# Courses Lifecycle - Award Course Nomenclature and Coding Procedure

# Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure provides the standards used at Victoria University (VU) to:

a. Name Higher Education (HE) Award Courses, Units, Majors and Minors.
b. Apply codes to HE Award Courses, Units, Majors and Minors.
c. Ensure Vocational Education and Training (VET) Award Courses and Units are titled and coded exactly as per external endorsement/accreditation.
d. Apply abbreviations to all HE and VET Awards.

# Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

a. All HE Award Courses, Units, Majors and Minors, including Higher Degrees by Research (HDR).
b. All VET Award Courses.

(3) This Procedure does not apply to VU Non-Award Courses.

# Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(4) Courses Lifecycle Policy.

# Section 4 - Procedures

## Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

| Roles | Responsibilities |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Director, Academic Quality and Standards | Endorses:<br>- HE Award, Course, Unit, Major and Minor nomenclature:<br>- HE Award, Course, Unit, Major and Minor coding;<br>- Award Abbreviations for both HE and VET Awards.<br><br>Ensures:<br>- all VET Award Courses, Units of Competency and Specialisations are named exactly as per external endorsement/accreditation;<br>- all VET Award Courses, Units of Competence and Specialisations are coded exactly as per external endorsement/accreditation.<br><br>Proposes Award Abbreviations for VET Awards. |
| Academic Board | Approves all VU Award Courses, Units, Majors, Minors, Specialisations and Abbreviations.<br><br>Declares all VU academic Awards. |

## Part B - Naming of HE Award Courses, Units, Majors and Minors

(5) As a self-accrediting University, VU is approved to accredit HE Awards using the following standard Award titles for AQF qualifications:

a. Doctor of.
b. Master of (Extended).
c. Master of.
d. Graduate Diploma in.
e. Graduate Certificate in.
f. Bachelor (Honours) of.
g. Bachelor of.
h. Associate Degree in.
i. Diploma of.
j. Undergraduate Certificate in.

(6) The use of the title 'Juris Doctor' is permitted for a Masters Degree (Extended) for legal practice.

(7) As a self-accrediting University, VU develops and approves its own Award, Course, Unit, Major and Minor titles. In all cases the titles of an Award, Course, Unit, Major or Minor must be:

a. Concise and meaningful.
b. An accurate representation of the discipline and content of the HE Award, Course, Unit, Major or Minor.
c. Readily recognisable by students, employers and other stakeholders.
d. Consistent with national and international standards and usage.
e. Sustainable in the long term.
f. Consistent in the spelling of common words. If a proposed title includes a variant spelling, even if technically correct, it will be altered to fit the consistent usage.
g. Socially acceptable and free from possible negative connotations.

(8) A HE Award, Course, Unit, Major or Minor should be developed according to the following standards:

a. Punctuation marks including full stops, commas, slashes, dashes between words and letters should not be used.
b. Combined titles should be linked by 'and' and not an ampersand (&). The only time an ampersand is used in the

nomenclature context is an award abbreviation (refer below).

c. Colons and semi-colons are not to be used in any title.
d. Quotation marks are not to be used in any title.
e. Acronyms can be used in Course, Unit, Major and Minor titles but only when they are readily recognised and in common language. The acronym must be accurate and displayed in capitals with no punctuation or spaces.

(9) HE Award titles are developed according to the following:

a. Standard AQF qualification titles are expanded by the addition of the major discipline (content) of the course. They must reflect the learning outcomes of the course.
b. A generic Award title can be expanded to describe compulsory specialist studies in the same discipline. This can be described by the addition of brackets but only one bracket should be included in the title.
c. The curriculum structure of an Associate Degree, Diploma or Graduate Certificate does not lend itself to the inclusion of a major or specialisation. Brackets should not be included in these Award titles unless there are compelling reasons to do so.
d. Where there are specific professional accreditation requirements, the Award title should reflect required or common usage.
e. The inclusion of ‘Studies’ in a title is encouraged when it is a nested/exit course in a professionally accredited Award. This title will clearly indicate that this Award will not lead to professional accreditation and registration.
f. The term ‘professional’ should be used only when there is not a professional accreditation outcome. Where possible the term should be included in the title, and not the brackets, as it is not a discipline.
g. Adjectives such as 'Applied' and 'Studies' should only be used when it is warranted or a recognised pattern of usage can be demonstrated.
h. The Award title should be benchmarked both nationally and internationally.
i. An acronym must never be used in an Award title.

(10) Double degree titles are developed according to the following:

a. Generally the College that seeks approval for the double degree will list their Award first.
b. In cases where the College ‘owns’ both Awards, they would generally be listed in alphabetical order unless there are other factors that recommend reversing the order.
c. Both degrees must be accurately named using their full Award title.
d. The use of a forward slash (/) between the two Awards indicates that this is a double degree course.

