Integrated Risk, Quality and Standards Framework for Learning and Teaching

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to identify, document and manage key areas of risk in assuring the quality and standards of international student learning, assessment and support at Western Sydney University International College (WSUIC).

2. Scope

This framework applies to all learning, teaching and student support activities at WSUIC. It is based on the findings of a Western Sydney University (WSU) national senior teaching fellowship involving 3700 learning and teaching leaders around the world funded by Australia's Office for Learning and Teaching. The Fellowship was undertaken from 2014-16 and focused on what needs to be done to assure the quality of higher education learning and outcomes (See: FLIPCurric). The framework has been internationally benchmarked and aligns with the requirements of TEQSA.

3. Definitions

Standard – a level of achievement with clear criteria, indicators and means of testing.

Quality – Fitness of purpose as well as fitness for purpose and performance to an agreed standard.

Learning – a demonstrably positive improvement in the capabilities and competencies that are most important for successful early career performance, further study and societal participation.

Assessment – gathering evidence about the current levels of capability and competency of students using valid (fit-for-purpose) tasks.

Strategy – linking relevant, desirable and clear ends to the most feasible means necessary to achieve them.

Evaluation – making judgements of worth about the quality of inputs and outcomes (including the evidence gathered during assessment).

"FLIPCurric" - A methodology in which the curriculum design and review process is "Flipped" by starting not with content but with a specific focus on validating program level outcomes as being relevant, desirable, clear and feasible (deliverable). How this is done is outlined and discussed on the FLIPCurric site.

4.   Alignment of risk management with a proven Quality and Standards Framework for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

4.1   WSUIC has identified the major areas for risk management in learning, teaching and its support and has located these in the quality and standards framework commended as best practice in an earlier audit of WSU by the Australian Universities Quality Agency and validated internationally during the FLIPCurric project.

4.2   It is important to note that all of the checkpoints identified need to be addressed if the quality of the learning, teaching and support experienced by WSUIC students is to be assured and negative outcomes for both students and WSUIC are to be avoided. It is in this way that continuous quality assurance and improvement and effective risk management become two sides of the same coin.

4.3   The use of the WSUIC Risk Management and Quality and Standards Framework is characterised, therefore, by a pro-active rather than a reactive approach to ensuring students are engaged and retained in the most productive learning possible.

4.4   The risk management and quality assurance checkpoints identified for each of the components that make up the framework take into account accreditation standards, benchmarking with other highly successful Higher Education Providers, an analysis of litigation in higher education, a study of recurring student complaints, relevant legislation (Appendix A) and an extensive analysis of all the available empirical research on effective approaches to Higher Education learning and support.

Diagram 1
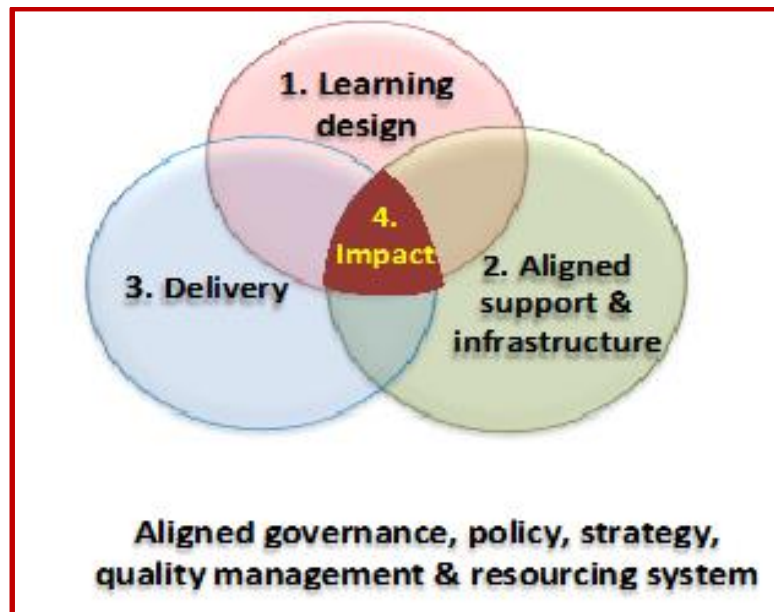
In Table 1 below, each of the components that make up Diagram 1 is taken in order and the empirically verified risk management/quality assurance checkpoints are identified. The first part of this table gives focus to **what** needs to be given attention if quality is to be assured and risk is to be managed effectively (Risk Management/Quality Assurance Checkpoints). The second part of the table identifies **how** this agenda is best enacted (Aligned Governance, Policy, Strategy, Human Resources' Management, Quality Management and Resourcing).

