the course will receive from the profession and from industry. Detailed information and evidence concerning these matters will be required in the ‘Approval’ stage of a new course application.)

   2.1 Industry input, consultation and demand for the new course
      (Describe the process of consultation and input as well as the outcome of that consultation process. What demand is the course anticipated to address?)

   2.2 Professional status of the planned course
      (Will the course meet specific professional registration requirements or fill a niche or gap in professional education?)
3. **ACADEMIC STRATEGY**

(The ways in which the course fits within the vision and mission of the Faculty and University has to be made clear. Courses which cannot be clearly justified in this way will not be supported. Be clear and succinct. Again, detailed information is required in the “Approval” of a new course application.)

3.1 **Faculty Strategic Plan**

(Describe how the proposed course assists the implementation of the Faculty’s Strategic Plan. Relate to specific strategies and actions in the Strategic Plan.)

3.2 **RMIT Strategic Plan**

(Describe how the new course assists the implementation of RMIT’s Strategic Plan and other priorities which may be decided upon by Academic Board from time to time. Relate to specific strategies and actions in the Strategic Plan and specific decisions of Academic Board. The Secretary of Courses Committee maintains a record of relevant Academic Board decisions.)

4. **COURSE DESIGN**

(Bear in mind the RMIT and Faculty missions and strategies, particularly the Teaching and Learning Strategies, when addressing this section. For example, how does the course articulate desired graduate attributes which adhere to the RMIT and Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategy? How does the course maximise opportunities for participation for those groups traditionally disadvantaged in their access to tertiary education?)

4.1 **Course purpose**

(The purpose encompasses a brief statement of the anticipated role of the graduates and, related to this, to the course’s intended student learning outcomes. Also describe how the new course will reflect the Teaching and Learning Strategy of RMIT and the Faculty.)

4.2 **Course structure including course length and content**

(Course structure is the framework for learning through the full course. The content should briefly describe the principal areas of learning which are explicitly related to cognate disciplines as necessary. Apart from one or two paragraphs as necessary, this section is to include a diagram indicating years and areas of study. Readers will appreciate that these are provisional at this stage.)

4.3 **Study mode**

(Is the course to be studied internally, at a distance, offshore, full-time or part-time?)

4.4 **Articulation**

(Is the program expected to stand alone? How does this course relate to other current and proposed courses? Are there specific programs with which the proposed course will articulate?)

4.5 **Service teaching**

(Identify likely requirements for teaching by other departments.)
### 4.6 Planned learning experiences

(Briefly describe the primary experiences which will facilitate student learning. These are to relate intended student learning outcomes, course content and structure to course purpose as well as reflect the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The learning experiences are to be clearly student-centred. A simple listing of methods used by the teachers is to be avoided! Student choice should be provided for where appropriate. Two or three tightly written paragraphs may be sufficient. Again, readers will appreciate that these are provisional at this stage.)

### 5. SOURCE OF FUNDS

#### 5.1 Fee-based courses

Attach a memorandum from the Commercial and Legal Service Group approving the fee structure.

(A costing analysis will be required by the Commercial and Legal Service Group. Course development teams are advised to consult this Group at the earliest opportunity.)

#### 5.2 Commonwealth Operating Grant courses

Identify source of EFTSU.

### 6. CONTACT PERSON

#### 6.1 Provide the name and telephone extension of a contact person to whom enquiries may be addressed.

(Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.2, Appendix A)
3. NEW COURSE APPROVAL: Development of the Full Curriculum

3.1 Overview

Before undertaking the New Course Approval process, a proposed course must have completed the New Course Advice process and gained endorsement by RMIT Courses Committee (Chapter 2).

The New Course Approval process involves designing and developing the full course curriculum including all appropriate consultations. Approval and endorsement of the New Course Approval document is then sought from a specially-established accreditation committee. Amendments are made if necessary.

The course documentation is then presented to the Faculty Board of the originating Faculty. It is subsequently submitted for endorsement to Courses Committee, then Academic Board and, finally, RMIT Council. Academic Board and Council approval will accredit the course and approve the title. At any stage the course may be returned for additional information, clarification or further development.

3.2 Purpose

This process is intended to guide and support the development of an award course of the highest quality in every respect. The process requires thorough research of market need, wide consultation within and outside the university and considered application of key principles of teaching and learning. A full curriculum is developed.

The formal decision sequence ensures that the finally approved program enjoys the full support of all groups essential for effective program delivery.

The course document as approved becomes the key reference point for course team continual quality improvement according to RMIT's EQA system.

3.3 Process

The process of New Course Approval is described in the flowchart and accompanying notes (Figure 4). This process is described in Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.3 (also included as Appendix E).

The course development team is researching, designing and developing a full curriculum down to the full subject descriptions, including learning objectives, student learning experiences and assessment. You are referred to the course design tips in Chapter 1.
**Figure 4**

**NEW COURSE APPROVAL**

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**Procedure**

- New Course Advice endorsed by RMIT Courses Committee (*Figure 2*)
  - Originating Faculty recommends Accreditation Committee membership
  - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education & Training) approves Accreditation committee

- Course design and curriculum development commences
  - Accreditation Committee consulted during course development

- Originating Faculty prepares New Course Approval
  - Accreditation Committee considers New Course Approval
    - Endorsed
      - Subcommittee and then
        - Originating Faculty Board
          - Endorsed
            - RMIT Courses Committee
              - Endorsed
                - RMIT Academic Board
                  - Endorsed
                    - RMIT Council
                      - Approved

- Course accredited for 5 years
- Administration to establish course

- Responsible Faculty delivers course engaging in continual teaching and course quality improvement processes (*Figure 8*)

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**Responsibility**

- Chair, Courses Committee
  - Dean of originating Faculty
  - Course Development Coordinator

- Course Development Coordinator
  - Chair, Accreditation Committee
    - Chair of Subcommittee
    - Dean

- Chair, Courses Committee
  - Chair, Academic Board
    - Chair, Council

- Council Secretariat
  - Course Team
  - Office of Prospective Students
  - Responsible Faculty
  - Course Team
    - Responsible Faculty
Notes

- Generally courses are not to be advertised before accreditation.
- The Accreditation Committee is to examine the academic content of and resources allocated to the new course proposal.
- Accreditation Committee membership and terms of reference are described in Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.3 (Appendix E of this handbook.)
- Preparing the New Course Approval document is a process of curriculum design (Chapter 1). Generally at least two months intensive effort will need to be devoted to this task (additional time would allow for recommended consultation with the Accreditation Committee and other stakeholders).
- The New Course Approval document is to conform with Academic Operating Procedure 7.28.1.3 (Figure 5).

