

# Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Alignment Policy

## Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) Under the Australian Higher Education Standards Framework the University is required to comply with the Qualifications Standards which are based on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). La Trobe University is a self-accrediting institution.

(2) To provide guidance in ensuring that learning outcomes for awards of the University are aligned with the Australian Qualifications Framework.

## Section 2 - Scope

(3) Applies to:

- a. All campuses
- b. All programs and courses
- c. All staff and students

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) La Trobe University is a self-accrediting institution, and adheres to the Australian Qualifications Framework.

(5) Learning outcomes associated with the Australian Qualifications Framework are specified at award level.

(6) Within an award, individual subjects may have learning outcomes that are at a lower level than those for the award, reflecting an expectation of progressively increasing complexity in skills and knowledge development throughout the award. There should be sufficient subjects studied at the exit level of the award to ensure learning outcomes at the appropriate level.

- a. First year undergraduate broadly equates to AQF Level 5;
- b. Second year undergraduate broadly equates to AQF Level 6;
- c. Third year undergraduate and exit standard for undergraduate degrees are at AQF Level 7;
- d. For four year undergraduate degrees, fourth year subjects may be at AQF Level 7 or at AQF Level 8.
- e. A four year program with AQF Level 8 learning outcomes is an Honours degree;
- f. An independent Honours year equates to AQF Level 8;
- g. A Graduate Certificate with typical duration of 0.5-1 year EFT (60-120 CP) should have at least 60CP with learning outcomes at AQF Level 8.
- h. A Graduate Diploma with typical duration of 1-2 years EFT (120 - 240 CP) should have at least 90CP with learning outcomes at AQF Level 8.
- i. At least 120 credit points of a Masters degree should have learning outcomes at AQF Level 9, whether the

Masters degree is 120 credit points, 180 credit points or 240 credit points;

- j. For a Professional Doctorate comprising 3-4 years EFT of study (360 - 480 credit points), at least two years EFT or two-thirds of the qualification must be devoted to the production of significant and original research that culminates in a thesis, dissertation, exegesis or equivalent. In the structured learning component of the award, advanced level subjects or research integrated practice in support of the research outcomes should broadly equate to AQF Level 9 or 10.

## Section 4 - Procedures

### Course Levels, Nomenclature and Notional Duration

(7) Higher Education courses taught at the University fall into Levels 5-10, with the nomenclature shown below. Notional duration is measured as Equivalent Full Time and does not preclude a shorter completion time as long as the relevant number of credit points is completed.

Level 5	Diploma	1-2 yrs
Level 6	Associate Degree	2 yrs
Level 7	Bachelor Degree	3-4 yrs
Level 8	Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma Bachelor Honours	0.5-1 yrs 1-2 yrs 1 yr
Level 9	Masters Degree (Research) Masters Degree (Coursework) Masters Degree (Extended)	1-2yrs 1-2 yrs 3-4 yrs
Level 10	Doctoral Degree	3-4 yrs

### Masters Degree - Duration

(8) Following a 3 year Level 7 qualification in a non-cognate discipline, Masters degrees must be at least 2 years in duration. If the Level 7 qualification is in the same discipline area they may be 1.5 years.

(9) Following a 4 year Level 8 qualification in a non-cognate discipline, Masters Degrees must be 1.5 years in duration. If in the same discipline area they may be 1 year.

### Graduate Entry Masters Degrees

(10) In the case of graduate entry or conversion Masters degrees it is permissible to include up to four subjects with introductory content (knowledge) within a 2 year Masters award. These four subjects should have learning outcomes equivalent to no less than AQF level 7 (see also the [Masters by Coursework Policy](#) and Guidelines).

### Graduate Diplomas and Certificates

(11) Graduate Diplomas and Certificates will have learning outcomes at Level 8 (The Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate qualification types do not exist under the revised (2011) AQF).

### Doctorates

(12) All doctoral degrees including professional doctorates must have learning outcomes at Level 10 and include a

research component of at least 2 years or two-thirds Equivalent Full Time (EFT) resulting in a thesis, dissertation, exegesis or equivalent for independent examination by at least two external expert examiners of international standing.

### **Advice on Compliance**

(13) In addition to consulting the AQF documentation, Colleges may seek assistance from the Office of the Executive Director, Quality and Standards.

## **Section 5 - Definitions**

(14) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Equivalent Full Time (EFT): The duration of a degree studied full-time. A full time workload is 120 credit points per annum. For example, a student completing a three year EFT degree at 50% would complete in 6 years real time.

## **Section 6 - Stakeholders**

Responsibility for implementation – College Pro Vice-Chancellors; Heads of School; and Course Coordinators.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); and College Pro Vice-Chancellors.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
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