

<b>Policy Hierarchy Link</b>	<b>Structure of Honours Programs – Policy</b>		
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Vice-President		
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)		
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	The Structure of Honours Programs – Procedure, version 1.0, approved on 9 February 2015		
<b>File Number</b>	2016/08759		
<b>Associated Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honours at UNSW Discussion Paper (AB12/58)</li> <li>• Structure of Honours Programs – Policy</li> <li>• Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Policy</li> <li>• Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Procedure</li> <li>• Admissions Policy</li> <li>• Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure</li> <li>• Recognition of Prior Learning (Coursework) Policy</li> <li>• Recognition of Prior Learning (Coursework) Procedure</li> <li>• University Medal Policy</li> <li>• Equal Opportunity in Education Policy Statement</li> <li>• UNSW Graduate Capabilities</li> <li>• University Handbook</li> </ul>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorised by</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
1.1	Administrative update by Head of Governance	18 February 2016	29 February 2016

## Contents

1.	Purpose and Scope	1
2.	Definitions	1
3.	Design Principles for Honours Programs	2
3.1	Graduate Capabilities and Program Learning Outcomes	2
3.2	Program Structure	2
3.3	Assessment Process and Criteria for Awarding Classes of Honours	3
4.	Administrative Arrangements	4
4.1	Progression Requirements (Embedded Honours programs)	4
4.2	Program Enrolment Restrictions (Separate Honours Year Programs)	4
4.3	Pathways	5
4.4	Program Information	5
5.	Review & History	5

## 1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure describes the structure and characteristics of Honours programs. It applies to Separate Year Honours programs and Embedded Honours programs.

All new programs and program revisions covered by these procedures must conform to the *Structure of Honours Programs – Policy*.

## 2. Definitions

Definitions are consistent with the UNSW Glossary of Terms [in the UNSW Handbook: http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au](http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au).

### 3. Design Principles for Honours Programs

The purpose of Honours programs is to equip students for entry to a higher-level research qualification or for entry to professional practice requiring a higher level of learning than a Pass qualification.

Honours programs can be offered as Separate Year Honours programs or as Embedded Honours programs.

A Separate Year Honours program is an additional, distinct year of study that follows the completion of an undergraduate Pass degree program in a cognate discipline or area of study, whether at UNSW or elsewhere. Separate Year Honours programs are one year (48 UoC) programs with all components of the Honours program contributing to the Honours level learning outcomes.

An Embedded Honours program is where Honours components (research and higher-level learning requirements) are studied as an integral part of an overall undergraduate program that includes components contributing to both Pass and Honours level learning outcomes.

#### 3.1 Graduate Capabilities and Program Learning Outcomes

Honours programs require students to engage in independent critical thinking related to their discipline or area of study, demonstrated through achievement of the program learning outcomes.

All Honours programs must align with the UNSW Bachelor Honours-level learning outcomes specified at

<https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/programlearningoutcomesguide.html>. These may be adapted to suit the discipline or area of study.

The program must be designed to enable students to acquire and demonstrate the program learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and their application) that are appropriate to the Honours qualification level and discipline or area of study.

Program learning outcomes must align with the UNSW Graduate Capabilities and be mapped to course learning outcomes and assessment.

*The Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) can provide advice and assistance on the development of program learning outcomes.*

#### 3.2 Program Structure

##### 3.2.1 Separate Year Honours

All Separate Year Honours programs require completion of 48 UoC of study typically undertaken over one year (or part-time equivalent).

The program will typically consist of 24 to 36 UoC of research-based work (an honours thesis or research project) and 12 to 24 UoC of advanced coursework. The proportion of research-based work and coursework may differ by program and will be proposed by Program Authorities for approval by the Academic Board.

The Honours thesis or research project will involve planning and executing a piece of research and scholarship and/or project work with some independence, under the supervision of a duly appointed supervisor. The program will also include training in research methodologies, research ethics, and academic writing skills relevant to the discipline. The nature of the Honours thesis or research project component may differ by program and will be proposed by Program Authorities for approval by the Academic Board.

All courses that contribute to an Honours program must be approved through normal UNSW governance processes. Only courses undertaken while enrolled in the separate Honours year program can be counted towards program requirements, including the calculation of class of award.

Courses studied from undergraduate pass degree programs that are included in the Separate Year Honours program as foundational courses typically should comprise no more than 50% of the Honours coursework component. The program proposal should demonstrate how these courses meet UNSW Honours-level learning outcomes.

### **3.2.2 Embedded Honours Program**

Embedded Honours programs require completion of at least 192 UoC typically undertaken over four years of full-time study (or part-time equivalent) when taken in stand-alone mode or at least 144 UoC when taken in dual award mode.

The longer program duration relative to a Pass degree program reflects the greater volume of learning required for students to acquire the advanced disciplinary knowledge and research learning outcomes of the Honours program.

