



Transnational Education (TNE) Policy

Policy Owner:	ECC Partner Programs Director/College Principal
Contact Officers:	ECC Partner Programs Director/College Principal Academic Director Academic Administrator
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Approved by:	Senior Management Group (16/06/2017); Quality Assurance Unit (17/05/17)
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Related Policies:	Assessment Policy Complaints and Appeals Policy Internationalisation Policy Moderation Policy Progress & Graduation Policy Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy Student Misconduct Policy
Related Documents:	Academic Governance Structure ECC Unit Coordinator and Lecturer Handbook Teaching and Learning Plan

1. Overview

- 1.1. Transnational Education (TNE) includes any teaching or learning activity (offered through partnership arrangement), in which the students are outside of Australia and require staff and/or educational materials to cross national boundaries.¹
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to::
 - Cover the delivery of programs in TNE locations via partnerships; or
 - Cover the provision of intellectual property and quality assurance processes in TNE locations via cooperative arrangements
 - Describe processes and provide decision-making guidelines as outlined in Schedule 1.
- 1.3. Transnational education (TNE) offerings via course delivery or intellectual property and quality assurance provisions should:
 - Contribute to the achievement of ECC's strategic objectives directly; or
 - Contribute to the achievement of ECC's strategic objectives indirectly and to Navitas' strategic objectives directly; and
 - Should be provided in a manner such that the financial viability of ECC is not exposed to undue risk.

2. Organisational Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all ECC programs with ECC students enrolled in accredited ECC programs offshore.

¹ Knight, J. (2003). Updated internationalization definition. *International Higher Education*, 33, 2-3.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Academic Governance:** Refers to the committee structure that is responsible for ECC's academic systems. It includes the ECC Academic Council, ECC/ECU Faculty Consultative Committees, ECC Teaching & Learning Committee, Navitas/Offshore Academic Advisory Committee and the ECC Board of Examiners.
- 3.2. **Cooperative Arrangement:** A formal agreement where ECC has agreed to provide an institution with intellectual property and quality assurance processes related to academic matters.
- 3.3. **Course/Program:** A formal program of education and/or training made up of study components known as units.
- 3.4. **Internationalisation:** The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of ECC programs.²
- 3.5. **Navitas Projects Approvals Team:** Members drawn from senior management of the Navitas group and convened by the Executive General Manager University Programs to assess prospective TNE offerings.
- 3.6. **Partnership:** A formal agreement where an institution (partner) has been approved as a TNE delivery site of ECC, where ECC provides the intellectual property, quality assurance processes and award documentation.
- 3.7. **ECC Academic Council:** Academic governing body established to assure academic quality standards, advise on academic policy, teaching and learning plans, academic standards and academic outcomes. The Academic Council also endorses new course curriculum and major course changes.
- 3.8. **ECC/Offshore Board of Examiners:** Internal committee responsible for reviewing moderated marks for approval.
- 3.9. **ECC/ECU Faculty Consultative Committee:** Discipline-specific committee that assures developments in course design, academic outcomes, moderation, staff and student support in the delivery and assessment of courses.
- 3.10. **ECC Teaching and Learning Committee:** Committee responsible for developing, improving and making recommendations relating to the Teaching and Learning Plan to the ECC Academic Council. The committee monitors and recommends the course content, assessment and delivery.
- 3.11. **ECC Unit Coordinator:** is the nominated ECC staff member who will be responsible for all aspects of quality assurance for that unit at the TNE location.
- 3.12. **Transnational Education (TNE):** This includes any teaching or learning activity (offered through partnership arrangement), in which the students are outside of Australia and require staff and/or educational materials to cross national boundaries.³

4. Policy Principles

The focus of the policy is:

- 4.1. To ensure that the TNE program is linked to ECC's overall strategic objectives, Internationalisation Policy and Teaching and Learning Plan;

² Knight, J. (2003). Updated internationalization definition. *International Higher Education*, 33, 2-3.

³ Knight, J. (2003). Updated internationalization definition. *International Higher Education*, 33, 2-3.

