Discontinuation and Teaching-out Policy

Policy Owner	Academic Dean
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Implementation Responsibility	Academic Dean
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Review date	TBA
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1. Purpose

This policy defines the processes and requirements for the discontinuation of a course at the Sydney Polytechnic Institute (SPI). It details the disestablishment procedures for an identified course, and the identification of administrative issues which need to be resolved to minimise adverse effects on students and their studies and to ensure that students may have viable opportunities to complete their award.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all academic Courses of SPI, and all staff and affiliates across SPI who have oversight for course discontinuation, wherever a course is to be discontinued.

3. Definitions

Course Suspension refers to the period of time when a student's enrolment is suspended following the approval or instruction by their higher education provider.

Teaching-out agreement is a formal contract between higher education providers which provides for the completion of a course of study for students enrolled at a separate institution in the event of a teach-out and discontinuation of their course. This ensures that students are fairly treated and have the opportunity to complete their courses. Students have the right to refuse any teach-out offers or arrangements.

Teaching-out period refers to the time when, following the discontinuation of a course, students already enrolled are able to complete the course requirements and receive their qualification.

4. Policy Statement

- A course may be disestablished if a course is deemed by SPI to be no longer viable, or if discontinuation is required by other external factors such as government or regulatory requirements.
- SPI has a commitment to the educational interests and welfare of its students and will provide timely and considered advice to students on how it will impact the study options available to them. When this policy is implemented, any prior policies related

to course duration will be superseded.

5. Decision to Discontinue

5.1 A course may be deemed no longer viable in accordance with

- standard 6.2.1 (i) of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021;* or
- the decision made by the government to discontinue; or
- the decision made by a regulatory authority like Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) that SPI may be in a position where it is either not viable or not in the best interests of students for the course to continue.

6. Discontinuation Procedure

6.1 Discontinuation of Academic Courses

6.1.1 Academic Course discontinuations must be approved by the Governing Council after seeking input from the CEO and Academic Board.

Discontinuations must be approved by the Governing Council before students are formally notified of the discontinuation.

TEQSA must be notified of discontinuation of courses.

6.1.2 A Discontinuation Plan shall be provided, outlining the details of the course to be discontinued along with the rationale and options for enrolled students. The options shall include one or more of the following:

- Cancel the course immediately and enact mechnisms under the Tuition Assurance scheme.
- Apply to Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency for 'teach out' arrangements;
- Facilitate the completion of the students' course within the accreditation period;
- Arrange the transfer of students to another course delivered by the Institute;
- Arrange the completion of an equivalent course with another institution.

6.2 Notification to students

6.2.1 All currently enrolled students must be notified of:

- The plans for discontinuation and the end date for the course
- The expected course progression arrangements with the timetable
- Any changes expected to impact their available options regarding their studies.

6.2.2 Notifications must be delivered to students before the end of the third trimester in the preceding year from the expected teach-out period, or prior to the expected time of enrolment, depending on which comes first. If students affected by the teach-out are on leave at the time of notification, they shall return and re-enroll prior to the end of their approved leave period, to complete their course of study under a teach-out program.

6.2.3 SPI will provide individual consultations with relevant academic and administrative staff regarding avenues for course completion prior to the students' agreement of their individual study plan. Should any alterations or variations affect the teach-out arrangements, students will be notified promptly and adjustments will be arranged accordingly.

6.2.4 Students enrolled in discontinued courses are subject to the normal course progression and graduation policies of SPI.

7. Teach out arrangements Procedure

7.1 A teaching-out arrangement for all currently enrolled students or students who are in receipt of an active offer of admission to a Course, must be endorsed by the Academic Board and approved by the Governing Council for each discontinued Course.

7.2 A teaching-out arrangement must:

- Include a timetable of teaching-out programs offered;
- Detail the teach-out course conditions and requirements, including core and elective units available during this period;
- Outline how the quality of education will be provided and the learning or graduate outcomes will be maintained; and
- Outline any expected or potential implications on student progress due to the implementation of a teach-out.

