

## Structure and Requirements of Qualifications Awarded by Griffith University

<b>Approving authority</b>	Academic Committee
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<b>Description</b>	This policy prescribes the definitions, general elements and structural features which apply to all the qualifications of Griffith University.

### Related documents

[Bachelor Degree \(AQF Level 7\) Policy](#)

[Bachelor Honours Degree \(AQF Level 8\) Policy](#)

[Postgraduate Qualifications \(AQF Level 8 & 9\) Policy](#)

[Program Approval and Review](#)

[Higher Degree Research Policy](#)

[Role Statement Program Director](#)

[Fees and Charges Policy](#)

[Student Administration Policy](#)

[Academic Awards, Programs, Nomenclature and Abbreviations](#)

[Academic Calendar Procedure](#)

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy](#)

[\[Definitions\]](#) [\[Program\]](#) [\[Award Qualifications\]](#) [\[Course\]](#) [\[Credit Point\]](#) [\[Trimesters and Teaching Periods\]](#) [\[Program Standard Length\]](#) [\[Annual Academic Load\]](#) [\[Program Mode\]](#) [\[Student Academic Load and Mode of Attendance\]](#) [\[Program Requirements\]](#) [\[Changes to Program Requirements\]](#) [\[Progress\]](#) [\[Award of Qualification\]](#) [\[Variation to Program Requirements\]](#)

## 1. DEFINITIONS

**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 or courses, the completion of which leads to an AQF qualification.

**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.

**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.

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

**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.

**Teach Out** refers to a program with a sunset clause in which no commencing students can be enrolled, and arrangements are in place to ensure that all existing enrolled students can either complete the program of study within a specified timeframe or transition to a replacement program.

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## 2. PROGRAM

A program is an approved course of study leading to an award of the University. A student is admitted to a program, undertakes study while enrolled in that program, and on successful completion of all program requirements is awarded the qualification to which the program relates.

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## 3. AWARD QUALIFICATIONS

### 3.1 Qualification Types and Levels

The University offers programs at the following qualification types and levels in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework:

- **Diploma (AQF Level 5)**

The Diploma is a program typically equivalent to one to two years of full-time study for which the University grants the award of Diploma of X.

- **Advanced Diploma (AQF Level 6)**

The Advanced Diploma is a program typically equivalent to one and a half to two years of full-time study, for which the University grants the award of Advanced Diploma of X.

- **Associate Degree (AQF Level 6)**

The Associate Degree is a program typically equivalent to two years of full-time study for which the University grants the award of Associate Degree of X.

- **Bachelor Degree (AQF Level 7)**

The Bachelor degree is a program typically equivalent to three or more years of full-time study for which the University grants the award of Bachelor of X.

- **Bachelor Honours Degree (AQF Level 8)**

The Bachelor Honours degree is a program typically equivalent to one year of full-time study normally taken after the completion of a three year bachelor degree through which the student demonstrates a high level of academic achievement through advanced study and research. The University grants the award of the Bachelor of X (Honours) (refer to *Bachelor Honours Degree (AQF Level 8) Policy*). A Bachelor Honours Degree may also be embedded in a Bachelor Degree, typically as an additional year.

- **Graduate Certificate (AQF Level 8)**

The Graduate Certificate is a program typically equivalent to one trimester to one year of full-time study for which the University grants the award of Graduate Certificate in X.

- **Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8)**

The Graduate Diploma is a program typically equivalent to one to two years of full-time study for which the University grants the award of Graduate Diploma of X.

- **Masters Degree (AQF Level 9)**

The Masters degree is a program typically equivalent to one to two years full-time study for which the University grants the award of Master of X.

A Masters degree may be designated as a coursework Masters degree or research Masters degree, in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework, current Government guidelines and the University's policy on the classification of programs as higher degrees by research (*Higher Degree Research Policy*).

A Masters degree may be designated as an extended Masters degree which is a program typically equivalent to three to four years of full-time study for which the University grants the award of Master of X, with the exceptions of medical practice, physiotherapy and dentistry where the University grants the award of Doctor of X.

