University Procedure

Federation UNIVERSITY • AUSTRALIA

Coursework Postgraduate Programs Procedure

Policy Code: LT1949

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Purpose

This procedure supports and mandates the implementation of Federation University Australia's Nomenclature of Sealed Awards Policy. It expands on the principles outlined in the policy and provides a framework for the development of coursework postgraduate courses.

The coursework postgraduate courses offered at the University include:

- graduate certificate
- graduate diploma; and
- masters degree (coursework)

Scope

This procedure applies to the development of all coursework postgraduate courses, with the exception of postgraduate courses by research which is the subject of Regulation 5.1 Higher Doctorates, The Degree of Philosophy, Professional Doctorates and Masters Degrees by Research.

All staff of the University must comply with the Nomenclature of Sealed Awards Policy and this procedure whenever engaged in the development of coursework postgraduate courses.

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Legislative Context

Federation University Australia Act 2010

Statutes and Regulations

- Statute 5.1 Academic Awards and Courses
- Regulation 5.1 Higher Doctorates, The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Professional Doctorates and Masters Degrees by Research
- Regulation 5.1.2 Honours and Distinctions
- Regulation 5.1.3 Programs

Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA ACT) - establishes TEQSA as an agency who regulate using the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
Application of knowledge and/or skills	Refers to how a graduate applies knowledge and skills in context and in terms of autonomy, responsibility and accountability
AQF qualification	The result of an accredited complete program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF
Articulation arrangements	Enable students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined qualification pathway (refer credit transfer)
Assessment	A process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration
Autonomy in the application of knowledge and/or skills	The ability to apply knowledge and/or skills with an appropriate degree of independence for the level of the qualification
Award of a qualification (also referred to as conferral)	Occurs when a student has met the requirements of the qualification and the qualification is certified through the provision of a testamur
Coursework	A method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that does not include a major research component
Credit	The value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing
Credit Outcomes	The results of a process of determining a student's application for credit or credit transfer

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![Federation University Australia logo]

TERM	DEFINITION
Credit Transfer	A process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications
Knowledge	Refers to what a graduate knows and understands and it can be described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity
Learning Outcomes	The expression of a the set of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning
Levels	AQF levels are an indication of the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement. AQF level 1 has the lowest complexity and AQF level 10 has the highest complexity
Levels Criteria	AQF levels criteria describe the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement for each AQF level from 1 - 10
Qualification Title	The nomenclature used for an AQF qualification that denotes the type, level and field of study/discipline of the qualification
Qualification Type Descriptor	The set of statements that describe the learning outcomes of each of the AQF qualification types in terms of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills
Sealed Awards (HE)	Issued to recognise successful completion of qualifications prescribed in the University's Statute 5.1 The Schedule
TEQSA	The Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) is an independent statutory authority established in 2011. TEQSA regulates and assures the quality of Australia's large, diverse and complex higher education sector. The Australian higher education system comprises both public and private universities, Australian branches of overseas universities, and other higher education providers with and without self-accrediting authority. Qualifications available from higher education providers range from undergraduate awards, (bachelor degrees, associate degrees or advanced diplomas) to postgraduate awards, including graduate diplomas, masters degrees and doctoral degrees. TEQSA registers and evaluates the performance of higher education providers against the Higher Education Standards Framework - specifically, the Threshold Standards, which all providers must meet in order to enter and remain within Australia's higher education system.
Testamur	An official certification document that confirms that a qualification has been awarded to an individual; also referred to as an award, parchment, laureate or certificate
Volume of Learning	A dimension of the complexity of a qualification. It is used with the level criteria and qualification type descriptor to determine the depth and breadth of the learning outcomes of a qualification. The volume of learning identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type.

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TERM	DEFINITION
	It is expressed in equivalent full-time years. At Federation University Australia, volume of learning is measured by credit points where 1 credit point equals 10 hours. A full-time program of study is 120 credit points per annum.

Actions

1. AQF Levels Criteria and AQF Qualification Type Descriptors

The organising framework for the AQF is a taxonomic structure of levels and qualification types each of which is defined by a taxonomy of learning outcomes. The AQF levels define the relative complexity and depth of achievement and the autonomy required of graduates to demonstrate that achievement.

