

Academic Policies

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Academic Policies

Avondale's philosophy of education is based on a Christian view of life which affirms that true education has to do with the development of the whole person. The themes of this philosophy shape the structure of all programs offered at the College. These themes emphasise a commitment to Christian values, the importance of analytic and reflective thinking, a concern for the individuality of the student, academic and professional excellence, and the development of autonomy and responsibility.

Accreditation and Professional Recognition

Avondale's courses are offered within the terms of the Australian Qualifications Framework, and are nationally accredited.

Undergraduate and postgraduate programs are accredited by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

Vocational studies programs are accredited by the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB). Avondale is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

The institution is also listed on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), with courses approved for international students. CRICOS Provider No. 00618K—Australasian Conference Association Ltd (Seventh-day Adventist Church).

Avondale is accredited as an Adventist Institution of Higher Education by the Adventist Accreditation Association based in Washington DC.

Professional recognition for particular courses is indicated where appropriate in the "Courses of Study" section of the Handbook.

Academic Administration

The Avondale College Council has ultimate responsibility for the academic program.

Responsibility for the administration of the academic program is delegated to the Vice President (Academic Administration), who is secretary of the Academic Advisory Committee of the Council. Within the institution the Academic Board is responsible for academic policy and for the planning, development and operation of undergraduate

and postgraduate programs. The Vocational Studies Board is responsible for Vocational Studies programs and the English Language Centre.

Each degree course or group of courses has a course board responsible for course development, documentation, monitoring and quality assurance, including subject moderation. Each Vocational Studies program has a course committee. The Vice President (Academic Administration) chairs the Academic Board and the Vocational Studies Board, and is the secretary of each degree course board.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for administering admissions, registration, academic records, testing and examinations, and timetabling. Under the Vice President (Academic Administration) the Academic Registrar is also responsible for the administration of the College's Vocational Studies programs. The Academic Registrar is secretary of the Academic Board and the Vocational Studies Board, and chairs the Vocational Studies and English Language Centre course committees.

Faculties and other academic organisational units

Faculty of Arts
 Faculty of Business and Information Technology
 Faculty of Education
 Faculty of Lifestyle Education, Visual Arts and Graphic Design
 Faculty of Nursing and Health
 Faculty of Science and Mathematics
 Faculty of Theology
 English Language Centre
 School of Aviation

A Faculty Dean administers each faculty; the School of Aviation is administered by the Chief Flying Instructor and a manager, the English Language Centre by a Director of Studies and a manager.

Each program has a course coordinator who chairs the relevant course board or course committee.

Authorisation and implementation of academic policy

The Academic Board and Vocational Studies Board, chaired by the Vice President (Academic Administration), are responsible for setting academic standards and policies within the general policies established by the Council.

Academic policies are published in the Avondale Handbook. Changes which occur between printings are published on the web site and in *Connections*, the weekly College publication.

The Academic Review Committee, chaired by the Vice President (Academic Administration), is concerned with the implementation of academic policy and the monitoring of student progress. It also considers appeals for variations to course requirements.

Quality assurance processes for degree courses

Academic Advisory Committee of the Avondale College Council

This subcommittee of the Council is responsible for monitoring the academic standards of the College, reviewing and ruling on modifications and amendments to current course structures, considering and making recommendations regarding proposed new courses and curriculum developments, reviewing and making recommendations to Council regarding new course submissions prepared for accrediting bodies, and receiving all assessment reports on course submissions made by accrediting bodies and reporting to Council accordingly. Four members of this committee of seven are external to the College.

External advisory committees

An external advisory committee for each degree course (or group of courses) meets at least once a year to monitor and advise on the development of the course. The course coordinator presents an annual report to the External Advisory Committee.

External moderation of subjects

Each subject is moderated externally at least once in each 5-year accreditation cycle. External moderators receive the subject description, the examination question paper, and a representative sample of student assignments and examination scripts. Moderators submit a written report to the Vice President (Academic Administration) assessing whether the subject objectives have been met, whether the assessments are appropriate to the level of the subject, whether the standard of work is similar to that in comparable subjects in Australian universities, and whether the marking is balanced and fair. Lecturers are required to submit to the Vice-President a written response to substantial issues in the moderator's report. Reports of external moderators are presented and discussed at each External Advisory Committee meeting.

Other external consultation

Avondale's quality assurance processes include external consultation with academics in other institutions, and where relevant, professional bodies and practitioners, as well as feedback from graduates, employers and the community.

Development of new courses

Protocols include documentation of the need for the course; market research to determine likely take-up; assessment of fit with institutional objectives and strategic planning; review of similar courses offered at other institutions; documentation of rationale, graduate profile and course objectives; documentation of resources and staffing required; cost projections; approval in principle by Course Board, External Advisory Committee, Academic Board, College Council; development of detailed course documentation and

subject outlines (this process to include consultation with external specialist academic advisers); approval of course documentation by Course Board, External Advisory Committee, Academic Board, College Council. Submission of course documentation for examination by a Course Assessment Committee convened according to the protocols of the NSW Department of Education and Training; accreditation by the NSW Department of Education and Training; accreditation, where necessary, by relevant professional bodies.

Development of new subjects/major changes to existing subjects

Protocols include documentation of need for subject; assessment of fit with faculty/course/institutional objectives; assessment of resources and staffing required; cost projections; review of similar subjects offered at other institutions; review of draft subject outline by colleagues and by an external academic competent in the subject content; notification of External Advisory Committee; cross-check and sign-off of completed subject outline by an academic colleague, the faculty dean, and (where relevant) the course coordinator; approval by Course Board and Academic Board.

Course review

Course boards are involved in a continuing process of course review involving consultation with external academics and professionals, assessment of workplace needs, review of similar courses at other institutions, and staff consultation to improve and update course offerings. Courses are revised in preparation for each 5-year accreditation; minor course revisions are made within accreditation cycles.

Annual revision of subject outlines

Guidelines are in place to ensure uniform subject outline format and approximate parity of workloads across different subjects. Subject outlines are required to be revised annually with reference to current scholarship, trends in the relevant professions, current practice in other higher education institutions and (for teacher education courses) current school syllabus requirements. The list of references in subject outlines must be updated annually. Except for primary sources and seminal works, references should generally have been published within the last ten years, and should be available to students. The date of the last subject outline revision is to be stated in the footer of the first page. Subject outlines should be cross-checked by a colleague and submitted for approval and sign-off by the faculty dean/course coordinator (or nominee) at least one week before the beginning of each semester. Deans/course coordinators should check outlines for parity of workload across subjects, consistency with Avondale's assessment policies, appropriateness and level of difficulty of content, recency of references, consistency of referencing style, and consistency with institutional requirements for subject documentation.

Subject outlines are distributed to students at the first class meeting of each semester, together with a document entitled “Student Information” containing a week-by-week schedule of lecture/tutorial/lab topics; assignment questions, instructions and due dates; tutorial/lab requirements; examination length and format (where applicable), and notes on attendance expectations, plagiarism, late penalties and provision for extensions.

Assessment policy

Avondale’s assessment policies (see below) include safeguards against over-assessment and guidelines to achieve approximate parity of workload across subjects.

Examination protocols

Before printing, examination question papers are cross-checked and signed-off before printing by an academic colleague or an external person competent in the subject of the examination. Borderline assignments and examination scripts are cross-marked by a colleague or external person. Each Faculty Examination Board meets at the end of each semester to review and approve students’ grades before these are submitted to the Academic Office.

Student evaluation of teaching and learning

Each subject with more than four students is evaluated by students at least twice in each five-year accreditation cycle, using the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) instrument developed and processed by the Centre for Learning and Teaching, University of Western Sydney.

External accreditation

Each course is submitted for reaccreditation, normally at five-year intervals, by a Course Assessment Committee convened under the protocols of the NSW Department of Education and Training.

General Conference Accrediting Association

The General Conference Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities conducts an accreditation of Avondale College at least once every five years.

Admission policies

Admission to undergraduate degree courses

General Policy

Avondale College welcomes applications from individuals regardless of race, gender, or religious affiliation. Admission to, and continuation at Avondale is dependent on evidence of good character, intellectual competence, support for the philosophy and mission of the College and a willingness to conform to College regulations.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for approving all admissions. In deciding on borderline applications, the Academic Registrar will normally consult with the relevant

Faculty Dean(s), and may also require that the applicant be interviewed.