(11) Double Major: The use of a forward slash (/) between two majors indicates that this is a double major within an Award Course.

(12) Double qualifications: The lower AQF Award will be named before the higher AQF Award.

(13) Dual Award: The Award titles are developed as for Clause 9 with the VU Award always listed first.

(14) Exit Award: The exit Award should have the same or similar Award title.

(15) Joint Award: The Award is generally a combined title and should be linked by 'and' and not an ampersand (&).

(16) Nested Award: All Award Courses approved under a nested arrangement should have the same or similar Award title.

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# Part C - Coding HE Award Courses, Units, Majors and Minors

(17) HE Award Courses are represented by a four character (4 alpha) code approved according to the following protocols:

| | |
|---|---|
| Character 1 | Sponsoring College |
| Character 2 | HE Award code |
| Charaters 3 & 4 | Major study |

(18) College Codes in use are:

| | |
|---|---|
| A | Arts (part of the College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and IT) |
| B | Victoria University Business School |
| E | Education (part of the College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and IT) |
| N | Engineering (part of the College of Sport, Health and Engineering) |
| H | Health (part of the College of Sport, Health and Engineering) |
| L | Law (part of the College of Arts, Business, Law, Education and IT) |
| S | Sport (part of the College of Sport, Health and Engineering) |
| U | VU Research |
| V | Centre of VU Transitions |

(19) HE Award Codes in use are:

| | |
|---|---|
| P | Doctoral (Research) |
| Z | Doctoral (Coursework) |
| R | Masters (Research) |
| M | Masters (Coursework) |
| C | Double Qualifications |
| G | Graduate Diploma |
| T | Graduate Certificate |
| J | Dual/Joint Awards |
| H | Bachelor (Honours) |
| B | Bachelor |
| A | Associate Degree |
| D | Diploma |

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(20) HE Award Units are represented by a seven character (3 alpha and 4 numeric) code approved according to the following protocols:

| | |
|---|---|
| Character 1 | Sponsoring College |
| Character 2 | Major study |
| Character 3 | AQF qualification level (as per Clause 22) |
| Characters 4, 5 & 6 | Next number in line for specific alpha characters |

(21) In addition to the above coding protocols:

a. New unit codes and/or titles are only allowed for brand new units.
b. Re-coding of units to reflect changing organisational structure and new Award Course codes is discouraged.
c. There is to be no designation of semesters in the unit code.
d. It is recommended that the 5th character (numeric) is detailed as a nine (9) if the unit is a research based unit.
e. All codes must be socially acceptable and free from possible negative connotations.

(22) AQF qualification level conventions in use are:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Diploma/Year 1 Bachelor |
| 2 | Associate Degree/Year 2 Bachelor |
| 3 | Year 3 Bachelor |
| 4 | Year 4 Bachelor |
| 5 | Bachelor (Honours) |
| 6 | Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma |
| 7 | Master |
| 8 | Doctoral |

(23) Majors are represented by a six character (6 alpha) code approved according to the following protocols:

| | |
|---|---|
| Character 1 | Sponsoring College |
| Characters 2 & 3 | MA (mandatory) |
| Characters 4, 5 & 6 | First 3 letters of the Major title |

(24) Minors are represented by a six character (6 alpha) code approved according to the following protocols:

| | |
|---|---|
| Character 1 | Sponsoring College |

| | |
|---|---|
| Characters 2 & 3 | MI (mandatory) |
| Characters 4, 5 & 6 | First 3 letters of the Minor title |

## Part D - Part D - Naming and Coding VET Award Courses, Units of Competency and Specialisations

(25) As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), VU is able to approve VET Award Courses using the following standard Award titles for AQF qualifications:

a. Graduate Diploma in.
b. Graduate Certificate in.
c. Advanced Diploma of.
d. Diploma of.
e. Certificate IV in.
f. Certificate III in.
g. Certificate II in.
h. Certificate I in.

(26) Award Course and Units of Competency titles and codes are:

a. Endorsed by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISA); or
b. Accredited by National or State based regulators.

(27) As part of these processes VET Award Course and Unit titles and codes have been externally endorsed/accredited. As a RTO, VU must use this information unchanged.

(28) A VET Award may include an endorsed specialisation which VU must include in the Award title on the testamur. This information is included in the packaging rules of the qualification and must be strictly adhered to.

## Part E - Creating Award Abbreviations

(29) As part of the Award accreditation/approval process, both HE and VET Awards must include an Award Abbreviation.

(30) The Award Abbreviation will be included on the Register of Awards.

