

# Australian Qualifications Framework Compliance for UNE Course and Units Guidelines

## Section 1 - Overview

(1) These guidelines:

- a. Outline the requirements for the development and design of all coursework, undergraduate and postgraduate courses at UNE in accordance with the requirements of the [Australians Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#);
- b. Provide advice as to the structure of courses offered by UNE in relation to the volume and scaffolding of learning; and
- c. Specify the correlation between units and AQF levels.

## Section 2 - Guidelines

### AQF Compliance of UNE Courses

(2) All UNE courses are required to meet the specifications of the AQF, in terms of their duration (volume of learning), expressed in equivalent full-time years, and level, expressed in terms of course learning outcomes.

(3) Courses will comprise a number of units, each with a specified credit point value; the sum of the credit points of all units within a course will be the volume of learning for that course.

(4) Where applicable, course content will be structured so that students progress from introductory material to more advanced material throughout their program of study. This will be reflected through the learning outcomes of the units at each level, with alignment with course aims, learning outcomes and graduate attributes and the relevant AQF qualification descriptors.

### Course Aims, Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes

(5) Using the AQF descriptors, all courses are to be reviewed to ensure they demonstrate knowledge and skills relevant to the discipline and that they comply with the appropriate AQF level. Courses may need to be amended to ensure they are compliant with the AQF criteria.

(6) Course aims, learning outcomes and graduate attributes are required as part of the new and amended course approval process.

### Units

(7) Units are the building blocks of courses. Course Learning Outcomes (knowledge and skills) are achieved by completing a package of units at specified levels.

(8) To facilitate AQF compliance of all UNE courses, the following unit numbering procedures must be adhered to (Table 1). The correlation between unit levels and AQF levels in Table 1 will enable Schools to clearly demonstrate that unit learning outcomes are at the appropriate level and that the relationship between unit and course learning

outcomes is transparent. It will also remove ambiguity that could arise if units at the same AQF level had varying levels of learning outcomes.

(9) Table 1. Correspondence between UNE Unit Levels and AQF Levels

UNE Unit Level	AQF Level
100	5 — Diploma
200	6 — Advanced Diploma/Associate Degree
300	7 — Bachelor
400	8 — Bachelor Honours/Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma
500	9 — Master
600	10 — Doctoral

(10) While a particular unit should correspond to a specified AQF level, some learning outcomes of the unit may be more closely aligned with a higher AQF level. In such instances, the majority of the learning outcomes of the unit (and the assessment in the unit) should situate the unit at the AQF level indicated by the unit code.

(11) The Learning Outcomes of new units brought to the Faculty Education Committee for approval, must correspond to the appropriate AQF level. The first digit of the three-digit unit number must reflect this level, as per Table 1.

(12) Where the guidelines outlined above are inconsistent with the unit numbering or Learning Outcomes requirements mandated by professional bodies for accredited courses, these guidelines will not apply for those courses. The Faculty Education Committee must be informed together with supporting documentation outlining the requirements for the award.

## **Program Structure**

(13) The design of a course must enable students to achieve the Learning Outcomes for both the qualification type and the discipline. The number of units at particular levels will depend on whether the qualification is designed to deepen existing knowledge and skills or whether it is designed to broaden students' knowledge and skills in a different discipline.

(14) Unit Learning Outcomes should be mapped to the course learning outcomes and course graduate attributes to demonstrate their attainment at the appropriate AQF level once a course is successfully completed.

(15) Guidelines for the number of units at different AQF levels for each qualification type are shown in Tables 2 and 3. Schools may be able to justify meeting the AQF level qualification types in a different way to that described in the Tables, but will need to provide a strong pedagogical argument to justify their decision.

(16) Schools should refer to the AQF for specific details on these and other course requirements.

## **Undergraduate Award Structure**

(17) Some disciplines use a structure that includes a sequence of 100, 200, 300 and above units, others use a model of introductory and advanced level units. Both models can demonstrate scaffolding of learning.

## **Postgraduate Award Structure**

(18) The Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma are AQF level-8 qualifications. Masters Degrees are level 9. It is suggested that the Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma can be used either for extension of the undergraduate discipline to provide further specialist knowledge, or for conversion for students entering from a non-

related discipline area to enable them to undertake a scaffolded program of learning.

