



HOW TO draft rules for Cycle II courses

After reading this guide, you should be able to:

1. understand and apply the key principles for drafting course rules
2. understand the importance of adopting consistent approach to drafting course rules
3. develop an expertise in drafting course rules

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

Each faculty has sets of rules that apply to courses governed and administered by that faculty. These rules deal mainly with the structure of the courses but also include rules relating to admissions and progress status.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES IN DRAFTING

Clear and succinct

When drafting course rules it is always advisable to use simple, straightforward language and grammatical constructions. The aim is to produce rules that are as clear and concise as possible.

Consistency

Rules should be consistent and also expressed in a format and manner that is consistent with the University's legislative drafting practices.

Reader-centric

It is useful when drafting to bear in mind the end user and to aim to produce something which could be readily understood even by a reader who is unfamiliar with the University and its course structures. The main users of the course rules are likely to be students, prospective students and members of staff who have responsibility for advising students in relation to their course of study.

Standard Practice and Expressions

Use of "must" rather than "shall"

The current practice is to use the word "must" rather than "shall" to express obligation, e.g.

- "a student **must** complete the course within two years of enrolment";
- "except as provided in (b), a student **must** complete all design units for a level before enrolling in any units at the higher level";
- "the course **must** include a major sequence".

RULE-SPECIFIC DRAFTING PRINCIPLES

1. Admission Rule

1.1. *Appropriate use of capital letters and apostrophe*

- If not referring to specific degree, then it should be "....an applicant must have a bachelor's degree from this University, or equivalent....".
- If referring to specific degree, then it should be "....Bachelor of Arts from this University,...."
- Not bachelor but should be bachelor's

1.2. Use of the phrase “or equivalent as recognised by the Faculty”

- Use it only once and at the end after stating the full requirement. For example:

“To be considered for admission to this course an applicant must have a bachelor’s degree of this University with a major in Law and Society with a course weighted average mark of at least 60 per cent , or equivalent as recognised by the Faculty.

The underlined text states the full requirement and a qualification which is equivalent to this in its entirety may be recognised by the Faculty.

1.3. Use of acronyms or symbols

- Should not include acronyms unless the term is repeated. Otherwise, all acronyms should be spelt out in full.
- Use per cent not %

1.4. Professional experience:

When including professional experience as an admission requirement, do not forget to include the minimum number of years (the University’s minimum is two years of professional experience).

1.5. Avoid ambiguity

Requirements with multiple parts should always appear in lettered / numbered lists, not within a sentence.

For example:

“To be considered for admission to this course an applicant must have A qualification in psychology as accredited by the AhPRA. This qualification may be at the level of First or good second class Honours, a four year Bachelor of Psychology or a Graduate diploma in Psychology, or higher. The applicant must be eligible for registration as a psychologist at application. To be considered for the course an applicant must also have an average mark of 70 percent as a minimum in the 4th year of psychology study. In addition, it will help the applicant to have some relevant community service (e.g., telephone counselling, aide to a person with a disability).”

Should be written and presented as follows:

3.(1) To be considered for admission to this course an applicant must have—

(a) a qualification in psychology, as accredited by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), comprising

(i) a first or second class upper Honours; or

(ii) a four year Bachelor of Psychology; or

(iii) a Graduate Diploma in Psychology, or equivalent as recognised by the Faculty; and

(b) an average mark of at least 70 per cent in their fourth year of psychology study.

(2) The applicant must be eligible for registration as a psychologist at application.

(3) It will help the applicant to have some relevant community service (e.g. telephone counselling, aide to a person with a disability).

2. Articulation and Exit Awards

- The difference between an articulated course and an exit award should be understood before determining the appropriate rule that applies in this section.
- Articulated courses are for commencing students and for those who also wish to exit with a lesser award (downward articulation).
- Alternatively, a student may articulate from a lesser award to a higher award course (upward articulation).
- An exit award does not provide for commencing students. An exit award must specify the precise requirements for the student to exit with a lesser award.

3. Satisfactory Progress Rule

- The standard wording for this rule is as follows:

“To make satisfactory progress in a calendar year a student must pass units to a value of at least half the total value of units in which they remain enrolled after the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty”.

- If required the following additional rule should be included under this section and not be presented as a progress status rule:

“A student who fails the same unit twice will not have made satisfactory progress”.

- To include this rule, you will have to indicate that the satisfactory progress rule is a variation to standard clause by way of inclusion of an additional rule.

4. Progress Status Rule

A progress status rule must state the conditions in which the following progress status rules apply: “Good Standing”, “On Probation”; “Suspended”; or “Excluded”.

Progress status rule should draw reference to the satisfactory progress rule. For example, see Rule 8:

6. To make satisfactory progress in a calendar year a student must pass units to a value of at least half the total value of units in which they remain enrolled after the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty.

7. A student who has not achieved a result of ungraded Pass (UP) for the ACE module when their progress status is assessed will not have made satisfactory progress even if they have met the other requirements for satisfactory progress in Rule 6.

8. (1) A student who makes satisfactory progress under Rule 6 is assigned the status of ‘Good Standing’.

(2) Unless the relevant board determines otherwise because of exceptional circumstances –

(a) a student who does not make satisfactory progress for the first time under Rule 6 is assigned a progress status of ‘On Probation’.

(b) a student who does not make satisfactory progress for the second time under Rule 6 is assigned a progress status of ‘suspended’.

