

# Academic Policies

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NOTE: Refer to the Avondale website for full versions of the policies summarised here and for additional policies not located in this handbook

## Academic Integrity Policy

Avondale's Code of Conduct states that it is an educational aim of Avondale 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 expects students to act with integrity in the performance of their academic work while students at Avondale. Avondale 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

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own. Plagiarism is one form of academic dishonesty, and students are expected to avoid it 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. Further, students should refrain from: copying another student's work; lending an assignment to other students; 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.)

Students are required to declare that the work is their own by attaching a cover sheet to all assignments submitted. The cover sheet should include 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 unit or institution. I have read and understood Avondale's Academic Integrity Policy.*

Signed ..... Date.....

Lecturers undertake plagiarism prevention procedures in order to assist students to complete the required assessment tasks without pressure to plagiarise. These plagiarism prevention procedures include: rotating assessment tasks in subsequent teaching periods to prevent students using the work of previous students in the unit; coordinating the due dates of assignments so that assignment due dates are spread as evenly as possible throughout the semester; providing clear assignment instructions and the conditions under which assignments may be completed (e.g., with/without the use of calculators); refusing to mark assignments that do not have a properly signed cover sheet; and providing adequate feedback on all formative assessment work.

However, if a lecturer suspects plagiarism, the lecturer will, in collaboration with the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee, determine the appropriate penalty. Guidelines for this process are outlined below:

### Major Plagiarism

Major plagiarism is defined as an attempt to circumvent assessment requirements by drawing on unacknowledged sources in such a way as to improve the grade. This is serious misconduct and will not be tolerated. Guidelines for responding to instances of major plagiarism are as follows:

The lecturer who suspects or has evidence of major plagiarism reports their suspicions and/or provides evidence to the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee who in turn notifies the Faculty Dean and the Course Coordinator of the allegation and that an investigation will follow. The Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee checks the student's file in the Academic Office for earlier recorded instances of plagiarism. Where previous breaches are on file, these will be taken into consideration in the investigation.

The Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee sets up a meeting between the student(s), the lecturer and the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee. Where two or more students are involved both/all student(s) are interviewed simultaneously. The Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee acts as facilitator of the meeting. The lecturer outlines his/her cause for concern and explains the basis for his/her concerns. The Chair asks the student(s) for an explanation. If plagiarism is established the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee takes a penalty recommendation to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee. Students in their second or later teaching periods 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 units taken at Avondale): fail grade for the unit.
- **Third offence** (counting all units taken at Avondale): fail grade for the unit and the student shall be asked to show cause why they should not be excluded from

their course of study for a period of 2 years. Any student excluded from one course of study will not be permitted to transfer any internal advanced standing to another course of study.

If major plagiarism is established the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee reports the matter to the Registrar who will ensure that a record is placed in the student's file in the Academic Office. This record will include the date, the unit involved, the nature and extent of the plagiarism, and the action taken. Copies of the relevant documents also should be included in the file.

### Minor Plagiarism

Minor plagiarism is defined as uninformed omissions of details which are minor in nature and by themselves are unlikely to alter the student's overall grade (e.g., omission of a limited number of referencing details or incorrect referencing details.) It is acknowledged that these minor omissions and errors are more likely to occur in the student's first semester on campus, and therefore, responses should be more educative at that time. Education and rehabilitation are the preferred course of action.

However, major plagiarism may occur in a student's first semester and in such cases the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee should use the guidelines for resolving major plagiarism as outlined above in resolving the matter. In addition, not all instances of minor plagiarism occur in first semester. Where instances of minor plagiarism occur in subsequent teaching periods the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee should use the guidelines for resolving minor instances of plagiarism in resolving these cases.

Guidelines for resolving minor instances of plagiarism are that, in the first instance, a student is to be issued with a warning and a note filed on the academic file. Subsequent instances of minor plagiarism will be penalized with increasing severity as determined by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

In all cases of plagiarism a record will be kept on the student's academic file and this record will include a copy of the plagiarised work, the findings of any investigation, and a record of the actions taken.

### Incorrectly Ascribing Authorship In Group Projects

Students may be required to work cooperatively with other students in exploring the issues underpinning concepts later required to be developed for submission as assessment items. In such cases, it is acknowledged that the ideas may be similar, but from these initial ideas students must develop their own assignment which should be their own independent work. Students who have worked collaboratively in a group must acknowledge the other members of the group and indicate on the front cover of the assignment that conceptual work was done in a group. The cover should then include an acknowledgement of the names of the other members of the group.

Alternatively students may be required to work together and submit an assignment that represents the work of the group. In these cases, the assignment is submitted as a joint assignment. Only one copy of the assignment should be submitted, and the assignment should include the names of both/all contributors. In such cases a single mark will be awarded and an identical mark will be recorded for all contributors.

Students who work on group projects and incorrectly ascribe authorship, other than in the ways indicated above, will be treated under the guidelines for resolving major plagiarism or minor plagiarism depending on the judgment of the Chair of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

### **Cheating in Examinations**

Cheating in examinations is another form of intellectual dishonesty and students attempts to circumvent assessment requirements by cheating in examinations will be taken seriously. Avondale is committed to conducting examinations in a manner to ensure academic integrity is maintained.

In supervising examinations invigilators and/or other persons in authority will refer suspected instances of cheating in examinations to the Registrar and these reports will be referred to the Chair of the Faculty Examination Board; and take action where candidates have unauthorized materials in their possession.

The Faculty Examination Board will:

- Investigate seriously all allegations of suspected cheating in examinations;
- Take action to protect the reputation of Avondale and other students in cases where attempts to circumvent assessment requirements by cheating in examinations has been established.
- Notify the Chair of the Academic Board and the Registrar of the circumstances and substance in relation to all cases of cheating in examinations.

The Chair of the Academic Board will ensure that appropriate records are included in the student's file in the Academic Office, appropriate persons are notified and appropriate penalties are implemented.

### **Penalties for Cheating in Examinations**

Cheating in any form during an examination will normally result in a failing grade being recorded for the unit in question and may result in exclusion from the course of study.

Further instances of cheating in examinations will result in a fail grade for the unit and the student shall be asked to show cause why they should not be excluded from their course of study for a period of 2 years. Any student excluded from one course of study will not be permitted to transfer any internal advanced standing to another course of study.

## **Admission to Undergraduate Degree Courses**

Applications from all prospective students are welcome and no test of religion, politics, race or gender is applied to determine admission as a student, graduation or the enjoyment of any benefit, advantage or privilege of the institution. Admission to Avondale is dependent on demonstrated evidence of good character, intellectual competence, and a willingness to conform to Avondale regulations. Several pathways are available to admission but the onus is on the student to demonstrate his/her capacity to succeed in tertiary education. Avondale will accept various forms of documentary evidence to support this claim, such as:

### **Year 12 Satisfactory Completion**

Australian and New Zealand students may provide evidence of satisfactory completion of Year 12 (Australia) or Year 13 (New Zealand). This may be through achieving a satisfactory Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score or its equivalent in other States (e.g., OP) or the International Baccalaureate.

### **TAFE Qualifications**

Successful completion of an Australian VET or TAFE award at Certificate IV or higher (or equivalent) will normally be considered to meet the entry requirements into the undergraduate degree courses at Avondale. Individual courses may have specific entry requirements.

### **Foundation Studies**

Successful completion of a Foundation Studies Course at a recognised Australian institution, designed to prepare students for tertiary education, may be used to gain entry into the undergraduate degree courses at Avondale.

### **Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT)**

An appropriate score in the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) may be provided by applicants who do not have a satisfactory ATAR or its equivalent, and who are more than nineteen years of age by the census date in the commencing semester of studies.

