

Fourth Year (Honours) Programs Procedure

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Purpose

This procedure supports and mandates the implementation of Federation University Australia's Approval and Maintenance of Award Programs Higher Education Procedure and [Vocational Education and Training \(VET\) Awards Procedure](#). It expands on the principles outlined in these procedures and describes the requirements for fourth-year Honours courses.

Scope

This procedure applies only to Honours courses consisting of a single year of study following on from a Bachelor's degree.

Legislative Context

- Federation University Australia Act 2010
- Academic Regulations (schedule 6)
- Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011

Definitions

Term	Definition
Degree with Honours:	A four year degree where an honours year is embedded into the course as a fourth year of study
Honours Course :	A single year of study following on from a Bachelor's degree consisting of 120 credit points.
Supervisor:	An academic staff member of the University with a minimum of an AQF level 9 degree or equivalent who is active in research. The responsibility of the supervisor is to guide the student along the path to successful completion of the thesis or research project.
Honours Coordinator:	The person/s appointed by the Institute to take responsibility for implementing the course of study.

Actions

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Aligning the course Description	Institute	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An honours course will consist of 120 credit points of study at fourth-year level, combining research and course work. 2. It is undertaken over one (1) academic year (taking 9 months: part-time must be no more than double that time to ensure equity.) 3. Each Institute may implement guidelines that complement, but do not conflict with this procedure for Honours assessment.
B.	Defining Course Objectives	Honours Coordinator /Supervisor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through completion of the degree, students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge to identify and provide solutions to complex problems with intellectual independence; • have cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of a body of knowledge and theoretical concepts with an advanced understanding in some areas;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have cognitive skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in developing new understanding; • have technical skills to design and use research in a project; • have communication skills to present a clear and coherent exposition of knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences; • be able to apply their knowledge and skills with initiative and judgement in professional practice and/or scholarship; • be able to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts; • be responsible and accountable for own learning and practice and able to work in collaboration with others within broad parameters; • be able to plan and execute project work and/or a piece of research and scholarship with some independence.
C.	Determining Entry Requirements	Institute	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of a three or four year undergraduate degree, with Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 6.0 in the final year or the relevant major sequence. In Psychology, the minimum entry requirement is 5.0 in second and third year Psychology courses. 2. A student who wishes to enter the course, but who does not fulfil these requirements, may present a case in writing to the relevant Honours Course Coordinator in the Institute, at whose discretion they may be admitted to the course. 3. Students will normally have a thesis or research project topic approved before enrolment, however in

			<p>Psychology, the project may be co-designed during the process. Approval of research topics may depend upon the availability of a suitable supervisor.</p>
D.	Defining Course Structure	Institute	<p>1. The Honours year will comprise a combination of specified coursework and research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coursework for Honours courses shall include training in the principles of research, which are designed to support the research project. In some courses, students may be permitted or encouraged to undertake cross-institutional studies. • Any units credited to an Honours course must be from fourth-year level or above; units from an undergraduate course must be separately approved for Honours level. • Credit for studies in completed courses or for research undertaken previously will not be granted towards an Honours course. In the case of part-time students, coursework should normally be undertaken before the research thesis. <p>2. Research undertaken for Honours may be presented as a thesis or by a combination of creative or practical work and supporting analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thesis length will be identified in the Institute's Honours Handbook relevant to the particular discipline. • The thesis will have a clear focus and a line of argument based on the research, and be presented in accordance with

			<p>referencing and formatting requirements of the relevant discipline or field of study as identified in the Institute's Honours Handbook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combination of creative or practical work (such as software development, or a performance or an exhibition of creative work) must communicate the research question, findings, and disciplinary context of the research in an appropriate manner through a supporting exegesis. • The research component should comprise at least 60 credit points of the work requirements for the course, and be carried out under the guidance of at least one approved supervisor. <p>3. An overall grade for Honours will be determined using a weighted average percentage for all graded units in the course applied in accordance with processes. The overall honours grade must not be more than one level higher than the grade awarded for the research component of the unit. Possible grades for Honours are outlined in Schedule 6 - AcademicRegulations 2022.</p> <p>4. In order to obtain an Honours degree, students must obtain a minimum of 50% overall and a minimum of 50% in the examined thesis.</p>
E.	Defining Assessment Criteria	Honours Coordinator	<p>The following assessment criteria will apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment of the Honours thesis (or major body of creative work) must be conducted by assessors who are independent of the student and external to the student's supervisor group(s).

