

Academic Policies

Advanced standing and credit transfer

Advanced standing for completed formal studies

Students may apply for advanced standing in postgraduate courses where they have completed formal studies at another higher education institution. Students apply by submitting the appropriate form to the Course Coordinator and attaching documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of that course or courses. In coursework Masters degrees a decision is made by the relevant Faculty Research and Teaching Committee about the level at which the student will enter the course (eg. 1 year of advanced standing means the student will enter the course at the level of Year 2). In research Masters degrees and the Doctor of Philosophy degree the decision is made by the Research Committee. The maximum amount of credit that may be granted normally is no greater than 50% of the course.

Block or unspecified credit

Students may apply for unspecified or block credit in postgraduate coursework degrees where they have completed a block of subjects that comprise part of a course at a recognised higher education institution. Students apply by submitting the appropriate form to the Course Coordinator and attaching documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of those subjects. In coursework Masters degrees a decision is made by the relevant Faculty Research and Teaching Committee about the equivalence of the block of subjects from which the student will be exempted. In research Masters degrees and the Doctor of Philosophy degree the decision is made by the Research Committee about the level at which the student will enter the course on the basis of:

- time enrolled in a course of an equivalent level at another institution;
- quality of work completed; and
- relevance of the previous work to the research project undertaken at Avondale College

The maximum amount of credit which may be granted normally is no greater than 50% of the course.

Credit transfer

Students may apply for credit transfer in postgraduate courses where they have completed a subject or subjects at a recognised higher education institution. Students apply by submitting the appropriate form to the Course Coordinator and attaching documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of a similar subject(s).

A decision is made about the equivalence of the subject(s) from which the students will be exempted. In coursework Masters degrees decisions about credit transfer applications will be made by the relevant Faculty Research and Teaching

Committee on the following basis:

- 1 Subjects for which credit is granted should have reasonable correspondence to subjects offered by Avondale College.
- 2 Credit is normally not granted for work completed more than 10 years previously;
- 3 Students wishing to take out two Avondale College awards may be granted cross credits not exceeding 50% of the shorter course.
- 4 Requests for credit transfer in excess of these guidelines may be considered by the Faculty Research and Teaching Committee on a case-by-case basis but will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- 5 In research Masters degrees and the Doctor of Philosophy degree the decision is made by the Research Committee about the level at which the student will enter the course on the basis of:
 - time enrolled in a course of an equivalent level at another institution;
 - quality of work completed; and
 - relevance of the previous work to the research project undertaken at Avondale College.

Waiver/exemption

Students may apply for an exemption from a required element of a course on the basis of subjects or equivalent content completed elsewhere, but the student may be required to undertake alternative subject(s) to an equivalent credit point value in lieu of the exempted subject(s).

Partial credit

Students may seek partial credit from assessment within a subject by applying to the lecturer in charge of the particular subject. If satisfactory documentary evidence is presented by the student, the lecturer may exempt the student from the particular part of the assessment or attendance requirements that is related to the previously completed material.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Recognition of Current Competency

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) are terms normally reserved for Vocational Education courses. See the RPL Advanced Standing Policy and Procedures in the Avondale College website.

Credit transfer through cross institutional enrolment

Avondale College postgraduate students should seek the permission of their Course Coordinator prior to enrolling in studies with another institution that they will later seek to credit toward their Avondale College course.

Upon successful completion of the course at the other institution, it is the student's responsibility to submit an application for credit transfer to the Course Coordinator and attach a copy of the official results obtained at the other institution.

Academic integrity

Avondale College's Code of Conduct states that it is an educational aim of Avondale College to develop skilled graduates who act according to ethical principles and with integrity in their personal and professional lives. In preparing students to meet this aim, Avondale College expects students to act with integrity in the performance of their academic work while students at College. Avondale College assists students in this respect by informing them how to act with integrity and discouraging all forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty may take several forms and these forms include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating in examinations, falsification of data, and incorrectly ascribing authorship in group projects.

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own. It is one form of academic dishonesty, and students are expected to avoid plagiarism by: doing their own work when independent work is required; acknowledging all sources of information and ideas; and acknowledging all group members when group assignments are required. Students should attach a cover sheet to all assignments that includes the following declaration:

"I certify that this assignment is my own work and is free from plagiarism. I understand that the assignment may be checked for plagiarism by electronic or other means. The assignment has not previously been submitted for assessment in any other subject or institution. I have read and understood Avondale College's plagiarism policy."
Signed Date

Further, students should refrain from: copying another student's work; producing an assignment in conjunction with another person when independent work is required; lending an assignment to another student(s); copying or quoting from another source without acknowledging that source and appropriately identifying all quoted material; and paraphrasing another person's work closely, with minor changes, but with the essential meaning, form and/or progression of ideas maintained, without acknowledging the source of the paraphrase. (Extensive paraphrasing, even when acknowledged, is not advisable).

Since Avondale College's philosophy is educative, first instances of plagiarism, if minor, will bring a warning and penalties ranging from deduction of marks to resubmission of an assignment. Students in their second or later semesters will be penalised more heavily than beginning students. The penalties for more serious instances are as follows:

- **First offence:** Penalties range from substantial deduction of marks to zero marks for an assignment.

- **Second offence (counting all subjects taken at Avondale College):** fail grade for the subject.
- **Third offence (counting all subjects taken at Avondale College):** the student may be discontinued from further study at Avondale College.

