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## General Unit Policy

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**Definitions:** **Amendment:** A change to improve or edit a unit offered by the Engineering Institute of Technology.

**Cancelled Unit:** A unit which was indicated as being offered in a specified teaching period and is subsequently not offered in that teaching period, but is intended to be offered in a subsequent teaching period.

**Cross-Institutional Enrolment:** A unit offered by another institution that may be taken by an EIT student for credit

**Discontinued Unit:** A discontinued unit is one which will no longer be offered by the Institute. Once a unit has been discontinued no further enrolments shall be accepted

**Independent Study Contract:** A unit of independent study on a topic or subject that is not available as a structured unit within the Institute for which credit toward a degree may be obtained.

**Single Coded Unit:** A unit that is offered under only one triple alpha / triple numeric unit code.

**Small Unit:** A unit with student enrolments below the minimum enrolment thresholds. (N/A in the initial period)

**Special Topic Unit:** A postgraduate level temporary specialty subject offered as either a Generic Special Topic Unit or individual Special Topic Unit

**Unit:** A unit is the basic component of study, normally completed over a period of one semester. A combination of required units (core units plus specified elective units) and general elective units make up a course, major, minor or specialisation

**Core Unit:** A compulsory unit in an approved course or specialisation.



**Specified Elective Unit:** A compulsory elective unit in an approved course, major, minor or specialisation. A student is required to select a specific number of specified elective units from an approved list

**General Elective Unit:** A unit of a student's free choice.

**Unit Code:** Each unit is assigned a triple alpha/triple numeric code with the triple alpha aligned with the general broad discipline area.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to set out information that is relevant to the creation, amendment and cancellation of Units and Unit enrolment regulations.

**Scope:** This policy is relevant for EIT students and EIT academic and administrative staff.

**Essential Supporting Documents:**

**Related Documents:**

- Course and Unit Amendment Policy
- Course and Unit Discontinuation Policy
- Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy

**1. Authority to Offer Units**

The Academic Board may overrule any decision made by staff or sub committees on unit offerings where, in its view, this is against the interests of the Institute overall.

**2. Unit Approvals**

New units are approved as part of the annual academic planning process in accordance with the prevailing Academic Planning Guidelines.

**2.1 Single-coded units and Special Topic units**

Single-coded units and Special Topic units are approved by Academic Board.

**2.2 Unit codes**

Unit codes are approved in accordance with the following principles:

- (i) Unit codes should be selected with a view to long-term stability of the code.
- (ii) Where possible, the triple alpha code should be aligned with the general broad discipline area.
- (iii) New unit proposals should include the preferred triple alpha.
- (iv) Where possible, existing unit numbers should be maintained.
- (v) Enabling (bridging and supplementary) courses which do not carry credit into Institute level studies have a triple numeric code commencing with the numeral 0 (zero).
- (vi) Unit numbers must be whole numbers. They must not include decimal point values.

## **2.4 Special Topic Units**

Special Topic units are designed to allow flexibility in teaching arrangements and unit offerings according to the availability of special expertise among members of the academic staff in a given year, in particular to utilise the expertise of visiting academics. They can be used to pilot possible new units where student demand is uncertain.

It is important to distinguish between the Generic Special Topic Unit and the individual Special Topic (temporary specialty subject offered under that umbrella). It is possible to offer a number of Special Topics with different titles under a single Generic Special Topic Unit.

Special Topics are approved in accordance with the following provisions:

- (i) The points value of Special Topics on offer per year shall not be greater than four points per eight established academic staff positions.
- (ii) One Special Topic per postgraduate course per year.
- (iii) The minimum enrolment for a Special Topic offering to proceed shall be as prescribed in Clause 3.1b below.

## **3. Minimum Unit Enrolments**

- 3.1 In order to avoid uneconomic unit offerings, unit enrolments are expected to meet minimum enrolment thresholds or be discontinued. When averaged over the past two offerings, the unit should attract an enrolment of not less than 10 enrolments.
- 3.2 The Academic Chair can grant exceptions to Minimum Unit Enrolments in the following circumstances:
  - The unit is a required unit for a course which is recommended for continuation, or is a required part of a collaborative agreement with another educational provider. In cases where a course, major or minor is to be radically restructured, an exemption may be granted for up to three years for small units.
  - The unit is substantially funded by external sources (e.g. lectureship funded by industry).
  - The unit should attract an enrolment above the threshold when next offered (e.g. because it is becoming an elective for a large course or has been offered once only).



- The unit is taught jointly with another larger unit (e.g. sharing all lectures), requiring little extra staff contact hours.
- The Academic Chair believes that it is in the strategic interest of the Institute to retain the unit, after consultation with Dean.
- The cancellation of the unit, possibly in conjunction with other units with low enrolments, makes the course no longer academically viable. In any such situation the Dean shall review whether the course concerned should be discontinued before deciding to retain the unit.