- 4.2. To ensure that TNE programs are developed, offered and quality assured in a manner consistent with ECC's policies, procedures and practices;
- 4.3. To ensure that where TNE students are enrolled in ECC programs, the TNE students' experience and outcomes are comparable to those of onshore students;
- 4.4. To safeguard the reputation of ECC;
- 4.5. To ensure that all staff engaged in TNE programs are provided with appropriate support, training and development, and documentation to ensure they meet ECC standards:
 - Academic leadership (onshore)
 - Academic leadership (offshore)
 - ECC Unit Coordinators (onshore)
 - ECC Unit Coordinators (offshore)
 - ECC TNE Administrative staff

5. Policy Content

5.1 Course Approvals and Modifications

- 5.1.1. All courses for delivery or agreements to provide intellectual property and quality assurance processes are recommended by the Senior Management Group for endorsement by the ECC Academic Council and approval by the ECC Board;
- 5.1.2. Following consideration of the business plan, the final approval is given by the ECC Board via the Navitas Projects Approval Team, following consideration of a business plan detailing the approved academic structure, host country marketing intelligence, draft TNE program agreement, analysis of risk and confirmation of fit to ECC's strategic directions;
- 5.1.3. Subject to the nature of the agreement, programs may be accredited by offshore regulators as appropriate;

5.2. Academic Management

- 5.2.1. The academic management of the programs is the responsibility of the Partner Programs Director/College Principal in consultation with the Academic Director;
- 5.2.2. The ECC Unit Coordinator is responsible for provision of all course materials and ongoing academic support to the TNE unit lecturer;
- 5.2.3. The Partner Programs Director/College Principal will approve the appointment of TNE lecturers in consultation with the Academic Director and Unit Coordinator as appropriate;
- 5.2.4. Specific duties and responsibilities of the parties are detailed in the ECC Unit Coordinator and Lecturer handbook and in the appropriate ECC TNE program agreement.

5.3. Financial and Contractual Management

- 5.3.1. The ECC Business Manager will be responsible for the financial management of all TNE programs;
- 5.3.2. The ECC Partner Programs Director in consultation with the ECC College Director/Principal will be responsible for contract management of all TNE agreements;
- 5.3.3. Fees will be collected in accordance with the Fees Schedule in the appropriate ECC TNE program agreement;

5.3.4. Records will be maintained as is appropriate to the nature of the agreement.

5.4. Curriculum

5.4.1. TNE units should have comparable content to units offered onshore. Discussions between the ECC Unit Coordinator and the TNE lecturer may lead to content being contextualised for local conditions whilst ensuring the equivalence of standards;

5.4.2. TNE units must follow equivalent learning patterns and timeframes to units offered onshore.

5.5. Admissions

5.5.1. The language of instruction is English with TNE students required to meet the same English language entry requirements as students onshore.

5.5.2. TNE students are required to meet the equivalent academic entry requirements to students onshore.

5.5.3. Any award for advanced standing for TNE students should be the same as for onshore students;

5.6. Awards

5.6.1. Where the nature of the agreement provides for the issuance of award documentation, the documentation provided to TNE students will be the same as for students onshore.

5.7. Teaching

5.7.1. Learning outcomes and performance criteria for TNE students should be comparable to those of students taking the same unit onshore;

5.7.2. TNE support staff onshore and TNE staff offshore will be offered training, support and development appropriate to their role;

5.8. Student Support

5.8.1. TNE student learning support systems are to be comparable to those offered to students onshore;

5.8.2. TNE pastoral support systems are to be comparable to those offered onshore, within the constraints of the local environment;

5.9. Assessment and Appeals

5.9.1. Final examinations for the TNE program are to be marked onshore by the ECC Unit Coordinator;

5.9.2. Samples of all points of TNE assessment will be moderated by the ECC Unit Coordinator;

5.9.3. Examinations will be conducted in accordance with ECC examination guidelines;

5.9.4. The ECC/Offshore Board of Examiners will approve all final results;

5.9.5. Students in the TNE program enrolled in a ECC award have the right to appeal results as detailed in the Assessment Policy and will be advised of their rights and the appropriate procedure to follow.