### **Special Consideration**

Special consideration may be extended to people who have suffered economic or social disadvantage. Disadvantage may be the result of many factors including: low socio-economic background, non-English speaking background, family disruption, high mobility in childhood, little encouragement to continue study, primary care of children, remote area background, excessive travel time to school, personal illness, injury, disability, or refugee status. In such cases, the onus remains with the applicant to demonstrate a level of knowledge that indicates a capacity to succeed at tertiary level. This may be done by undertaking the STAT test (at the discretion of the Registrar the age requirement may be waived in special circumstances), relevant TAFE qualifications, or by recent passes in at least two degree level units completed at a recognised tertiary institution.

## Additional Requirements

### Specific pre-requisites

Some courses have specific pre-requisites and these are listed with the information about that particular course later in this Handbook.

### For applicants for Commonwealth-Supported Places in education and nursing

Offers of places are made in order of academic merit (based on Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) or other entry qualifications as assessed by the Registrar).

### For courses involving contact with vulnerable people

Applicants for courses in Education, Nursing, Theology and any other courses that include contact with children, young people, the ill, or other classes of vulnerable people are required to sign a self-disclosure form (Prohibited Persons Declaration) and consent to a criminal record check. These checks may be required by organisations providing professional experience placements, fieldwork, clinical placements, work experience or professional internship placements. Applicants should note that in order to run the criminal records check, an employer body or other agency may require Avondale to provide it with personal information including name, date and place of birth, citizenship status and current address.

### For courses including fieldwork

Some courses require professional experience placements, fieldwork, clinical components, work experience or professional internship placements. If organisations/agencies providing such placements decline for any reason to permit a student to undertake this aspect of his/her studies, then he/she may not be able to complete the requirements of the course. Avondale will do all that is reasonable to arrange an alternative location for the student to undertake such compulsory components. However, Avondale cannot guarantee that such an option will be available. Students should therefore note that, in such circumstances, they may not be able to graduate with the anticipated award.

Other courses such as nursing also require adherence to relevant NSW Health Department vaccination and screening guidelines that are in place during the time of their course. This may require completion of some vaccinations or undertaking of particular screening for exposure to, or protection from, certain diseases. Non-participation in this vaccination and screening program may prevent the completion of compulsory clinical placements and hence the student may not be able to graduate with the anticipated award.

### For applicants whose first language is not English

Courses at Avondale are delivered in the English language. In order to complete the courses successfully, international applicants from a country where English is not the first language must demonstrate proficiency in English in one of the following ways, except for nursing students:

- 1 Provide documentary evidence at the time the application is lodged that all secondary schooling was conducted in

the English language, AND evidence of a satisfactory pass in English in a British O level examination or local equivalent; *or*

- 2 Provide documentary evidence at the time the application is lodged of a satisfactory pass in the standardised IELTS test with a score of 6.5 or better, with no individual band score less than 6.0 for all courses in all Faculties except courses in the Faculty of Education which require a minimum IELTS score of 7.5 in each category.
- 3 Provide documentary evidence at the time the application is lodged of a satisfactory pass in the standardised TOEFL test at a score of 580 (630 for Faculty of Education) with no score less than 5.0 (5.5 for Education) in the Test of Written English in all Faculties; *or*
- 4 Successful completion of at least two years of tertiary study conducted in the English language in Australia or another country in which English is the official language within the last two years.

Applicants for the Bachelor of Nursing whose first language is not English will normally be required to provide documentary evidence at the time the application is lodged of a satisfactory pass in the standardised Academic IELTS test with a score of 6.5 or better, with no individual band score less than 6.5 and dated within 2 years of the expected commencement of the degree. Exemptions to this requirement will normally be granted to Permanent Residents/Australian citizens who have completed all their secondary schooling in Australia and completed the Higher School Certificate or equivalent.

These English entry requirements are a minimum level and applicants are advised to take further English study after enrolment if specific language challenges are encountered.

If applicants do not meet these English language requirements but satisfy all other academic requirements, they will be advised to undertake instruction in an English Language program. (Avondale is able to advise prospective students of the location of English Language Schools in Australia.) For admission to all Faculties except the Faculty of Nursing and Health, the combination of an English language course together with their chosen Avondale course may be taken as a “package offer” in which the English course is followed by undergraduate study.

### For international students

Overseas applicants are also required to satisfy Australian Government visa requirements. Applicants from countries deemed Level 3 or 4 by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) will be required to obtain an IELTS score of 6.0 or better (however, please note the entry requirements for Avondale courses as identified above) to be eligible to obtain a visa, even if other options listed above are demonstrated. The Australian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate in the home country will provide information regarding the visa requirement. (See <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm> ).

In exceptional circumstances demonstrated English proficiency to the satisfaction of the Academic Registrar, subject to DIAC requirements, will be accepted.

**English language proficiency requirement for teachers in NSW**

International students require an International English Language Test Score (IELTS) of at least 8.0 for speaking and listening prior to being employed as graduate teachers in New South Wales

**English language proficiency requirement for nurses in Australia**

Applicants for the Bachelor of Nursing whose first language is not English will normally be required to provide documentary evidence at the time the application is lodged of a satisfactory pass in the standardised Academic IELTS test with a score of 6.5 or better, with no individual band score less than 6.5 and dated within 2 years of the expected commencement of the degree. Exemptions to this requirement will normally be granted to Permanent Residents/Australian citizens who have completed all their secondary schooling in Australia and completed the Higher School Certificate or equivalent.

Country	Entry Certificate Required
All countries	Successful completion of the International Baccalaureate with a minimum of 24
Botswana	Successful completion of a minimum of 3 GCE "A" level subjects (at least 2 subjects in one sitting) <i>or</i> Successful completion of one year of study at a recognised university
Brazil	Successful completion of one year of tertiary study at a recognised university; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of a recognised college or TAFE diploma
Canada	Provincial High School or Secondary School Diploma satisfying entry to Canadian University; <i>or</i> Ontario year 13 Secondary School Diploma with average of 65%
Peoples Republic of China	Satisfactory completion of one year of tertiary study at a recognised university; <i>or</i> Applicants with completed degrees should provide certified proof of completion including National Emblem, certificate number and accreditation of their degree; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of a recognised college or TAFE diploma
Denmark	Successful completion of Danish Studentereksamen or equivalent
Fiji	Satisfactory completion of Form 7; <i>or</i> satisfactory completion of a recognised Foundation Year
France	Successful completion of Baccalaureate
Germany	Successful completion of Abitur or Reifezeugnis
Hong Kong	Successful completion of minimum of 3 HK or GCE "A" level subjects (at least 2 subjects in one sitting)
India	Successful completion of Indian School Certificate; <i>or</i> Successful completion of All India Senior School Certificate
Indonesia	Successful completion of one year of tertiary study at a recognised university with grades above 6.5 Completion of SMU 3 with a GPA of 8.0 (Nursing, Science and Mathematics requires 8.6)
Japan	Satisfactory completion of one year of tertiary study at a recognised university or junior college; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of a recognised college or TAFE diploma
Kenya	Successful completion of a minimum of three GCE "A" level subjects (at least two subjects in one sitting)
Korea (South)	Successful completion of one year of tertiary study at a recognised university; <i>or</i> Korean Senior High School Diploma with a GPA of 3.5
Malaysia	Successful completion of one year of tertiary study at a recognised university; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of a recognised college or TAFE diploma; <i>or</i> Successful completion of STPM (minimum of three subjects); <i>or</i> Successful completion of a minimum of three GCE "A" level subjects (at least two subjects in one sitting)
Netherlands	Successful completion of Dutch Diploma of Higher General Secondary Education
New Zealand	NCEA Level three with university entry; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion University Bursaries Examination (pre 2004)
Norway	Successful completion of Vitnemal or den Videragenade Skole+ 4 in English
Pacific Islands	Satisfactory completion of the University of the South Pacific Foundation Year
Papua New Guinea	Satisfactory completion of either the NSW, ACT or QLD Year 12 certificate; <i>or</i> PNG Higher School Certificate with minimum of five subjects with at least 3 'B' grades or better
Philippines	Satisfactory completion of one year of study at a recognised university
Singapore	Successful completion of a minimum of three GCE "A" level subjects (at least two subjects in one sitting)
South Africa	Satisfactory completion of the South African National Senior Certificate; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of the SA Senior Certificate; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of the Matriculation Certificate of the Joint Matriculation Board (6 higher grade subjects must be presented)
Sweden	Satisfactory completion of the Swedish Secondary School Leaving Certificate
Taiwan	Satisfactory completion of one year of study at a recognised university; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of two years at a recognised junior college
Tanzania	Successful completion of a minimum of three GCE "A" level subjects (at least two subjects in one sitting); <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education
Thailand	Successful completion of the Matayom 6 Thai Certificate of Secondary Education; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of one year of tertiary study at a recognised university
Uganda	Successful completion of a minimum of three GCE "A" level subjects (at least two subjects in one sitting); <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of Ugandan Advanced Certificate of Education
United Kingdom	Successful completion of a minimum of three GCE "A" level subjects (at least two subjects in one sitting)
United States	Successful completion of one year of tertiary study at a recognised university; <i>or</i> Satisfactory completion of a recognised college or TAFE diploma; <i>or</i> Graduation from High School plus appropriate SAT, APT or ACT (minimum GPA of 3.0 and minimum SAT score of 1700)
Zambia	Successful completion of a minimum of three GCE "A" level subjects (at least two subjects in one sitting)
Zimbabwe	Successful completion of a minimum of three GCE "A" level subjects (at least two subjects in one sitting)