General Academic Admission Requirements

Regular admission to undergraduate degree courses

Australia and New Zealand

In order to be academically eligible for admission to undergraduate degree courses, candidates resident in Australia or New Zealand are normally expected to have completed Year 12 (Australia) or Year 13 (New Zealand) and have achieved a satisfactory Universities Admissions Index (UAI) rank or equivalent as determined by the Academic Registrar in consultation with the dean of the faculty (or faculties) in which the applicant proposes to pursue major studies.

Other Countries

Applicants from other countries will have their qualifications assessed by the Academic Office. Applicants from a country where English is not the first language must demonstrate proficiency in English in one of the following ways:

- 1 Provide documentary evidence that all senior 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.
- 2 Obtain an overall IELTS score of 6.0 or better with no individual band score less than 6.0 (post 1987). Overseas applicants are also required to satisfy Australian Government visa requirements.

Entry requirements for particular courses and subjects

Some courses and subjects have specific entry requirements. These are indicated in the entry requirements for each course in the “Courses of Study” section of the Handbook.

Alternative admission to degree courses

Decisions on alternative pathways to admission are made by the Academic Registrar in consultation with the relevant faculty dean and other appropriate personnel. Each case will be considered on its individual merit.

Previous post-secondary qualifications

Admission may be obtained by the successful completion of an appropriate Certificate IV or Diploma from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) subject to the requirement that normally an equivalent number of years have been spent in education as would be required to complete Year 12 (Australia) or Year 13 (New Zealand).

Foundation Studies

Admission may be obtained by the successful completion of a suitable foundation studies program, such as Avondale’s Diploma of General Studies, with a level of pass as determined by the Academic Registrar in consultation with the dean of the faculty (or faculties) in which the applicant proposes to pursue major studies.

Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT)

Applicants who have not attempted the Higher School Certificate (HSC) or its equivalent prior to admission but who will have reached the age of nineteen years by 1 March in the year of commencement of the proposed course may be considered for admission by achieving an appropriate score in the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT).

Special Entry

Applicants who have completed their secondary education without achieving a result in the HSC or equivalent that would qualify them for entry to a degree course under regular admission criteria, but who can demonstrate or document disadvantaging factors impacting on their year 12 results, may apply for special consideration. Such applicants may be required, at the discretion of the Academic Registrar, to provide a STAT result for consideration for admission and/or undertake a full-time Diploma of General Studies program for one or more semesters.

Applicants seeking special consideration on the basis of economic or social disadvantage will normally need to satisfy criteria in at least two of the categories set out below:

- 1 *A person from low socio-economic background who is:*
 - In receipt of a health card, sole parent or invalid pension, or some other form of benefit; or
 - Dependent on parents or care-givers who are in receipt of a health card, sole parent or invalid pension, or some other form of benefit; or
 - Receiving Homeless Austudy or Independent Austudy in lieu of social security with no other means of support; or
 - Dependent student in receipt of maximum Austudy/Abstudy for living-at-home or living-away-from-home allowance; or
 - Dependent on parents or care-givers who are in receipt of maximum Austudy/Abstudy for living-at-home or living-away-from-home allowance; or
 - Currently unemployed, or their parents or care-givers are currently unemployed. In the case of the latter, applicants are required to provide evidence that they are still legally dependent upon their parents or care-givers. In order to verify employment status, students are required to provide relevant documentation from Centrelink or other relevant Government departments or designated agencies; or
 - Able to provide other evidence to verify their eligibility under this category.
- 2 *Non-English speaking background*
 - Were born overseas and arrived in Australia less than 10 years ago; and
 - Have passed Year 12 English or the International English Language Test;
 - Speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islands language

as their first language.

- 3 *Family disruption which has interrupted schooling*
Have an immediate family member who is very ill or has recently died and this has interrupted schooling. Similarly, recent divorce or separation of parents.
- 4 *Changed high schools several times*
Have missed lengthy periods of schooling or changed schools several times because family has moved from place to place.
- 5 *Little encouragement to continue study*
Family has not supported the student continuing to post-secondary education and student feels they have to "go it alone."
- 6 *Work to assist family*
Have to work reasonably long hours outside of school/study hours to supplement the family income.
- 7 *Limited home study conditions*
Living conditions may be crowded or excessively noisy, or family relationships may be such that the home environment is not conducive to study.
- 8 *Primary care of children*
May be solely responsible for the care of their own children or have to care for siblings for long periods of time while parents are at work thus reducing time for study.
- 9 *Attending a Disadvantaged or Remote Area School*
The school attended for senior secondary schooling has been classified by the Education Department as Disadvantaged or Remote Area.
- 10 *Excessive travel time to school*
- 11 *Personal illness, injury or disability*
May have been seriously affected by glandular fever, asthma, diabetes, or another chronic illness during Years 11 and 12. May have a disability such as impaired vision or hearing, paraplegia or quadriplegia or cerebral palsy.
- 12 *Refugee status*
As determined by the Department of Immigration as a Refugee.
- 13 *Other*
Other disadvantage not listed above may be considered.

Admission to postgraduate courses

Postgraduate admission requirements are specified in the course information for each postgraduate course. See Courses of Study section of the Handbook.

Admission to Vocational Studies courses, ELICOS courses, and Foundation Studies

Admission requirements for these programs are specified in the “Courses of Study” section of the Handbook.

Word processing competence

During the first two weeks of the first semester of study all commencing degree students will be required to demonstrate a working knowledge of practical computing. A student may meet this requirement in one of three ways:

- 1 Provide certificates detailing keyboard input speed and accuracy and word processing competence from a recognised institution
- 2 Take a speed test during registration (a speed of at least 20 wpm with a minimum 90% accuracy is required) *and* pass a word processing challenge test
- 3 Take the subject: Word Processing Competency (WP010).

The challenge test is offered free of charge during the first two weeks of the semester. Before attempting this test students will need to be able to create and save files to subfolders, enter and edit text, change margins and line spacing, indent text, spellcheck, use cut and paste, insert bullets, use headers/footers /automatic page numbering, and create tables.

A student who neglects these opportunities will need to make his/her own arrangements to satisfy these requirements. Use of the College word processing facilities and graduation are dependent on demonstrating word processing competence.

Academic bridging program

Students entering a degree program who have not recently acquired a Higher School Certificate, or completed other study at tertiary level, are required to attend the Academic Bridging Program offered during the week prior to the start of first semester. Exemption from this requirement is possible only upon the provision of evidence of recent successful academic performance.

Self-disclosure and criminal records check consent

Current legislation requires Avondale students who may be engaged in professional experience, field work, clinical placements, internships, work experience or research involving children or young people, the ill, or other vulnerable people to sign a self disclosure form (Prohibited Persons Declaration) and consent to a criminal record check. Avondale requires these checks of all applicants for Education, Nursing, Theology, and other courses which may include involvement with any of the types of people listed above.

These checks may also be required by organisations providing professional experience placements, field work, clinical placements, work experience or professional internship

placements.

Students should note that in order to run the criminal records check, an employer body or other agency may require the College to provide it with personal information including name, date and place of birth, citizenship status and current address.

Eligibility for professional experience and other placements

Some courses require professional experience placements, field work, 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. The College will do all that is reasonable to arrange an alternative location for the student to undertake such compulsory components. However, the College 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.

Definition of academic terms

Academic year

The academic year at Avondale comprises two semesters of 15 weeks duration. The semesters are separated by a winter term involving classes for some postgraduate and vocational studies courses, and practical experience components for some professional courses.

Course

The total program of study leading to an academic award.

Full-time student

A student registered for at least seventy-five per cent of a full academic load.

Major

A sequence of studies usually comprising at least eight 3-credit point subjects in one discipline area.

Minor

A sequence of studies usually comprising at least five 3-credit point subjects in the one discipline area.

Subject

A self-contained unit of one semester's academic work in a particular discipline (eg Chemistry IA).

Core subjects

Studies which all students are required to take in subjects addressing the religious, moral, physical or social values and special emphases for which Avondale stands. For further details see the course structures.

