Academic Awards, Programs, Nomenclature and Abbreviations

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<th>Approving authority</th>
<th>University Council</th>
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<tr>
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**Description**

This policy specifies the academic awards that may be conferred or granted by the Council, the processes associated with the conferral of awards and the provision of certification documents. This policy also prescribes the University's approach to naming its programs and awards.

**Related documents**

- Academic Awards, Programs, Nomenclature and Abbreviations - Schedule of Abbreviations for University Awards
- Academic Transcripts
- Structure and Requirements of Qualifications Awarded by Griffith University
- Program Approval and Review
- Australian Qualifications Framework

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Griffith is committed to providing programs of study leading to academic awards of the University that prepare influential graduates to be:

- knowledgeable and skilled, with critical judgement
- effective communicators and collaborators
- innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial
- socially responsible and engaged in their communities
- culturally capable when working with First Australians
- effective in culturally diverse and international environments

This commitment is supported by the University's program and award naming conventions which are consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Nomenclature for awards conferred by the University unambiguously identifies the qualification type, specifies the level of the award, and includes the field of study.
2. **ACADEMIC AWARDS**

Griffith offers two categories of academic awards:

1) higher education awards which lead to an AQF qualification; and
2) continuing education certificates which are non-AQF qualifications comprising a specific combination of courses on a particular theme for the purpose of professional development and/or continuing education.

The requirements and structure of programs leading to University academic awards are established in accordance with the *Structure and Requirements of Qualifications Awarded by Griffith University* and the University's *Program Approval and Review* policy. Program titles and award nomenclature require the approval of Programs Committee.

3. **DEFINITIONS**

*AQF qualification* – a completed University accredited program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved the learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

*AQF level* – the nomenclature used in the AQF to demonstrate the relative complexity and/or depth of achievements and the autonomy required of graduates of AQF qualifications to demonstrate that achievement e.g. AQF level 1 has the lowest complexity and AQF Level 10 has the highest complexity.

*Qualification type* – the nomenclature used in the AQF to describe each category of AQF qualification e.g. Associate Degree, Graduate Certificate, Masters Degree (Coursework). Each qualification type is defined by a descriptor expressed as learning outcomes.

*Certification* - the verification and authentication of a student's entitlement to a qualification.

*Conferral* - occurs when a student has met the requirements of the qualification and the qualification is certified through the provision of a testamur.

*Certification documentation* - set of official documentation (testamur, transcript and graduation statement) that accurately reflect the achievements of graduates, are authenticated and are secured against unauthorised modification through physical and/or electronic measures.

*Digitary* – the service that provides the University’s certified documents online portal enabling the secure issuing of digital certification documentation that graduates can access and share securely.

*Graduate* – a person who has been awarded a qualification by Griffith University.

*Higher education award* is an award which leads to a qualification located at levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework and meets the corresponding specifications (including the levels criteria and qualification type descriptors).

*Non-award program* is an approved course of study that does not lead to an award of the University. The non-award program may comprise courses normally taken as part of an award program but is a non-AQF qualification. Non-award programs include Continuing Education certificates, tertiary preparation, enabling, and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) programs.

*Program* is an approved course of study leading to an award of the University (a higher education award). A student is admitted to a program, and on successful completion of all program requirements is awarded the degree to which the program relates.

*Testamur* – the official certification document conferred by the University that confirms a qualification has been awarded to an individual.

*Transcript* - A transcript is a record of all learning leading to an AQF qualification or an accredited course in which a student is enrolled and is issued by the University.

*Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement* - a supplementary statement to the testamur and the transcript that provides information to enhance understanding of the qualification by students, employers, industry, professional associations and internationally.

*Field of study* - refers to the main focus of the qualification.
Nested qualifications - purposely designed qualifications that enable explicit articulation pathways and encompass more than one AQF level and/or qualification type.

4. **PROGRAM TITLES**

A program title is selected with due consideration for:

- accurate representation of program content;
- facilitation of promotion and marketing;
- requirements of professional bodies;
- consistency with nomenclature of similar degrees in other Australian Universities;

and is approved by the Programs Committee.

