

Guideline - Course Structures and Study Patterns

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Guideline is to assist staff who have responsibility for designing or redesigning a course at the University of Canberra (the University). It supports a consistent approach to course design to meet the requirements of the University's [Course Policy](#), the [Course Procedure - Courses and Course Components](#) and the [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#). It provides examples of undergraduate and graduate course structures and study patterns.

(2) This Guideline supports the [Course Policy](#) and the [Course Procedure - Courses and Course Components](#).

(3) It is recommended that staff seek advice and support from the University's Learning & Teaching (L&T) team early in the process of course design or redesign. The L&T team has skills and expertise to support course design or redesign, and can advise on timelines and documentation for course approval and any legislative and compliance constraints.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) This Guideline applies to all AQF qualification types issued by the University.

(5) Higher Degree by Research (HDR) courses are also subject to HDR policies and procedures.

(6) International students on student visas are subject to additional course requirements under relevant legislation and Rules.

Section 3 - Guidelines

Part A - Indigenising the Curriculum Framework

(7) The University's [Indigenising the Curriculum Framework](#) provides information about how the design of the student learning experience at the University ensures our graduates have had opportunities to develop the Indigenous Graduate Attribute – see the [Graduate Attributes Policy](#).

(8) The [Indigenising the Curriculum Framework](#) includes processes through which program directors can align learning activities and assessment design to explicitly include and evidence the development of students' Indigenous cultural capabilities. For undergraduate courses, this applies across units in core and specialisation majors, at the appropriate level of depth and complexity for the University unit level.

Part B - Teaching Periods and Calendars

(9) The University offers different teaching period calendars to support different kinds, modes, third party provider partners, and locations of study. All course and unit design must take into account the opportunities and constraints of different teaching period durations, and calendars.

(10) The main teaching periods at the University are Semester 1, Winter Term and Semester 2. The University also supports:

- a. a summer semester;
- b. University of Canberra College (UCC) trimester teaching periods for diploma units delivered by the UCC;
- c. calendars specific to various third party partner locations; and
- d. a seven week study block calendar typically used only for post graduate online courses.

Design for the Study Block Calendar

(11) The study block calendar design approach expects that each unit is largely a standalone learning experience and each unit can be offered to students in any order. Units in a masters degree (coursework) for example would typically have a nested graduate certificate and thus entry points would be AQF level 8 equivalent units. Units in a study block carousel may be offered in multiple study blocks in a single calendar year, enabling students to start in any study block, or pick up units if they have taken a break for the duration of one or more study blocks.

Scaffolding Student Learning in a Study Block Calendar

(12) Scaffolding student learning between units in a recommended study pattern supports a student's progression from introductory to more advanced concepts and skills. In a study block calendar, however, students may be able enter a course at any unit entry point. This means most units will need to be designed to be self-scaffolding, that is, each unit design must ensure students are provided with resources and learning activities to enable them to successfully complete a unit and progress. These early learning activities may be formative in nature and be based on an early diagnostic activity and refer students to additional support and/or resources.

Supporting Student Learning in Shorter Teaching Periods

(13) The study blocks in a study block calendar and the Winter Term teaching period are significantly shorter in duration than Semester 1 or Semester 2. When a unit is offered during one of the shorter teaching periods, or will be offered in both a longer and shorter teaching period it must be designed to take that into account. That is, the design of learning activities and assessment must be considered in light of the intensity of student effort required, as the volume of learning (ie notionally 50 hours of student effort per credit point) remains the same but is required to be achieved within different durations. Learning activities and assessment tasks must be designed so that students are able to demonstrate that they meet the unit's learning outcomes within both semester and study block or Winter Term durations. Students must be advised to enrol in a single study block unit, and no more than two Winter Term units, in these study periods.

Part C - About 'Related field'

(14) If a masters degree (coursework) course is being developed, the definition of 'related field' for any given masters course will ultimately be an academic decision. It is an important one as it determines the admission requirements for the masters, and its duration. For guidance, [Australian Standard Classification of Education](#), at the lowest level, is likely to be an indicator of whether a field may be considered 'related'.

(15) In some cases, there may be a masters offering which is directly related to a specific undergraduate program. In other cases, there may be more than one program that is considered a related field. A Master of Arts, for example, may consider a broader range of undergraduate study to come within its related field status.

Part D - Admission Considerations

(16) The [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) states:

“Admissions policies, requirements and procedures ... are designed to ensure that admitted students have the academic preparation and proficiency in English needed to participate in their intended study, and no known limitations that would be expected to impede their profession and completion.”

(17) It is essential to consider how to ensure students are sufficiently academically prepared to succeed in their course. This must be considered in relation to admission requirements, inherent requirements, assumed knowledge, and the design of the course to ensure it supports successful student transition into university study, and into the particular course level and qualification type. This includes assessing whether students have sufficient knowledge from a related field to enable them to progress successfully.

(18) In the case of a vertical masters, this may include review of student progress and performance in their bachelor degree course to ensure a student would be able to satisfactorily complete graduate level units. For example, admission requirements or course advice to students, may require that a student achieves a particular Grade Point Average (GPA) in their early year(s) of undergraduate study in order to enrol to the G level units.

(19) Staff should refer to the [Admission Policy \(Coursework\)](#) and the [Admission Procedure \(Coursework\)](#) for additional information about admission requirements.

Part E - Program Structure For Undergraduate Courses

(20) The program structure for undergraduate courses is intended to:

- a. provide students with a coherent learning journey, with clear progression through their course
- b. eliminate duplication, overlaps or gaps in unit content while building breadth of understanding and the ability to apply the skills and knowledge gained in one unit to relevant activities and assessment in other units
- c. enable students to specialise within a discipline for depth of knowledge, and provide opportunities to study across disciplines for breadth of knowledge allow sufficient flexibility to enable students to commence in either semester or to study part-time
- d. develop the common skills and disciplinary knowledge and understanding required by all graduates of the Program through the provision of a common professional core, and
- e. allow sufficient flexibility to enable students to commence in either semester or to study part-time.