The advanced disciplinary knowledge should be developed progressively throughout the program. Students may be required to take higher level courses relative to Pass level students, where different levels are available. Where appropriate, students may also be required to meet progression requirements to enrol in or remain enrolled in the Honours program.

Embedded Honours programs will include a mandatory research requirement, which involves the planning and execution of a piece of research or a professional project undertaken with some independence, and training in research methodologies, research ethics, and academic writing skills relevant to the discipline. This training may be embedded in the program in dedicated courses designed for this purpose, or may be included within learning activities across the program.

Embedded Honours programs will include Honours in the award name.

### **3.2.3 Dual and Cross-disciplinary Honours Specialisations (Separate Honours Year Programs)**

Dual and cross-disciplinary specialisations in Separate Year Honours programs must be identified through formally approved streams that specify the discipline or area of study in which the student may take Honours as well as entry requirements.

In addition to studying specialisations that combine two disciplines or areas of study, students may complete Honours in two distinct disciplines or areas of study by completing two Separate Year Honours programs.

## **3.3 Assessment Process and Criteria for Awarding Classes of Honours**

As specified in the *Structure of Honours Programs - Policy*, meritorious achievement in Honours programs may be recognised through class of award.

The determination of the class of award should be based on pre-defined academic standards. These standards and the criteria for the achievement of Honours in each of the classes should be explicitly stated in program rules.

Where the Honours program requires completion of an Honours thesis or research project, it must be marked by two examiners who are qualified to assess the work. Each examiner should make their initial assessment independently of each other.

Program Authorities will have documented processes and clear guidelines to review and moderate the final assessment marks and the classes of award.

### **3.3.1 Separate Year Honours Programs**

For Separate Year Honours programs the calculation of class of award will be determined from the student's weighted average mark (WAM) for all of the courses (research-based and coursework) required for the program. Only courses taken while enrolled in the Honours program, and specified in the program rules, may count towards the award class WAM.

### **3.3.2 Embedded Honours Programs**

Embedded Honours Programs may use an approved weighted WAM calculation which reflects the relative importance of different components of the curriculum in the awarding of a class of Honours. Examples of this may include higher relative weightings for core, upper level, or research courses. This calculation needs to be approved as part of the program rules.

In cases where students meet progression requirements and program-level learning outcomes, and hence qualify for the Honours-level award, but do not meet the approved requirements for a class of Honours, a student's testamur and transcript will acknowledge Honours as part of the award name only.

*Refer to the University Medal Policy for the awarding of the University Medal for outstanding academic performance by a student in an Honours program.*

## **4. Administrative Arrangements**

### **4.1 Progression Requirements (Embedded Honours programs)**

Typically, students are admitted directly into an Embedded Honours program upon initial admission. To remain in the program, students will be required to maintain an appropriate level of academic achievement by meeting the progression requirements specified in the approved program rules.

Progression requirements may include the requirement to maintain a specified stage or overall WAM and successful completion of courses and learning activities which specifically map to Honours level program learning outcomes.

Where there are progression requirements, a student who does not meet these requirements will be required to transfer to an appropriate Pass-level program and will not be awarded an Honours-level qualification.

Some programs may admit students to a Pass-level program and then permit qualified students to transfer with credit to an Honours-level program at an appropriate point throughout their study. In some circumstances, where successful progress towards Honours-level learning outcomes cannot be validated earlier, this may be at the point of completion of all program requirements.

### **4.2 Program Enrolment Restrictions (Separate Honours Year Programs)**

In principle, a student enrolling for a Separate Year Honours program should not be enrolled in another program at the same time. A Dual Award program student would normally be suspended in that program if they interrupt their study to undertake the Honours program. In exceptional cases, and subject to the agreement of both Program Authorities, a student may be permitted to enrol simultaneously in both the Honours and another program.

### 4.3 Pathways

Program documentation (i.e. the program proposal in the online academic information management system and the UNSW Handbook) will identify the pathways to further study enabled by an Honours program, including whether the program leads to learning outcomes that could contribute to meeting the admission requirements for entry to a Higher Degree Research program.

### 4.4 Program Information

The Handbook and Faculty/School websites should provide the following information (as specified in Academic Board resolution AB10/128):

- Entry requirements and procedures;
- The content of the Honours program, including the breakdown between a thesis and other components;
- The examination procedure for a thesis component;
- Calculation of final Honours result, and
- Range of possible outcomes.

## 5. Review & History

The *Structure of Honours Programs – Procedure* will be reviewed by Academic Board every two years.

### Appendix A: History

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	9 February 2015	9 February 2015	New Procedure *
1.1	Administrative update by Head of Governance	18 February 2016	29 February 2016	Administrative update to reflect changes in senior roles.

\* This new procedure supersedes the *Structure of Separate Year Honours Programs – Procedure*, version 1.0, effective from 14 May 2013 to 8 February 2015.