



Honours Courses Procedure

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In developing this procedure the University had regard to the provisions of section 40B(1)(b) of the Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT).

PURPOSE:

1. These procedures set out the University requirements for all honours courses, including honours course development requirements, awards and exit pathways, grading and awarding of honours courses. These procedures support the Course Policy.
2. These procedures are applicable for all staff and students at the University of Canberra (UC).
3. The University of Canberra awards two types of honours degrees:
 - 3.1. An honours degree consists of a stand-alone year of research-related units, equivalent to 24 credit points. This course must have learning outcomes at AQF Level 8 and is only available for students who have completed a three-year bachelor pass degree in the same or a similar field of study.
 - 3.2. A bachelor degree with honours, or embedded honours degree, is awarded following completion of a four-year or longer course that includes AQF Level 7 and 8 (for the research elements) learning outcomes. A bachelor degree with honours must include at least 12 credit points of research-related units, including research methods, with a minimum of a 6 credit point research project, typically undertaken during the second half of the degree.

PROCEDURE:

1. Course information

1.1. Honours course development requirements

The [New Course Development Policy](#) and [New Course Development Procedure](#) provide the requirements for the development and approval of courses.

1.1.1. An honours degree, which has a separate award from the bachelor degree, requires a new course proposal for each new honours course developed.

1.1.2. A bachelor degree with honours (embedded honours degree), which does not lead

to a separate award, does not require a separate course proposal for the honours component. The Register of Courses will indicate that the bachelor degree course provides an optional honours component. The testamur for this award will indicate that it is a degree with honours.

1.2. Awards and exit pathways

1.2.1. A student who fails to meet the requirements for the honours degree is recorded as not having completed those course requirements.

1.2.2. A student who fails to meet the requirements for the bachelor degree with honours may be considered for the award of a pass degree (i.e. the AQF Level 7 degree) if he or she meets the requirements for such a degree.

1.2.3. Students undertaking a double degree course, which has honours as a feature of one or both components of the course, should be treated and assessed on the same basis as students undertaking an honours course as a single course.

1.2.4. If performance in a series of units can count toward the requirements for honours in both courses then those results should be counted for both courses.

2. Grading of honours courses

2.1. The following grades are awarded for honours courses, with the Grade Point Average (GPA) calculated in accordance with the [Measures of Academic Achievement Policy](#) and [Measures of Academic Achievement Procedure](#):

- **First Class:** a GPA of at least 6 for the research-related coursework units *and* an exceptional performance in the thesis (or major final piece) component of their assessment;
- **Second Class, Division I:** a GPA of at least 5.25 for the research-related coursework units *and* a very good performance in the thesis (or major final piece) component of their assessment;
- **Second Class, Division II:** a GPA of at least 4.5 for the research-related coursework units *and* a good performance in the thesis (or major final piece) component of their assessment;
- **Third Class:** a GPA of at least 4 for the research-related coursework units *and* an adequate performance in the thesis (or major final piece) component of their assessment. Third class honours is only available with honours degrees.

2.2. Faculties should clearly establish what constitutes the descriptions for the allocating of performance grades in the honours course. The following suggested descriptions are provided as a guideline:

- **Exceptional performance:** work of exceptional quality showing clear understanding of subject matter and appreciation of issues; well formulated; sustained arguments; figures and diagrams where relevant; appropriate literature referenced; strong evidence of creative ability and originality; high level of intellectual work.
- **Very good performance:** work of high quality showing a strong grasp of subject matter and appreciation of dominant issues though not necessarily of the finer points; literature referenced; evidence of creative ability and robust intellectual work.
- **Good performance:** work of solid quality showing competent understanding of subject matter and appreciation of the main issues (possibly with some lapses and inadequacies) and with clearly identifiable deficiencies in logic, presentation or originality; some evidence of creative ability; well prepared and presented.

- **Adequate performance:** adequate work of reasonable quality but showing a minimal understanding of the research area, with noteworthy deficiencies in content or experimental rigour; little evidence of creative ability or original thought. Performance is sufficient to receive only a bare pass.

3. Appeals

3.1. An appeal against a decision not to advance a student to honours candidature, a decision on the level of honours to be awarded, or a decision on progress through the honours course, will be managed in accordance with the [Student Grievance Resolution Policy](#).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Who	Responsibilities
Deans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the faculty board meets its course-related responsibilities, determine relevant responsibilities of staff and committees in the faculty and ensure arrangements are known by staff.
Faculty Boards and Associate Deans (Education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define course components for honours degrees and bachelor degrees with honours (embedded honours degree), admission requirements and grading for the course; • Set minimum requirements for credit, level and duration for the course and course components, and ensure that the relevant information is included in the DCP; • Ensure the availability of suitably qualified and experienced staff within the faculty to support honours students and supervision procedures; • Ensure honours students are integrated into the research activities in the faculty and, where appropriate, other faculties; • Ensure usual course development, approval and closure processes are followed.
Learning and Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise and support staff on specific matters and policy, procedures and processes; • Maintain, publish and monitor course documentation, including forms, to provide all details needed for the University and external requirements; • Present course revision proposals to the University Education Committee and Academic Board, and implement decisions after approval; • Ensure that the Admissions and International Compliance Office (ICO) are aware of changes and have addressed any issues as a result.
Council	Approve changes to the honours degrees on Academic Board recommendation.

GOVERNING POLICY AND LEGISLATION:

Commonwealth and Territory governing framework and legislation

- [University of Canberra Act 1989](#)
- [Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act 2000](#)
- [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\) Second edition, January 2013](#) (incorporating amendment to Master's Degree Specifications, May 2014)
- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)
- [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) (incorporating amendments to February 2016)

University Statutes and Rules

- [University of Canberra \(Courses and Awards\) Statute 2010](#)
- [University of Canberra Courses and Awards \(Courses of Study\) Rules 2013](#)
- [University of Canberra \(Academic Board\) Statute 2011](#)
- [University of Canberra Academic Board Rules 2011](#)

University policy and procedures

- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Admission \(for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework Courses\) Policy](#)
- [Admission \(for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework Courses\) Procedure](#)
- [New Course Development Policy](#)
- [New Course Development Procedure](#)
- [Student Grievance Resolution Policy](#)

DEFINITIONS:

Terms	Definitions
Nil	