

Academic Policies

Introduction

The academic policies and information located in this section of the handbook are abridged versions of policies located on the Avondale College website. Note that the version on the website www.Avondale.edu.au is the full, current and definitive version of the policies.

Academic administration

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

Each vocational studies course has a course committee, and a sub-committee called the Board of Assessment. Each course coordinator is the secretary of the relevant course committee. The Academic Registrar chairs each course committee. The course committees and course coordinators for 2007 are:

- Aviation—Garry Fraser
- Business—Gaylene Heise
- Outdoor Recreation—Peter Vaughan

Academic advisement

Each student is responsible for structuring their course of study in accordance with published requirements. Course coordinators are available to advise and assist students in arranging their course of study where necessary.

Academic records

Avondale College provides students with accurate and up to date information about the status and outcomes of the units of competency in which they are enrolled. Academic transcripts are available detailing a student's performance in all relevant assessments.

Academic regalia

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

Academic transcripts

Academic transcripts identify the course and semester in which students are enrolled and identify the basis of their enrolment. Academic transcripts detail a student's performance in all relevant course assessments and allow identification of the units of competency attained by the student. Avondale College provides two copies of an academic transcript free of charge at graduation but reserves the right to charge a fee for the reprinting of any additional academic transcripts requested by a student or their representative. Such a fee will be on a cost recovery/

non-profit basis. Official transcripts bear the impressed seal of Avondale College.

Access to records

Full confidentiality of records is guaranteed to the student and information is not divulged to non-lecturing staff or any other persons unless authorised by the student, or if it is a legal requirement to provide such information. Avondale College wishes to encourage trust and confidence among students, faculty, staff and administration and in particular, to affirm the right to privacy of each member of the Avondale College community. In accordance with this policy, current and former students of Avondale College will have access to their own records. Only those staff within Avondale College who have a legitimate interest may have access to student records. Persons outside Avondale College do not have access to the records of individual students unless students give written permission for the release of specific records, or unless the knowledge of such information is required to be provided to funding, immigration, accreditation or other agencies which are legally entitled to such information.

Information required by other education institutions for the purposes of confirming qualifications of a current or former student of Avondale College, such as confirmation of units of study completed, participation in officially recognised activities, and awards received by students, will not be released by Avondale College unless accompanied by written authorisation of the student or the organisation.

Admission to Vocational Education and Training courses

Entry into a program at Avondale College is based upon academic performance, interview and proficiency in the English language. Applications are welcomed from individuals regardless of race, gender, or religious affiliation. Admission to, and continuation at Avondale College is dependent on evidence of good character, intellectual competence, support for the philosophy and mission of Avondale College and a willingness to conform to College regulations.

Students wishing to apply should submit copies of their reports and/or official examination certificates for assessment and should have successfully completed either:

Certificate III level courses

- Ten years schooling—Year 10 (Australia), Year 11 (New Zealand) or international equivalent; *and*
- Completion of a relevant Certificate II course.

Diploma course

- Twelve years schooling to the level of Higher School Certificate, International Baccalaureate or a national or vocational equivalent; *or*
- Ten years schooling with at least one year's further study at a tertiary institution and a further year appropriate and relevant industry experience; *or*
- Ten years schooling and two years appropriate and relevant industry experience; *or*
- Completion of a relevant Certificate III course.

Mature-aged applicants (over 19 years of age) must have successfully completed either:

- Certificate III or an appropriate national vocational equivalent, plus have appropriate and relevant industry experience; *or*
- Ten years schooling, plus have appropriate industry experience and training sufficient to be considered as the equivalent to a Certificate III in an associated area.

In exceptional circumstances admission to the program may be granted by the Academic Registrar in consultation with the course co-ordinator based on life and employment experiences.

English language proficiency

- International applicants from countries where English is not the first language must demonstrate that they have an adequate level of proficiency in English;
- English language proficiency may be demonstrated by providing evidence of satisfactory performance in the International Language Testing System (IELTS). Applicants who take IELTS must sit either the General module and attain a minimum score of 6.0 or the Academic module and attain a minimum score of 5.5, with consistent results across the bands. If a student cannot demonstrate this score Avondale College will require students to undertake a prescribed period of intensive English language tuition before commencing studies at Avondale College. Students holding an English language certificate deemed to be equivalent of IELTS 6.0 from an English Language College recognised by Avondale College are not required to provide an IELTS score.

Admission with credit

- Provided that it is clear that an applicant has fulfilled the relevant progression and assessment requirements of the program by means other than attendance on the planned program, and will be able by completing the remaining requirements to fulfil the objectives of the program and attain the standard required for the award, that applicant may be admitted to any appropriate point in the program;
- Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) must be submitted through the course coordinator no later than the completion of week four of the semester

of entry.