(21) When designing or revising a course, faculties must consider the ordering of units from a student learning and progression perspective and consider how unit availability will be assured to enable students to complete their course, including a breadth major, and still complete the course within the expected duration.

(22) The Program Director (or equivalent) of a program:

- a. ensures courses within a program are designed, delivered, developed, monitored, reviewed and closed in accordance with relevant legislation and university policy and procedures
- b. oversees accreditation and the quality assurance lifecycle of courses within a program of courses
- c. leads the design and delivery of program
- d. represents the faculty's course proposals at Course Advisory Panels and Curriculum Committee meetings
- e. attends Course Advisory Group meetings
- f. incorporates Course Advisory Group, student and external feedback into course revisions
- g. monitors and acts on course and unit learning and teaching data analytics
- h. leads and mentors teaching teams for courses in a program, and
- i. where required, collaborates with other Program Directors, or equivalent, where units are shared, or offered or used as service units, and on double degree course planning and quality assurance.

Part F - Course Structures and Study Patterns

Diploma

(23) The University offers a small number of diploma courses which are delivered, or partially delivered, on behalf of the owning faculty by the University of Canberra College (UCC).

(24) A diploma may also be developed by a faculty as an exit for one or more bachelor courses to enable students who have satisfactorily completed 24 credit points of undergraduate units in a course to graduate with a qualification where they do not wish, or are not able to complete the bachelor course.

(25) Where a diploma is a standalone course with units delivered by UCC, units are typically offered in the UCC-specific calendar periods. In designing diploma courses that will be delivered on the faculties' behalf by UCC, program directors are required to:

- a. ensure the diploma meets the criteria for AQF Level 5.
- b. include two required units: Academic English or equivalent, and the Professional Orientation unit from the discipline to which the diploma belongs or equivalent. The remaining credit points will be specified by the faculty to support students' articulation into the related bachelor course(s)
- c. ensure diploma students will be provided with additional support services through UCC and/or will access Peer Assisted Learning Sessions (PALS), Maths Stats and It Help (MASH), Study Skills (refer to [Study Help](#)), and
- d. discuss any proposed new diploma, proposed revision to a diploma offering, or any constituent units with the Education Partnerships Office to ensure compliance with current contractual arrangements with UCC.

(26) Where a diploma is used as an exit for a bachelor course(s) the faculty will ensure that students who complete 24 credit points of a bachelor course meet the course learning outcomes for the diploma, and that the diploma's course learning outcomes are mapped to the higher level bachelor course(s).

(27) Example study pattern for a diploma delivered by UCC on behalf of a faculty studied full time using the UCC Trimester calendar

24 credit point diploma completed Full Time	
UCC Trimester 1	UCC Trimester 2
Unit 1	Unit 5 - Academic English
Unit 2	Unit 6 - Professional Orientation
Unit 3	Unit 7
Unit 4	Unit 8

(28) Example study pattern for a diploma delivered by UCC on behalf of a faculty studied part time using the UCC Trimester calendar

24 credit point diploma completed Full Time		
UCC Trimester 1	UCC Trimester 2	UCC Trimester 3
Unit 1	Unit 4	Unit 7
Unit 2	Unit 5	Unit 8
Unit 3 - Academic Englis	Unit 6 - Professional Orientation	

Three Year Bachelor Degree Course

(29) Three year bachelor degree courses are designed for students to achieve AQF level 7 on graduation. Students complete introductory (level 1), intermediate (level 2) and advanced units (level 3 or level 4) within their bachelor course:

Introductory Units

(30) Introductory units provide foundational skills and knowledge in the discipline as a basis for more advanced study, and have no pre-requisites.

Intermediate and Advanced Units

(31) Intermediate and advanced units build on knowledge and skills acquired at the introductory level, with learning activities or assessment that follow on from those at introductory level, and may have at least one pre-requisite/co-requisite (usually an introductory unit in the same field).

(32) In most instances, students would complete introductory units in their first year. Introductory units may be completed in later years, but typical study patterns must be designed to provide students with a cohesive learning journey.

(33) The number of introductory or advanced units in a program (and in turn within the core and specialist majors) will depend on the program, disciplinary area, and professional accreditation or registration requirements, but at least 24 credit points must be at the advanced level to ensure students graduate at AQF level 7.

Structuring a Bachelor Degree Course

(34) All bachelor courses in a program have a common core major, and each bachelor course has a specialist major designed to work with the core major. The remainder of the course is the breadth component. Together, the core major and the specialist major must ensure that the student achieves the course learning outcomes for the course and the University's [graduate attributes](#).

(35) To ensure depth and breadth of learning:

- a. students may be introduced to knowledge and skills with introductory units during the first year, then build upon these with intermediate and advanced units in the second and third years
- b. students may study introductory and intermediate units alongside each other, both building their foundational knowledge and deepening their understanding concurrently
- c. each major is designed as a modular component that could be used as a component of a double degree, and/or potentially as a breadth major
- d. the capacity for a breadth component may depend on professional accreditation requirements for curriculum content
- e. in some cases a faculty may recommend that a student complete an additional specialist major from within the program as their breadth component, or from somewhere else in the faculty or the University
- f. study patterns and sequencing of units and any pre- or co-requisites need to be carefully considered for students who are commencing their studies in Semester 2, Winter Term, or who are articulating into a course from a partner institution, and
- g. students must complete a minimum of 18 credit points at advanced (University level 3 or 4) in a three year undergraduate course to ensure that they graduate at AQF level 7.

Diagram: 3 year bachelor course structure that offers a core major, a specialist major, and a breadth component.