- **Doctoral Degree (AQF Level 10)**

A Doctoral degree is a program typically equivalent to three or more years of full-time study, which requires the student to make a substantial original contribution to knowledge through research and/or advanced critical reflection on professional theory and practice, for which the degree Doctor of X is awarded.

### 3.2 Learning Outcomes

For each program the learning outcomes that students are required to acquire through their studies and are able to demonstrate at the completion of the qualification are specified. The learning outcomes are to be consistent with the AQF learning outcomes descriptors specified for the appropriate qualification type. Where discipline threshold learning outcomes relevant to the program are established these are also to be addressed in the program's design and development.

### 3.3 Academic Career

Bachelor degrees, including Bachelor Honours degrees and sub-degree level (AQF Level 5 & 6) programs are collectively referred to as undergraduate programs. Students undertaking undergraduate programs are designated as being in the undergraduate career. Vertical degrees (Bachelor/Master) are also designated as being in the undergraduate career. Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, and Masters programs are postgraduate programs. Students undertaking Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Coursework Masters or Extended Masters programs are designated as being in the postgraduate career. Students undertaking research Masters or Doctoral programs are designated as being in the research career.

Notwithstanding Bachelor Honours degrees being classified as undergraduate programs in the undergraduate career, privileges and services normally only available to students in postgraduate or research programs may be extended to Bachelors Honours students.

### 3.4 Nested Qualifications

An award program may include various entry points and exit points, with the exit points leading to other qualification types. The set of related programs and awards may be referred to as "nested qualifications". The program requirements approved by Programs Committee for each program shall specify the requirements for entry, exit and transfer between related programs, including any requirement for students to attain a specific standard in a part of a program in order to proceed to the remainder of the program, and the qualification to be awarded where students do not attain the specified standard.

Where a student has taken an exit qualification, whether by choice or as a requirement, the student may be readmitted to the initial program and proceed to complete the qualification for the program in which they were initially enrolled. The award at the exit point is not normally rescinded. The student must undertake further study in the initial program to satisfy the program requirements and may be required to undertake an increased volume of learning to meet the requirements of the qualification type.

## 4. COURSE

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

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## 5. CREDIT POINT

The term "Credit Point" (abbreviated CP) refers to the number of units assigned to a course. This term is used to:

- provide students with a guide to the amount of work a course may entail;
- indicate a student's enrolment load;
- define the requirements for an award of the University;
- quantify the recognition of prior-learning; and
- indicate the amount of work a student has successfully completed towards an award of the University.

Credit Points are assigned to courses such that the courses which comprise one year of full-time study add to 80 credit points. Refer to Annual Academic Load.

As a general guide, 1CP is equivalent to approximately 15 hours of work; that is approximately 150 hours for a 10 credit point course, including all forms of teaching contact (face to face and online), assessment tasks and private study, for an 'average' student.

The workload specified by the credit point value of a course applies regardless of the length of the course (year, trimester, intensive teaching period) or the mode of delivery (online, on-campus or blended).

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## 6. TRIMESTERS AND TEACHING PERIODS

The standard academic year is comprised of two standard trimesters, Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 as designated in the University's Academic Calendar. Other teaching periods may be designated in the academic calendar and may be used for the offering of certain courses (*Academic Calendar Procedure*).

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## 7. PROGRAM STANDARD LENGTH

The standard length of a program is the number of standard academic years, consisting of two standard trimesters, required for a student undertaking a full-time academic load to complete the academic requirements of the program.

Where a program is not offered in the pattern of two full-time trimesters per year, the standard length of the program is determined by reference to a hypothetical program structure of two full-time trimesters per year. Where a program is offered in accelerated mode by using overload study programs in trimesters and/or other teaching periods, the standard length of the program is determined by reference to a hypothetical program structure of two standard trimesters per year with standard full-time study loads each trimester.

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## 8. ANNUAL ACADEMIC LOAD

The annual academic load is the total credit points required for the award, as specified in the program requirements, divided by the program standard length.

The annual academic load for all programs shall be 80CP. This does not preclude program structures that use teaching periods other than the two standard trimesters.