- Remember that realistic timeframes have to be set to ensure due and proper consideration by the Accreditation Committee (members usually have limited time available). In addition, considerable amendments and further work will need to be made after the Committee considers the first draft of the New Course Approval document.
- The Accreditation Committee is to compile a report as prescribed in the Academic Operating Procedures, including a recommendation as to whether the course should be accredited.
- The Accreditation Committee's report, a letter of endorsement by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee and the New Course Approval document (including relevant memoranda of support and approval) is submitted to a Faculty Board subcommittee (if necessary), then to the Faculty Board. The Faculty DoTQ and Executive Officer can advise teams of the Faculty processes.
- Attachments should include Commercial and Legal Service Group approval of fee structure (fee-paying courses) and memoranda from the Library and Strategic Information Technology indicating that resources in the respective areas will be sufficient.
- Courses Committee assesses and comments on the quality, design, resources and academic content of the proposed course. The Committee ensures that reasonable collaboration has taken place between other faculties and that all requirements have been met concerning course design, subjects, student learning experiences and assessment.
- Double degrees: where a proposal is being developed by two or more Faculties, the Boards of each Faculty must endorse the New Course Approval before submission to Courses Committee.

- Planning of the entire course development process will allow for closing dates for VTAC Guide entries (if appropriate) and masterfiling on course/subject database in time for enrolments (Appendix A).
- Course delivery conforms to the requirements of RMIT's EQA system (Chapter 5).
3.4 Timelines

Course teams need to set a program schedule which allows ample time for investigation, consultation, deliberation and negotiation. Moreover, the program is to be planned to enable proper consideration by the Accreditation and other RMIT committees followed by reworking of the curriculum (if called for). Prior consultation, as appropriate, is likely to facilitate smooth formal committee appraisal of the proposal.

The Commercial and Legal Service Group is to endorse a cost analysis and fee structure for the fee-paying courses. Course development teams should contact the Group to discuss their requirements in advance.

3.5 Double Degrees

Where a course proposal, being a double degree, is to be developed by two Faculties, one must act as the originating Faculty for the management and administration of the course. In this case, the Boards of each of the relevant Faculties must endorse the New Course Approval before proceeding to RMIT Courses Committee.

3.6 Documentation

Course teams are to prepare the approval of new course document according to the structure and content described in Figure 5 (Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.3, Appendix 2). Annotations in italics are provided here to guide the team’s preparatory investigations and writing of the document.

Appendix C of this handbook includes some extracts of recent New Course Approval documents to illustrate the requirements.
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PROPOSAL FOR THE APPROVAL OF A NEW COURSE (Annotated)

(This document is intended to demonstrate the need for, nature of and the resources required for the proposed course. It will be a full curriculum which reflects thorough investigation and adoption of student-centred learning principles. In every respect, it will be a quality program for future students and other stakeholders.

The document has several key roles:
• to foster comment and advice with a view to refining the course;
• to demonstrate relevance to RMIT strategic priorities with a view to endorsement to join the university course portfolio of courses;
• to demonstrate quality such that it gains accreditation.

It also establishes the framework for ongoing delivery of the program and continual quality improvement. It becomes a key point of reference for RMIT’s EQA system.

The document must be prepared in clear and concise style according to the headings below.)

1. IDENTIFICATION
   1.1 Faculty of
   1.2 Department of
   1.3 Course title
   1.4 Abbreviated title
   1.5 Proposed year of introduction
   (It is likely to take a year for a course to go through the necessary processes and finally be approved.)
   1.6 Length of course
   (Length of course in years and semesters. Full-time and/or part-time)
   1.7 Study mode
   (Is the course to be studied internally, at a distance, offshore, full-time or part-time?)
   1.8 Articulation
   (Is the program expected to stand alone; are there specific programs which articulate with the proposed course?)
2. EVIDENCE OF DEMAND

2.1 Identify the need/demand for the new course. (What is the need for the proposed course and what evidence has been collected to establish this need? Reference should be made to the anticipated needs of industry and prospective students.)

2.2 Describe consultation with industry during development of the proposal. (What consultations have been undertaken with which groups and individuals and what were the results of such consultations? Indicate how those consulted are in a position to help identify future needs. Relevant details and endorsements can be included as attachments.)

2.3 Describe how the proposed course differs from comparable and potentially competing courses. (What comparable and competing courses exist and how is the proposed course different? Reference must be made to comparable courses in Victoria. Key differences are likely to be associated with:
   • the role and purposes of the course, including its market niche;
   • the principal learning outcomes, including graduate attributes;
   • study mode.)

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Describe how introduction of a new course is consistent with the Strategic Plans of the Faculty and RMIT. (It should be made evident how this course will advance the missions of RMIT and the Faculty by contributing to their strategic plans including the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The document should also address other relevant priorities which may be decided by Academic Board from time to time. Clear and direct links should be made between specific items in the Strategic Plans and the proposed course. Generally, each RMIT and Faculty goal should be specifically addressed. The Secretary of Courses Committee maintains a record of relevant Academic Board decisions.)

3.2 Describe the attributes of graduates of the course, in terms of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. (The graduate attributes developed through the course should be explained in terms of capabilities related to discipline-specific knowledge as appropriate. These should be stated for the core of the program and for the elective components of the program. The submission should also relate these attributes to the graduate attributes detailed in the Strategic Plans of both RMIT and the Faculty.)

3.3 Describe the expected destination of graduates in terms of how they would fit into the employment profile of the industry or profession.
4. RESOURCES

4.1 Identify the source of funding for the proposal, either from Commonwealth Operating Grant or cost recovery on a full-fee basis. (Will the course be supported by COG EFTSU and, if so, where, within the Faculty’s existing quota, will the EFTSU come from? Is there the prospect of industry-funded places in the course? Is the course to be marketed to full-fee paying students either locally or offshore? Include expected commencements, continuing and completing numbers. Note that fee-for-service courses require a fee structure approved by the Commercial and Legal Service Group.)

4.2 Identify the academic and support staffing required by the proposal. (Who will comprise the course team? Is the appropriate staff expertise presently available and, if not, how will it be developed or sought? Ensure that all components of the course are accounted for.)