Core Major (24 cp)	Specialist Major (24 cp)	Breadth Component (24 cp)
Professional Practice Core Units (12 cp)	Eight units in a disciplinary specialisation (24 cp)	Either an additional specialist major of 24 cp OR A minor PLUS some elective units 24 cp, or all elective units
Four discipline specific units (12 cp)		

(36) A typical three year bachelor degree course curriculum structure comprises:

- a. Four Professional Practice Core (PPC) units: Commencing with the introductory unit Professional Orientation in their first semester of study, students are supported in their transition to university study, develop foundational skills, plan how to use their breadth component, and begin building an ePortfolio that they add to throughout the core major and the rest of their course. While implementation of the [Indigenising the Curriculum \(ItC\) Framework](#) is a high priority across the whole of the University curriculum, it is essential it is applied to the PPC units. Further information about the PPC units can be found in the [Guideline - Undergraduate Professional Practice Core Units](#) and support for ItC can be sought from the LT team.
- b. Breadth component: A breadth component may be a breadth major, or a mix of individual units and a minor, or a mix of elective units. A faculty may recommend a breadth major, or selection of breadth components to students in a program or a course. As well as being a constituent component of a 3-year bachelor course, a breadth component may be used to enable students to progress towards completing the requirements of double degrees or vertical masters (see vertical masters pathway).
- c. Specialist major: Each bachelor degree course includes a specialist major (24 cp) designed to enable students to delve more deeply into a particular aspect of the discipline or profession, with students selecting at least one specialist major within their course. Specialist majors are designed as a sequenced progression of study, developing skills and knowledge in a linear way through that major.
- d. Four discipline-specific core units: The core units within a particular program may either be all introductory units (horizontally arranged to provide a strong foundation in the program before students specialise) or be a mix of introductory, intermediate and advanced units as best suits the discipline and intended student learning journey within that program.

(37) Clear relationships between the units in a specialist major, in terms of content and assessment, are necessary, as well as clearly specified co- or pre-requisites which consider the student learning journey and unit availability.

(38) As part of the design process for a bachelor degree course, faculties are encouraged to:

- a. build in flexibility to enable students to commence in different teaching periods - such as commencing in Semester 2 - to study part time, to undertake study abroad, and also enable students to take advantage of different modes of delivery, and
- b. minimise the number of units that have to be run more than once a year within specialisations to support unit viability and to manage staff workloads.

Core Major (24 cp)	Specialist Major (24 cp)	Breadth Component (24 cp)
Professional Orientation Professional Practice 1 Professional Practice 2 Professional Evidence	Eight units in a disciplinary specialisation (24 cp) May include Work Integrated Learning (WIL), additional PPC, and/or study abroad opportunities.	Either an additional specialist major of 24 cp OR A minor PLUS some elective units 24 cp, or all elective units May include study abroad or WIL opportunities.
Four discipline specific units (12 cp) May be offered as an undergraduate certificate.		

Refer to the [Guideline - Undergraduate Professional Practice Core Units](#) for more details about professional practice requirements.

Typical Three Year Bachelor Course Study Pattern

(39) The study pattern below enables students to start in Semester 1 or Semester 2 and follow a coherent learning journey, with minimal requirement to offer individual units in both semesters.

(40) However, in this study pattern the four Professional Practice Core units are required to be taught in both Semester 1 and Semester 2.

(41) Faculties may choose to offer additional units in additional teaching periods to facilitate flexibility options for students such as internships, study abroad, study breaks, and part-time enrolment.

(42) For the study pattern to work effectively for students, the pre-requisites must be carefully managed, with some specialist units having 'co-requisite OR pre-requisite' conditionality to allow them to be studied at the same time, if not before.

(43) Pre- and co-requisites should be implemented as needed to support student success as they move from introductory to advanced units in their course, and this needs to be balanced with unit availability and allow for some flexibility in a student's study plan.

Undergraduate Certificate

(44) An undergraduate certificate may be offered using, for example, the four discipline specific units in the core major. Satisfactory completion of those four units may then enable students to articulate into one or more of the bachelor degree courses in that program, or where an undergraduate certificate is nested in a bachelor degree course, enable a student to graduate early, using the undergraduate certificate as an exit from a bachelor degree course.

(45) For example, the four discipline units in the core major could be offered as an undergraduate certificate and in this study pattern it could be offered as a part-time option, depending on pre- or co-requisites.

(46) Alternatively, Professional Orientation, a specialisation unit and two core discipline units could be offered as an undergraduate certificate that articulates into the specialisation course in the program, and offered as full-time study for one semester, depending on pre- or co-requisites, or used as an exit for students who do not wish to complete the bachelor course.

(47) Semester 1 Bachelor degree commencement course structure:

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation
Professional Orientation	Breadth	Specialisation	Specialisation	Breadth	Breadth
Core	Core	Breadth	Breadth	Breadth	Breadth
Core	Core	Breadth	Professional Practice 1	Professional Practice 2	Professional Evidence

(48) Semester 2 Bachelor degree commencement course structure:

Year 1 S2	Year 1 S1	Year 2 S2	Year 2 S1	Year 3 S2	Year 3 S1
Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation

Year 1 S2	Year 1 S1	Year 2 S2	Year 2 S1	Year 3 S2	Year 3 S1
Professional Orientation	Breadth	Specialisation	Specialisation	Breadth	Breadth
Core	Core	Breadth	Breadth	Breadth	Breadth
Core	Core	Professional Practice 1	Professional Practice 2	Breadth	Professional Evidence

Four Year Single Bachelor Degree Course

(49) The same principles that apply to three year bachelor degree courses apply to four year bachelor degree courses.

Four Year Double Degree (Bachelor Degree Course)- Different Programs

(50) Four year double degrees are designed to enable students to meet AQF level 7 on graduation.

(51) In the undergraduate course structure, double degrees include the core major and a specialist major from two different programs, and the student is conferred with two awards in four years (where the bachelor courses are three year courses) on meeting the course requirements for each of the constituent courses.

(52) In the double degree structure, only one Professional Orientation unit is studied. Students select an elective unit to replace the other Professional Orientation unit, or a faculty may recommend a unit, or a restricted set of units from which the student chooses. Where a faculty recommends a unit or a restricted set of units it must ensure that unit availability for those units will enable the student to complete their double degree in four years.