Required subjects

Subjects (other than core subjects and subjects in a major or minor sequence) which all students registered for a course must take.

Subject area

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

Elective

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

Subject levels

- 001 – 099 Pre-degree
- 100 – 199 100-level Bachelors degree
- 200 - 299 200-level Bachelors degree
- 300 - 399 300-level Bachelors degree
- 400 - 499 Honours subjects in Bachelors degree
- 500 - 599 Postgraduate Diploma/Masters degree
- 600 - 699 Masters degree

Credit points

In most courses the academic weighting of each subject is indicated by the number of credit points awarded to it. In undergraduate courses it is generally expected that each credit point will demand of the average student approximately three hours of academic work per week, including lecture, tutorial, clinical and laboratory appointments, as well as individual study and research. An academic load of 15 credit points will thus involve the average student in approximately 45 hours of academic work per week.

General academic regulations**Academic load**

The normal academic load for each course is specified in the course regulations.

Students may be granted an academic overload (not exceeding the specified normal load by more than 3 credit points) upon the approval of the Dean of the Faculty of the student's major area of study, provided the student has achieved a minimum average of 65% on a minimum 15 credit point load in the immediately preceding semester. Other overload requests must be approved by the Registrar.

The Academic Review Committee reserves the right to limit any student's academic load on the basis of performance.

Progression rules

Except in special circumstances, a student enrolled in a course must take the prescribed subjects in the order listed for that course. The normal progression in a subject area is from 100 to 200 to 300 level subjects.

Prerequisites for particular subjects are stated in the Subject Synopses section of the Handbook.

Availability of subjects

Not all subjects listed in the Handbook are available every year. Those offered in alternate years are indicated in the Subject Synopses.

The College reserves the right not to offer a subject should there be insufficient enrolment for that subject, or non-availability of staff.

Responsibility for individual programs; academic advice

Each student is responsible for structuring his/her academic program in accordance with published requirements. The Dean of the Faculty of the student's major area, and the personnel of the Academic Office are available to advise and assist in arranging the student's academic program.

Variation from academic policy or course regulations

All variations from academic policy or course regulations require prior approval by the Academic Review Committee. A request for any such variation must be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar.

Core subjects

The core subjects for each course are listed in the relevant course information in the "Courses of Study" section of the Handbook.

Students who have applied for student volunteer positions may take CM250 Cross Cultural Ministry as an alternative to one of the following core subjects:

- CR200 Adventist Heritage
- CR210 Old Testament Literature & Faith (or ED210)
- NT215 New Testament Literature & Faith (or ED215)
- CR240 The Christian and Social Issues

The following alternatives to the core subject CR200 Adventist Heritage are available to students of other faiths:

- CR210 Old Testament Literature & Faith (or ED210)
- CR215 New Testament Literature & Faith (or ED215)
- CR260 Ethics & Philosophy of Religion
- EN236/336 Literature and Religion
- HU240 The Christian & Social Issues
- TH320 Comparative Religions (*when offered*)

Attendance at academic appointments

Avondale College is a private institution offering Christian Higher Education and as such is based on ideals and principles different from those in public universities. One of the obvious differences and advantages is its relatively small size and the close and caring relationships between students and staff that are thus made possible. The aim of the College is to encourage a positive learning environment through support of and direct contact with students. The educational program on both Avondale campuses thus intentionally features learning settings involving lectures, tutorials, laboratory and clinical activities to enhance

individual learning. The Avondale educational program assumes agreement to certain commitments and duties.

- Lectures, classes, tutorials and laboratory appointments involve commitments. There is not only the commitment of teachers to students but also of students to teachers and of students to their fellow students to contribute together to the achieving of effective learning and experience in a group environment. Such an environment involves respect for each other and interacting with each other in the creating of a learning community.
- 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 the College and of the student to these various sponsors to maximise opportunities, resources and time.

These commitments and duties lead to an expectation of punctual and regular attendance at all (ie 100%) classes, lecture appointments, tutorials and laboratories and clinical or other work experience placements. An Avondale graduation testamur indicates a certain level of attainment of knowledge and understanding. Students who have had serious absences cannot be considered to have fulfilled the standards implicit in such a testamur. Employers also express interest in the responsibility patterns of potential employees as demonstrated in attendance and punctuality at academic appointments.

As a consequence of the above, 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 Board responsible for a subject will implement measures to deal with unsatisfactory attendance. Such measures may include:

- 1 The notification of students when their attendance pattern is putting their study program at risk
- 2 The requirement of a student to withdraw from a subject
- 3 The requirement of additional make-up work
- 4 The notification of guardians or fee-payers concerning a student's unsatisfactory attendance patterns
- 5 The denial of academic credit
- 6 The imposition of a financial charge for rescheduling of assessments or other academic appointments.

Students who for any reason, including sickness, do not maintain a minimum of 85% attendance at class/lecture/laboratory/clinical appointments will be recorded as having withdrawn from the subject and will be notified accordingly in writing or by email by the Dean of the Faculty. Students will then need to respond by letter of application to the

Dean within one week of the issue date of the notice, showing cause why they should be permitted to re-enrol in the subject. Students are expected to continue attending classes during the show cause period and any appeals process.

Appeals against Faculty Board decisions in matters of attendance will be considered by the Academic Review Committee, and should be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar.

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

Restrictions on children in classrooms

Parents are advised that normally they are not to bring children to classes, and that in some classes or situations children will not be permitted at any time.

Restrictions on food in classrooms

For considerations of hygiene, health and safety, the consumption of food and drink (including snacks) is not normally permitted in classes, except where a student can demonstrate that timetable constraints do not allow a break for lunch or for the evening meal. In some classrooms and other teaching/learning areas food and drink are not permitted at all.

Last day to enter a class

Students are expected to be present for the instruction and orientation available in the initial class sessions of each semester. Under exceptional circumstances a student may register for a full academic load up until the ninth academic day of the semester, provided the lecturers believe such a late entry will not seriously undermine the integrity of the subjects. Such late registration requires the approval of the Dean of the Faculty who will consider the likelihood that the student concerned will make satisfactory progress in the subjects undertaken.

Late transfer of enrolment into certain designated classes

Special provision exists to allow late transfer of enrolment (up to April 30) between certain designated subjects: from MA130 Mathematics IA to MA134 General Mathematics, or from PH140 Physics IA to PH143 General Physics. The transfer in each case is from a more demanding to a less demanding subject of equal credit point value in the same discipline.

Changes in registration

Changes in registration may be made if accomplished by the deadlines stated in the yearly calendar. Students withdrawing from a subject must notify the Academic Office in writing. A withdrawal between the last day to enter a class and the end of the ninth academic week of a semester will result in a withdrawn (W) grade being recorded. Later withdrawals will result in a failing (WF) grade. For this purpose the partial weeks surrounding the mid-semester break will count together as one week.

Withdrawal from college

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

Disciplinary action

Campus Guidelines outline both the privileges and responsibilities of student life at Avondale College, and the Code of Discipline outlines possible disciplinary actions for infringements of regulations. If any student is required to withdraw, he/she will be required to make a written request to the Administration Committee for a resumption of student status.

Leave of absence

Any student who is pursuing a diploma or degree course and, for any reason, decides to discontinue such study for a period of one semester or more, must apply to the Registrar for official sanction of such absence before leaving the College if the student wishes to safeguard his/her continued program.

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.

Subjects failed twice

A student who fails a subject twice will not normally be allowed to re-enrol in the subject. A student must appeal in writing to the relevant Faculty Examination Board via the Faculty Dean for special permission to attempt a subject for a third time. To be successful, an appeal must demonstrate that the student's circumstances have changed in a way that would give reasonable expectation of success at the third attempt. No more than three attempts at a subject will be permitted.