4.3 Identify the accommodation required to deliver the course. (Is the proposed course to be taught on campus or at a distance? What type of teaching/learning accommodation will be required for the course? Is the appropriate teaching/learning accommodation currently available? What is being done to ensure that it will be available?)

4.4 Identify major equipment required by the teaching activities within the course. (Is existing equipment adequate or will new equipment be acquired? If so, how will this be funded?)

4.5 Identify information technology or computing facilities required by the course. (Will learning opportunities be developed by the course which make use of appropriate technology or computer facilities? Is there presently access to appropriate facilities or will new facilities have to be acquired? If so how will this be funded? Attach memorandum of support from the Director, Strategic Information Technology.)

4.6 Describe current library resources available, whether new stock will be required and how any acquisitions will be funded. (What arrangements have been made with the Library for the support of the proposed course in terms of library resources, print and electronic? Attach memorandum of support from the RMIT Librarian.)

5. COURSE STRUCTURE

5.1 Outline the structure for each year of the course. Note any options, major streams, special sequences or other constraints on student choice, and in the case of undergraduate degrees, inclusion of three Context Curriculum subjects as required by RMIT policy. (Provide a diagram as well as a written explanation. Make clear the weighting of individual subjects, the credit points and the equivalent contact and non-contact hours and indicate the expected progress through the course of part-time as well as full-time students.)
5.2 Describe the relationship between the course structure and the aims and objectives as well as strategic plans of the University and Faculty. *(How will knowledge and skill and understanding develop throughout the course? The key learning outcomes of major components of the course – including years and streams – will be described and related to course objectives and desired graduate attributes. In this context, indicate how each of the subjects will contribute to the achievement of the desired graduate attributes by the students.)*

Describe how the course structure relates to each relevant RMIT and Faculty goal in the Teaching and Learning Strategies.

5.3 Identify any teaching by other departments involved in the proposal. *(What discussions have been undertaken and what agreement reached concerning the nature of appropriate learning outcomes, student learning experiences and assessment?)*

Include confirmation from those departments of their ability to support additional teaching.

6. SUBJECTS

6.1 Attach subject descriptions for all subject within the course. These should include details of student-learning outcomes, planned student-learning experiences, the nature of assessment tasks and the relationship between them. *(RMIT has reviewed the requirements for subject guides. Refer to Appendix D.)*

7. CONTACT PERSON

7.1 Provide the name and telephone extension of the Departmental contact person or persons to whom enquiries may be addressed.

*(Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.2, Appendix B)*
4. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR DOUBLE DEGREES OR DUAL AWARDS COMPRISING APPROVED AND ACCREDITED COURSES

4.1 Overview

This chapter describes the processes for approval of double degrees and dual awards comprising courses which have already been separately approved and accredited.

The process provides for the development of the combined program structure and curriculum including all appropriate consultations. It is documented in a New Course Approval document which, after approval by relevant Course Advisory Committees, will be presented to the Faculty Boards of the originating Faculties. It is subsequently submitted for endorsement to Courses Committee, then to Academic Board and Board of Technical Studies (BoTS) as appropriate. Finally, the submission proceeds to RMIT Council.

At any stage the course may be returned for additional information, clarification or further development.

If either or both of the courses in a proposed double degree have yet to be approved and accredited the processes described in Part 1 (Higher Education) of this handbook need to be followed.

If either or both of the courses in a proposed dual award have yet to be approved and accredited the procedures described in Part 1 for the Higher Education Course and in Part 2 for the VET Course, need to be followed.

4.2 Purpose

This process is to guide and support the development of a combined program of the highest quality in every respect. The process acknowledges that due processes of design, development and course improvement have been pursued in the courses which are to be linked.

In particular, the process builds on prior research and existing documentation, focusing on key issues associated with establishing the associations between the courses.

The process requires establishment of market need, wide consultation within and outside the university and considered application of key principles of teaching and learning.

4.3 Process

The flowchart and accompanying notes (Figure 6) describe the process of new course approval for double degree/dual award – comprising approved courses.
Figure 6
NEW COURSE APPROVAL FOR DOUBLE DEGREES AND DUAL AWARDS COMPRISING ACCREDITED COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial idea for new course comprising extant accredited courses</td>
<td>Faculties offering the accredited courses – Deans and Course Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course development and negotiation</td>
<td>Course Development Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Course Approval prepared by Faculty to be responsible for the proposed course <em>(Prepared in conjunction with the Faculty responsible for the second currently accredited course.)</em></td>
<td>Chair, CACs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Advisory Committees</td>
<td>Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Boards</td>
<td>Chair, Courses Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Both originating Faculties are to endorse the course approval document; • Attachments should include the Commercial and Legal Service Group’s approval of fee structure – fee-paying courses</td>
<td>Chair, Academic Board Chair, BoTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDORSED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOUBLE DEGREE AND DUAL AWARD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Technical Studies (BoTS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT COUNCIL</td>
<td>Chair, Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Timelines

Course design teams need to set a program schedule which allows ample time for investigation, consultation, deliberation and negotiation. Moreover the program is to be planned to enable proper consideration by Course Advisory Committees and the RMIT Committees – allowing for reworking of the proposal if called for at any stage. Prior consultation, as appropriate, is likely to facilitate smooth formal committee appraisal of the submission.

The Commercial and Legal Service Group is to endorse a cost analysis and fee structure for the fee-paying courses. Course development teams should contact the Group to discuss their requirements in advance.

4.5 Documentation

Course teams are to prepare the approval of new course document according to the structure and content in Figure 6. Annotations in italics are provided here to guide the team’s preparatory investigations, negotiations and writing of the document. The new Course Approval submission will build on previous prepared documentation.
PROPOSAL FOR THE APPROVAL OF A DOUBLE DEGREE/DUAL AWARD – COMPRISING APPROVED COURSES (Annotated)

(This document is intended to demonstrate the need for, nature of, and the resources required for, the proposed double degree or dual award. It is to be used only if the double degree or dual award comprises two approved and accredited courses.

The document has several roles:
• to foster comment and advice with a view to refining the program;
• to demonstrate relevance to RMIT strategic priorities with a view to endorsement to join the RMIT course portfolio;
• to demonstrate quality in terms of the combined program.

The document must be prepared in clear and concise style according to the headings below.)

1. IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Faculty(s) of
(Identify both Faculties if proposed program involves two faculties and the faculty taking responsibility for the proposed course. If both Faculties are to be jointly responsible identify the arrangements.)