Prospective students who wish to appeal against a determination made with respect to admission to Avondale are referred to the Student Grievance and Appeals Policy (see Academic Grievances/Prospective Student Section) which is located on the Avondale website at <http://www.avondale.edu.au/information::Policies>

## Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer

Students may apply for advanced standing in undergraduate or postgraduate courses where they have completed formal studies at another higher education institution. Students apply by submitting to the Course Coordinator the application for advanced standing form and an original copy of any relevant Statement of Academic Record (Transcript) as documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of that course or courses. A decision is made by the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee about the level at which the student will enter the course (e.g., one year of advanced standing means the student will enter the course at the level of Year 2). The maximum amount of credit that may be granted normally is no greater than 49% of the course. (Where vocational education and training is in an area related to the content of the undergraduate degree course, credit may be granted for up to one year of the Avondale undergraduate course for studies completed at the Diploma or Advanced Diploma level.)

*NOTE: Your application may also need approval by any related professional body; and you must have been assessed as competent in the modules you undertook.*

### Block or Unspecified Credit

Students may apply for unspecified or block credit in undergraduate or postgraduate courses where they have completed a block of units that comprise part of a course at a recognised higher education institution. Students apply by submitting to the Course Coordinator the application for advanced standing form and an original copy of any relevant Statement of Academic Record (Transcript) as documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of those units. A decision is made by the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee about the equivalence of the block of units from which the student will be exempted (eg, a major/minor sequence). The maximum amount of credit which may be granted normally is no greater than 49% of the course. Where vocational education and training study is in an area related to the content of the degree course, credit may be granted for up to one year of the Avondale degree course for studies completed at the Diploma or Advanced Diploma level.

*NOTE: Your application may also need approval by any related professional body; and you must have been assessed as competent in the modules you undertook.*

### Credit Transfer in Units

Students may apply for credit transfer in undergraduate or postgraduate courses where they have completed a unit or units at a recognised higher education institution. Where the study has been completed external to Avondale students apply by submitting to the Course Coordinator the application for advanced standing form and an original copy of any relevant Statement of Academic Record (Transcript) as documentary evidence of satisfactory completion of a similar unit(s) as well as additional documentary evidence to indicate the content covered in the unit. Where the study has been undertaken in

a different course at Avondale, the Course Coordinator and lecturer approve any units which can be transferred to the course in which the student subsequently enrolls.

A decision is made about the equivalence of the unit(s) from which the students will be exempted (e.g., Chemistry IA). Decisions about credit transfer applications will be made by the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee on the following basis:

- units for which credit is granted should have reasonable correspondence to units offered by Avondale;
- credit is normally not granted for work completed more than 10 years previously;
- students wishing to take out two Avondale awards may be granted cross credits not exceeding 49% of the shorter course;
- where a student qualifies for two awards at Avondale, the Christian Studies units for the longer course are deemed to meet the requirements of the shorter course;
- requests for credit transfer in excess of these guidelines may be considered by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee on a case-by-case basis and recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee for approval, but will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

### Waiver/Exemption

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

### Credit by Challenge Assessment

Incoming students may submit to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee an application to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of a particular unit through prior learning. The Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee may permit the applicant to demonstrate their prior learning through submitting a summative assessment item normally in the form of an examination. In such cases, the Faculty Dean shall be satisfied that the summative assessment item is set and assessed at the same level as that expected of other students in the unit. The student must achieve at least a passing grade.

Upon successful completion of the challenge assessment, the student must submit a request for credit transfer for the relevant unit, providing documentary evidence of the successful completion of the challenge assessment.

### Partial Credit

Students may seek partial credit from assessment within a unit by applying to the lecturer in charge of the particular unit. 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 (e.g., for

providing a Certificate of Completion for the standard “Basic Week Workshop” offered by the William Glasser Institute a student may be exempted from one assignment in a behaviour management course).

### Christian Studies Units

Students admitted with advanced standing who will require more than two semesters to complete a course leading to the awarding of an undergraduate degree at Avondale must complete any two of the following units:

- Christian Studies I and variants
- Christian Studies II and variants
- Christian Studies III and variants, *or*  
choose an equivalent number of units from the range of units offered in the Faculty of Theology.

Students who have previously taken the required number of these units or approved alternatives at Avondale or other institution will be exempted from the above requirements. Students admitted with advanced standing in the Bachelor of Nursing course should seek advice on Christian Studies requirements from the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Health.

### Credit Transfer through Cross Institutional Enrolment

Avondale 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 course.

Upon successful completion of the units at the other institution, it is the student’s responsibility to submit an application for credit transfer to the Course Coordinator and attach an original copy of the official Statement of Academic Record (Transcript) from the other institution. This documentation must be received no later than the published deadline for grade upload for prospective graduates prior to the student’s graduation, and earlier if possible.

### Appeals on Academic Matters Policy

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

Students at Avondale have access to a 4-stage academic grievance process which is set out below. The grievance and appeals process will be conducted at no cost to the student or the person who seeks redress in this manner.