			<p>This will normally apply to all assessment tasks, but the Honours Course Coordinator has the discretion to vary this rule for non-thesis assessment tasks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. A minimum of two suitably qualified, independent assessors must be used for subjectively assessed tasks that represent 15% or more of the total course score. For tasks comprising less than 15% of the final course mark, the relevant Honours Course Coordinator has discretion to decide whether one independent assessor is appropriate. However, checks must be made to ensure the approach to assessment is the same for all students. 3. Assessors with appropriate discipline knowledge must be approved in advance of the thesis submission date by the relevant Honours Course Coordinator. 4. Assessment guidelines must be provided to students and assessors for each task. 5. Each Institute must have guidelines for determining penalties for late submission of assessment tasks. The penalty guidelines may be different for the thesis than for other tasks. Details of these penalties must be provided to students as part of the Honours Course Handbook. 6. The Honours Course Coordinator is responsible for compiling and formally recording grades for all assessment tasks relevant to the discipline/s they are responsible for. This responsibility can be delegated to a unit coordinator for individual unit elements. 7. Assessment tasks must be subject to regular review/
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			<p>moderation to ensure consistency of assessment between assessors, across years and between different tasks.</p> <p>8. The Literature Review can be valued at no more than 12.5% of the total course grade as an assessment piece outside of the examined thesis.</p> <p>9. A Research Methods Course can be valued at no more than 12.5% of the total course grade (i.e. 15 CP).</p>
F.	Outlining responsibilities - Institutes	Institutes	<p>1. Institutes should ensure that the expectations and responsibilities of supervisors are clearly understood by all parties. Guidelines should be provided to supervisors on good practice in supervision.</p> <p>2. Institutes must provide students with written information (in the form of a Handbook, web page, or other appropriate publication) on the aims, nature and benefits of the Honours Course.</p> <p>3. The handbook must include information regarding unit requirements and assessment procedures; thesis requirements (including style guide and word limit); information on the criteria used for decisions concerning assessment; weightings of the various components of the course; submission dates; and guidelines for such activities as laboratory, field or studio work, or attendance at research seminars.</p> <p>4. The guidelines must also include information regarding the timeframe for marking theses, penalties for late submission, and the process for handling a discrepancy in examined thesis grades (of</p>

			<p>more than 10 percentage points).</p> <p>5. All proposed Honours projects must be submitted to the relevant Honours Course Coordinator for the discipline or nominee for approval prior to the student commencing the project.</p>
G.	Outlining responsibilities - Supervisor	Supervisor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each student undertaking research at Honours level will have an academic staff member of Federation University as a supervisor. The supervisor must hold a minimum of an AQF level 9 degree or equivalent. Staff who do not hold an AQF level 9 degree can be co-supervisor (but not Principal Supervisor). 2. Supervisors must be active in research and have sound knowledge of the relevant discipline area. The supervisor will communicate regularly with the student (in person, virtual meetings, emails, or phone) to provide advice and to monitor progress. 3. The responsibility of the supervisor is to guide the student along the path to successful completion of the thesis or research project. In particular, the supervisor will advise on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of a suitable topic for a thesis or research project, and a feasible plan; • the availability of library resources in the field; • the process of the preparation of the thesis or exegesis and creative works, including comments on plans and drafts, and guidance on style and citation methods; • certification that the research is properly

			<p>presented at the time of submission.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Supervisors are responsible for maintaining close and regular contact with their students and establishing the basis on which contact will be made. 5. A supervisor should informally evaluate the student's progress and performance, provide advice, and draw the student's attention to unsatisfactory progress or work below the standard generally expected. 6. The supervisor should help with developing solutions to problems as they are identified.
H.	Defining expectations of the student	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student is expected to submit work of high quality at all stages of the project and to take the initiative in ensuring that progress is maintained. 2. In particular, the student is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a suitable research topic of interest; • arrange to communicate regularly with the supervisor/s and/or meet at mutually convenient times; • take initiative in raising any problems and share the responsibility for seeking solutions; • attend any seminars required for completion of thesis or coursework; • use, at all times, safe working practices relevant to the field of research and adhere to the ethical practices appropriate to the discipline and the institution; • attend and complete compulsory modules; • accept responsibility for producing the final copies of