A program title comprises the following elements:

4.1 **Qualification Type and Level of the Award**

The academic awards offered by the University are established in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework. The AQF level and qualification type is indicated in the program title by the following nomenclature. While it is common to list the qualification title before the field of study/discipline, the reverse order may be used. Qualifications titles (program and award titles) may indicate if the qualification has been achieved through research or coursework. Program and award titles are to include the term “research” where a minimum of two-thirds of the volume of learning is for research, research training and independent study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AQF Level and Qualification Type</th>
<th>Qualification Title</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Doctoral</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Doctoral</td>
<td>Doctor of field of study</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Masters (Extended)*</td>
<td>Doctor of e.g. Medicine, Physiotherapy, Dentistry</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Masters (Research)</td>
<td>Master of Philosophy</td>
<td>MPhil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Masters (Research)</td>
<td>Master of field of study</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Masters (Coursework)</td>
<td>Master of field of study</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Masters (Extended)</td>
<td>Master of field of study</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma of field of study</td>
<td>GDip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate in field of study</td>
<td>GCert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Bachelor Honours Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor of field of study (Honours)</td>
<td>B (Hons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor of field of study</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Associate Degree</td>
<td>Associate Degree in field of study</td>
<td>AssocDeg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma of field of study</td>
<td>AdvDip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Diploma</td>
<td>Diploma of field of study</td>
<td>Dip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For exceptions:
  - The qualification title and a statement that the qualification is an ‘AQF level 9 Masters Degree’ will appear on relevant certification documents, in the University’s information and promotional materials.
  - The qualification may not be referred to as a Doctoral Degree in any written, oral or electronic information.
4.2 **Field of Study**

The University offers a range of programs, some of which cover broad fields of study, others that have a narrower focus or are sub-categories of the broad fields and those which are highly specialised. To reflect this range the University's programs and awards may have broad, narrow or specific titles.

4.2.1 **Broad Title**

This title comprises a broad term used to represent the integration of a range of disciplines within an area of study and may be used by a range of University programs. Programs using broad titles may include a number of specialisations provided the specialisations share the same qualification level and duration. These specialisations may not be included in the award title but may or may not be included on the testamur in accordance with 12.1.5. Examples include:

- Arts
- Business
- Music
- Science

4.2.2 **Narrow Title**

Programs comprising a distinct structure focused on a specialised area of study which is to be included as part of the award title and on the testamur are to use narrow titles. Narrow titles include the name of a significant disciplinary sub-category or professional area of study within the program by appending it to the broad program title, as illustrated by these examples:

- Bachelor of Arts in Politics and Government
- Bachelor of Science in Ecology and Conservation Biology Bachelor of Music in Composition
- Master of Arts in Public Sector Leadership
- Master of Science in Public Health

4.2.3 **Specific titles**

Specific program titles may be used for professional qualifications. Examples include:

- Commerce
- Dentistry
- Education
- Engineering
- Law
- Medicine
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Psychology

Specific program titles may also be used to promote an area of specialisation or when a specialisation is developed from a broad program, and represents a discrete area of study. Examples include:

- Bachelor of Biomedical Science originally created from the Bachelor of Science
- Bachelor of Marine Science originally created from the Bachelor of Environmental Science
4.3 Bachelor Honours Degree Program Titles

For Bachelor honours programs, the preference is that program titles be limited to the broad title, and the word honours follows the broad title in brackets. For example:

- Bachelor of Business (Honours)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours)

If a narrow title is adopted for an honours program the additional appendices are to follow the "(Honours)". For example:

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Asian and International Studies
- Bachelor of Music (Honours) in Composition
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music

Proposals to adopt specific program titles for honours programs, other than professional qualifications, need to be presented to Academic Committee for debate. The Programs Committee shall advise Academic Committee as to whether the Group's request should be supported.

4.4 Continuing Education Certificates

The University offers certificates comprising a specific combination of courses on a particular theme for the purpose of professional development and/or continuing education; and titled the "Continuing Education Certificate in X". The format for the certification provided on completion of continuing education certificates is required to follow Griffith's corporate identity standards, include no reference to the Australian Qualifications Framework and is to be approved by the Academic Registrar. This certification is not provided electronically via the University’s certified documents online portal.

4.5 Non-Award Programs

The University offers a range of other non-award programs in addition to Continuing Education Certificates and certification documentation for such programs are not to include the use of the words Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) or the AQF logo. The format for the certification of such programs is required to follow Griffith’s corporate identity standards, include no reference to the Australian Qualifications Framework and is to be approved by the Academic Registrar. This certification is not provided electronically via the University's certified documents online portal.

5. NOMENCLATURE ON TESTAMUR

In all cases, the award title is the same as the program title.

5.1 Awarding the qualification with Distinction

The University may award degrees with distinction in bachelor degree programs where the qualification type is not a Bachelor Honours degree and in Masters (Coursework) and (Extended). A qualification is awarded “with distinction” where a student achieves a minimum program GPA of 6.5 with no failed courses. Additional criteria may be included with the approval of Programs Committee. The wording ‘with distinction’ will not form part of the award title (refer to paragraph 12.1.4 below).