- 1 (a) The student (or nominee) initiates the grievance process by discussing orally the nature of the grievance with the person with whom the grievance is held.
  - (b) If the oral response does not satisfy the student he/she may either speak with the Course Coordinator or submit a written description of the grievance to the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the VET Department who will endeavour to resolve the issue amicably and with respect to the rights and responsibilities of both parties. If the matter is able to be resolved, the Course Coordinator or Dean of the Faculty will report the outcome to the student. If the student feels unwilling or unable to approach either the person with whom the grievance is held or the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the VET Department, the student may seek the support of, or seek to be represented by, another person such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person, the Director of Student Services, a representative of the Avondale Student Association Council, the Equity Officer, the Disabilities Officer, the Student Counsellor, or the Chaplain.
  - (c) If the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the VET Department 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.
- 2 (a) If the matter remains unresolved then the student should submit a written grievance with full supporting documentation 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.
  - (b) The Vice President (Learning and Teaching), in consultation with a sub-committee (comprising no more than 4 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 full explanation in writing for the decision and actions taken as part of the procedures, if requested, by the complainant and/or respondent.
- 3 (a) If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) in Stage 2, the student may apply in writing to the Review Officer who is the President of Avondale and who also is a member of the Avondale Council, provided that the Avondale President has not been involved in the preceding process. The Avondale President may delegate this function to another person provided that the other person holds a rank that is more senior than any person previously involved in the

process (such as the Education Director of the South Pacific Division of SDAs who is also a member of the Avondale Council) and provided that that person has not already been involved in the preceding review process.

Students who request a review of the decision of the Vice-President (Learning and Teaching) must follow the following process:

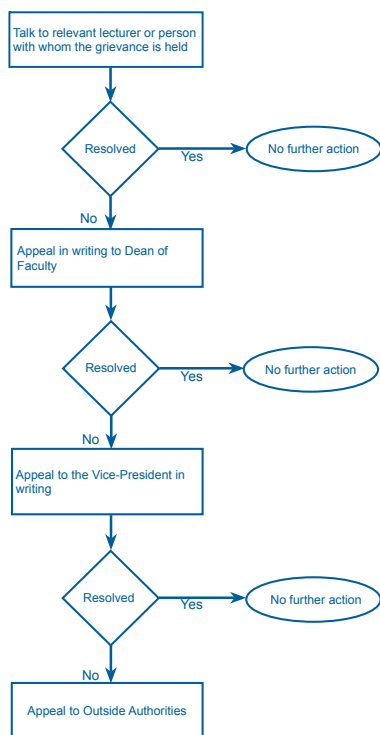
Write a letter to the President of Avondale and lodge it with the President's Personal Assistant within 28 days after the day on which the student/applicant received the notice of the outcome of the initial grievance/appeal application.

- (b) In reviewing grievance and appeals decisions the Office of the President will provide written acknowledgement within five working days of the receipt of the application for review of a reviewable decision. This letter of receipt of the application for review will include the statement, "*A final determination will be made within 45 days.*"
  - (c) If after 45 days the student has not received a letter advising him/her of the outcome of the review of the decision, the student is advised to call the Office of the President for information regarding the date on which the final determination was mailed. If the student is unable to obtain information about the outcome of the final decision the student must assume that the original decision remains unaltered and may proceed to the next stage of the process which is to lodge an appeal with an appropriate body external to Avondale.
- 4 (a) If not satisfied with the decision of the Review Officer in Stage 3, the student may request that the matter be further reviewed by the Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE).
- (b) The Grievance and Appeal process outlined above does not preclude the student seeking redress in other forums outside the Avondale process. For example, the student may wish to take the matter further by selecting the appropriate body from among such bodies as the NSW Fair Trading (Newcastle Centre), Level 5, 400 Hunter St, Newcastle (02-4925-7000), DEEWR (Dept of Education & Workplace Relations) 133-397, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1-300-656419) or the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW (02-49264300). (A full list of external bodies is located in the Government section of the local telephone book.) If one of the relevant outside authorities as outlined above gives a directive in relation to a grievance they have reviewed, the relevant outside authority will forward that directive to the President within a reasonable time who will ensure that the directive is acted upon within 14 days.

Students should note that:

- The Office of the Vice President (Learning and Teaching) will keep appropriate records of academic 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.
- All information obtained in the Grievance and Appeals and Review of Decisions processes will be treated confidentially and will also be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988.
- 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 unit, the written guidelines which lecturers have provided to students will be taken as definitive.
- Avondale 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.
- Avondale will ensure that students will not be victimized or discriminated against for submitting a grievance or appeal for consideration and as outlined in this policy.
- At all stages of the process, reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures will be given if requested by the complainant or respondent.
- At all stages of the process, the complainant and/or respondent may be accompanied and assisted by a third party if desired.
- Avondale will respond to grievances within the time periods indicated.
- Avondale will notify incoming students of the location of this policy on the Avondale website.
- Avondale will induct incoming staff in the location of this policy and in its correct use.
- A person seeking to appeal a decision or action taken regarding a student, financial or academic matter must apply to the relevant responsible officer within 12 months of the decision or action. Avondale may waive the 12 month deadline in special circumstances or if it is satisfied that the application could not be made within this time limit.

The following flow chart summarises the student grievance and appeals process for academic matters:



Note: The full version of this policy is located on the Avondale website and includes processes for resolving grievances and appeals on non-academic matters and processes for prospective students.

## Assessment Policy (Undergraduate)

Assessment tasks are set in each unit to promote learning and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned. So that a focus on learning is maintained, assessment tasks may be termed 'learning tasks'. 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, and the requirements for professional registration where necessary.

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

Learning 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:

- learning in relation to the body of knowledge identified in the unit outline;
- understanding of the key concepts of the unit;
- 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.

## Types and Number of Learning Tasks

The learning tasks in each unit normally:

- require students to apply the knowledge that they have learned to problems that graduates of the course may encounter in the workplace;
- measure whether or not the intended learning outcomes stated in the unit outlines and the content covered in the course have been achieved;
- is completed, with other unit requirements, within the allocated time of 149 hours for each 6-credit point unit.

Avondale acknowledges that the types, amount and frequency of learning tasks influence the quality of student learning. In order to design and implement units and courses of high quality consistent with our mission, the learning tasks are integrated into the overall pedagogy of the course. Normally a full-load is considered to be four, 6 credit-point units per semester and each unit requires 149 hours of time commitment. The design/type of each of the assessment items set for students is directly influenced by the time available for students to complete it, and by the availability of institutional resources allocated to assist completion. Learning tasks are designed to provide information to the lecturer on the degree to which each student has achieved the intended learning outcomes as stated in the unit profile. Each learning task need be no larger than that required by the lecturer to assess whether or not the student has achieved the learning outcome.

The use of a variety of different approaches is encouraged. In some cases the professional accrediting bodies require that these learning tasks be of a certain form and amount. In all cases, the type, amount and frequency of the learning tasks and the criteria by which grading will be determined, need to be communicated to the student early in the semester (preferably week 1 and no later than week 2) as this information will influence the amount and type of learning that the student achieves throughout the semester.

This policy is not intended to influence in any way the design of the learning tasks but where written tasks are set, the following parameters are issued as guides for the purpose of promoting equity between faculties and units. The word limits for assessment tasks should be no greater than the following:

First year students' assessment in a unit where there is an exam	3,000 wds
Second year students' assessment in a unit where there is an exam	3,490 wds
Third and fourth year students' assessment in a unit where there is an exam	4,000 wds
First year students' assessment in a unit where there is no exam	5,000 wds
Second year students' assessment in a unit where there is no exam	5,490 wds
Third year students' assessment in a unit where there is no exam	6,000 wds

Units offered by distance education mode have an extra 1,000 words available beyond the maximum word limit identified for assessment tasks (such as online responses, online chats etc.) which replace what would be expected of students attending classes in an on-campus mode.