NOTE: All instances of plagiarism will be recorded and the documentation placed in the student's academic file.

Plagiarism procedure

If a lecturer suspects plagiarism the lecturer will normally:

- 1 discuss the matter with the student and if plagiarism is established,
- 2 confer with the Dean of Faculty and, if necessary, other colleagues, to determine the appropriate penalty. As part of this process the Dean shall check the student's Academic Office file for any previous plagiarism offences.,
- 3 the Dean of Faculty shall report all instances of serious plagiarism to the Chair of the Academic Board who will ensure that a record is placed in the student's file of the date, the subject involved, the nature and extent of the plagiarism, and the action taken.

Appeals on academic matters

Academic matters include, but are not limited to, matters relating to admissions, review of a grade, transfer credit or advanced standing, quality assurance, and eligibility for graduation. Policies for each of these academic matters appear in both the student section and academic section of the Avondale College Policy Manual, the definitive version of which is located on the Avondale College website.

Appeals normally occur in two stages. In stage one the student is encouraged to contact the lecturer to confirm that the grade issued is the correct grade, and that a clerical error has not occurred. Following this confirmation, if the student continues to hold the belief that an injustice exists due to some inadequacy in the validity or the reliability of the assessment, a formal appeal may be initiated.

- 1 The student (or nominee) initiates the appeal/grievance process by discussing orally the nature of the appeal/grievance with the person with whom the grievance is held.
- 2 If the oral response does not satisfy the student he/she may either speak with or submit a written description of the grievance to the Dean of the Faculty who will endeavour to resolve the issue amicably and with respect to the rights and responsibilities of both parties. If the student feels unwilling or unable to approach either the person with whom the grievance is held or the Dean of the Faculty, the student may seek the support of another person in authority such as the Director of Student Services, a representative of the Avondale College Student and Faculty Association Council, the Equity Officer, the Disabilities Officer, the Student Counsellor, or the Chaplain.
- 3 If the Dean of the Faculty is unable to resolve the matter informally, he/she will establish a meeting within 10

working days between the student, the person with whom the grievance is held, and any other relevant authorities or persons.

- 4 If the matter remains unresolved then a written grievance with full supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching). The Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) (or nominee) will within 10 working days interview all parties individually, and set up a meeting between all parties where arguments and/or witnesses in support of either party can be presented. The Vice-President (Learning and Teaching), in consultation with a sub-committee (comprising no more than four persons) of the Teaching and Learning Committee will make a final determination on the matter within 10 working days of receiving the written submission, and communicate the outcome to all parties. In communicating this outcome the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) will give reasons and a full explanation in writing for the decision and actions taken as part of the procedures, if requested, by the complainant and/or respondent.
- 5 This Grievance and Appeal process does not preclude the student seeking redress in other forums outside the Avondale College process. For example, the student may wish to take the matter further by selecting the appropriate body from among such bodies as the Office of Fair Trading (02 4925 7000), the DEST National Training Hotline (1800 000 674), the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1300 656 419) or the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW (02 4926 4300). (A full list of external bodies is located in the Government section of the local telephone book.)

Students should note that:

- The Office of the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) will keep appropriate records of grievances for at least five years, and allow parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records.
- The Office of the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) will ensure that all records are treated as confidential.
- In the case of an appeal against a grade the result may be that the final grade is either retained, raised or lowered.
- In a dispute relating to instructions which have been given to students on assessment procedures within a subject, the written guidelines which lecturers have provided to students will be taken as definitive.
- Avondale College will alter this policy immediately and without notice where any conflict arises with relevant legislation and in such cases the requirements of the legislation will take precedence.
- A nominee of the student may be included in the grievance handling processes if the student so chooses.

Assessment

Assessment tasks are set in each subject to promote learning and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned. Academic staff also are able to demonstrate that students who apply to graduate have fulfilled the requirements of their course, met the requirements of accrediting bodies, Avondale College's Quality Management System and the requirements for professional registration where necessary.

Assessment tasks allow academic staff to monitor students' progress and/or diagnose and remediate learning difficulties and/or deficiencies. Assessment tasks may be modified to allow students with disabilities to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes through alternate means. Assessment tasks also provide feedback to academic staff on the effectiveness of their instructional methods, and adequacy of the content selected.

Assessment tasks may take a variety of forms such as examinations, portfolios, case studies, critical incident scenarios, group presentations, problem-based learning tasks and may increase in the level of difficulty as the course progresses. In designing assessment tasks academic staff encourage students to demonstrate:

- mastery of the body of knowledge identified in the subject outline;
- understanding of the key concepts of the subject;
- ability to deduce, infer, analyse, synthesize and evaluate;
- ability to apply theories and methodological content of the discipline;
- ability to evaluate content and/or concepts as a basis for professional decision making;
- a capacity for independent thought;
- ability to develop new ideas based on sound scholarship;
- ability to select, use and document the source of their ideas; and
- capacity to argue and communicate coherently and persuasively either symbolically or in written form.

The types and amount of assessment normally undertaken by students at Avondale College are included in the assessment policy located on the Avondale College website. In summary, key principles include that assessment in each subject normally:

- requires students to apply the knowledge that they have learned to problems that graduates of the course may encounter in the workplace;
- measures whether or not the intended learning outcomes stated in the subject outlines and the content covered in the course have been achieved;
- is completed, with other subject requirements, within the allocated time of 170 hours for each standard subject.

