

Qualifications

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1.0 Purpose

This Procedure describes the requirements for each qualification for which the University confers an award.

2.0 Scope

The Procedure applies to all programs offered by the University that lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification with the exception of Higher Doctorate programs (refer to the *Higher Doctorates by Publication Policy*). This procedure does not apply to non-award programs.

3.0 Procedure

Programs Committee approves all programs that lead to an AQF qualification, as outlined in the *Program Approval Procedure*. As part of this process, Programs Committee considers the alignment of the qualification type and academic requirements to assure itself that the program will enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes specified in the relevant AQF level criteria, discipline standards and/or the University's graduate attributes. The requirements for each program vary depending on the purpose of the qualification in terms of broadening, extending, or deepening knowledge and skills. Programs Committee may approve variations to the requirements for each qualification.

3.1 Diploma (AQF Level 5)

A Diploma is normally 80 credit points (CP). It should be structured to facilitate progression to a Bachelor degree program. When used as an exit qualification, program requirements may be modified.

3.2 Bachelor Degree Program (AQF Level 7)

A Bachelor degree program is normally 240 or 320 CP. Attributes of a Bachelor degree program include:

- core courses
- academic plan – major and/or minor
- elective courses; and
- a capstone course.

3.2.1 Program requirements

A Bachelor degree program will include:

- a common core of Level 1 courses, normally 60 CP, that facilitates progression to the second year (and higher) of the program.
- A 240 CP Bachelor degree program will not allow for the completion of more than 100 CP of Level 1 courses.
- A 320 CP program will not allow for the completion of more than 120 CP of Level 1 courses.
- The program must allow for a minimum of 60 CP of final year courses (i.e. Level 3 or above).
- A final year course will be identified as a capstone course for either the program or the major.
- A Bachelor degree program must include a core comprising at least 60 CP of courses at Level 2 or higher and at least 20 CP must be a final year level (Level 3 or above). Alternatively, it may include one or more majors of 60 CP of course at Level 2 or higher and at least 20 CP at final year level (Level 3 or above). The majority of courses in a major will be unique and not shared with other majors within the program.
- A Bachelor degree program may include Minors (40 CP) and, in the case of qualifications in Education, Teaching Areas.

3.2.2 English Language Enhancement Course (ELEC)

The English Language Enhancement course (ELEC) is a mandatory requirement for all Bachelor degree programs that enrol international students in first and second year, unless the program restricts entry to students who are not required to complete the ELEC (see [Appendix 1](#)). Where a program includes the ELEC:

- The course will be completed in place of an elective,
- It must be completed within the annual academic load,
- It is normally completed in the first trimester of study,
- The ELEC does not count towards a specific year level.

3.3 Bachelor Honours Degree (AQF Level 8)

Three models of honours programs are available:

1. **End-on Honours:** Admit graduates into an 80 CP Level 8 Bachelor Honours degree program, following completion of a Level 7 Bachelor degree.
2. **Concurrent Honours:** Admit all students into a 320 CP (or more) Level 8 Bachelor Honours degree program.
3. **Embedded Honours** (to be phased out): Admit all commencing students into a 320 CP (or more) Level 7 Bachelor degree program; students who meet the admission requirements may apply to transfer to a 320 CP Level 8 Bachelor Honours degree program. Where the award of Honours is based on a differentiated program, the criterion for admission for the Bachelor Honours degree program (AQF Level 8) will be based on a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 5.0 in a specified set of courses taken in the program up to the point of admission to the Honours program. Where a differentiated program is approved, the CPs required in the differentiated program should normally be the same as the CPs for the standard (non-Honours) program.

An End-on Honours degree program must include:

- at least a 40 CP supervised research component leading to a dissertation, or a comparable activity in the visual, performing or creative arts; and
- 10 CP research methodology.

In a Concurrent Honours Program, the 40 CP supervised research component may include a 10 CP research methodology course and 30 CP of supervised research. The amount and type of research must provide sufficient preparation for research at a higher qualification level.