(53) Course advice must be provided to the student about which of the professional orientation units they need to complete. Typically this would be the area in which they have the strongest interest in building a career.

(54) Students will complete all Professional Practice units, other than the Professional Orientation unit, in each core major.

(55) Professional Evidence, as a capstone unit, is completed for each program. This enables a student to synthesise their learning and demonstrate their achievement of the course learning outcomes in each course.

(56) Ensuring unit availability, scaffolded learning experience in both courses, course duration, and a workable study pattern for both full time and part time students across required units in both programs, is essential in the design for a double degree course.

(57) Example of the typical four year double degree bachelor course structure with specialist majors from different programs

Specialist major A (24 cp)	Core major A (21 cp)	Shared units (6 cp)	Core major B (21 cp)	Specialist major B (24 cp)
Specialist A	Core A Professional Practice (x2) Professional Evidence	Professional Orientation Elective	Core B Professional Practice (x2) Professional Evidence	Specialist B

(58) Example of the typical four year double degree bachelor course study pattern with specialist majors from different programs

Double degree study pattern with specialist majors from different programs							
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2

Double degree study pattern with specialist majors from different programs							
A Spec	A Spec	A Spec	A Spec	A Spec	A Spec	B PP 2	B PE
A PO	B Core	A Spec	A Spec	B Spec	BPP 1	B Elective	B Spec
A Core	A Core	B Core	B Spec	B Spec	B Spec	B Spec	B Spec
A Core	A Core	B Core	B Core	A PP 1	A PP 2	B Spec	A PE

Four Year Double Degree (Bachelor Degree Course) - Same Program

(59) Students who are dedicated to a particular field of study may wish to undertake a double degree in two specialisations within the same program to improve their employment prospects and follow their interests. These may be developed by the faculty in response to evidence of student demand.

(60) On completion of the four majors, the student must meet the course learning outcomes for both courses in the same program.

(61) The Professional Orientation and Professional Evidence units are studied only once. Students are required to complete the Professional Practice 1 and Professional Practice 2 or equivalent internship or placement units in the areas for both specialist majors to ensure they are properly prepared for employment in either area of specialisation.

(62) Example structure for a double degree in the same program

Core major (24 cp)	Specialist major A (24 cp)	Specialist major B (24cp)	Breadth component (24cp)
Core major from the program.	Specialist major A is one of the specialist majors available within the program.	Specialist major B is one of the specialist majors available within the program.	The breadth component in the double degree will be specified, or will be chosen from a restricted set of units and include two additional Professional Practice 1 & 2 Units to ensure students have WIL experience in both areas of specialisation.

(63) Typical four year double degree bachelor course study pattern with specialist majors from the same program

Double degree study pattern with specialist majors from the same program							
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
A Spec	A Spec	A Spec	A Spec	A Spec	A Spec	B Spec	B Spec
PO	B Spec	A Spec	A Spec	Breadth	B Spec	B Spec	Breadth
Core	Core	B Spec	Breadth	Breadth	Breadth	Breadth	Breadth
Core	Core	B Spec	B Spec	PP 1	PP 2	Breadth	PE

Four Year Bachelor Degree Course with Embedded Honours

(64) A bachelors degree course with an embedded honours component must meet all the requirements of a standalone honours as described in the AQF, and consistent with a standalone honours, that is:

- a minimum of 6 credit points of research training, and
- a minimum of 12 credit points of research.

(65) Another 6 credit points equivalent must be specified as supporting the student's development of the skills and

knowledge required for the honours component.

(66) Individual units within the course may be specified as a component of the embedded honours, such as an introductory unit about research in the discipline in first year, or may be specific learning outcomes in specified units.

(67) These specified units and specified unit learning outcomes may be at any AQF level but must clearly scaffold the development of the students' skills and knowledge that will be needed in the AQF level 8 learning activities and assessment tasks, and must be clearly identified as part of the honours component.

(68) Example course structure for a four year bachelor degree with embedded honours

Core major (24 cp)	Specialist major A (24 cp)	Specialist major B (24cp)	Honours component (24 cp)
Core major from the program.	Specialist major A is one of the specialist majors available within the program.	Specialist major B is one of the specialist majors available within the program.	Minimum 12 credit points of research Minimum 6 credit points of research training. The 12 credit points of research includes the research output/thesis component of the honours component
Research training: A minimum of 3 credit points equivalent introducing research in the disciplinary field – this may be individual unit learning outcomes across all the units in the core major, or a combination of a specified unit and specified unit learning outcomes in other units.	Research or Research training: A minimum of 3 credit points equivalent building and applying research knowledge and understanding in the disciplinary field – this may be individual unit learning outcomes across all the units in the specialist major or a combination of a specified unit and specified unit learning outcomes in other units.	Research or Research training: A minimum of 3 credit points equivalent building and applying research knowledge and understanding in the disciplinary field – this may be individual unit learning outcomes across all the units in the specialist major or a combination of a specified unit and specified unit learning outcomes in other units.	If sufficient credit points have not been specified in the other course components, then it is expected that the credit points would be made up of an additional specified honours unit.

(69) Example study pattern for a four year bachelor degree with embedded honours (see table below):

- The professional accreditation requirements for a four year bachelor degree course with embedded honours may require differences to the example structure, but the faculty must demonstrate how the course meets the AQF specifications for a bachelor honours degree and the University's Course Procedure: Courses and Course Components.
- The study pattern is based on three credit point units. From time to time an H (Honours) unit may be multiples of three credit points.
- The Professional Evidence unit is a capstone unit and will be designed to bring together all learning into a final professional portfolio in the final year.
- The study pattern must demonstrate how the bachelor honours degree component of the course will meet the AQF requirements for that qualification level, and this must be included in the evidence provided to Academic Board.