A separate document gives guidance on how to allocate risk ratings to individual checkpoints, in terms of their likelihood of occurrence and the significance of their consequences if not well managed.

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Table 1

Risk Management/Quality Assurance Checkpoints			
1. Course Design Standards	**2. Student Support & Admin Standards**	**3. Delivery Standards**	**4. Impact – Academic Learning Outcomes**
All programs are designed/reviewed using the key quality checkpoints in the FLIPCurric quality system. Specifically: **Right outcomes** 1. The capabilities that are confirmed as central for early career practice/ further study are confirmed as valid and are the focus of course, unit and assessment design. **Right mapping** 2. Units are mapped and scaffolded to meet specified learning out-comes. **Right assessment** 3. Assessment tasks demonstrably address one or more of the validated course learning outcomes and meet the powerful assessment tests in FLIPCurric. 4. Prompt and constructive feedback on assessment is built into the course design. 5. There is clear, confirmed agreement on what is required from students when markers allocate different grade levels. 6. Different cultural expectations regarding what is learnt, how it is learnt and what constitutes valid and reliable assessment are identified and addressed.	**Recruitment & enrolment** 13. Agents are quality assured, effectively briefed and trained to meet WSUIC expectations and standards. 14. Information and promises made by in-country agents is confirmed as accurate and deliverable. 15. There is a structured and robust admissions and enrolment process which ensures that new students are appropriately evaluated and only those with the required level of education and skills, including English language skills, are enrolled. 16. Admissions' processes facilitate ease of offer and acceptance and efficiently manage visa issues. 17. Fees are managed accurately and promptly and communicated consistently to students and agents. 18. Information provided to prospective and current students is accurate, relevant, timely, easily accessible, and enables informed decision making about educational offerings and experiences. **Transition** 19. Pre-departure briefings and expectations' management for students are efficient and effective. 20. Targeted help is provided for transition; new arrivals are greeted and supported on arrival.	**Staff quality** 38. Staff are committed to the core values and mission statement acknowledged by WSUIC. 39. Staff are accessible, easy to contact and responsive. 40. Teachers are of a high academic calibre, responsive, culturally sensitive, effective communicators and educators and have a qualification level and capabilities required for the subject(s) taught. 41. Course Convenors are trained and actively monitor the quality of delivery. 42. Sessional teachers are effectively trained and briefed. 43. Professional Development of staff is timely, consistent, 'fit-for-purpose' and supported. 44. Quality teaching practice is shared and recognised/ rewarded. **Tracking & Improvement during delivery** 45. Survey and Feedback design aligns with the WSU quality tracking and improvement system and covers all key components of the WSUIC quality and standards framework. It is delivered and processed comprehensively, promptly and reliably. 46. The consistency and quality of the delivery of the course design is tracked, with particular attention to sessional staff.	**Key indicators of positive impact on students** 51. Retention and completion rates are at or above 85% 52. Benchmarked student satisfaction levels on feedback surveys is above 3.8/5. 53. Transition rates into WSU are Greater than 90% 54. WSUIC graduate success rates at WSU are at or above the average for the course studied. 55. Course and unit learning outcomes are reported by graduates as enhancing future study and employment opportunities. 56. Feedback from employers about the quality of WSU(C/WSU graduates is consistently positive. 57. There is evidence of consistently high levels of word of mouth endorsement of WSUIC particularly on social media. 58. Demand for WSUIC courses remains high. 59. Testamurs, Certificates and Statement of Attainment are accurate & compliant with all AQF and TEQSA requirements.

Risk Management/Quality Assurance Checkpoints			
1. Course Design Standards	**2. Student Support & Admin Standards**	**3. Delivery Standards**	**4. Impact – Academic Learning Outcomes**
7. Robust internal processes that address plagiarism, cheating and the use of essay factories are in place. 8. Intermarker training, calibration and moderation is built into the grading system. **Right learning methods, resources and support** 9. Course and unit designs consistently foster active learning and strong theory-practice links. 10. Students have access to a range of flexible learning options and tools to support various learning styles. 11. A range of forms of learning support, including assessment-focused learning guides, peer support, transition support and study assistance are built into the design. 12. The teachers who are to deliver a new/revised course or unit are involved in the design process of that course or unit.	21. Orientation processes provide timely and practical, needs-based support for the transition of new and existing students into campus life and life in Western Sydney. **Student systems & services** 22. Student Services Teams are pro-active and responsive. 23. Quality-based service standards are consistently implemented for all students. 24. The delivery of support services like counselling and welfare assistance is of consistently high quality across all locations. 25. Access and participation for all students, including those with a disability is easy and of consistently high quality. 26. Complaint, appeals and grievance management processes are structured, transparent and easy to navigate and ensure that issues raised by students are addressed and resolved in a timely manner. 27. Assessment results are provided to students in a timely manner. 28. Records' management is secure and accurate. 29. Administration and support processes are regularly reviewed to identify and address opportunities for continuous improvement. **Learning resources** 30. Learning materials, library and other teaching resources are 'fit-for-purpose', well maintained and easily accessed by students and staff.	47. There is an 'early warning' system that identifies and assists students at risk. **Assessment delivery** 48. Expectations regarding assessment are well defined and confirmed with the student at the commencement of the course and each unit of study. 49. The WSUIC academic integrity policy is consistently and effectively implemented and demonstrably minimises academic misconduct. 50. Examinations and other key forms of assessment are conducted with integrity.	60. The quality of student outcomes and impact is prioritised over a focus on the confirmation of quality inputs.