7.3 Special Arrangements in Teaching-out Courses

- For the affected students who have made satisfactory academic progress prior to the discontinuation of their course, provisions will be made to allow them to satisfy their course requirements and complete their compulsory units of study (or appropriate equivalents) in order to gain their qualification.
- For students enrolled in a discontinued Course, whose academic performance is unsatisfactory and where the number of enrolments in Units deem running it unviable, special arrangements will be made by SPI.
    - These special arrangements are subject to the Academic Board's approval.
- In cases where an affected student is also subject to academic suspension, contingency plans will be developed for them.
- In cases where a student, during the teaching-out period, has an approved period of leave or has an approved extension of an existing period of leave, alternative unit arrangements may be developed and implemented.
    - In such cases, with the exception of extenuating circumstances, students are to be informed that such requests will be approved.
    - Students requesting a period of leave, or an extension of their existing period of leave, will be informed of the expected impacts on their ability to progress in their studies, and that their options may be limited as a result.

- Substitutions and alternative unit arrangements are subject to the review and approval of the Academic Dean to ensure that negative consequences are minimised or averted, particularly when substitutions of core units are involved.

7.4 Requirements

- A Course for which accreditation is due to expire but is deemed to be in Teach Out mode is still required to be accredited until all Students have either completed or transitioned out of the Course.
- Courses delivered in Teach Out mode are required to meet the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021. The Teach Out re-accreditation process, therefore, requires providers to ensure they have appropriate provisions in place to ensure that Course resourcing, Course outcomes and overall service and support to Students is not reduced as part of any Teach Out process.

7.5 Other consideration

7.5.1 Determine Final Intake Period

- The time from which cessation of student intake takes place is dependent on when the decision to discontinue a Course is confirmed. In all cases, the cessation of intakes must occur at the earliest possible opportunity. It is the responsibility of the Academic Dean to decide when the last intakes can be accepted in cases where formal articulation pathway agreements apply, ensuring that sufficient notice is given and negative consequences to students' studies are minimised.
    - Prior to the withdrawal of a Course, Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and Contractual Agreements will be entered and implemented to outline the relevant procedures.
    - Given the potential for transition arrangements or a new agreement, alternative pathways may be applied to relevant Contractual Agreements.
    - Students will be informed that places offered as part of the final Course intake cannot be deferred.

7.5.2 External Partners

In cases where the delivery of a Course during the teach-out period involves external partners, considerations toward the terms of the contractual agreement must be made prior to discontinuation.

- If discontinuation is confirmed, the implementation of the terms will be conducted either by SPI, the external partner, or jointly. In such cases, consultation will be sought from SPI's solicitor.

8. Arrangements for teach out by an alternative provider

8.1 An arrangement shall:

1) Be consistent with *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*;
2) Provide for the equitable treatment of students by ensuring that the teach-out is offered by an institution that has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to:
   - provide, insofar as possible without additional charge to the students, an educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonably similar in content, structure, learning outcomes, and scheduling to that provided by the institution ceasing operation entirely or of one of its programs or at one of its locations;
   - remain stable, carry out its mission, and meet all its obligations to students;
   - provide students access to program(s) and services without requiring them to move or travel great distances;
3) Require the teach-out institution to provide notification to students of any additional charges.

8.2 SPI shall

- Update Students of any developments regarding the teach-out arrangement in a timely manner:
  - Follow-up meetings may be held subject to the specific circumstance and, if appropriate, upon request. These meetings may be used to answer student queries or provide further reassurance and details regarding course progression.
  - Develop and implement individualised course plans for affected students.
    - Outlined in the Course plan are the pathway/s to course completion as part of the Teaching-out program.
  - Draft and implement a procedure for the effective communication of any relevant information applicable to current applicants or recipients of offers. Relevant information must be communicated in a timely manner following the decision to discontinue a Course, either before the end of the third trimester in the preceding year from the expected teach-out period, prior to the expected time of enrolment, depending on which comes first.
    - Designate a staff member and point of contact responsible for addressing student enquiries regarding the process.
  - Modify publicly available information about discontinued courses, including in marketing materials and SPI's website, and notify the education agents of the changes in a timely manner.
    - Update information on the website about the teaching-out arrangement where students can refer to, especially for re-enrolment information.
- Consult SPI's solicitor regarding any pertinent matters.
- Make arrangements with administrative, Student Services, Information Technology and Library staff to maintain support services and facilitate changes as a result of teach-out arrangements.

Notes

Related documents:

SPI Business Continuity Management Policy
SPI Tuition Fees Payment and Refund Policy
SPI Student Progression, Exclusion and Graduation Policy.
SPI Strategic Plan
SPI Business Plan

Amendment History:

Version No.	Approved by	Effective date	Amendments
1.0	Academic Board	27/08/2021	New Policy
1.1	Academic Board	17/08/2026	Clarified the discontinuation approval pathway; removed the two-year cap on Teach Out accreditation renewal; minor wording and structural refinements throughout.