



# STRUCTURE OF POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS – POLICY

<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Superseded Documents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 Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Policy, version 2.0, approved by the Acting President and Vice-Chancellor on 1 July 2014		
<b>Review</b>	1 July 2017		
<b>File Number</b>	2016/08771		
<b>Associated Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Procedure</li> <li>• Academic Program Review Policy</li> <li>• Academic Program Review – Coursework Programs Procedure</li> <li>• Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure</li> <li>• Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Policy</li> <li>• Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Procedures</li> <li>• Admissions Policy</li> <li>• Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure</li> <li>• Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure</li> <li>• Recognition of Prior Learning Policy</li> <li>• Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure</li> <li>• International Memorandum of Understanding &amp; Student Agreement Policy</li> <li>• International Memorandum of Understanding &amp; Student Agreement Procedures</li> <li>• Equal Opportunity in Education Policy Statement</li> <li>• Parallel Teaching (AB09/19)</li> <li>• UNSW Graduate Attributes</li> <li>• UNSW Handbook</li> </ul>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorisation</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
2.1	Administrative update by Head of Governance	18 February 2016	29 February 2016

## 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 *in the UNSW Handbook*: <http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au>.

A glossary of additional UNSW academic terminology is provided in Appendix B of the *Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Procedure*.

## 2. Policy statement

### 2.1 Principles

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

- The programs will be defined by their purpose. Masters programs, in particular, may be for broadening, deepening or for professional accreditation purposes, or a combination of these.  
*Refer to Appendix 1 for examples of different types of masters programs.*
- The program's purpose, 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 should seek to deliver the UNSW graduate attributes and will specify 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 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 and cognate knowledge and/or skills.

For cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary programs, 'disciplinary' may refer to more than one discipline.

The 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 foundational and cognate knowledge 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 and duration

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

Typically, the duration of programs (expressed as units of credit) will be determined by program purpose, the characteristics of the student cohort and the required learning outcomes.

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 (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.

In considering duration, the program must achieve all requisite learning outcomes in the allocated UoC. Where appropriate, consideration may also be given to:

- The requirements for professional accreditation; and/or
- Similar programs of high-quality international or G08 comparators, and their associated entry requirements.

## 2.4 Discipline and cognate discipline

The meaning of 'discipline' and 'cognate discipline' will be defined at the program level and will depend on program purpose. Program documentation will explicitly state and justify the cognate disciplines which are accepted for determining program duration and student entry requirements.

## 2.5 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.

## 2.6 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.

## 2.7 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 there is a disciplinary overlap of programs, program documentation will contain information on course sharing and the minimum duration to complete the dual award program.

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

## 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 – Procedure* and the Academic Board discussion papers and decisions listed on page 1 under Associated Documents.

## 4. Implementation

### 4.1 Roles and responsibilities

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Vice-President is responsible for the development and implementation of this policy.

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

### 4.2 Support and advice

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

- Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- President, Academic Board
- Director, Student Services and Systems

## 5. Review and history

This policy is due for review three years from the date of effect.

### Appendix A: History

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Acting President and Vice-Chancellor	9 October 2012	9 October 2012	New policy
2.0	President and Vice-Chancellor	1 July 2014	1 July 2014	Full review
2.1	Administrative update by Head of Governance	18 February 2016	29 February 2016	Administrative update to reflect changes in senior team.

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## Appendix 1: Examples of different types of Masters Programs

The structure and duration of a postgraduate coursework program will depend on the program purpose, the characteristics of the student cohort and the required learning outcomes. Masters programs may be for broadening, deepening or for professional accreditation purposes, or a combination of these.

The purpose of a **Broadening Masters** is to develop knowledge in a new area, or multidisciplinary area building on earlier learning, for employment or as pathway for further learning. These programs may also be described as Transitioning. A Broadening Masters could also have an interdisciplinary focus.

The purpose of a **Deepening Masters** is to develop knowledge in an existing area to a deeper level for specialised employment or as pathway for further learning. These programs may also be described as Specialist or Academic Masters.

The purpose of a **Professional Accreditation Masters** is to develop knowledge in areas that meet professional accreditation requirements for entry to/continuation in a profession.

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