Risk Management/Quality Assurance Checkpoints			
1. Course Design Standards	**2. Student Support & Admin Standards**	**3. Delivery Standards**	**4. Impact – Academic Learning Outcomes**
	Information Technology 31. The IT-enabled learning system used is benchmarked against the ACODE Benchmarks & ACODE Online standards, and the CHEA standards. It is aligned to each course's outcomes, reliable, secure, and easy to access both on and off campus. 32. A benchmarked IT security system and IT 'worst case scenario' meltdown/ disaster and recovery plan with accountable leaders and identified staff trained in its implementation is in place and effectively used. **Accommodation & Transport** 33. Formal and Informal learning and collaboration spaces are flexible and fit-for-purpose. 34. The campus is secure, well-lit and it is easy to access security staff when needed. 35. Parking is accessible when needed. 36. Transport between campuses is regular and reliable. 37. Food services, gym, clubs and other forms of campus life meet proven good practice benchmarks.		

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Aligned Governance, Policy, Strategy, Quality Management and Resourcing Systems

Governance	1. Governance accountabilities and reporting lines and performance monitoring are clear and confirmed as working effectively. 2. Decisions are evidence based not anecdotal and tested against agreed quality tests. 3. Strategic objectives are small in number and widely confirmed by those who are to implement them as being relevant, desirable, clear, and most importantly feasible (deliverable, given available resources). 4. Key risk management priorities and indicators are set, widely understood and regularly monitored – these would include attrition; early stage negative feedback. 5. Central and local leaders are monitored and held to account for successfully addressing the key quality improvement priorities and areas for strategic development relevant to their responsibilities 6. The governing body is able to answer the question "How do you know your Academic Board is effective"?
Risk Management and Compliance Systems	7. Trained student representatives are involved appropriately in governance activities 8. A comprehensive, benchmarked, validated risk management framework and tracking system is in place with clear accountabilities for its implementation and prompt, effective action is demonstrably being taken to address any areas of poor performance. 9. There is a disaster management plan, procedure and set of accountabilities in place 10. The IT data system's security and back up is assured, including high levels of security around the recording of student grades on that system. 11. Compliance with relevant legislation including CRICOS, ESOS (see Appendix A), Disability Legislation, TEQSA requirements is confirmed by an accountable member of the Exec.
Policy & Procedures	12. All policies and associated implementation procedures are benchmarked, confirmed as 'fit for purpose', and their consistent implementation is tracked and assured. 13. A key focus is on assuring the consistent implementation of agreed policies and procedures across all programs and locations. 14. All forms, templates and data-gathering mechanisms are efficient, agile, demonstrably of importance and those who provide the data are informed on how their input was used.
Quality Assurance and Improvement System	15. A comprehensive, valid, widely understood and used Quality and Standards Framework for L&T is in place – staff can identify their role in delivering their accountabilities in this framework and where their key areas for improvement lie. 16. Consistent and effective use of an online course development & review system which enables all who are to deliver or support a learning program to make comment on it and which has provision for authorised sign-off that the design meets key QA checkpoints in the FLIPCurric quality system. 17. Agreed improvement priorities are addressed promptly and wisely. 18. There is a focus on confirming not only the quality of inputs but also the quality of student outcomes and impact. 19. There is consistent and regular monitoring of performance in all of the areas identified in the quality and standards framework across all programs and locations using a proven Tracking & Improvement System, with annual diagnostic reports produced and successfully acted upon. 20. Academic and professional staff regularly use the data from the Tracking and Improvement system to self-assess where their services are working well and what needs improvement. 21. The Academic Board ensures that the accountable leaders 'close the loop' on key areas for improvement promptly and wisely; and ensure support is given to these players in this process. 22. The quality and performance of 3rd party providers in all these areas is assured up front and carefully monitored.