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
Spec U	Spec	Spec U	Spec	Spec U	Spec	Spec DD	H unitW
Professional Orientation	Spec DD U	Spec	Spec	Breadth	Spec DD U	Spec DD U	H unit W

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
Core W	Core U	Spec DD U	Breadth	Breadth	Breadth U	Spec DD	H unit W
Core	Core	Spec DD	Spec DD W	Prof Prac 1	Prof Prac 2	H unit W	Professional Evidence U

W	Whole unit that contributes to the 24 credit points of the honours component
U	One or more unit learning outcomes that contributes to the 24 credit points of the honours component

Five Year Double Degree (Bachelor Degree) Course

(70) The University offers a small number of five year duration (full time study) double degrees which are restricted to double degrees which include Law as one of the constituent courses. These Law double degrees enable students to combine their interest in Law with another disciplinary area such as Communication and Media, Commerce, Arts, Business, or Politics and International Relations.

(71) Given the variety of the second courses that may be combined into a double degree with Law, it is the proposing faculty's responsibility to ensure that a study pattern will work effectively for students, and that changes to the constituent courses are well managed over the period the double degree is offered. The Faculty of Business Government and Law is expected to be the proponent of a double degree that includes Law.

(72) Example course structure - 5 year double degree bachelor

Core major 1 (Law) (24 cp)	Specialist major A (Law) (24 cp)	Specialist major B (Law) (24cp)	Core major 2 (other program) (24 cp)	Specialist major (other program) (24cp)
Law Foundation units (24 credit points).	Legal Practice units (24 credit points).	Law electives (restricted choice) must include at least one Work Integrated Learning unit.	Core major from the Program (the Professional Orientation unit will be replaced by another elective).	Specialist major from the Program.

Vertical Masters Pathway

(73) The vertical masters is similar in concept to a double degree course.

(74) Students have the opportunity to take graduate (G) level units as part of the breadth component of their undergraduate bachelor degree course - rather than the second major for a double degree - and thus potentially achieve an undergraduate bachelors degree and a postgraduate masters degree in one continuous study sequence.

(75) Like a double degree, this approach to the vertical masters pathway takes less time than completing one degree after another, because it enables a student to use the elective capacity within one course to complete units from the other.

(76) Students may commence AQF level 8 and/or 9 units in the breadth component of their bachelor degree courses. Those units contribute to the achievement of the course learning outcomes for the masters degree (coursework) courses, and may also contribute to the course learning outcomes of the bachelor course, depending on course design.

(77) A vertical masters degree (coursework) course pathway will be structured using one of the following options:

- a. 12 credit points masters units in a bachelor course, or

b. 24 credit points of masters units in a bachelor course.

(78) Note that under the AQF no distinction is made between graduate and post-graduate courses. They are all referred to as graduate and may be AQF qualifications at level 8, 9 or 10.

(79) Students may be allowed to complete graduate level units without committing to a vertical masters pathway, depending on co- or pre-requisites and unit availability.

Twelve Credit Point Vertical Masters Degree (Coursework) Study Pattern

(80) The 12 credit point structure assumes that the core or specialisation units are in a related field to the masters. This allows the masters component of the course to be 36 credit points (1.5 years full time equivalent study). This is consistent with AQF volume of learning guidelines for a masters degree (coursework) course in a related field.

(81) This approach allows undergraduate students to make a decision at the end of their second year of full-time study whether or not to enrol in G or PG units in year three of their course and begin their vertical masters pathway.

Twelve Credit Point Vertical Masters Course Example Study Pattern - Breadth Component

(82) In the example structure below, students take Graduate (G) units which are equivalent to AQF level 8 in the breadth component of their undergraduate course.

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Masters G/PG	Masters PG
Professional Orientation	Breadth	Specialisation	Specialisation	Masters G	Masters G	Masters G/PG	Masters PG
Core	Core	Breadth	Breadth	Masters G	Masters G	Masters PG	Masters PG
Core	Core	Breadth	Professional Practice 1	Professional Practice 2	Professional Evidence	Masters PG	Masters PG

Twenty-Four Credit Point Vertical Masters Degree (Coursework) Example Study Pattern

(83) The 24 credit point structure assumes that the core or specialisation units in the student's undergraduate course are in an unrelated field to the masters.

(84) This requires the masters component of the course to be 24 credit points, also consistent with the AQF volume of learning guidelines.

(85) Because this model requires students to make a decision to begin their postgraduate study in the second year of their undergraduate study, the 24 credit point model may be most effective when offered as part of an enrolment package.

(86) Students wishing to undertake a masters in an unrelated field could do the first 12 credit points of masters study concurrently and complete an extra semester after year 4 (for a total full-time equivalent duration of 4.5 years).

(87) As students are commencing study of G level units early in their course it is important that the overall course design of the undergraduate course and the vertical masters are considered together, to ensure that students are appropriately supported to enable success in the higher level units.

24 Credit Point Vertical Masters Degree (Coursework) Example Study Pattern

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Masters PG	Masters PG
Professional Orientation	Specialisation	Specialisation	Masters G	Masters G	Masters G	Masters PG	Masters PG
Core	Core	Masters G	Masters G	Masters G	Masters G	Masters PG	Masters PG
Core	Core	Masters G	Professional Practice 1	Professional Practice 2	Professional Evidence	Masters PG	Masters PG

Part G - Postgraduate Program Structures and Study Patterns

(88) Postgraduate programs extend from level 8 to level 10 (the highest level) in the AQF. At level 8, graduates will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional and highly skilled work and/or further learning. At level 10, they will have systemic and critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge at the frontier of a discipline or area of professional practice.

Nesting - Postgraduate Program Structures

(89) Graduate certificates and graduate diplomas are both AQF level 8 qualifications. Typically these courses will be designed to nest within one or more higher level courses, and are designed to enable students to advance through to a higher level course if they so choose or to take an early exit from the higher level course.

