

## THE AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

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The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a single national, comprehensive system of qualifications offered by higher education institutions (including universities), vocational education training institutions and secondary schools.

The **revised AQF**, introduced in 2011, has 10 levels - each with defined criteria based on learning outcomes. From January 2015, all new enrolments must be into courses that meet the requirements of the revised AQF.

Existing students graduate in courses that meet the requirements of either the revised AQF or the **AQF 2007 Edition**. To find where your degree fits in the Australian Qualifications Framework, see the table below.

The main AQF qualifications awarded by higher education institutions are Bachelor Degrees, Masters Degrees and Doctoral Degrees. At the graduate level (below the Masters Degree), are the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma.

### Where does my degree sit in the AQF?

All UOW courses currently satisfy the requirements of either the revised AQF or the AQF 2007 Edition. All courses on offer from 1 January 2015, must meet the requirements of the revised AQF.

The following table sets out where each qualification type offered by the University of Wollongong sits within these respective versions of the AQF:

Qualification Type	Revised AQF	AQF 2007 Edition
Bachelor Pass Degree	Level 7	Bachelor Degree
Bachelor's Graduate Entry	Level 7	Bachelor Degree
Bachelor Honours Degree	Level 8	Bachelor Degree
Graduate Certificate	Level 8	Graduate Certificate
Graduate Diploma	Level 8	Graduate Diploma
Postgraduate Diploma	No Revised AQF Equivalent	Graduate Diploma
Masters by Coursework	Level 9	Masters Degree
Masters by Research	Level 9	Masters Degree
Doctoral Degree	Level 10	Doctoral Degree
Doctorate by Research	Level 10	Doctoral Degree
Doctorate by Coursework	Level 10	Doctoral Degree
Diploma in Languages	No Revised AQF Equivalent	No AQF 2007 Edition Equivalent
Certificate in Languages	No Revised AQF Equivalent	No AQF 2007 Edition Equivalent

## The Revised AQF

Under the revised AQF, higher education qualifications are placed between level 5 (the Diploma) and level 10 (the Doctoral Degree) of the revised AQF.

Each AQF qualification has a set of descriptors which define;

- the type and complexity of knowledge and skills,
- the application of the knowledge and skills a graduate awarded that qualification has attained, and
- the typical volume of learning associated with that qualification type.

The full set of levels criteria and qualification type descriptors for the Revised AQF can be found by visiting [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au). A summary is set out below.

Level	AQF Level Summary	Qualification Type
<b>Senior Secondary Certificate of Education</b>	Graduates of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifies individuals with knowledge, skills and values for diverse pathways to further learning, work and effective participation in civic life.	Senior Secondary Certificate of Education
<b>Level 1</b>	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for initial work, community involvement and/or further learning	Certificate I
<b>Level 2</b>	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for work in a defined context and/or further learning	Certificate II
<b>Level 3</b>	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for work and/or further learning	Certificate III
<b>Level 4</b>	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for specialised and/or skilled work and/or further learning	Certificate IV
<b>Level 5</b>	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for skilled and/or paraprofessional work and/or further learning	Diploma
<b>Level 6</b>	Graduates at this level will have broad knowledge and skills for paraprofessional and/or highly skilled work and/or further learning	Advanced Diploma Associate Degree
<b>Level 7</b>	Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and/or further learning	Bachelor Degree



<b>Level 8</b>	Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional highly skilled work and/or further learning	Bachelor Honours Degree Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma
<b>Level 9</b>	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for research, and/or professional practice and/or further learning	Masters Degree (Research) Master Degree (Coursework) Masters Degree (Extended)
<b>Level 10</b>	Graduates at this level will have systematic and critical understanding of a complex field of learning and specialised research skills for the advancement of learning and/or for professional practice	Doctoral Degree

### The AQF 2007 Edition

The previous edition of the AQF consists of fifteen (15) qualification types and sets out the main criteria for defining qualifications based on the general characteristics of education and training at each level. These characteristics are expressed principally as learning outcomes.

For the awards issued by higher education institutions, the following learning outcome characteristics are defined:

Qualification	Characteristics of Learning Outcomes
<b>Bachelor Degree</b>	<p>The acquisition of a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, the underlying principles and concepts, and the associated communication and problem-solving skills.</p> <p>Development of the academic skills and attributes necessary to undertake research, comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources.</p> <p>Development of the ability to review, consolidate, extend and apply the knowledge and techniques learnt, including in a professional context.</p> <p>A foundation for self-directed and lifelong learning.</p> <p>Interpersonal and teamwork skills appropriate to employment and/or further study.</p> <p>A course leading to this qualification also usually involves major studies in which significant literature is available.</p> <p>Course content is taken to a significant depth and progressively developed to a high level which provides a basis for postgraduate study and professional careers.</p>
<b>Graduate Certificate</b>	<p>Characteristics of learning outcomes at this level cover a wide range of specialised needs following an undergraduate program or relevant prior work, ranging from initial and ongoing professional development to preparation for further postgraduate study.</p> <p>The learning outcomes reflect a standard appropriate to advanced study and primarily include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new discipline or professional area, which may also involve extending knowledge and skills gained in an undergraduate program or relevant prior work.</p>



<p><b>Graduate Diploma</b></p>	<p>Characteristics of learning outcomes at this level cover a wide range of specialised needs following an undergraduate or postgraduate program or relevant prior work, ranging from initial and ongoing professional development to preparation for further postgraduate study, including research higher degrees.</p> <p>The learning outcomes reflect a standard appropriate to a graduate intake and may include: the acquisition and critical application of knowledge and skills in a new discipline or professional area, which may also involve extending knowledge and skills already gained in an undergraduate program or relevant prior work; and further specialisation within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge.</p>
<p><b>Masters Degree</b></p>	<p>Mastery or overview of the relevant field of study or area of professional practice and the emphasis may range from the acquisition or enhancement of specific professional or vocational skills and knowledge, usually undertaken in a combination of coursework and research, through to the acquisition of in-depth understanding in a specific area of knowledge which is usually undertaken through research.</p> <p>Provide appropriate evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist body of theoretical and applied topics.</p> <p>Demonstrate a high order of skill in analysis, critical evaluation and/or professional application through the planning and execution of project work or a piece of scholarship or research.</p> <p>Demonstrate creativity and flexibility in the application of knowledge and skills to new situations, to solve complex problems and to think rigorously and independently.</p>
<p><b>Doctoral Degree</b></p>	<p>A substantial original contribution to knowledge in the form of new knowledge or significant and original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge.</p> <p>A comprehensive and searching review of the literature, experimentation, creative work with exegesis or other systematic approach or an advanced, searching and expansive critical reflection on professional theory and practice.</p> <p>Undertake an original research project, or a project(s) addressing a matter of substance concerning practice in a profession at a high level of originality and quality.</p> <p>Presentation of a substantial and well ordered dissertation, non-print thesis or portfolio, for submission to external examination against international standards.</p>

The full set of levels criteria and qualification type descriptors and full details of the current and previous editions of the AQF can be found by visiting [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au).