Further details on the types and amount of assessment appear in the current version of the Types and Amount of Assessment Policy located on the Avondale College website.

The assessment process

Subject outlines provided to students at the commencement of each semester include a description of the assessment tasks, their relative weighting, assessment topics, and a list of criteria by which the item(s) will be evaluated.

An overview of all assessment items required to be submitted by students enrolled in the course each semester is compiled by the course coordinator to ensure that the workload of the course is manageable and spread equitably throughout the semester. A copy of this overview is made available for students.

In marking the assessment tasks, Avondale College academic staff use both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment methods depending on the constraints of each subject. When using both methods of assessment academic staff apply the stated criteria consistently so that students with the same level of achievement receive identical grades. Comments written on the assignments provide feedback to students that is:

- timely (that is, marked assignments are returned to students in less than two weeks after submission);
- informative so that comments provided to students relate to the criteria established at the commencement of the semester.

Grades awarded

At the conclusion of a semester, academic staff may award any of the following grades. Students are expected to achieve grades of Pass or better for subjects to be counted towards an award although up to two subjects at Pass Terminating (PT) level may be counted.

- **High Distinction (HD)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 85–100%
- **Distinction (D)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 75–84%
- **Credit (C)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 65–74%
- **Pass (P)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 50–64%
- **Pass Terminating (PT)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 45–49%. PTs indicate that the subject may not be used as a pre-requisite for a subject at a more advanced level.
- **Fail, supplementary available (FS)** is reserved for students who have passed other items of assessment and may pass the subject if they achieve a higher examination score by completing extra assignment work, practical work, and/or an examination.
- **Pass with supplementary assessment (SP)** indicates that the student achieved a passing grade after completing an additional assessment. Supplementary assessments normally are awarded where a student failed a subject because an essential assessment component for the subject has not met the minimum requirement but the aggregate score for the assessment is greater than or equal to 50%, or where a student has a mark that falls in the range of 45%–49%. Supplementary assessments

may include assignment work, practical work and/or an examination. Supplementary assessments are to be submitted by the end of the first week of the semester following that in which the subject was studied unless otherwise determined by the Faculty Examination Board. If the supplementary assessment is not completed by the specified date which must be no later than the census date of the following semester, the FS grade will convert to an FF. The lecturer in charge of the subject is responsible for notifying the student of the work to be completed, and also for notifying the Academic Registrar when the work has been received, marked and a final grade for the subject is available.

- **Fail after supplementary assessment attempted (FF)** indicates that the student achieved a failing grade after completing additional assessment.
- **Fail (F)** normally in the range 0–49% however, a failing grade may be awarded in any subject where minimum requirements in essential components have not been met.
- **Withdrawal without penalty (W)** indicates that the student was permitted to withdraw from the subject without academic or financial penalties.
- **Fail due to late withdrawal (FW)** from the subject and financial and academic penalties imposed.
- **Incomplete (IC)** indicates that the subject is incomplete due to outstanding assessment. When the student has not completed the required work, has requested an extension and the lecturer believes that the student experienced circumstances beyond his/her control, the lecturer in charge of the subject may award an IC. The lecturer in charge of the subject must stipulate the revised due date; must notify the student of the work to be completed, and the due date for its completion. The lecturer in charge must notify the Academic Office when the work has been submitted, marked and of the final grade for the subject before the census date for the next semester.
- **Deferred examination (DE)** indicates that the student is required to successfully complete a deferred examination in the subject before the subject is counted towards the course of study. Students who, by reason of extenuating circumstances such as sickness or accident, are unfit to sit a scheduled examination or to make adequate preparation may apply to the Academic Registrar for a deferred examination. Such application must be made on the prescribed form countersigned by a medical practitioner (where illness is the ground for the application). The application form must be submitted to the Academic Registrar as soon as it can be completed. (The expectation is that this will normally be completed within 24 hours). Where sudden illness, accident or other serious misadventure occurs during the examination which prevents the student from continuing with the examination, it is the duty of the student to bring such problem immediately to the attention of the chief examination supervisor who shall

report to the Academic Registrar. If an application for a deferred examination arises from such a situation, it should be lodged as soon as is reasonably possible with the Academic Office, and is to be supported by relevant documentation. Students who misread the examination timetable will not be granted permission to sit a deferred examination.

- **Satisfactory (S)** indicates satisfactory achievement in a subject in which the full-range of grades was not available
- **Unsatisfactory (U)** indicates unsatisfactory achievement in a subject for which the full range of grades was not available
- **Audit (AU)** indicates attendance at classes but the student was not enrolled in the subject and did not complete assessment tasks.

Norm-referenced assessment

In a norm-referenced assessment the distribution of scores gained from marking student scripts is a relative rather than absolute measure of quality. Students are measured in relation to the achievement of their peers. Small class sizes make this type of assessment problematic. However, if this type of assessment is used at Avondale College in some large classes utilizing more than one lecturer and/or tutor it may be appropriate to rescale scores in order to approach a level of parity between the markers and student groups. Where class size indicates that rescaling is appropriate lecturers may standardize marks using a standard score such as the Z-score.

