1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose and scope

These procedures relate to the structure of UNSW postgraduate coursework programs of study that lead to the award of graduate certificate, graduate diploma and/or masters degrees. They cover the development and approval of new programs, the revision of existing programs and the creation of new dual award programs.

These procedures do not relate to masters (extended) award programs.

All new programs and program revisions covered by these procedures must conform to the “Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Policy”.

1.2 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.
2. Design principles for UNSW postgraduate coursework programs

See illustrations of the Postgraduate Coursework Program Model in Appendix B

2.1 Overarching design principles

The following design principles will apply to all UNSW postgraduate coursework programs.

- Program documentation will specify program-level learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) that are appropriate to the qualification level and discipline and align with UNSW graduate attributes. The Learning and Teaching Unit can provide advice and assistance on the development of program-level learning outcomes.

- Where programs have the same name (whether offered externally or within the home faculty) they must have an identical structure, course requirements (number of UoC) and the same course composition (core and prescribed elective choices). This does not apply to revisions of programs intended to replace earlier versions.

- Where courses or subject matter are the same or similar to undergraduate courses, the pedagogy, learning outcomes and assessment for postgraduate coursework students should be at a higher level than would be expected for undergraduate students.

2.2 Single masters by coursework degree programs – duration and structure

Masters by coursework programs are intended for graduates and practising professionals who wish to develop advanced knowledge and competency in their area of expertise or to gain advanced knowledge in a new area. All masters programs will include a minimum 48 UoC of advanced disciplinary courses. These courses will be designed so that, at completion of the program, students can demonstrate that they have met the program-level learning outcomes for masters programs. Advanced disciplinary courses may be compulsory courses, prescribed electives or a mix of both.

The precise mix of foundational disciplinary and cognate courses (including courses to develop academic skills), and disciplinary courses, will depend on the program objectives, learning outcomes and entry characteristics of students.

Typically masters programs will be 96 UoC, but can be 72 UoC or 48 UoC if it can be demonstrated that students on entry have acquired the foundational, cognate and disciplinary knowledge either through prior formal or informal/unstructured learning as illustrated in Appendix B.

A 96 UoC masters program:

- Is typically for students entering with an undergraduate degree in a non-cognate discipline (or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience). Programs of this duration, when offered to students holding a cognate undergraduate degree, may also allow students to attain more disciplinary breadth, explore a discipline in more depth or meet professional accreditation requirements; and

- Will comprise 48 UoC of advanced disciplinary courses, and typically 24 UoC of foundational disciplinary and cognate courses that provide an introduction to the discipline, and 24 UoC of disciplinary courses.

A 72 UoC masters program:

- Is typically for students entering with an undergraduate degree in a cognate discipline, an undergraduate degree in a non-cognate discipline at honours level, or graduate diploma in non-cognate discipline (and/or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience); and

- Will comprise 48 UoC of advanced disciplinary courses, and typically 24 UoC of disciplinary courses.
A 48 UoC masters program:

- Is typically for students entering with an undergraduate degree in a cognate discipline at honours level or graduate diploma in a cognate discipline (and/or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience); and
- Will comprise 48 UoC of advanced disciplinary courses only.

It is not necessary for masters programs to include specialisations but, where these are included, the specialisation will typically consist of a sequence of at least 36 UoC. The program structure should specify how it relates to the above model for masters programs.

If the masters program provides pathways to further study, the courses and learning outcomes related to each pathway must be identified. A masters program intended as a pathway to Higher Degree Research (HDR) programs should include the development of enquiry-based competencies that are sufficient to demonstrate the student's potential to successfully undertake HDR programs.

Cross-disciplinary programs will follow the same design principles outlined above, however, ‘disciplinary’ may refer to more than one discipline.

2.3 Graduate certificate and graduate diploma programs – duration

A graduate diploma will be 36-48 UoC and a graduate certificate will be 24 UoC. Programs of longer duration will be permitted.

Graduate diplomas and graduate certificates may be part of an articulated suite of programs or stand-alone (non-articulated) programs.

2.4 Articulated programs

Articulated postgraduate coursework programs provide a pathway to masters level qualifications for students who are not eligible for direct entry to these programs or who may wish to take a staged approach to completing a masters. In these programs the requirements for completion of early programs in the sequence are embedded within the requirements for subsequent programs, and articulation means the granting of full credit for courses completed in earlier programs in the sequence.

The learning outcomes for all programs that form part of an articulated sequence should align with and form constituent parts of the learning outcomes of the masters level program.