The annual academic load determines the calculation of effective full-time student load (EFTSL), also referred to as effective full-time student unit (EFTSU), which is the statistical measurement of student enrolment (student load) and is the basis for the calculation of the student contribution and learning entitlement for Commonwealth supported students and the tuition fee for non-Commonwealth supported students (refer to Fees and Charges Policy).

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## 9. PROGRAM MODE - FULL-TIME/PART-TIME/INTERNAL/EXTERNAL

Programs may be offered in full-time mode, part-time mode, or internal, external mode and combinations of these modes.

The mode(s) in which the program is offered are approved by the Programs Committee as part of the Program Approval process. The program mode of offer and the attendance and participation requirements should be clearly conveyed to students on the Programs and Courses website.

### **Full-time Mode**

The designation of a program as being offered in a full-time mode requires that the program structure published on the Programs and Courses website shows a sequence of courses suitable for students proceeding at a full-time study rate. It does not require that all courses are scheduled during the day.

### **Part-time Mode**

The designation of a program as being offered in a part-time mode requires that the program structure published on the Programs and Courses website shows a sequence of courses suitable for students proceeding at a part-time study rate, normally 20 credit points per trimester. Courses should be timetabled in a manner which accommodates students in full-time employment.

### **External Mode**

The designation of a program as being offered in external mode indicates that all courses which comprise the program are offered in external mode such that there is no requirement for on campus attendance, or very limited requirement for on campus attendance.

### **Internal Mode**

The designation of a program as being offered in internal mode indicates the program comprises courses which require regular scheduled on-campus attendance for face-to-face delivery. This does not preclude some courses in the program being offered in both internal and external modes.

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## 10. STUDENT ACADEMIC LOAD (FULL-TIME/PART-TIME) AND MODE OF ATTENDANCE (INTERNAL/EXTERNAL)

Students are classified as full-time, part-time, or internal, external depending on their student load in a given trimester. Where a student is undertaking all courses in external mode in a trimester, the student is an external student. If the student is undertaking at least one course on-campus in a trimester, the student is an internal student (see Student Administration Policy).

This classification does not depend on the program mode of offer. Students may undertake a part-time academic load in a full-time program and may undertake a full-time academic load in a part-time program, subject to timetable and course sequence restrictions.

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## 11. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The set of academic requirements which need to be attained in order for the qualification associated with the program to be conferred are approved by the Programs Committee. Program requirements normally include one or more of the following:

- Core Courses
- Academic Plan/s
- Elective Courses
- Research component

### 11.1 Core Courses

The program requirements specify the core courses that are mandatory for the award including level 1 courses, designated courses, capstone course and the ELE course.

In specific circumstances, approval may be given to substitute another course for a core course, provided that both courses have learning outcomes specified at the same level and qualification type or a defensible pedagogical rationale to justify the substitution is provided

Approval:

- for an individual student to substitute another course for a core course is given by the Dean on the recommendation of the Program Director where it is considered that the substitute course is consistent with the program's learning outcomes.
- for a student cohort to substitute the English Language Enhancement Course for a core course, approval is given by the Programs Committee on the recommendation of the relevant Dean.
- In approving the substitution of a core course consideration needs to be given to the balance of the components of the program at the level of the qualification type and the program's learning outcomes.

### 11.2 Academic Plan

Within the program requirements, a set of courses that develop a particular academic theme may be identified and designated as an academic plan.

Academic plans are designated with a type. Types of academic plans include:

#### **Bachelor Degree**

- Major (60CP)
- Minor (40 CP)

#### **Masters Degree**

- major (minimum 40CP)

A major in the masters degree includes the independent research component specified for this qualification type.

The type, nomenclature and the requirements which constitute each academic plan are approved by the Programs Committee as part of the program requirements. Programs Committee may approve variations to the name and weighting of academic plans in exceptional circumstances and on the basis of a well-defined academic need. In the case of qualifications in Education the academic plan type may be described as a Teaching area.

### 11.3 Award Nomenclature and Award Academic Plan

The Programs Committee, as part of the program approval process approves the award title to be conferred on completion of the program requirements, and its post-nominal abbreviation.

