

# Common Course Rules – Masters Degree by Coursework

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## INTRODUCTION

In Higher Education (HE), all courses offered by the University must comply with national regulatory requirements, for example, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and many courses are also accredited through professional organisations. The University as a self-accrediting institution has a Council that determines course rules, which provide course structures and rules for HE awards. These course rules apply to HE AQF Levels 5 to 10.

For each category of award, there is a common set of rules applicable to all programs leading to an award in that category. In addition, each course may have associated with it specific rules that apply only to that course in addition to the common rules; specific rules are described in the course curriculum documentation.

## STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

The authority behind this policy is the [Charles Darwin University Act 2003](#) section 47 under the authority of the Council.

## COMPLIANCE

This is a compliance requirement under the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#).

## RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

In the context of this document

**Award** means a recognised certification of achievement or competence which may be granted to a student after successful completion of all the requirements of a course;

**College Dean** means the Dean of the College in which the student is enrolled;

**Core unit** means a unit that is compulsory for the course;

**Course** means a formally approved/accredited program of learning that leads to the award of a qualification;

**Credit point** means a value allocated to individual higher education units to indicate their contribution to the overall course requirements and to the enrolment load of a student e.g. a 10 credit point unit represents a quarter of a standard load for a semester;

**Dissertation** means a written thesis based on original research;

**Elective** means a unit selected by the student from any of the University's higher education units. Where appropriate an elective may include certain specified VET units or combinations of modules. Unit selection is governed by the Units and Courses Policy;

**Exceptional circumstances** means an extended and serious illness of the student or an immediate family member; extreme financial hardship; long-term cultural obligations; or other circumstances such that failure to recognise them would result in an unfair or unreasonable outcome;

**Exegesis** means a critical interpretation or explication of text, a project or creative work;

**Integrated qualification** means a purposely designed qualification that enables explicit articulation pathways and encompasses more than one AQF level and/or qualification type and/or education and training sector;

**Program of learning** means a course, curriculum, training package, unit of study or structured workplace learning that leads to the award of a qualification;

**Qualification** means the result of a completed accredited program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF;

**Research** comprises systematic experimental and theoretical work, application and/or development that results in an increase in the dimensions of knowledge;

**Sequence** means an approved progression of units, which develop a coherent academic theme within a course. A sequence normally comprises a minimum of one quarter of the credit points within the qualification;

**Special Circumstance** means a situation which is an exception to the general rule, is beyond the student's control, is not reasonably foreseeable and which prevents the student from engaging in a University activity such as: accepting an international offer of a place, withdrawing from a unit prior to census/cut-off date, completing the requirements for a unit of study or attending a scheduled examination. Examples may include sudden illness or disability; loss of employment; an inability to obtain a student visa; death of the student or a close family member (parent, sibling, spouse or child); natural catastrophe; or a political or civil uprising;

**Specialist elective** means a unit selected by the student from a group of units identified as highly relevant to the course;

**Standard load** means a real or notional program of studies, which a full-time student would be required to undertake in a full year of a particular course. The University has adopted 80 credit points as its standard load;

**Thesis** means the presentation of results of a research project, whether by written or other means. A thesis may take many forms and can include a production or performance component, a dissertation and/or exegesis; and

**Unit** means the smallest credit-bearing component of a qualification that has been accredited. A unit may also be called a 'module', 'subject', 'unit of competency' or 'accredited unit'.

## **RULES**

### **Courses Leading to the Qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework**

The following rules apply to courses leading to a qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework. These Rules may be cited as the "Masters by Coursework Rules".

## Course Requirements

Courses leading to the qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework must meet the requirements for AQF Level 9 Masters Degree (Coursework),

Unless otherwise specified in the course curriculum documentation, a course leading to a qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework will include:

- Core units;
- Specialist elective units;
- Elective units; and/or
- Project units;

to a total of between 80 and 160 credit points. The duration of the course i.e. volume of learning, will be justified in relation to the basis of admission as per above. Some courses may not include all unit classifications i.e. specialist elective, elective and/or project.

A project will comprise a maximum of one half the total credit point value of a course leading to a qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework.

All units in a course leading to the qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework must be designated at the 400 level or above.

Courses leading to the qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework may include sequences as designated in the course curriculum documentation.