1.2 Department(s) of
(Identify both departments if proposed program involves two departments and the specify the department taking responsibility for the proposed course. If both departments are to be jointly responsible identify the arrangements.)

1.3 Course title

1.4 Abbreviated title

1.5 Proposed year of introduction

1.6 Length of course
(Length of course in years and semesters. Full-time and/ or part-time)

1.7 Study mode
(Is the course to be studied internally, at a distance, offshore, full-time or part-time, FFPOS?)

1.8 Articulation
(Is the program expected to stand alone; are there specific programs which articulate with the proposed course?)
2. EVIDENCE OF DEMAND

2.1 Include an estimate of student demand for the proposed double degree (This may be related to student demand for similar double degrees and double degrees generally.)

2.2 Describe the expected destination of graduates in terms of how they would fit into the employment profile of the industry or profession (This should be done in consultation with the Course Advisory Committee.)

2.3 Describe how the proposed course differs from comparable and potentially competing courses

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Describe how the introduction of a new course is consistent with the strategic plans of the Faculty and the University and the Teaching and Learning Strategy and other relevant academic policies (It should be made evident how this course will advance the missions of the University and the Faculties by contributing to their Strategic Plans. The document should also address other relevant priorities which may be decided by Academic Board from time to time. Clear and direct links should be made between specific items in the Teaching and Learning Strategy and the proposed course to demonstrate conformity with the requirements of the Teaching and Learning Strategies. The Secretary of Courses Committee maintains a record of relevant Academic Board decisions and procedures.)

3.2 Describe the attributes of graduates of the course, in terms of their knowledge skills and attitudes (The graduate attributes developed through the course should be explained in terms of capabilities related to discipline-specific knowledge as appropriate. These should be stated for the core of the program and for elective components. The submission should also relate these attributes to the graduate attributes detailed in the Teaching and Learning Strategy of RMIT and the Faculty.)

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Source of funds (EFTSU) (Will the course be supported by COG EFTSU/SOG SCH and if so where, within the Faculty’s existing quota, will the EFTSU come from? Is there the prospect of industry-funded places in the course? Is the course to be marketed to full-fee paying students either locally or offshore? Include expected commencements, continuing and completing numbers. Note that “fee-for-service courses” require a fee structure approved by the Commercial and Legal Service Group.)

4.2 Identify the academic and support staffing required by the proposal (Where students will be accommodated in existing classes in the base or similar programs this should be noted or other arrangements described. Who will comprise the Course Team? Ensure all the components of the course are catered for.)
4.3 Identify any additional accommodation required to deliver the course
(Is the proposed course to be taught on campus or at a distance? What type of teaching/learning accommodation will be required for the course? Is the appropriate teaching/learning accommodation currently available? What is being done to ensure that it will be available?)

4.4 Identify any additional major equipment required by the teaching activities within the course

4.5 Identify any additional information technology or computing facilities required by the course

4.6 Identify any additional library stock required to support the course

5. COURSE STRUCTURE

5.1 Outline the structure for each year of the course including credit points and yearly totals for the:
- proposed course
- two degrees or VET course, showing any subjects being substituted for or omitted from the degrees

(List subjects in the proposed double degrees by year level showing credit points and identify the similarities and differences with the existing degrees/VET course. Provide a diagram as well as an explanation. Explain why the differences will not prejudice the achievements of the course learning outcomes (including the graduate attributes of each course). Show how the proposed course complies with the credit points policy including the ratio of contact to non-contact hours.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Degree Course</th>
<th>Proposed DD or DA Course</th>
<th>The other existing Degree or VET Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject Name &amp; No</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively, where the proposed course is based on the model of an existing double degree or dual award of similar disciplines, the similarities and differences should be noted and explained in the manner described above but using the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Double Degree or Dual Award Course (the model)</th>
<th>Proposed DD or DA Course</th>
<th>The base Degree or VET course being substituted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject Name &amp; No</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Describe the relationship between the course structure and the aims and objectives

(How will knowledge and skill and understanding develop throughout the course? It is recommended that key learning outcomes of major components of the course – including years and streams – be described and related to course objective. In this context, indicate how each of the subjects will contribute to the overall aims and objectives of the course indicate where and how the graduate attributes will be addressed.)

5.3 Identify any changes which affect departments other than those involved in the proposal and include confirmation from such departments of their ability to support additional teaching caused by the changes

(What discussions have been undertaken and what agreement reached concerning the nature of appropriate learning outcomes, student-learning experiences and assessment?)

6. SUBJECTS

6.1 Include only subject descriptions for proposed new subjects

(Where subjects comprising the new course are all extant in the existing base degrees or awards subject descriptions are not required.)

7. CONTACT PERSON

7.1 Provide the name and telephone extension of the Departmental contact person or persons to whom enquiries may be addressed
5. IMPLEMENTATION:
Continual Course Quality Improvement

5.1 Overview
The course team delivering the course, engages in reflective, evaluative and change-oriented practice continually seeking to improve teaching and student learning. The team undertakes course improvement cycles in a disciplined and systematic manner within the framework of the RMIT EQA system.

These practices are documented in the course log. They are monitored and are the subject of a regular Course Quality Review.

The continual quality improvement cycles, the monitoring and review processes take place within the context of the Teaching and Learning Strategy (Figure 8). At all times, the course team as well as the Educational Quality Audit Committee (EQAC) is to have regard to the Teaching and Learning Priorities (Figure 9). Course development teams will appreciate that these same relationships have been stressed throughout this guide and are integral to the processes and documentation required during course development and approval at RMIT.

Faculty DoTQs have primary responsibility for supporting and guiding course teams’ continual course quality improvement. Course coordinators and teachers are referred to their DoTQ for elaboration of these and the RMIT EQA system processes.

The continual quality improvement process and RMIT’s Educational Quality Assurance system is described and explained in:


The practice of regular reaccreditation by specially-constituted Accreditation Committees at intervals of five to seven years is no longer pursued at RMIT.

5.2 University and Faculty Approval Processes for Course Changes
As far as the University is concerned, the course team’s continual course quality improvement practices accommodate all course changes which have previously been known as “minor” and “major” amendments as well as most “fundamental changes”.