Criterion-referenced assessment

A criterion-referenced assessment compares the students' performance with a set of standards that are provided to students at the commencement of the semester. Feedback given to students by lecturers using criterion-referenced assessment provides information to students regarding the level of their achievement in relation to their own established goals and helps to focus learning on the intended learning outcomes. Final grades are an expression of how closely students' work has approximated the intended learning outcomes. Where deficiencies exist students are made aware of the areas of those deficiencies and how to address them, thus making progression to advanced levels possible.

The Faculty Board of Examiners meets at the end of each semester to:

- ensure that results are valid and reliable and that assessment tasks have been conducted in accordance with the written regulations provided to students;
- take action to protect the reputation of Avondale College and other students in cases where there have been suspected or actual attempts to circumvent assessment requirements;
- identify anomalies in the assessment process;
- identify students who are not maintaining adequate progress in the course and recommend the appropriate action to the Course Coordinator, the Faculty Dean, the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) or the Vice-President (Administration and Research).

Course assurance

For each course of study offered at Avondale College, Avondale College is required to have a legally-binding agreement with one or more higher education providers (the "Second Provider"), that should Avondale College cease to be able to provide a course of study, the Second Provider will offer to enrol Avondale College students in that course of study in a similar course, with full credit for the units of study completed and leading to the same or a comparable qualification. (Guidelines to the Higher Education Support Act 2003).

In the event that the course assurance arrangements were needed, the second provider might have a different student contribution or tuition fee for the course of study, so that the amount students may be required to pay may vary.

Students are not obliged to enrol in the alternative course offered under the course assurance arrangement, but if they enrolled with a third provider there is no obligation for that provider to offer full credit transfer for the units of study completed at Avondale College.

The fee assurance requirement

For each course of study offered at Avondale College, Avondale College is also required to have a legally-binding guarantee provided by a separate legal entity, under which the separate legal entity guarantees to refund to the student the student contribution amount or tuition fee received by Avondale College for any uncompleted units of study where:

- Avondale College ceases to be able to provide a course of study; and
- Avondale College has not transferred to another provider with whom the student has enrolled, the student's student contribution amount or tuition fee.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited has provided this guarantee for students at Avondale College.

In the event that Avondale College was unable to continue to offer a course of study in which students are enrolled, a student in that course would either receive a refund of the student contribution or tuition fee paid for any incomplete units of study, or the funds paid for such incomplete units of study would be transferred (with the student's agreement) to the another provider with whom the student has enrolled.

In such circumstances any refund claim should be directed initially to the Student Finance Office of Avondale College, and, if Avondale College is unable to provide a refund, to the Treasurer of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited. Refund claims should be supported by evidence of enrolment in the unit(s) of study not delivered to completion, and evidence of the student contribution or tuition fee paid for the incomplete unit(s).

This Course Assurance Statement is published in full on the Avondale College website: www.avondale.edu.au

Excellence awards

Excellence awards are offered to encourage the pursuit of excellence by Avondale College students. Awards are presented in November of each year unless indicated otherwise. Further details regarding criteria and selection procedures are available from the Office of the Vice-President (Administration and Research).

Glossary of academic terms

Academic advisement

Each student is responsible for structuring his/her academic program in accordance with published requirements. Course coordinators are available to advise and assist students in arranging their academic program where necessary.

Academic regalia

Candidates for graduation are required to wear the specified academic regalia during graduation ceremonies, as determined by College administration.

Academic year

The academic year at Avondale College comprises two semesters of 14 weeks duration. In addition, a Winter Term (June–July) and a Summer Term (January–February) include residential schools for some postgraduate subjects. Note that there are two census dates for Semester 1. The census dates for each subject are listed on the Avondale College website.

Academic transcripts

Academic transcripts are the permanent academic record of each student and includes a list of all subjects in which the student has enrolled together with the grade awarded. Two free copies of the transcript are normally provided to each graduate following graduation. Further copies are available on request, and will be provided following payment of the standard charge. Official transcripts bear the impressed seal of Avondale College.

Appeals

Students may appeal against any administrative decision if appropriate grounds for an appeal exist. Non-frivolous appeals will be considered under the relevant guidelines such as the Grievance and Appeals policy, Anti-bullying and Harassment policy, or Postgraduate Student Handbook.

Auditing subjects

Auditing a subject involves attending class periods without doing assignments or taking tests or examinations. No academic credit is given for an audited subject. Students may audit classes provided that no more than one subject is audited each semester; the pre-requisites have been fulfilled; the lecturer has approved the audit arrangements; the subject is not a practical subject; and the audit fee has been paid. Students auditing subjects may change to credit status if the Course Coordinator approves, provided all assessment requirements have been or will be met. A student changing to credit status will be charged the full fee for the subject. Students who have demonstrated academic excellence by achieving a 75% average in their studies in the previous semester are permitted to audit one subject free.

Core subjects

Core subjects are certain required or mandatory subjects that form part of a postgraduate coursework degree. All students are required to undertake core subjects where designated as part of the degree.

Course

The total program of study leading to an academic award.

Credit points

In most courses the academic weighting of each subject is indicated by the number of credit points awarded to it. In postgraduate courses an equivalent full-time load is generally expected to be four 6-credit point subjects totalling 24 credit points per semester.

Degree regulations

All degrees are governed by degree regulations which are published on the Avondale College website, follow the links to Policies.

Disciplinary action

Students should note that the Code of Conduct identifies the behaviours expected of students. The Code of Discipline provides guidelines for responding to breaches of the Code of Conduct. If any student is suspended from College, he/she will be required to make a written request to Avondale College Administration before reinstatement as a student.

