1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose

This Policy sets out the academic principles and overarching rules applicable to UNSW postgraduate coursework programs. The aim is to ensure that the University’s postgraduate coursework programs consistently conform to a coherent and clearly defined model, and to provide a framework for assuring the quality of the program offerings.

The policy aligns with the UNSW Structure of Undergraduate Programs - Policy and its development has been informed by an assessment of the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011 and the Australian Qualifications Framework 2011.

1.2 Scope

This Policy applies to all UNSW postgraduate coursework programs of study that lead to the award of Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and/or Masters Degree.

1.3 Definitions

Definitions are consistent with the UNSW Glossary of Terms: http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/general/2013/SSAPO/glossary.html.

A glossary of additional UNSW academic terminology is provided in Appendix C of the Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Procedures.
2. Policy statement

2.1 Principles

UNSW postgraduate coursework programs will be offered in accordance with the following principles:

- The program’s objectives, characteristics of student cohorts, and required learning outcomes will:
  - drive the design of the learning environment, curriculum, program structure and duration, teaching and assessment methods, and student entry requirements; and
  - be used to establish the qualifications required of teachers in the program.
- The program will specify UNSW graduate attributes and program-level learning outcomes, including knowledge and/or skills and the application of knowledge and/or skills, that are appropriate to the qualification level and discipline.

2.2 Disciplinary knowledge and skill requirements

Postgraduate coursework programs have one or more of the following components:

- Advanced disciplinary knowledge and/or skills;
- Disciplinary knowledge and/or skills; and
- Foundational disciplinary and cognate knowledge and/or skills.

For cross-disciplinary programs ‘disciplinary’ may refer to more than one discipline.

The disciplinary knowledge and/or skill components within a program will depend on the program purpose, qualification level and types of entrants. Generally a program’s content, teaching approaches and assessment should be designed so that students progress from foundation to advanced disciplinary knowledge as they move to higher qualification levels or through stages in a single qualification. The learning outcomes that students will be required to achieve will therefore reflect this progression.

2.3 Program structure

A postgraduate coursework program may be designed as a single stand-alone program or structured to form part of an articulated suite of programs.

Where it is foreseen that a program may potentially be offered with other programs as a dual award program, it should be designed with this in mind.

2.4 Dual awards and international partnerships

A masters coursework program may be combined with another masters coursework program (dual master awards) or with an undergraduate program (cross-career programs).

Combinations of programs may be intra-Faculty, cross-Faculty or cross-institution. Where programs are combinations of single award programs, each component single award program must comply with UNSW policies for programs at the relevant qualification level. Where programs are offered only as part of a dual award they must obtain specific approval from Academic Board.

Where there is a disciplinary overlap of programs, program documentation will contain information on course sharing and the minimum duration to complete the combined programs.

Where programs are offered in collaboration with another institution, they must comply with UNSW policies for managing these arrangements.

2.5 Duration

Typically, the duration of programs (expressed as units of credit) will be determined by the program objectives, program-level learning outcomes, and the minimum required student entry qualifications.
Generally, programs that are of a longer duration contain a curriculum which is intended to accommodate a cohort of students who do not have prior qualifications or relevant experience in the cognate discipline (and therefore need additional time to attain the disciplinary knowledge required to meet the program-level learning outcomes) or are for students who wish to attain more disciplinary breadth or depth.

Programs may be based on a different UoC duration, relative to the characteristics of students entering the program, provided there is a sound academic justification that is approved by the Academic Board.

Justification criteria must include:
- The program achieves all requisite learning outcomes in the allocated UoC;
and additionally may also include:
- The program is recognised as meeting particular professional requirements; or
- The program is benchmarked against high-quality international comparators and/or is a national standard.

2.6 Discipline and cognate discipline
The meaning of ‘discipline’ and ‘cognate discipline’ will be defined at the program level. Program documentation will explicitly state and justify the cognate disciplines which are accepted for determining program duration and student entry points.

2.7 Pathways
Program documentation will specify the entry and exit points and pathways to further study enabled by the 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.

2.8 Recognition of prior learning
Faculty Standing Committees will ensure that processes are in place for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) for entry into a program and/or the awarding of credit for the partial fulfilment of a qualification.

3. Legal and policy framework
This policy must be read in conjunction with the following:
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)
- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act.

Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Procedures (under development) and the following Academic Board discussion papers and decisions:
- Academic Program Review Policy
- Academic Program Review – Coursework Programs Procedure
- Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Policy
- Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Procedures
- Admissions Policy
- Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure
- International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Policy (under development)
- International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Procedures (under development)
- Equal Opportunity in Education Policy Statement
- Postgraduate Coursework Program Structure, Units of Credit & Naming Conventions (AB08/120)
- UNSW Graduate Attributes
- UNSW Handbook.
4. Implementation

4.1 Roles and responsibilities
The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is responsible for the development and implementation of this policy.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) is responsible for maintaining the procedures associated with this Policy.

4.2 Support and advice
Support and advice in relation to this policy are available from:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) and Registrar
- President, Academic Board
- Director, Student and Academic Services
- Director, Learning and Teaching Unit.

5. Review and history
This policy is due for review three years from the date of effect.

Appendix A: History

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<th>Approval Date</th>
<th>Effective Date</th>
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<td>Acting President and Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>9 October 2012</td>
<td>9 October 2012 to 30 June 2014</td>
<td>New policy</td>
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