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

Academic probation and termination of enrolment

- 1 A student who fails more than half the credit points attempted in any semester will be placed on academic probation. To achieve a return to regular status, a student placed on probation must pass at least half the credit points attempted in a subsequent semester. A student on academic probation may be advised to take a lighter study load.
- 2 A student's enrolment in a course will be terminated if
 - a) the student fails to achieve a return to regular status within two semesters of being placed on academic probation;
 - b) the student fails more than half the total credit points attempted in any three consecutive semesters of study (excluding the first semester of post-secondary study);
- 3 Decisions on academic probation and academic termination will be made by the Academic Registrar, who will notify the student and the relevant Faculty Dean.
- 4 A student may appeal to the Academic Review Committee against an academic termination decision. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar. To be successful, an appeal must demonstrate that the student's circumstances have changed in a way that would give reasonable expectation of success in the course.
- 5 A student whose enrolment in a course has been terminated may apply in writing to the Academic Review Committee via the Academic Registrar for admission to another course. The coordinator of the course to which the student seeks admission will meet with the Academic Review Committee. For an application to be successful, the Academic Review Committee must be satisfied that the student's present circumstances give reasonable expectation of success in the new course. The major content area(s) proposed in the new course must not significantly overlap major content areas of the course from which the student has been terminated.

Academic credit regulations

Earned credit

To earn credit in any subject at Avondale College, the student must secure a passing grade in that subject. Final grades are assessed on class assignments, tests and examinations.

Transfer credit

The Registrar in consultation with the relevant Faculty Dean(s) shall decide on credit granted for subjects passed elsewhere.

Students seeking advanced standing shall apply to the Registrar, submitting full official transcripts, subject outlines, and course information which allows credit point equivalents to be established. English transcripts may be required.

Applicants for undergraduate and postgraduate courses may be guided by the following:

- 1 Credit is not normally granted for work completed more than 10 years previously.
- 2 Advanced standing will be given only for work done in recognised courses.
- 3 Subjects for which credit is granted should generally have reasonable correspondence to subjects offered by Avondale College, though provision also exists for unspecified elective credits (of a stated number of credit points) or unspecified credits (with a stated number of credit points) in major or minor disciplines. Provision is also available for block credit of a given number of Avondale credit points deemed equivalent to one or more semesters of studies undertaken in a similar degree or major at another institution.
- 4 Normally, no credit will be granted at the 300-level.
- 5 When an award has been received, not more than 33% of that award may be applied toward a further award at the same or lower level. Credit may be granted up to 33% of the Avondale award being sought.
- 6 Where tertiary credits have been earned but no award received, credit may be granted up to two-thirds of the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business or Bachelor of Science degrees, or up to 50% of any other Avondale degree in which the applicant seeks advanced standing (unless specific course regulations specify otherwise). Where studies have been taken at recognised Seventh-day Adventist institutions in courses structured closely to the Avondale course, this rule may be relaxed.
- 7 Students wishing to take out two Avondale awards may be granted cross credits not exceeding 50% of the shorter course.
- 8 Where a student qualifies for two awards at Avondale, the core subjects for the longer course are deemed to meet the requirements of the shorter course.

Credits from Vocational Education and Training studies

Credit towards degree courses on the basis of studies previously completed in the Vocational Education and Training sector may be allowed on the following basis:

- 1 Where the Vocational Education and Training study is in areas related to the subject matter of the degree course, credit may be granted for up to one year of the Avondale degree course for studies completed at Certificate IV level or higher.
- 2 Where the Vocational Education and Training study is in areas unrelated to the subject matter of the degree course, credit of up to 6 credit points may be granted towards 100-level electives for studies completed at Certificate IV level or higher.

TAFE credits

Up to one year of credit may be granted to students who have completed an Associate Diploma at a College of Technical and Further Education, depending on subjects completed in the Associate Diploma, and the course to which the student is being admitted.

Exemptions

The Registrar in consultation with the relevant Faculty Dean and the Course Coordinator may decide, on the basis of work done elsewhere, to give an exemption for a required element of a course, but may require the student to undertake alternative subject(s) to the equivalent credit point value in lieu of the exempted subject(s).

Credit by challenge examination

Where a student may be eligible for credit in, or exemption from, a particular subject on the basis of work done elsewhere, but cannot provide acceptable documentation, the relevant Faculty Dean may recommend a challenge examination. The policies governing challenge examinations are as follows:

- 1 The Registrar must grant approval for each challenge examination
- 2 The Faculty Dean shall be satisfied that the examination is set and assessed at the same level as a final examination for regular students in the subject
- 3 A passing grade must be attained
- 4 Credits so obtained are deemed to be transfer credits.

Recognition of prior learning

Provision for the recognition of prior learning or recognition of current competency in vocational studies courses is indicated in the course information for those courses. See "Courses of Study" section of the Handbook.

Mandatory subjects for students admitted with advanced standing to certain degree courses

Students admitted with advanced standing who will require more than two semesters to complete a course leading to the award of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business, Bachelor of Science (or a double degree associated with these courses), Bachelor of Education or Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary), must take the following subjects:

| | |
|-------|--|
| CR100 | Christian Faith |
| CR200 | Adventist Heritage (alternatives are available for students of other faiths) |
| CR210 | Old Testament Literature & Faith (or ED210) |
| | <i>or</i> |
| CR215 | New Testament Literature & Faith (or ED215) |

Students admitted with two years of advanced standing in the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business or Bachelor of Science course, or one year of advanced standing in a Bachelor of Teaching course, must take two of the above sub-

jects.

Students who have previously taken the required number of these subjects 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 core requirements from the Dean, Faculty of Nursing and Health.

Studies pursued at other institutions

- 1 Students of Avondale College are not permitted to undertake studies for credit at Avondale with another institution without the prior permission of the Registrar who, in consultation with the relevant Faculty Dean, may reserve the right to require additional prescribed work to satisfy College requirements.
- 2 Students studying at the Cooranbong or Wahroonga campus are normally expected to take undergraduate subjects in face-to-face mode when delivery in that mode is available, except in cases of unresolvable timetable clash, or where taking a subject in distance mode may enable a student to graduate without having to return for another semester on less than a full study load. In such cases an on-campus undergraduate student will normally be permitted to study in distance mode up to two subjects that are available in face-to-face mode. The two distance subjects may not normally include more than one core subject. This rule applies to distance education subjects offered by Avondale as well as by other institutions.
- 3 No more than 6 credit points in any course may be met through Griggs University/Home Study International. Prior approval for each subject is required from the Faculty Dean and the Registrar.
- 4 Students expecting to use distance learning credits from another institution to meet graduation requirements should complete such study by the commencement of the second semester of their final year. Permission to join the graduation class will not be granted until the official certified transcript of such credit is received by the Academic Office. This must be no later than four weeks before graduation. Students who undertake distance learning credits during second semester of their final year should plan on graduation in the following year.
- 5 Credits so obtained are deemed to be transfer credit.

Auditing subjects

Auditing a subject involves attending class periods without doing assignments or taking tests or examinations. No academic credit is given for an audited subject.

Students may audit classes under the following conditions:

- 1 Not more than one class may be audited per semester.
- 2 The prerequisites must be satisfied and approval of the lecturer secured.

- 3 Practical subjects may not normally be audited.
- 4 The established audit fee will be charged.
- 5 A student auditing a subject may change registration to credit status with the approval of the Registrar in consultation with the Faculty Dean, provided all assessment requirements, and overload constraints if applicable, are met. A student changing to credit status will be charged the full fee for the subject.
- 6 Students who have demonstrated academic excellence by achieving a 75% average in their studies in the previous semester are permitted to audit one subject free. (A charge may be made for materials if the class is a practical class).

Independent directed study

Up to 6 credit points of academic credit at 200-level or above may be undertaken as guided readings or independent study/research under the supervision of a lecturer. Such subjects shall include the production of written reports or papers.

Independent study subjects are not normally available to students enrolled in degrees in which a research seminar is already a requirement.

Independent study subjects are not normally intended to replace subjects included in a major or minor area of concentration, but may be used to fill elective options.

Independent study subjects will only be available to students having attained an average grade of at least credit level (minimum of 65%).

Registration in an independent study subject is by recommendation of the appropriate Dean of Faculty to the Vice President.

Under unusual circumstances requests to enrol in independent study subjects which fall outside these policies may be considered, but in such cases approval of the Academic Review Committee will be required.

Independent Study subjects are given codes that locate the study within a particular discipline area, for example: EN395 Independent Study.

