The MQ Model: Postgraduate Curriculum Architecture Principles

Principle 1: Nomenclature

1.1   Programs will henceforth be known as "Courses".
("Course of study leading to an Award").

1.2   The order of individual courses within a double degree combination will be determined by the naming hierarchy below. Stewardship of the double degree will reside with the course named second in the combination. The order of course names is to be determined when the combination is first constructed. Once determined the order can only be changed if the name of one of the combinations changes, or it is recommended by a formal course review. The naming principles for postgraduate combinations are as follows:

    a. Where a double degree combination consists of a lower AQF level course and a higher AQF level course, the lower level course will be named before the higher level one.
    b. Where a double degree consists of a non-accredited course and an accredited course, the non-accredited course will be named before the accredited one.
    c. If neither of the previous criteria applies, the courses will be arranged in alphabetical order. i.e. Bachelor of Aardvark Studies and Bachelor of Zebra Studies.

Principle 2: Stewardship of Courses

2.1   All courses are "owned" by Academic Senate on behalf of the University. Individual faculties/offices, however, act as stewards for individual courses on behalf of Academic Senate. They are responsible for the design, delivery, review, and innovation of courses in compliance with University policies and procedures.

Principle 3: Unit Credit Point System and Unit Identification Coding

3.1   Postgraduate courses will utilise a 10 credit point (cp) system or multiples thereof for all units.

3.2   A 10cp unit must meet the Commonwealth's expectation that a unit of study will consist of 150 hours of activity for a student so enrolled.

3.3   Courses may continue to use zero credit point units as required.

3.4   From 2020 MQ will move to a four alpha/four numeric (e.g. MATH8002) coding system to make room for new unit codes and reduce rule complexity.

3.5   Current 800 and 900 level units will be recoded as 8000 Level.

3.6   Foundation units may be recorded as 6000 Level if the outcomes and assessment are an extension of the undergraduate unit from which they are drawn.

Principle 4: Postgraduate Course Types

4.1   The University offers four postgraduate course types leading to AQF awards. These are:

    a. Graduate Certificate (AQF Level 8)
    b. Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8)
    c. Masters (Coursework) (AQF Level 9)
    d. Masters (Extended) (AQF Level 9).

4.2   Combined degrees cross AQF Bachelor levels 7/8 and Masters 9.

Principle 5: Postgraduate Course Types — Volume of Learning

5.1   Postgraduate course types are informed by the following volume of learning restrictions:

    a. Graduate Certificate (AQF Level 8) — 40 credit points
    b. Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8) — 80 credit points
    c. Combined Degrees (AQF 7/8/9) — at least 320 credit points
    d. Masters (Coursework) (AQF Level 9) — 80, 120,160, 200 or 240 credit points
    e. Masters (Extended) (AQF Level 9) — at least 240 credit points

5.2   The volume of learning for Combined Degrees and Masters (Extended) Courses must always be set in multiples of 40cp.

Principle 6: Exit Awards

6.1   Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas can act as exit awards for the relevant Masters course.

6.2   When a Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma is being utilised as an exit award any study zone requirements for that award as an entry qualification do not apply (see Principle 7).

6.3   To qualify for an exit award, a student must meet the course learning outcomes for that award.

Principle 7: Course Structure (Study Zones)

7.1 Postgraduate courses may comprise the following study zones:

    a. Core Zone

    b. Flexible Zone

    c. Foundation Zone

7.2 A Graduate Certificate (as an entry qualification) will comprise 40cp.

7.3 A Graduate Diploma (as an entry qualification) will either comprise 40cp from the Foundation Zone and 40cp from the Core Zone or 80cp from the Core Zone.

7.4 A Masters award can comprise the following study zones depending on the volumes of learning being undertaken by the student and the field of study:

    a. Core Zone: at least 80cp

    b. Flexible Zone: 40cp or zero

    c. Foundation Zone: 40cp or 80 cp

7.5 An Extended Masters award will comprise of either a core zone or a core plus foundation zone only.

Principle 8: Core Zone

8.1 The core zone consists of the course's specific depth requirements for the disciplinary, trans-disciplinary or professional area of study.

8.2 The core zone includes all compulsory requirements for the course (outside of foundation studies in the foundation zone) and may include elective units, essential units and/or specialisations.

