Program Structure Design Principles

1.0 Purpose

This Schedule describes the program structure design principles for the design and review of qualifications awarded by Griffith University.

2.0 Scope

The Schedule applies to all award programs offered by the University with the exception of Higher Degree Research, end-on Honours and non-award programs. This schedule should be read in conjunction with the *Programs and Courses Policy*, the *Qualifications Procedure* and the *Program Attributes and Requirements Procedure*.

3.0 Schedule

The program structure design principles provide a coherent and simplified approach to the architecture of Griffith's programs to ensure we offer programs that:

- offer certainty to our students via clear pathways

- are straightforward to navigate

- provide clarity to staff designing and delivering programs

The program structure design principles should, as much as possible, be applied to all award programs the University offers including professionally accredited programs.

In rare cases where an exception to a design principle is necessary, the *Program Approval Procedure* details the process required to request a variation.

3.1 Undergraduate program structures

Undergraduate program structures consist of modules and the design of each module is based on associated design principles as described in Section 3.2.

Modules combine to form programs and are classified into two types:

1. Programs with majors

2. Programs without majors

The program requirements of a Bachelor program are displayed as modules with corresponding credit point values. The compulsory modules and credit point value, for a standard three year, 240 credit point Bachelor program, are described below for each program type:

TYPE 1: PROGRAMS WITH MAJORS		TYPE 2: PROGRAMS WITHOUT MAJORS	
Module	**Credit Points**	**Module**	**Credit Points**
Core	100 CP	Core	160 CP
Major	60 CP	Flexible	80 CP
Flexible	80 CP		
Total	**240 CP**		**240 CP**

If an undergraduate programs' duration is longer than 240 Credit Points (e.g. Honours, Advanced etc) the additional credit points should increase the duration of the core module only and preferably by 40 credit point increments. An example of the degree requirements in a 320 Credit Point program is shown for both program types, below:

TYPE 1: PROGRAMS WITH MAJORS		TYPE 2: PROGRAMS WITHOUT MAJORS	
Module	**Credit Points**	**Module**	**Credit Points**
Core	180 CP	Core	240 CP
Major	60 CP	Flexible	80 CP
Flexible	80 CP		
Total	**320 CP**		**320 CP**

Sub-bachelor degrees (e.g. Advanced Diploma, Diploma, UG Certificate etc), will articulate fully to the related Bachelor program. A sub-bachelor program contains a core module only the duration of which is consistent with the award type as set out in the *Qualifications Procedure*. The core module of a Diploma program is comprised of 60 credit points of core courses from the first year of the related Bachelor program. The remaining 20 credit points for the Diploma program will be prescribed and made up of level 1 courses only, preferably from the elective list of the related Bachelor program.

3.2 Undergraduate program structure design principles

The undergraduate program structure design principles are outlined below:

CORE MODULE

UG 1	The core module is 100 CP in duration for programs with majors, and 160 CP in duration for programs without majors.
UG 2	The core module will be largely prescribed. Where options are required to facilitate access to WIL for all students or to enable progression to a major or stream, this may involve very limited "or" choices between courses (for example, a student selects 10 CP from 20 CP of options).

UG 3   The first-year core will be 60 CP in duration and include level 1 coded courses only. In most instances, this will satisfy the prerequisite knowledge required for later years in the program and minimise the need for prerequisite courses.

Note: The first-year core will be the same for the Bachelor (AQF Level 7) program and its related (AQF Level 5) Diploma and (AQF Level 6) Advanced Diploma programs to ensure full credit transfer for students articulating through nested undergraduate suites.

UG 4   The core module includes a minimum of 40 CP of level 3 courses (including core and major courses) to ensure scaffolded learning and to assist students in meeting the minimum requirements for level 3 study.

UG 5   Career development learning should be scaffolded throughout the compulsory elements of the program. This should involve early opportunities in the core elements of the program for students to explore potential career pathways and to develop their professional networks, career identity, and career goals. A minimum 10 CP WIL designated course or capstone course is a compulsory element in level 3 or higher study.

MAJOR MODULE

UG 6   Majors are consistently 60 CP in duration and involve only level 2 coded courses (or higher), with a minimum of 20 CP at level 3 (or higher).

UG 7   Majors have a prescribed course list and the majority of courses in a major must be unique and not shared with other majors within the program.

FLEXIBLE MODULE

UG 8   The flexible module is 80 CP in duration and can comprise options for second majors, minors, additional WIL and/or electives.

UG 9   The flexible module will enable at least 40 CP of level 1 credit transfer for students who have successfully completed 40 CP of study in any bachelor program (excluding Double Degree programs). This means a course-by-course assessment will not be required.

