

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 Procedure*). 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.

All coursework award programs must be designed in accordance with the University's Program Structure Design Principles, which specifies the structural architecture that underpins the University's approach to program design. Programs consist of modules and the design of each module is based on the associated Design Principles.

When used as an exit qualification, program requirements may be modified so long as Program Learning Outcomes are met.

3.1 Undergraduate Certificate (AQF Levels 5 – 7)

An Undergraduate Certificate is normally 40 credit points (CP). The Core module will comprise courses from programs at AQF Levels 5, 6 or 7 and must include at least 10 CP in gateway courses. The Undergraduate Certificate will provide a pathway into an existing qualification and may also be used as a nested qualification at AQF Levels 5, 6 or 7.

3.2 Diploma (AQF Level 5)

A Diploma qualification normally comprises 80 CP and is designed to articulate with a related Bachelor program. The Core module consists of 60 CP of courses aligned with the first-year core of the related Bachelor program. The remaining 20 CP will consist of prescribed 1000 coded courses, preferably selected from the elective list of the related Bachelor program and/or enabling courses that support student transition and success. Diplomas must include at least 20 CP of gateway courses.

3.3 Bachelor Degree Program (AQF Level 7)

A Bachelor degree program is normally 240 CP for a three year program or 320 CP for a four year program. Bachelor degree programs are structured as follows:

3.3.1 240 credit point Bachelor degree with majors

A Bachelor degree with majors will comprise:

- 100 CP of Core module
- 60 CP of Major module
- 80 CP of Flexible module

3.3.2 240 credit point Bachelor degree without majors

A Bachelor degree without majors will comprise:

- 160 CP of Core module
- 80 CP of Flexible module

3.3.3 320 credit point Bachelors degree

A Bachelor degree with majors will comprise:

- 180 CP of Core module
- 60 CP of Major module
- 80 CP of Flexible module

A Bachelor degree without majors will comprise:

- 240 CP of Core module
- 80 CP of Flexible module

For Bachelor degrees greater than 320 CP, any additional credit points should be carefully considered in relation to student workload and program structure. Where appropriate, additional credit points should be allocated to the Core module, with increments of 40 CP preferred to maintain coherence and academic progression.

3.3.4 Program requirements

A Bachelor degree program will include:

- A first year core of 60 CP comprising 1000 coded courses only, 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 1000 coded courses.
- A 320 CP program will not allow for the completion of more than 120 CP of 1000 coded courses. The Core module includes a minimum of 40 CP of 3000 (or higher) coded courses

(including core and major courses) and at least 10 CP WIL designated course or capstone course at 3000 (or higher) study.

- 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, this may involve very limited “or” choices between courses (for example, a student selects 10 CP from 20 CP of options).
- The program must allow for a minimum of 60 CP of final year courses appropriate to the AQF qualification type (i.e. 3000 coded or above).
- Majors are 60 CP and must include courses coded at 2000 or higher, with a minimum of 20 CP at 3000 coded or above. The majority of courses in a major should be unique to that major and not normally shared with other majors within the program.
- Bachelor degrees require a minimum of 60 CP of gateway courses, including 20 CP per major, where relevant. Gateway courses in Bachelor degrees should be spread throughout the program to include courses at all levels. To ensure progression from a nested diploma, 20 CP of gateway courses should be 1000 coded.
- The Flexible module of a Bachelor degree program may include second Majors, Minors (40 CP) and, in the case of qualifications in Education, Teaching Areas.

3.4 Bachelor Honours Degree (AQF Level 8)

Three models of honours programs are available:

1. **End-on Honours:** Admit graduates into an 80 CP AQF Level 8 Bachelor Honours degree program, following completion of a AQF Level 7 Bachelor degree.
2. **Concurrent Honours:** Admit all students into a 320 CP (or more) AQF Level 8 Bachelor Honours degree program.
3. **Embedded Honours** (being phased out): Admit all commencing students into a 320 CP (or more) AQF Level 7 Bachelor degree program; students who meet the admission requirements may apply to transfer to a 320 CP AQF 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 40 CP supervised research component leading to a dissertation or comparable research output for examination in the visual, performing or creative arts; and
- 10 CP research methodology.

Typically these courses will serve as gateway courses for the degree.

