

Award Course Structure Standards

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1. Overview

Sections 1, 2, 4 and 5 of these mandatory standards apply to all coursework award courses, including postgraduate coursework courses.

Section 3 and 6 of these mandatory standards apply only to new and restructured AQF Level 7 Bachelor Degree and four-year AQF Level 8 Bachelor (Honours) degree courses.

These Standards do not apply to dual awards, double degrees, courses at AQF Level 6 and below (Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma, Diploma).

2. Educational Quality Framework, Policy & Procedures

Curriculum is developed and approved in accordance with the Award Courses Policy and Award Course Approval Procedures.

These Standards are to be read in conjunction with the:

- [Educational Quality Framework](#)
- [Award Courses Policy](#) and [Award Course Approval Procedures](#)
- [Award Course Improvement and Accreditation Procedures](#)
- [Honours Programs Policy](#).

3. Courses

Approved courses are categorised as Modular, Prescribed, or Diversified. All courses must comply with the requirements for one of these structures. The categorisation determines the composition, placement of course components (e.g. Minors, Majors and Specialisations) and requirements for course design.

All new and restructured AQF Level 7 Bachelor Degree courses (and course components) must comply with the requirements for one of these approved course categories:

- Modular (refer 3.1)
- Prescribed (refer 3.2)
- Diversified (refer 3.3)

Articulations must be considered and maintained when designing new, or restructuring existing, courses.

3.1. Modular Course

AQF Level 7 Bachelor Degree courses and four-year AQF Level 8 Bachelor (Honours) Degree courses are to be developed with a Modular structure where possible to offer flexibility and choice for students.

A Modular Course consists of a *Common First Year* and must include at least one Major or Specialisation course component. Generic, non-specialised course components are generally not permissible.

3.1.1. Common First Year

The *Common First Year* offers the same Program of Study for all students in a Modular course and must include:

- 36 units of topics
- minimum of 22.5 units of Core topics
- maximum of 13.5 units of Option topics

3.1.2. Subsequent Years

The second and third years (or part-time equivalent) of a Modular Course may include:

- 1 Major plus 36 units of Option and/or Elective topics[#], or
- 1 Major plus 2 Minors, or
- 1 Major plus 1 Minor plus 18 units of Core topics, Option and/ or Elective topics[#]
- 2 Majors, or
- 1 Specialisation.

[#] Maximum of 18 units of Elective Topics permitted

- Minors, Majors and/or Specialisations must not be required to commence until the student has attempted the equivalent of 36 units of *Common First Year* topics.
- The fourth year (or part-time equivalent) of a Modular Course may contain embedded 36 unit Honours Program/s (as course component/s).

Refer 6.1 [Example – Modular Course](#)

3.2. Prescribed Course

A Prescribed Course includes Core and Option topics throughout the Program of Study. Many Prescribed Courses are designed to meet requirements for external professional accreditation.

A Prescribed Course must include:

- maximum of 9 units of Option topics in the first two years (or part-time equivalent)[^], or
- maximum of 18 units of Option topics in the first three years (or part-time equivalent)[^].
- The fourth year (or part-time equivalent) of a Prescribed Course may contain embedded 36 unit Honours Program/s (as course component/s).

- iv. When included in a combined degree, those Core topics necessary to meet the course level learning outcomes must be included.

^ Inclusive of any Minor or Major.

Refer 6.2 [Example – Prescribed Course](#)

3.3. Diversified Course

A Diversified Course consists of a *Diverse First Year* and a Major, offering flexibility for students to pursue their interests throughout the course.

3.3.1. Diverse First Year

The *Diverse First Year* must include:

- i. 36 units of topics
- ii. minimum of 9 units of Core topics

3.3.2. Subsequent Years

The second and third years (or part-time equivalent) of a Diversified Course must include:

- iii. a Major.

The fourth year (or part-time equivalent) of a Diversified Course may contain embedded 36 unit Honours Program/s (as course component/s).

Refer 6.23 [Example – Diversified Course](#)

3.4. Honours Program

An Honours Program is either a:

- i. Standalone, one year full-time (or part-time equivalent) AQF Level 8 Honours Program comprising 36 units, taken after completion of an appropriate undergraduate AQF Level 7 Bachelor Degree course, or
- ii. 36 unit course component, embedded in a four-year (or part-time equivalent) Bachelor (Honours) Degree course.