2. AQF levels summaries and learning outcomes criteria

LEVEL	SUMMARY
7	Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and/or further learning
8	Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional/highly skilled work and/or further learning
9	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for research, and/or professional practice and/or further learning

Learning objectives/outcomes for all courses should be clearly stated and be guided by the characteristics of learning outcomes as expressed below in Action 3 - AQF Specifications, refer AQF Qualification type descriptors.

3. AQF Specifications

Level	AQF Qualification	No of 15 credit point courses	Volume of Learning	AQF Qualification type descriptors (Refer AQF Second Edition 2013)
8	Graduate Certificate	4 - 8	0.5 - 1 year	**Purpose:** The Graduate Certificate qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional or highly skills work and as a pathway for further learning **Knowledge:** Graduates of a Graduate Certificate will have specialised knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area

Level	AQF Qualification	No of 15 credit point courses	Volume of Learning	AQF Qualification type descriptors (Refer AQF Second Edition 2013)
				Skills: Graduates of a Graduate Certificate will have - • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems • specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice • communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts • communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences **Application of knowledge and skills:** Graduates of a Graduate Certificate will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills - • to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts • to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts • with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all asp0aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters
8	Graduate Diploma	8 - 16	1 - 2 years	**Purpose:** The Graduate Diploma qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning **Knowledge:** Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will have advanced knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area **Skills:** Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will have - • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems • cognitive skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas

Level	AQF Qualification	No of 15 credit point courses	Volume of Learning	AQF Qualification type descriptors (Refer AQF Second Edition 2013)
				• specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice • communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts • communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences **Application of knowledge and skills:** Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills - • to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts • to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts • with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters
9	Masters Degree (Coursework)	8 - 16	1 - 2 years; In the same discipline 1.5 years following a level 7 qualification or 1 year following a level 8 qualification; In a different discipline 2 years following a level 7 qualification or 1.5 years following a level 8 qualification	**Summary:** The Masters Degree (Coursework) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship and as a pathway for further learning **Knowledge:** Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will have - • a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in a discipline and/or area of professional practice • knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to a field of work and/or learning **Skills:** Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will have - • cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and professional practice or scholarship • cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level

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Level	AQF Qualification	No of 15 credit point courses	Volume of Learning	AQF Qualification type descriptors (Refer AQF Second Edition 2013)
				• communication and technical research skills to justify and interpret theoretical propositions, methodologies, conclusions and professional decisions to specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse and theorise about developments that contribute to professional practice or scholarship **Application of knowledge and skills:** Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills - • with creativity and initiative to new situations in professional practice and/or for further learning • with high level personal autonomy and accountability • to plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship

4. Developing New Coursework Postgraduate Courses

Volume of Learning, AQF Levels, Pathways

All Masters by Coursework programs at the University will need to comply with the following program structure to ensure compliance under the new AQF requirements. This is a **minimum** level requirement. Programs may be built around higher level courses but must not contain a mix of courses which would come from any other lower level than stated in this table.

Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma are included for reference for early exit points if required.

Assessment of prior study as being in a cognate field rests with the Coordinator of the Masters program.

AQF	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Volume of Learning	Comments & Justifications
Graduate Certificate	-	4	-	6 months (4x 15 credit point Courses)	AQF Second Edition 2013, Graduate Certificate = AQF level 8.
Graduate Diploma	-	8	-	1 year (8x 15 credit point Courses)	AQF Second Edition 2013, Graduate Diploma = AQF level 8.
Masters 1.5 years	-	4	8	1.5 years (12x 15 credit point Courses)	4 level 8 courses acknowledges academic progression through levels and allows for a Graduate Certificate as an early exit point.

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AQF	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Volume of Learning	Comments & Justifications
(Following a level 7 qualification in cognate discipline)					
Masters **2 years** (Following a level 7 qualification in a non-cognate discipline)	4	4	8	2 years (16x 15 credit point Courses)	Up to 4 level 7 courses for requisite discipline knowledge. 4 level 8 courses acknowledges academic progression through levels and allows for a Graduate Certificate as an early exit point
Masters **1.0 years** (Following a level 8 qualification in cognate discipline)	-	-	8	1 year (8x 15 credit point Courses)	
Masters **1.5 years**(Following a level 8 qualification in a non-cognate discipline)	4		8	1.5 years (12x 15 credit point Courses)	Up to 4 level 7 and/or level 8 courses for requisite discipline knowledge. 4 level 8 courses allows for Graduate Certificate as an early exit point

Notes:

Non-Cognate is defined as a student coming from a discipline other than the discipline of the Masters they are about to study. Some Schools currently use the term *Conversion* Programs.

