

Offshore Course Delivery Policy

Policy Category	Policy/guideline/procedure/rules		
Review	3 years from date of Approval		
Policy Code	AP043		
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Version	Approval Authority	Approval Date	Commencement Date
2020.07	Academic Board	27 July 2020	27 July 2020

1. PURPOSE

The Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce (IMC) provides a range of educational opportunities including the option of course delivery in offshore campus locations. This policy provides information related to the development and administration of courses delivered in offshore locations. The policy emphasises the importance of quality assurance standards and practices that ensure: the quality of the student learning experience; the educational value of the course; and that any award offered offshore is equivalent to that delivered onshore.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to students undertaking IMC courses delivered in an offshore location and to staff involved in the development, delivery and administration of those courses. The *Course Delivery in a Language Other than English Policy* outlines additional requirements of offshore delivery.

3. DEFINITIONS

Offshore course is an IMC course approved for delivery to students at a location outside of Australia.

Offshore campus is a campus at an overseas location that is established by IMC in order to expand its educational offerings outside of Australia.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a framework that specifies standards for educational qualifications in Australia.

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF 2021) is the regulatory framework of standards that govern higher education in Australia.

Language Other Than English is any language other than English which is used as the language of instruction of an IMC Course.

4. PRINCIPLES

- a) Offshore teaching and learning and assessment activities must meet IMC's standards of academic quality, which encompass AQF requirements.
- b) Quality assurance procedures will enable IMC to ensure that the offshore experience is equivalent to that provided onshore and that there is adherence to HESF 2021 requirements.

- c) Course and Unit Learning Outcomes will be the same or equivalent for offshore and onshore, and students will be given the same IMC award on completion.
- d) All IMC offshore campuses will operate in compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements of the country in which they operate.
- e) IMC's academic policies apply irrespective of location. Through appropriately designed quality assurance mechanisms, the Provost will be responsible for ensuring that there is compliance with IMC policies and compliance with HESF 2021 requirements.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Approval to deliver offshore

All courses to be delivered offshore need the approval of the Academic Board. Deans will be responsible for seeking approval. In providing justification for offshore delivery of a course Deans must demonstrate how offshore course delivery will:

- Provide opportunities for international students to complete an IMC course while staying in their home country;
- Develop international and inter-cultural perspectives to course content and resources; and
- Advance the strategic interests of IMC.

Deans will be also required to demonstrate how offshore delivery will provide the elements that are essential to successful delivery of an IMC course. The Dean will provide an assessment of the:

- Qualifications of proposed teaching staff;
- Quality of teaching materials;
- Provision of student support;
- Capability to conduct appropriate assessment of learning outcomes; and
- Translation, where a course is to be delivered in a language other than English. (See *Course Delivery in a Language Other than English Policy*)

Offshore teaching activities cannot commence before approval processes are complete and appropriate in-country government approvals have been secured.

5.2 Quality assurance

5.2.1 Standards

IMC must assure that standards are compatible with those of the course delivered onshore, and are of sufficient quality to lead to an IMC award, including in the following areas: student admission; learning outcomes; assessment; teaching and learning activities; content; and student experience.

Courses may be delivered in English or a language other than English. However, if the latter, approval must be sought and specific procedures will be applicable (see *Course Delivery in a Language Other than English Policy*).

5.2.2 Admission

Student admission standards will be as for student admission to courses delivered onshore; that is, admission will be determined on the basis of academic merit, the capacity for tertiary level study and the likelihood of successful completion of the course. See *Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedures* and *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy* for further information.

5.2.3 Monitoring

The Dean (or his or her nominee) will oversee academic management and delivery. The Dean will ensure that teaching and learning activities meet IMC's criteria for educational quality. Moderation of assessments, exam papers and marking will be coordinated by the Dean (or his or her nominee) and

involve collaboration of offshore and onshore academic staff. IMC's moderation procedures will be applied to offshore delivery (See *Moderation Policy and Procedure AP015*) with additional procedures applied, if appropriate. Student feedback surveys that are conducted for courses onshore must also be conducted for offshore students, with content modified to suit specific offshore environments (variations should take into account the compatibility of onshore and offshore surveys to allow meaningful comparison and benchmarking). Where appropriate, moderation may involve annual inspection visits (either actual or virtual) to the offshore campus by the Dean or a delegated onshore faculty member.

5.2.4 Academic staff

It is essential that teaching staff have appropriate qualifications in the course discipline for the level of teaching. As a minimum, they must be qualified to at least one AQF level higher than the course of study being taught or have professional experience equivalent to at least one AQF level higher than the course of study being taught. (See *Academic Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Policy AP003* for further requirements)

The responsibility for academic standards is a collaborative effort between offshore and onshore staff. Offshore staff will provide a similar level of student contact and mentoring as provided by onshore staff. Staff in an offshore campus will participate in the development and continuous improvement of courses and in assuring academic quality and standards. There is also an expectation that offshore staff will contribute to research.

5.2.5 Course content, Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Onshore staff will provide core teaching, learning and assessment materials and marking guides for all courses. However, in order to maintain cultural relevance, offshore staff may customise learning materials and activities, with the approval of the Dean. However, even with customisation, courses delivered offshore will have the same learning outcomes as those delivered onshore.

In some cases, courses and units may be developed specifically for offshore delivery and this will be in accordance with procedures in the *Course and Unit Development Policy and Procedure AP011*.

For courses and units developed specifically for offshore delivery, quality assurance procedures must provide evidence that:

- Teaching and learning activities are of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to an IMC award;
- Teaching material is appropriate and of an equivalent standard to that provided to onshore students;
- Learning Outcomes are equivalent to and compatible with those of a similar unit or course delivered onshore; and
- Assessment is capable of demonstrating that Unit and Course Learning Outcomes have been achieved and the extent to which they have been achieved.

5.2.6 Student experience

The student experience at an offshore campus will be equivalent to and of a comparable standard to that at the onshore campus.

Facilities and resources at the offshore campus must be of a standard that enables students to achieve learning outcomes and to ensure their experience is equivalent to the onshore experience. Initial approval for offshore delivery will be dependent upon the Dean's assessment of facilities and resources and ongoing reviews will require evidence that they are fit for purpose.

Student learning support will include the provision to all students of:

- A valuable orientation experience;
- Student handbook and information about IMC rules and policies;
- Access to IMC email services;
- Online learning resources;
- Library services;
- Academic and welfare support services;
- Access to student appeals and complaints processes.

5.3 Review

Courses delivered offshore will be included in IMC's course review and re-accreditation processes with the same standards as for those delivered onshore including:

- Course proposal, development and approval;
- Accreditation and reaccreditation;
- Course and Unit review; and
- Continuous improvement processes.

(See *Academic Quality Assurance Framework* and *Course and Unit Review Policy and Procedure* for further information)

In addition to IMC's usual course review processes, an Offshore Campus Advisory Committee, appointed by the Chair of the Academic Board will conduct annual reviews to consider:

- Academic management;
- Course performance and benchmarking;
- Equivalency of student administration, services and support; and
- Other factors required for quality assurance

These reviews will be considered by the Academic Board and incorporated into IMC's continuous improvement processes.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- i. *Course Delivery in a Language Other than English Policy (draft)*
- ii. *Academic Quality Assurance Framework*
- iii. *Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedures AP034*
- iv. *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy POL016*
- v. *Academic Qualifications and Equivalent Professional Experience Policy AP003*
- vi. *Course and Unit Development Policy AP005*
- vii. *Course and Unit Review Policy and Procedure AP011*
- viii. *Moderation Policy and Procedure AP015*