

Discontinuation and Teaching-out Policy

Purpose	This Policy addresses AITC’s approach to discontinuing a Course and the student focused arrangements that are in place when it is taught out.
Location	The policy is maintained on owncloud
Responsible executive	Chair of Academic Board
Responsible office	Chair of Academic Board’s Office
Contact officer	TBA
Effective date	29 June 2020
Review date	TBA
Modification history	Version 1.0
Related documents	AITC Business Continuity Management Policy AITC Staff Welfare and Wellbeing Policy AITC Fee Refund Policy and Procedure AITC Tuition Fees Payment Policy AITC Student Progression, Exclusion and Graduation Policy AITC Strategic Plan AITC Business Plan AITC Workforce Plan AITC Education Plan
Authority	Approved by Council

1. Purpose

This Policy outlines the requirements regarding AITC’s approach to discontinuing a Course and the student focused arrangements that must be in place for when it is taught out.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all academic Courses of AITC.

3. Definitions

Teaching-out period means the length of time between the announcement that a Course is to be closed to the time when all the enrolled students have completed the Course.

Intermission is the period that a student is approved to pause his/her studies.

Course Suspension is the period when a student is directed by AITC to delay his/her studies.

4. Introduction

The Australian Institute of Technology and Commerce (AITC), in some circumstances, has to disestablish a Course. There are several reasons that would lead to such a decision and these may

include, changes in student demand, changes in strategic positioning in particular markets or a major course revision following a course review.

This policy outlines how such a decision would be implemented to effectively disestablish the Course and identify the management issues that need to be addressed and actioned to ensure a smooth transition for students. It does not however address any staffing issues that may arise from a decision to discontinue a Course. These issues need to be managed in accordance with related AITC staffing policies.

The outlined processes focus on ensuring that enrolled students can complete their Course within a reasonable timeframe and that the quality of the Course and supporting resources are maintained to the end of the teach-out period. There is also a need to ensure that such situations are managed sensitively with individual students and with any external partners/stakeholders involved in the Course delivery.

Depending on the size of the student cohort and the circumstances surrounding the disestablishment, it is likely to be appropriate to seek advice from the AITC Legal officers on the timing and consequences of disestablishment of the course and the content of the initial written communication to students that advises them of the course disestablishment. The Academic Dean will assess the risks in each case and devise an appropriate supportive, student-centred, management strategy.

AITC must advise on the legal requirements of course disestablishment involving an external partner where contractual arrangements are in place. External legal advice will be sought in executing this activity.

All actions are to be undertaken in consultation and approval of all relevant regulatory authorities, including the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA).

5. Principles

5.1 Discontinuation of Academic Courses.

- 5.1.1 Academic Course discontinuations must be endorsed by the Academic Board and approved by the AITC Council on advice from the CEO.
- 5.1.2 Discontinuations must be approved by the Academic Board before students are formally notified of the discontinuation.
- 5.1.3 TEQSA must be notified of discontinuation.

5.2 Teaching-out of Academic Courses.

- 5.2.1 A teaching-out plan must be endorsed by the Academic Board and approved by the Council for each discontinued academic Course of the currently enrolled students or students who are in receipt of an active offer of admission to a Course. The teaching-out plan must;
 - detail the core and elective Units that will be offered over the period of teaching-out;
 - indicate how the integrity of the course/major/stream will be maintained and its objectives met during the teaching-out process;
 - detail the implications for student progress in the academic Course;
 - include a teaching-out timetable indicating the core and elective Units that will be

- offered over the period of teaching-out; and;
- refer to teach-out agreements AITC has established to support teaching-out.

5.3 Notification to Students.

5.3.1 All students enrolled in an academic Course or in receipt of an active offer of admission to a course that is to be taught out must be notified of:

- the plans for discontinuation;
- the expected timetable for the phasing-out period; and;
- any planned changes in the overall study options that will be available to them.

5.3.2 Students must be notified either before the end of semester two in the year preceding the commencement of the teaching-out phase, or before the normal time of enrolment, whichever is the earlier. It is expected that AITC would make available individual course counselling for students who need advice on their specific completion pathways.

5.3.3 Students who are already on approved leave from a Course that is to be taught out should be able to return to complete the course, provided they re-enrol no later than the end of the period of approved leave. Any additional leave approved after the discontinuation phase has commenced should be negotiated between the Academic Dean and the student but will be at the discretion of AITC.

5.4 Student Progress and Special Arrangements in Teaching-out Courses

5.4.1 Students enrolled in discontinued Courses are subject to the normal course duration and progress rules for the Course.

5.4.2 Students who are enrolled in a Course that is subsequently discontinued and who are making satisfactory progress will be able to complete that Course, including all compulsory Units of study and any requirements necessary for professional accreditation.

5.4.3 AITC will make special arrangements for students in a discontinued Course who are falling academically behind their cohort and where it would not be viable to offer Units for a very small number of students. These arrangements must be approved by the Academic Board.

5.5 Teaching-out agreement.

5.5.1 A teach-out agreement is a written agreement between institutions that provides for the fair treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their programs of study.

5.5.2 All teaching-out agreements must be approved by Academic Board before students are advised.

Procedures Appendix

The statements below provide advice on the matters that must be considered when planning for teaching-out of a Course. Sample action plans are attached that address initial planning requirements and ongoing actions during the teach-out period.

1. Determine Final Intake Period.

- a) The timing of the decision to disestablish a Course will normally impact on how quickly an intake of students can be halted, for example, a decision made late in the academic year may mean that one final intake is needed in the following year. Intakes should be ceased at the earliest possible opportunity while honouring commitments made by AITC.
- b) Courses that have formal articulation pathway agreements will need the Academic Dean to determine the last date of intake for the course based on enough notice periods for the pathway Courses. In such cases, memoranda of understanding and contractual agreements will be in place and these documents must outline the processes that will be followed if the Course is withdrawn.
- c) It may be possible to offer an alternative pathway for the term of any such agreements as transition arrangements or a new agreement may need to be explored by AITC.
- d) Students need to be advised that an offer of a place in the final Course intake cannot be deferred.