5.10. Resources

- 5.10.1. The TNE partner is responsible for ensuring the appropriate availability of, and access to, print and electronic library resources, to a level acceptable to ECC;
- 5.10.2. The TNE partner is responsible for ensuring appropriate IT resources and support for each unit offered, to a level acceptable to ECC;

5.11. Quality Assurance

- 5.11.1. ECC will carry out an annual quality assurance audit on TNE programs to ensure compliance with both ECC policies and processes and with the terms of the TNE program agreement;
- 5.11.2. An Academic Advisory Committee meeting will be convened on an annual basis to review TNE performance and provide advice on future directions.
- 5.11.3. ECC will carry out unit evaluations on an annual basis for every unit and every lecturer and provide feedback on the results to the TNE partner for action as appropriate.
- 5.11.4. ECC will conduct an annual audit of the TNE partner as per the regulatory standards and provide feedback as appropriate; ECC will monitor TNE teaching and learning outcomes via moderation processes and compare TNE results with results for students onshore. Moderation reports will be generated to inform and offer advice to the TNE lecturer. Findings and recommendations will be reported to ECC's Teaching and Learning Committee and the ECC Academic Council.
- 5.11.5. TNE partners will be required to act on the recommendations of the ECC Teaching and Learning Committee and/or ECC Academic Council and demonstrate compliance within the timeframe stated by these Committees.

5.12. Teach-Out Provisions

- 5.12.1. In the event of the demise of a ECC-TNE Partnership arrangement, formal teach-out procedures will be undertaken as soon as practicable. The teach-out procedures will align with the provisions of the Partnership Agreement, in particular with respect to student outcomes, in relation to:
 - Issue of a formal notice to end the arrangement. (If the end of the arrangement is due to a default, a notice of default and timeframe for remedy/action will be given prior to ending the arrangement).
 - Formal advice sent to offshore Ministry together with press release.
 - Implementation of procedures for meeting obligations (ie. teach out, communication strategy for closure, etc.) including...
 - Liaison with university partner re: Agreement termination processes
 - Face-to-face meetings with staff and students outlining teach-out timelines and teach-out principles.
 - If applicable, the appointment of Australian Academic Manager to oversee the process.

6. Administrative procedures

- 6.1. This policy will be available on the ECC website and copies provided to relevant onshore and offshore staff involved in TNE activities.

Schedule 1 Guidelines to Inform Transnational Education Strategy (TNE)

