

The University of western Australia

Course Development Criteria for ACADEMIC CASE for offering a New Postgraduate Coursework Courses

The following criteria will provide the basis for considering academic proposals for new postgraduate courses:

1. Academic rationale

- a) A high level overview of the course and what does the course aim to achieve (this is not about what the course content covers)? For e.g. the proposed course is designed to:
- give professionals the expertise to pursue careers in specific field
 - extend training in specified areas of a discipline
 - close gaps in specific disciplinary areas
 - cater to improvements in professional training and delivery of professional services

Example of an academic rationale:

The Master of Health Science (specialisation) is a suite of Master of Health Science courses with a titled specialisation. Each course within this suite will comprise studies in population health and studies in a science discipline in the same spirit as the very successful four-year Bachelor of Health Science that is being phased out as part of the NC2012 reform. The Master of Health Science will provide students with a strong grounding in public health knowledge and theory and with the specialisation providing advanced knowledge and skills in specific areas. Overall, the aim of public health is to improve health and wellbeing, prevent ill health and decrease social inequity. The academic objectives of the Master of Health Science therefore are:

- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the historical, social, political and environmental context of public health in Australia.
- Critically appraise public health systems and policies locally and internationally
- Assess the health status of populations and outcomes using appropriate analytic methods
- Demonstrate critical thinking in evaluating solutions of public health issues
- Critically analyse information that uses quantitative and qualitative methodologies
- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of health promotion planning and evaluation and underpinning theories and models

2. Learning outcomes

- b) The learning outcomes of postgraduate coursework courses must be developed in accordance with the AQF level specific criteria comprising the following: (a) Knowledge; (b) Skills; and (c) Application of knowledge and skills.
- c) Alignment of the outcomes of the units with the learning outcomes of the course, pedagogy and assessment
- d) Demonstration of differentiated outcomes at different exit levels

3. Admissions

- a) Evidence that admission requirements are clear, simple and transparent
- b) Information on how any imprecisely defined admission criteria will be operationalised
- c) Explicit, logical and academically coherent criteria for course articulation
- d) Clear and cogent justification for any inclusion of work experience or professional experience as a basis for admission

4. Articulation

- a) Where there is a sequence of (upward) course articulation, the higher award must acknowledge such articulation as one of the grounds for admission and the criteria for articulation must be clearly enunciated
- b) Criteria for exit articulation to be specified
- c) Course achievement grade to be specified for articulation

5. Course design 1: Appropriateness of the length of the course offered at the following levels:

- a) Masters:
- i. 3 years bachelors + 96 points (3 + 2 specification) or
 - ii. 4 years honours + 48 points (4 + 1 specification) or
 - iii. 3 year undergraduate + Graduate Diploma + 48 points (3 + 1 + 1 specification)
 - iv. variations of (iii) include: 3 or 4 year undergraduate + minimum of 2 years professional experience + 48 points (treated as 3 + 1 + 1 specification) or
 - v. state whether special approval required on the basis of national / international best practice (for 72 points).
- b) Graduate Diploma: 3 + 1 or state whether special approval required
- c) Graduate Certificate: 3 + 0.5
- d) Compelling case for awarding credit for advanced standing in the course design in any of the above levels

6. Course design 2: Structural requirements

- a) Consistency with structural requirements:
- i. 6-point units (other than for research completed in same semester/period)
 - ii. Requirement that Levels 1 – 3 units are neither included in the structural sequence of units nor counted as credit towards the postgraduate course. They may be used only as conversion units for admission credit.
 - iii. Requirement that for Masters courses no more than 50% of the units may be at Level 4
 - iv. Postgraduate coursework courses, where applicable, must take the form of either a (i) named degree course structure; or (ii) generic degree course structure that shares a common set of units and includes at least two specialisations relating to the disciplinary area.

- v. Logic, cogency and coherence of academic justification provided for proposed deviation from approved structural requirement
- vi. For a generic course structure course proposal:
- o It must have at least two specialisations
 - o The proportions of generic and specialised units or named degree units must be within approved range, as follows:

Generic degree Course structure - components	96 credit points Volume of learning	72 credit points Volume of learning	48 credit points Volume of learning
Course core / options	At least 4 core or options that relate to the disciplinary field of the generic name of the course, of which at least 1 must be unique	At least 2 core or options that relate to the disciplinary field of the generic name of the course	
Specialisation units	At least 4 units that relate to the disciplinary field of the specialisation		
Options	Up to 8 options that may be shared across specialisations or across named degrees or other related generic degree courses	Up to 6 options that may be shared across specialisations or across named degrees or other related generic degree courses	Up to 2 options that may be shared across specialisations or across named degrees or other related generic degree courses
Named degree course structure - components	96 points	72 points	48 points
Core	At least 8 core units must relate to the disciplinary field of the degree name, of which at least 1 unit must be unique	At least 6 core units must relate to the disciplinary field of the degree name, of which at least 1 unit must be unique	At least 4 core units must relate to the disciplinary field of the degree name, of which at least 1 unit must be unique
Options	Up to 8 options may be shared across named degrees or generic degree courses	Up to 6 options may be shared across named degrees or generic degree courses	Up to 8 options may be shared across named degrees or generic degree courses

- b) Grounds for providing credit in course design:
- i. No credit for work experience
 - ii. Any professional development involved must be a formal part of the course structure
- c) Meet requirements of jointly-badged degrees (where relevant)
- i. Are UWA admission standards met?
 - ii. Is UWA responsible for at least 50% of the content and teaching?
 - iii. If less than 50% of course undertaken at UWA, degree can only be awarded 'in association' with UWA

7. Course design 3: Teaching

- a) Appropriateness of assessments at unit levels
- b) If to be applied, criterion for the award of Distinction (WAM of at least 80%) is standard across all master's by coursework and master's by coursework and dissertation degrees
- c) Appropriateness of learning modes and timetabling

8. Dissertation Component

For Master's by coursework and dissertation, the research component comprising a dissertation / project must represent less than 66.6% of the course requirements. This may take one of the following configurations:

- At least 4 (24 credit points) dissertation/project units in a course with a minimum volume of learning of 96 credit points.
- At least 3 (18 credit points) dissertation/project units in a course with a minimum volume of learning of 72 credit points.
- At least 2 (12 credit points) dissertation/project units in a course with a minimum volume of learning of 48 credit points.

9. Thesis Component

For Master's by thesis and coursework, the research component comprising a thesis must represent more than 66.6% but less than 100% of the course requirements.