### Learning Tasks

Unit outlines provided to students at the commencement of each semester include a description of the learning tasks, their relative weighting, assigned 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 learning tasks, Avondale academic staff use both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced methods depending on the constraints of each unit. When using both methods, 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 (marked assignments are returned to students as soon as is practicable after submission); and
- informative (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 units to be counted towards an award although PT grades, as indicated in the descriptor below, 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 49–64%
- **Pass Terminating (PT)** normally indicating achievement in the range of 45–49%. PTs indicate that the unit may not be used as a pre-requisite for a unit at a more advanced level. Normally no more than one PT is permitted in a two-year associate degree, and no more than three PTs are permitted in a three-year or four-year bachelor degree. A PT is not permitted for a 300 level unit. The maximum number of combined Pass Terminating and Pass Conceded grades allowed will be two in a two or three year degree and three in a four year degree.
- **Pass Conceded (PC)** normally indicates that the student achieved a grade in the range of 45–49% but the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee has determined the student's overall performance warrants a PC grade rather than a fail grade. A PC grade allows the student to use the unit as a pre-requisite for another unit. A PC grade may be awarded only if the following conditions are satisfied:
  - i. The student achieved a grade in the range of 45–49% for the unit;
  - ii. The student has achieved a minimum weighted average mark of 55% for the semester in which the PC is awarded;
  - iii. The student has passed at least 75% of the units in which he or she was enrolled in the year in which the PC grade was awarded.

The maximum number of combined Pass Terminating and Pass Conceded grades allowed will be two in a two or three year degree and three in a four year degree.
- **Fail, supplementary available (FS)** is reserved for students who have passed other items of assessment and who may pass the unit if they achieve a higher score by completing extra assignment work, practical work, and/or an examination. Supplementary assessments normally are awarded where a student failed a unit because an essential assessment component for the unit has not met the minimum requirement but the aggregate score for the assessment is greater than or equal to 49%, 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. Normally no more than two supplementary assessments will be granted in a two or three year degree course and no more than three will be granted in a four year degree course. Supplementary assessments are to be submitted by the end of the first week of the semester following that in which the unit was studied unless otherwise determined by the Faculty Examination Board. The maximum grade

that can be available for a supplementary assessment is 64%. If the supplementary assessment is not completed by the specified date the FS grade will convert to an FF. If the supplementary assessment(s) is not attempted the FS grade reverts to a F. The lecturer in charge of the unit is responsible for notifying the student of the work to be completed, and also for notifying the Course Coordinator when the work has been received, marked and a final grade for the unit is available. The Course Coordinator will then input the grade into Callista, or notify the Academic Office of the final grade.

- **Pass with supplementary assessment (PS)** indicates that the student achieved a passing grade after completing an additional assessment.
- **Fail (F)** normally in the range 0-49% however, a failing grade may be awarded in any unit where minimum requirements in essential components have not been met.
- **Fail after supplementary assessment attempted (FF)** indicates that the student achieved a failing grade after completing additional assessment.
- **Withdrawal without penalty (W)** indicates that the student was permitted to withdraw from the unit without academic or financial penalties.
- **Withdrawal late without academic penalty (WL)** indicates that the student was permitted to withdraw late from the unit without academic penalty but financial penalties were imposed.
- **Fail due to late withdrawal (FW)** indicates that the student withdrew late from the unit and financial and academic penalties were imposed.
- **Incomplete (IC)** indicates that the unit is incomplete due to an 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 unit may award an IC. The lecturer in charge of the unit 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 Course Coordinator when the work has been submitted, marked and of the final grade for the unit before the relevant census date for the next semester. The Course Coordinator will then input the grade into Callista, or notify the Academic Office of the final grade.
- **Deferred examination (DE)** indicates that the student is required to successfully complete a deferred examination in the unit before the unit 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 supported by a medical certificate

(where illness is the ground for the application), or by a Residence Hall Director, Director of Student Services or the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Health (for the Sydney campus) in other cases. 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 problems immediately to the attention of the chief examination supervisor who shall report to the Academic Registrar (Lake Macquarie Campus) or Faculty Administration Office (Sydney Campus). 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 (Lake Macquarie Campus) or Faculty Administration Office (Sydney Campus), 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 unit in which the full-range of grades was not available
- **Unsatisfactory (U)** indicates unsatisfactory achievement in a unit for which the full range of grades was not available
- **Audit (AD)** indicates attendance at classes but the student was not enrolled in the unit and did not complete assessment tasks.

### Norm-Referenced Assessment

In a norm-referenced procedure, 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 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 procedure 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.

## Attendance Policy

Avondale aims to encourage a positive and supportive learning environment for all its students. The educational program at both the Lake Macquarie and Sydney campuses includes lectures, tutorials, laboratory and clinical activities, and professional experience to enhance individual learning. The Avondale educational program requires students enrolled in the on-campus mode to attend scheduled educational activities for the following reasons:

- Lecturers design courses so that students are able to achieve the stated learning outcomes as approved by the NSW Department of Education and Training and as required by relevant professional bodies. At graduation the course coordinator must certify that students have met the requirements for graduation. An Avondale graduation testamur indicates that students have successfully completed the requirements for their course. Where students do not participate in the learning activities that have been designed for their course, they may not be able to meet the intended learning outcomes for their course and are at risk of failure.
- There is also the duty of stewardship. Parents, friends and church sponsors as well as the individual student, contribute to the provision of educational opportunity and privilege. The duty of stewardship implies a responsibility on the part of Avondale and of the student to these various sponsors to maximize opportunities, resources and time.
- Avondale staff often are asked by employers to provide references for potential employees. These employers often request comments on responsibility patterns of potential employees as demonstrated in attendance and punctuality at academic appointments.

For these reasons Avondale requires punctual and regular attendance at all (ie 100%) classes, lecture appointments, tutorials, laboratories and clinical or other work experience placements. Students should be aware that attendance records are maintained by lecturers. Students are responsible for their attendance. Occasions when a student arrives more than 10 minutes late for appointments may accumulate to count as absences.

The Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee may implement measures to deal with unsatisfactory attendance. Such measures may include:

- the notification and counselling of students when their attendance pattern is putting their study program at risk;
- the requirement of a student to withdraw from a unit;
- the requirement of additional make-up work;
- the denial of academic credit;

Students who for any reason, including sickness, do not maintain a minimum of 85% attendance at class/lecture/laboratory/clinical appointments may be recorded, by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee, as having a

fail-withdrawal (FW) from the unit and will be notified accordingly in writing or by email by the Course Coordinator. The Registrar will be notified of the FW grade and supplied a copy of correspondence with the student.

Where students receive a letter from the Course Coordinator in relation to their attendance, they need to respond to that letter in writing within one week. Students are expected to continue attending classes during the show cause period and any appeals process. Appeals against Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee decisions in matters of attendance will be considered by the Avondale Learning and Teaching Committee and should be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar.

It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they receive unit outlines and other materials that may be distributed in class. Unit outlines are available to students in electronic form on the Avondale website. The institution is not responsible when students do not receive material due to absence from a class appointment. Students who register after the commencement of classes may find they have unresolved timetable difficulties. Avondale is not responsible to resolve such timetable clashes if a student has returned later than the first day of classes in a given semester.

## Examinations and Tests

### Scheduling Examinations and Tests

Wherever possible, tests and examinations are scheduled to avoid unmanageable workload peaks for students, and to allow adequate time for study at the end of each semester. Course Coordinators ensure that major assignments do not fall due in the last two weeks of classes except in units where there is no final test or examination or in the last week of classes when teaching weeks are less than 12. No tests or assignments are to be scheduled during Professional Experience sessions for teacher education students. No off-campus trips/tours or extra-curricular activities are to be scheduled during the last week of classes in a semester or during the examination period.

### Examination Procedures

Avondale takes seriously its responsibility to conduct examinations in a manner to ensure that academic integrity is maintained. Failure to comply with examination procedures may result in a failing grade. The responsibilities and roles of students and Avondale are outlined below.