(c) a student who does not make satisfactory progress for the third time under Rule 6 is assigned a progress status of ‘Excluded’.

5. Unit Substitution Rule (New Rule)

The following standard wording should apply, unless the faculty chooses not to provide for such a rule:

Under exceptional circumstances assessed on a case by case basis, the Faculty, on recommendation by the course coordinator, may permit a student to substitute units up to a maximum of 12 points another unit or other units of equivalent value.

6. Course Structure

6.1 Format: Key pointers

- (i) A unit can play different roles in different courses, as follows: core, option, specialisation option, course core, or elective. To avoid confusion for the student simply refer to a unit as a unit. Do not write rules in terms of the design of the course but in terms of what you want the students to undertake.

So, stating a rule such as “Take Core units” or “Take specialisation options” would mean nothing to the student. It would be best to give clear and direct instruction such as “Take all units” or “Take units to the value of xx points”.

- (i) Avoid using unnecessary labels to refer to sets of units such as:

Format/ Styles to be avoided at all times:

“Group A Specialisation options: Take option units to the value of 12 points”;

“Option 1: Take option units to the value of 24 points”;

“Additional options: Take unit(s) to the value of 12 points”.

- (ii) Avoid ambiguous rule such as “Take unit(s) if applicable”. The student might not be in a situation to make a self-assessment.
- (iii) Keep it simple:

If students are required to take a set of core units, then express the rule as follows:

Take all units (xx points)

or

If you are required to choose from a set of options, then express the rule as follows:

Take unit(s) to the value of xx points

Note: When to use “(s)”

6.2 Core units

- A core unit means it is mandatory. All students must undertake the prescribed core unit. Therefore, ensure that the rule is made simple by giving a clear and direct instruction to students. For example:

Should be: Take all units (xx points)

NOT

Take all unit(s) to the value of xx points.

- Do not use words like "... from this group". This is unnecessary.
- No need to label a set of core units as a group (i.e. Group A or Group B, etc.)
- There is no such a thing as "core options" – this is an oxymoron

6.3 Options

- Options are different from "optional units". The latter refers to a situation whereby the student can choose not to undertake the units.
- Options are units forming part of the course sequence of units and where there is a choice for students to consider.
- Must specify the total number of units that a student must take from the set of options. For example:

- **Example A:** Take unit(s) to the value of xx points **NOT** Take option units (xx points)
- **Example B:** Take unit(s) up to the value of xx points **NOT** Take units to the value of up to (xx points)
- **Example C:** Take unit(s) to the value of at least xx points **NOT** Take options at least to the value of (xx points)

6.4 Restricting unit sets to certain groups of students within a course

- A course designed to include dissertation components may have different pathways for students undertaking the course by coursework only or by coursework and dissertation.
- In such instances, you may choose to provide a pretext to the rule. For example:

Example 1: In this example, the unit set provides for only coursework and dissertation students:

"For students in course by coursework and dissertation only, take all units (24 points)"

Example 2: In this example, the unit set is intended to provide for both coursework students and for coursework and dissertation students:

"For students in course by coursework only, take unit(s) to the value of 36 points of which up to 12 points must be taken at Level 5. For students in course by coursework and dissertation only, take unit(s) to the value of 12 points."

6.5 When to use the label 'Groups'?

- Groups should be used to express inter-relationships between a student's choice of options.
- Label unit sets as Group A , Group B and / or Group C only
 - if there is a relationship between the groups. For example:

“Group A: Take unit(s) to the value of at least 36 points to a maximum of 60 points from this group. Total units completed from option group A, B and C must equal 72 points”.

“Group B: Take unit(s) to the value of at least 6 points to a maximum of 24 points from this group. Total units completed from option group A, B and C must equal 72 points”.

“Group C: Take unit(s) to the value of at least 6 points to a maximum of 24 points from this group. Total units completed from option group A, B and C must equal 72 points”.

- if the set of units needs to be cross referenced. For example:

“Group A: Take unit(s) to the value of 24 points from Group A or take unit(s) to the value of 12 points from group A and unit(s) to the value of 12 points from options available from the Master of XXX.”

6.6 Sequence notes field

- Avoid the use of sequence notes field.
- A sequence notes field is **NOT** an opportunity to insert reminders / reference notes for yourself. Remember what you write in this field will be published.
- Do not repeat the unit set rules in the sequence note field.
- Rules for each unit set should be captured within that unit set.

When to use sequence notes field?

- A sequence note field should be used only in the following circumstances:
 - to provide instructions to different groups of students. For example:

Note: Students:

- (a) electing Aboriginal Health: take unit(s) to the value of 6 points from Group A
- (b) electing Rural Medical Practice: take unit(s) to the value of 6 points from Group B
- (c) not electing (a) or (b): take unit(s) to the value of 6 points from Group C

- to provide complex rules that combines instructions to different groups of students and instructions relating to undertaking units from different unit sets (i.e. groups). For example:

Note: Students:

- (a) electing Aboriginal Health: take all unit(s) from Group D and take unit(s) to the value of 12 points from group F
- (b) electing Rural Medical Practice: take all unit(s) from Group H (36 points) and take one pair of unit(s) (12 points) from Group G
- (c) electing Rural Clinical School: take all unit(s) from Group H (36 points) and take one pair of unit(s) (12 points) from Group E
- (d) not electing (a), (b) or (c): take all unit(s) from Group D (36 points) and take one pair of unit(s) (12 points) from Group E.

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10 October 2014