Formal approval by RMIT Courses Committee is required for changes to course length and course title. Approval for changes to course length must be sought using the processes described in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Changes to title require a fully explanatory memorandum addressed to the Chair, Courses Committee. Course teams are to contact their Faculty DoTQ in the first instance or the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Education).
Figure 8
CONTINUAL COURSE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

- Monitored by RMIT’s Educational Quality Audit Committee (EQAC)
- RMIT’s educational quality assurance internal course quality reviewing managed by EQAC (Responsibility of EQAC)

Course implementation and delivery

Ongoing continual course quality improvement—implementation of the Teaching and Learning Strategy (Responsibility of course team)

Course accredited (New Course Approval, Figure 4)

The New Course Approval document as amended and approved by Council becomes the primary initial reference for ongoing course quality improvement. The document, along with relevant background research papers, is the first item in the course log.

Evidence of teaching and course quality improvement cycles including evaluations and subsequent decisions are documented, and filed in the course log.

Course teams are referred to their Faculty Director of Teaching Quality (DoTQ).

Evidence of teaching and course quality improvement cycles including evaluations and subsequent decisions are documented, and filed in the course log.
If, in the case of double degrees or dual awards, Faculties wish to modify credit point totals in any year from those already approved, approval must be sought from Courses Committee. Refer to the Faculty DoTQ.

Any changes to the masterfile of courses and subjects will need approval of the relevant Faculty Board. This applies, for example, if credit points or contact hours are being changed, or if subjects are being added to or removed from, a course. Again, course teams should refer to their DoTQ in order to ascertain Faculty policy and processes.

Note that EQAC will advise RMIT Courses Committee where it believes changes being made to a course are such that it no longer reflects the intentions of the original program. The latter Committee will take action appropriate to the circumstances.

**Figure 9**

*RMIT TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY PRIORITIES*

- Balancing stakeholders’ needs.
- Quality assurance and continual improvement.
- Vocational focus.
- Graduate attributes.
- Student-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- Maximising student choice of content and learning.
- Assessment practices.
- Internationalisation of the curriculum.
- Supporting full fee paying overseas students and students studying offshore.
- Access and equity.
- Multiple course entry and exit points.
- Valuing staff for their teaching.
APPENDIX A
Primary Contacts for Assistance

The Secretary of RMIT Courses Committee is your first contact for the New Course Advice and Approval processes described in this handbook (Chapters 2 and 3). The Secretary can give you a list of coordinators of recently-approved courses.

To find out your Faculty’s processes contact your DoTQ in the first instance.

Advice and guidance on all aspects of new course design and development is available from the EPI Group.

Courses Committee (RMIT), Secretary
Telephone: 9925 4070, City campus

Director of Teaching Quality (DoTQ)
Contact your Faculty office

Educational Program Improvement (EPI) Group
Telephone: 9925 4520, City campus

Other Contacts

Academic Board, Secretary
Telephone: 9925 4070, City campus

Commercial and Legal Service Group
Telephone: 9925 3180, City campus

Higher Degrees Committee, Secretary
Telephone: 9925 4070, City campus

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and Chair, Courses Committee
Telephone: 9925 1095, City campus
You should first decide *when* you wish to introduce the course. Will it be in the following academic year? Will it be first semester? Will it be second semester?

Typically course development teams establish a timeline working backwards from the desired time for advertising for students. Deadlines for submission to committee meetings are scheduled starting with the appropriate Council meeting for approval (the final committee step of New Course Approval process) and allowing for masterfiling and other critical course administration. This should be no later than the December meeting of Council prior to the year of introduction of the course (assuming a semester one start).

Having set the Council meeting the course development team works backwards setting the Academic Board meeting, Courses Committee meeting and so on to the beginning of the New Course Advice. *Figure 10* should help in this regard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 1997</td>
<td>start the New Course Advice process with a view to completing it in early 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1998</td>
<td>complete the accreditation process and submit New Course Approval to Faculty Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1998</td>
<td>submission to RMIT Courses Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1998</td>
<td>submission to RMIT Academic Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1998</td>
<td>submission to RMIT Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This timeline allows for issues raised by Faculty Board, Courses Committee and Academic Board to be addressed – perhaps even a resubmission. It assumes extensive consultation with relevant RMIT groups and the Accreditation Committee members during the New Course Advice stage (otherwise there is no chance of completing this critical phase inside four months).

For courses to be approved in time for entry into the VTAC Guide, it must be through the Council by May the year before commencement.

For courses wishing to start in mid-year, the timelines need to be appropriately adjusted.

Clearly, developing a new course proposal and seeing it through to final approval requires considerable organisation and a familiarity with the meeting dates scheduled by the University for the oncoming academic year!
Some additional points to remember:

- Thorough and educationally-sound research, investigation and synthesis when preparing the New Course Advice and the curriculum in New Course Approval makes for a quality program. Problems are less likely to be raised at subsequent committee stages;

- Similarly, determined and thorough consultation will see potential issues uncovered and dealt with early in the process;

- Bear in mind that Accreditation Committee members as well as RMIT staff are busy people with limited time. Consultations are best based on short, sharp and clear written summaries, probing for responses seeking ways in which issues can be addressed;

- Ensure you have a list of meeting dates for the year and allow extra time for hiccups. But don’t forget that the papers usually need to be with the Secretary of each Committee at least 14 days before the meeting. This allows for agendas to be set, papers to be compiled and distributed to members providing them enough time to properly consider your proposal;

- Very few proposals travel smoothly down the committee path. Most require clarification and expansion of detail and, if proposals do not meet the standard criteria, they are returned for further work. Allow for the possibility that your proposal could be returned for more work and consider this at the beginning when working out a realistic timeframe for Course Approval to its full realisation which includes entry on to the Master file and student enrolment.

Previous experience can reduce the time needed by the course design team to develop the course and to prepare appropriate documentation. However, in all cases, the time demands for University processes remain.
APPENDIX C
Examples of New Course Approval

Several examples of key sections of recent New Course Approval documents are presented in this Appendix.

RMIT Courses Committee maintains a file of exemplar documents for review by course development teams (refer to the Secretary of Courses Committee).

These examples are provided to help course teams clarify the requirements of the approval process. Needless to say, Courses Committee expects that over time course teams will demonstrably improve the quality of course design and development as well as accompanying documentation.

Example One

Evidence of Demand – Section 2.1
Extract from Course Approval document for M. Bus. (Corporate Governance)

“2.1 Identification of Need

The Faculty of Business has a group of long-established and highly credible postgraduate programs in a variety of business disciplines. The Faculty manages a number of general management programs including three varieties of the MBA. Over 1590 postgraduate participants are currently enrolled in Faculty of Business programs.