EFTSL (Effective Full Time Student Load)

One EFTSL is the standard study load for one year of a course of study. The standard full-time load in most postgraduate coursework masters degrees at Avondale College is four 6-credit point subjects per semester, or eight subjects per year. All 6-credit point subjects comprise 0.125 of a full-time load.

In the case of the Graduate Diploma in Theology, the Graduate Diploma of Ministry, the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) and the Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary) the standard study load for one year is eight 6-credit point subjects, each worth 0.125 EFTSL.

Elective

A subject which a student may choose within the elective parameters specified in the relevant course regulations.

Full-time student

Students enrolled in a normal full-time student load at Avondale College normally undertake four subjects (units of study) each semester. Eight subjects per annum is considered to be a normal full-time load. A full-time student is registered for at least seventy-five per cent of a full academic load or at least three subjects totalling 18 credit points in each semester of the academic year.

Graduation

Students are permitted to graduate from their course of study when they have fulfilled the requirements prescribed for their course, have achieved a passing grade for each subject listed for that course in the Handbook for the year that they entered the course or a later Handbook, and fully paid all outstanding fees.

Graduating class

Candidates for graduation join the graduating class in the year of their expected graduation. Unsatisfactory citizenship may result in suspension from the class.

Graduation in absentia

Graduates unable to attend the official graduation ceremony may graduate in absentia. Notification must be provided to the Academic Registrar in writing prior to the graduation ceremony of the intention.

Higher Education Provider (HEP)

Avondale College has been gazetted as a private Higher Education Provider under the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

Last day to enter a subject

Students are expected to be present for the instruction and orientation available in the initial class sessions of each semester. Where a student wishes to change a subject, a student may enter a subject up until the ninth academic day of the semester, provided the lecturers believe the student's capacity to succeed in the subject will not be compromised by such a late entry. Entering a class after the first day of the semester requires the signature of the Course Coordinator on the approved form.

Last day to withdraw from a subject

Students withdrawing from a subject prior to the census date must obtain the signature of the Course Coordinator on the appropriate form. Where this is approved prior to the census date, the student's academic record will indicate 'Withdrawn' (W). Where approval is granted after Census date a (WF) grade is awarded if the withdrawal takes place between Census date and week 8. Withdrawals after week 8 receive a grade of F.

Leave of absence

Any student enrolled in a course of study at Avondale College may apply for Leave of Absence from his/her course for up to two years by completing the prescribed form. If such leave is approved, the student is entitled to re-commence his/her course at any point in the future. Unless prior arrangements are made outlining how the original requirements of the student's course are to be completed, the student may be required to resume studies under the Handbook regulations existing at the time of re-enrolment.

Provisional enrolment

Students who do not meet the entry requirements for a particular course of study and have been admitted to a course under one of the alternate entry pathways, may be designated as 'provisionally enrolled' until such time as they demonstrate their capacity to succeed in the course or until such time as they meet the entry requirements.

Semester

Avondale College operates on a semester system. Undergraduate students normally undertake two semesters per year. Each semester comprises 14 weeks. Semester 1 normally commences in early March and Semester 2 normally commences in early August. Postgraduate courses may be offered in Semester 1, Semester 2 or as intensives as the Winter and Summer terms. Postgraduate courses undertaken by research may commence at any time of the academic year.

Subject

A self-contained unit of study normally equivalent to 0.125 EFTSL.

Subject area

A field of study generally synonymous with a single academic discipline (eg Theology, Education, Accounting).

Subject availability

Some subjects listed in the Handbook are offered only in alternate years. Subject availability is listed in the final section of the Handbook and indicated in the Subject Synopses. In addition, Avondale College reserves the right not to offer a subject should there be insufficient numbers of students enrolling in that subject, or non-availability of staff.

Subject codes

Subject codes at Avondale College indicate the discipline area and the year level of the subject. The first two letters indicate the discipline area (eg, ED indicates subjects in Education); the first digit indicates the level, for example:

- 0 indicates pre-degree
- 1 indicates 100-Level in an undergraduate degree
- 2 indicates 200-Level in an undergraduate degree
- 3 indicates 300-Level in an undergraduate degree
- 4 indicates Honours Level in an undergraduate degree, or a graduate entry course
- 5 indicates a coursework masters degree
- 6 indicates a research masters degree.

The final two digits indicate the number of the subject in the course sequence.

Subjects failed twice

Australian government visa regulations do not permit international students on student visas to repeat a failed subject more than once.

Subject workload

Part-time postgraduate students normally enrol in two 6-credit-point subjects each semester and each subject requires approximately 170 hours of time commitment to complete. The weekly time commitment for one subject is approximately 12 hours.

Testamur

A certificate issued at the completion of a course of study that indicates that the student has fulfilled all the requirements prescribed for that course of study.

Variation from academic policy or course regulations

All variations from academic policy or course regulations require prior approval by the Faculty Research and Teaching Committee in the case of postgraduate coursework degrees, or by the Research Committee in the case of postgraduate research degrees. Variations also may require the approval of the Teaching and Learning Committee and/or Academic Board. A request for any such variation must be submitted in writing to the Course Coordinator.