(31) An Award Abbreviation commences with the standard abbreviation for each AQF qualification (as noted below). Standard Award Abbreviations in use are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Doctoral | D |
| Master | M |
| Graduate Diploma | GradDip |
| Graduate Certificate | GradCert |
| Bachelor Honours | B(Hons) |
| Bachelor | B |

| | |
|---|---|
| Associate Degree | AssocDeg |
| Advanced Diploma | AdvDip |
| Diploma | Dip |
| Certificate IV | CertIV |
| Certificate III | CertIII |
| Certificate II | CertII |
| Certificate I | CertI |

(32) The standard AQF qualification abbreviation is extended to include a precis of the discipline/major study.

(33) Award abbreviations should be developed according to the following protocols:

a. Abbreviations must be meaningful, easily recognised and as short as possible.
b. The same abbreviation should not be used for unrelated disciplines.
c. The same abbreviation is used for singular, plural and extended forms of the same word.
d. Common professional/industry practices should be adopted where applicable.
e. Community practices and norms should be adopted where applicable.
f. Words, phrases or acronyms that may offend must not be used.

(34) Award abbreviations should be developed according to the following standards:

a. They must not exceed five (5) characters long.
b. Words of five (5) letters or less do not need to be abbreviated.
c. The first letter of each abbreviated word must be capitalised.
d. There should be no spaces between each different word.
e. An ampersand (&) should be used instead of the word ‘and’.
f. Punctuation marks including full stops, slashes, and dashes should not be used.

# Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(35) Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) specifically: the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.

(36) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth): Standards 1.5 Graduations and Attainment; 3.1 Course Design; 5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation.

(37) National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 : Standard 2.1 Information.  Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: 11 Issue of VET qualifications and VET statements of attainment.

(38) VU Governance, Academic and Student Affairs Statute 2013: Part 6 Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and Other Awards – Division 1 Awards of the University (No 26).

# Section 6 - Definitions

(39) Accredited Unit

(40) Award

(41) Award Abbreviation

(42) Award Course

(43) Award Credit Points – The numeric definition of a HE award.

(44) AQF Qualification

(45) Course

(46) Discipline

(47) Double Degree

(48) Double Qualification

(49) Dual Award (HE only)

(50) Elective

(51) Exit Award

(52) Joint Award (HE only)

(53) Major

(54) Minor

(55) Nested Award

(56) Nomenclature – The agreed HE Award naming standards.

(57) Specialisations

(58) Unit

(59) Unit of Competency

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## Status and Details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Status** | Current |
| **Effective Date** | 21st February 2025 |
| **Review Date** | 21st February 2028 |
| **Approval Authority** | Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer |
| **Approval Date** | 21st February 2025 |
| **Expiry Date** | Not Applicable |
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Award Course"** - A structured combination of approved units and/or supervised research into which students are admitted and are issued with an Award at the completion of their studies.

**"Course"** - The overall program of study in which the student is enrolled.

**"Unit"** - A discrete entity of study within a discipline area and the fundamental component of a course.

**"Double Degree"** - Comprises two individually approved Victoria University Awards at the same Australian Qualifications Framework level, taken concurrently, and resulting in the conferral of two Awards.

**"Double Qualification"** - A combination of two degrees at different Australian Qualifications Framework levels undertaken sequentially, where the full requirements of each Award must be met.

**"Dual Award (HE only)"** - Where Victoria University and another Higher Education institution offer a collaborative course which results in two separate Awards being conferred from the two institutions.

**"Joint Award (HE only)"** - The awarding of a single qualification, recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework, which is jointly conferred by Victoria University and one or more institutions. In such arrangements, each institution delivers their own units / content.

**"Major"** - A major consists of 96 credit points of study within an undergraduate course that provides students with a depth of knowledge in a particular discipline. Majors may only be commenced after first year.

**"Accredited Unit"** - A unit that is approved as part of a formal accreditation process within an award course. This is also referred to as a Unit of Competency for VET Awards.

**"AQF Qualification"** - Referred to as an Award Course at Victoria University (VU) and is one of the following: Doctor, Master, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate, Bachelor (Honours), Bachelor, Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma, Diploma, Certificate IV, Certificate III, Certificate II or Certificate I.

**"Award"** - An academic award of the University, approved by the Vice Chancellor.

**"Discipline"** - An area of study which has a history and tradition of teaching at both introductory and advanced levels.

**"Exit Award"** - An award that may be available to students unable to fulfill the requirements of the course in which they are enrolled but who have completed the requirements of a lower level qualification.

**"Minor"** - A minor consists of 48 credit points of study that may either be a discipline minor or a breadth minor.

**"Nested Award"** - A purposely designed Award course that enables explicit articulation between courses from one or more Australian Qualifications Framework qualification types. These courses must be available for students to both enter and exit.

**"Award Abbreviation"** - The official abbreviation for an Award as declared by the Vice-Chancellor.

**"Elective"** - A unit that provides alternate options for students to complete, or incorporate unique learning experiences within courses.

**"Unit of Competency"** - Defines the skills and knowledge to operate effectively in a workplace context.

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