Transcripts

Students may request the Academic Office for an academic transcript. Two free copies of the transcript are normally sent to each graduate after graduation. Further copies are available on request, and will be prepared after payment of the standard charge.

The permanent academic record of each student includes a list of all subjects attempted, and transcripts are issued on this basis.

A transcript is official if it bears the impressed seal of the College and either ink or facsimile signature of the Registrar.

Transcripts will not be issued to students who owe money

to the College. Financial clearance must be obtained before a transcript can be issued.

Assignments

Referencing of assignments

Assignments should be referenced according to the style manual of the relevant subject or faculty.

The sources of the following types of information should be properly acknowledged:

- Quotations
- Information closely paraphrased or summarised from other sources.
- Factual information not commonly known and accepted in the discipline under study.
- Tables, diagrams, maps and illustrations derived from other sources.
- Information derived from web sites or other electronic sources.

All sources referenced in the essay must also be included in a bibliography or list of references at the end.

Assignment declaration

The cover sheet of all assignments must 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 subject or institution.

Signed[student's signature]

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own. It is a form of academic dishonesty, and carries heavy penalties.

Examples of plagiarism:

- Copying another student's work.
- Producing an assignment in conjunction with another person when independent work is required.
- Copying or quoting another source without appropriately identifying all quoted material, and acknowledging the source.
- 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. (Note: Extensive paraphrasing, even when acknowledged, is not advisable).

Safeguarding against plagiarism

Students must not allow anyone to borrow or copy work of theirs prepared for assessment purposes.

Penalties for plagiarism

Minor instances of plagiarism will bring penalties ranging from deduction of marks to resubmission of an assignment. Students in their second or later semester of post-secondary study will be penalised more heavily than beginning students.

The penalties for more serious plagiarism are as follows:

- *First offence:* Penalties range from substantial deduction of marks to zero marks for an assignment.
- *Second offence* (counting all subjects taken at Avondale): Fail grade for the subject.
- *Third offence* (counting all subjects taken at Avondale): Recommendation to the Academic Review Committee that the student be discontinued from further study at Avondale.

Where a lecturer suspects a student of serious plagiarism, the following procedures shall apply:

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

Pre-examination period

The following regulations are intended to maximise students' study time during the pre-examination period at the end of each semester.

- 1 Major assignments may not fall due in the last two weeks of classes in a semester, except in subjects with no final test or examination. In these subjects no assignments may fall due in the last week of classes.
- 2 No tests or assignments may be scheduled during the last week of classes in a semester. Vocational Studies courses are exempted from this requirement. Any other exemptions must be specifically approved by the Vice President (Academic Administration) at least two weeks before the beginning of the semester.

- 3 No off-campus trips or extra-curricular activities requiring student participation may be scheduled during the last week of classes in a semester.

Examinations

Examinations are held at the end of each semester. Failure to comply with the examination requirements in any subject will result in a failing grade. Students should not make any travel bookings prior to the last day of the published examination timetable.

Examination regulations

- 1 Candidates may enter the examination room up to 30 minutes after the commencement of an examination, but no extension of time will be allowed for late candidates. No candidate may leave the examination room until at least 30 minutes after the commencement of an examination.
- 2 Candidates may not communicate in the examination room with any person other than an examination supervisor.
- 3 Books and paper may not be taken into the examination room, except:
 - a) where the printed instructions on the examination question paper indicate otherwise (in which case the lecturer will be at the examination venue to scrutinise the materials).
 - b) where a student whose first language is not English has received in advance written approval from a lecturer to use a dictionary in an examination (in which case the examination supervisor will check the dictionary). The lecturer must submit written approval to the Registrar prior to the examination.
- 4 Mobile phones and other electronic devices (approved calculators excepted) are not permitted in the examination room.
- 5 Candidates may not leave their seats during the examination without a supervisor's permission.
- 6 At the end of each examination candidates should remain in their seats until their answer papers have been collected.
- 7 Possession of unauthorised study materials and/or cheating in any form during an examination will normally result in a failing grade being recorded for the subject in question. Cheating in examinations will be dealt with by the Faculty Examination Board.
- 8 Students from a non-English speaking background who are in their first year at Avondale, and whose final two years of secondary schooling have been in a language other than English, may be allowed ten minutes of additional time per hour of examination on the recommendation of the Faculty Dean responsible for the subject in

question, and may also take into the examination a translation dictionary (non-electronic). Students wishing to be considered for these provisions must apply to the Registrar via the Faculty Dean prior to the examination period. The examination supervisor will check the dictionary in the examination room.

- 9 Students with a disability (permanent or temporary) likely to impede speed of performance in examinations may apply for additional examination time. Applications should be directed to the Registrar prior to the examination period via the Faculty Dean responsible for the subject in question. Applications must be supported by a statement of the nature and extent of the disability, a written recommendation by the Faculty Dean, and documentation from a medical practitioner or other recognised professional specialist as appropriate. Where the disability is permanent, documentation need only be provided on initial application for additional examination time. Approval will be at the discretion of the Registrar. If granted, additional time will normally be allowed at the rate of ten minutes per hour of examination.

Deferred examinations

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 Registrar for a deferred examination. Such application must be made on the prescribed form countersigned by a medical practitioner (where illness is the ground for the application), or by a Residence Hall Director, Director of Student Services or the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Health (for the Wahroonga campus) in other cases. The application form must be submitted to the Registrar as soon as it can be completed. (The expectation is that this will normally be completed within 24 hours).

Where sudden illness, accident or other serious misadventure occurs during the examination which prevents the student from continuing with the examination, it is the duty of the student to bring such problem immediately to the attention of the chief examination supervisor who shall report to the Registrar. If an application for a deferred examination arises from such a situation, it should be lodged as soon as is reasonably possible with the Academic Office, and is to be supported by relevant documentation.

Students who misread the examination timetable will not be granted permission to sit a deferred examination.

Supplementary assessments

Supplementary assessments are possible on a restricted basis and are administered as follows:

- 1 Where a student has failed a subject because an essential assessment component for the subject has not met the minimum requirement but the aggregate score for the assessment is greater than or equal to 50%, *or*

- 2 where a student has a mark that falls in the range of 45%–49% (inclusive), the student, upon recommendation of the Faculty Examination Board to the Registrar, may be granted a supplementary assessment (FS), the nature of which shall be determined by the Faculty Examination Board in consultation with the subject lecturer, according to approved faculty guidelines.

The following conditions apply:

- 1 Supplementary assessments shall normally be taken during the vacation period.
- 2 In three-year courses a supplementary assessment will not normally be granted if a student has previously had two or more supplementary assessments. In four-year courses a supplementary assessment will not normally be granted if a student has previously had three or more supplementary assessments.

Upon successful completion of a supplementary assessment the Fail grade shall be changed to a Pass Supplementary (PS) grade (50%–64%). Should the supplementary not be passed successfully the FS grade will convert to an FF.

Supplementary assessments may include assignment work, practical work and/or an examination.

All supplementary assessments are to be completed by the end of the first week of the semester following that in which the subject was studied unless otherwise determined by the Faculty Examination Board. If the supplementary assessment is not completed by the specified date the FS grade will convert to an FF.

The lecturer in charge of the subject is responsible for notifying the student and the Registrar of the work to be completed, and the due date for its completion.

Grading system

Grades awarded

| | | |
|----|--------------|--|
| H | 85–100% | High Distinction |
| D | 75–84% | Distinction |
| C | 65–74% | Credit |
| P | 50–64% | Pass |
| PT | 45–49% | Pass (Terminating) |
| PS | 50–64% | Pass with Supplementary Assessment |
| FS | ..... | Fail, Supplementary Assessment Available |
| F | 0–49% | Fail |
| FF | ..... | Supplementary attempted but failed |
| FW | ..... | Fail (late Withdrawal) |

A failing grade may be awarded in a subject even when percentages above 50 are achieved but where minimum requirements in essential components have not been met. Such minimum requirements are made clear in specific subject descriptions.

A grade of P or better (PT is allowable in up to six credit

points) is required in each subject of the course in order to meet the requirements of an award.