(90) A graduate certificate may be nested within a graduate diploma and/or masters degree (coursework) and the satisfactory completion of the graduate certificate course requirements automatically qualifies a student for admission into the graduate diploma or masters degree (coursework) in which it is nested.

(91) The graduate certificate and/or graduate diploma nested in a higher level course may also be used as an exit for students enrolled in the higher level course who decided they no longer want to complete it.

(92) Automatic qualification for admission into the higher level course provides students with a clear pathway to further study and the knowledge that their graduate certificate is credited towards the completion of the graduate diploma or masters degree (coursework).

(93) Ideally a graduate certificate will be developed as part of a nested set of courses, but there will be circumstances where a standalone graduate certificate, or graduate diploma, is the most appropriate option for the market and/or target student cohort.

Graduate Certificate (AQF Level 8)	>	Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8)	>	Masters Degree (Coursework) (AQF level 9)
12 credit points A graduate certificate may be nested in a masters degree (research) as a coursework component, particularly for research training purposes. At the University, the Graduate Certificate in research methods and Design is an exit from the Doctor of Philosophy.	>	24 credit points A graduate diploma may only be nested in a 36 or 48 credit point masters degree (coursework). A graduate diploma may be made up of 2 graduate certificates.	>	24, 36 or 48 credit points

Part H - Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma

(94) Students graduate from a graduate certificate or graduate diploma at AQF level 8. There may be a case from time to time that one or more unit learning outcomes in a unit are at AQF level 9, or perhaps a single unit. If this the case, then appropriate educational scaffolding must be designed to support student success.

(95) Where a graduate certificate is a standalone course, then all unit learning outcomes will be at AQF level 8 unless there is specific justification for a specific unit learning outcome to be at a higher AQF level.

(96) A graduate certificate or graduate diploma is designed to provide a program of learning that ensures that graduates will have specialised or advanced knowledge respectively within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge which may include:

- a. acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new discipline or professional area, or
- b. acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in an existing discipline or professional area.

(97) At the University, a graduate certificate is typically designed:

- a. for a clearly identified and specialised field of education where there is a demonstrated demand for upskilling or reskilling
- b. as a bespoke offering for particular purpose, such as a response to a government tender, or to meet the training requirements of a government department or large organisation, and
- c. as a discrete but nested component of master degrees (coursework) which are designed as an entry and/or exit point for a master degree (coursework) course.

(98) A graduate diploma will typically be designed as an aggregation of two graduate certificates designed to enable students' demonstration of advanced knowledge in either a new or existing discipline area, and as a qualification nested within a masters degree (coursework).

(99) Where a graduate diploma is nested within a masters course, an individual unit, or an individual unit learning outcome may be at AQF level 9 to assist in preparing students for the AQF level 9 units.

AQF Volume of Learning Requirements

(100) The AQF volume of learning requirement for a graduate certificate is 0.5-1.0 years and can be completed in 0.5 years or one year (12 credit points), depending on a full time or part time study pattern. Time taken to complete the course is dependent on unit availability and the proposed study pattern.

(101) The AQF volume of learning requirement for a graduate diploma is one year full time (24 credit points). Time taken to complete the course is dependent on unit availability and the proposed study pattern.

Example Study Patterns for a Graduate Certificate

Graduate certificate Study Pattern Completed in a Single Semester Full-Time

Semester 1	Semester 2
Unit 1 G level	
Unit 2 G level	
Unit 3 G level	
Unit 4 G level	

Note that the unit numbering is not a sequence but indicates the number of units to be completed for the course.

Graduate Certificate Study Pattern Completed in Calendar Year Part-Time

Semester 1	Semester 2
Unit 1 G level	Unit 3 G level
Unit 2 G level	Unit 4 G level

Note that the unit numbering is not a sequence but indicates the number of units to be completed for the course.

Graduate Certificate Study Pattern Completed Using the Study Block Calendar

(102) Note that the study block calendar may be used in a 'carousel' formation when building a masters degree (coursework) offering across the six study block periods, enabling more than one unit to be offered in the same study block.

(103) Not all study blocks have to be used. It is important to keep in mind the intensity of the study block for both students, who still need to achieve the unit learning outcomes, and teaching staff. Teaching staff are expected to mark and return assessment within short timeframes to enable feedback to feed forward and enable students to progress to the next study block without interruption, and finalised grades within a week so that students are able to progress into the next study block without interruption.

(104) All study blocks can be used, and units arranged and designed, to enable students to commence in any study block. Attention needs to be paid to how transitions from graduate certificate and/or graduate diploma units are offered to ensure that any pre- or co- requisites for the masters degree (coursework) are satisfactorily completed prior to admission. This is particularly important where there is a placement or internship unit in a professionally accredited course and students must meet competencies prior to their placement.

(105) A faculty may choose to admit students in any or all study blocks depending on course design.

(106) Note that while more than one unit is offered in each study block, the units are intensive so students are discouraged from enrolling in more than one unit in a study block.

Graduate certificate study patterns completed using the study block calendar

Study block 1	Study block 2	Study block 3	Study block 4	Study block 5	Study block 6
Unit 1 G level	Unit 2 G level	Unit 3 G level	Unit 4 G level	Unit 1 G level	Unit 2 G level
Unit 3 G level	Unit 4 G level				

Note that the unit numbering is not a sequence but indicates the number of units to be completed for the course.

Graduate Diploma Typical Study Patterns

Graduate Diploma Study Pattern Completed in a Single Calendar Year of Full Time Study

Semester 1	Semester 2
Unit 1 G level (graduate certificate 1)	Unit 5 G level (graduate certificate 2)
Unit 2 G level (graduate certificate 1)	Unit 6 G level (graduate certificate 2)
Unit 3 G level (graduate certificate 1)	Unit 7 G level (graduate certificate 2)
Unit 4 G level (graduate certificate 1)	Unit 8 G level (graduate certificate 2)

Note that the unit numbering is not a sequence but indicates the number of units to be completed for the course.