2. Determining Anticipated Completion Dates.

- a) All existing enrolments (per year level) including the estimated final intake cohort need to be carefully reviewed. Based on the nature of the student cohort and the Course, and how highly structured it is, an achievable end date needs to be determined. This would normally be the full-time duration plus one further year or part-time equivalent, depending on the nature of the student cohort and the Course. Part-time students should expect to complete the course in a normal part-time progression (e.g. 2 Units per semester). The projected end date for offering the course would be guided by end date for timely progression for part-time students.
- b) Based on the course length and the pattern of enrolment for the student cohort (i.e. part-time enrolments versus full-time enrolments) the estimated enrolment pattern for the teach-out period will be forecast. Estimated enrolments will be based on actual student numbers not equivalent full-time students.
- c) The teach-out period should allow for students to access up to one year of intermission, as per AITC policy. Students should be advised that it is unlikely that any extensions beyond this time would be approved and what options would be available to them if this need eventuates (e.g. course transfer, complementary study).

3. Mapping Unit Delivery across the Teach-Out Period.

Table.

	Current Units Offered	Planned Units Year 1 of Teach Out	Planned Units Year 2	Planned Units Year 3	Planned Units Year4	Planned Units Year 5
Level 1						
Level 2						

4. Course or Campus Transfer as an Option

If appropriate, students may be offered the option to apply to transfer to another Course or to complete their course at another campus, but such options may not always be possible.

5. Individual Course Maps for All Students

- a) Enrolments of all students should be reviewed and an individualised course map for the teach-out period prepared. This should assume timely progression based on the student's current enrolment pattern (full or part-time).
- b) Course maps will need to be reviewed each semester to ensure that timely progression is maintained, and any progression issues are resolved.

6. Alternative Unit Options.

- a) Towards the end of the teach-out period, there may be a need to approve alternative Units of study to facilitate the completion of some students, for example, alternative elective units, off campus delivery or cross-institutional enrolments may need to be considered. Students need to be advised of this possibility when notified of the disestablishment of the course.
- b) Such substitutions may need to be approved by the Academic Dean to ensure that there are no consequential issues for students (in the case of core unit substitutions).
- c) A contingency for unit options for any student who does not complete his/her Course by the end of the teach-out period due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. serious illness) may need to be considered and implemented.
- d) These arrangements may also need to be applied to any student requesting an intermission late in the teaching-out period or if seeking an extension to an intermission period. Students should be advised that such requests are unlikely to be approved unless there are exceptional extenuating circumstances. Students making these requests need to be advised of the consequences on their progression and that a limited range of options may therefore be available.

7. Students on Suspension.

Contingency plans to manage any students on any form of academic suspension will be specially developed.

8. Student Communication.

- a) All students impacted by the decision to close a Course must be advised in writing. The correspondence should include the reasons for the decision and details concerning the various options that are available. A nominated contact person will be included to assist students with their individual enquiries. Advice on draft correspondence will be sought from the AITC Legal Office.
- b) Depending on the circumstances, a follow-up meeting with students might be considered to answer any student questions and provide further reassurance about progression.
- c) Student communication should not be limited to active enrolments but also include students on intermission and academic suspension.
- d) Students in pathway programs also need to be informed about the teaching-out and any plans/options for their cohort.
- e) A communication plan also needs to be developed for any current applicants for the course advising them of alternative course options.
- f) At the point of the final intake, students need to be advised that no deferral of commencement is possible. Marketing material for the final intake must clearly state that deferral cannot be approved.

9. Course Advertising.

Marketing and Recruitment of AITC will be advised to remove information about the Course from all websites and publications, both locally and internationally.

10. External Partners

Where the Course involves external partners in its delivery, the terms of the contractual agreement need to be applied when taking the decision to disestablish the Course. In accordance with those terms, some of the implementation actions may be undertaken by the partner or jointly by AITC and the partner. The AITC Legal Office will be asked for their advice on this matter.

Suggested Teach-Out Action Plan and Item Checklist

1. Maintain the website for students with information about the teach-out. Refer to this site in all future correspondence with students, especially for re-enrolment information.
2. Review course planning at the end of each year to ensure students are streaming into units, thus making class sizes more viable and minimising unit offerings. Ensure unit offerings are still meeting the needs of the students.
3. At the end of each year, prepare and supply individual course plans for all students mapping their progression to completion within the designated teach-out period.
4. Seek advice from AITC's Solicitor on any relevant issue (i.e. content of written communication to students notifying them of the decision to disestablish the course and honouring contractual obligations and other representations made by AITC).
5. Develop a communication plan to advise any current applicants or students with offers for subsequent intake periods that the course will no longer be offered, including information about alternative course options that are available.
6. Consult with the Library, Information Technology (IT) and Student Services regarding maintenance of support services and any changes to service delivery associated with teach-out arrangements.
7. A letter should be sent to all students explaining the teach-out arrangements and detailing all available options for students.
8. Where possible, consider holding a meeting with students to explain processes and address any concerns.
9. Nominate a contact person to deal with student enquiries about the process.
10. Establish a website for students with information about the teach-out. Refer to this site in all future correspondence with students, especially for re-enrolment information.
11. Course planning to ensure cohorts of students are streamed into units, thus making class sizes more viable and to minimise unit offerings.
12. Prepare and supply individual course plans for all students mapping their progression to completion within the designated teach-out period.