

Graduate Diploma - Awards and Programs Schedule

Schedule to the [Awards and Graduation Policy](#).

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) As a higher education provider authorised to self-accredit, the University of Newcastle (University) is responsible under the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 \(Cth\)](#) for ensuring that programs comply with the Provider Course Accreditation Standards. This Schedule provides the detailed principles and criteria that underpin the self-accreditation process for each Graduate Diploma award that may be delivered and conferred by the University.

(2) This Schedule supports the implementation of the [Awards and Graduation Policy](#) and [Governance Rule](#). The [Governance Rule](#) describe each type of qualification offered by the University and provides a description of Academic Senate's role in approving and monitoring programs.

(3) Within the Schedule the general program principles and structures have been tabulated and the approved programs that are offered under it will be listed in [Graduate Diploma - Approved AQF Compliant Programs](#) covered by this Schedule. For the specific descriptions and requirements of an approved program, refer to the relevant Program Handbook.

(4) In the event of an inconsistency between subordinate policy documents and any Rule(s) or Schedule to the Rule(s), the Rule(s) made by Council prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

Section 2 - Principles and Program Structures

Model: Graduate Diploma

(5) This table describes an AQF level 8 program leading to the award of Graduate Diploma under the [Governance Rule](#).

Volume of Learning	A minimum of 80 units typically completed in one year full-time study or equivalent.
Purpose	The Graduate Diploma qualifies individuals to apply a body of knowledge in a range of contents to undertake professional/ highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning.
Maximum Time	Maximum time to complete a Level 8 Graduate Diploma will be four years from the date of admission, calculated on the basis of (2N+2) (Note a), inclusive of periods of leave, exclusion or academic suspension. Approved variations are included in Graduate Diploma - Approved AQF Compliant Programs covered by this Schedule.

Principles and Structure	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will have completed a program that: i) includes a volume of learning equivalent to 80 units of study; ii) may have a specialisation of a minimum of 40 units; and iii) has been designed to ensure that the learning outcomes can be met; and iv) requires the completion of: a. at least 60 units at 4000 level; and b. no more than 20 units at 3000 level. All units may be completed at 6000 level. Individual program requirements will be described in the program handbook.
Admission and Selection Criteria	The admission and selection criteria for each program will be determined by the College, and approved by Academic Senate in accordance with the criteria listed below: PART A - Admission Criteria and Pathways Admission and selection criteria should specifically address the alternative pathways into the Graduate Diploma and maximise the credit that can be granted for formal and non-formal learning already undertaken. This may include pathways provided by approved nested programs and recognised prior learning (please refer to the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy).
	PART B - General Admission Criteria Admission and selection criteria must: i) be appropriate for this AQF Level and its required learning outcomes; ii) take into account external benchmarks; iii) ensure that successful applicants have: a. adequate prior knowledge and skills to complete the program successfully; and b. satisfy the admission requirement of having completed an AQF compliant Bachelor degree (or an equivalent combination of formal and informal learning); iv) include special admission procedures to support access and equity targets; and v) establish English language entry requirements to ensure that students are sufficiently competent in the English language to participate effectively in the program and achieve the required learning outcomes (please refer to the English Language Proficiency Policy).
	PART C - Additional Admission Criteria Additional admission and selection criteria may include requirements for: i) prior completion of such other work as prescribed by the College Board that may be recognised under Pathways – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (below); and/or ii) completion of interviews, auditions or portfolios; and/or iii) possession of other qualifications, or professional experience, or particular attributes that are required to ensure successful completion.
Specialisation	An approved specialisation of a minimum of 40 units identified by the College as from a specific field of study or specialty within a field of study, and excluding any undergraduate courses offered within the program.
Additional Requirements	Any approved compulsory program components (CPC) or pre-requisites approved by the Program and Course Approval Committee on the recommendation of the relevant College Board.
Graduate Learning Outcomes	Graduate learning outcomes underpin the design of all academic programs offered by the University. Graduate learning outcomes will be developed for each program in accordance with the AQF including: i) fundamental skills, such as literacy and numeracy appropriate to the Level 8 Graduate Diploma, including English language proficiency; ii) people skills, such as working with others and communication skills; iii) thinking skills, such as learning to learn, decision making and problem solving; and iv) personal skills such as self-direction and acting with integrity.
i. Knowledge	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will have advanced knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area.
ii Skills	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will have: i) cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems; ii) cognitive skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas; iii) specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice; iv) communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts; and v) communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences.