Following the success of the Corporate Governance Conference in June 1995, it is evident that an increasing number of senior executives, regulators and management educators are aware of a growing need to provide an executive level educational program which will assist in raising the standards of corporate governance in Australia. This has been confirmed by an extensive market survey which covered 16 related professional associations, 35 major Australian organisations and 122 individuals who have expressed an interest in the field of corporate governance. It reviewed information from a number of sources as follows:

• a questionnaire survey of Corporate Governance Conference attendees, respondents to advertisements seeking expressions of interest in educational programs in corporate governance, major organisation and employers and professional bodies and business associations;

• telephone interviews and discussions have been held with senior people employed in business and representatives of major associations involved with the area of Corporate Governance. Their comments have been taken into account in the design of the program outlined in this proposal.

(An attachment to the Approval document contained details of the market research report.)

The results indicated a significant level of support for a master program as well as support for professional development programs in the discipline.
As a major university in Melbourne which has strengths in a variety of business disciplines, as well as strong links with the business community, RMIT is extremely well positioned to provide such a program.

This program will provide a focused study of the corporate governance issues which are of paramount importance to senior corporate advisers and managers in Australia today. At the same time the course structure recognises the needs of participants to choose some subject which closely relates to their career requirements. The program will fill a major gap in the current provision of education to the business community.

The program recognises the current importance of corporate issues and represents a decisive and timely response to this awareness."

Example Two

Evidence of Demand – Section 2.1
Extract from Course Approval document for B. Social Science

"2.1 Demand

2.1.1 The design of this degree is framed by a recognition of the fundamental transformations in the nature of work, and in the shape and role of work organisations arising out of the impact of transnational economic, social and cultural factors, and the impact of new technologies, new communication systems and novel forms of work organisation.

2.1.2 This degree course is designed to produce employment-ready graduates with creative, problem-solving and reflective practice skills who are adaptable and able to work across a range of public, private and community-based organisations. Graduates of this degree will have had extensive practice and experience in a variety of organisational settings which will have encouraged in them a recognition of the diversity of organisations, the role of market forces and the diversity in levels of resourcing available in these various sectors.

2.1.3 There is significant evidence from our consultation with industry and with a broad range of employers (an appendix documented that evidence) that a new kind of social science degree and a new set of graduate attributes are being looked for. The Department of Social Science has consulted with peak bodies like Victorian government departments like Health and Community Services Victoria, unions, community groups, local government, private and public research and consultancy groups. These bodies have unanimously supported the development of a new social science degree with a commitment to producing graduates with a practice-based creative, problem-solving approach to facilitating change in a variety of work organisations. There is also evidence from our analysis of workforce trends, of a trend for employers in a wide range of government organisations, community-based organisations and private sector agencies to employ generically equipped social science graduates who are also equipped with employment-ready practice skills around competencies in research, organisation analysis, managing change and policy analysis. A job advertisement survey carried out in mid-1995 established that there was a significant market for
graduates with the attributes and central generic-skill/knowledge components specified in the Approvals document. Of those jobs advertised 78% sought graduates where this course was either ‘directly relevant’ or ‘relevant’. *(An attachment to the Approval document contained details.)*

2.1.4 Historically the majority of degrees in the social sciences were of two kinds. The first were the traditional generalist degrees found in the older universities, where the student put together a degree based on a discipline major in the areas like sociology, politics, history, etc. The second kind, developed in the former Colleges of Advanced Education, were vocational degrees, aimed at producing graduates for specific professions. While such vocational degrees had always existed in the older universities, (e.g., in engineering, medicine, law), what distinguished the vocational orientation of the CAEs was a focus on training graduates for the newer professions, and the major role played by professional bodies in designing and developing these courses.

2.1.5 RMIT’s Strategic Plan places at the centre of the university’s research and development strategy, “the importance of unravelling the complex issues of living and working in a technologically dominated society”. Developing a stronger social research capacity, linked increasingly with the domains of work and technology, is defined as crucial if the university is to achieve its ambition of engaging with “real world issues” which are increasingly at the interface of the social and the technological.

2.1.6 Against this background of the broader repositioning of RMIT, the Department of Social Science is proposing the development of a Bachelor of Social Science.”

Example Three

**Teaching and Learning Strategy – Section 3.1**

*Extract from Course Approval document for B. Social Science*

“This 3.1.5 Teaching and Learning Strategy

3.1.6 The Department of Social Science will proceed to develop a Teaching and Learning Strategy for the new degree course which takes into account RMIT, Faculty, and Department Teaching and Learning Strategies.

In particular the Teaching and Learning Strategy for this course will specify the goals, implementation processes, quality assurance and accountability mechanisms to be instituted by the course team and co-ordinator. The Teaching and Learning Strategy will inter alia:

3.1.7 (a) Balance stakeholders’ needs by a process, implemented by the course co-ordinator and course team, of consultation with all stakeholders to monitor and reorder directions and priorities on an ongoing basis using a variety of consultative committee processes;

(b) Ensure continuous quality assurance and continual improvement by developing a range of relevant quality assurance processes, eliciting useful feedback from stakeholders, use regular course team meetings, and engage in systematic staff development programs;
(c) Sustain a strong and consistent vocational focus in the course by maintaining regular contact with stakeholders, monitoring graduate destination and changing patterns in labour force demand, and ensure that a regular process of curriculum review is carried out;

(d) Ensure that graduate attributes continue to be described and achieved in terms consonant with the RMIT goal of educating graduates who are knowledgeable, creative, critical, responsible and employable life-long learners. The course co-ordinator and course team will be able to demonstrate the relevance of these attributes in graduates of the course. These graduates will be able to understand then intervene effectively in change processes by delivering quality research, policy making and organisational change and management skills that address the core themes of work and organisational transformation.”

(Continued. Note that each item (a) to (d) relates to specific headings in the RMIT and Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategy.)

Example Four

Graduate Attributes – Section 3.2

Extracts from Course Approval document for B. Social Science

“3.2.5 Knowledge

3.2.5.1 Graduates will have a knowledge of and insight into the form and impact of new technologies, new communication systems and new global pattern of organising relations between market actors and governments on the design, availability of and organisation of work.

3.2.5.2 Graduates will have a knowledge of and understanding of the various disciplines which contribute to effective public sector and non-government sector policy research and organisational skills.