(19) Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) must demonstrate advanced knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning, and plan and execute a substantial piece of research.

(20) Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) must demonstrate knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to a field of work and/or learning, and demonstrate planning and execution of a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship. The relevant School must identify which unit/s meet these requirements.

(21) All Doctoral Degrees must demonstrate that graduates have a substantial knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning and produce a substantial and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice.

(22) Table 2. Structure of Undergraduate Awards

Qualification Type	AQF Level	Credit Points (cp)	Unit Composition
Diploma	5	48	All 100 level or scaffolded 100, 200, 300.
Advanced Diploma	6	72-96	Between 36 cp and 48 cp at 100 level and remainder at 200 and 300 level.
Associate Degree	6	96	Between 36 cp and 48 cp at 100 level and remainder at 200 and 300 level.
Bachelor Degree (3 years)	7	144	Maximum of 60 cp at 100 level, at least 36 cp at 300 level and maximum of 12 cp at 400 level.
Bachelor Degree (4 years)	7	192	Maximum of 60 cp at 100 level and at least 72 cp at 300 level; 400 level units may be included to a maximum of 24 cp.
Combined Bachelor Degree (4 years)	7	192	Maximum of 72 cp at 100 level to allow sufficient scope for introductory units in both components of combined degree; at least 24 cp at 300 level in each component of degree, and maximum of 24 cp at 400 level.
Double Degree (5 years)	7	240	Maximum of 72 cp at 100 level, and at least 24 cp at 300 level in each component of degree; maximum of 24 cp at 400 level.
Embedded Honours Degree	8	192	Maximum of 60 cp at 100 level, minimum of 36 cp at 300 level, minimum of 36 cp at 400 level, maximum of 12 cp at 500 level. Must demonstrate knowledge of research principles and methods and application of knowledge and skills to plan and execute project work and/or piece of research and scholarship (minimum 12 cp) at 400 level or above. Calculation of Honours level should be on final year results or must be justified by benchmarking with other universities that offer same program.
Bachelor Honours Degree	8	48	At least 36 cp at 400 level, and maximum of 12 cp at 500 level. Must demonstrate knowledge of research principles and methods and application of knowledge and skills to plan and execute project work and/or a piece of research and scholarship (minimum 12 cp) at 400 level or above.

(23) NB: the Joint Medical Program is currently under review with the University of Newcastle and will have the same structure as agreed by both institutions.

### **Course Mapping, Admission, Advanced Standing and Exit Awards**

(24) It is recognised that students can be admitted into a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters Degree

with varying levels of prior learning which may enable them to meet the level 8 or 9 learning outcomes of the respective qualification type in varying periods of time (Table 4).

(25) To accommodate multiple admission pathways within the one award and different volumes of learning, block advanced standing may be given as outlined in Table 5.

(26) To allow Students to exit early from a course of study with a lower level exit award where such exists, the sequence in which units are taken will need to be carefully prescribed in the course rules, and courses will need to be mapped appropriately in terms of the trimester offering of units:

- a. To allow this to happen in the case of a nested set of Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelor courses, a full-time student enrolled in a Bachelor course (level 7) should take mainly 100-level (level 5) units in the first two teaching periods in order to be able to exit with a Diploma, and mainly 200-level units (or 300-level units where 200-level units do not exist) in the third and fourth teaching periods in order to be able to exit with an Advanced Diploma;
- b. In the case of a nested set of Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters Degree courses, a full-time student with a Bachelor degree in a cognate discipline and enrolled in the coursework Masters (level 9) should take mainly 400-level (level 8) units in the first one or two teaching periods in order to be able to exit with a Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma (level 8); and
- c. In cases where a student exits with a lower level award and then wishes to resume study towards the higher lever course, advanced standing may be given for the units at the lower level but only up to the number permitted under the rules for the higher level course.