For bachelor and masters degree programs the testamur for the award includes a statement indicating the major which a student has completed. Each major is linked to particular wording on the award testamur e.g. 'This award was achieved with a major in X'

Where the program structure permits a student to complete the requirements of two majors the wording on the award testamur shall state 'This award was achieved with two majors, one in X and one in Y'.

#### **11.4 Electives**

Electives are either:

- listed electives – 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
- free choice electives – students are permitted to select a number of courses that are not specified in the program or plan requirements in order to fulfil the requirements of the program or plan.

Where the program requirements permit a student to undertake either listed or free choice electives, the student may enrol in such a course provided that:

- the course is at a level suitable to the type of qualification the student is undertaking; and
- the program requirements concerning the minimum number of credit points at program's qualification level are complied with; and
- pre-requisite and co-requisite conditions are satisfied; and
- the course is not a restricted course; or
- in the case of a restricted course, the student meets the conditions specified in the restrictions, or is given approval by the Head of School or nominee to undertake the course.

#### **11.5 Research component**

Within the requirements of a program a course or set of courses that include as learning outcomes the capacity to plan and execute a research project in accordance with the definition set out in 1.0 may be designated as a research component.

The amount and type of research in each of the University's qualification types vary as does the form of the research project. The Programs Committee approves the program requirements for all of the University's qualifications. The Board of Graduate Research assures that the research component in Doctoral and Masters (Research) degrees meet the learning outcomes for those qualification types.

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## **12. CHANGES TO PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The Programs Committee may approve changes to the program requirements on the recommendation of the relevant Group Board. The amended program requirements apply only to students admitted in the trimester/teaching period subsequent to the changes being approved.

Teach out and transition arrangements for withdrawn programs are approved by the Chair of Programs Committee.

A timeframe for teaching out the existing program requirements shall be approved with the maximum period being the standard length of the program, from the last admit term for commencing students.

Transition arrangements for currently enrolled students may require them to transfer to the new program to complete their program requirements.

Teach out and transition arrangements are communicated to students via the Programs and Courses website.

Students who withdraw from the program, or who otherwise interrupt their enrolment in the program, including taking leave of absence, are not covered by transition arrangements and are required to conform to the amended program requirements when they resume their studies in the program, this may result in them completing more credit points than are normally required for the qualification.

## 13. PROGRESS

Students accumulate credit points for all courses for which the grade of 4 or higher has been attained. A student may gain credit for a course at a pre-2013 grade of 3, provided the program requirements had previously permitted the award of the Pass Conceded grade, and if the grade of 3 does not take the student's total number of 3s beyond one-eighth of the total credit points required for the award. Courses in which a grade of 3 has been awarded and in which the student has subsequently gained a higher grade do not count for credit. Unsatisfactory progress is defined in the University's Policy on Academic Standing, Progress and Exclusion.

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## 14. AWARD OF QUALIFICATION

When the student has completed all academic requirements for the qualification, the relevant Dean, on the recommendation of the Program Director, certifies that the student has completed all program requirements and approves that the award be granted.<sup>1</sup>

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## 15. VARIATION TO PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

In exceptional circumstances, on the recommendation of the Program Director, the relevant Dean may approve a variation on the standard requirements for the program for individual students, where:

- compliance with a requirement is impractical for the student in terms of its availability, and its learning outcomes;
- the requirements of the degree have been met at the point of graduation with the exception of a preparatory requirement scheduled early in the student's studies;
- the revised program of study substantially satisfies the knowledge and skills of the qualification;
- the degree is accredited/recognised by a professional body, the revised program of study satisfies the standards for recognition or registration of the student on graduation;
- the revised program of study continues to comply with the total number of Credit Points required for the award of the degree.

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<sup>1</sup> Council (4/2012) resolved to delegate authority to the Deans (Learning and Teaching) of the relevant academic group to approve the granting of academic awards to undergraduate students, and coursework postgraduate students who have satisfied the academic requirements for the award of a degree; and to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School to approve the granting of higher degree by research awards, and doctorates and higher doctorates by publication awards to candidates who have satisfied the requirements for the award of a degree.