THE STRUCTURE OF HONOURS PROGRAMS – POLICY

Responsible Officer  
Vice-President and Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Contact Officer  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) and Registrar

Superseded Documents  
This is a new Policy which supersedes all other UNSW documents existing at the effective date

Review  
7 December 2015

File Number  
2012/43400

Associated Documents  
- Honours at UNSW Discussion Paper (AB12/58)
- The Structure of Honours Programs – Procedures (under development)
- The Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Policy
- The Structure of Undergraduate Programs – Procedures
- The Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Policy
- The Structure of Postgraduate Coursework 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
- UNSW Graduate Attributes
- UNSW Handbook
- Online Handbook

Version  Authorisation  Approval Date  Effective Date
1.0  President and Vice-Chancellor  7 December 2012  7 December 2012

1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose

This Policy sets out the academic principles and overarching rules applicable to the structure of Honours programs at UNSW. The aims are to ensure that undergraduate programs that lead to the award of Honours conform to a coherent and clearly defined model, and to provide a framework for assuring the quality of the program offerings. These principles and the Honours model were proposed in the Honours at UNSW Discussion Paper which was endorsed by Academic Board on 9 October 2012.

The Policy aligns with the UNSW Structure of Undergraduate Programs - Policy and Structure of Postgraduate Coursework Programs – Policy. 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.

2. Scope

This Policy applies across the University to all undergraduate programs of study that lead to the award of a degree with Honours (separate year) and Honours degree (embedded Honours) award programs.

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 Honours Programs – Procedures (to be developed).
4. The UNSW Honours Model

4.1 Principles
Honours at UNSW is a recognition of academic excellence in undergraduate programs. It requires students to engage in independent critical thinking related to their discipline, usually demonstrated through:

- Advanced disciplinary knowledge, which may include coursework, specialisation, cross-disciplinary training or capstone course; and
- Independent or self-directed learning, which may include research training (including research methods and ethics), project management, or research towards a substantial independent research thesis or project.

Programs that lead to an award with Honours 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. The program will contribute to the development of UNSW Graduate Attributes.

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

4.2 Structure of programs
Honours is available in two modes in Undergraduate programs:

- Award with Honours (separate year of study to pass level undergraduate programs); and
- Embedded Honours.

Where an Honours award program is combined with another award program, the Honours program will follow the same convention as single award programs.

4.2.1 Award with Honours programs (separate year)
An Award with Honours program is an additional, distinct year of study that follows the completion of an undergraduate degree in a cognate discipline, whether at UNSW or elsewhere. All components of the Honours program contribute to the Honours level qualification.

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

4.2.2 Embedded Honours programs
An Embedded Honours program is a program where the Honours components are studied as part of the overall program.

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

4.3 Honours classifications
Honours can be awarded in the following classes: Class 1; Class 2, Division 1; Class 2, Division 2; and Class 3 (if appropriate). Program documentation will include the methodology for awarding Honours.

4.4 Program documentation
Faculties will ensure that all Honours program proposals and revisions to existing programs specify:

- Clear and explicit entry requirements and, if appropriate, the cognate disciplines that will be accepted for determining student entry;
- Structure, including all course requirements that form part of the program;
- Graduate Attributes and Learning Outcomes and how these will be achieved;
• Academic progression and transfer rules and exit criteria (for students who do not satisfy progression rules);
• 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; and
• Criteria for the award of Honours, including the award of classes of Honours.

Refer to the Structure of Honours Programs – Procedures (to be developed) for procedures relating to these requirements.

5. Legal and Policy Framework
This policy must be read in conjunction with The Structure of Honours Programs – Procedures (under development) and with reference to the list of associated documents (above). The policy has been informed by the:

• *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)
• Australian Qualifications Framework
• *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*.

6. Implementation

6.1 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.

6.2 Support & 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; and
• Director, Learning and Teaching Unit.

7. Review
The Policy is due for review three years from its date of effect.

Appendix A: History

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