- The Academic Registrar in consultation with the course coordinator shall decide on credit granted for units of competencies and subjects passed elsewhere.
- Recognition of Prior Learning is generally used as a term including both prior certificated learning and experiential learning.

Course specific admission with credit*Aviation*

- Students who have completed a CASA Private Pilot Licence are granted entry to the Diploma of Aviation.
- Students who have completed the CASA Commercial Pilot Licence and a Multi-engine Command Instrument Rating or a Night VFR Rating may be granted entry to the Associate Degree in Aviation with advanced standing.
- Advanced standing will also be given for CASA exams completed, and the Chief Flying Instructor will require a flight evaluation to establish current flying competence.

Outdoor Recreation

- Students who successfully complete Certificate III in Outdoor Recreation will gain Advanced Standing into the Diploma in Outdoor Recreation.

Specific entry requirements*Aviation*

- Ability to pass the CASA-approved medical examination; *and*
- Fluency in the English language to a standard that permits effective written and verbal communication in an aviation context; *and*
- Completion of Mathematics and a Science (Physics or Chemistry) at Year 12 level or its equivalent, as much of the course assumes a prior knowledge of Mathematics and Physics principles.

Outdoor Recreation

- Completion of Senior First Aid and Bronze Medallion qualifications; *and*
- A reasonable standard of fitness, which needs to be maintained to continue to engage in outdoor pursuits; *and*
- Aptitude for physical activity and leadership, must be literate, numerate and a good communicator. Prior experience and a positive interest in several outdoor pursuits are desirable.

Overseas applicants

- Bona fide equivalent qualifications as assessed by the Academic Registrar; *and*
- Documentary evidence that 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; *and*
- Satisfy Australian Government visa requirements.

Appeals

If a student has substantive grounds of injustice regarding matters relating to admissions, review of an assessment, RPL, quality assurance, and eligibility for graduation mechanisms exist for appealing decisions. These appeals will be considered under the relevant guidelines such as the Grievance and Appeals policy or the Anti-bullying and Harassment policy.

Generally the initial stage of an appeal is one of oral confirmation, where contact is made with the responsible staff member and the grounds of appeal are outlined. This provides an opportunity for administrative and other errors to be corrected and/or the rationale for the decision to be satisfactorily explained.

The next, more formal stage, the student can submit the matter of grievance to the Coordinator of Vocational Education either verbally or in writing. The manager will seek to resolve the matter amicably and with respect to the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Further processes of appeal, detailed in the full policies, are available if the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

Appeals Committee

A student, under certain circumstances and with supportive documentation, may request that the Appeals Committee reconsider a decision of the Board of Assessment.

Assessment

Assessment tasks are set in each unit of competency to promote learning and provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their competency.

Attendance

There is an expectation of punctual and regular attendance to all classes, appointments, placements and other learning experiences as required by staff. Students are responsible for their attendance. The Teaching Committee in the Faculty of Education may implement measures to deal with unsatisfactory attendance.

Auditing units

Auditing an undergraduate subject or a vocational education unit of competency involves attending class periods without doing assignments or assessment tasks. No credit is given for audited subjects/units. Students should note that no more than one subject/unit can be audited per semester; the pre-requisites must have been fulfilled; the staff member involved has approved the audit arrangements; the subject/unit is not a practical one; and the audit fee has been paid.

Board of Assessment

Qualified assessors make assessments of students in accordance with the course assessment regulations and makes recommendations relating to the conferring of awards for students who have fulfilled the objectives of an approved program of study and achieved the standards required for an award.

Changes in registration

Changes in registration may be made if submitted by the deadlines stated in the yearly calendar.

Christian Studies units

Christian Studies which all students are required to take addressing the religious, moral, physical or social values and special emphases for which Avondale College stands, are part of the Vocational Education and Training program. Part-time students are referred to the policy manual located on the website for special sequences of units.

Course

A structured sequence of learning built around a range of specific learning outcomes usually delivered in an educational/training institution environment through a curriculum. In some instances, completion of a course may lead to a recognised AQF qualification; in other instances it results in other forms of recognition and certification.

Disciplinary action

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

Eligibility for placements

Outdoor Recreation requires field work or work experience placements. If organisations/agencies providing such placements decline for any reason to permit a student to undertake this aspect of their studies, then the student may not be able to complete the requirements of the course. Avondale College will do all that is reasonable to arrange an alternative location for the student to undertake such compulsory components. However, Avondale College cannot guarantee that such an option will be available. Students should therefore note in such circumstances they may not be able to graduate with the anticipated award.