UG 10   Electives, displayed as a part of the flexible module in the program structure, will adhere to the Elective List Design Principles as described in section 3.6.

UG 11   20 CP of Electives will be made available in the first year of programs with an IELTS of 6.5 to enable students required to undertake English Language Enhancement course (ELEC) to do so in their first trimester of study. For students needing to undertake the ELEC, this will reduce their flexible module to 70 CP, so they still undertake all of the core and major modules.

Note 1: Students are required to take ELEC in their first trimester of study, therefore, 10CP of electives should be available for each intake trimester for the program.

Note 2: To accommodate the ELEC in double degrees Program Directors will work together to create space for students to complete the ELEC course by, as a preference, identifying overlap/commonality between core courses while considering professional accreditation requirements.

3.3 Postgraduate program structures

Postgraduate Programs or program suites consist of modules and the design of each module is based on associated design principles as described in section 3.4.

Modules combine to form programs, or pathways in a Masters program, and are specified in the program requirements for each qualification or pathway in the suite. The module, or combination of modules, that comprise a qualification or pathway within a postgraduate program suite and its credit point value, is described below:

QUALIFICATION	FOUNDATION MODULE 40 Credit Points	CORE MODULE 80 Credit Points	FLEXIBLE MODULE 40 Credit Points
Graduate Certificate	40 CP	n/a	n/a
1 Year (80 CP) Masters	n/a	80 CP	n/a
1.5 Year (120 CP) Masters (Broadening)	40 CP	80 CP	n/a
1.5 Year (120 CP) Masters (Deepening)	n/a	80 CP	40 CP
2 Year (160 CP) Masters	40 CP	80 CP	40 CP

Graduate Diplomas can be nested, as an exit point, in a postgraduate program suite or be standalone if industry or market standard. The duration, admission and program requirements will be consistent with AQF Level 8 outcomes as specified in the Qualifications Procedure.

If a Masters programs duration is longer than 160 credit points (for example: Masters Extended program) the additional credit points should increase the duration of the core module only and preferably by 40 credit point increments.

3.4 Postgraduate program structure design principles

The postgraduate program structure design principles are outlined below:

POSTGRADUATE FOUNDATION MODULE

PG 1	The Foundation Module maps to AQF Level 8 Program Learning Outcomes.
PG 2	Volume of learning is 40 CP in duration and is largely prescribed (Min. 30 CP prescribed courses and Max. 10 CP choice). For example, choice may be included to enable progression from a foundation module/ Graduate Certificate to a Masters program where one or more is nested.
PG 3	This module should be foundational in content, and therefore, if offered as a standalone Graduate Certificate should only include very limited content from the core module (at most 10 CP of AQF 9).
PG 4	The Foundation modules/Graduate Certificates in related programs can share a maximum of 20 CP courses.

| PG 5 | The admissions criteria for students commencing with the Foundation module (i.e. Graduate Certificate and 1.5 year+ Masters) should capture: 1) students with unrelated UG; and 2) students with a combination of formal or informal learning deemed equivalent to 1. (e.g. significant relevant professional experience). |

POSTGRADUATE CORE MODULE

PG 6	The Core Module maps to AQF Level 9 Program Learning Outcomes.
PG 7	Volume of learning is 80 CP in duration and it is largely prescribed. Limited choice (max 10 CP from 20 CP) may be included to facilitate progress from a nested Graduate Certificate or between research preparation courses. 1 x 40 credit point major can be included, and the majority of courses must be unique and not shared with other majors within the program.
PG 8	The core module should deepen foundational content, and therefore, should be distinct from the foundation module. This also means it should not have courses that are co-taught with UG.
PG 9	When offered as a standalone 1-year Masters, the core module will generally not include a 40 CP dissertation as it is intended to attract students wanting to deepen through coursework (noting the core can enable research preparatory course/s).
PG 10	The admission criteria for students commencing with the Core module (i.e. 1 year 80 CP Masters) should capture students with a related AQF7 Bachelor + relevant professional experience. For 1.5 year (120 CP) Masters that include the core + flexible modules admission criteria should capture those students with a Related AQF 7 Bachelor.

POSTGRADUATE FLEXIBLE MODULE

| PG11 | The Flexible Module maps to AQF Level 9 Program Learning Outcomes and can include a maximum of 20 CP of foundation courses from all related Graduate Certificates. |
| PG12 | The Volume of Learning is 40 CP in duration and can comprise options for second majors, additional WIL, research dissertation and/or electives.

* Electives, displayed as a part of the flexible module in the program structure, will adhere to the Elective List Design Principles as described in section 3.6. |

3.5 Admission requirements

The table below maps admission requirements, target markets and program modules to define pathways and their durations in the postgraduate program suite. The admission requirements are to be applied to all programs or program durations in the suite, and to professionally accredited programs where possible.

