

PROGRAM RULES SIMPLIFICATION

THE UNSW UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE

Over the past few decades, the number of undergraduate degree programs offered at UNSW has increased to around 200. Along with the numbers, the rules that govern these degree programs have also proliferated and diversified to the point of having only the few following rules in common¹,

- Degrees are structured as either 3, 4, 5 or 6 year degrees, or as combined 4 - 7 year degrees
- A degree program stipulates two semesters per year
- Each year of the degree program requires 48 Units of Credit (UoC) to be completed
- Total UoC required at the completion of a single 3 year degree program is 144
- Programs may include a major, a minor or a double major

The problems of different rules and requirements are further complicated by the use of inconsistent terminology, and the existence of courses with various different associated units of credit that define courses, making it difficult and time-consuming for both students and academics to determine the exact requirements for completing a particular degree. Adding to the complexity is the university's General Education curriculum requirement, which does not apply to all degree programs.

As a result, it is impossible for graduation checks to be done by a computer program. They must be done manually by professional staff in faculties and Student Services, which is highly resource consuming. With thousands of students enrolling and graduating each year, it became necessary to explore a course of action that would simplify enrolment and graduation, as well as providing accessible information in relation to these processes.

It was therefore agreed that existing Academic Programs and their rules would be simplified, examining all 200 undergraduate programs and aiming to:

- standardise nomenclature²
- formulate simplified draft program rules, and
- seek feedback from the University community regarding the draft rules.

It is hoped that such simplification will enable online enrolment and graduation checks, reduce manual labour and cost, whilst providing greater clarity and transparency for both students and staff, improving their experience at UNSW.

STRUCTURE OF A DEGREE

All UNSW undergraduate degree programs can be categorised in one of three ways:

1. Single - Three Year Degrees

These are designed to be completed in 3 years of full-time study, with an optional fourth year leading to the award of the degree with Honours. They require that approximately 60% of the Program be chosen from one faculty. Example: Bachelor of Commerce. Due to its entry requirement, Graduate Law will not be considered as an undergraduate degree for the purpose of this document.

2. Single - Four, Five or Six Year Degrees

These are designed to be completed in 4 - 6 years, leading to a professional qualification and/or accreditation. The programs are therefore more prescribed than in a 3 year degree, to ensure sufficient depth. Example: Bachelor of Engineering

3. Combined Degrees

Such programs are designed for the study of two areas of specialisation, from either the same or two different faculties, in a period of 4 - 7 years. They combine the requirements of two single degrees. At completion, students are eligible for two separate awards and at the discretion of the Faculty, have the option of an extra Honours year in one or both areas of specialisation. Example: Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Commerce

Nationally, there is a growing trend towards undergraduate programs that satisfy the requirement for structured deepening of knowledge whilst catering for a broader, more rounded approach to education³. UNSW degree structures reflect this, providing depth of study, breadth of understanding and appropriate academic progression, in alignment with the University's graduate attributes.

To obtain a degree, a student has to enrol in one or more of the programs offered under that degree. For example, programs offered under the Bachelor of Science Degree by the Faculty of Science include Communications (3 years), Advanced Mathematics (4 years) and Medicine (6 years). These programs are designed as a coherent collection of courses leading to the award of a degree. As part of their program, students are required to undertake a major, intended to provide a systematic deepening of knowledge at each level. For example, in a typical 3 Year Degree, a major may comprise a sequence of 2 or more foundation courses in the first year, 2 - 3 courses in the second year, 3 - 4 in third year, and other prescribed courses at each level, the equivalent of approximately 75% of a program. Since the knowledge in the discipline is intensified at each level, there might be a requirement to complete a course at a previous level before attempting a course at a higher level, known as a pre-requisite.

For those students wishing to strengthen knowledge in more than one area, the depth component enables the choice of secondary plans such as a minor or another major. A minor has fewer course requirements than a major. Two majors studied in parallel are known as double major. As for a major, sequences for minors and double majors are set out by the relevant faculty.

Outside of major and minor sequences, the remaining 25% of the program is comprised of breadth courses or 'electives'. Some of the electives are restricted in order to complement the core program, some are interdisciplinary and others offer students free choice. The availability of interdisciplinary electives is intended to encourage wider thought process, offer new networks and experience, and opportunities to explore other academic interests.

Courses at UNSW have a particular weighting which is referred to in terms of Units of Credit (UoC). Most courses are 6 UoC in value. A normal full-time study load for a program is 48 UoC per academic year, or 24 UoC in each of the 1st and 2nd semesters, totalling 144 UoC for an undergraduate 3 year single degree program. The structured component of such a program contains courses to the value of no more than 108 UoC. All UNSW programs require the successful completion of a specified number of UoC to be awarded a degree.

PROPOSED RULES FOR PROGRAMS

A. Undergraduate Programs

All 3 – 6 Year Degrees and Combined Degrees are specified as programs by the relevant faculty.

A Program

- a. requires a combination of compulsory and elective courses of 48 UoC per stage of enrolment to be satisfactorily completed. For example, a student enrolled in a 3 year full-time program must satisfactorily complete a total of 144 UoC
- b. shall contain a Major which is a coherent sequence of 48 - 72 UoC of total courses, with at least 18 UoC at each Level 2 and 3
- c. may include a Minor, which is a coherent sequence of courses totalling 24 - 36 UoC containing at least 6 UoC at level 3. A minor does not form part of the nominated major(s)
- d. shall contain an Extended-Major in 4, 5 and 6 Year degrees only. An Extended - Major is a coherent sequence of courses totalling at least 66 UoC, with at least 18 UoC at each level 2 and above
- e. for the purpose of ADFA, replace the term 'Faculty' with 'Core Discipline Area'.