#### **4. Unit Cancellations**

- 4.1 A unit may be cancelled because of (a) low enrolments, or (b) the resignation or incapacity of the Unit Coordinator, where there is not another staff member available with the expertise to teach the unit.
- 4.2 A unit or enrolment option of a unit shall not be cancelled later than two weeks before the start of the semester concerned, unless this has the consent of all students enrolled in it, or it is a consequence of unavailability of staff and occurs no later than the end of week 2 of semester.
- 4.3 The cancellation of a unit will not prevent or delay the graduation of any student enrolled in it.
- 4.4 When a unit is cancelled, all students enrolled in the unit shall be notified in writing and be assisted in making an alternative enrolment.

#### **5. Discontinuing a Unit**

- 5.1 As part of the annual academic planning exercise some units may be discontinued. The following issues must be taken into account when discontinuing a unit:
  - (i) If the unit is a core or specified elective unit, a revised course, structure must be submitted in accordance with the prevailing Academic Planning Guidelines.
  - (ii) When there is a change to the requirements of a course, the students enrolled in it shall not be subject to any additional requirements. Therefore consideration must be given to appropriate transitional arrangements. Consultation with affected parties to ensure there are no unintended consequences and that replacement units are available where appropriate.



## **6. Unit Availability**

- 6.1 Core units must be offered each year. Where courses are of less than one year's duration and offered more than once a year, core units must be offered once during each course offering.
- 6.2 Specified elective units must be offered at least each alternate year, with a sufficient number offered in any course cycle to provide full-time students with a choice in the units they select to fulfil their course/major requirements.
- 6.3 General elective units must be offered at least each alternate year.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **7. Amending a Unit**

- 7.1 Units are generally amended during the annual academic planning period. Unit amendments that require Academic Board resolutions include amendments to unit codes, unit titles, points value and enrolment options.
- 7.2 Where a unit is a core or specified elective in any course, consideration must be given to the potential effects the amendments may have. Consultation with affected parties to ensure there are no unintended consequences is required.

### **8. Unit Approvals**

- 8.1 A new unit can be proposed during the annual academic planning.
- 8.2 New unit proposals should include the preferred triple alpha from the attached approved codes. Requests for new triple alphas must be approved by Academic Board.
- 8.3 Approval of the Generic Special Topic Units occurs as part of the annual academic planning exercise. The unit description required for the Handbook is a general statement to the effect that details of any topics available can be obtained from the Dean. However, if the Special Topic to be offered in that year is known, it is desirable to include some details in the unit description, as this will increase the prospects of the topic attracting a reasonable enrolment. These details might be simply the title, prerequisites, assessment methods and semester options.
- 8.4 The individual Special Topics offered in a year require the prior approval of the Academic Board.



- 8.5 Where it is intended to offer a Special Topic each year, it should be mounted as a regular unit rather than as a Special Topic.

## **9. Minimum Unit Enrolments**

- 9.1 In determining whether a unit enrolment meets the minimum threshold:
- Enrolments shall be determined as at the unit census date for the relevant semester (for 2-semester options, this shall be the unit census date for the first semester of the unit).
  - Where a unit is or has been offered in more than one academic period in a given year, these shall be treated as separate offerings. The unit in this case must meet the minimum enrolment threshold in at least one of the offerings.
  - Enrolment numbers should be combined for units taught jointly and requiring little extra in staff contact hours (e.g. offered at two levels or at two different points values).

## **10. Enrolment in Special Topics**

- 10.1 There is no limit on the number of Special Topic Units in which a student can enrol for credit towards their degree, subject to meeting other prescribed course/major requirements.
- 10.2 Students should enrol in Special Topic Units in the same way as for any other unit. They must nominate the particular topic that they are taking to avoid enrolment in the wrong or non-existent topics (the Handbook descriptions of some Generic Special Topic Units advertise unit options for both semesters, whereas they may be available in only one semester or not at all).
- 10.3 The Special Topic title, points value and semester option of each specified topic will be added to the codes file as Divisions advise topics to be offered. Topics finalised after then will be added once details are known. Where a Generic Special Topic Unit does not yet have an approved Special Topic, the Student Information System will not accept any enrolments in the unit.
- 10.4 It is possible for each notionally available Generic Special Topic Unit to be offered by the EIT more than once per year. Where this happens, the codes file will have two or more codes as appropriate, with each specified topic being allocated a separate code. Occasionally, Special Topics are decided and students assigned to particular Special Topics after enrolments are finalised. Where this occurs, students should be enrolled in the appropriate unit code prior to the printing of Notices of Enrolment and Higher Education Contribution Scheme Liability, i.e. by end-March (semester 1) or end-August (semester 2).