TARGET MARKETS	QUALIFICATION	ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	MODULES IN PROGRAM STRUCTURE	CP
Conversion: Professionals with no prior study	**Graduate Certificate**	Relevant and sufficient professional experience	Foundation Module	40 CP
Specialising: Graduates specialising in their field	**1 Year (80 CP) Masters**	Related Bachelor + Professional Experience OR Related Graduate Certificate	Core Module	80 CP
Broadening: Graduates extending their career	**1.5 Year (120 CP) Masters** (Broad)	Any Bachelor	Foundation Module + Core Module	120 CP
Deepening: Graduates deepening their knowledge	**1.5 Year (120 CP) Masters** (Narrow)	Related Bachelor OR Any Bachelor + Professional Experience	Core Module + Flexible Module	120 CP
Broadening or career changing: Students establishing or switching careers. i.e. INT students	**2 Year (160 CP) Masters**	Any Bachelor OR A combination of alternative admission criteria such as formal, informal, and non-formal learning deemed to be equivalent to the above.	Foundation Module + Core Module + Flexible Module	160 CP

Note 1: The criteria above represent possible criteria for admission. A student with a higher qualification could also gain entry to the program.

Note 2: If a program includes both a 1.5 year (Broad) and 2 year pathway, with the same admission requirements, the title of the 2 year Masters program will be differentiated to distinguish it from the shorter duration pathways.

3.6 Elective list design principles

The elective list design principles are to be applied by Program Directors for undergraduate and postgraduate programs that display electives as a part of the flexible module in the program structure.

Complementary: Courses on the elective list add value to the core program content. This means the electives should be:

- **Career orientated**: Elective lists should build the employability and career readiness of students in the program.

- **Cross-disciplinary**: Elective lists should include opportunities for the student to explore disciplines that are outside of, and complementary to, their primary discipline. This means it should include electives that are hosted by other Schools/Departments and Groups.

- **Data informed**: Elective lists should be guided by what we know that students are interested in – as demonstrated by previous enrolment patterns in electives.

Concise: Elective lists should only have a small number of courses (for example, 20 CP for every 10 CP of flexible CP in the program). For a program with an 80CP flexible module this would mean no more than 16 courses could be on the elective list). If a minor, WIL or dissertation are included in the flexible module of a program all courses within will count toward the maximum number of courses allowed.

Distinct: The electives, including minors and second majors, should be distinct from each other and the course list for the program.

Current: Elective lists should only include courses that have an offering in the current academic year. Elective lists should be regularly reviewed as part of the annual program review process.

Enable progression: Courses on the elective list should enable student progression. This means elective list courses:

- Should not have prerequisites, unless those prerequisites are from the core courses of the program.

- Should include courses that are offered in the mode and/or trimesters in which electives are required to be taken in the program.

- For Bachelor programs: may include a small number of level 1 courses but should have largely level 2 and 3 courses to ensure students meet maximum higher-level requirements.

4.0 Roles, responsibilities and delegations

ROLE	RESPONSIBILTY
Chair, Programs Committee	Approves variations to the Design Principles.
Deans L&T	Provide leadership to ensure, as much as possible, program change proposals are aligned to the program structure design principles. Endorse academic rationale/s to support exemption requests for design principles.
Deputy Heads of School	Lead the development of the program change proposal in alignment to the program structure design principles.
Program Directors	Align the program design to policy and the design principles. Produce the major change proposal in collaboration with the PSO, PBP and ASO.

	Where required, engage with relevant stakeholders about program changes.
	Draft academic rationale/s to support exemption requests for variation to the design principles (for approval by Dean L&T).
Managers, Group Program Services	Provide policy and procedural advice to support the planning, development and approval of the relevant Groups program changes.
Learning and Teaching Consultants/Learning Designers	Provide curriculum development support for quality assurance of program changes.
Program Business Partners (PBPs)	Provide policy and procedural advice to support the planning, development, and approval of program changes.
	Conduct quality assurance check of program change proposals, including checking alignment to design principles and identifying issues/errors with alignment to design principles.
	Where required, work with PSO, Program Director, DHOS and Deans L&T to improve alignment to design principles.
Program Support Officers (PSOs)	Coordinate administrative support for the program/program cluster changes.
	Provide assistance to Program Directors to ensure that programs are aligned to the design principles.
	Support the submission of the program change proposal.
Academic Support Officers (ASOs)	Coordinate administrative support for the planning and delivery of course changes from the approved program change proposal
	Collaborate with the Program Team (Deputy Head of School (Learning and teaching), Program Director, Course Convenor and Program Support Officer) to ensure course offerings are consistent with the approved program structure

5.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and related policy documents, the following definitions apply:

AQF qualification is a completed University accredited program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved the learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

Capstone Course is a course which offers students nearing graduation the opportunity to summarise evaluate and integrate learning from across a range of learning experiences to engage with a task which addresses a contemporary issue or problem facing a particular discipline or profession.

