Boards of Studies: Course Development Criteria for Honours Specialisations

Endorsed by the (Interim) Boards of Studies in May 2010:
(Bachelor of Arts – R32/10); (Bachelor of Commerce – R17/10); (Bachelor of Design – R8/10); (Bachelor of Science – R51/10)

Criteria for assessing Honours proposals (Framework):
1. Logic, cogency and coherence of academic justification provided for any principled exceptions to the standard Honours program structure, which has an eight-unit value and should normally comprise:
   - One research dissertation unit equivalent to four standard units – a total of 600 hours workload
   - Four standard units – with a 150 hours workload each
2. Logic, cogency and academic coherence of satisfying the revised Educational Principles.
3. Academic coherence and cogency of description of the structure of the Honours research component

Criteria for assessing Standard Units as part of the Honours proposal:
1. Academic coherence in relation to how the pedagogy and assessment practice align with the outcomes of the proposed unit.
2. Appropriateness of the level at which these units are proposed to be offered.
3. Standard workload of 150 hours applies for all units. Logic, cogency of academic justification for principled exceptions to the standard workload.
4. Academic coherence in relation to how the proposed units define the research component of the Honours course (see footnote 1).
5. Consistency of unit outcomes with the paradigm of knowledge associated with the degree in which the unit will be made available.

Criteria for assessing Dissertation Unit as part of the Honours proposal:
1. Academic coherence in relation to how the outcomes of the proposed dissertation unit align with the pedagogy and assessment practice.
2. Appropriateness of the level at which the dissertation unit is proposed to be offered.
4. Academic coherence in relation to how the proposed dissertation unit defines the research component of the honours course (see footnote 1).
5. Consistency of unit outcomes with the paradigm of knowledge associated with the degree in which the unit will be made available.

1 The research component of the Honours course may be delivered entirely within the Honours Dissertation unit or may also include work done in some or all of the coursework units. The research component must address the following, all of which must be assessed:
   - A research proposal;
   - A literature review;
   - A description of relevant research methods;
   - A digital object, called the Research Dissertation, which may or may not include some or all of the other items on this list, and which represents the scholarly archived record of the research and its outcomes;
   - An oral presentation; and
   - A demonstration of the discourse conventions of research in the discipline.

2 Given it might be difficult to supply unit content details for Honours at Phase 2 stage, Faculties have been advised that a few disciplines may need to defer decisions about specific Honours units until they are in a position to decide on things like articulation with postgraduate coursework and the future availability of individual staff to teach particular research-based topics. If that applies to Honours in a particular discipline, Faculties need not provide the detail requested for Honours units (Form C) by the Phase 2 deadline. It can wait until later in the year – due date to be advised. However, those who see benefit in considering Level 4 units in relation to Levels 1-3 have been encouraged to provide the content information that Form C asks for as part of the Phase 2 process.

3 A research dissertation will typically be one of the following as determined by the discipline:
   - a 12,000 – 18,000 word text object (with embedded figures and tables); or
   - a research manuscript of at least 6,000 words in a format suitable for publication in a reputable journal of the discipline; or
   - a creative object constructed within a research framework (a musical composition, a piece of creative writing, an architectural design, or a work or art), accompanied by an exegesis of at least 2,000 – 4,000 words. An exegesis would normally be written and examined in an Honours coursework unit, and include documentation of the creative object, a summary of the research proposal, a discussion of research methodology and the place of the research in the field or discourse of the discipline.