

# Bachelor Honours Policy

(1) NOTE: Academic Senate approved the revised Bachelor Honours Policy for implementation from 1 January 2015. The revised edition of the Bachelor Honours Policy will apply to students completing the requirements for an AQF level 8 Bachelor Honours program (for example Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) and the Bachelor of Teaching (Humanities)(Honours) and the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)(Civil)) from the 2015 academic year, unless otherwise specified. Note: Students completing a pre-2015 program may be awarded Honours in accordance with the Honours requirements as set out in the relevant program documentation or schedule (such as Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical)).

(2) Click the Historic Versions link (above) for previous editor of this Policy, which is for students completing Bachelor Honours program that was approved in 2013 or 2014 under the pre-2015 Bachelor Honours Policy (such as the Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)) and will only apply for students completing their studies at the conclusion of the 2014 academic year (including summer school 2014/2015). Note: Students completing a pre-2015 program that was not under the jurisdiction of the pre-2015 Bachelor Honours Policy may be awarded Honours in accordance with the Honours requirements as set out in the relevant program documentation or schedule (such as Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical)).

## Section 1 - Introduction

(3) The Bachelor Honours Degree "qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning" (Source – Australian Qualifications Framework 2013, p.49). "Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional/highly skilled work and/or further learning" (op cit, p.13).

## Section 2 - Policy Scope

(4) This policy applies to all AQF Level 8, Bachelor Honours, programs offered by the University. A Bachelor Honours program may follow a 240 unit (level 7) Bachelor program, or be a 320 unit program (level 8). One or both program components of a combined program may be a Bachelor Honours program.

## Section 3 - Policy Intent

(5) This policy is designed to describe the:

- a. two types of honours programs offered;
- b. eligibility to undertake Bachelor Honours;
- c. structure of Honours programs;
- d. grading of Honours programs;
- e. descriptions of the classes of Honours; and
- f. provision for ungraded Honours.

## Section 4 - Policy Provisions/Principles

(6) All Bachelor Honours programs must meet the learning outcomes for AQF level 8 Bachelor Honours qualifications. There are two types of Bachelor Honours program: end-on; and embedded. This policy applies to single and combined programs.

(7) The relevant Head of School is responsible for the appointment of Honours supervisors.

### End-On Honours (AQF level 8)

(8) High achieving students usually apply for admission to an end-on Honours program within a field of study when they have completed the requirements for an AQF level 7 Bachelors degree. Approved end-on Bachelor Honours programs are listed in the relevant schedule to the [Awards and Graduation Policy](#).

(9) Graduates of an end-on Honours program will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional studies or further research. The completion of an Honours program is a recognised pathway to a higher degree by research.

(10) To be eligible to undertake an end-on Honours programs, students must have:

- a. qualified for the award of a Bachelor degree (level 7); and
- b. completed the requirements of an approved major in the field of study, to be their focus in the Honours program; and
- c. achieved the approved GPA listed in the handbook for the program with a minimum of a:
  - i. Cumulative GPA of 5.0 or higher ; or
  - ii. GPA of 5.0 or higher in the approved major; or
  - iii. GPA of 5.0 or higher in 60 units of approved courses at the 3000 level, which are listed in the Handbook; and
- d. met any supplementary criteria listed in the handbook (such as presentation of portfolio, interview, auditions); and
- e. had a written application approved by the relevant Head of School on the advice Program Convenor responsible for the program.

(11) The structure for end-on Honours programs will be such that it ensures all graduates meet the AQF level 8 Bachelor Honours learning outcomes and that it:

- a. can commence at the discretion of the relevant School;
- b. requires 80 units of study at the 4000 level;
- c. requires a minimum 10 units of coursework in research methodology (or equivalent in multiple courses);
- d. requires a minimum 40 unit research component;
- e. is designed so that students receive progressive marks, or feedback, for all course assessment items throughout the program; and
- f. awards no credit for courses completed as part of an AQF level 7 Bachelor degree or other qualifications at a level lower than AQF level 8.

(12) For the end-on Bachelor Honours degrees, the class of Honours degree to be awarded each student will be determined by combining the percent results awarded for each Honours course including the final honours research component (total 80 units), taking account of the unit weighting of each course/component.

**Table One: End-on Honours**

<b>Overall mark</b>	<b>Class Awarded</b>
85% or above	Honours Class I
75% to 84%	Honours Class II Division 1
65% to 74%	Honours Class II Division 2
50% to 64%	Honours Class III
0% to 49%	Fail

### **Embedded Honours (AQF level 8)**

(13) The Embedded Honours Program will be structured to either:

- a. allow all students in a program to be eligible for the Honours grades described in Table Two; or,
- b. offer high performing students selected admission into graded Honours stream on the basis of a pre-determined and publicised level of performance in specified courses in the program. Students who do not complete the graded Honours stream will be eligible only for ungraded Honours.

(14) Individual program requirements will be described in the program handbook.

(15) Graduates of an Embedded Honours Bachelor program will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional studies or further research, as per the AQF level 8 learning outcome descriptors.