Withdrawal from a course

Students discontinuing their course part way through a semester must complete the official withdrawal form. Fee refunds for withdrawals prior to census dates are calculated from the date of completion of this form. A student who fails to comply with these formalities forfeits College fee refunds and is awarded a failure for each enrolled subject.

International students—special regulations

Student visas

International students planning to study in Australia need a passport and an Australian student visa. Visa conditions vary from country to country—see the DIMA (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) website: www.immi.gov.au/study. Applicants from many countries must provide evidence of English language competence. The IELTS test is the preferred English language assessment test for student visa applications. Avondale College's Admissions Office is happy to assist with information and guidance on visa matters.

Academic load

A student visa requires full-time enrolment (24 credit points) in a registered course of study. Student visa holders are normally expected to progress through their course at a rate of at least 75% (18 credit points) per semester.

Overseas health insurance cover

All student visa holders are required to have Australian Overseas Student Health Cover. Evidence of current cover must be produced before the beginning of each semester as a condition for continuing enrolment at Avondale College.

Change of course or course duration

Avondale College is required to inform DIMA of any change of course or course duration by an international student. Student visa conditions require the written approval of Avondale College to change from one course to another. If a student visa holder finishes a course prior to the scheduled completion date, he/she must either enrol with another institution within 28 days, or obtain a different visa, or leave Australia.

Academic performance

Avondale College is required to notify DIMA if student visa holder fails a subject twice.

Change of address

Student visa holders must inform the Academic Office of any change in their address or telephone number. If an international student fails to satisfy course requirements relating to attendance or satisfactory academic performance, the Academic Office is required to notify the student of this, and that the student must report to the DIMA office named in the notice within 28 days. If the student's address is not up to date and the student does not receive this notice, automatic visa cancellation could occur without the student's knowledge. Such cancellation may not be revoked if it has occurred because the student failed to keep Avondale College informed of his/her address and other contact details. A student visa holder must also notify DIMA at least two working days before any change of address.

Renewal of student visas

Student visas should be renewed at least six weeks before the current visa expires. Failure to renew before the current visa expires will result in deportation.

Deferral of study program

Student visa holders may only defer their studies on the following grounds:

- illness documented by a medical certificate
- other exceptional compassionate circumstances beyond the control of the student (eg bereavement).

Research ethics

Avondale College is committed to providing for the ethical review of research projects and other studies which involve certain interventions with humans as subjects. Such interventions could range from simple questionnaires, observations, case notes and clinical procedures through to various forms of physical or psychological invasive tests.

Investigators should seek clarification from the Human Research Ethics Committee if they have any doubts about the ethical nature of their investigations.

Applicants must be knowledgeable about the 'Principles of Ethical Conduct' outlined in: National Health and Medical Research Council (1999), National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans, Canberra: AusInfo. Investigators submit an application for ethical clearance prior to engaging in their research projects to The Secretary, Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee. The application should be completed on the electronic form located on the the Avondale College website and include: a title of the proposed project; the name of the principal investigator, co-investigators and supervisor; the duration of the proposed project; funding source; the purpose of the study; details of the study; assurance that anonymity of participants will be maintained; and a description of the arrangements made for secure storage of data. The investigator must state how the project complies with Commonwealth privacy legislation

The Human Research Ethics Committee functions to assess and provide clearance for proposed research studies to be undertaken by staff or research students involving human subjects, human materials or records from which participants in the study may be identified.

Specifically the functions of the Committee are to:

- Evaluate and provide written approval for those applications for ethical clearance that comply with the relevant legislation, codes of practice and Avondale College's published guidelines.
- Keep current a database of approved projects that includes the title of the project, the commencement and conclusion dates, and the names of persons indicated as responsible for each project.
- Provide guidance and peer review to applicants for ethical clearance in the use of appropriate ethical

procedures by providing guidelines for completing ethical clearance proposals and communicating with the outcome of those applications, the reasons for rejecting certain procedures.

- Develop relevant policy related to the use of human subjects in research and/or teaching, and recommend the adoption of that policy to the Avondale College Administrators Committee and/or College Council for approval.

The Committee is made up of one representative from each Faculty, one man from the community, one woman from the community, one member who is a lawyer, the research Services Officer Secretary, the Vice-President (Administration and Research) ex officio, and the chairperson is elected by the committee at the commencement of each year.

Meetings are normally scheduled five times in the year. In order to ensure a short turn-around time for researchers, additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson as applications are received.

Animal Research Ethics is administered under an auspiced arrangement with the University of Newcastle. An Avondale College Representative liaises with the Chair of the Animal Research Ethics Committee at the University of Newcastle. The University of Newcastle is responsible for official documentation and approval of research projects at Avondale College involving animals.

Supervision of research

The relationship between a postgraduate student and a supervisor is necessarily rather flexible, and may have various functions, but a good working relationship between student and supervisor is a significant factor in the successful completion of a Thesis/Dissertation.

The supervisor is in practice Avondale College's representative in ensuring that appropriate advice on the content and form of the Thesis/Dissertation is offered; and that work towards the Thesis/Dissertation is subject to regular and constructive critical review.

It is the responsibility of Postgraduate Studies Coordinators to inform students of the procedures for administering research programs, and to draw this code to the attention of postgraduate students.

Appointment of supervisors

- Prospective students will consult with the Course Coordinator concerning the nomination of an appropriate supervisor. It remains the responsibility of Faculty Deans to appoint supervisors. Candidates should be interviewed before being assigned to supervisors.
- A supervisor should be confident of his/her capacity and ability to act as an effective supervisor of the proposed topic. The supervisor should also be fully

aware of the regulations pertaining to postgraduate degrees.