8.3 Units in the core zone will always be at 8000 level.

Principle 9: Flexible Zone

9.1 The flexible zone consists of the course's breadth and/or maturity requirements.

9.2 A flexible zone can consist of free choice units which may include designated course electives.

9.3 Units in the flexible zone can be a mix of 6000 and 8000 units.

9.4 Students with a performance standard at least equivalent to an MQ WAM of 65 in their bachelor's degree (related or different) may forgo the Flexible Zone.

Principle 10: Foundation Zone

10.1   The foundation zone consists of the foundation knowledge and ways of performing for graduates without a related background.

10.2   The foundation zone may include 4000 level or above units and a maximum of 20 cp of 1000/2000/3000 level units.

10.3   Students who are eligible for admission to either the 80cp 120cp or 160cp version of a degree on the basis of holding a related degree or having approved informal and/or non-formal prior learning may forgo the Foundation Zone.

Principle 11: Study Types

11.1   Postgraduate courses can be offered in either full-time study or part-time study modes or both.

Principle 12: Specialisations

12.1   Masters and Extended Masters courses may have a specialisation and if they do the specialisation will be a component of the core zone.

12.2   A student completing a Masters course can only complete one specialisation.

12.3   Extended Masters courses may permit students to complete more than one specialisation.

12.4   A specialisation component will always be exactly half the credit points of the course's core zone (e.g. 40cp of an 80cp core zone etc.).

12.5   Graduate Certificates cannot have specialisations recognised.

12.6   Graduate Diplomas can recognize a specialisation but must be consistent with 12.2 and 12.4.

Principle 13: Postgraduate Degree Course Offer Modes

13.1   Postgraduate degrees can be offered in three modes:

1. Single Degree
2. Double Degree
3. Combined Degrees.

Principle 14: Admission Points

14.1   Entry to a Masters degree is dependent on the student meeting the course's admission requirements at one of the four volume of learning "admission points".

14.2   Admission Point — 80 cp Masters

To gain admission the student must meet either: Hold a related merit-based Honours (AQF 8), Graduate Diploma (AQF 8) or HDR degree

OR

a. Hold two of the following three criteria:

    i.   A related bachelor's degree (AQF 7)
    ii. Approved informal and/or non-formal prior learning
    iii. Performance in their bachelor's degree (related or different) of an MQ equivalent WAM of +65

14.3   Admission Point — 120 cp Masters

To gain admission the student must meet either:

a. Hold a related bachelor's degree (AQF 7)

    OR

b. Hold a non-related bachelor's degree (AQF 7) and one of the following criteria:

i.   Approved informal and non-formal prior learning
ii. Performance in their non-related bachelor's degree of an MQ equivalent WAM of +65

14.4   Admission Point — 160 cp or more Masters

As set by the course authority and in compliance with AQF volume of learning standards.

14.5   Admission Point — minimum 240 cp Extended Masters

As set by the course authority and in compliance with AQF volume of learning standards.

14.6   Formal RPL (advanced standing)

Formal RPL is not used to determine eligibility for an admission point but may discount the number of units a student must complete to receive the award (subject to the University's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy).

14.7   In addition to these basic admission requirements, course authorities will continue to be able to set additional admission requirements that align with Academic Senate and University policy.

Principle 15: Advertising and Enrolment at Admission Points

15.1 Informed by market trends and University needs, a course authority can promote and admit students at specific admission points.

Principle 16: Double Masters

16.1 Outside stated University exclusions students may choose any combination of postgraduate degrees for which they are qualified to be admitted.

16.2 Students must gain entry to both courses. This can be at different admission points

16.3 In combining two courses the only volume of learning discount (outside formal RPL) will be the forgoing of any flexible zone requirement.

Principle 16A: Course Viability and Efficiency

16A.1 The University Executive Group will set a "Viability Score" for all postgraduate courses and their components (specialisations).

16A.2 The Viability Score will be based on the number (headcount) of commencers into a course or a course component.

16A.3 The Viability Score will inform decision-making around the continuation of a course or a course component during the annual health check and periodic course review processes.

16A.4 The Viability Score will inform an "Efficiency Metric" which determines the number of specialisations a course may have and the number of units per 10cp option set in the core zone of the course or in its specialisations.

16A.5 Through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the University Executive Group will promulgate the Viability Score and the Efficiency Metric in a Schedule which will be appended to the Postgraduate Curriculum Architecture principles (see Appendix A: *Course Viability and Efficiency Schedule — Postgraduate Courses and Components*).