### Examination Roles and Responsibilities

*Students have a responsibility to:*

- be present at the scheduled time. Students should not make any bookings for travel during the published examination period or arrange events that are incompatible with attendance at examinations;
- apply to the Equity Officer for special provisions where required for documented disabilities in a timely manner

and in line with the Students with Disabilities policy and procedures;

- apply at least three weeks prior to the examination period, where a first year student from a non-English speaking background wishes to be granted permission to have use of an unannotated, bilingual dictionary (non-electronic) and ten minutes of additional time per hour of examination. The application is to be made to the Academic Registrar through the relevant Course Coordinator;
- take into the examination venue writing tools, and additional materials as directed by the lecturer;
- bring their Avondale Student ID card and place it on the desk in front of them during the examination;
- write their Avondale Student ID number clearly on the examination paper and/or examination booklet;
- follow all directions provided by the lecturer for the unit, the invigilators and/or other persons in authority;
- refrain from communicating with other persons in the examination room other than the examination invigilators;
- refrain from bringing unauthorised materials into the examination room;
- refrain from bringing mobile phones and other unauthorised electronic devices to the examination venue. Where such items are brought to the examination venue students have a responsibility to switch off the items and leave them in the place designated by the examination invigilator. In these circumstances students are responsible for the security and collection of their item/s;
- remain in their seats during examinations; request permission from an invigilator before leaving their seats, and remain in their seats until all examination papers have been collected.

*Avondale has a responsibility to:* ensure that examinations are conducted in an environment free from cheating, plagiarism or any other attempts to circumvent assessment requirements. In fulfilling this requirement Avondale will:

- provide invigilators and/or supervisors for examinations;
- take action where candidates have unauthorised materials in their possession. Cheating in any form during an examination will normally result in a failing grade being recorded for the unit in question and may result in exclusion from the course of study. Invigilators have a responsibility to refer suspected instances of cheating in examinations to the Academic Registrar and these reports will be referred to the Faculty Examination Board;
- allow first year students from a non-English speaking background ten minutes of additional time per hour of examination on the recommendation of the relevant Course Coordinator responsible for the unit in question. They may also be allowed to take into the examination an unannotated bilingual dictionary (non-electronic). Students wishing to be considered for these provisions

must apply to the Academic Registrar via the Course Coordinator at least three weeks prior to the examination period. The examination invigilator will check the dictionary in the examination room;

- allow students with a disability (permanent or temporary), likely to impede speed of performance in examinations, to apply for modifications to the examination conditions. When students register their disability with the Equity Officer, they are to provide documentation of their disability duly signed by a registered practitioner, and provide a list of the accommodations required, Avondale will make any necessary modifications to the examination conditions.

*Lecturers have a responsibility to:*

- set examination papers that reflect the content covered in the unit;
- set examination papers that allow students to demonstrate their learning in relation to the stated learning outcomes as indicated on the unit profile;
- provide examination scripts in a timely manner to the Academic Office (Lake Macquarie Campus) or the Faculty Office (Sydney Campus);
- retain copies of the examination scripts and a copy of the examination papers for at least one year.

*The Board of Examiners has a responsibility 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 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 relevant Course Coordinator (or appointee) who will communicate the action to Academic Registrar. The Academic Registrar will submit a progression report to the Avondale Learning and Teaching Committee each semester.

## Glossary of Selected 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 Avondale administration.

### Academic year

The academic year at Avondale commences in January and

concludes in December. It comprises two teaching periods of 13 weeks duration, one year long teaching period and three intensive teaching periods. The Academic Calendar is located on the Avondale website.

### **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 or Anti-bullying and Harassment policy.

A person seeking to appeal a decision or action taken regarding a student, financial or academic matter must apply to the relevant responsible officer within twelve months of the decision or action. Avondale may waive the twelve month deadline in special circumstances or if it is satisfied that the application could not be made within this time frame.

### **Auditing units**

*Current Students:* Auditing a unit involves attending class periods without doing assignments or taking tests or examinations. No academic credit is given for an audited unit. Current students may audit classes provided that no more than one unit is audited each semester; the prerequisites have been fulfilled; the lecturer has approved the audit arrangements. There is no cost for auditing a unit if you are a current student taking at least 75% load.

*Community Members:* Auditing a unit involves attending class periods without doing assignments or taking tests or examinations. No academic credit is given for an audited unit and auditing a unit does not entitle a person to accrue credit. Community members may audit more than one unit per semester provided the lecturer has approved the audit arrangements. There is a fee for auditing a unit which is published on the Avondale website and in 2012 this fee is \$200. It is anticipated that this fee will rise annually in line with the Education CPI.

### **Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement**

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is provided by Australian higher education institutions to graduating students on completion of the requirements for a particular higher education award. It provides a description of the nature, level, context and status of studies that were pursued by the individual named. Its purpose is to assist in both national and international recognition of Australian qualifications and to promote international mobility and professional recognition of graduates. Avondale plans to implement the graduation statement from 2012 onwards.

### **Census dates**

Census dates are the dates on which Avondale reports enrolments to the Commonwealth Government. Students are not permitted to add or drop or change enrolment without academic and/or financial penalty after the census date in each particular semester or teaching period. Census dates are recorded on the Academic Calendar.

### **Christian Studies units**

A series of units in the study of Christianity. Students are required to enrol in the Christian Studies units prescribed for their course (maximum of three). The Christian Studies units are designed to encourage students to think Christianly about themselves, the wider world, their chosen profession and field of study. The overarching goals of the Christian Studies units are to provide opportunities for students to develop a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, an understanding of the Christian faith, a recognition of the advantages of practising a lifestyle based on sound Biblical principles, high ethical standards and respect for others, an appreciation of diversity, and a commitment to faith, integrity, and social justice in students' local congregations and the local, national and global communities.

### **Commonwealth Supported Places**

A Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) is a higher education place for which the Australian Government provides funding and the CSP student contributes to the cost of his/her education. The student contribution is lower than the full tuition fee.

### **Core units**

Certain required or mandatory units that form part of a degree. All students are required to undertake core units where designated as part of their degree.

### **Course**

The total program of study leading to an academic award.

### **Credit points**

In most courses the academic weighting of each unit is indicated by the number of credit points awarded to it. In undergraduate courses it is generally expected that students study four 6-credit point units totalling 24 credit points per semester. This full-time academic load will require a time commitment of 40–48 hours of academic work per week.

### **Degree regulations**

All degrees are governed by degree regulations which are published on the Avondale website. Follow the links to Policies and the Handbook.

### **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 Avondale, he/she will be required to make a written request to Avondale Administration before reinstatement as a student.

### **Double major**

An approved sequence of studies comprised of sixteen 6-credit point units in one discipline or coherent multi-discipline area, with at least four units at 300-Level.

### Effective Full-time Student Load (EFTSL)

One EFTSL is the standard study load for one year of a course of study. The standard load in most undergraduate courses at Avondale is four 6-credit point units per semester, or eight units per year. All 6-credit point units comprise 0.125 of a full-time load.

### Elective

A unit 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 normally undertake four units (units of study) each semester. Eight units 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 units totalling 18 credit points in each semester of the academic year.

### Graduation

Candidates who have fulfilled the requirements prescribed for each unit of their course as listed in the Handbook and unit outlines for the year they entered the course or a later Handbook are permitted to graduate when they have 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 of the intention must be provided to the Academic Registrar through Student Connect prior to the graduation ceremony.

### HECS-HELP

HECS-HELP is available for students who:

- a) elect to defer their student contribution; or
- b) pay more than \$490 of their student contribution up front and therefore are eligible for a discount *AND* are Australian citizens or holders of a permanent humanitarian visa.

NOTE: New Zealand citizens and holders of an Australian permanent resident's visa are eligible for CSPs but are not eligible to defer their student contribution under HECS-HELP.