1. Single Three-Year Degree Rules

1.1. A Faculty shall in each of its programs,

Depth Component: Majors, Minors and Compulsory courses

- a) specify if appropriate, a number of core (compulsory) courses which may count towards a major and/or a minor
- b) include at least one major
- c) also offer one or more minors if appropriate
- d) may approve one or more majors from another Faculty to count towards rules 1.2.b and 2.2.b. E.g. Anatomy major taught by the Faculty of Medicine may count towards a BSc offered by the Faculty of Science

Breadth Component: Electives

- e) Allocate 12 UoC for General Education requirement to be taken from outside the Faculty in which the degree is based. Courses from other faculties which form a compulsory part of the program may not be counted
- f) Make a further 24 UoC available as electives. The Faculty in which the award is based, may restrict up to 12 UoC of these electives. In programs subject to approved¹ professional accreditation, all 24 UoC electives may be restricted electives.

Progression

- g) specify a minimum of 36UoC of Level 1 courses

¹ By the U/G Studies Committee

- h) not specify co-requisite courses
- i) Faculties may award Pass Degree with Distinction to students who obtain a minimum of 75 WAM across the program and complete at least 72 UoC in that program at UNSW.

1.2. A Candidate for the Degree shall

Depth: Compulsory Courses, Majors and minors

- a) enrol in a Single- Three Year Degree program UoC totalling 144
- b) take at least 84 UoC for a program from the faculty that awards the degree
- c) include one or more majors and/or minors totalling at least 50% of total UoC
- d) specify their major(s) at the time of enrolment into Level 2

Breadth: Electives

- e) choose 12 UoC of courses as General Education requirement from outside the Faculty in which the degree is based. Courses from other faculties which form a compulsory part of the program may not be counted towards this requirement
- f) nominate a further 24 UoC of elective courses. If enrolled in an approved¹ professionally accredited program, electives may be chosen from a list provided by the faculty

Progression:

- g) complete at least 18 UoC of Level 1 courses before enrolling in Level 2 courses and no more than 60UoC in total of Level 1 courses excluding requirement 1.2.e
- h) in Faculties that award Pass Degree with Distinction, obtain a minimum of 75 WAM across the program and complete at least 72 UoC in that program at UNSW to be eligible.

1A. Honours Rules

- a) **Entry:** is subject to approval by the Head of School. Requires pass degree (144 UoC) with at least a credit average across upper Levels in the major
- b) **Application:** should submit Expression of Interest by end of Level 2 and the formal Application by end of Level 3 for approval by Program Authority
- c) **Structure:** must undertake at least 48 UoC in an approved² program completed in one year full time or two years part-time. The program must contain a substantial research component
- d) **Award:** Class I or Class II Division 1, or Class II Division 2 or Class III. If requirements for these classes are not met, a Pass degree will be awarded
- e) **Program Based Honours:** Some 4, 5 and 6 Year and Combined Degrees may award a Bachelors Degree with Honours to meritorious students.

² By the Head of School

2. Single - Four, Five or Six Year Degree Rules

Designed to provide underpinning capabilities with core courses, enhance in-depth technical competence and foster personal and professional skills development in strongly prescribed programs via an extended- major.

2.1 A Faculty shall in each of its 4, 5 and 6 Year programs,

Depth: extended majors and compulsory courses

- a) specify where appropriate, a number of core (compulsory) courses which may count towards a major and/or an extended-major
- b) include one or more majors and/or extended-majors totalling at least 50% of the total UoC for the program.

Breadth: Elective courses

- c) Please refer to 1.1.e - 1.1.f.

Progression

- d) Please refer to 1.1.g - 1.1.h.

2.2 A Candidate for the Degree shall,

Depth: extended majors, majors/minors

- a) enrol in a 4, 5 or 6 Year Degree program UoC totalling 192, 240 or 288 respectively
- b) specify extended-major(s) at the time of enrolment into Level 2
- c) take at least 50% of the program and an additional 12 UoC from the faculty that awards the degree

Breadth: Elective courses

- d) Please refer to rules 1.2.e – 1.2.f.

Progression:

- e) Please refer to rules 1.2.g – 1.2.h.

3. Combined Degree Rules

Following are the combined requirements that enable the completion of two or more single degrees simultaneously.

3.1 A Faculty shall, in each of its Combined Programs,

Depth: Compulsory Courses, Majors and Minors

- a) Please refer to rules 1.1.a – 1.1.d
- b) offer combined degree programs from one or more faculties under a single program code

Breadth: Elective courses

- c) All combined degrees are deemed to satisfy Breadth rules 1.1.e – 1.1.f

Progression:

- 3.3.1 Please refer to rules 1.1.g – 1.1.h

3.2 A Candidate for the Degree shall,

Depth: compulsory courses, majors and minors

- a) enrol in two concurrent programs under a single program code set out in either one or two faculties
- b) within the combined program, take at least 50% of the total UoC for each of the component single degree from the faculty that offers that single degree
- c) include extended-major(s) and/or major(s), and/or minor(s) totalling at least 50% of the UoC for that combined program
- d) specify extended-major(s) and/or major(s) at the time of enrolment into level 2

Breadth: Elective courses

- e) All combined degrees are deemed to satisfy Breadth rules 1.2.e – 1.2.f

Progression:

- f) Please refer to 1.2.g – 1.2.h
- g) 1.2.h may be awarded in either or both of the programs

¹ Appendix A: Comparison of UNSW 3 year Programs

² Appendix B: Glossary Draft v4 – in progress

³ Appendix B: Review of Program Rules in 10 Australian Universities