It is recommended that some coursework be included in the Honours program to allow students to extend their knowledge of the discipline. Such courses should provide a coherent and good quality program and/or candidature which meet the aims of the Honours degree program. Where such courses are included in an Honours program or candidature, the Honours Program Director must ensure the conditions specific to Honours candidature management are applied to these courses and be satisfied that the standard of assessment is undertaken at Honours level.

This may include:

- research preparation courses, supervised reading courses, and colloquia, which are assessed
- courses taken from a postgraduate program (AQF Level 8 and 9)
- Honours courses.

3.3.1 Honours classification

The degree with Honours may be awarded in classes - Class I, Class IIA, Class IIB, and Class III. Programs Committee may approve only the award of unclassified Honours where this is the established norm in the profession.

The award of Honours in a four year program is based on meritorious performance across the whole program or a defined sub-set of the program including a research component weighted at 30 CP or more.

3.4 Graduate Certificate (AQF Level 8)

A Graduate Certificate is normally 40 CP. The balance of learning in the Graduate Certificate will deliver AQF Level 8 learning outcomes.

A maximum of 10 CP of final year undergraduate courses (AQF Level 7) may be included as introductory content. The final year undergraduate course may be used without modified learning outcomes, teaching approaches and assessment strategies.

3.5 Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8)

The Graduate Diploma is normally 80 CP. The balance of learning in the Graduate Diploma will deliver AQF Level 8 learning outcomes.

A maximum of 20 CP of final year undergraduate courses (AQF Level 7) may be included as introductory content in a Graduate Diploma. The final year undergraduate course may be used without modified learning outcomes, teaching approaches and assessment strategies.

3.6 Masters Degree Programs (AQF Level 9)

The volume of learning of a Masters program is identified below and is dependent on the type of Masters, the intent of the Masters (deepening or broadening) and the admission criteria. Admission criteria must identify the necessary knowledge and/or skills required for admission to the program, and must be consistent with the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

A Masters degree program can be one of the following types:

- **Masters (Coursework):** typically 80 – 160 CP
- **Masters (Extended):** typically 240 or 320 CP
- **Masters (Research):** typically 80 - 160 CP.

The balance of learning in the Masters program will deliver AQF Level 9 learning outcomes.

Attributes of a Masters degree program include:

- core courses
- major
- research component; and
- elective courses.

3.6.1 Program requirements

A Masters degree program will include:

- a research component that aligns with the qualification descriptor for the Masters program; specialised knowledge and skills for research, to independently research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice, and to plan and execute a substantial piece of research. The composition of the research component will be identified in the program proposal. It may be included within multiple courses across the program or assigned to specific courses.
- 160 CP Masters programs may include a maximum of 40 CP of final year undergraduate courses (AQF Level 7) as introductory content only. The final year undergraduate course may be used without modified learning outcomes, teaching approaches and assessment strategies.
- Undergraduate courses will not be included in 80 CP or 120 CP Masters.
- Majors will be 40 CP.
- Teaching Areas may be identified in the case of professional Education qualifications.
- A Masters degree program may provide a pathway to a higher degree by research program. In these cases, the research component must meet the qualifications for admission, identified in the *Higher Degree by Research Policy*.
- Where the Masters (Coursework) or (Extended) includes a significant research component in the form of a dissertation, the percentage mark for the dissertation is calculated from the individual examiners' marks and a grade calculated based on minimum percentage as per the Honours calculation.

3.6.2 Masters (Extended)

A Masters (Extended) program may cover similar material to undergraduate courses but will be delivered and assessed at the appropriate postgraduate level.

Research in a Masters (Extended) degree program designed for advanced learning or for professional outcomes may comprise applied research or professionally-oriented research, and the outcome of the research is likely to be the execution of a project.

3.6.3 Masters (Research)

The Masters (Research) program will have a research component worth at least 50% of the program that leads to a dissertation, thesis, exegesis or equivalent, on a single coherent topic. The entire program must comprise at least 66% research which may include a research component, research training, independent study and/or research projects.