3.5. Combined Degree

A Combined Degree must consider the requirements of the two separate Award courses it comprises and adhere to the relevant Award Course Structure Standards for both.

A Combined Degree includes:

- i. a first year equivalent derived from Core topics from the two separate courses*
- ii. course components and/or topics from the two separate courses being combined, including:
 - a. All core topics from each Prescribed course, and/or
 - b. A specialisation or Major from each Modular course, and/or
 - c. A Major from each Diversified course.

* Level 1 topics must not exceed 40% of all units in the Program of Study for the Combined Degree.

Refer 6.5 [Example – Combined Course](#)

3.6. Degree Apprenticeship

Degree Apprenticeship courses will conform to the relevant Award Course Structure Standards.

4. Course components

Course components and topics must conform to the definitions and standards outlined in this section. Components will typically not duplicate the title of an existing or new component.

The components must enable the Course Learning Outcomes to be achieved.

4.1. Topic

Topics are units of learning that form part of a course. A standard full-time study load is 18 units per semester, which is typically equivalent to four 4.5-unit topics.

4.1.1. Topic Level

Some courses specify the number of units that must be completed at each level. The topic code indicates the level of learning and assessment (not an AQF level):

Topic level	Codes from	Codes to
Undergraduate	XXXX1000	XXXX4999
Level 1	XXXX1000	XXXX1999
Level 2 ('upper level')	XXXX2000	XXXX2999
Level 3 ('upper level')	XXXX3000	XXXX3999
Honours	XXXX7000	XXXX7999
Postgraduate	XXXX8000	XXXX9999
Microcredentials and other	XXXX0000	XXXX0999

The Program of Study for an AQF Level 7 Bachelor Degree courses must include:

- i. minimum of 27 units of Level 1 topics
- ii. maximum of 45 units of Level 1 topics[#]
- iii. minimum of 27 units of Level 3, or higher level, topics.

[#] Additional level 1 units may be approved for Combined Degrees.

4.1.2. Core Topic

- i. Core topics are designated as core where they are either necessary to meet the course level learning outcomes or are compulsory to meet the course structure standards requirements of the course, or course component (section 3).
- ii. There is a minimum quantity of Core topics in courses and course components.
- iii. Typically, core topics are the same, and must be available, for each course offering, e.g. various locations and modes of delivery.
- iv. Students must be able to progress with full time study load irrespective of when they commence the course. The student experience, and course duration, must not be adversely impacted by availability of Core topics.

4.1.3. Option Topic

A Program of Study in a course, Minor, Major or Specialisation (course component) may direct students to select from a curated, defined list of Option topics.

Students must be able to progress with full time study load irrespective of when they commence the course. The student experience, and course duration, must not be adversely impacted by availability of Option topics.

An Option topic must be:

- i. approved by the College Dean (Education), and
- ii. related or complementary to the area of study, and
- iii. presented in the Program of Study for a course component (i.e. Minor, Major or Specialisation) in a list containing no more than 10 Option topics, or
- iv. presented in the Program of Study for a course, in a list containing no more than 10 Option topics per year level.

4.1.4. Elective

A Program of Study may direct students to select one or more Elective topics in any area of interest (where requisites are met).

Elective topics:

- i. are typically not permitted in a Prescribed course, and
- ii. must not account for more than 18 units in a Modular course, and
- iii. are selected by students from any area of study across the University where requisites are met, and
- iv. may be recommended, but not restricted to discipline/s or topic code/s.

4.2. Minor

A Minor is relevant, or complementary to the field of study aligned with the course and may be selected by a student who has gained admission to the course.

A Minor must include:

- i. 18 units of Core and Option topics, and
- ii. minimum of 13.5 units of Core topics.

4.3. Major

A Major represents a specific sub area of a discipline that is recognised as a valuable discipline sequence of study in its own right, or a discipline sequence of study that will add value to or accommodate the individual interests and aspirations of students, and may be selected by a student who has gained admission to the course

A Major must include:

- i. 36 units of Core and Option topics, and
- ii. minimum of 22.5 units of Core topics.