In a Concurrent Honours program, the credit point structure of Bachelor Honours programs is outlined in section 3.3.4 above. The 40 CP supervised research component may include a 10 CP research methodology course and 30 CP of supervised research, or equivalent. The amount and type of research must provide sufficient preparation for research at a higher qualification level. The program must allow for a minimum of 60 CP of final year courses appropriate to the AQF qualification type and of these at least 20 CP must be gateway courses.

It is recommended that some coursework be included in the end-on 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 an AQF Level 8 or 9 postgraduate program;
- Honours courses.

3.4.1 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.

3.5 Graduate Certificate (AQF Level 8)

A Graduate Certificate is 40 CP and will comprise courses from the Foundation module. 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.

Graduate Certificates must include at least 10 CP of gateway courses.

3.6 Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8)

The Graduate Diploma is 80 CP and will comprise courses from the Foundation and Core modules. 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.

Graduate Diplomas must include at least 20 CP of gateway courses, including the research or capstone course (where applicable).

3.7 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 AQF.

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

- 1 Year (80 CP) (Coursework) Masters
- 1.5 Year (120 CP) (Coursework) Masters (Broadening)
- 1.5 Year (120 CP) (Coursework) Masters (Deepening)
- 2 Year (160 CP) (Coursework) Masters
- Masters Extended): 240 or 320 CP

- Masters (Research): 80-160 CP

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

3.7.1 Masters (Coursework)

Masters (Coursework) programs are structured as follows:

- 1 Year
 - Core module (80CP)
- 1.5 Year broadening
 - Foundation module (40 CP)
 - Core module (80 CP)
- 1.5 Year deepening
 - Core module (80 CP)
 - Flexible module (40 CP)
- 2 Year
 - Foundation module (40 CP)
 - Core module (80 CP)
 - Flexible module (40 CP)

A Masters (Coursework) program will include:

- A minimum of 20 CP of gateway courses in the Core module (programs without majors), or at least 10 CP of gateway courses in the Core module and 10 CP in each major (programs with majors)
- A research component that aligns with the AQF 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. Gateway courses must encompass the research component of the Masters degree.
- 160 CP Masters programs should include a 40 CP Foundation module of which up to 40 CP can comprise final year undergraduate courses (3000 coded or above) 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 and will form part of the Core module.
- 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 *Equivalent Qualifications for Higher Degree by Research Program Admission Schedule*.

Where the Masters (Coursework) 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.

3.7.2 Masters (Extended)

A Masters (Extended) program may cover similar material to undergraduate courses but will be delivered and assessed at the appropriate AQF level. Masters (Extended) programs must include at least 20 CP of gateway courses.

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. The research component must be assured as a gateway course.

Where the Masters (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.

3.7.3 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.

3.7.4 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 *Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure* for the minimum and maximum duration of candidature for the Master of Philosophy).

3.8 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 the *Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure*.

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.

3.8.1 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 Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure* 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.

3.8.2 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 Program and Courses website for duration of candidature for specific professional doctorate programs).

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.

3.8.3 Jointly Awarded Doctorates

A jointly awarded 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 jointly awarded doctoral degree program may vary depending on the arrangements negotiated by the partner institutions.

3.9 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 modules, including gateway courses, specified in the single degree;
- Major module, including gateway courses, for Undergraduate programs;
- research component, where one component is an Honours program or a Masters program.

Flexible module 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.

Course code is a unique number for a course where the numeric code reflects the course's year level, which is determined by its position within the program structure and the knowledge prerequisites required for progression. The course code is published in course lists and appears on the academic transcript.

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 1000 courses, designated courses, work integrated learning (WIL) courses, and capstone courses.

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.

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.

Gateway course assures learning of one of more program learning outcome or distinctive areas of learning essential to the degree (i.e. knowledge and skills in majors) via forms of assessment that provide a very high degree of confidence that students have met the learning outcomes without unauthorised assistance.

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.

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.

5.0 Information

Title	Qualifications Procedure
Document number	2026/0000007
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	10 February 2026
Effective date	10 February 2026
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Qualifications Framework (Second Edition) 2013 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
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Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Awards and Graduations Policy Admission Policy Program and Course Policy Higher Degree by Research Policy
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Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Approval Procedure Course Attributes and Requirements Procedure Dissertation Management Procedure Dual Award and Jointly Awarded Doctorates English Language Proficiency Schedule Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Variations to Candidature Procedure Micro-credential and Digital Badge Approval and Review Procedure Program Approval Procedure Program Attributes and Requirements Procedure
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Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Structure Design Principles
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