



STRUCTURE OF POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS – PROCEDURE

Policy Hierarchy Link	Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Policy		
Responsible Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education		
Contact Officer	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)		
Superseded Documents	The Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Procedure, version 2.2		
Review	Under review		
File Number	2015/37693		
Associated Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure • Recognition of Prior Learning Policy • Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure • Program Level Learning Outcomes for Honours and Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Guideline • International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Policy • International Memorandum of Understanding & Student Agreement Procedures • Equal Opportunity in Education Policy Statement • Parallel Teaching (AB09/19) • UNSW Credit and Articulation Arrangements (AB12/6) • Age of Courses Successfully Completed to be Used for Credit Transfers at UNSW (AB12/36) • UNSW Graduate Attributes • UNSW Handbook 		
Version	Authorisation	Approval Date	Effective Date
2.3	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)	13 March 2017	13 March 2017

1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose and scope

This procedure relates 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.

This procedure does not relate to masters (extended) award programs.

All new programs and program revisions covered by this procedure 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/2016/SSAPO/glossary.html>.

A glossary of additional UNSW academic terminology is provided in Appendix B.

2. Design principles for UNSW postgraduate coursework programs

2.1 Overarching design principles

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

- Program documentation will specify the purpose of the program, the entry requirements and the required learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) that are appropriate to the qualification level and discipline and that align with UNSW graduate attributes.
The Learning and Teaching Unit can provide advice and assistance on the development of program-level learning outcomes. See also Program Level Learning Outcomes for Honours and Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Guideline.
- The purpose of a masters program may be for broadening, deepening or for professional accreditation, or a combination of these purposes. These categories are not mutually exclusive. They are intended to clarify the purpose of the program for students and staff.
- 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 should be at a level that would be expected for postgraduate coursework students. Exceptions to this are permissible where explicitly approved by Academic Board as an appropriate part of a program structure in the foundational or disciplinary components.
- Where a program is designed to provide a pathway to doctoral study then the structure and outcomes of the program will need to reflect the entry requirements for doctoral study at UNSW (see *Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure*).

2.2 Single masters by coursework degree programs – 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.

Typically, masters programs will include 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 and cognate courses (including courses to develop academic skills), disciplinary courses and advanced disciplinary courses, will depend on the program purpose, the characteristics of the student cohort and the required learning outcomes.

A Broadening Masters (which aims to develop knowledge in a new area, or multidisciplinary area building on earlier learning, for employment or as pathway for further learning) will typically contain foundational content as well as disciplinary and advanced disciplinary/multidisciplinary content. The enquiry-based element will typically have a project or work related focus.

A Deepening Masters (which aims to develop knowledge in an existing area to a deeper level for specialised employment or as pathway for further learning) will typically contain a minimum of 48 UoC (equivalent to two full-time semesters) of specialised advanced disciplinary content. The enquiry-based element will typically have a research/scholarly focus.

Professional Accreditation Masters (which aims to develop knowledge in areas that meet professional accreditation requirements for entry to/continuation in a profession) will typically have a structure and disciplinary content that is informed by professional accreditation requirements. The enquiry-based element will typically have a professional practice focus.

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.

2.3 Single masters by coursework degree programs – duration

The duration of masters programs will be determined by the program purpose, the characteristics of the student cohort and the required learning outcomes. Masters programs are typically 96 UoC (four semesters), 72 UoC (three semesters) or 48 UoC (two semesters).

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.

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 a graduate diploma in a non-cognate discipline (and/or equivalent qualifications and/or professional experience).

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).

2.4 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.

2.5 Articulated programs

Articulated postgraduate coursework programs are a defined sequence of programs that 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 program.

In articulated programs:

- The learning outcomes for all programs in the sequence must align with and form constituent parts of the learning outcomes of subsequent programs in the sequence;
- The courses and requirements for completion of earlier programs in the sequence must be a subset of subsequent programs in the sequence; and
- Full credit is granted for courses completed in earlier programs in the sequence.

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.

Typically, there are no articulation pathways for a 48 UoC masters. With approval from the Academic Board, articulation to a 48 UoC masters may be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the entry requirements for the graduate certificate and/or graduate diploma are the same as the masters program.

2.6 Award with Excellence

The award of 'with Excellence' provides formal recognition on the testamur and academic transcript of outstanding performance in coursework masters programs:

- Award with Excellence is awarded when an overall weighted average mark (WAM) of at least 80 has been achieved in all courses completed since enrolment at UNSW that are credited to the relevant award. These include courses from other UNSW programs of study for which credit has been granted and courses completed as part of a graduate certificate and/or graduate diploma that articulates to the masters;
- Courses that have been failed will also be included in the calculation of WAM;
- Courses completed on exchange or cross-institutionally will not be included in the calculation of WAM;
- The recognition of other specified levels of academic performance on the testamur for coursework masters awards is not permitted, specifically any award based on levels other than with Excellence;
- WAM is not rounded up or down for the purposes of awarding with Excellence;
- To be eligible a student must have completed at least 50% of the requirements of their award through UNSW. Students who undertake courses under exchange or other overseas study arrangements will not be disadvantaged in determination of eligibility;
- Eligible students are identified by the Program Authority when checking students for graduation. Students do not need to apply for this award;
- It is expected that all eligible programs will award 'with Excellence' except in special circumstances where a program authority has the approval of Academic Board for a particular program to opt out.

An award 'with Excellence' cannot be awarded for graduate certificate or graduate diploma programs.

3. Dual award programs

Dual awards covered by this procedure 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 this procedure.

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.
 - 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 Services & Systems, 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. For example, if two 48 UoC programs are combined the minimum duration of the dual award is 72 UoC.

All students will be required to complete the advanced disciplinary course requirements of each program. 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. Course sharing of advanced disciplinary courses will not be permitted.

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

4. Admission, recognition of prior learning and credit

Students will be admitted in accordance with the *UNSW Admissions Policy* and the *UNSW Admission to Coursework Programs Procedure*.

Recognition of prior learning and granting of credit towards an award must be in accordance with the *UNSW Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure*.

5. Review and history

The *Structure of Postgraduate Coursework 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)	6 November 2012	6 November 2012	New procedure
1.1	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students)	20 June 2013	20 June 2013	New Section 2.5
2.0	Vice-President and Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	1 July 2014	1 July 2014	Full review
2.1	Vice-President and Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	15 January 2016	1 February 2016	Revised Section 2.6
2.2	Administrative update by the Head of Governance	18 May 2016	18 May 2016	Administrative update to senior positions
2.3	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)	13 March 2017	13 March 2017	Section 2.6, first dot-point clarified.

Archived Document

Appendix B: Glossary

The complete UNSW glossary can be found at:

<http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/general/2016/SSAPO/glossary1.html#Award>

Advanced Disciplinary Courses

The masters-level courses that enable students to develop advanced disciplinary knowledge and/or skills and meet the masters-level learning outcomes.

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.¹

Broadening Masters

Aims 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.

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.

Deepening Masters

Aims 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.

Knowledge and skill requirements

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

Foundational and cognate knowledge and/or skills generally provides an introduction to the discipline for students from a non-cognate discipline.

Disciplinary knowledge and/or skills allows students to broaden and/or deepen their understanding of the discipline.

Advanced disciplinary knowledge and/or skills 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.²

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.)

Professional Accreditation Masters

Aims to develop knowledge in areas that meet professional accreditation requirements for entry to/continuation in a profession.

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.³

Specialisation

A focussed area of academic study in a postgraduate program.

² UNSW Assessment Policy, File number 2010/02663

³ *Ibid*