- The arrangements for supervision should normally be agreed to by the candidate, the supervisor, and the Dean of Faculty before being approved by the Faculty's Research and Teaching Committee.
- The appropriateness of the appointed supervisor or clinical adviser should be reviewed as a matter of course by the end of the first year of candidature.
- An associate supervisor also will be appointed. This person should act as the supervisor whenever the supervisor is unable to do so; should be closely involved during formulation of the research plan; and should maintain a sufficient communication with the candidate to be able to advise or act as supervisor whenever appropriate. It may be also desirable at times to appoint a clinical adviser.
- Applicants may not be offered a place on a course before the Faculty has determined that appropriate supervision is available and that any special requirement, such as specialised equipment and/or library resources are available or obtainable.

Agreement between candidate and supervisor concerning research objectives and research methods

- Agreement does not necessarily mean that objectives and methods should be laid down by the supervisor, since the completed Thesis/Dissertation will finally be the candidate's responsibility, but if the candidate is faced with opposition from the supervisor the Thesis/Dissertation outcome is likely to be adversely affected.
- It is important that the supervisor offer the best possible and most informed advice on the scope of the proposed topic. The topic should be large enough in scope yet clearly delimited and sufficiently challenging intellectually so as to lead towards a probable positive outcome. It should be sufficiently circumscribed to allow completion within the normal period of writing for the degree and within the normal maximum length. As a general rule, Masters Research Theses should be no more than 50,000 words, Major Theses no more than 30,000 and minor theses no more than 15,000 words.
- The topic and its scope should be sufficiently defined by the end of the first semester to enable a reasonable indication of a successful completion within minimum time. Ideally, a written outline should exist by this stage.
- Supervisors should make it clear that as the research program progresses candidates may, and sometimes should, seek advice from other scholars in the field(s) in which the research is located. Supervisors should be prepared to offer guidance on where constructive advice may be sought.

- Supervisors should ensure that if the research topic involves animal or human experimentation the candidate has obtained the appropriate ethical clearance. (See the Human Research Ethics Committee section.)
- Supervisors should endeavour to warn candidates if the proposed topic is likely to be restricted by undue confidentiality requirements.
- Where the candidate is carrying out research within a collaborative team, his or her specific contribution to the whole project should be carefully defined. The candidate should also be encouraged to develop a thorough grasp of how this contribution fits into the whole project of which it is a part.
- Students should be made aware, before their study commences, that Avondale College has a policy on intellectual property. Potential problems should be raised before enrolment so that a conflict of interest between the student, Avondale College and the employer or sponsor does not occur later on. Where a conflict of interest over intellectual property arises after enrolment the advice of the Research Committee should be sought. A full statement of the Policy on Intellectual Property is available on the Avondale College Website.

Regular meetings between candidate and supervisor to discuss progress

- Appropriate procedures will differ from discipline to discipline, and according to the type of research involved. It is necessary to arrange for regular contact between candidate and supervisor. Candidates should normally consult with the supervisor on average approximately twice a semester.
- At the end of each meeting, the two participants should have a clear understanding of any decisions made and of what future plan of action, both short and long term, has been agreed upon. Candidates or supervisors may request that agreements reached between them be recorded in writing and signed by both.

Yearly report on a candidate's progress

At the end of each year of candidature, the Research Committee will receive a report on each candidate's progress from his or her supervisor. This report should accurately reflect the candidate's progress, and record any difficulties or problems encountered which may either immediately or in the future necessitate a variation in the candidature. The Yearly Report form should accurately record the frequency and type of contact between the candidate and his or her supervisor.

Supervisor functions, and publications arising out of the research project

- The supervisor should encourage the preparation of draft sections of the thesis in accordance with a timetable determined so as to allow completion within the normal period. It is the supervisor's responsibility to read and comment upon such drafts, and to return them to the candidate as quickly as is reasonable.
- Supervisors should be prepared to monitor employment undertaken by a full-time candidate while engaged upon the research project. Candidates may not be required to undertake employment, and should never be pressured to do so, and supervisors should not use candidates as unpaid research assistants or secretaries.
- Candidates may be encouraged to prepare papers for publication or for presentation at conferences.
- Where publications arise out of the research project, the candidate's name should always appear first on any paper which is derived from the candidate's thesis research and upon which he/she has worked; the appearance of other names on such papers is normally governed by the conventional practices of particular disciplines.

Procedures for dealing with problems of supervision or progress

- If a candidate or appointed supervisor feels that progress is not being made because the candidate/supervisor match is unsuitable, whether because of personality differences or because of directions taken by the research project, steps should be taken as expeditiously as possible to remedy the situation. As far as possible, such difficulties should be resolved at Faculty level, by negotiation between candidate and supervisor, and/or negotiation with the Faculty's Course Coordinator. Matters which cannot be satisfactorily resolved may be referred to the Faculty Dean.
- Requests for variations to a candidature must be referred, after discussion with the supervisor and the Course Coordinator, to the Research Committee.

