

GUIDELINES ON THE ADMISSION OF NON-GRADUATES TO POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS

Background

The Faculty is receiving an increasing number of applications for entry to postgraduate coursework programs from applicants who are not university graduates. These applicants often have considerable experience in the field of study in which the applicant wishes to study, typically in the form of professional work experience, which is often combined with educational qualifications at levels lower than an undergraduate degree. These qualifications are often at the diploma level, but also include lower awards recognised in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), such as Certificates I through to IV.

The AQF Implementation Handbook provides the following definitions of pathways to graduate certificate, graduate diploma and masters qualifications offered by education institutions in Australia.

Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma

Candidates typically hold the equivalent of a bachelor degree or an advanced diploma and are expected to demonstrate potential to undertake work at this level. In some circumstances, relevant prior work can be recognised, particularly where relevant professional practice has been undertaken.

Masters

Candidates typically hold an honours bachelor degree, a qualifying year of study or equivalent and are expected to demonstrate potential to undertake work at this level. In some circumstances relevant prior work can be recognised, particularly where highlevel performance in graduate studies or relevant professional practice has been undertaken. The masters degree by coursework is normally entered into after a period of employment and has a professional orientation, allowing entry from a pass bachelor degree. Because candidates hold a range of relevant skills and knowledge, the duration of programs varies. A typical masters degree by coursework would be expected to require the equivalent of two years of full-time work.

The current specifications of all postgraduate coursework programs in the Faculty require the completion of at least an undergraduate degree from a recognised tertiary education institution. This excludes those potential students who may have considerable competencies and experience from studying the programs. These guidelines provide a mechanism for such qualified applicants to be given the opportunity to study a postgraduate coursework program in the Faculty.

Guidelines for the admission of non-degree qualified applicants

1. The Faculty may accept as a candidate for any of its graduate certificate or graduate diploma by coursework programs a person who has not completed an undergraduate degree at a recognised tertiary education institution and:

- a. has at least six years of work experience relevant to the course of study that is considered by the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) as acceptable for admission; or
 - b. has completed an advanced diploma or diploma level qualification and has at least three years of work experience relevant to the course of study that is considered by the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) as acceptable for admission; or
 - c. has completed an unspecified level of education, work experience, or any other experience that is considered by the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) as acceptable for admission.
2. The Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) has authority for admitting a candidate to a postgraduate coursework program who does not hold a recognised undergraduate degree in accordance with clause 1 above, after receiving a recommendation from the relevant head of school.
 3. The Faculty will not normally admit any candidates who do not hold a recognised undergraduate degree or graduate qualification directly to masters by coursework programs.