



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

Policy:

Masters Award (Coursework)

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Audience: Staff

Policy Category: Academic

Policy Sub-category: Programs and
Courses

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Policy Owner: DVC, Academic

Responsible Officer: Academic Registrar

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Policy outlines the requirements of a Masters Award (Coursework), including entry and volume of learning, and establishes principles for Master Awards within Vertical Double Degrees at The University of Notre Dame Australia (**University**).

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy only applies to coursework awards of *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)* Levels 7 to 9, including Bachelor, Honours, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters awards.

3 PRINCIPLES

3.1 Purpose of a Masters Degree (Coursework)

- 3.1.1 A Masters Degree (Coursework) is a Level 9 AQF qualification. Its purpose is to ‘apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship’. It also provides a ‘pathway to further learning’.
- 3.1.2 If the purpose of a Masters Degree (Coursework) is to prepare graduates for a particular profession, the University will collaborate with the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body (as appropriate) to design a specific component of the structured learning program.

3.2 Masters Degree (Coursework): Learning Outcomes and Course Requirements

- 3.2.1 The course learning outcomes of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will:
- 3.2.1.1 be consistent with the purpose of the qualification;
 - 3.2.1.2 meet the requirements of the discipline in which graduates will be working and/or undertaking further study; and
 - 3.2.1.3 ensure graduates achieve and apply the knowledge and skills specified by the AQF for the award
- 3.2.2 The Masters Degree (Coursework) will include a program of structured learning with some independent research, and project work or practice-related learning.
- 3.2.3 The Masters Degree (Coursework) will contain a substantial research project that is consistent in size and style with the purpose of the qualification, in which the students demonstrate and apply:
- 3.2.3.1 knowledge of current understandings within a discipline and/or area of professional practice;
 - 3.2.3.2 discipline-appropriate research principles and methods; and
 - 3.2.3.3 creativity, initiative and a high level of autonomy and accountability.

3.3 Entry Requirements and Volume of Learning

3.3.1 The volume of learning of the University's awards will meet the requirements of the AQF. The duration of a Masters Degree (Coursework) is therefore two years (400 credit points). However, prior learning in a cognate discipline area may enable the University to offer a Masters Degree (Coursework) in shortened form, as follows:

3.3.1.1 where a Bachelor Degree (AQF Level 7) of no specific discipline is suitable for entry to a Masters Degree (Coursework), the volume of learning will be two years (400 credit points);

3.3.1.2 where the entry requirements for a Masters Degree (Coursework) include a Bachelor Degree (AQF Level 7) in the same or a cognate discipline, the volume of learning may be reduced to a minimum of 1.5 years (300 credit points);

3.3.1.3 where the entry requirements for a Masters Degree (Coursework) include an Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8 qualifications) in the same or a cognate discipline, the volume of learning may be reduced to a minimum of 1 year (200 credit points); and

3.3.1.4 where the entry requirements for a Masters Degree (Coursework) include professional experience deemed to be equivalent to a formal qualification and experience in the academic discipline, the volume of learning may be reduced to a minimum of 1.5 years (300 credit points).

3.3.2 Students entering a 400 credit point Masters Degree (Coursework) may reduce its timeframe when provided with advanced standing as follows:

3.3.2.1 students with a Bachelor Degree in the same or a cognate discipline may be eligible for up to 100 credit points of block credit;

3.3.2.2 students with a Bachelor Honours Degree or Graduate Diploma in a cognate discipline may be eligible for up to 200 credit points of block credit; and

3.3.2.3 students with professional experience deemed to be equivalent to a formal qualification and experience in the academic discipline may be eligible for up to 100 credits of block credit in recognition of their prior learning.

3.4 Masters Degree (Coursework): Vertical Double Degrees

3.4.1 A Vertical Double Degree is an approved articulation through a Bachelor Degree to a Masters Degree (Coursework). The awards are completed consecutively, not concurrently.

3.4.2 A Vertical Double Degree reduces the time required to complete both awards by awarding advanced standing for prior learning to the Masters, as follows:

- 3.4.2.1 in accordance with 3.3.2.1, a vertical double degree may provide up to 100 credit points of block credit to the Masters where the Bachelor Degree is from the same or a cognate discipline; and
- 3.4.2.2 additionally, a student may be awarded up to 100 credit points of advanced standing for any Masters units completed in the Bachelor award. These units will be published in a vertical double 'pathway' (see 3.4.3 and 3.4.4).
- 3.4.3 Requirements of a Vertical Double Degree pathway will be approved by the Program and Course Accreditation Committee and will be published in the Program Regulations for both awards.
- 3.4.4 A Vertical Double Degree may enable students to complete up to 100 credit points of postgraduate units in the final year of the Bachelor award, as follows:
 - 3.4.4.1 postgraduate units offered within the Bachelor award will normally be foundational learning units of the Master award;
 - 3.4.4.2 postgraduate units will normally be taken as elective units in the Bachelor award—though may replace compulsory units where relevant and reasonable—providing all requirements of the Bachelor award are met;
 - 3.4.4.3 students will have completed at least 400 credit points of the Bachelor award and have achieved a Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.5 (which is a credit average) before enrolling in the postgraduate units; and
 - 3.4.4.4 award regulations may specify further entry requirements of an undergraduate student to the postgraduate units, if accreditation or other issues are relevant.
- 3.4.5 A student will complete the Bachelor award before entering the Master award. A student may therefore choose at the completion of the Bachelor award not to proceed immediately, or at all, to the Master award. If a student enters the Master award at a later date, provisions of the General Regulations regarding currency of prior learning will apply.
- 3.4.6 Students of a Vertical Double Degree are normally guaranteed entry to the Master award, subject to completing all requirements of the Bachelor award and meeting all conditions of entry to the Master award (which may include usual University admissions requirements). Conditions of entry to the Master award may include specific requirements (as stated in the Program Regulations) for the purposes of accreditation.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 **Program and Course Accreditation Committee** has responsibility for approving requirements of a vertical double degree pathway.

5 RELATED DOCUMENTS

5.1 *Australian Qualifications Framework*

5.2 *General Regulations*

6 DEFINITIONS

6.1 *For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:*

AQF means The Australian Qualifications Framework.

AQF Levels means the category of an award defined by the AQF, including Bachelor (Level 7); Honours, Graduate and Graduate Diploma (Level 8); and Masters (Level 9).

Award has the same meaning as given in the University's General Regulations.

Cognate discipline means a discipline that is closely related to another by knowledge, academic literacy and skills, inquiry, research methods, and/or professional practice.

Elective unit (elective) has the same meaning as given in the University's General Regulations.

Grade Point Average (GPA) has the same meaning as given in the University's General Regulations.

Vertical Double Degree means an articulated pathway through sequential enrolments in a Bachelor and Master Award that is normally shortened in its overall duration by the sharing of content and recognition of prior learning.

Version	Date of approval	Approved by	Amendment
1	January 2018	Vice Chancellor	Effective date – new Policy.
2	March 2018	DVC, Academic	Updated nomenclature.