

# Awards and Graduation Policy

## Section 1 - Audience

(1) This policy applies to all awards at the University of Newcastle (University).

## Section 2 - Purpose

(2) The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on University requirements and responsibilities for:

- a. the conferral of awards;
- b. graduation ceremonies;
- c. graduation documents;
- d. academic dress; and
- e. award abbreviations.

## Section 3 - Awards

(3) The awards referred to in this policy and its schedules may be conferred and awarded to students who have satisfied the provisions of this policy and any relevant rules, schedules, and other requirements.

(4) The awards approved are listed in [Schedule 1](#) and [Schedule 2](#) of this policy.

## Section 4 - Eligibility for conferral of an award

(5) A student will be qualified for the conferral of an award when they have satisfied the requirements of their program, unless:

- a. an allegation of student misconduct has been made against the student and the matter remains under investigation in accordance with the [Student Conduct Rule](#) or any other relevant policy document; or
- b. the student has not discharged any debt to the University or made appropriate arrangements acceptable to the Vice-Chancellor, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) for the discharge of any such indebtedness.

(6) For coursework programs, the Academic Division General Manager and Academic Registrar will ensure that qualification and conferral of an award is recorded in the student records system once the student has met the requirements of their program.

(7) For Higher Degree by Research programs, the Dean of Graduate Research will ensure that program completions and conferrals are recorded in the student records system for candidates who have met the requirements of their program.

(8) For the purposes of this policy, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) will inform the Academic

Division General Manager and Academic Registrar of any students who are under investigation for an allegation of student misconduct and who have been qualified for conferral of an award.

(9) Upon conferral, the student becomes a graduate of the University.

## **Section 5 - Posthumous Awards**

(10) Posthumous awards shall be considered on an individual basis following the submission of a formal request.

(11) The President Academic Senate holds delegated authority to approve the waiver of program requirements to grant a posthumous award.

(12) The College offering the program for which a deceased student was enrolled is responsible for confirming:

- a. the student's completion of their final semester or component of the program;
- b. their satisfaction, beyond doubt and on the basis of work completed during the year, that the student demonstrated capacity to complete the program and would have satisfactorily completed the requirements for their award.

## **Section 6 - Distinction and Honours**

### **Part A - Awarding with Distinction**

(13) The University will award relevant AQF level 7 Bachelor programs and AQF 9 Masters coursework and Masters Extended programs as ordinary degrees, except where students achieve a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 6.0 based on all studies undertaken in the program, when the degree may be awarded 'with Distinction'.

#### **Eligibility**

(14) A student will be eligible to be awarded their degree 'with Distinction' when they:

- a. have completed a program that is eligible to be awarded 'with Distinction';
- b. meet all program requirements and be eligible to be awarded an ordinary degree;
- c. complete at least 50 per cent of their program at the University of Newcastle; and
- d. achieve a minimum GPA of 6.0 based on all studies undertaken in the program.

(15) Students who complete a degree under an approved articulation agreement, where less than 50% of their units are completed at the University, may be eligible to be awarded their degree 'with Distinction', provided they achieve a minimum GPA of 6.0 based on all studies undertaken in the program.

(16) The below listed AQF compliant programs are not eligible to be awarded 'with Distinction':

- a. all AQF level 5 Diploma programs;
- b. all AQF level 8 Bachelor Honours programs;
- c. all AQF level 8 Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma programs;
- d. all AQF level 9 Masters by Research programs; and
- e. all AQF level 10 Doctoral Degrees programs.

(17) The below pre-AQF programs are not eligible to be awarded 'with Distinction':

a. Bachelor of Engineering;

(18) Professional doctorate programs are not eligible to be awarded 'with Distinction'.

(19) A cumulative GPA will be calculated for each graduating student to determine their eligibility to be awarded their degree 'with Distinction', as per the [Grade Point Average Calculation Guideline](#).

(20) The award 'with Distinction' for the Bachelor of Medicine – Joint Medical Program (JMP) is to be made in accordance with the [Joint Medical Program \(JMP\) Award of Bachelor of Medicine with Distinction Guideline](#).

The Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine – Joint Medical Program is not eligible to be awarded 'with Distinction'.

## Part B - Awarding Honours

(21) The University will award relevant AQF level 8 Bachelor (Honours) programs as either:

- a. an ungraded Bachelor Honours degree; or
- b. a graded Bachelor Honours degree.

(22) A graded Bachelor Honours degree will be awarded with one of the following classes, based on the criteria in clauses 24 and 25:

- a. Honours Class I;
- b. Honours Class II Division 1;
- c. Honours Class II Division 2; or
- d. Honours Class III (end-on Honours only).

(23) The attributes for each class of Honours are specified in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Attributes of Bachelor Honours Classes**

Class	Attributes
<b>Honours Class I</b>	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.
<b>Honours Class II Division 1</b>	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.
<b>Honours Class II Division 2</b>	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.
<b>Honours Class III</b>	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.

## Criteria for Graded Honours Classes

(24) For end-on Bachelor Honours programs (listed in [Bachelor Honours Degree \(80\) - Awards and Programs Schedule](#)), the class of Honours to be awarded to each student will be determined in accordance with Table 2.

**Table 2 - Graded Honours Criteria - End-on Honours**

Overall Mark	Honours Class Awarded
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

(25) For embedded Bachelor Honours programs (listed in [Bachelor Honours Degree \(320\) - Awards and Programs Schedule](#)), the class of Honours to be awarded to each student will be determined in accordance with Table 3.

**Table 3 - Graded Honours Criteria - Embedded Honours**

Weighted Average Mark (WAM)	Honours Class Awarded
77 - 100	Class I
72 - 76	Class II Division 1
67 - 71	Class II Division 2
<67	Ungraded

## Section 7 - Graduation ceremonies

(26) Graduates will be invited to attend a graduation ceremony.

(27) The Vice-Chancellor approves the dates and locations of each graduation ceremony on the recommendation of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global). The Chancellor, or another person appointed by the Council, is the Presiding Officer at the graduation ceremony. The Presiding Officer is authorised by the Council to present graduation documents to graduates at the ceremonies.

(28) Graduates may choose to attend the graduation ceremony, defer attendance to a future graduation ceremony, or request their graduation documents to be issued after the scheduled ceremony if they do not attend.

### Recognition Ceremonies Conducted by Partner Institutions

(29) Partner institutions may hold recognition or prize giving ceremonies to celebrate the achievements of students based at those institutions. Prize giving or recognition ceremonies are not official graduation ceremonies.

(30) Senior officers of the University, including the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor or any College Pro Vice-Chancellor or Division Pro Vice-Chancellor are encouraged to attend as invited guests at prize giving or recognition ceremonies, but do not officiate at such ceremonies.

(31) Certificates of Participation or Recognition Certificates may be presented at recognition ceremonies. Testamurs of the University must only be presented at formal graduation ceremonies of the University.

(32) Graduates must wear academic dress at recognition ceremonies. The hire of academic dress is arranged by the partner institution.

(33) Plans by a partner institution to hold a recognition ceremony, or requests for University involvement at such ceremonies, should be communicated to the Academic Division General Manager and Academic Registrar as soon as possible to ensure that the University's support and involvement is coordinated.

## **Section 8 - Graduation documents**

(34) Graduation documents issued by the University include a testamur, academic transcript, and Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS).

(35) The academic transcript is an official record of studies undertaken at the University and will indicate the date on which the student was qualified and conferred in the program.

(36) The testamur is an official award certificate issued by the University. A testamur is presented at a graduation ceremony. After conferral, graduates may apply for the release of their testamur if they opt to not attend a graduation ceremony.

(37) The University may issue graduation documents in printed and/or verified digital format.

(38) Graduation documents will not be released and students will not be admitted to a degree or awarded a diploma if:

- a. the student is indebted to the University or has not made arrangements to discharge such a debt; or
- b. an allegation of student misconduct has been made against the student and the allegation remains under investigation in accordance with the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

(39) Graduates who elect to attend a graduation ceremony will receive:

- a. a copy of their academic transcript; and
- b. their testamur, unless they have requested an early release of their testamur in which case they will receive a certificate of participation.