Graduate Diploma Study Pattern Completed in a Single Calendar Year of Full-Time Study

Semester 1	Semester 2
Unit 1 G level (graduate certificate 1)	Unit 3 G level (graduate certificate 1)
Unit 2 G level (graduate certificate 1)	Unit 4 G level (graduate certificate 1)
Unit 5 G level (graduate certificate 2)	Unit 6 G level (graduate certificate 2)
Unit 7 G level (graduate certificate 2)	Unit 8 G level (graduate certificate 2)

Note that the unit numbering is not a sequence but indicates the number of units to be completed for the course.

Graduate Diploma Study Pattern Completed Using the Study Block Calendar

Study block 1	Study block 2	Study block 3	Study block 4	Study block 5	Study block 6
Year 1					
Graduate certificate 1				Graduate certificate 2	
Unit 1 G level	Unit 2 G level	Unit 3 G level	Unit 4 G level	Unit 5 G level	Unit 6 G level
Year 2					
Graduate certificate 2					
Unit 7 G level	Unit 8 G level				

Note that the unit numbering is not a sequence but indicates the number of units to be completed for the course.

Part I - Masters degree (coursework)

(107) A masters degree (coursework) is designed so that graduates will have undertaken a program of structured learning, with some independent research, project work or practice-related learning.

(108) If the course is to prepare graduates for a profession, a significant component of structured learning is expected to be developed in collaboration with a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

(109) Graduates of a masters degree (coursework) will have an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for:

- a. professional practice or scholarship
- b. a pathway to further learning
- c. understanding of recent developments in a discipline and/or area of professional practice, and
- d. knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to a field of work and/or learning.

(110) [TEQSA expectations of research](#) in a masters degree (coursework) are as follows:

A masters degree (coursework) should include some form of learning activity that develops knowledge of research methods and principles appropriate to the discipline, field of work, or professional practice. Learning activities to develop research skills would typically include one of the following:

- a. research-based project
- b. capstone experience, and/or

c. a piece of scholarship.

These three types of activities may be alternatives.

Nesting Arrangements for Masters Degree (Coursework)

(111) The nesting arrangements for a masters degree (coursework) is dependent on the nature and credit points of the proposed masters. Where possible faculties are encouraged to nest at least one graduate certificate within a masters degree (coursework) to provide students with an early exit if they need to seek one, and to enable a faculty to target a different cohort – for example, a cohort that seeks to upskill or reskill, rather than one that wants to commit to and complete a full masters degree (coursework) course.

(112) A masters degree (coursework) can be constructed, where it makes sense to do so, with nested graduate certificates, with sufficient AQF level 9 units included in the masters to enable a student to graduate at AQF level 9.

Masters Degree (Coursework) Volume of Learning and Course Types Examples

(113) Research for a masters degree (coursework) excluding research training is typically no more than 25% of the total course.

Masters total credit points (cp)	Prior studies AQF level	Typical suggested components	Minimum research training	Typical research	Total research plus research training
Prior studies in the same discipline as masters degree (coursework)					
24 cp	AQF level 8	1 nested graduate certificate	6 cp	6 cp	12 cp
36 cp	AQF level 7	1 or 2 nested graduate certificates	6 cp	9 cp	15 cp
Prior studies in a different discipline from the masters degree (coursework)					
36 cp	AQF level 8	1 or 2 nested graduate certificates	6 cp	9 cp	15 cp
48 cp	AQF level 7	2 nested graduate certificates with one nested Graduate diploma	6 cp	12 cp	18 cp

Examples of Study Patterns and Nesting for Masters Degree (Coursework)

(114) The structures below presuppose that all units are three credit points, and that only the semester teaching periods are used. Winter Term and summer semester may also be part of the course design.

Example 24 Credit Point Masters Degree (Coursework) Semester-Based Study Pattern with one Nested Graduate Certificate - Full-Time

(115) In a 24 credit point masters degree (coursework) at least 12 credit points of the course requirements should be at AQF level 9.

24 credit point masters degree (coursework) full time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Unit 1 G level (graduate certificate unit 1)*	Unit 5 PG level
Unit 2 G level (graduate certificate unit 2)	Unit 6 PG level
Unit 3 G level (graduate certificate unit 3)	Unit 7 PG level

24 credit point masters degree (coursework) full time	
Unit 4 G level (graduate certificate unit 4)	Unit 8 PG level

*a G unit is designed to be at AQF level 8, and a PG unit is designed to be at AQF level 9.

Example 36 Credit Point Masters Degree (Coursework) Semester-Based with one Nested Graduate Certificate - Full-Time

(116) In a 36 credit point masters degree (coursework) at least 12 credit points of the course requirements should be at AQF level 9.

36 credit point masters degree (coursework) full-time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Year 1	
Unit 1 G level (graduate certificate unit 1)*	Unit 5 G level (graduate certificate unit 3)
Unit 2 G level (graduate certificate unit 2)	Unit 6 G level (graduate certificate unit 4)
Unit 3 G level	Unit 7 PG level
Unit 4 G level	Unit 8 PG level
Year 2	
Unit 9 PG level	
Unit 10 PG level	
Unit 11 PG level	
Unit 12 PG level	

*a G unit is designed to be at AQF level 8, and a PG unit is designed to be at AQF level 9.

48 Credit Point Masters Degree (Coursework) Full-Time

(117) In a 48 credit point masters degree (coursework) at least 18 credit points of the course requirements should be at AQF level 9.

48 credit point masters degree (coursework) full-time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Year 1	
Unit 1 G level (graduate certificate unit 1)*	Unit 5 G level (graduate 2 certificate unit 1)
Unit 2 G level (graduate certificate unit 2)	Unit 6 G level (graduate 2 certificate unit 2)
Unit 3 G level	Unit 7 G level (graduate 2 certificate unit 3)
Unit 4 G level	Unit 8 PG level (graduate 2 certificate unit 4)
Year 2	
Unit 9 PG level	Unit 13 PG level
Unit 10 PG level	Unit 14 PG level
Unit 11 PG level	Unit 15 PG level
Unit 12 PG level	Unit 16 PG level

*a G unit is designed to be at AQF level 8, and a PG unit is designed to be at AQF level 9.