Other completion codes

| | | |
|----|-------|--------------------------|
| S | ..... | Satisfactory |
| U | ..... | Unsatisfactory |
| AD | ..... | Audited |
| IC | ..... | Incomplete |
| W | ..... | Withdrew without penalty |
| DE | ..... | Deferred |

Where courses require competency-based grading the following codes are used:

| | | |
|-----|-------|---|
| NYC | ..... | Not Yet Competent |
| C | ..... | Competent |
| P | ..... | Competent at Pass level (65%–74%) |
| M | ..... | Competent at Merit level (75%–84%) |
| D | ..... | Competent at Distinction level (85%–100%) |

The pass level for competency-based units in certificate and diploma courses is 65% unless otherwise indicated in unit outlines.

Terminating passes

A degree level student who has obtained a score between 45% and 49% (inclusive) in a subject may be offered a terminating pass at the discretion of the Faculty Examination Board.

- 1 No more than 3 credit points of terminating pass may have been granted previously.
- 2 No terminating passes will be granted at the 300-level
- 3 A student awarded a terminating pass in a subject may not advance to any higher-level subject with the same alphabetical subject code prefix, or to any subject for which the PT subject is a prerequisite.

Students wishing to gain CPA (Certified Practising Accountant) certification should note that no more than three terminating passes in a three-year bachelor degree are permitted for certification purposes. Further, “no more than one terminating pass is acceptable for subjects in the core curriculum in accounting and business related areas, unless a more advanced subject in the areas is passed.”

Incomplete grades

An incomplete grade may be recorded when:

- 1 A subject spans two semesters.
- 2 Illness or serious misadventure has disrupted a student’s academic program.
 - Any request on this ground for an incomplete grade should be presented to the Faculty Dean through the appropriate lecturer.
 - An application form signed by the lecturer and the Faculty Dean must be submitted to the Registrar.

- All assignments or assessments relating to an incomplete grade granted under (2) above are to be completed by the end of the first week of the semester following that in which the subject was studied unless otherwise determined by the Faculty Examination Board.
- Where the required work is not completed by the specified date, the incomplete grade will become a failing grade.
- The lecturer in charge of the subject is responsible for notifying the student and the Registrar of the work to be completed, and the due date for its completion.
- Any variation to the due date must be approved by the Faculty Examination Board.

Reassessment of a grade

Grounds are deemed to exist for an appeal against a grade awarded where one or more of the following conditions apply:

- 1 There is reason to believe that a clerical or other recording error may have occurred.
- 2 There is reason to believe an injustice exists due to some inadequacy in the validity or the reliability of the assessment.

Appeals may only be lodged after the official release of grades by the Academic Office. An appeal will only be recognised if lodged by the first Friday of the semester following that in which the grade in question was awarded, unless exceptional circumstances are established.

To lodge an appeal under (1) above, the student should contact the lecturer responsible for the subject to ascertain whether the grade as notified agrees with her or his records. Any clerical error will be rectified.

To lodge an appeal under (2) above, the student should make application to the Registrar in writing. An appeal may result in a grade being retained, raised or lowered.

A review committee consisting of the Vice President (Academic), two members nominated by the Vice President (Academic), and a member of the relevant Faculty will evaluate the matter and make a determination.

In any dispute relating to instructions which have been given to students on assessment procedures within a subject, the written guidelines which lecturers have provided to students will be taken as definitive.

Graduation regulations

Academic

A candidate for an Avondale College academic award must gain a passing grade or better in each subject listed in the course requirements for that award.

Financial

Candidates for graduation must make satisfactory arrangements to settle their financial accounts. Graduation diplomas will not be issued until fees are fully paid.

Published requirements

Students enrolling for a course and completing it in the normal time may choose to graduate either under the conditions outlined in the Handbook current at the time of commencing the course or under those listed in a subsequent Handbook.

Students who take longer than the normal time to complete their course must be prepared to adapt to later published requirements.

Where a student has nine or fewer credit points to complete in order to qualify for graduation, and where written authorisation has been given by the Registrar in consultation with the Course Coordinator for these credits to be taken elsewhere, the student shall be allowed a maximum of two years to complete such credits. If they are not completed within this time, the student automatically falls under the terms of graduation as stated in the College Handbook current at the time of graduation.

Academic excellence

Avondale College seeks to encourage excellence among its students. Accordingly, the graduation testamurs of the highest achieving bachelor degree students may be endorsed in recognition of academic excellence, if the candidate's work is of sufficient merit.

The endorsement "credit" or "distinction" may be available to bachelor degree students who at Avondale have completed in the course from which they are graduating at least 60 credit points since their enrolment in that course at Avondale. The endorsement "merit" may be available to bachelor degree students who at Avondale have completed in the course from which they are graduating between 30 and 59 credit points since their enrolment in that course at Avondale.

Eligibility for these excellence endorsements is calculated by a formula which relates the student's weighted average mark to the mean scores of all degree students over the five-year period preceding the student's graduation. The calculation includes all subjects taken at Avondale in the relevant course since the student's enrolment in that course at Avondale. Subjects at 200 and 300 level receive progressively higher weightings than 100-level subjects.

Students should note particularly that an average score in the range 75%–84% does not ensure graduation with distinction; nor does an average score in the range 65%–74% ensure graduation with credit.

Excellence in other areas

Excellence in such areas as Christian lifestyle, citizenship, professional performance and leadership is encouraged in many ways, including the granting annually of Excellence Awards.

The graduation class

In their final year, candidates for graduation must join the graduation class. Unsatisfactory citizenship may result in suspension from the class.

Academic regalia

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

Graduation in absentia

All graduates are required to participate in the official graduation ceremony unless written approval has been granted by the President of the College for them to graduate in absentia.

Assessment policy

Assessment of student work has the following objectives:

- 1 To provide learning experiences in which students may develop and demonstrate a range of intellectual abilities
- 2 To permit lecturers and tutors to measure the achievements of students against both institutional objectives and standards current in comparable institutions in the higher education community of Australia. Assessment is thus an important factor in quality assurance.
- 3 To provide a means of monitoring students' progress and to diagnose specific strengths and weaknesses in student learning so that teachers and students may work together to remediate difficulties and maximise student achievement.
- 4 To provide a variety of formative and summative assessment tasks which recognise individual differences between students and address a range of skills and abilities.
- 5 To assist in the process of designing curriculum and in choice of presentation methods.
- 6 To indicate to lecturers areas where modifications in their teaching may be desirable in order to facilitate improved student learning.

The assessment process should be characterised by

- *Content Validity*: Does the assessment measure what it claims to measure? Does it reflect the teaching process? Is it representative of the content as taught?
- *Predictive Validity*: Does the assessment predict success in desired outcomes, for example, effectiveness in teaching, accounting, nursing, ministry?
- *Suitability*: Is the assessment process suitable to the discipline?
- *Reliability*: Is there consistency in the evaluation?

The assessment process will endeavour to provide indicators of:

- The student's mastery of a corpus of knowledge and/or skills.
- The student's understanding of key interpretive issues.
- The student's ability to deduce, analyse, synthesise and evaluate.
- The student's capacity for sound scholarship in the selection, use and documentation of sources.
- The student's ability to apply theories and methodological content of the discipline.
- The student's capacity for independent thought.
- The student's capacity to argue and communicate coherently and persuasively either symbolically or in written form.

Modes of assessment

Students may be assessed on the basis of coursework or examination or a combination of both. A variety of assessment modes will be used across different subjects. The modes of assessment will be appropriate to both the level of difficulty and to the specific objectives of each subject and will reflect the expectation of increasing levels of achievement and sophistication at higher course/subject levels. For example, students at 300 level will be expected to demonstrate more highly developed powers of analysis, synthesis, critique and evaluation than students at 100 level.

Assessment should seek to be as objective as possible although it is recognised that in some disciplines such as visual arts, non-objective factors are important. Lecturers will not assign marks for such intangible matters as 'attitude' or 'spirit'. Marks should not normally be assigned for general participation, but for quality of performance in particular assigned activities.

