



**EXCELSIA**  
**COLLEGE**  
Sydney - Australia

**Document Name**

**COURSE STRUCTURES POLICY**

**Document Number**

**PO-COU-05**

**Document Status**

Author	Chief Academic Officer	February 2015
Approving Authority	Academic Board	February 2015
Publication	Issue 4	November 2018
Review Date	Review of Issue 4	November 2020

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to specify the structures of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in order to provide clear guidelines for the development of new courses and any course review activities in Excelsia College.

## Scope

All new and continuing courses offered by the College.

## Responsibility

Academic Board  
Curriculum Development and Academic Standards Committee  
Course Development Committees  
Chief Academic Officer  
Senior Academics

## Definitions

**A semester** is a study session comprising 13-16 teaching weeks, with associated periods for examinations, practical experiences and breaks. The academic year is normally structured around 2 semesters, but some courses offer students the possibility of a third semester/study session over the Christmas holidays.

**Student workload** is the total of contact/delivery hours and personal study hours over a semester. The student workload has standard definitions in relation to credit points, course units, semesters, years, and courses.

**Credit points** indicate the relative quantitative contribution of a course unit to an award course. The relationship between the level of student effort required in a course unit and the credit point value of that unit is defined and articulated in the course documentation, and guides academic staff in monitoring student workloads in each course unit. One credit point equates to 25 hours of student workload per semester.

**Course units** are the building blocks of degree courses. A course unit has 6 credit points and requires 150 hours of total student workload (contact hours plus personal study). Four 6-credit-point units comprise a full-time study load for a semester, although the number of units making up the semester total of 24 credit points can vary if double-units (12 credit points, 300 hours student workload) and/or half-units (3 credit points 75 hours student work) are included in the course.

**Courses** are undergraduate and postgraduate awards defined in the course documentation, conforming to the AQF qualification level requirements, and comprising course units selected according to the accredited course regulations. Courses range from one year to three years in duration when taken by means of full-time study.

**Level of Learning** is a classification for units within a course. Depending on its volume of learning (or duration), a course may have from one to three levels:

- Level 1 Foundational Bachelor or Diploma
- Level 2 Intermediate Bachelor or Associate Degree
- Level 3 Advanced Bachelor
- Level 4 Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate
- Level 5 Master
- Level 6 Doctor.

**Course Streams** denote a pre-determined sequence of units designed to achieve a set of specialist or discipline-specific outcomes. Most commonly streams lead to undergraduate Majors or Minors.

- **Major (only in Bachelor degrees).** A major consists of a minimum of six sequential units (36 credit points) in a field of study or discipline, including a minimum of 12 credit points at level 3.

- **Minor (in Associate or Bachelor degrees).** A minor consists of four sequential units (24 credit points) in a field of study or discipline, of which no more than 12 credit points are at level 1.

## Coding of Units of Study

### Undergraduate Units

**Example: DRBB257 Stage Management**

DR – Drama;

B – Bachelor;

B – Version of unit;

2 – Level of Learning;

57 – Unique unit number

### Postgraduate Units

**Example: MUPM511**

MU - Music;

P - Performance;

M - Master;

5 – Level of Learning;

11 – Unique unit number

### Pre-service Education Units

**Example: EDSC507 Mathematics Method I**

ED - Education;

S - Secondary;

C – Curriculum Studies;

5 – Level of Learning;

07 – Unique unit number

## Course Structures

Excelsia College courses have been harmonised, with consistent structures across the College's various disciplines. This consistency is achieved at the level of credit points. The table below summarises the regulations concerning course structures.

Course	AQF Level	Semesters (full-time study)	Course Units*	Credit Points	Hours / Week Student Workload	Hours / Semester Student Workload	Total Hours Student Workload
Diploma	5	2-4	8-16	48-96	40	600	1200-2400
Associate Degree	6	4	16	96	40	600	2400
Bachelor Degree	7	6	24	144	40	600	3600
Graduate Certificate	8	1	4	24	40	600	600
Graduate Diploma	8	2	8	48	40	600	1200
Masters Degree Coursework (cognate)	9	3	12	72	40	600	1800
Masters Degree Coursework	9	4	16	96	40	600	2400
Masters Degree Research**	9	4	8 + Thesis	96	40	600	2400
Doctoral Degree***	10	6	8 + Thesis	144	40	600	3600

\*The figures in this column reflect whole units of 6 credit points each. The number of units would vary where half-units or double-units are substituted for whole units, but the figures in all other columns remain unaffected.

\*\* The Research component is required to be two thirds or more of the qualification

\*\*\* No more than one third of the qualification can be coursework

Within this overall pattern, further flexibility has been built into the delivery of some courses. For example, full-time students in the Master of Counselling complete two units during teaching Weeks 1-8, have a break in Weeks 9-10, and then complete two units during Weeks 11-18. In this altered unit delivery cycle, the unit structure and requirements remain unchanged (150 hours student workload) comprising:

- 40 hours of face-to-face tuition over 8 class sessions of 5 hours each, and
- 110 hours of personal study, including prescribed pre-reading and completion of 3 assessment tasks.

The capstone units in the Master of Counselling (Research I&II and Counselling Practicum I&II) are all delivered over the full 16 teaching weeks of the semester, giving students a full year to complete their research projects and 200 hours of supervised counselling practice.

## **References**

Course Development and Accreditation Policy and Procedures

New/Existing Course Documentation Template

Staff Handbook

Student Handbook