Thesis submission

Length

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's degree by research will normally report the findings of a research investigation. As a general rule, Masters research theses should be no more than 50,000 words. Theses submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree, should be no more than 100,000 words. The actual length of the thesis, however, rests with the student after discussion with the supervisor, and is somewhat dependent on the research topic chosen and methodology adopted. This recommendation should be considered as a suggestion for normal practice. If the student, after discussion with the supervisor, considers that the thesis requires a major departure from this

recommendation such a request should be made to the Research Committee.

Structure

The thesis consists of the front pages and the main text.

The front pages include:

- a A title page that identifies the title of thesis, the student's name and qualifications, the name of the institution and faculty, and the date of submission.
- b The student's declaration contains statements relating to authorship and previous use of thesis materials, for example:
I, (student's name) hereby declare that:
 - this thesis is my own work,
 - all persons consulted, and all assistance rendered are fully acknowledged,
 - all references used are indicated in the text and accurately reported in the list of references,
 - the substance of this thesis has not been presented, in whole, or part by me, to any other institution for a degree.

Date Signature
- c Acknowledgements
- d Dedication (optional)
- e Abstract (maximum of 300 words)
- f Table of Contents
- g Lists of Tables, Figures and Appendices

The main text includes:

- a An introduction normally includes a statement of the problem, the need for the study, the hypothesis (depending on the study), the purpose of the study and a description of the structure of the thesis.
- b A literature review locating the study in the existing literature.
- c The structure of the main text of the thesis will vary according to the actual nature of a specific research study and the methodology adopted in the study. Each student should discuss the appropriate main text structure for their study with their supervisor. However, a thesis will normally contain the following components:
 - d The research methodology section should be identified and the design of the study described along with the theoretical framework adopted for the study, data collection techniques and data analysis processes.
 - e Discussion and conclusion
 - f References
 - g Appendices

Supervisor's critical comment on the final version of the thesis

A supervisor may advise against submission of a thesis at this stage, if further work seems necessary, but cannot forbid the candidate to submit the thesis, since ultimately the thesis must be regarded as the candidate's product. If a thesis is submitted against the supervisor's advice, however, the supervisor is entitled to submit a report detailing

criticisms of the thesis to the Research Committee. Such criticisms will not be communicated to examiners before the examination process is completed.

Submission of a thesis

Four copies in a temporary binding are to be submitted to the supervisor for examination.

Following approval of thesis/dissertation four bound copies are to be submitted to the Course Coordinator who disperses them to the library, faculty and two supervisors. One electronic copy is submitted to the Course Coordinator for inclusion in the library holdings.

Assessment criteria

The thesis is a quality academic research paper which should exhibit the attributes of a scholarly essay. The thesis is expected to demonstrate originality, critical insights, and a capacity for sustained argument and independent research. A contribution to knowledge is expected. The thesis should put forward a clearly-argued and well-supported position for a new result as an application of an idea, theory or practice. It should set out and remain within clear boundaries. The thesis should also demonstrate the following:

- the study is linked to existing knowledge and literature
- definitions, facts and ideas which are sufficient in theoretical breadth
- research question or problem clearly framed, employing appropriate terms and concepts
- where appropriate, hypotheses are formulated for testing showing the use of appropriate deductive and inductive processes
- appropriate methodologies selected and applied proficiently
- issues stated in the introduction should be addressed appropriately in the conclusion
- the study should use methodology effectively
- analysis of data and problem-solving which follows a logical progression of thought
- inconsistent views are described and argued
- realistic applications are identified and described
- analysis identifies and interprets appropriate concepts and relationships
- inferences, implications and inductions from the information are made, through clear, thoughtful and appropriate inductive logic
- clear integration of concepts and relationships of issues
- recommendations and implications for further studies are described clearly
- elicited data and conclusions should be soundly reasoned

The appointment of appropriate examiners

The Examining Committee varies depending on the level of the course. The Research Committee will appoint examiners who are authoritative in the field and whose

assessment will be respected: this is to the advantage of both the candidate and Avondale College.

Examiners

- Minor thesis (Masters coursework degree)—two examiners, both internal
- Major thesis (Masters coursework degree)—two examiners, one internal, one external
- Masters Research degree—two examiners, both external

Only supervisors may nominate the names of suitable persons as potential examiners, or persons who should not be appointed as examiners. Such nominations must be submitted in writing to the Research Committee, and be supported by adequate reasons. Supervisor's nominations will be taken into consideration in appointment of the examiners.

Examiners' reports

Each examiner will submit a written evaluation of the thesis to the chairperson of the examining committee. In the case of a major thesis in a Masters by coursework degree or a research only degree, the examiners will recommend one of the following outcomes:

- 1 Accept without conditions
- 2 Accept subject to modification within a specified time frame
- 3 Major revisions required; resubmit for re-examination
- 4 Fail

Revisions to a thesis range from minor to major rewriting. The supervisor's responsibility in the event of any rewrite is to determine the extent of revision required and to assist the candidate to focus revision on such key areas as identified by the examiners. If the original supervisor is no longer available, the Faculty must appoint a replacement supervisor. When revision is completed the supervisor should submit an appropriate report to the Chairperson of the Research Committee. If the chairperson of the Research Committee is unable to resolve disagreements between the examiners with respect to recommended outcome, the Research Committee shall consider the reports and give a ruling. If necessary, this committee may request a third suitable examiner to assess the thesis.

The submission of a supervisor's report when reports have been received from examiners

The Chair of the Research Committee receives the reports and conveys the results to the Faculty Dean who will convey the results to the supervisor and student.