

Postgraduate Coursework Policy

The Postgraduate Coursework Policy is being retired with immediate effect. Please refer to the Curriculum Design and Approvals Policy.

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) This policy should be read in conjunction with the current [University Policies](#) governing the Admission, Enrolment, Progression and Graduation of students.

(2) This policy provides coherent guidelines for the structure of postgraduate awards. The following principles underpin the guidelines for the structure of postgraduate awards:

- a. Flexibility and student choice;
- b. High quality;
- c. Accommodation of professional requirements;
- d. Coherence and defined areas of concentration;
- e. Consistency, where appropriate, across the University;
- f. Variation, where there are strong reasons for it;
- g. Facilitation of student movement across the tertiary education sector.

Section 2 - Definitions

(3) Nil.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

Part A - Structure of Postgraduate Courses

(4) Normally, all taught postgraduate courses will be structured to have embedded exit points of Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters.

(5) A Graduate Certificate award is normally 40 to 80 credit points, with the expectation that most Graduate Certificate awards would be at least 40 credit points in length.

(6) A Graduate Diploma award is normally 80 to 160 credit points with the expectations that most Graduate Diploma awards would be at least 80 credit points.

(7) A Masters award is normally at least 80 credit points.

(8) University postgraduate awards conform to the nomenclature for award titles prescribed in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

(9) Postgraduate courses are specialised and highly structured, and student free choice of units will, of necessity, be

non-existent or restricted. Free choice of electives may be permitted within some courses but will always be less than 25% of the units the student takes.

(10) Postgraduate courses and units may be offered in a variety of delivery modes - full-time, intensive, part-time, external, off-shore - according to perceived demand. The academic requirements and the standards expected from students will not differ according to the mode of presentation.

(11) Postgraduate units are assigned either 10 credit points or multiples of 10. Values of multiples of 10 credit points will attach primarily to special long-term research units or thesis preparation units in honours or postgraduate research degrees.

Part B - Admission

(12) As per the [Admissions Policy](#).

Deferred admission

(13) As per [Admissions Policy](#) - Deferring Offers.

Part C - Advanced Standing

(14) Students will not be given Advanced Standing for units previously taken to meet undergraduate award requirements. An exception will be made for students entering certain professional postgraduate programs, who may be given Advanced Standing if a case is approved by the Education Committee of Academic Senate.

(15) Advanced standing in specified units is not normally granted for studies completed ten years or more prior to application. Where advanced standing is being sought for studies completed ten years or more prior to application, the University may require an assessment of the currency of an applicant's knowledge. The University will determine the method of assessment.

(16) Advanced standing for units in professionally accredited courses can only be given for equivalent units that would satisfy the requirements for professional accreditation.

(17) Irrespective of any Advanced Standing that may be given, at least 50% of the credit points required to gain a postgraduate award must be achieved through formal study at this University, and be subject to the University's [Advanced Standing Policy](#).

(18) Advanced Standing is not given for mandatory units within a course unless the student has completed clearly comparable units at an equivalent tertiary institution. Where a student has not completed clearly comparable units, credit can only be given for non-mandatory units (if any) in the program.

(19) Where applicants are seeking credit based on un-credentialed learning, the granting of credit must be recommended by the relevant Academic Course Advisor or Director, Academic Program and Unit Coordinator. For more information see [Advanced Standing Policy](#).

Part D - Progression, Completion and Graduation

(20) Each Postgraduate coursework award has specified completion requirements that students must attain. (see Structure of Postgraduate Coursework awards above).

(21) Conceded passes are not permitted in any postgraduate coursework award. (see the University's [Assessment Policy](#) - Table 1 - Final Grades for units receiving a mark). Students who have received a fail in the final unit of their degree may apply to the Dean of the School, or nominee, to undertake a supplementary assessment for that unit. (see

the University's [Assessment Policy- Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment](#) - Supplementary Assessment in the final unit of a Course).

(22) Western Sydney University students, upon completion of a lower level nested award, can apply for transfer to the higher level award. If a student chooses to graduate from a lower level award, they will then need to re-apply for the higher level award. The previously completed units within the nested award will be noted on the academic transcript as Advanced Standing. As per [Admissions Policy](#) - Admission to Higher Level Nested Awards.

(23) Where a student is given provisional enrolment in a Graduate Certificate, instead of a Graduate Diploma or Masters award, because of lack of prior knowledge of the area, transfer to the higher award will be automatic where the student passes all of the units in the Graduate Certificate at their first attempt.

(24) Any variation to the above must be requested at the time of course approval. Arguments supporting the variation must be presented in writing to the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee.

(25) Students who are enrolled in a higher level coursework award (Masters or Graduate Diploma) who have fulfilled the requirements of a lower nested postgraduate coursework award and wish to exit at the lower level must obtain the permission of the relevant Academic Course Advisor or Director, Academic Program.

(26) Students who complete a Masters award (or a Graduate Diploma where no extension to a Masters award is available) are eligible to receive recognition of outstanding grades at graduation ([Graduation Policy](#) - Graduation with Distinction). The levels of recognition, and the Grade Point Averages required to achieve them, are to be in accord with [Graduation Policy](#) - Cumulative Grade Point Average Rule - Part B).

Part E - Postgraduate Students Undertaking Undergraduate Units

(27) In some courses, postgraduate students may be required to enrol in undergraduate units, for example, where courses are designed to meet professional requirements for students who have not studied at undergraduate level in the same discipline.

(28) Given the higher expectation of post-graduate studies, it would be expected that post-graduate students would attend the undergraduate lectures then have separate workshops/tutorials and substantially different assessment requirements. In these cases, the unit will be numbered differently for the postgraduate and undergraduate enrolment.

(29) Students will not be given Advanced Standing for units previously undertaken to meet undergraduate award requirements. However, undergraduate units undertaken to meet postgraduate award requirements in University awards (as stated above) would not fall into this category.

Section 4 - Procedures

(30) Refer to the:

- a. [Progression and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Policy](#);
- b. [Graduation Policy](#).

Section 5 - Guidelines

(31) Nil.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	14th December 2017
Review Date	14th December 2020
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	14th December 2017
Expiry Date	26th July 2021
Unit Head	Brian Stout Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching b.stout@westernsydney.edu.au
Author	Barbara Gow
Enquiries Contact	Brian Stout Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching b.stout@westernsydney.edu.au