Example 48 Credit Point Masters Degree (Coursework) in Study Block Calendar with one Nested Graduate Certificate and one Nested Graduate Diploma

48 credit point masters degree (coursework) completed using the study block calendar					
SB 1	SB 2	SB 3	SB 4	SB 5	SB 6
Year 1					
Graduate certificate					
Graduate diploma					
Unit 1 G level	Unit 2 G level	Unit 3 G level	Unit 4 G level	Unit 5 G level	Unit 6 G level
Year 2					
Graduate diploma					
Unit 7 PG level	Unit 8 PG level	Unit 9 PG level	Unit 10 PG level	Unit 11 PG level	Unit 12 PG level
Year 3					
Unit 13 PG level	Unit 14 PG level	Unit 15 PG level	Unit 16 PG level		

Masters Degree (Research)

(118) The primary focus of the masters degree (research) is the research training and research thesis with the key focus on students developing the ability to 'plan and execute a substantial piece of research' ([AQF, 2015](#)). Masters degrees (research) must be designed so that students graduate at AQF level 9.

(119) At AQF level 9, students are expected to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge, and be able to design, use and evaluate research and research methods. A masters degree (research) must include research training to enable students to develop the knowledge and skills required to successfully complete the thesis component, unless the student is able to demonstrate they have the required research training skills.

(120) These research training units required must be relevant to the students' research topic, and so may be selected from existing faculty-based research training units.

(121) When developing and managing a masters degree (research), a faculty must ensure it has sufficiently qualified and experienced supervisors for the student's research area and proposed topic as required in the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) policies and procedures.

(122) Masters degrees (research) volume of learning and therefore the duration of the course, depends on whether the course is designed for a student coming from the same discipline or a different discipline, and/or whether the student is coming into the masters with an AQF level 8 qualification or AQF level 7 qualification.

(123) At University masters degrees (research) are all 48 credit points, typically with a minimum of six credit points of research training coursework, up to 12 credit points of research training.

(124) Typically a University masters degree (research) is designed for students with an AQF level 7 qualification moving into a new discipline and is designed as two years full time study, with an equivalent part-time option where appropriate.

Masters Degree (Research) Volume of Learning and Course Types Examples

(125) For a masters degree (research), research typically comprises the majority of the credit points of the course (at

least two-thirds), with some credit points allocated to research training units.

Masters total credit points	Prior studies AQF level	Suggested typical components	Minimum research training	Typical research
48 cp	AQF level 7	Research training Thesis	6 cp (may be up to 12cp)	36 cp

Masters Degree (Research) Example Study Pattern

(126) In this suggested study pattern the student commences their thesis in their second semester of study and the overall thesis weighting is 36 credit points over two years, with the research training coursework undertaken predominantly in the first year.

(127) In some University masters degrees (research) there is a single 36 credit point unit for the thesis component of the masters. While this is acceptable, it is worth considering situations in which students are seeking an intermission at some point during their thesis development process.

(128) The coursework units may also be a restricted set or sets, enabling students to select coursework research-focused units relevant to their particular discipline and topic, and the skill that they will need for successful completion.

(129) The coursework research training units may not be required for students who are able to demonstrate previous relevant research training.

Example 48 Credit Point Masters Degree (Research) with Minimum of 6 Credit Points of Research Training

(130) Typical Study Pattern - full time example

Semester 1	Semester 2
Year 1	
3cp Qualitative Research Practice PG	3cp Research Planning PG
3cp Subject Area Principles of Research PG	3cp Quantitative Research Practice PG
6cp Master of Subject Area Research Thesis Type 2 PT R (36 cp)	6cp Master of Subject Area Research Thesis Type 2 PT R (36 cp)
Year 2	
12cp Master of Subject Area Research Thesis Type 2 FT R (36 cp)	12cp Master of Subject Area Research Thesis Type 2 FT R (36 cp)

Note:

- Students enrol in the PT Thesis unit in Y1S1 and Y1S2 to achieve 6cp of thesis each semester
- Students enrol in the FT Thesis unit in Y2S1 and Y2S2 to achieve 12cp of thesis each semester
- This is referred to as enrolled credit points versus achieved credit points

Doctoral Degree Courses

(131) Doctoral degree qualifications are level 10 of the AQF. The AQF states the purpose of a doctoral degree is to:

qualify individuals who apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice (AQF Council, 2013: 63)

(132) Research is the defining characteristic of all doctoral degree qualifications, and most of the doctoral degree course will be supervised study and research in which candidates undertake original research.

(133) The AQF recognises two forms of doctoral degree:

- a. the doctoral degree (research), and
- b. the doctoral degree (professional).

(134) The research doctoral degree (typically referred to as a Doctor of Philosophy) makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge; the professional Doctoral Degree (typically titled Doctor of [field of study]) makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the context of professional practice.

(135) The emphasis in the learning outcomes and research may differ between the different forms of doctoral degree qualifications, but all graduates must demonstrate knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills at AQF level 10 at graduation.

(136) Doctoral degrees will provide students with an introduction to research training in their discipline area. This introduction must be relevant to the student's proposed thesis and can be up to 12 credit points of research-focussed coursework, with a minimum of 6 credit points. Students are expected to satisfactorily complete any coursework units to indicate their academic preparedness to undertake the research units. The requirement to complete coursework may be waived where students are able to demonstrate they have sufficient research training.

Section 4 - Policies

(137) Refer to [Course Policy](#).

Section 5 - Procedures

(138) Refer to [Course Procedure - Courses and Course Components](#).

Status and Details

Status	Current
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Custodian	Michelle Lincoln Deputy Vice-Chancellor
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