5.2 Change of Program Title and Award Title

When a program undergoes a major change requiring a new program and award title, the new program and award title applies only to students admitted subsequent to the changes being approved. However, transition arrangements for students currently enrolled in the program at the time of the changes being approved may allow them to either remain in the existing program or transfer to the new program. As part of the transition arrangements students remaining in the existing program shall be advised of the maximum time in which they are to complete the degree and this may vary from the Maximum Time for Completing a Program specified in the Student Administration Policy. Students who are admitted or transferred to the new program shall
graduate with the new award title. All past graduates continue to be linked to the old program title and award title.

6. **AWARD ABBREVIATIONS**

The abbreviation for the qualification type and level of the award is given in section 4.1.

To achieve consistency in abbreviations, the standard abbreviations listed in the *Schedule of Abbreviations for University Awards* should be used. Exceptions to the table may be adopted on grounds of common usage (e.g. MBA for Master of Business Administration) or aesthetics.

The qualification "(Hons)" is included in post-nominal award abbreviations.

A complete listing of abbreviations for University Awards is contained in the Schedule of Abbreviations for University Awards.

7. **ABBREVIATION FOR GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY**

The accepted abbreviation for Griffith University is *Griff*. For example:

I M Cheng, BA *Griff*.

8. **AWARDING DOUBLE DEGREES AND NESTED QUALIFICATIONS**

Double degree programs require students to meet the requirements for two degrees. Therefore students graduate with two degrees and receive two testamurs, each specifying a single award, which shall be set out on the testamur in accordance with this policy. One or both degrees, if they meet the criteria may be awarded with distinction.

Nested qualifications are purposely designed qualifications that enable explicit articulation pathways from one or more AQF level and/or qualification types to meet the requirements of the final and more advanced qualification level and type. Therefore students graduate with one qualification and one testamur.

The degree requirements approved by Programs Committee for each program shall specify the requirements for entry, exit and transfer between related programs, including any requirement for students to attain a specific standard in a part of a program in order to proceed to the remainder of the program, and the qualification to be awarded where students do not attain the specified standard. Students may also choose to graduate at one of the nested AQF level and/or qualification types.

When a student has taken an exit point qualification, whether by choice or as a requirement, in order to continue with subsequent qualifications readmission is required, the student must undertake further study and the volume of learning to complete the subsequent qualification may be greater in order to meet the requirements of the qualification type. The award and testamur received at the early exit point is not normally rescinded.

9. **AWARDS TAKEN IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

The University has award programs that it offers in collaboration with another institution or group of institutions. Arrangements for the conferral of degrees and design of award certificates must be agreed between the institutions before the collaborative program is approved by the Programs Committee. There are three options available:

9.1 **Joint Award of a Degree**

In this instance both institutions exercise their degree awarding powers.
9.2 Dual Badging

The University awards the degree and the involvement of the partner institution is recognised on the testamur through inclusion of their corporate image. Where it has been agreed that the other institution is to exercise their degree awarding powers, the involvement of Griffith is recognised by inclusion of its corporate image on the testamur.

9.3 Recognition of Partnership

The University awards the degree and the involvement of the partner institution is recognised on the testamur through a statement such as "in association with".

10. CONFERRAL

In conferring AQF qualifications the University adheres to the government's regulatory and quality arrangements for each qualification type. For all graduates except those graduating from higher degrees by research, the conferral date for their award is the date of their graduation ceremony or the date of an approved interim conferral round. For higher degree research graduates, the conferral date is the date that the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School has certified that the higher degree research candidate has met the requirements of their award.¹

11. CONFERRAL OF AWARDS - POSTHUMOUSLY OR ON THE BASIS OF PERMANENT INCAPACITY

There are circumstances in which the University may confer an award on a student before completion of the requirements of that award, these include:

- the death of the student;
- sustaining an injury or contracting an illness that renders the student permanently incapacitated and precludes completion of their studies.

Awards may be conferred in these circumstances provided that:

- the student is a currently enrolled student of Griffith University at the time of their permanent incapacity or death; and
- the request for conferral of the award is made by a staff member of the University with either the consent of the individual or the family.

Conferral of awards in these circumstances may be considered provided that:

11.1 Coursework Award

- a student enrolled in a coursework award, at the time of their permanent incapacity or death, had satisfactorily (GPA of 3.5) completed at least two-thirds of the program in which they had enrolled; and
- the Dean (Learning & Teaching) recommends conferral of the award to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) as Chair of the Academic Committee.