The typical articulation pathways for both 96 UoC and 72 UoC masters are:

- 24 UoC graduate certificate ➔ 48 UoC graduate diploma ➔ 96 or 72 UoC masters
- 48 UoC graduate diploma ➔ 96 or 72 UoC masters; and
- 24 UoC graduate certificate ➔ 96 or 72 UoC masters.

See Appendix B for illustrations of articulation pathways.

Typically there are no articulation pathways for a 48 UoC masters. Students who wish to exit these programs early may transfer to other programs provided they meet the relevant requirements. Articulation from a 24 UoC graduate certificate and/or 36 UoC graduate diploma to a 48 UoC masters may be permitted if it can be demonstrated that both:

a) the entry requirement for the graduate certificate and/or graduate diploma is the same as that required for the masters program to be articulated to; and

b) all the courses completed by the student in the graduate certificate or diploma for which credit is granted are advanced disciplinary courses and can be completed by students in the masters program.

Refer to section 4.1 for admission requirements and 4.3 for transfer options. Details on admission requirements and procedures, including internal program transfer and credit
3. Dual award programs

Dual awards covered by these procedures are:

- Dual masters awards; and
- Cross-career awards.

Where a dual award program is offered in conjunction with another institution, the rules of the program should as much as is practicable align with these procedures.

UNSW student system requirements and Commonwealth regulations require all dual award programs to be allocated a unique identifier code.

3.1 Overarching principles for dual awards

The following overarching academic principles will apply to all UNSW dual award programs.

- Any two award programs can be combined to create a dual award. (In addition to academic considerations, scheduling, economic and marketing considerations should be taken into account when creating a new dual award program.)
- Where a dual award program:
  - is a combination of single award programs, each component single award program must comply with UNSW policies for programs at the relevant qualification level and the rules for the single programs will apply;
  - combines single award programs that are undertaken concurrently, a student must satisfy the entry requirements for each of the component single award programs; and
  - combines single award programs that are undertaken sequentially, minimum performance criteria in the first program (e.g. minimum WAM) may be a requirement for continuation on to the second program.
- A new combination of programs must be approved by the Academic Board.
- A program that combines programs from different faculties must have the agreement of each Faculty Program Authority.
- Memorandums of Understanding to offer a program in a twinning arrangement with another institution must be approved and signed in accordance with the International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Policy and Procedures.
- Courses completed by a student can, in principle, satisfy more than one academic requirement (course sharing). Dual award programs that share courses need specific approval of the Academic Board. Proposals will need to demonstrate how the learning outcomes of each individual program will be achieved by completion of courses in both programs. *This is a complex area, and advice can be provided by the Director, Student and Academic Services, on the best way to achieve the intended academic outcomes.*

3.2 Dual masters awards

Dual masters awards are a combination of two masters by coursework programs. Programs are typically taken concurrently, but may be taken sequentially with achievement requirements to enter the second program.

Individual courses may be shared and therefore meet the requirements of both programs, up to a maximum of 25% of the required UoC of any single program.

All students will be required to complete the advanced disciplinary course requirements of each program (96 UoC total). Where part of the advanced disciplinary
courses are common to more than one program students will only need to complete these once within these limits.

3.3 Cross-career programs

A cross-career program is a combination of a bachelor and a masters program. Programs are typically, but not always, taken sequentially, with undergraduate courses being completed before students progress to the postgraduate material.

All students will be required to complete the advanced disciplinary courses of the masters program (48 UoC). Course sharing of advanced disciplinary courses will not be permitted.

Refer to section 3.3 of the Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Procedures for the procedures relating to the undergraduate component of cross-career awards.

4. Admission and graduation

4.1 Admission requirements

Entry points to a postgraduate coursework program will depend on the qualifications of the entrant, including the specialisation of their undergraduate degree and/or prior professional experience, and the program’s provision for credit.

Details on admission requirements and procedures, including internal program transfer and credit transfer limits, are specified in the UNSW Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure.


4.1.1 Admission to masters programs

The minimum entry requirement for admission to a masters program is typically an undergraduate degree (and/or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience). Students must also meet the relevant English language requirements.

Students with an undergraduate degree in a cognate discipline at honours level or a graduate diploma in a cognate discipline (and/or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience) can be admitted directly to the advanced disciplinary course component as specified for 48, 72 and 96 UoC masters programs.

Students with an undergraduate degree in a non-cognate discipline at honours level or a graduate diploma in a non-cognate discipline (and/or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience) can be admitted directly to the disciplinary course component (or phase or sequence) as specified for 72 and 96 UoC master programs.