(27) Table 3. Structure of Postgraduate Awards

Qualification Type	AQF Level	Credit Points	Unit Composition
Graduate Certificate	8	24-48	Minimum of 18 cp at 400 level, and maximum of 6 cp at 500 level.
Graduate Diploma	8	48-96	Minimum of 30 cp at 400 level, and maximum of 18 cp at 500 level. May include lower level units to facilitate admission from a different discipline.
Masters Degree (coursework)	9	48-96	Minimum of 36 cp at 500 level, and maximum of 12 cp at 600 level. Graduates must demonstrate knowledge of research principles and methods and application of knowledge and skills to plan and execute substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship.
Masters Degree (Research)	9	48-96	Minimum of 36 cp at 500 level, and maximum of 12 cp at 600 level. Graduates must demonstrate advanced knowledge of research principles and methods and application of knowledge and skills to plan and execute substantial piece of research. A Masters Degree (Research) requires a minimum of two-thirds (67%) research.
Doctoral Degree	10	144-192	An assumption has been made that all Doctoral Degrees must comply with the Research Training Scheme as well as AQF, therefore a minimum total of two-thirds (67%) research is required. Graduates must demonstrate a substantial and original contribution of knowledge and/or professional practice.

(28) The following is a set of guidelines based on the AQF, UNE is open to recognition of prior learning.

(29) Table 4. Correlation between Admission and Volume and Scaffolding of Learning for AQF Level 8 and Level 9 Qualifications

Volume and Scaffolding of Learning
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Admitted From	Graduate Certificate AQF Level 8	Graduate Diploma AQF Level 8	Masters (Research) AQF Level 9	Masters (Coursework) AQF Level 9	Masters (Extended) AQF Level 9
AQF level 7 in same/related discipline	0.5 years; 18 cp at 400 level	1—2 years; scaffolding with 30 cp at 400 level	1.5 years; scaffolding with 36 cp at 500 level	1.5 years; scaffolding with 36 cp at 500 level	3-4 years; scaffolding with 36 cp at 500 level
AQF level 7 in different discipline	0.5—1 year; scaffolding with 18 cp at 400 level	1—2 years; scaffolding with 30 cp at 400 level	2 years; scaffolding with 36 cp at 500 level	2 years; scaffolding with 36 cp at 500 level	3-4 years; scaffolding with 36 cp at 500 level
AQF level 8 in same/related discipline	N/A	N/A	1 year; 36 cp at 500 level	1 year; 36 cp at 500 level	N/A
AQF level 8 in different discipline	N/A	N/A	1.5 years; scaffolding with 36 cp at 500 level	1.5 years; scaffolding with 36 cp at 500 level	N/A

(30) Table 5. Correlation between Admission, Block Advanced Standing, Volume of Learning and Course Credit Points for 96-cp Masters (Coursework) Degrees

Admission Level	Block Advanced Standing	Volume of Learning	Course Credit Points
AQF level 7, different discipline	None	2 years (96 cp)	96
AQF level 8, different discipline	24 cp	1.5 years (72 cp)	96
AQF level 7, same/related discipline	24 cp	1.5 years (72 cp)	96
AQF level 8, same/related discipline	48 cp	1 years (48 cp)	96

## Authority and Compliance

(31) The Guideline Administrator, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Innovation), makes these Guidelines.

(32) These Guidelines operate as and from the Effective Date.

(33) Previous Guidelines relating to Australian Qualifications Framework Compliance for UNE Courses and Units are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Procedure.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	2nd May 2017
<b>Review Date</b>	2nd January 2020
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Innovation)
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"AQF"** - Means the Australian Qualifications Framework.

**"Learning Outcomes"** - Is the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

**"School"** - Is an organisational unit comprising academic staff in related fields of study who are responsible for teaching and research in those academic fields together with support staff. Each School also has lead management for the design and delivery of the courses within its responsibility.

**"Graduate Certificate"** - Is a postgraduate course typically requiring completion of an approved program of study of at least 24 credit points.

**"Graduate Diploma"** - Is a postgraduate course typically requiring completion of an approved program of study of at least 48 credit points.

**"Student"** - Is an admitted student or an enrolled student, at the relevant time: 1. an admitted student is a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study and who is entitled to enrol in a unit of study or who has completed all of the units in the UNE course of study; 2. an enrolled student is a student who is enrolled in a unit of study at UNE.

**"Volume of Learning"** - Is a dimension of the complexity of a qualification. It is used with the level criteria and qualification type descriptor to determine the depth and breadth of the learning outcomes of a qualification. The volume of learning identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type. It is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

**"Effective Date"** - means the Rule/Policy takes effect on the day on which it is published, or such later day as may be specified in the policy document.