### Higher Education Provider (HEP)

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

### Independent topic

Up to 12 credit points of academic credit at 200-Level or above may be undertaken as an independent topic under the supervision of a lecturer. Independent topic units require students to produce written reports of their study. Independent topic units are available provided that: students

have not undertaken a research seminar in their course; the Independent Topic is not replacing a required unit; students have attained an average grade of at least credit level (minimum of 65%); and the approval of the course coordinator is obtained.

### Intermission

Any student enrolled in a course of study at Avondale may apply for Intermission (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 two-year period. 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. Students who do not return to their course of study after two years on intermission will be administratively discontinued from their course of study by the Academic Registrar. The time taken as intermission is included when calculating the maximum time allowed to complete a course.

### Last day to enter a unit

Students are expected to be present for the instruction and orientation available in the initial class sessions of each semester and/or teaching period. Where a student wishes to change a unit, a student may enter a unit up until the ninth academic day of a 14 week teaching period (or pro rata point in a teaching period of a different length), provided the lecturers believe the student's capacity to succeed in the unit will not be compromised by such a late entry. Entering a class after the first day of the teaching period requires approval by the Course Coordinator.

### Last day to withdraw from a unit

Students withdrawing from a unit prior to the census date must obtain the approval of the Course Coordinator. Where this is approved prior to the census date, the student's academic record will indicate Withdrawn (W). Withdrawals after census date will result in a Withdrawal Late Without Academic Penalty (WL) or Fail due to Late Withdrawal (FW). A student is still liable for the full tuition fee where withdrawal from a unit occurs after the census date of the teaching period in which he/she is enrolled.

### Major

An approved sequence of studies comprising at least eight 6-credit point units in one discipline area or coherent multi-discipline area with at least two units at 300-Level.

### Minor

An approved sequence of studies comprising at least four 6-credit point units in one discipline area or coherent multi-discipline area with at least two units at 200- or 300-Level.

### Pre-examination study days

A pre-examination period at the end of each semester provides time for study and reflection.

## Prizes

Excellence is encouraged through a variety of prizes awarded annually for demonstrated excellence in areas such as academic performance, Christian lifestyle, citizenship, professional performance and leadership. A current list of prizes is located on the Avondale website.

## Progression rules

Students are normally expected to pass all units in which they are enrolled in a teaching period. A student who fails to pass 49% or more of the credit points attempted in a teaching period will be considered as not making satisfactory progress and placed on probation.

Avondale reports students under Section 19 of the ESOS Act 2000 who have breached the course progress requirements.

The full policy and procedure is located on the Avondale website, [www.avondale.edu.au](http://www.avondale.edu.au)

## Provisional enrolment

Undergraduate 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 tertiary education. Undergraduate students who are provisionally enrolled have a status of "academic probation" in their first teaching period.

## Required units

Units (other than core units, major units or minor units) which all students enrolled in a course must take.

## Resolution of grades

Normally the time limit for resolution of grades DE, FS, and IC in coursework degrees shall be the Census Date of the semester following the one in which the students are currently enrolled. At the end of this time the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee shall review and process these grades. Normally these will be converted to an F or FF (whichever is appropriate), unless there are extenuating circumstances.

## Secondary transcript

Some students will receive a secondary transcript at the time of Graduation upon which is inscribed the extra-curricular and leadership activities in which the student has participated while enrolled at Avondale.

## Specialisation

An approved sequence of studies comprised of at least ten units in one discipline or coherent multi-discipline area, including at least two units at 100-Level, at least four units at 200-Level and at least four units at 300-Level.

## Statement of Academic Record

Statements of Academic Record are the permanent academic record of each student and include a list of all units in which the student has enrolled together with the grades 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 Statements of Academic Record bear the impressed seal of Avondale, are printed on forgery-proof parchment, and are individually numbered.

## Student Workload

The Academic Registrar, on the basis of advice of the relevant Course Coordinator, may limit any student's enrolment on the basis of demonstrated performance. On the approval of the Course Coordinator a student may overload, by enrolling in a fifth unit in a single semester. Usually the Course Coordinator will require such a student to have achieved a minimum weighted average mark of 65%. Any enrolment overload above 5 units will require the pre-approval of both the relevant Course Coordinator and the Academic Registrar.

## Teaching periods

Teaching periods are the length of time over which units of study are offered. Avondale's teaching periods include 13 week semesters, 3 week intensives and year long. Postgraduate research students may commence and/or complete their course at any time. See the overview of teaching period commencement dates, conclusion dates, and census dates on the Avondale website, [www.avondale.edu.au](http://www.avondale.edu.au).

## Testamur

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

## Tuition Assurance Statement

Avondale (the First Provider) is required to provide a tuition assurance arrangement for Australian citizens or holders of an Australian permanent humanitarian visa who are enrolled in higher education courses it offers. This requirement is to protect a student in the event that Avondale ceases to provide a course of study in which a student is enrolled.

In the event that Avondale ceases to provide a course of study in which a student is enrolled the student is entitled to a choice of:

- an offer of a place in a similar course of study with a Second Provider without any requirement to pay the Second Provider any student contribution or tuition fee for any replacement units (this is known as the "Course Assurance Option"); *or*
- a refund of his or her up-front payments for any unit of study that the student commences but does not complete because Avondale ceases to provide the course of study of which the unit forms part (this is known as the "Student Contribution/Tuition Fee Repayment Option").

If Avondale ceases to provide a course of study, the relevant Second Provider(s) listed on the Avondale website and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited will send a

student enrolled in the course of study a Written Tuition Assurance Offer (the Offer) advising the student of the options available under the tuition assurance requirements. The Offer will include directions that the student must follow in order to notify the relevant Second Provider(s) and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited of the choice they have made for each affected unit. The, relevant Second Provider(s), listed on the Avondale website, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited, will provide this offer within 20 business days after it knows, or should know by reasonable enquiries, that Avondale has ceased to provide a course of study.

### Unit

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

### Unit area

A field of study generally synonymous with a single academic discipline (e.g., Geography, Accounting).

### Unit availability

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

### Unit codes

Unit codes at Avondale indicate the discipline area and the year level of the unit. The first four letters indicate the discipline area (e.g., EDUC indicates Education). The first digit indicates the year 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
- 7 indicates a doctoral degree

The final four digits indicate the unit sequence in the course.

### Units failed twice

A student who fails a unit twice is not permitted to re-enrol in that unit or an equivalent unless there are exceptional circumstances as determined by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee. A student who fails a unit twice in a core unit for a course will be asked to show cause in writing to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee why they should not be excluded from that course.

### Unit mode

Units may be offered in on-campus, distance or mixed modes. A list of units and the mode(s) in which they are offered is

available on the Avondale website.

### Unit set

Approved sequences of units may be either a specialisation, major, or minor unit set.

### Unit workload

Students normally enrol in four 6-credit point units each semester and each unit requires approximately 149 hours to complete. The weekly time commitment for one unit is approximately 10–12 hours, and the weekly time commitment for all units is approximately 40–48 hours.

### Variation from academic policy or course regulations

All variations from academic policy or course regulations require prior approval by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee and also may require the approval of the Avondale Learning and Teaching Committee and/or Academic Board. A request for any such variation must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the relevant committee.

### Verification of credentials and qualifications

Applicants who apply to undertake a course of study at Avondale must submit documentary evidence that they hold the qualification(s) required for entry to that course. An original or certified copy of the required qualification, or an official letter provided by the issuing institution confirming that the degree has been conferred, must be sighted.