3.2.6 Creative and Critical

3.2.6.1 Graduates will develop critical, problem-solving and creative skills for effective practice including problem-solving, co-operative work and leadership styles in teams, organisational analysis, policy analysis and a variety of research methods and will address core issues of organisational change, and new work designs.

3.2.6.2 Graduates will have an effective capacity for working in teams, and will possess appropriate beginning level leadership and management skills.

3.2.6.3 Graduates will be adaptable to new learning situations along with a positive attitude to life-long education.

3.2.7 Responsible and Employable

3.2.7.1 In general graduates will have well-developed written and oral communication skills, as well as possess a strong fundamental knowledge of social research techniques, as well as have and be able to use a specialised knowledge of policy, program and organisational analysis, and will be able to intervene in and act effectively.
3.2.7.2 Graduates will be responsible practitioners based on an understanding of the position of decision-makers, funding agencies and stakeholders involved in various public and private sector and community sector agencies. They will develop skills, strategies and processes which facilitate community and organisational consultation, multi-disciplinary knowledge and co-operation, negotiation and co-ordination in order to provide maximum community, organisational, social and professional benefit. (Continued.)

Example Five

Graduate Attributes – Section 3.2
Extract from Course Approval document for B. App. Sc. (Chinese Medicine)

“3.2 Graduate attributes

In line with the University and Faculty strategy, this program aims to produce graduates who knowledgeable, critical, creative, responsible, employable and equipped to become future leaders in their respective fields.

The attributes should be demonstrable in graduates as follows:

At the patient/practitioner level:

- Knowledge of the structure and function of the human body, of human behaviour and of abnormal function and patient care;
- Competence in the establishment of correct diagnoses for common diseases in the context of both Western medicine and Chinese medicine;
- Skill in the use of acupuncture and Chinese medicine and Chinese therapeutic massage at a general practitioner level;
- Familiarity with interpersonal skills;
- An understanding of management given the individual patient’s physical, psychological and socio-economic environment.

Relating to the health care system:

- Acquaintance with the expertise and limitations of their own and other health professions in order to facilitate inter-disciplinary co-operation and respect;
- Employability as primary contact practitioners in private practice or a hospital, educational or research setting.

Relating to research:

- The ability to select research subjects, design simple research methods and perform basic data analysis;
- The ability to participate in multi-disciplinary research programs.
At a personal level:

- Responsibility as a Chinese medicine physician;
- Competence as self-directed learner;
- The ability to critically appraise and adapt professional practice in the light of advancing knowledge;
- The standard of behaviour and conduct befitting members of a health care profession;
- Creativity in developing new assessment and treatment strategies and techniques.

The dual bachelor degree program in Chinese Medicine in particular supports and promotes broad educational aims which are to produce graduates who have developed:

- A self-directed and self-reliant professional initiative;
- An appreciation of the values inherent in the arts and sciences;
- Informed, defensible options on matters concerned with public health;
- Skills in communication;
- An appreciation of the value of free inquiry and discussion, and the willingness to accept professional and community responsibility;
- A self-actuated interest in learning which they will maintain through their lives;
- The ability to use the skills of others in the practice of their chosen vocation.”

Examples Six and Seven

Relation of Structure to Aims – Section 5.2

Extracts from Course Approval documents for M. Environmental Policy and B. App. Sc. (Chinese Medicine)

The following extracts illustrate two approaches. Courses Committee encourages course development teams to design course structures building on principles of effective teaching and learning. These principles provide the foundation for discussing the relation between structure and aims. Contact the EPI Group.

From M. Env. Policy:

“5.2 Relation of Structure to Aims

Through the core subjects the structure provides students with exposure to the key aspects of policy development and implementation, and to the scope and contexts of environmental policy. The core subjects also expose students to the relationships of environmental policy to bringing about change, and to the movement for ecologically sustainable development. Importantly the core research subjects ensure that all students have an understanding of the processes of interdisciplinary research, and have the opportunity to practise these by involvement in a project relevant to an organisation with which they are familiar. The links between the subjects and the course objectives and intended skills are summarised as follows:
Objective or Intended Skills | EP Subject Number
--- | ---
Understanding of the social, ecological and economic interdependencies at the heart of environmental problems and policy implications | ✓ ✓ ✓
Understanding of the philosophical, theoretical and practical issues involved in sustainability and sustainable development | ✓ ✓
Understanding of the particular attributes, problems and potential of environmental policy. | ✓ ✓ ✓
Understanding of processes of change, planned change and change strategies. | ✓ ✓ ✓
Understanding of techniques in policy development and available policy tools. | ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

(Continued.)”

From B. App. Sc. (Chinese Medicine):

“4. Clinical decision making

The ability to arrive at an appropriate diagnosis or diagnosis based on a concept of multifactorial aetiology by approaching the diagnosis objectively and evaluating all available evidence; interpreting and integrating examination findings; arriving at a provisional diagnosis using differential diagnostic assessment findings; using clinical laboratory and x-ray procedures with due regard for safety precautions; recognising concomitant conditions; establishing any inter-relationship and directing their proper therapeutic trial.

(Diagnosis of Chinese Medicine, Chinese Medicinal Formulae, Western Medical Sciences subjects, Chinese Internal Medicine, Chinese Medical Sciences Year 5 – Chinese Medical Science; Specialty Areas and Clinical Internship.)

5. Management planning

The ability to formulate a management plan, with rational and efficient use of investigational modalities, and to plan management in concert with the patient. The level of detail expected in relation to the management plan will vary depending on the commonness or importance of the condition(s) or disease process(es) from which the patient may be suffering;

(Diagnosis of Chinese Medicine, Pharmacology of Chinese Medicine, Chinese Medicinal Formulae, Western Medical Sciences subjects, Chinese Internal Medicine, Chinese Medical Sciences, Year 5 – Chinese Medical Science subjects including Clinical Internship.)”
Subject Descriptions are to be prepared as part of the New Course Approval document. They together form a critical part of the curriculum. They serve as a vital framework for the teachers.

The subject description headings below are identical to those needed for Subject Guides. However details marked with an asterisk (*) are not required at the New Course Approval stage – they can be added later when the Subject Guides are prepared during course implementation. Moreover, additional descriptive details can be added at the implementation stage. Subject Guides serve as a guide to students for their learning.

A separate handbook for the preparation of Subject Guides is available from your Faculty DoTQ or the EPI Group. The handbook clarifies the requirements below. The Secretary of Courses Committee has examples of Subject Descriptions used for New Course Approval documents.