3.6.4 Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

The MPhil is distinguished from other Masters (Research) programs by its structure which comprises a research component only. It will include a program of independent supervised study that produces a substantial piece of research in the form of a thesis, dissertation, exegesis or equivalent, for a specified period of time (refer Section 8.7 Minimum and Maximum Duration of Candidature *Higher Degree by Research Policy*).

3.7 Doctoral Degree Programs (AQF Level 10)

The Doctoral degree program will deliver AQF Level 10 learning outcomes and meet the qualification descriptor. A Doctoral degree program can be one of the following:

- Doctoral degree (Research) typically referred to as the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD); or
- Doctoral degree (Professional) typically referred to as the Professional Doctorate.

Research is the defining characteristic of all Doctoral Degree programs. Other attributes of a Doctoral Degree program may include coursework and electives.

The Doctoral degree program is 240-320 CP. Volume of learning is approved in consideration of the aims of the program, the characteristics of the candidates, professional accreditation requirements (where applicable) and the length of similar programs in other institutions. The duration for each program of study are detailed in refer Section 8.7 Minimum and Maximum Duration of Candidature, *Higher Degree by Research Policy*).

The Doctoral degree program must have a research component that constitutes at least half of the academic work required for the degree that leads to a dissertation, thesis, exegesis or equivalent, on a single coherent topic.

The entire program must include the equivalent of at least two years of research, consisting of a research component.

3.7.1 Doctor of Philosophy

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is awarded on the basis of a program of independent supervised study that produces significant and original research outcomes culminating in a thesis, dissertation, exegesis or equivalent. The Doctor of Philosophy comprises a research component only, with the exception of the discipline specific PhD programs in Psychology. PhD candidates, under supervision, are responsible for developing and carrying out a prescribed program of research for the specified period of the program (refer to *Higher Degree by Research Policy* for 'Minimum and Maximum Duration of Candidature').

In cases where a PhD program contains a specified coursework component applicable to all candidates (i.e. discipline specific PhD programs in Psychology), the particular structure of the program will require approval from Programs Committee. In such cases the research component of the program will be of at least two years duration and must comprise two-thirds or more of the qualification.

3.7.2 Professional Doctorate

The Professional Doctorate degree is awarded for an integrated program of structured learning and independent supervised study that produces significant and original research outcomes in the context of professional practice, culminating in a thesis, dissertation, exegesis or equivalent. The Professional Doctorate comprises both a research component and a coursework component. Candidates, under supervision, are responsible for developing and carrying out a prescribed program of research for the specified period of the program (refer to *Higher Degree by Research Policy* for 'Minimum and Maximum Duration of Candidature').

The coursework component will include advanced coursework designed to enhance the candidate's capacity to make a significant contribution to original knowledge in the discipline (or cross-disciplinary field) and/or research integrated practice developed in collaboration with a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

The content and structure of the program will be chosen with due regard to the objectives of the program, the characteristics of potential candidates, professional and industry needs. The coursework and the research component of the program should be integrated and

complementary. The research component of the program will be of at least two years duration.

3.7.3 Joint Doctoral degree program

A Joint Doctoral degree is a program leading to a single qualification and is typically conferred jointly by the partner institutions. It is a collaborative award program where the content and delivery of the program is designed by both institutions, as well as the assessment of learning outcomes and the requirements for awarding the qualification. The requirements of a Joint Doctoral degree program may vary depending on the arrangements negotiated by the partner institutions.

3.8 Double degree programs

Double degrees programs are designed to meet the core requirements and learning outcomes of each single degree. As such, two separate awards are granted.

Attributes of a double degree program include:

- core courses specified in the single degree
- academic plans – major and/or minor
- research component, where one component is an Honours program or a Masters program
- capstone course/s.

Elective requirements may be met by the requirements of the other degree.

The following models exist:

- Double bachelor degree program comprising two Bachelor degree programs, one Bachelor degree and one Bachelor honours degree program or two Bachelor honours degree programs.
- Double Masters degree program
- Vertical degree program comprising a Bachelor program and a Masters program, or a Bachelor honours program and Masters program. Vertical degree programs always sit in the undergraduate academic career.