Aligned Governance, Policy, Strategy, Quality Management and Resourcing Systems	
Human Resource Development and Monitoring	23. Regular benchmarking using the quality and standards framework is undertaken not only to prove but improve quality. 24. There is a demonstrably positive record in attracting and retaining high quality staff. 25. All of the staff required to deliver a particular policy/set of procedures/course design are trained on how best to do this, using successful practitioners as a key learning resource. 26. Staff are able to identify their key improvement priorities and how performance enhancement is being tracked and supported. 27. Effective local and central leadership training, accountabilities, performance management and follow-up are in place with demonstrably positive outcomes. 28. There is regular training/monitoring/review for key governance bodies –directors, academic board and sub-committees and an associated good practice manual in place and used by each of these groups. 29. Appropriate administrative tools are in place to capture and maintain Professional Development and Scholarly Activity records and currency.
Resource Allocation	30. Resource allocation is demonstrably 'fit-for-purpose'. 31. The effectiveness of resourcing decisions is regularly determined and short falls addressed promptly and wisely. 32. The ICT-enabled learning system is demonstrably 'fit-for-purpose', attracts high levels of student satisfaction and is constantly upgraded and confirmed as still delivering the learning support students require.
Meetings	33. Every meeting demonstrably adds value to the quality of student learning' outcomes and support. 34. Meetings are undertaken by teleconference whenever appropriate in order to save time. 35. The chairs of meetings are trained. 36. Participants are held to account for effectively delivering the actions agreed at earlier meetings.

5. Quality and Compliance

5.1 This document is reviewed periodically (at a minimum every two years) to ensure regulatory compliance, operational currency, the identification of continuous improvement opportunities and risk identification and mitigation. This review is reflected in WSUIC's Quality Management Framework and Risk Management Framework.

5.2 This document will be available on the WSUIC website for students and the WSUIC SharePoint site for staff access.

5.3 Emails will be issued to all staff to inform and update them on any changes to the policy and/or procedures and guidelines.

5.4 New staff will receive policy information during the induction process where it relates to their position.

6.   **Related Documents**

- WSUIC Teaching and Learning Plan

- WSUIC Quality Management Framework

- WSUIC Risk Management Framework

7.   **Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Legislation**

- [Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015](#)

- [The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training for Overseas Students 2017](#) `

- [ESOS Act](#)

Approval and Amendment History

Approval Authority:	Western Sydney University International Academic Board
Policy Owner:	Academic Director/Academic Leadership Team
Approval Date:	26 February 2019
Date for Next Review:	26 February 2021

Revision Date	Version	Summary of changes
1 June 2017	1.0	New Framework Document Developed
26/02/2019	1.1	Minor/cosmetic changes: formatting changes throughout; replaced Western Sydney University International College with WSUIC. Reviewed as part of the Foundation Studies application.

Appendix A:

ESOS Requirements for Overseas Students
(From NSW Ombudsman Report 2015)

At: https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/4205/University-Complaints-Handling-Guideline-Jan-2015-NSW-web.pdf

Universities that provide services to overseas students – which would be the vast majority, if not all, universities – are required by the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007(the ESOS Code) to develop complaints and appeals processes. For further information on the specific requirements of the code, see:
https://www.aei.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Education-Services-for-overseas-students-esos-legislative-framework/national-code/Pages/default.aspx.

Standard 8 of Part D of the ESOS Code states that:

- The provider must have an internal complaints and appeals process that:
    o requires a written record if the complaint or appeal cannot be resolved informally
    o provides a student with the opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost
    o allows the student to be assisted or accompanied by a support person
    o provides a written statement of the outcome, including details and reasons for the decision
    o requires that processes begin within 10 working days of the provider receiving the formal written lodgement of the complaint or appeal.

- The provider must maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing. This does not necessarily mean that a student must remain in class.

- The provider must have arrangements in place for an independent external person or organisation to hear the complaints or appeals where the provider's internal process has been completed and the student remains dissatisfied.

- The student must be granted immediate access to the provider's complaints and appeals process. The process must begin within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint or appeal.

- The provider's documented internal complaints and appeals process must include provision of a written statement of the outcome, including details and reasons for the decision.

- If the outcome of a student's appeal through a provider's internal or external complaints and appeals handling process is favourable to the student, the provider must immediately advise the student of this and implement any decision and/or corrective and preventive action required. Ombudsman offices are independent external organisations well equipped to look at the decisions of universities. It should be noted that the ESOS code is currently under review.