At the beginning of each semester, academic faculties in committee or where appropriate, course teaching teams, will scrutinise the type and volume of work expected in all their subjects to ensure that coincidence of demands placed on students is appropriate and reasonable. In general, a 3 credit point subject assumes a total student workload of approximately 120 hours at undergraduate level, or 160-170 hours at postgraduate level. Within faculties an effort will be made to avoid unmanageable peaks of assessment for likely subject combinations in student programs. The pattern of assessment will be structured so as to accommodate the diagnostic purpose of assessment.

Each subject outline will indicate the percentage each assignment or assessment measure contributes towards the final grade for the subject, as well as the estimated time an average student might be expected to devote to the assignment task. Where an assessable assignment or module constitutes an essential component of the subject that must be

passed satisfactorily to gain a pass in the subject as a whole, the subject outline must clearly state this, with the percentage score that needs to be attained in that component.

The total number of assessable assignments including a final examination should not exceed four for a 3 credit point subject. A sequence of assessable practical classes should be regarded as one assignment.

Where assessment of a subject includes both assignments and examinations, the total length of written assignments set in subjects of 3 credit points will not exceed the following limits:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 100-level subjects | 2,500 words |
| 200-level subjects | 3,000 words |
| 300-level subjects | 3,500 words |
| postgraduate subjects | 5,000 words |

Where assessment of a subject is entirely by assignment, with no examination, each faculty shall establish guidelines for total assignment length approved by the Academic Board. (Typical practice is a maximum of 5,000 words for 300-level undergraduate subjects and a maximum of 7,000 words for postgraduate subjects).

To ensure equivalence of demand, assessments for subjects carrying other than 3 credit points will be on a pro-rata basis.

Appropriate equivalent criteria approved by the faculty and the Academic Board shall be established in those disciplines in which assessments are substantially in a non-written form.

Scheduling of tests and assignments

Wherever possible, tests and assignments should be scheduled to avoid unmanageable workload peaks for students, and to allow adequate time for examination preparation at the end of each semester.

In subjects where short periodic tests are appropriate there should be no more than four during the semester. Exemptions from this requirement must be approved by the Vice President (Academic Administration) at least two weeks before the beginning of each semester.

Major assignments may not fall due in the last two weeks of classes in a semester, except in subjects with no final test or examination. In these subjects no assignments may fall due in the last week of classes.

No tests or assignments may be scheduled during the last week of classes in a semester. Vocational Studies courses are exempted from this requirement. Any other exemptions must be approved by the Vice President (Academic Administration) at least two weeks before the beginning of the semester.

Grade distribution

Because the distribution of scores gained from marking student scripts is a relative rather than absolute measure of quality, it is appropriate to rescale scores in order to approach a level of parity across a range of subjects within the institution.

Where class sizes make the exercise appropriate, the table below is provided as a guide for the rescaling process. Typical means for 100-level and 200-level subjects should lie within the vicinity of 60-65% with a standard deviation of about 11 and that of 300-level and 400-level subjects will be within the vicinity of 65-70% with similar standard deviation. Individual lecturers who present score distributions deviating markedly from those recommended would need to defend their judgement in the matter. Where a subject is taught to several class groups in a semester by the same or different lecturers, scores should be scaled to ensure a grade distribution that does not advantage or disadvantage one student group over another.

Approximate percentages of a class of 50 students lying within given mark ranges for assumed normal distributions with given means and standard deviations.

| Year | X (Sx) | High Distinction | Distinction | Credit | Pass | Fail |
|-------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 & 2 | 60-65% (11) | 1-3% (1-2) | 8-15% (4-8) | 24-32% (12-16) | 41-49% (20-24) | 9-18% (4-9) |
| 3 & 4 | 65-70% (11) | 3-9% (2-5) | 15-23% (8-11) | 32-36% (16-18) | 29-41% (14-20) | 3-9% (2-4) |

Monitoring of assessments: internal quality assurance processes

- Examination papers must be reviewed by a teaching colleague prior to lodgement with the Academic Office, to ensure clarity of instructions and questions, appropriate language, balance of requirements, appropriate weighting of questions, and freedom from typing errors. The process also provides feedback to the lecturer regarding question types, coverage of syllabus and level of difficulty.
- Assignments and examination scripts should be cross-marked where work is borderline.
- At the conclusion of each semester, all members of each academic faculty meet as a Board of Examiners for the purpose of reviewing the distribution of grades, moderating borderline results and determining that all results are according to approved course requirements and regulations. Assessments are reviewed to ensure that they are fair, uniform and of an acceptable standard for the award. The Examination Board must include one member external to the faculty, appointed by the faculty for a period of three years.

Notification of results of assessment

- Lecturers are expected to assess assignments and notify students of the results as soon as possible after the due date of the assignment. Marked assignments are returned with comments designed to contribute to the learning process.
- The Academic Office sends students official notification of the grades received in each subject.

Retention of student scripts

Examination scripts and photocopies of selected student assignments will be retained by each faculty for at least one year for moderation purposes. Faculties may exercise discretion to keep these materials for longer periods if desired.

Postgraduate theses

Thesis length

The following table provides a guide to typical lengths of different types of postgraduate theses:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Minor thesis (approx 25% of course) | 10,000–12,000 words |
| Major thesis (approx 50% of course) | 20,000–25,000 words |
| Research degree (approx 100% of course) | 40,000–50,000 words |

Recommended thesis lengths will vary somewhat according to type of research and academic discipline. Supervisors will provide advice.

Thesis examiners

Examiners are appointed by the Postgraduate Studies Coordination Committee on advice from the relevant faculty. The following protocols apply to the appointment of examiners:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Minor thesis | Two examiners, both internal (may include supervisor). |
| Major thesis | Two examiners, one external (may include supervisor). |
| Research degree | Two examiners, both external (may include an adjunct lecturer who is not the thesis supervisor). |

Examiners must have recognised academic/professional competence in the field of the thesis.

Candidates may nominate suitable persons as examiners, or persons who should not be appointed as examiners. Such nominations must be submitted in writing, supported by adequate reasons. Candidates' nominations will be taken into consideration in the appointment of examiners.

On advice from the relevant faculty, the Postgraduate Studies Coordination Committee will also appoint a chairperson to coordinate the work of the examiners.

Examination of postgraduate theses

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

- 1 Accepted without conditions.
- 2 Accepted subject to modification within a specified time frame (the recommended modifications may be minor or more extensive).
- 3 Major revisions required. Resubmit for re-examination.
- 4 Fail

The chairperson of the examining committee will submit the examiners' reports with a recommendation to the Postgraduate Studies Coordination Committee in its capacity as Postgraduate Thesis Examination Board.

If the chairperson of the examining committee is unable to resolve disagreements between the examiners with respect to a recommended outcome, the Postgraduate Studies Coordination Committee shall consider the reports and give a ruling. If necessary, this committee may request a third suitable examiner to assess the thesis.

Postgraduate students should be aware of the following minimum times for thesis examination. The examination of a thesis may take longer than the minimum time.

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Minor thesis | at least one month |
| Major thesis | at least two months |
| Research degree | at least four months |

Research involving human subjects

Human Research Ethics Committee

Research involving human subjects needs approval by either the Avondale College *Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)* or the relevant *Faculty HREC*. Such research may involve the use of surveys, questionnaires, interviews, invasive procedures, etc. The function of the HREC is to safeguard the ethical rights of subjects of human research. The committee meets as specified in the *Monthly Minder*. Reminders of such meetings are announced in *Connections*. Information regarding the procedures and schedule of each Faculty HREC can be obtained from the relevant Faculty Dean or HREC representative.

The application form for approval of research involving human subjects and other associated information required for completion of the application form are available in electronic form from the Chairperson, Secretary or Faculty Representative of the HREC. Application forms must be submitted by the relevant due dates (see *Connections*) in order to allow time for circulation of completed application forms to HREC members.

Ethical clearance must be gained from the Avondale College

HREC, prior to commencing data collection, for research projects conducted by:

- Undergraduate students enrolled in honours programs undertaking research as a component of their program at Avondale College
- Postgraduate students undertaking research as a component of their program at Avondale College
- Avondale College staff or students engaged in research where it is anticipated the result will be made public or be published
- Researchers outside of Avondale College who are using Avondale College staff or students as subjects/participants in their study

Note that it is not necessary to submit an application to the HREC if the research is undertaken for the fulfilment of a degree undertaken from another tertiary institution and the research subjects are not from Avondale College (assumes research approval granted from the ethics committee of that institution).