A Major typically requires a student to complete 18 units (or more) of level 3, or higher level, topics.

4.4. Double Major

A student may complete a maximum of two majors per course, where space allows in the Program of Study.

A Double Major may be undertaken if:

- i. two Majors are permitted by the course Program of Study, and
- ii. no more than 9 units of Core Topics overlap in the Majors, and
- iii. typically, no more than 18 units of topics overlap with another Major in the course, and both Majors contain Option Topics, and
- iv. topic requisites are met.

4.5. Specialisation (as course component)

A Specialisation represents a specific sub area of a discipline that is recognised as a valuable discipline sequence of study in its own right or a discipline sequence of study that will add value to or accommodate the individual interests and aspirations of students, and may be selected by a student who has gained admission to the course.

A Specialisation must include:

- i. 72 units of Core and Option topics, and
- ii. minimum of 45 units of Core topics.

A Specialisation typically requires a student to complete 36 units (or more) of level 3, or higher level, topics.

4.6. Honours Program (as course component)

An Honours Program may be embedded in the Program of Study and is typically undertaken wholly in the fourth year (or part-time equivalent) of the course.

An Honours Program must include:

- i. 36 units of topics, and
- ii. A minimum of 18 units programmed in the fourth year (or part-time equivalent) of the course.

Refer also [Honours Program Policy](#).

5. Additional course rules

5.1. Aims

5.1.1. Course Aims

Aims are required for all courses and must:

- i. provide a concise summary of the main aims of the course, and
- ii. contain a maximum of 5 bullet-point aims.

5.1.2. Course Component Aims

Aims are required for all Minors, Majors and Specialisations and must:

- i. provide a concise summary of the main aims of the course component, and
- ii. contain a maximum of 5 bullet-point aims.

5.2. Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes (LOs) are essential for courses and course components. They clarify the knowledge and skills that students should acquire and develop by the end of their studies.

All Core topic Learning Outcomes must scaffold to course Learning Outcomes and support students to apply the knowledge and skills required for successful completion of the course.

5.2.1. Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes are required for all courses and must:

- i. align with outcomes of Core topics in the Program of Study, and
- ii. contain a minimum of 6 Learning Outcomes
- iii. contain a maximum of 8 Learning Outcomes[#]
- iv. be presented in a numbered list.

5.2.2. Course Component Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes are required for all Minors, Majors and Specialisations and must:

- i. align with outcomes of Core topics in the Program of Study, and
- ii. contain a minimum of 2 Learning Outcomes
- iii. contain a maximum of 3 Learning Outcomes[#]
- iv. be presented in a numbered list.

[#] Additional Learning Outcomes may be approved for professionally accredited courses, course components and combined courses.

5.3. Program of Study

The Program of Study (PoS) lists the approved curriculum items that must be completed by students to satisfy requirements for an Award. A Program of Study structure is required for courses and course components, including Minors, Majors, Specialisations and embedded Honours Programs.

A Program of Study is not designed to be a Study Planner. The approved structure may or may not indicate the recommended sequencing of topic enrolment.

5.4. Australian Higher Education Statement (AHEGS)

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) provides a description of the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued by the graduate named on the statement. The AHEGS complies with Department of Education specifications and is provided to graduating students upon conferral together with a Testamur and Academic Transcript.

There is a limit of one AHEGS per course.

5.5. Permissible Awards

The Permissible Award is the name of the Award qualification that appears on the Testamur and AHEGS.

There is a limit of one Permissible Award per course.

6. Course Structure Examples

The following examples of course and course component structures comply with the Award Course Structure Standards and may guide curriculum development and review.