Excellence awards

Mountain Designs Certificate III Outdoor Recreation Excellence Award

\$250

Presented to an outstanding student graduating from Certificate III in Outdoor Recreation. Overall excellence is determined by: (a) demonstration of a high degree of skill and professionalism in the areas of canoeing, kayaking, abseiling and bushwalking; (b) diligence and positive attitude to studies and quality of service in work experience; (c) relationship to peers, lecturers and College personnel; and (d) exemplary citizenship, presentation, integrity and spiritual sensitivity.

Mountain Designs, Newcastle Diploma in Outdoor Recreation Leadership Award

\$250

Presented to an outstanding student graduating from Diploma in Outdoor Recreation. Overall excellence will be determined by: (a) demonstration of a high degree of skill and professionalism in the areas of canoeing, kayaking, abseiling and bushwalking; (b) diligence and positive attitude to studies and quality of service in work experience; (c) relationship to peers, lecturers and College personnel; and (d) exemplary citizenship, presentation, integrity and spiritual sensitivity

Exemptions

The Academic Registrar in consultation with 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 alternate units of competencies in lieu of the exempted work.

Flexible delivery

Flexible delivery involves a range of approaches to providing education and training, giving learners greater choice of when, where and how they learn. Flexible delivery may involve mixed-mode delivery, online education, and/or self-paced learning.

Full-time student

Students enrolled in a normal full-time student load at Avondale College normally may undertake as many vocational education units of competencies as they are able to complete.

Graduating class

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

Graduation

Graduation means that students are competent in the units

of competencies that they have completed and that they have completed all the required units of competencies for the course in which they are enrolled.

Graduation in absentia

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

Integrity

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

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. Late registration requires the approval of the course coordinator who will consider the likelihood that the student concerned will make satisfactory progress in the units of competencies undertaken.

Leave of absence

Any student enrolled in a course of study at Avondale College may apply for a Leave of Absence from their course for up to two years by completing the prescribed form. If such leave is approved, the student is entitled to re-commence their course at any point in the future. Unless prior arrangements are made outlining how the original requirements of the student's course are to be completed, the student may be required to transfer to the current training package where the package has been revised.

Mutual recognition

Mutual recognition is a feature of the Australian Quality Training Framework which allows a registered training organisation (RTO) registered in one state or territory to operate in another without a further registration process. Qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any RTO are to be accepted and recognised by all other RTOs, and training packages endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee to be delivered by all RTOs registered to do so.

Notification of results of assessment

Staff are expected to notify students of assessment results as soon as possible after the assessment. The Academic Office sends students official notification of the grades received in each subject.

Pathways to degree studies

Students successfully completing TDA40203 Certificate IV Transport and Distribution (Flight Operations) or Certificate IV in Aviation or the Diploma of Aviation, may be considered for admission to the Associate Degree in Aviation.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own. It is a form of dishonesty and students are expected to avoid plagiarism by: doing their own work when independent work is required; acknowledging all sources of information and ideas; and acknowledging all group members when group assignments are required. Further, students should refrain from: copying another student's work; producing an assignment in conjunction with another person when independent work is required; lending an assignment to another student(s); copying or paraphrasing another's work closely without acknowledging the source of the paraphrase.

Privacy policy

Avondale College is committed to ensuring the Privacy of all students, staff and contractors and are committed to ensuring this policy is implemented. Avondale College collects information necessary to enable it to provide services to its students. Avondale College takes reasonable steps to protect personal information from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Personal information is destroyed or permanently de-identified when no longer required. We do not disclose personal information to third parties without the owner's consent, unless required or permitted by law. We may be required by law to disclose some personal information to Australian government organisations and to the Fund Manager of the ESOS Assurance Fund. Personal information may be disclosed for the prevention, detection or investigation of criminal or proscribed conduct, or in certain circumstances in the interest of public health or public safety. We are required by law to inform the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) if an overseas student visa holder changes the course of study for which he/she is enrolled.

Progression within and across courses

A student who commences one of the courses may exit with a lesser qualification by completing the appropriate units of competency.

Australian Government visa regulations do not permit

international students on a student visa to repeat a failed unit more than once.

Published requirements

Students enrolling in a course and completing it in the normal time may choose to graduate either under the conditions outlined in the Training Package current at the time of commencing the course or under those listed in a subsequent training package. Students who take longer than the normal time to complete their course must be prepared to adapt to the requirements of later training packages.

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:

- there is reason to believe a clerical or other recording error may have occurred; or
- 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.

Recognition of Current Competency (RCC)

Because neither the route nor the method of learning is considered in the assessment process, Avondale College takes into account a range of prior learning experience, including experiences other than those accredited by other registered providers. Students who consider they already possess the skills and knowledge necessary to be deemed competent in any element may have the opportunity to have this substantiated through formal qualifications or assessment/references.