The conferral date for the award is the date of the next graduation ceremony or the date of an approved interim conferral round.

11.2 Research Award

- a candidate enrolled in a higher degree by research, at the time of their permanent incapacity or death, had completed sufficient documentation in the form of data and publications that in the view of the Griffith Graduate Research School the requirements of

¹ Council (4/2012 meeting) resolved to delegate authority to Deans (Learning and Teaching) of the relevant academic group to approve the granting of academic awards to undergraduate students, and coursework postgraduate students who have satisfied the academic requirements for the award of a degree; and to the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School to approve the granting of higher degree by research awards, and doctorates and higher doctorates by publication awards to candidates who have satisfied the requirements for the award of a degree.
the degree would have been satisfied if the candidate had been in a position to continue their work; and

- the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School recommends conferral of the award to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) as Chair of the Academic Committee.

The conferral date is the date that the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research certifies that the higher degree research candidate has met the requirements of their award.

### 11.3 Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances cases may be considered for the conferral of awards, where the student/candidate does not meet the criteria set out in 11.1 and 11.2. In such circumstances a case may be made by the Dean (Learning & Teaching) via the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) to the Vice Chancellor.

### 11.4 Award of a Continuing Education Certificate

Where a student/candidate does not meet the criteria set out in 11.1, 11.2 or 11.3 a Continuing Education Certificate may be awarded in recognition of the student's achievements on the recommendation of the Dean (Learning & Teaching).

### 12. CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTATION

The certification documentation provided to a graduate includes the testamur, academic transcript and the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS). The certification documentation is made available to graduates in a digital format through the University's certified documents online portal following conferral. The testamur is the only document provided in a paper-based format to a graduate at a graduation ceremony or following conferral. The University ensures sufficient information is provided on the certification documentation for it to be authenticated and to minimise its fraudulent use.

#### 12.1 Testamur

The wording on the Griffith testamur is as follows:

By the authority of the Council

**Graduate Name**

is hereby granted the

<award title>

under the common Seal of Griffith University

on the <date> day of <month, year>

Student number/Testamur number

12.1.1 Presentation of the Award Title on the Testamur

On the testamur, the award title shall be predominant. In the case of programs with narrow titles where additional information is appended to denote a significant disciplinary sub-category or professional area, the additional information shall be included underneath the award title in smaller print. For example:

**BACHELOR OF ARTS**

in

Asian and International Studies
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

in

Environment

12.1.2 Presentation of Honours Classifications on the Testamur

In the case of bachelor (honours) awards, the class and division of the award are recorded on testamurs. For example:

BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONOURS)

Class IIA

12.1.3 Presentation of Language of Instruction on the Testamur

In the case where a program has been taught solely in a language other than English or any part of a course or any assessment leading to the award of the qualification have been conducted in a language other than English, the language of instruction is recorded on the testamur. For example:

This award was achieved through instruction conducted in [Language].

12.1.4 Presentation of ‘with distinction’ on the Testamur

The words ‘This award was achieved with Distinction’ are recorded on the testamur, appearing below the date for conferral of the award, and not forming part of the award title.

12.1.5 Presentation of Majors on the testamur

For bachelor and masters degree programs, a statement indicating the major or prescribed academic plan which a student has completed is included on the testamur. A major in the masters degree includes the independent research component specified for this qualification type.

A student may be awarded the bachelor degree with a maximum of two majors and the masters degree with one major. Each major is linked to a particular statement on the award testamur. For example

‘This award was achieved with a major in X’.

Where the program structure for a bachelor degree permits a student to complete the requirements of two majors the statement on the testamur shall reflect both award majors. The majors are recorded on the testamur. For example

‘This award was achieved with two majors, one in X and one in Y’.

Where the prescribed academic plan and the award title are the same and there are no other majors within the program, the prescribed academic plan shall not be represented on the testamur.

12.1.6 Presentation of the Australian Qualifications Framework on the Testamur

Graduates of qualifications conferred on the 5 January 2015 and onwards shall include;

‘The award is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework’;

except where the qualification is not consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework (2011). In such cases no notation is included on the testamur.

12.1.7 Presentation of the Name and Office of those authorised by the Council to issue the Testamur

The signatures of the Vice Chancellor and the Chancellor and the titles of their office shall be included on the Testamur as members of the Council authorised to issue the testamur.
12.2 Academic Transcript

On conferral of their award all graduates receive an official Academic Transcript in a digital format which is the record of all programs and courses in which they had enrolled at Griffith, the enrolment status in each program, credit awarded, the grade obtained for each course and their cumulative GPA. In the case where a program has been taught solely in a language other than English or the any part of a course or any assessment leading to the award of the qualification have been conducted in a language other than English, the language of instruction is recorded on the transcript.