			<p>the thesis or exegesis and creative works, its content, and ensure that it meets the relevant requirements, including the standard of presentation, as outlined by the Institute in unit documentation.</p>
I.	Assessing the Research Component	Student	<p>1. Thesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutes may have specific requirements for format and presentation of theses or research projects. • Extensions may only be granted with the approval of the Honours Coordinator in exceptional circumstances that could not reasonably be foreseen. • Extensions will not be merited for data collection or computer malfunction reasons. <p>2. Honours Course Students may apply for leave from their studies during enrolment, however, they must complete their studies within four years from their commencement date.</p> <p>3. In other areas such as drama and art, the presentation of a traditional written thesis is not a requirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A piece of creative work may be the outcome together with an exegesis, which should constitute between 30% and 50% of the work for the thesis/ research project. • In such cases, specific criteria may be created to accommodate the nature of this work, but an exegesis should both communicate the research which has been carried out in the project and locate the work in a disciplinary context.

			<p>4. Finally, an electronic production is an accepted form of submission for an Honours thesis or project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific criteria must be provided for the assessment of this type of work, prior to its completion, for the benefit of students, supervisors and examiners.
J.	Defining criteria for examiners/supervisors	Honours Coordinator	<p>1. Examination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the research thesis or project will be by two appropriately qualified examiners selected by the relevant Honours Coordinator who may consult with other discipline-specific staff. • Examiners must hold a qualification that is at least at AQF level 9 or equivalent. • Supervisors cannot examine work from their own student. • Clear and explicit criteria for assessment must be provided for students and examiners of theses. • Each Institute must have a defined process for resolving grade discrepancies of greater than 10 percentage points between examiners. • The Honours Course Coordinator has discretion to determine how the procedure is implemented and issue resolved for the discipline/s they are responsible for, but it must be consistently applied and be described in the Honours Handbook provided to students and supervisors. • In the event that processes for grade discrepancies or other processes are unclear in the Institute, the Chair of

			Academic Board will be consulted for a determination.
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Supporting Documents

- [Academic Governance Policy](#)
- [Approval and Maintenance of Award Courses \(Higher Education\) Procedure](#)
- [Vocational Education and Training \(VET\) Awards Procedure](#)
- [Higher Education Assessment \(inclusive of FedTASKs\) Procedure](#)
- [Higher Education Examinations Procedure](#)

Promulgation

The [Fourth Year \(Honours\) Programs Procedure](#) will be communicated throughout the University community in the form of:

1. An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the 'Recently Approved Documents' page on the 'Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University' website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Procedure;
2. Academic Board
3. Academic Induction Program

Implementation

The [Fourth Year \(Honours\) Programs Procedure](#) will be implemented throughout the University via:

1. Information Sessions;
2. Training sessions

Records Management

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Assessment Criteria	Course/Unit Coordinator	Course/Unit Coordinator	Destroy 18 months after administrative use has concluded Dispose of hard copy records as per disposal process in the records Management Procedure
Final Assessment - summary form of final results to be awarded to students for each component of study	University's approved records management system	Honours Coordinator	Permanent Lodge records into the University's approved records management system using established procedure once

			administrative use has concluded
Theses - Honour Degree related documentation: items including artwork, video or sound recordings, specimen collections	University's approved records management system	Honours Coordinator	Retain until organisational use has concluded
Higher Degree Theses - High Public Interest	University's approved records management system	Honours Coordinator	Permanent Lodge records into the University's approved records management system using established procedure once administrative use has concluded
Examiners/Supervisors qualification matrix	Course/Unit Coordinator	Course/Unit Coordinator	Retain 2 years after life of relevant course Lodge records into the University's approved records management system using established procedure