

ASCED Classification of Subject Disciplines Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy supports the correct classification of subject disciplines under the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED). Correct classification is critically important because the University's funding is directly related to the ASCED codes of subjects.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) Applies to:

- a. all campuses
- b. all programs
- c. all staff involved in the creation of units

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(3) All new and revised units must have expert academic input into the assignment of discipline codes (ASCED codes).

(4) The appropriate ASCED code of any new subject must be agreed to by the Deputy Director, Student Administration before a subject is given final approval by a College Academic Committee.

(5) All new and revised subjects must be assessed for quality assurance and compliance using the principles outlined in the ASCED Classification of Subject Disciplines Procedures and the ASCED Classification of Subject Disciplines Guidelines. It is recognised that, on rare occasions, the assigning of ASCED codes to subjects will not be supported by this framework. Any deviations from the framework must be appropriately documented and accountability trails established for audit purposes.

Section 4 - Procedure

Part A - Explanation of the ASCED and its Structure

(6) This Procedure is to explain the process for classifying units under the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED).

(7) The ASCED was developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. ASCED is a statistical classification for use in the collection and analysis of data on educational activity and attainment. The classification was developed as part of a national framework for the storage, exchange and dissemination of statistical and administrative data on educational activity in Australia. ASCED has a three-tiered structure:

- a. Broad Discipline group (Branch of learning): There are twelve categories of Broad Discipline group. Each has a two-digit numeric code.
- b. Narrow Discipline group: Each Broad Discipline group is subdivided into Narrow Discipline groups, the number of which varies from one Broad group to another. Narrow Discipline groups have a four-digit numeric code. The first two digits are the code for the Broad Discipline group in which the Narrow Discipline group is located.
- c. Detailed Discipline group: Each Narrow Discipline group is subdivided into Detailed Discipline groups, the number of which varies from one Narrow group to another. Detailed Discipline groups have a six-digit numeric code. The first four digits are the code for the Narrow Discipline group in which the Detailed discipline group is located.

Part B - Essential References

(8) A simple list of Broad, Narrow and Detailed Discipline groups. The Government listing of Discipline groups.

Part C - 'First principle' of Classification

(9) Every subject must be assigned to as detailed a level of Discipline group as possible. This must be at least the Narrow Discipline group.

Part D - Responsibility of Colleges

(10) Colleges are responsible for:

- a. assigning subject disciplines using expert academic input and the principles outlined in these procedures and in the ASCED Guidelines;
- b. sending an email with the title of the subject and the proposed ASCED code to the Deputy Director, Student Administration or nominee for review before the subject is given final approval by the College Academic Committee;
- c. providing supporting documentation, detailing the reasons, when a subject does not fit within the framework of the ASCED Procedures or Guidelines;
- d. entering the La Trobe discipline code for the subject accurately on Course Information Management System (CIMS);
- e. being accountable for their submissions regarding the assignment of subject discipline codes.

Part E - Responsibility of Student Services Division

(11) The Student Services Division is responsible for:

- a. maintaining on the University's Student information System (SIS) a set of the discipline codes in use, based on the ASCED as used by DET, to assist Colleges in assigning disciplines to subjects;
- b. providing a list of all discipline codes on the University's SIS and the linked ASCED to Colleges as required to assist in assigning disciplines to subjects;
- c. checking that the discipline code assigned to all new and substantively revised subjects is compliant with these Procedures and with the ASCED Guidelines, identifying inconsistencies, and seeking supporting documentation and clarification from Colleges if required;
- d. approving ASCED codes for new and substantively revised subjects;
- e. ensuring appropriate quality assurance, documentation and accountability trails;
- f. providing a diagram explaining the links between the CIMS, SIS, subject discipline code and ASCED code (Appendix 1 to these Procedures); and

- g. ensuring that discipline codes are mapped to ASCED codes in the CIMS, to ensure that entry of a discipline code automatically populates the ASCED code field.

Part F - Process for Classifying a Subject Discipline

(12) The following three general scenarios require slightly different approaches (refer also to the worked examples at [ASCED Classification of Subject Disciplines - Appendix 1 and 2](#)).

Part G - A Detailed Discipline Group Corresponds Exactly to the Subject to be Classified

(13) Where the ASCED contains a Detailed Classification that corresponds to the discipline of the subject to be classified, that Detailed Classification should be used.

- a. For example: Ecology should be classified under the Detailed Discipline group 010905 (Natural and Physical Sciences/Biological Sciences/Ecology and Evolution) and not under 050999 (Agricultural, Environmental and Related Studies/Environmental Studies/Environmental Studies not elsewhere classified). Refer to the worked example in [ASCED Classification of Subject Disciplines - Appendix 1 and 2](#).

Part H - No Detailed Discipline Group Corresponds Exactly to the Subject to be Classified

(14) Where the ASCED does not contain a Detailed Classification that corresponds exactly to the discipline of the subject to be classified, then classification needs to be a balanced decision that takes account of all close possibilities.

- a. Refer to the examples in [ASCED Classification of Subject Disciplines - Appendix 1 and 2](#).

Part I - Subject to be Classified has Mixed or Multi-disciplinary Content

(15) Use the most relevant ASCED code. For example, a subject that includes elements of disciplines such as Recreation (50%), Culture (25%), and Environmental Observation (25%) should be classified as Recreation. The order of topics and the emphasis in the subject description often assists when making such an assessment.

Section 5 - Definitions

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

- a. ASCED: Australian Standard Classification for Education; a national statistical classification for use in the collection and analysis of data on educational activity and attainment.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – College General Managers.

Responsibility for Monitoring Implementation and Compliance – Deputy Director, Student Administration.

Status and Details

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