12.3 Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

All graduates with higher education awards receive, in conjunction with their testamur and academic transcript, an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement issued in a digital format under the authority of the Academic Registrar, to:

- ensure professional, national and international recognition of the qualifications awarded by Griffith University; and
- facilitate international mobility by its graduates.

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement which includes the University's corporate logo, the AHEGS logo and a description of the AHEGS, contains five sections:

- **Section 1** - The Graduate which includes personal details of the graduate.
- **Section 2** - The Award which includes details of the award, including admission requirements, normal duration of study and Australian Qualifications Framework level. This section also includes information about external accreditation (if required) of the program leading to the award, language of instruction in which the program was conducted, work-integrated learning components, capstone courses and a summary of other higher education awards for which the conferred award is preparatory. Graduates of programs that are no longer consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) with a conferral date of 5 January 2015 onwards shall not have an AQF level on the AHEGS. A notation "This qualification was accredited prior to the establishment of the Australian Qualifications Framework (2011)" is to be included against the AQF level in Section 2 of AHEGS.
- **Section 3** - Awarding Institution which includes a brief description of the University, its establishment date and in the case of awards offered collaboratively with other higher education institutions and training organisations, a brief description of the program delivery arrangements. Where a program is completed through Open Universities Australia details of the arrangement are provided in this section.
- **Section 4** - Graduate's Academic Achievements which includes the courses (code, name, credit point value and grade) completed, whether successfully or not, credit and advanced standing awarded, dissertation and thesis title and in the case of HDR, a 100 word abstract. This information is accompanied by a key to grading, the Honours Weighted Average HWA for determining Honours classifications (for graduates prior to February 2017), the criteria for awarding Honours classifications and a description of the HDR examination process. The University has identified a list of academically related individual achievements such as prizes and awards, university and program based medals, and University and external funded scholarships for inclusion in the description of the Graduate's Academic Achievements on the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. Graduates in receipt of such forms of recognition will have them included in their Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. This section includes the signature of the Academic Registrar who is authorised to issue the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement.
- **Section 5** - Description of the Australian Higher Education System which includes a comprehensive summary of the Australian system provided by the Australian Government.

Graduates of the University's double degree programs receive two Australian Higher Education Graduation Statements, one for each award. Where there is dual badging of a degree the AHEGS acknowledges delivery of the qualification by two institutions. If the partnership is with an overseas institution only the University issues the AHEGS, where the partnership is with an Australian institution both providers issue the AHEGS.
13. SURRENDER AND REPLACEMENT OF CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

13.1 Testamurs

Surrender of paper-based testamurs is required in the following instances:
- The testamur is damaged and a replacement testamur is requested.
- The University Council has agreed to upgrade the award level of a program without changing the program's degree requirements.

Both replacement and substitute testamurs will be issued subject to the following conditions:
- a Request for Replacement Testamur form is completed in full;
- where the original certificate was defective, has been damaged or a change of name is required, the certificate is returned;
- payment of the prescribed fee, where applicable.

A replacement paper-based testamur is to include immediately below the ‘Student number/Testamur number’ the word Replacement.

13.2 Australian Higher Education and Graduation Statements and Official Academic Transcripts

Graduates may request additional and replacement paper-based Australian Higher Education and Graduation Statements and Official Academic Transcripts. These will be issued subject to the following conditions:
- a Request for Australian Higher Education and Graduation Statements form is completed in full; or
- a Request for Official Academic Transcript form is completed in full; and
- payment of the prescribed fee.

13.3 Access to Certification Documents via University’s certified documents online portal

- Graduates from July 2017 can access and share their testamur, transcript and Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement via the University’s certified documents online portal.

14. REVOCATION OF AN ACADEMIC AWARD

The University Council reserves the right to revoke an academic award that has been conferred on the basis that the person:
- did not possess the relevant qualifications to undertake the program for which the award was conferred; or
- did not complete the necessary requirements for the award; or
- achieved conferral through plagiarism, fraudulent or dishonest means.

Upon revocation of the award by the University Council, the person is advised in writing that they are no longer to cite or imply that they are a recipient of that award and a noting including the date the award was revoked is placed on the official academic transcript. Electronic copies of the testamur, transcript and Australian Higher Education Statement are removed from the University’s certified documents online portal.