Issue	Questions/considerations to inform the issue
Would the venture help to achieve ECC's key strategic objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the venture increase cultural mix, student numbers and/or program diversification? • Would it increase and improve ECC's profile in the TNE's location? • Does it build onto a current strength? • Does the venture contribute to short, medium and longer term financial objectives?
Rationale behind prospective TNE program (educational and financial) in both long/short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good financial return: provision of a type of education not readily available? • Marketing strategy: students to come onshore to complete award. • Altruistic: broaden access to education - corporate social responsibility.
Is there an adequate target market for the product?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of independent research to support introduction • Evidence of trends in the country requiring skills specific to the prospective TNE program
Careful selection of a partner/agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of partner/agent is it? (private or government provider) • Motivations of the partner/agent and any associated stakeholders • Background/reputation of partner/agent – as ECC will also be judged by this in the local environment; • Does the partner have experience in education? • Are the educational objectives of the partner consistent with those of ECC? • Do we understand any possible constraints to the partnership in the local regulatory environment? • Would we be exposed politically (ie, is the partner aligned to the current government?) • Would there be any conflict of interest if the partner was also the agent, and if so, how would this be managed?
Has thorough due diligence been undertaken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have as many potential risks as possible been explored and identified, and are they able to be systematically managed? • Are the prospective location and facilities appropriate? • Is there a well-trained agent who can assist students who may want to transfer onshore; • What are the immigration challenges for TNE students who may want to transfer to Australia; • Are there any visa/security challenges/DFAT warnings around ECC staff travelling to the location? If so, how would this be managed? • How stable is the country?
Regulatory environments/ quality control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does ECC have the appropriate onshore/offshore accreditation for the type of partnership that ECC are hoping to set up? If not, do we understand the approval process, additional workload and associated timeframes and costs associated with these approvals?
Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the contract provide clear statements of each party's responsibilities? • Can ECC standardise against comprehensive existing contracts? • Have Navitas' lawyers reviewed the contract? • In the event of disputes, in which country will the dispute be heard? • Is the contract subject to review and renegotiation?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there agreements on exclusivity that ECC need to be aware of?
Governance and Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the contract make clear the nature of the relationship between the parties, (e.g. Who do the students belong to? Who is the awarding institution? Is the nature of the agreement for an offshore delivery site or provision of IP and quality assurance processes only? • Are appropriate policies in place (e.g. Assessment, Progression, Appeals etc.)
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does ECC have appropriate staff to support the program? • Staff monitoring systems? • Staff development processes?
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the challenges of delivering Australian curriculum in the local environment? • Contextualisation of the content/cultural sensitivity whilst ensuring equivalence in the curriculum
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ECC source teachers at the appropriate level locally? • What are the training and professional development needs of the local teachers? • What allocation of time, support and training do ECC need to provide to onshore staff to enable adequate TNE support?
Entry Standards and Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does ECC monitor entry standards to ensure they are equivalent to those onshore? • How will the admissions process be handled? • English language entry requirements need to be the same as those onshore
Assessments and Marking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments need to be equivalent to onshore • ECC to mark final exams and moderate a sample of all other points of assessment • How is ECC able to assure the robustness of all areas of the assessment process? (e.g. security of examination papers, safe storage and copying of examination papers sent by ECC, invigilation etc.) • Are there reliable international courier services available in country with acceptable delivery times? • Is ECC able to deliver marks by required turnaround times, especially for trimester designed TNE programs? • Identify units to be moderated by the ECC Unit Coordinator and results recommended to the ECC Boards of Examiners for approval; • Written feedback via a Moderation Report to be provided to TNE lecturers
Student Support and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will ECC provide comparable academic support services to what is provided onshore? • How does ECC define what is an acceptable level of access to information technology and library resources for students in the TNE program in the context of locally available resources? • What processes do we have in place to support the TNE provider with access to increased levels of resources? • What is the appropriate level of pastoral support given any constraints in the local environment? What cultural issues need to be considered when making this decision?

Marketing and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is responsible for this? (cost and content) • What language will be used for the promotion of the program and what quality controls will need to be put in place if it is not English? • Ethical use of logos • ECC to sign off on advertising
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What interaction does the TNE provider have with its local community? • Has the local community (eg, professional bodies, employers and government departments) provided any input to discussions on the appropriateness of the proposed TNE program? • Would the community offer support via provision of work experience, career talks? • Does the TNE provider support its local community with fundraising activities, scholarships and school visits?
Quality, Evaluation and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What quality process does the TNE provider already have in operation and how rigorous does it appear to be? • Do the quality levels exceed local regulatory minimum compliance levels or is the institution just carrying out the bare minimum? • What processes will we use to ensure an acceptable level of quality that is continually reviewed and improved? • Do onshore lecturers understand and see involvement with the TNE program and lecturers as a rewarding and worthwhile activity? • If no, what communication and transfer of knowledge can be achieved to provide greater understanding of why we are involved in the TNE program and its fit with the strategic goals of ECC?

ECC and ACBT acknowledges the use of policy statement, structure and/or ideas from the following sources to develop this policy:

- Murdoch University
- University of Southern Queensland
- Edith Cowan University
- Australian Learning & Teaching Council, 'Enhancing frameworks for assuring the quality of learning and teaching in university offshore education programs' (The University of Western Australia, Curtin University and the University of the Sunshine Coast, 2010)
- 'Good Practice in Transnational Education: A Guide for New Zealand Providers' (Christopher Ziguras, 2007)
- AUQA's quality framework for transnational education (TNE) arrangements (AUQA, 2008)