Students with an undergraduate degree in a non-cognate discipline (or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience) will be admitted to the foundational disciplinary and cognate course component (or phase or sequence) as specified for 96 UoC master programs.

In articulated programs, progression criteria may be specified for students to articulate between the qualification levels.

Refer to section 4.2 for credit arrangements.

4.1.2 Admission to graduate diploma and graduate certificate programs

The minimum entry requirement to a graduate certificate or graduate diploma is an undergraduate degree (and/or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience). Students must also meet the relevant English language requirements.

4.1.3 Admission to dual award programs

The minimum entry requirements to a dual award program must be the same as the requirements of individual programs.
Admission to a dual award program is via the same procedures as admission to a single award program.

4.2 Credit arrangements

Students may be awarded credit for completed or partially completed academic qualifications, prior learning and professional experience where it can be demonstrated that the student has achieved equivalent learning outcomes to the exempted course. Credit can be specified credit, unspecified credit, advanced standing, block credit or course substitution in accordance with the UNSW Admission to Coursework Programs Policy and Procedure.

4.2.1 Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process of recognising, for credit towards a postgraduate coursework program, what an individual student knows, understands or can do, regardless of where or how the student may have acquired the knowledge or skills. Prior learning can be formal, non-formal and informal.

Where specified in program documentation, prior learning may be used for:

- entry into a program leading to a qualification when the specified prerequisites based on completion of a formal course of education and training have not been undertaken;
- credit towards an award or exemption from some program requirements, in accordance with UNSW policy on advanced standing, credit transfer and prior learning (UNSW Admission to Coursework Programs Policy and Procedure); and
- exemption or credit for a specified compulsory course (course substitution).

Where prior learning is used for entry to a program, students will need to demonstrate that they have met the entry requirements for that program (see the University requirements for masters in Appendix B).

Faculty Standing Committees are responsible for RPL assessment. These responsibilities include:

- establishing and documenting appropriate processes and procedures for RPL, within University Admission requirements;
- determining on a program-by-program basis, whether it is appropriate to offer RPL for entry into a program and/or credit for the partial fulfilment of a qualification; and
- assessing claims of prior learning and maintaining records of the outcomes of assessment and a brief statement of reasoning.

RPL assessment processes should be of a comparable standard to those used to deliver and assess the qualification. In particular:

- Prospective students should be provided with information and advice about the process, evidence required and the timeline for a decision; and
- assessment of claims of prior learning should be undertaken by academic or teaching staff with expertise in the subject area.

Learning and Teaching Unit can provide advice and assistance on RPL.

4.2.2 Credit transfer and advanced standing

Students who successfully complete stand-alone programs from UNSW or from another institution or who graduate with an award that is part of an articulated sequence, may be eligible for credit towards, or satisfy entry qualifications for, another UNSW qualification.

A postgraduate coursework student enrolled in an articulated sequence of programs may apply to progress to the next qualification level with full credit for courses completed in earlier programs in the sequence whether the award has been conferred or not. If the award has been conferred the student will need to reapply but will receive full credit subject to elapsed time rules. For students who have a qualification from
another institution then this principle will also apply if the courses/programs are
determined to be the same as the UNSW qualification and they meet the program
requirements regarding minimum number of UoC undertaken at UNSW. A Faculty
Standing Committee may stipulate a minimum performance level (e.g. Credit average)
in early programs in the articulated sequence before progression to the next highest
program in the sequence.

Credit transfer may be granted for completed or partially completed postgraduate
awards from UNSW or from another institution. Notwithstanding credit granted,
students must enrol in and complete at least 50% of the program to be eligible for the
award.

All credit transfer assessments will be based on the completion date for the course to
be used for credit and not the program. Courses with a successful completion date of
7 years or less can be used for specific credit transfer within a program as provided
within the program rules and the University rules on credit. Courses with a successful
completion date of up to 10 years can be used for unspecified credit within a program
as provided within the program rules and the University rules on credit.

Refer to the UNSW Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure at
and the Age of Courses Successfully Completed to be Used for Credit Transfers at UNSW
(AB12/36).

4.3 Transfer options
A student may be permitted to transfer from one qualification to another qualification
with credit for any completed courses that form part of their new program provided that
the requirements for this qualification are met. Program authorities may, within the
UNSW rules, allow additional credit for other courses for transferring students.

Internal transfer to a dual award program is via the same procedures as internal
transfer to a single award program. At any stage in a dual award program a student
may transfer to the single program version of either of the programs unless the
program specifically prohibits single program enrolments.