In approving double degrees Programs Committee takes into account the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, the volume of learning, the balance of learning, and the program of study including content, learning and assessment approaches.

4.0 Definitions

Academic Career refers to the broad academic level to which a program belongs. There are four academic careers: Undergraduate (UGRD), Postgraduate (PGRD), Research (RSCH) and Non-Award (NAWD).

AQF level is the nomenclature used in the AQF to demonstrate the relative complexity and/or depth of achievements and the autonomy required of graduates of AQF qualifications to demonstrate that achievement e.g. AQF level 1 has the lowest complexity and AQF Level 10 has the highest complexity.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a national system of qualifications encompassing all post-compulsory education. Higher education awards are located at AQF Levels 5-10.

Award program is an approved course of study that leads to a qualification located at levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework and meets the corresponding specifications (including the levels criteria and qualification type descriptors).

Capstone Course is a core 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.

Core courses are mandatory for all students to successfully complete to meet the degree requirements.

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.

English Language Enhancement (ELE) Course develops competency in English language skills in writing, reading, speaking and listening.

Elective courses are either listed electives or free choice electives. The program requirements will identify limits on elective options within each program.

Dissertation refers to a coherent exposition of a research study in which the research objectives, relationship to other scholarly work, methodology and strategies employed and the results obtained are identified, analysed and evaluated.

Free choice electives are a set of courses that are not specified in the program in order to fulfil the requirements of the program or plan. Students may select any course from within the University provided that all enrolment conditions of the course are met.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) means a higher degree by research that is a research Masters or research Doctorate. A research Masters means a Level 9 qualification as described in the Australian Qualifications Framework and where a minimum of two-thirds of the program of learning is for research, research training and independent study. A research Doctorate means a Level 10 qualification as described in the Australian Qualifications Framework and where a minimum of two years of the program of learning, and typically two-thirds of the qualification, is research.

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.

Listed electives are a set of courses specified in the requirements of a program or an academic plan from which students are required to choose a specified number to fulfil the requirements of the program or plan; or

Non-award program is an approved course of study that does not lead to an award of the University. The non-award program may comprise courses normally taken as part of an award program but is a non-AQF qualification. Non-award programs include micro-credentials, continuing education, executive education, professional development, tertiary preparation, enabling, and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) programs.

Program is an approved course of study. A student is admitted to a program.

Qualification type is the nomenclature used in the AQF to describe each category of AQF qualification e.g. Bachelor degree, Bachelor degree Honours, Graduate Certificate, Masters degree (Coursework). Each qualification type is defined by a descriptor expressed as learning outcomes.

Research comprises and includes original, exploratory, experimental, applied, clinically or work-based and other forms of creative work undertaken systematically to increase knowledge and understanding, deploying a range of research principles and methodologies. Research is specified in the learning outcomes for the Doctoral Degree, the Masters Degree and the Bachelor Honours Degree. The amount and type of research in each of these qualifications types vary.

Research Component Within the requirements of a program a course or set of courses that include as learning outcomes the capacity to plan, execute and report on the findings of a research project may be designated as a research component. Courses with learning outcomes requiring students to demonstrate their ability to collate research and findings on a particular topic, to apply their knowledge in analysing this information and incorporating it into a written response meet the research component requirement.

Appendix 1: Requirement to Complete the English Language Enhancement Course

The table below identifies the international student groups required to complete the English Language Enhancement Course and those exempt from the requirement to complete the English Language Enhancement Course.

Students whose first language is English are not permitted to undertake the English Language Enhancement (ELE) course.