An individual who has falsified qualifications, identity, other documentation or information used to assess entry to a course of study or entry to the country will be investigated, reported to authorities, and a range of penalties applied. The full version of this policy is located on the Avondale website, [www.avondale.edu.au](http://www.avondale.edu.au).

### Volunteer service and academic credit

In keeping with its strong focus on Christian service, Avondale is keen to foster a spirit of volunteer service in its students. It is possible in most degree courses for students to receive academic credit for significant volunteer engagement and reflection. The reflection is assessed through guided independent reading and writing. Such credit can only be given once in a particular degree course, to a value of six credit points. See the unit synopsis, HUMA20000 Volunteer Experience and Reflection.

### Withdrawal from a course

Students discontinuing their course part way through a teaching period must complete and submit 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 Avondale fee refunds and is awarded a failure for each enrolled unit.

Students who fail to notify Avondale of their withdrawal from study or who fail to return from approved leave will be administratively withdrawn from their course of study by the Academic Registrar.

## International Students

Where International students are enrolled at Avondale, the following additional special regulations apply prior to, during and following their period of enrolment.

### ESOS Framework

The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 and associated legislation is the legal framework governing the responsibility of education institutions towards overseas students. Avondale applies this framework in the development of its policies and procedures related to international students.

This framework comprises:

- ESOS Act 2000 (as amended in 2007)
- ESOS Regulations 2001
- The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code 2007)
- ESOS (Registration Charges) Act 1997
- ESOS Assurance Fund Act

For more information about the ESOS framework, please visit: <http://aei.dest.gov.au/aei/esos/default.htm>

### 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 DIAC (Department of Immigration and Citizenship) website: <http://www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm> for details. 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's Enquiry and Enrolment Centre can assist with information and guidance on visa matters.

### Academic load

International students must have an enrolment load which will allow them to complete their course within the duration specified in the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) issued with their visa. This is monitored by the Avondale International Students Officer. Student visa holders in undergraduate courses are normally expected to be enrolled in a full-time study load (24 credit points) per semester or equivalent teaching period. Enrolment in less than this load may be approved by the Academic Registrar if:

- there are compassionate or compelling reasons for reducing the load;
- the reduced load is part of Avondale's intervention strategy;

- the student has studied, or plans to study, extra units in another teaching period because of unit offerings;
- the student has only a few units left to complete and these do not constitute a full-time load;
- pre-requisite units are not available in that teaching period.

Avondale expects students to enrol in the Christian Studies units prescribed for their course. This requirement may be waived where a student has already completed similar units at another Seventh-day Adventist higher education institution.

### Study by distance education

In line with visa regulations, students at Avondale who are student visa holders must not be enrolled exclusively in distance education units in any one semester or year-long teaching period, and may not complete more than 25% of their course by distance education. This is monitored by the Avondale International Students Officer.

### Academic performance

International students must meet course progress requirements as outlined in the Avondale 'Progression Policy and Rules [A.30]'. Avondale is required to inform DIAC if a student visa holder is in breach of course progress requirements.

### Attendance at classes

The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 requires all overseas students to attend classes, in line with the institution's attendance policy, during the period of their study. Avondale is required to report student visa holders to the Secretary of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), through the Provider and International Students Management System (PRISMS), if they are in breach of attendance requirements.

The following statement is incorporated in all student information documents accompanying unit outlines:

*International students admitted to Australia on student visas should be aware that Avondale is required to notify the Secretary of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), through the Provider and International Students Management System (PRISMS), breaches of the attendance policy or of unsatisfactory academic progression.*

### 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 teaching period as a condition for continuing enrolment at Avondale.

### Change of course or course duration

Avondale is required to inform DIAC, through PRISMS, of any change of course or course duration by an international student. Students wishing to change the course in which they are enrolled at Avondale must submit a 'Change of Course' form to the Academic Office. Student visa conditions require the written approval of Avondale 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.

If it is determined that a student visa holder is not going to complete the course within the expected duration as identified on the COE issued with the student visa, depending on the circumstances Avondale will:

- encourage the student to 'catch up' by taking extra units if allowed under the Student Workload overload rules;
- take steps to issue a new COE for the student; *or*
- if the student has deliberately enrolled in a reduced load, despite the Academic Registrar's advice to the contrary;
- cancel the student's enrolment when the student refuses to enrol in an appropriate load; *or*
- document the student's behaviour and, if the student requests an extension of duration of study, refuse to extend the COE.

International students may apply in writing to the Academic Registrar for deferment or suspension of their studies if they have good reason for doing so (compassionate or compelling circumstances). A record of the application and determined outcome will be kept in the student's file.

Avondale will only extend the duration of an international student's study program where it is clear that the student will not complete the course within the expected duration, as specified on the COE issued with the student visa, as a result of:

- compassionate or compelling circumstances (for example, illness where a medical certificate states that the student is unable to attend classes in line with the 'Attendance Policy [A.21]', or Avondale was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit);
- Avondale implementing its intervention strategy for the student because he/she is at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress in line with the 'Progression Policy and Rules [A.30]'; *or*
- an approved deferment or suspension of study having been granted.

Where an international student's course duration is shortened due to granted advanced standing or credit transfer, Avondale will:

- if the advanced standing or credit transfer is granted before the student visa grant, indicate the actual net course duration in the COE issued for that student for that course; *or*
- if the advanced standing or credit transfer is granted after the student visa grant, report the change of course duration to DIAC via PRISMS.

### Transfer between registered providers

International students may transfer to another registered provider, provided they have completed at least six months of the course in which they are enrolled at Avondale. A letter of

release will be granted at no cost to the student.

International students may request, in writing, to transfer from Avondale to another registered provider before they have completed six months of the course in which they are enrolled. Requests for transfer in these circumstances will be assessed by the Academic Registrar, and will be granted within 10 working days of the request being submitted, where:

- the student has a valid enrolment offer from the receiving provider; *and*
- the student, if under 18, has provided written evidence that the student's parent/legal guardian supports the transfer, and, where appropriate, written confirmation that the new provider will accept responsibility for approving a student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements; *and*
- the course the student wishes to transfer to better meets his/her study capability and long term goals; or the student provides evidence that his/her reasonable expectations about the current course are not being met.

Students who are granted permission to transfer to another provider before completing six months in their course at Avondale will be provided with a letter of release at no cost. The letter will advise the student of the need to contact DIAC to seek advice on whether a new student visa is required.

A request for transfer to another provider will not be granted where it is considered the transfer may be detrimental to the student because:

- the transfer may jeopardise the student's progression through a package of courses; *or*
- the student only recently commenced study in the course and the full range of support services are yet to be provided; *or*
- the student is trying to avoid being reported to DIAC for failure to meet the provider's attendance or academic progress requirements.

Where a request for transfer is not granted the Academic Registrar will provide the student with a letter outlining the reason/reasons for the request being refused and providing information about his/her right to appeal the decision by using the Avondale Student Grievance and Appeals Policy.

Avondale will not knowingly enrol a student wishing to transfer from another registered provider prior to the student completing six months of his/her course at the other provider, except where:

- either the other provider or the course in which the student is enrolled cease to be registered; *or*
- the other provider has provided a written letter of release; *or*
- the other provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the government that prevents the student continuing in his/her course; *or*

- any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interest and has provided written support for the change.

Avondale will maintain records of all requests from students for a letter of release. The assessment of, and decision regarding, a request will be kept in the student's file

#### **Change of address**

Student visa holders must change their contact details in Student Connect within seven days 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. 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 informed of his/her address and other contact details.

#### **Renewal of student visas**

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

#### **Living Costs**

Information about living costs in Australia can be found at: [http://www.avondale.edu.au/future\\_students::International\\_Students/](http://www.avondale.edu.au/future_students::International_Students/)