Components of a qualification refer to units of academic work, modules, or courses, the completion of which leads to an AQF qualification.

Core course is a course in the Core, Foundation and Major modules of a program and are mandatory for all students to complete in that program. They may include level 1 courses, designated courses, work integrated learning (WIL) courses, and capstone courses .

Course refers to a component of a qualification, normally undertaken over a single trimester, in which the student enrols and on completion of which the student is awarded a grade, such grades appearing on a student's academic transcript. Learning outcomes, assessment tasks and achievement standards are specified for each course appropriate to a level and qualification type.

Coursework is a method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that does not include a major research component.

Elective course is a course or set of courses that are completed as part of the flexible module. In undergraduate programs an elective course can be any course offered by the University for which a student is eligible. In a postgraduate program an elective course must be listed in the program to assure the AQF level learning outcomes for the qualification are met.

Elective lists are one option to guide students to use the flexible module in their programs. The elective list design principles in **Section 3.6** provide guidance to program directors to curate a meaningful, data driven selection of elective course options for students.

Foundation module is a broadening module of study in a postgraduate program or program suite. It contains courses referred to as core courses, maps to AQF Level 8 learning outcomes and is 40 credit points in duration. The foundation module can be offered as a standalone Graduate Certificate or combined with other modules in the postgraduate program suite to create longer form Masters programs.

Learning Outcomes are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

Major module is a compulsory module of study for undergraduate programs that offer majors and courses within this module are referred to as core courses. If the program contains a major module completion of this module is required for graduation from the program. The major module allows students to elect and specialise in an area of interest and contains specific knowledge that is required for a student to receive the major title printed on their testamur.

Modules are groups of courses within undergraduate and postgraduate programs and program suites that can be combined, or standalone, to create the structure of a qualification offered by the University. The type and requirements of modules are defined in the program requirements.

Nested qualifications are purposely designed qualifications that enable explicit articulation pathways and encompass more than one AQF level and/or qualification type.

Postgraduate Core Module is a deepening module of study in a postgraduate program or program suite. It contains courses referred to as core courses, maps to AQF Level 9 learning outcomes and is 80 credit points in duration and can include an option for a 40CP major. The postgraduate core module can be offered as a standalone 1-year Masters program or combined with other modules in the suite to create longer duration Masters programs.

Postgraduate Flexible Module is an additional module of study in a postgraduate program or program suite, comprising electives, second major, additional WIL or research dissertation. It is designed to extend upon the foundation and core modules in a program or program suite allowing students to customise their study. It contains courses referred to as elective courses, maps to AQF Level 9 Learning outcomes and is 40 credit points in duration.

Pathways in Masters programs are formalised advanced standing arrangements that allow students to shorten the duration of study by recognising eligible prior learning as standardised admission criteria.

Program is an approved course of study leading to an award of the University (a higher education award). A student is admitted to a program, and on successful completion of all program requirements is awarded the degree to which the program relates.

Undergraduate Core module is a compulsory module of study and is listed in the program requirements of a program. Courses within this module are referred to as core courses. The core module houses the most important knowledge and capabilities for a graduate and for the career/s a graduate will pursue and enables students to form their discipline and professional identity.

Undergraduate Flexible module is a compulsory module of study and listed in the program requirements of a program. Courses within this module are referred to as elective courses. It provides choices that allow students to customise their study to their career goals and gain credit for unrelated prior learning. Elective lists are one option to guide students to use the flexible module in their programs. The elective list design principles in **Section 3.6** provide guidance to program directors to curate a meaningful, data driven selection of elective course options for students. Other options may include second majors, minors, intensive WIL and study abroad.

6.0 Information

Title	Program Structure Design Principles Schedule
Document number	2025/0000754
Purpose	This Schedule describes the program structure design principles for the design and review of qualifications awarded by Griffith University.
Audience	Staff
Category	Academic
Subcategory	Learning & Teaching
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	This document aligns with Sustainable Development Goal: 4: Quality Education
Approval date	December 2024
Effective date	1 January 2025
Review date	2027
Policy advisor	Director, Student and Academic Services

Approving authority	Provost

7.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Policy	Program and Course Policy
Procedure	Course Approval Procedure
	Program Attributes and Requirements Procedure
	Program and Course Review Procedure
	Program Approval Procedure
	Qualifications Procedure