6.1. Example – Modular Course

Year 1			
Common First Year	Core Topics (min. 22.5 units)		Options (max. 13.5 units)
Years 2 and 3			
Major	Major (36 units)		Options* (36 units)
OR			
Minor	Major (36 units)	Minor 1 (18 units)	Options* (18 units)
OR			
Double Minor	Major (36 units)	Minor 1 (18 units)	Minor 2 (18 units)
OR			
Double Major	Major 1 (36 units)		Major 2 (36 units)
OR			
Specialisation	Specialisation (72 units)		
Year 4 (if applicable)			
Honours	Honours Program (36 units)		

* Refer topic requirements in Section 4.1.3

6.2. Example – Prescribed Course

Year 1			
100% Core	Core Topics # (36 units)		
Years 2 and 3			
100% Core	Core Topics # (72 units)		
OR			
75% Core	Core Topics (54 units)		Options (18 units)
OR			
Major	Core Topics (36 units)		Major (36 units)
OR			
Major / Minor	Core Topics (18 units)	Major (36 units)	Minor (18 units)
Year 4 (if applicable)			
Honours	Honours Program (36 units)		

Refer topic requirements in Section 4.1.2

6.3. Example – Diversified Course

Year 1			
Diverse First Year	Core Topics (min. 9 units)	Core Topics / Options / Electives / Component~ (max. 27 units)	
Years 2 and 3			
Major	Major (36 units)		Core / Options / Electives~ (36 units)
OR			
Minor	Major (36 units)		Minor 1 (18 units) Core / Options / Electives~ (18 units)
OR			
Double Minor	Major (36 units)		Minor 1 (18 units) Minor 2 (18 units)
OR			
Double Major	Major 1 (36 units)		Major 2 (36 units)
Year 4 (if applicable)			
Honours	Honours Program (36 units)		

~ Refer topic requirements in Section 3.3

6.4. Example – Course Components

Minor (18 units)	Core Topics (min. 13.5 units)	Options (max. 4.5 units)
Major (36 units)	Core Topics # (min. 22.5 units [^])	Options (max. 13.5 units)
Specialisation (72 units)	Core Topics (min. 45 units)	Options (max. 27 units)
Honours Program (36 units)	Honours Program (36 units)	

6.5. Example – Combined Course

Modular (Major) + Modular (Major) – 144 units / 4 years			
Year 1			
Core Topics (18 units)	Core Topics (18 units)	36	
Years 2, 3, 4			
Core Topics [#] (9 units)	Options* (9 units)	Minor (18 units)	36
OR			
Core Topics [#] (9 units)	Options* (27 units)		
AND			
Major Course A (36 units)			36
AND			
Major Course B (36 units)			36
			144

Balance of first year core topics, 4.5 units from each Common First Year, to be completed in year 2.

* Refer topic requirements in Section 3.1.2

Modular (Specialisation) + Modular (Major) – 144 units / 4 years				
Year 1				
Core Topics Course A (18 units)		Core Topics Course B (18 units)		36
Years 2, 3, 4				
Core Topics [#] (9 units)	Specialisation Course A (9 units) [^]	Minor (18 units)		36
<i>OR</i>				
Core Topics [#] (9 units)	Specialisation Course A (9 units) [^]	Options* (18 units)		36
<i>AND</i>				
Specialisation Course A (36 units) [^]			36	
<i>AND</i>				
Major Course B (36 units)			36	
			144 units	

Balance of first year core topics, 4.5 units from each Common First Year, to be completed in year 2.

[^] Specialisation includes minimum of 45 units of core topics

* Refer topic requirements in Section 3.1.2

Modular (Specialisation) + Modular (Specialisation) – 144 units / 4 years				
Year 1				
Core Topics Course A (18 units)		Core Topics Course B (18 units)		36
Years 2, 3, 4				
Core Topics [#] (9 units)	Specialisation Course A (9 units) [^]	Specialisation Course B (9 units) [^]	Options* (9 units)	36
<i>AND</i>				
Specialisation Course A (36 units) [^]			36	
<i>AND</i>				
Specialisation Course B (36 units) [^]			36	
			144 units	

Balance of first year core topics, 4.5 units from each Common First Year, to be completed in year 2.

[^] Specialisation includes minimum of 45 units of core topics

* Refer topic requirements in Section 3.1.2

Prescribed + Modular (Major)		
Year 1		
Core Topics Course A (18 units)	Core Topics Course B (18 units)	36
Years 2, 3, 4		
Core Topics Course A (36 units)		36
<i>AND</i>		
Core Topics Course A (36 units)		36
<i>OR</i>		
Core Topics Course B (4.5 units)	Various – determined by component courses and shared core topics	4.5
<i>AND</i>		
Major Course B (36 units)		36
		148.5 units

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