iii Application of Knowledge and Skills	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: i) to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts; ii) to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts; and iii) with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters.
Qualification for the Award	Completion of the prescribed courses leading to a Graduate Diploma totalling not less than 80 units, ensuring that the learning outcomes have been achieved for the level.
Grading of the Award	The award will be conferred as an ordinary award.
Qualification Title	Graduate Diploma in (Field of Study)
Pathways - General	Our pathways for students have been developed in accordance with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy supporting student mobility and eliminating unfair and unnecessary barriers to our qualifications. Approved entry pathways are described in Admission and Selection Criteria (above).
Pathways - Credit and Advanced Standing	Credit is granted in accordance with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy (to a maximum of 40 units, ensuring that the integrity of the program is preserved and the learning outcomes are achieved. Please refer to the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy).
Pathways - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is possible for both formal and informal prior learning. RPL may be used for admission purposes or to grant advanced standing. RPL will be evaluated on a case by case basis and must be current and relevant to the program's learning outcomes (please refer to the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy).
Pathways - nested or integrated qualifications	Nested qualifications are qualifications that include articulated arrangements from a lower level qualification to a higher qualification to enable multiple entry and exit points. These are purposely designed qualifications that enable explicit articulation pathways and encompass more than one AQF level and / or qualification type. A Graduate Diploma may be nested (or integrated) with the following qualifications - - Graduate Certificate (level 8); - Masters Degree (Coursework) (level 9); and - Masters Degree (Extended) (level 9). Approved qualifications will be listed in Graduate Diploma - Approved AQF Compliant Programs.
Pathways - Exit	An exit award may be available to a student where: i) an exit award has been linked to the program in which the student is enrolled; ii) the student has satisfactorily completed the program of study to the point where they are eligible for the approved exit award; iii) the student is unable to complete the remaining requirements for their original enrolment; iv) the student has made an application, in writing, to have their enrolment transferred and therefore be awarded an exit award and v) the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor has approved the application. Approved Exit awards will be noted in Graduate Diploma - Approved AQF Compliant Programs of this Schedule.
Pathways - Graduate	Graduates of this program may seek admission to a Masters degree (Coursework) or Masters degree (Extended).
Professional Accreditation	This section is intentionally blank.
Additional Information	This section is intentionally blank.

Section 3 - Notes

(6) $2N+2$ where N is equal to the notional duration identified by the volume of learning.

Section 4 - Relaxing Provision

(7) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any case, the President of Academic Senate, on the recommendation of the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor or relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor may relax any provision of this Schedule provided that the relaxation:

- a. does not compromise compliance with external obligations (including but not limited to contractual, legislative or accreditation requirements);
- b. does not override a decision made under a formal delegation of authority;
- c. does not replace a decision that is subject to a formal delegation of authority; and
- d. gives due consideration to the principles of procedural fairness.

Section 5 - Reporting

(8) The President of the Academic Senate will report all applications of the relaxing provision of this Schedule to the Academic Senate.

Section 6 - Appendices

(9) [Graduate Diploma - Approved AQF Compliant Programs](#)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	12th November 2025
Review Date	12th November 2025
Approval Authority	President Academic Senate
Approval Date	11th November 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Enquiries Contact	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance Student Central

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Academic Senate" - The Academic Senate of the University as described in the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Council" - The governing authority of the University established under section 8A of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Graduate" - (Noun) Has the same meaning as in section 3(2) of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Advanced standing" - A form of credit for any previous learning as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Credit" - When referring to course credit, credit is the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit can reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)" - Means an assessment of an individual's prior learning to determine where credit will be granted. RPL includes formal, informal, and non-formal learning.

"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.

"Exit award" - An academic qualification that is conferred when a student has met the program requirements of a linked program within the same field of study as listed in the relevant Awards and Programs Schedule.

"Learning outcome" - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a 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.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

"Unit" - When referring to an academic unit, unit means the proportional amount of academic credit allotted to a course. This term is used to define the requirements for a program award of the University and indicate a student's enrolment load. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Specialisation" - When referring to a program, a specialisation is a sequence of courses, approved by the Program and Course Approval Committee, which students may be required to complete as part of their postgraduate coursework program. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.

"College Board" - The principal governance committee of the College.