It may be necessary to impose some restrictions on the use of the exit points in nested programs, for example a one year exclusion on enrolling in a subsequent program if the student graduates at the early exit point.

Schools currently using co-coded courses to teach students at different AQF levels will need to ensure that this ceases or in the course documentation demonstrate how the different learning outcomes for the different AQF levels are achieved, for example how do learning activities and assessment align with the different learning outcomes.

5. Articulation of Courses

Where possible, graduate certificates and graduate diplomas should be included within coursework masters courses. That is, there should be full articulation between each of the course levels. Course proposals should clearly identify the requirements of each course level and the articulation between each.

Where courses are fully articulated, if a student enrolled in a higher level course has to exit that course before completing all academic requirements they should be recommended for a lower level course (one only) if the academic requirements for that course have been met.

Candidates who have been awarded a lower level qualification in a fully articulated program will retain that qualification should they proceed to a higher level course in such a program.

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6. Entry Requirements

Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma

Candidates will have a bachelor degree or an advanced diploma or equivalent. Relevant prior work experience might also be recognised, particularly where relevant professional practice has been undertaken.

Masters Degree (Coursework)

Candidates will have a bachelor degree, an honours degree, a graduate diploma, graduate certificate or equivalent.

7. Course Duration

Graduate Certificate

Will require a minimum of six months full-time (120 credit points)

Graduate Diploma

Will require a minimum of one year of full-time study (120 credit points)

Masters Degree (Coursework)

A minimum of eighteen months of full-time study (180 credit points), where candidates have successfully completed a three year bachelor degree.

In instances where candidates have successfully completed a 'fourth year' of higher education studies in (eg a three year bachelor degree plus an honours year or a four year undergraduate degree) the program will require a minimum of one year of full-time study (120 credit points)

8. Research Requirements in Masters Degree (Coursework)

It is recommended that in Masters Degree (Coursework) a minimum requirement would include:

- Research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship, the magnitude of which should be benchmarked against discipline standards. As a guide:
  - 45 credit point research project will fulfil honours equivalence for entry to PhD.
  - 30 credit point minimum to fulfil AQF requirement
- 15 cpt research methods course

Research Methods courses can be taken directly from Level 8 Honours Programs.

This will satisfy the AQF requirement that:
Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills:

- *To plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship.*

Some accredited programs will have difficulty fitting these research components into their coursework programs, however TEQSA has stated that requirements of accrediting bodies come second to complying with the AQF.

9. Qualifications of Teaching Staff

TEQSA has stated that teaching staff must hold a qualification one level higher or equivalent industry experience than the level of qualification they are teaching, eg if a lecturer is teaching a Bachelor's Degree then he/she needs

to hold an Honours degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma at level 8 or higher qualification. In addition, the highest qualification does not have to be in the same discipline that he/she is teaching. This applies to staff with responsibility for curriculum, lectures, assessment and moderation and does not necessarily preclude tutors/ demonstrators and other assistants with the same level qualification from fulfilling these roles.

Supporting Documents

Nomenclature of Sealed Awards Policy

Approval of New Award Programs (Higher Education) Procedure

Responsibility

- Academic Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure
- Chair, Academic Board is responsible for maintaining the content of this policy as delegated by the Academic Board
- Executive Secretariat is responsible for the administration support for the maintenance of this procedure as directed by the Chair, Academic Board

Promulgation

The Coursework Postgraduate Courses Procedure will be communicated throughout the University via:

1. an Announcement Notice under 'FedNews' website and through the University Policy - 'Recently Approved Documents' webpage to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy;
2. inclusion on the University Policy, Procedure and Forms website; and/or
3. distribution of e-mails to Head of School / Head of Department / University staff

Implementation

The Coursework Postgraduate Courses Procedure will be implemented throughout the University via:

1. Information Sessions; and/or
2. Training Sessions

Records Management

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Course development - course proposals, course outlines Course review - review or changes to existing courses	School	Program Coordinator	Retain **3 years** from date of last entry Lodge records into the University's approved records management system using established procedures
Course management - working papers	School	Program Coordinator	Retain until organisational use has concluded

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Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Teaching staff qualifications matrix	School	Program Coordinator	Retain **2 years** after life or relevant program Lodge records into the University's approved records management system using established procedures