Students who revert to a single program will be subject to the specific single degree
rules and depending on the number of UoC completed to date may not receive full
credit for courses already completed.

Students enrolled in a cross-career program will normally only be permitted to transfer
to the undergraduate program.

4.4 Graduation
A degree, graduate diploma or graduate certificate will be awarded to a student who
has completed all program requirements and achieved the prescribed program-level
learning outcomes for the program.

Students who satisfactorily complete a dual award program will receive two testamurs
if both are from UNSW. Students may graduate in one of the component award
programs after the requirements of that award have been met.

For cross-career awards, students can graduate from the undergraduate award,
ahead of completion of the postgraduate award.

5. Submission of academic proposals
New postgraduate coursework programs and major program revisions, including dual
award programs identified in section 3.1, are approved by the Academic Board on the
recommendation of the relevant Faculty Education Committee, the Faculty Standing
Committee and the Postgraduate Coursework Committee.

Proposals for new programs must provide details of the program structure, including
courses (core and prescribed electives) and any specialisations, and how the program
structure relates to the requirements specified in Section 2 of these procedures. Where possible, proposals for new programs should include complete proposals for all new courses and program revisions should address changes to the whole program at the same time.

Proposals are to be created, recorded and managed using MAPPS the online Management of Proposals and Portfolio System [https://mapps.cse.unsw.edu.au/mapps/showLogin.php](https://mapps.cse.unsw.edu.au/mapps/showLogin.php).

Guidance on how to use MAPPS is available from Academic Administration [MAPPS@unsw.edu.au](mailto:MAPPS@unsw.edu.au) or online: [http://utes.unsw.wikispaces.net/MAPPS+-+User+Guide](http://utes.unsw.wikispaces.net/MAPPS+-+User+Guide)

6. Review and history

The *Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Procedures* will be reviewed by Academic Board every two years.

Appendix A: History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Authorised by</th>
<th>Approval Date</th>
<th>Effective Date</th>
<th>Sections modified</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Vice-President and Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)</td>
<td>8 November 2012</td>
<td>8 November 2012 to 19 June 2013</td>
<td>New procedures</td>
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</table>
Appendix B: Postgraduate Coursework Program Model – Illustrations

1. Masters by coursework programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundational disciplinary &amp; cognate knowledge</th>
<th>Disciplinary knowledge</th>
<th>Advanced disciplinary knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(introduction to the discipline for students from a non-cognate discipline)</td>
<td>(allows students to broaden and/or deepen their understanding of the discipline)</td>
<td>(allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the discipline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 UoC</td>
<td>24 UoC</td>
<td>24 UoC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

University requirement:

- 96 UoC for students who have:
  - a degree in a non-cognate discipline; or
  - equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience.

- 72 UoC for students who have:
  - an undergraduate degree in a cognate discipline;
  - an undergraduate degree in a non-cognate discipline at honours level;
  - a graduate diploma in a non-cognate discipline; and/or
  - equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience.

- 48 UoC for students who have:
  - an undergraduate degree in a cognate discipline at honours level;
  - a graduate diploma in a cognate discipline; and/or
  - equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience.

2. Articulation pathways for masters by coursework programs

2.1 – 96 UoC masters

a) 24 UoC graduate certificate + 48 UoC graduate diploma + 96 UoC masters

Entry point
Grad Cert (24 UoC) + Grad Dip (48 UoC) + Masters (96 UoC)

24 UoC + 48 UoC credit transfer + need to complete an additional 48 UoC

Total UoC: 96
b) 48 UoC graduate diploma + 96 UoC masters

![Diagram](b.png)

Entry point

Grad Dip (48 UoC) + Masters (96 UoC)

Total UoC: 96

c) 24 UoC graduate certificate + 96 UoC masters

![Diagram](c.png)

Entry point

Grad Cert (24 UoC) + Masters (96 UoC)

Total UoC: 96

2.2 – 72 UoC masters

a) 24 UoC graduate certificate + 48 UoC graduate diploma + 72 UoC masters

![Diagram](a.png)

Entry point

Grad Cert (24 UoC) + Grad Dip (48 UoC) + Masters (72 UoC)

Total UoC: 72

b) 48 UoC graduate diploma + 72 UoC masters

![Diagram](b.png)

Entry point

Grad Dip (48 UoC) + Masters (72 UoC)

Total UoC: 72

c) 24 UoC graduate certificate + 72 UoC masters

![Diagram](c.png)

Entry point

Grad Cert (24 UoC) + Masters (72 UoC)

Total UoC: 72

2.3 – 48 UoC masters

Articulation pathways are not available for a 48 UoC masters (refer to section 2.4 for exceptions).
Appendix C: Glossary
The complete UNSW glossary can be found at:
http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/general/2013/SSAPO/glossary1.html#Award

Advanced Disciplinary Courses
The masters-level courses that enable students to develop advanced disciplinary knowledge and meet the masters-level learning outcomes.