## Prerequisites and Co-requisites

All prerequisites and co-requisites for core units will be core units; and all prerequisites and co-requisites for specialist elective units may be either core units or specialist elective units.

A student may not enrol in any unit until all prerequisite units (or their equivalents as approved by the Dean) have been completed satisfactorily. The College Dean may waive prerequisite requirements in special circumstances.

## Periods of Enrolment

The maximum period of enrolment for a course leading to a qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework will be twice the period required for a student undertaking a standard load to complete the course, plus one (1) year.

In exceptional circumstances, the College Dean may extend the period of enrolment.

## Alternative Exit Awards

In some cases, a student enrolled in a course leading to the qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework may elect not to complete the course leading to the qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework but instead seek to exit with an alternative award.

## Award of the Qualification

To receive a University award, a student must complete a minimum of one-third of the award or a minimum of one (1) year full-time equivalent, whichever is the lesser, through enrolment in the University course leading to the awarding of that qualification unless the course leads to an approved integrated qualification.

Where a student completes the requirements of a course leading to the qualification of Masters Degree by Coursework, Council will award that qualification.

## Termination of the Course

When a course is approved for termination or is superseded:

- Transition/completion arrangements for existing students must be clearly documented and disseminated to all existing students;
- As far as possible, students will not be disadvantaged by the transition/completion;
- The course will be offered for re-enrolment only until all existing students have completed/transitioned or for a period not to exceed twice the period required for a student undertaking a standard load to complete the course, whichever is less;
- At the conclusion of the period for which the course is offered for re-enrolment only, the course will be closed.

## ESSENTIAL SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### Internal

[Admissions Policy](#)

[Advanced Standing Policy](#)

[Course Accreditation and Reaccreditation Procedures \(CARP\)](#)

[Grading Policy](#)

[Higher Education Course Delivery Relationships with Other Entities Policy](#)

[Higher Education Students – Academic Progression Procedures](#)

[Students - Breach of Academic Integrity Procedures](#)

[Units and Courses Policy](#)

### External

[Australian Qualifications Framework](#)

## Document History and Version Control

<b>Last amendment:</b>	Jun 2019	<b>Next Review:</b>	Jun 2021
<b>Sponsor:</b>	Vice-Chancellor		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pro Vice-Chancellor,		
Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Brief Description
1.00	26 Jan 2002	Council	Creation of original document and upload to CDU website.
1.01	22 Mar 2006	Secretary to Council	Editorial Changes: TAFE to VET NTU to CDU Remove invalid NTETA link.
1.02	13 Jul 2006	Secretary to Council	Editorial Changes: No 4 – change Common rules – Course leading to the Award of Graduate Certificate to Common Rules – Courses leading to the Degree of Master by Coursework.
2.00	7 Dec 2012	Council	Major review of document to remove procedural details and ensure compliance with AQF
2.01	6 Mar 2013	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigned document number</li> <li>• Updated and added hyperlinks</li> <li>• Minor changes to formatting, wording and grammar</li> </ul>
2.02	15 Dec 2017	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion to new Governance template due to new University branding</li> <li>• Updated hyperlinks</li> <li>• Contact Officer updated to Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Success</li> <li>• Sponsor added, Vice-Chancellor</li> <li>• Essential Supporting Documents updated. Academic Qualifications and Unit Level Policy (under development), Advanced Standing Policy (under development) and Integrated Qualifications Policy (under development) removed</li> <li>• Higher Education Students Progression Procedures updated to Higher Education Students – Academic Progression Procedures</li> </ul>
2.03	13 Jun 2019	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove definitions for Faculty and PVC due to restructure and add definition for College Dean</li> <li>• Add <i>Unit selection is governed by the Units and Courses Policy</i> to definition of Elective</li> <li>• Removed definitions for Combined course, Joint course and Nested qualifications as the terms are not used in the document</li> <li>• Remove Admissions paragraph as this information now contained in the Admissions Policy</li> <li>• Remove reference to Integrated Qualifications Policy under Alternative Exit Awards paragraph</li> <li>• Add to Essential Supporting Information Admissions Policy, Advanced Standing Policy and Units and Courses Policy</li> <li>• Amended Contact Officer from PVC SES to Provost due to restructure</li> </ul>