(40) A lost or destroyed testamur can be replaced upon application and provision of appropriate declarations where the prescribed fee has either been paid or waived. Multiple copies of testamurs cannot be provided.

(41) Additional copies of academic transcripts are available upon request for a prescribed fee which must be either paid or waived before the copies are provided.

(42) AHEGS statements will be issued electronically after graduation ceremonies and printed copies are available upon request and where the prescribed fee has either been paid or waived, unless the student is indebted to the University.

## **Section 9 - Conferral and reporting of awards**

(43) The names of all graduates and the awards conferred will be approved under delegated authority by the Vice-Chancellor and reported annually to the Council by the Academic Division General Manager and Academic Registrar.

## **Section 10 - Academic dress**

(44) Members of the University will appear in academic dress in accordance with this policy when attending public

occasions convened for academic purposes and on such other occasions as the Council may appoint.

(45) The academic dress for the Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, members of the Council, staff and other authorised persons is as follows:

- a. the Chancellor - the accustomed robes of that office, decorated in gold;
- b. the Deputy Chancellor - the accustomed robes of that office, except that on a ceremonial occasion and in the absence of the Chancellor the Chancellor's robes may be worn by the Deputy Chancellor; and in the absence of both the Chancellor and the Deputy Chancellor such robes will be worn by the person appointed by the Council to preside at the occasion;
- c. the Vice-Chancellor - similar to that worn by the Chancellor but decorated in silver;
- d. members of the Council - the habit of their degree or, if any such member is not a graduate, a black Master's gown, with front panels and shoulder cover in cardinal red silk, and a cap as worn by Masters of Arts of the University of Cambridge;
- e. Honorary University Fellows - a gown of black cloth, a hood as worn by Masters of Arts of the University of Cambridge, lined with the appropriate colour;
- f. staff of the University who are graduates - the habit of their degree;
- g. any other person not being a graduate, authorised by the Council - a plain black Master's gown and cap as worn by Masters of Arts of the University of Cambridge.

(46) The academic dress for graduates of the University is:

Award	Academic Dress
Higher Doctoral Degree	A festal gown of cardinal red cloth, with a hood of garnet cloth lined with silk cloth of the appropriate colour, and a black velvet bonnet with a gold cord.
Doctors of Philosophy	A gown of garnet cloth faced with silver grey to a width of 10 cm, with a hood of garnet lined with silver grey and a black velvet bonnet with a silver cord.
Professional Doctoral Degrees	A festal masters style gown of dark blue faced with silver grey, with a hood of garnet cloth lined with silver grey and a black velvet bonnet with a silver cord.
Masters	A gown of black cloth, a hood as worn by Masters of Arts of the University of Cambridge lined with the appropriate colour, and a black cap as worn by Masters of Arts of the University of Cambridge.
Master of Philosophy	A gown of black cloth and a black cap as worn by Masters of Arts of the University of Cambridge, and a hood of garnet lined with silver grey.
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	The habit of their degree. Postgraduates who hold no former degree will wear a gown of black cloth and a cap of the style worn by Bachelors of Arts of the University of Cambridge.
Bachelors	A gown of black cloth, a black cap and hood of the style worn by Bachelors of Arts of the University of Cambridge lined (unless otherwise indicated) to a depth of 15 cm with the appropriate colour.
Associate Degree	Graduates who hold no former degree will wear a gown of black cloth and a cap of the style worn by Bachelor of Arts of the University of Cambridge.
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	Graduates who hold no former degree will wear a gown of black cloth and a cap of the style worn by Bachelor of Arts of the University of Cambridge.