Advanced standing
The granting of block credit (usually of a semester or more). Advanced standing indicates that the student is deemed to have satisfied all the program requirements that are embedded in the period and courses for which block credit has been awarded. Block credit can be specified or non-specified. Advanced standing reduces the time and the number of courses the student must undertake to successfully complete the program.

Articulation
An approved agreement or approved structure which recognises that:
(a) the completion of requirements in one program contributes to the satisfaction of program requirements of another program;
(b) admission to the subsequent program may be dependent, and possibly guaranteed, upon satisfactory completion of the prior program at a specified level;
(c) credit for study completed in one program which is to be recognised for the requirements of a subsequent program must be approved as part of an articulation agreement with an external provider, or as part of UNSW program structure if only UNSW programs are involved.

Block Credit
Block credit is awarded as a specific number of units and it may be granted on the basis of studies judged to be comparable to part of a given program. Block credit is most often granted under articulation arrangements where a Memorandum of Understanding exists.

Cognate discipline
A cognate discipline is a closely allied or related discipline, or defined branch of study or learning. The disciplines, branches of study or learning that are considered ‘cognate’ will be defined at the program level.

Cross-career program
Cross-career programs are a combination of a bachelors and a masters program.

Disciplinary knowledge
Generally a program’s content, teaching approaches and assessment should be designed so that students progress from ‘foundational disciplinary and cognate knowledge’ to ‘advanced’ as they move to higher qualification levels or through stages in a single qualification.

Foundational disciplinary and cognate knowledge generally provides an introduction to the discipline for students from a non-cognate discipline. Disciplinary knowledge allows students to broaden and/or deepen their understanding of the discipline.

Advanced disciplinary knowledge generally allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the discipline.

1 UNSW Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure, File number 2011/02038
Dual award program
The concurrent or sequential study of two award programs as one integrated and coherent program leading to two awards and two testamurs (one for each program). Dual Award programs can be within a career (e.g. dual masters programs) or cross-career (e.g. combined bachelors and masters programs).

Learning outcomes
Learning outcomes are statements of the capabilities that students must demonstrate in order to pass a course or graduate from a program of study. The learning outcomes are what must be assessed.  

Masters (Extended) Programs
Masters (Extended) is an AQF qualification type. Currently there are only two Masters (Extended) programs at UNSW – the Juris Doctor (UNSW JD) and the Doctor of Medicine (MD) programs. Refer to the Australian Qualifications Framework (www.aqf.edu.au) for a description of the Masters (Extended) qualification type. (Note that these programs are not the same as the UNSW Masters (Extension) programs. The term Masters (Extension) has been used at UNSW to describe programs of a longer duration that allow students to attain more disciplinary breadth, explore a discipline in more depth or meet professional accreditation requirements.)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
RPL is the process of recognising for entry into and/or credit towards a postgraduate coursework program what an individual student knows or can do, regardless of where or how the student may have acquired the knowledge or skills. Prior learning can be formal, non-formal and informal.

Formal learning which takes place through a structured program of study that is delivered by education or training providers, and which leads to an officially accredited qualification.

Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

Informal learning is learning that takes place through life and work experience. Unlike non-formal and informal learning, it is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

Skills
The range of discipline-relevant abilities that a student acquires as part of their studies. They can include cognitive skills, technical skills, communication skills, creative skills, interpersonal skills and generic skills. They may be related to how a student uses or discovers the discipline knowledge acquired in their study, or they may be related to the professional practice of those who work in the discipline.

Specialisation
A focussed area of academic study in a postgraduate program.

Specified Credit
Credit which is granted when the school delivering the UNSW course accepts that an exact or near exact equivalence to a course studied at another tertiary provider can be demonstrated. Once agreed this recognition becomes a precedent for other students. How the credit is used in the award is covered by the program rules and the University rules covering credit.
Substitution
Exemption or credit for a specified compulsory course. Students are still required to complete an equivalent course to the same unit of credit value.

Unspecified Credit
Credit which is granted when an exact or near exact course equivalence cannot be demonstrated. Unspecified credit is most often granted when the work is deemed to be equivalent in amount and academic value as elective courses studied.