Principle 17: Unit Sharing in Double Degrees

17.1 Units completed in a postgraduate double degree can meet the requirements of both courses of study.

17.2 This form of unit sharing is limited to 50cp of the core zone units for 160cp combinations, with an additional 20cp of unit sharing permitted for each additional 80cp of study.

17.3 Double degree combinations which exceed the requirements of Principle 17.2 cannot be combined as doubles and the combination will be placed on an exclusion list.

17.4   Where a student uses a single unit to satisfy the requirements of two core zones, to ensure the total volume of learning is not reduced, they will complete an additional unit of the same or higher level.

Principle 17A: Unit Sharing and Distinctiveness across Course Components

17A.1 Individual units can meet the requirements of more than one course component.

17A.2 Students will not be permitted to complete two course components that share more than 50 per cent of their units.

17A.3 Combinations of course components that exceed the requirements of Principle 17A.2 will be placed on an exclusions list.

17A.4 Where a student uses one or more units to satisfy the requirements of two distinct course components, they will still be required to complete the volume of learning for the course. They will complete additional units that can be chosen from option sets within the two courses. Where there is no such unit available, they may choose an elective unit, for which they are qualified to enrol, from another course.

Principle 18: Timely completion

18.1   All students must be advised that due to unit or pre-requisite unavailability, clinical placements, or other possible course restrictions (beyond their individual unit performance) they may be unable to complete their chosen connected double combination within expected normal full-time duration of the courses. Course authorities must monitor combinations to manage systemic timetable clashes.

Principle 19: Double Degree Governance

19.1   With each course's core zone previously approved by Academic Senate and with the student simply completing the core zone requirement of two University approved courses, double degree combinations do not require further Academic Senate approval.

19.2   If a popular double combination is to be marketed to international students, it must be approved by Academic Senate in order for it to meet TEQSA requirements to be registered on CRICOS.

19.3   Where a student uses a single unit to satisfy the requirements of two separate courses, they will still be required to complete the volume of learning for the double degree course. They will complete additional units that can be chosen from the option sets of the two components or the course cores. Where there is no such unit available, they may choose an elective unit, for which they are qualified to enrol, from another course.

Principle 20: Reversion to Single Degree

20.1 At any stage of their candidature a student may choose to cease their enrolment in a double degree course and transfer to the stand-alone version of either constituent course.

Principle 21: Graduation

21.1   Students will normally have their qualification recorded and their awards conferred upon meeting the requirements of both degree courses.

21.2   Students who successfully complete a double degree will receive two testamurs.

Principle 22: Award Nomenclature

22.1   Postgraduate qualifications are named after the specialist/professional area of study.

22.2   Specialisations can be recorded in brackets in the name of the degree course e.g. Master of Astro-Cartooning (Animation).

Appendix A: Course Viability and Efficiency Schedule — Postgraduate Courses and their Components

This schedule was endorsed by Executive Group on 26 August 2020.

1. Viability Score:

1.1: The following Viability Score applies to the postgraduate coursework suite:

   a. The Viability Score for postgraduate courses and course components (majors and specialisations) is set at 25.

2. Efficiency Metric

2.1: At Postgraduate level, the following Efficiency Metric applies to courses:

   a. A course with 25-49 enrolments may only offer essential units. It cannot contain specialisations.

   b. A course with 50-74 enrolments can have two units per 10 credit point option set. It may have two specialisations.

   c. A course with 75-99 enrolments can have three units per 10 credit point option set. It may have up to three specialisations.

   d. A course with 100-124 enrolments can have four units per 10 credit point option set. It may have four specialisations.

   e. Four is the maximum number of units permitted in a 10 credit point option set, while 20 is the maximum number of specialisations permitted (with 500 commencers).

2.2: At Postgraduate level, the following Efficiency Metric applies to course components:

   f. A course component with 25-49 enrolments can have no option sets.

   g. A course component with 50-74 enrolments can have two units per 10 credit point option set.

   h. A course component with 75-99 enrolments can have three units per 10 credit point option set in the core zone.

   i. A course with 100-124 enrolments can have four units per 10 credit point option set in the core zone.

   j. Four is the maximum number of units permitted in a 10 credit point option set.