Domestic students whose first language is not English may complete the ELE course as an elective.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ADMITTED VIA ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ENGLISH ADMISSION PATHWAYS ARE <u>REQUIRED</u> TO COMPLETE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ENHANCEMENT COURSE	INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ADMITTED VIA ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ENGLISH ADMISSION PATHWAYS ARE <u>NOT REQUIRED</u> TO COMPLETE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ENHANCEMENT COURSE
IELTS (Academic) below 7.0 with any sub-score below 6.5 (or equivalent)	At least IELTS (Academic) of 7.0 with no sub-score below 6.5 within the last two years
TOEFL (paper based) below 580	At least TOEFL (paper based) 580 within the last two years
TOEFL (internet based) below 92 with any score below 22	At least TOEFL (internet based) 92 with no score less than 22 within the last two years
Less than ISLPR 4 in each skill	At least ISLPR 4 in each skill within the last two years
a grade of C or below on the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)	a minimum grade of C on the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)
Less than a score of 68 in the Pearson Test of English (Academic)	At least a score of 68 in the Pearson Test of English (Academic)
Griffith English Language Institute Direct Entry Program	Satisfactory completion of one of the qualifications specified in the <i>Admission Policy</i> or <i>English Language Proficiency Schedule</i>
Satisfactory completion within the past five years from Canada (excluding Quebec), New Zealand, Australia, Republic of Ireland, United States or United Kingdom of senior secondary, post-secondary, Higher Education Sector accredited associate degree- or degree-level study, or equivalent, but for less than two years full-time equivalent, where the language of instruction was in English. Note these students will be required to complete the ELE course. This includes: senior secondary study (including Foundation program studies) or equivalent where the study duration was less than two years;	Satisfactory completion within the past five years from Canada (excluding Quebec), New Zealand, Australia, Republic of Ireland, United States or United Kingdom of senior secondary, post-secondary, Higher Education Sector accredited associate degree- or degree-level study, or equivalent for at least two years full-time equivalent, where the language of instruction was in English. Note these students will not be required to complete the ELE course. This includes: senior secondary study (excluding Foundation program studies) or equivalent where the duration of study was at least two years;

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post-secondary study of a VET Sector accredited certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, or equivalent (eg. TAFE) where the program duration was less than two years;
post-secondary study of a Higher Education Sector accredited diploma (eg. Queensland Institute of Business Technology) where the program duration was less than two years;
a Higher Education Sector accredited associate degree or degree, or equivalent where the study duration was less than two years.

Satisfactory completion within the past five years of up to two years full-time equivalent post-secondary, Higher Education Sector accredited associate degree- or degree-level study, or equivalent in a country as specified in the *Admission Policy* or *English Language Proficiency Schedule* in which the language of instruction and assessment/examination for the entire duration of study was in English.

Satisfactory completion within the past five years of a senior secondary or post-secondary qualification or equivalent from a country other than those specified above, irrespective of the duration of study.

Satisfactory completion within the past five years from a country other than those specified above of a Higher Education Sector accredited associate degree or degree, or equivalent.

International students entering through any other English language admission pathways not specified as leading to exemption from completion of the English Language Enhancement Course.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ADMITTED
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post-secondary study where the study duration was at least two years;

VET-Sector accredited certificate, diploma, advanced diploma (eg TAFE) where the combined program duration was at least two years;

a Higher Education Sector accredited associate degree or degree, or equivalent where the study duration was at least two years.

Satisfactory completion within the past five years of at least two years full-time equivalent post-secondary, Higher Education Sector accredited associate degree- or degree-level study, or equivalent in a country as specified in the *Admission Policy* or *English Language Proficiency Schedule* in which the language of instruction and assessment/examination for the entire two years was in English.

5.0 Information

Title	Qualifications Procedure
Document number	2023/0000381
Purpose	This Procedure describes the preferred structure and requirements of each qualification for which the University confers an award.
Audience	Staff
Category	Academic
Subcategory	Learning and Teaching
Approval date	20 July 2023
Effective date	Trimester 1 2024
Review date	2028
Policy advisor	Senior Manager, Student Credentials
Approving authority	Provost

6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Australian Government Legislation and Policy	Australian Qualifications Framework 2013 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
Policy	Academic Awards and Qualifications Policy Admission Policy Program and Course Policy Higher Degree by Research Policy
Procedure	Course Approval Procedure Dissertation Management Procedure English Language Proficiency Schedule Micro-credential and Digital Badge Approval and Review Procedure Program Approval Procedure Program Attributes and Requirements Procedure