(16) The structure for Embedded Honours programs :

- a. require 320 units of study with at least 40 at the 4000 level;
- b. have a compulsory research component which will include:
  - i. a minimum of 10 units of research related courses (or the equivalent in multiple courses) at the 3000 level or higher; and
  - ii. a minimum of 20 units at the 4000 level in the discipline being studied a:
    - substantial research project or thesis of at least 10,000 words; or
    - body of work comprising 2 to 3 research papers, each at least 3000 words and no more than 5,000 words; or
    - comparable capstone course report or body of work that is of equivalent value to either (i) or (ii) above.

(17) The Class of Honours awarded for Embedded Honours Programs will be determined as follows:

- a. a WAM, calculated in accordance with University policy, on all courses above the 1000 level, weighted at:
  - i. 2 for 2000 level courses;
  - ii. 3 for 3000 level courses; and
  - iii. 4 for 4000 level and above courses.

### **Table Two - Embedded Honours**

Criterion One WAM	=	Class Awarded
77 - 100	=	Class I
72 - 76	=	Class II Division 1
67 - 71	=	Class II Division 2
< 67	=	Ungraded

## Examination of the Research Component

(18) Refer to the [Course Management and Assessment Manual](#).

## Finalising Marking Outcomes of the Research Component (Research Thesis/Dissertation)

(19) If two examiners, the final mark will be an average of their marks;

(20) If the difference between examiners' marks is more than ten marks (from 100 total marks), a third examiner is to be appointed (not the supervisor);

(21) Where three examiners are used, the final mark shall normally be an average of the two closest marks with consideration being given to the written reports of the examiners; and

(22) If the mark from a third examiner is more than 10 from either original marker, the final mark will be as decided by the relevant Head of School on the advice of the relevant Program Convenor.

## Attributes of Classes of Honours

**Table Three: Attributes of Classes of Honours**

Honours Class I	Outstanding standard in research and reporting indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant field of study; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic ability; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives. In addition, if embedded Honours, an outstanding performance throughout the program.
Honours Class II Division 1	Excellent standard in research and reporting indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant field of study; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives. In addition, if embedded Honours, an excellent or outstanding performance throughout the program.
Honours Class II Division 2	Very good standard in research and reporting indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant field of study; demonstration of a high level of academic ability; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives. In addition, if embedded Honours, a very good to excellent performance throughout the program.
Honours Class III Available only to students in End-On Honours.	Satisfactory standard in research and reporting indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic ability; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of most assessment objectives.

\* Skills are those identified as required to meet the AQF level 8 program learning outcomes.

(23) Class III Honours will not be available to students within Embedded Honours programs. Students in Embedded

Honours programs will be awarded an ungraded Honours degree if they do not meet the criteria for graded Honours (Table Two) or if they were not selected to complete the graded component.

## **Section 5 - Right of Appeal**

### **Admission to End-On Honours**

(24) An applicant may appeal the outcome of their application for admission to the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) may request any advice required to assist in making a decision.

### **Admission to Graded Honours Stream within an Embedded Honours Program**

(25) An applicant may appeal the outcome of their application for admission to the relevant Head of School.

(26) If the Head of School, is unable to determine the outcome of the appeal or complaint to the satisfaction of the applicant, the final decision will be made by relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) may request any advice required to assist in making a decision.

### **Honours Grades**

(27) A student may appeal their final Honours Grade the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) may request any advice required to assist in making a decision, including referring the matter to the College Progress and Appeals Committee.

## **Section 6 - Relaxation Provision**

(28) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any particular case, the President of Academic Senate, on the recommendation of the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor may relax any provision of this policy.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	18th July 2017
<b>Review Date</b>	7th March 2020
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Senate
<b>Approval Date</b>	18th July 2017
<b>Expiry Date</b>	8th November 2022
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Mark Hoffman Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Kim Austin Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Academic Senate"** - The Academic Senate of the University as described in 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.

**"Class"** - When referring to a class attended by Students, a class is any teaching and learning activity of a course. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Academic year"** - The period 1 January to 31 December in a given year.

**"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.

**"Assessment item"** - Any form of work used to measure student learning outcomes and to determine the final result for a student in a course.

**"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.

**"Capstone Course"** - Provides the opportunity for a student to integrate and consolidate knowledge and skills learned throughout the program, enabling a mature reflection upon and cogent analysis of a problem so that the student may develop and demonstrate the capacity and attributes expected of a professional discipline graduate.

**"Complaint"** - As defined in Australian/New Zealand Standard - Guidelines for complaint management in organisations.

**"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.

**"Cumulative GPA"** - The Grade Point Average calculated over all units undertaken within the program as per the Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation Guideline.

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

**"GPA"** - The Grade Point Average calculated over a set of courses or specified number of courses at a particular level as per the Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation Guideline.

**"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.

**"Overall mark"** - A mark that is determined by combining the percentage results awarded in an end-on Honours degree for each Honours course including the final honours research component (total 80 units) and taking into account the unit weighting of each course/component.

**"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.

**"Program Convenor"** - The academic staff member with overall responsibility for the management and quality of a program.

**"Progressive marks, or feedback"** - Students will be provided progressive results on their progress throughout the program by their Course Coordinator, supervisor or program convenor.

**"School"** - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

**"Major"** - When referring to a program major, this is a sequence of courses approved by the Program and Course Approval Committee, which students may be required to complete as part of their undergraduate program (except undergraduate Diplomas). Each major will contain at least 80 units with at least 60 unique units. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

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