A. Subject Identification
1. Course(s) or Department offering the subject (in the case of electives)
2. Subject code and title
3. Year and semester offered
4. Department offering subject
5. Staff member(s) name*
6. Duration and mode of delivery
7. Credit points
8. Discipline code (Higher Education only)
9. Contact hours
10. Non-contact hours
11. Pre-requisites, co-requisites and post-requisites (what the subject leads to)

B. Subject Description
(An overall description of the subject and where it fits into the course of study. This description should relate to and incorporate the relevant parts of the RMIT Teaching and Learning Strategy e.g., graduate attributes, internationalisation, sustainability, access and equity.)

C. Objectives
(The objectives should be expressed as student learning outcomes. They should be linked to B. Subject Descriptions (above) and be keyed to graduate attributes.)

D. Planned Student Learning Experiences
(How the learning will occur.)

E. Assessment
1. Assessment tasks and the percentage value of each task
2. Assessment timeline*
3. Submission dates, dates for return of student work and feedback mechanisms*
4. Details of any negotiated assessment (if negotiation is a preferred teaching method)*
5. Gradings available or competency achieved, including assessment criteria and lecturer’s expectation
6. Plagiarism statement*
7. Procedures for submission of assessable work including penalties for failure to submit or late submission*
8. Procedure for making variations to assessment tasks described*

F. Study Program
(For the purposes of the New Course Approval this Section should outline the content of the subject and list key references.)
RMIT Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.2

PROCEDURES FOR A NEW COURSE ADVICE
HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR
Approved by the Academic Board on 14 August 1995

SECTION A – PURPOSE
1. The intention of this procedure is to:
   (a) advise all faculties of the intention to introduce a new course; and,
   (b) provide information on the resources required in relation to the introduction of a new course.

SECTION B – SCOPE
2. This procedure is applicable to all new course developments within the Higher Education Sector.

SECTION C – FORMAT
3. The submission for a New Course Advice shall be in the format provided in Appendix A.

SECTION D – PROCESS
4. When the New Course Advice has been approved by the Board of the originating Faculty, it should be circulated within the University for information, comment and advice. Proposals should be sent to:
   (a) Faculty Boards, and in the case of undergraduate degrees the Context Curriculum Policy Committee;
   (b) The Secretary, Courses Committee; and,
   (c) University Librarian.

   It is the responsibility of Faculties, resource and administration centres to provide comment or advice if a proposal is considered to have implications for their respective areas.

5. New course for double degrees should follow the procedure as outlined in (4) above. Where a proposal has been developed by two or more Faculties, one Faculty should be chosen to act as the originating Faculty.

Note that the single Appendix (Appendix A) to this Operating Procedure describes the format for the New Course Advice. It is included in Figure 3, Section 2.6 in this handbook.
RMIT Academic Operating Procedures 7.28.1.3

PROCEDURE FOR THE APPROVAL OF A NEW COURSE
HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR
Approved by the Academic Board on 10 April 1995

SECTION A – PURPOSE
1. This procedure describes the documentation and process required for the introduction of a new course to be approved by Council.

2. Before commencing this procedure a course should have received the endorsement of the Courses Committee as outlined in Operating Procedure 7.28.1.2.

SECTION B – FORMAT
3. The proposal must be submitted in the format described in this operating procedure.

SECTION C – PROCESS
4. After completing the requirements of Operating Procedure 7.28.1.2, the department(s) responsible for developing the new course should prepare the proposal for Course Approval. The correct format is described in Appendix 2.

5. During the preparation of the proposal, the responsible department(s) shall liaise with external individuals and organisations for options and evidence on the need for and value of the proposed course. It is essential that the proposal course is closely linked to the strategic planning process within the Faculty and at the University level.

6. The proposal is submitted for the examination of an Accreditation Committee. The structure and purpose of this committee is described in Appendix 1.

7. The proposal together with the report from the Accreditation Committee shall be submitted to the Faculty Board for consideration and recommendation to the Course Committee.

8. The Courses Committee shall consider the proposal, and:
   (a) recommend the proposal to the Academic Board;
   (b) return the proposal to the originating Faculty with comments and instructions for further action before resubmission to the Committee.

9. The Academic Board shall consider the approval of Council, and:
   (a) recommend the proposal for the approval of Council;
   (b) return the proposal to the originating Faculty with comments and instruction for further action before resubmission to the Board.

10. On approval by Council, Academic Administration Services shall enter details of the course structure on to the University database and also advise appropriate external authorities.
Appendix 1 to Operating Procedure 7.28.1.3

ROYAL MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

SECTION 1 – MEMBERSHIP AND CONDUCT OF MEETING

1. An Accreditation Committee shall be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Higher Education) on the recommendation of the appropriate Dean to examine the academic content of and resources allocated to a new course proposal and make recommendations accordingly.

2. The Committee shall have a minimum of seven voting members which should include:
   (a) the academic responsible for the proposal; (internal)
   (b) Courses Committee nominee; (internal)
   (c) a senior practising academic; (external)
   (d) an industry representative; (external)
   (e) two members of Course Advisory Committee/ Course Development Committee; (external)
   (f) Faculty DoTQ (internal)

3. In courses where related programs are offered in the TAFE Sector, a TAFE teacher from that area should be co-opted as an adviser.

4. The appropriate Head of Department and Dean of Faculty should be invited to observe the meeting.

5. The chairperson of the Committee shall be appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the appropriate Dean.

6. The quorum for meetings of the Committee shall be five members, always provided that the member nominated by Courses Committee is present and that there is a majority of members external to RMIT.

7. Membership of the Committee shall include at least one male and at least one female.

8. The member nominated by Courses Committee shall be responsible for providing procedural advice to the Accreditation Committee and for reporting its recommendations to the Courses Committee.
SECTION II – REPORT OF MEETING

9. After examining the proposal for course approval the Accreditation Committee shall produce a report which shall include:

   (a) description of the conduct of the approval process;
   (b) a recommendation as to whether the course should be accredited and where any changes should be made to the proposal;
   (c) any additional recommendations and/or comments;
   (d) a statement of any minority views;
   (e) membership of the Accreditation Committee, indicating name, title, qualifications, appointment and any relevant special interest.

10. Preparation and co-ordination of the report shall be managed by the academic responsible for the proposal.

Note that the second appendix (Appendix 2) to this Operating Procedure describes the format for the New Course Approval. It is included in Figure 5, Section 3.6 in this handbook.