(47) The colours of hoods will reflect the discipline content of the award, not the particular program or organisational unit. The following academic dress colours for disciplines specified below have been approved by the University. For information on a specific award, refer to [Schedules 1](#) and [Schedule 2](#):

Natural and Physical Sciences	Topaz
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Information Technology	Violet
Engineering and related Technologies	Lapis Lazuli
Architecture and Building	Garnet
Medicine and Health Sciences	Rhodochrosite
Nursing	International Orange
Education	Shamrock
Management, Commerce and Economics	Turquoise
Arts, Psychology, Social Science and Social Work	Pearl
Law	Waratah
Indigenous Studies	Wattle and Waratah
Music	Lilac
Visual Arts, Design and Communication Studies	Wattle

(48) The academic dress for students who have completed enabling programs or other non-award courses and hold no former degree is a gown of black cloth in the Cambridge style as worn by graduates holding the degree of Bachelor.

## Section 11 - Protocol for display of abbreviated qualifications

(49) It is recommended that staff and Alumni observe the [Conventions and Protocols for Displaying Qualification Abbreviations](#).

(50) The approved abbreviations for awards from the University are provided in [Schedule 1](#) and [Schedule 2](#) of this policy.

## Section 12 - Colours

(51) The colours mentioned in this policy, [Schedule 1](#) and [Schedule 2](#) are defined by:

- the British Colour Council Dictionary of Standard Colours, 2nd Edition, 1951 (B.C.C.), or
- the Australian Standard 1700S - 1985, Colour Standards for General Purposes (A.S.C.),
- The numbers which follow are those by which the dictionary or colour standard identifies the colours approved for the purpose of academic dress:

Cardinal Red	B.C.C. 186
Claret	A.S.C. R55
International Orange	A.S.C. R11
Lapis Lazuli	B.C.C. 150
Lilac	A.S.C. P23
Pearl	B.C.C. 151
Rhodochrosite	B.C.C. 14

Shamrock	A.S.C. G23
Silver Grey	B.C.C. 153
Topaz	B.C.C. 4
Turquoise	B.C.C. 118
Violet	B.C.C. 179 / A.S.C. P13
Waratah	A.S.C. R14
Wattle	A.S.C. Y12

## Section 13 - Schedules

- (52) [Schedule 1 of the Awards and Graduation Policy - List of Current Awards.](#)
- (53) [Schedule 2 of the Awards and Graduation Policy - List of Disestablished Awards 29.3.2018.](#)
- (54) [Associate Degree - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (55) [Associate Degree in Health Schedule.](#)
- (56) [Bachelor Degree \(240\) - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (57) [Bachelor Honours Degree \(320\) - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (58) [Bachelor Honours Degree \(80\) - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (59) [Bachelor of Education Studies Schedule.](#)
- (60) [Bachelor of Health Schedule.](#)
- (61) [Bachelor of Psychology \(Honours\) and Bachelor of Psychological Science Schedule.](#)
- (62) [Diploma - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (63) [Doctor of Business Administration Schedule.](#)
- (64) [Doctoral Degree \(Professional\) Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (65) [Doctoral Degree \(Research\) in Clinical Psychology – Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (66) [Enabling Program Schedule.](#)
- (67) [Graduate Diploma - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (68) [Graduate Certificate - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (69) [Higher Doctoral Degrees Schedule.](#)
- (70) [JMP – Joint Medical Program Schedule.](#)
- (71) [Masters Degree \(Coursework\) \(including models for 160,120,80\) - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)
- (72) [Masters Degree \(Extended\) - Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)

(73) [Masters Degree \(Research\) – Awards and Programs Schedule.](#)

(74) [Maximum Time Completion of Programs Schedule.](#)

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	25th November 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	25th November 2025
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Senate
<b>Approval Date</b>	25th November 2025
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance <hr/> Student Central

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Academic transcript"** - An official record of studies at the University.

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

**"Enabling program"** - A tertiary preparation program offered to domestic students.

**"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.

**"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.

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

**"Student misconduct"** - Academic misconduct, non-academic misconduct and/or research misconduct.

**"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.

**"Officer"** - Has the meaning given in the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), or any replacing legislation.

**"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.

**"Research"** - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or

document.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

**"Testamur"** - A ceremonial document presented to a graduate upon the successful completion of their program.

**"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.

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

**"Delegated authority"** - refers to the specific description of the authority that is delegated or sub-delegated to a holder.