Applications submitted to the HREC for students in honours and postgraduate programs require a letter of endorsement from their faculty. In most instances this letter should be signed by the Dean of Faculty. Exceptions to this would be:

- 1 where the Dean is also the supervisor, in which case another senior member of the faculty who is sufficiently expert in the research methodology being proposed should sign, or
- 2 where it is felt that another staff member in the faculty is more able to determine the appropriateness of the methodology and student's skills.

Ethical clearance must be gained, prior to commencing data collection, from the relevant Faculty HREC for research projects conducted:

- By undergraduate students undertaking individual research projects as part of their academic program
- In a class context where data may be collected and the results will be used only for educational purposes within the confines of that class.

Guidelines for undergraduate student projects involving human participants

The following guidelines have been developed by the HREC to be used by faculties who have undergraduate students who, as part of their academic program, undertake projects involving human participants. It is recognised that these projects are normally educational activities and are unlikely to be published. If it is anticipated that the results will be made public or published in any form, approval for the project needs to be gained from the HREC. These guidelines do NOT apply to postgraduate students and those who are carrying out research projects for Honours Degrees, as their

projects require approval by the HREC.

It is not the function of the HREC to legislate with respect to academic content, but rather to offer guidance as to the possible ethical implications that may arise when students undertake research activities.

- 1 Each faculty is delegated the responsibility of approving and monitoring projects involving human participants, undertaken by undergraduate students, in subjects offered within the faculty. Projects will normally be jointly assessed by the relevant subject teacher and the faculty's HREC representative. (The faculty may in its discretion appoint a substitute in place of the subject teacher). Where there is substantial uniformity in the type of work undertaken by students in fulfilment of a class assignment, blanket approval may be given for the assignment as a whole; but where students undertake distinctive individual research projects, the projects should be approved on an individual basis.
- 2 Each faculty is to ensure that projects adhere to the principles of ethical conduct outlined in the current edition of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) document *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (NHMRC, 1999, pp. 11–14).

The document is on the web at <http://www.nhmrc.health.gov.au/publicat/synopses/e35syn.htm> or can be ordered from Ausinfo on phone 132 447. Copies are also held by the HREC, Avondale College Library, or SAH Library. Faculties are required to have a hard copy of the above document (for faculty and student access) if they require undergraduate students to undertake projects that use human participants.

- 3 Each faculty will determine the method by which applications for such projects will be submitted for approval, ensuring that adequate details of the project are obtained to make an informed decision about the appropriateness of the study, particularly in relation to ethical issues. A record of approved projects is to be kept.
- 4 Each faculty is to submit an annual report to the HREC (at the time designated by the HREC), outlining the number and types of projects approved, and their status (completed or continuing).
- 5 Special care is needed when approving projects which require the use of participants whose involvement needs additional consideration, identified by the (NHMRC, 1999) as involving:
 - children and young people (p 25)
 - persons with an intellectual or mental impairment (p 26)
 - persons highly dependent on medical care (pp 27–29)
 - persons in dependent or unequal relationships (p 30)

- collectives (p 31)
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (p 32)
- 6 Projects involving deception of participants, concealment or covert observation require approval by the HREC. Normally undergraduate students should not be involved in such projects.
 - 7 Each faculty will determine the method by which approved projects will be monitored, ensuring that all procedures used in the project adhere to ethical standards, through to the completion of the study.
 - 8 Lecturers involved in the supervision of such projects undertaken by undergraduate students are to be well informed about research methods and ethical issues related to research studies that use human participants. Supervisors are to take reasonable and appropriate measures to ensure that each project adheres to the NHMRC document identified above.
 - 9 Students involved in such projects are to have a basic understanding of research methods and be adequately informed about the ethical issues related to their particular area of study.
 - 10 Each faculty is to ensure that projects involving human participants, undertaken by undergraduate students at Avondale College, adhere to the principles of ethical conduct as outlined by the NHMRC (1999, pp. 11–14). The following guidelines are based on these principles.

If a project involves human participants, it must be reviewed by an ethics committee and must not be undertaken until approval has been granted (NHMRC, 1.16).

When approving and monitoring projects by undergraduate students, particular attention must be given to:

 - a) *Integrity*: Ensure the student carries out the study in an honest and ethical way (NHMRC, 1.1).
 - b) *Respect for persons*: The student must take into account the individual and collective “welfare, rights, beliefs, perceptions, customs and cultural heritage” of participants (NHMRC, 1.2). Consider this issue carefully when assessing proposed data collection instruments (eg. questionnaires).
 - c) *Beneficence*: In all projects, the risk of harm or discomfort to participants must be minimised (NHMRC, 1.3), and must not be disproportionate to the benefits of the study (NHMRC, 1.17).
 - d) *Dignity of participants*: “Ensure that respect for the dignity and well being of the participants takes precedence over the expected benefits to knowledge” (NHMRC, 1.4). Consider this issue carefully when assessing proposed data collection instruments (eg. questionnaires).
- e) *Justice*: In consideration of a balance of burdens and benefits, ensure the student:
 - avoids imposing on a particular group which could be subject to excessive study
 - designs the study “so that the selection, recruitment, exclusion and inclusion of research participants is fair”
 - does not discriminate in the selection of participants “on the grounds of race, age, disability or religious or spiritual beliefs except where the exclusion or inclusion of particular groups is essential to the purpose of the research” (NHMRC, 1.5).
 - f) *Consent*: Ensure the consent of participants in a study is obtained. Consent must be clearly established either by :
 - a signed form
 - return of a survey
 - recorded agreement for interview (NHMRC, 1.9). Prior to obtaining the consent, participants must be informed of the “purpose, methods, demands, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and possible outcomes of the research (including the likelihood and form of publication of research results)” (NHMRC, 1.7). Participants must give consent voluntarily, with no form of coercion or inducement used (NHMRC, 1.10). Participants should be informed that they are free to withdraw from a study at any time, and they are not required to give any reason for such a decision (NHMRC, 1.8, 1.12)
 - g) *Research Merit*: The potential contribution to knowledge which can be made must be identified, and the student must be able to justify the need to carry out the project (NHMRC, 1.13).
 - h) *Safety*: Supervisors of research studies must have the “experience, qualifications and competence appropriate to the research”, and projects must be conducted with appropriate facilities and resources available to deal with “any contingencies that may affect participants” (NHMRC, 1.15).
 - i) *Storage and Disposal of Data*: Students must ensure that privacy, confidentiality and cultural sensitivities of participants are respected. Students should sign a statement agreeing to maintain the confidentiality of human participants and to destroy all raw data when it is no longer required (NHMRC, 1.19).

Special regulations for international students on student visas

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 Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs website: www.immi.gov.au/students/index.htm). 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 Admissions Office is happy to assist with information and guidance on visa matters.

Academic load

A student visa requires full-time enrolment in a registered course of study. Student visa holders in undergraduate courses are normally expected to maintain at Avondale an academic load of at least 15 credit points per semester, including at least one core or religion subject. The core/religion requirement may be waived where a student has already completed appropriate core/religion requirements at another Seventh-day Adventist higher education institution.

Student visa holders in certificate, diploma or postgraduate courses are required to maintain a full load of studies in each semester.

Attendance at classes

Avondale is required to inform DIMIA (The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs) if an overseas student's attendance at classes is unsatisfactory. Visa cancellation will result. Student visa holders must inform the Academic Office of any change in their ability to attend classes. A student visa holder who is ill for more than one day must submit a medical certificate to the Academic Office without delay.

Change of course or course duration

Avondale is required to inform DIMIA of any change of course or course duration by an international student. Student visa holders require written approval of both Avondale and DIMIA 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, obtain a different visa, or leave Australia.

Academic performance

Avondale is required to notify DIMIA of any breach of student visa conditions relating to unsatisfactory academic performance. A student visa holder is allowed to repeat a failed unit only once.

Change of address

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

Overseas health insurance cover

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

Renewal of student visas

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

Deferral of study program

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

- Illness documented by a medical certificate
- Other exceptional compassionate circumstances beyond the control of the student (e.g. bereavement).