All units in these courses are nationally recognised and therefore those students who have completed a recognised unit at another registered provider may be granted credit. Where more than 30% of a course is credited through RCC/RPL the fee will equate to 75% of the tuition fee.

RPL and RCC

Avondale College supports and encourages the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC) and Credit Transfer and has procedures in place to ensure fair, valid, reliable and consistent assessment of students' requests. It is the policy of Avondale College to recognise the AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by any other RTO. It is the student's responsibility for making a claim to have acquired knowledge and skills and for supporting the claim with appropriate evidence, although assistance may be

given by the course coordinator. Evidence submitted will be reviewed by a member of staff with expertise in the field and checked against the unit elements and performance criteria. This evidence will be reviewed to ensure that it is current, authentic, valid and relevant. Applications will be processed promptly.

Restrictions in classrooms

For considerations of hygiene, health and safety, the consumption of food and drink (including snacks) is not normally permitted. Parents are also advised that normally they are not to bring children to classes. Children are not permitted in computer laboratories.

Results awarded

At the conclusion of each course staff may award any of the following grades:

C	Competent
NYC	Not Yet Competent
RCC	Recognition of Current Competency
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning

Scheduling of assessments

Wherever possible, assessments should be scheduled to avoid unmanageable workload peaks for students.

Self Disclosure and Criminal Records Check consent

Avondale College students who may be engaged in field work, placements or work experience involving children or young people, the ill, or other vulnerable people are required to sign a self disclosure form (Prohibited Persons Declaration) and consent to a criminal records check.

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

Self-paced learning

Self-paced learning refers to learning undertaken at a student's own pace.

Supplementary assessments

In cases where the student is not yet competent, the course coordinator is responsible for notifying the student and the Academic Registrar of the work to be completed and the expected date for its completion.

Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS)

For each course of study offered at Avondale College, Avondale College is required to have in place a Tuition

Assurance Scheme (TAS) arrangement with an approved TAS operator, that should Avondale College cease to be able to provide a course of study, the TAS operator will act to relocate students in an appropriate course. Students receive full credit for the units of competency completed and leading to the same or a comparable qualification. The TAS operator engaged by Avondale College is the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).

Testamur

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

Transfer to another course

The procedure for awarding credit may be used to permit a student who has successfully completed all or part of one course of study to transfer to another related course of study.

Unit of competency

A unit of competency is a component of a competency standard and is a statement of a key function or role in a particular job or occupation.

Unit of competency codes

Units of competencies are given an abridged working code for internal purposes. The national unit of competency code appears on transcripts and statements of attainment.

Withdrawal

Students withdrawing from a unit of competency or discontinuing their course part way through must notify the Academic Office in writing on the designated form. A withdrawal between the last day to enter a class and the end of the ninth week of a semester will result in a withdrawn (W) grade being recorded. Later withdrawals, including students who fail to comply with these formalities forfeit College fee refunds and are awarded a Not Yet Competent (NYC) grade for each enrolled subject.

International students—special regulations

Student visas

International students planning to study in Australia need a passport and an Australian student visa. Visa conditions vary from country to country—see the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) website: www.immi.gov.au/study. Applicants from many countries must provide evidence of English language competence. The IELTS test is the preferred English language assessment test for student visa applications, however where possible Avondale College will consider alternate tests of English proficiency.

Avondale College's Admissions Office is happy to assist with information and guidance on visa matters.

Academic load

A person holding a student visa is required to be enrolled full-time in a registered course of study. Student visa holders in vocational education courses are normally expected to progress through their course at a rate of at least 75% per semester.

Attendance at classes

Avondale College is required to inform DIAC if an overseas student's attendance at classes is unsatisfactory. Visa cancellation may 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.

Medibank Private membership

International students must have Medibank coverage for the duration of their visa. New Zealand students may apply for Medibank coverage, however, this is not compulsory. The Medibank schedule for new and continuing students should be updated each semester, with amounts charged, according to the period of health cover required. The schedule is sent to the Accounts Department for cross-checking with the invoices sent to students. Once the checking has been completed, a corrected schedule, all application forms and a cheque are sent to Medibank Private in Sydney. Once the cheque and applications have been processed in Sydney, Medibank send back to the Academic Registrar a receipt which contains the membership number of every student listed on the schedule and the amount received. All Medibank numbers and dates of coverage for new students must be entered into the database. The Medibank numbers for continuing students should be checked and the dates of coverage updated. Medibank will send membership cards on an individual basis to students directly. All correspondence entered into with Medibank is filed by relevant semester and kept in the Academic Registrar's office.

Change of course or course duration

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

Academic performance

Avondale College is required to notify DIAC if student visa holder fails a unit of competency twice.

Change of address

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

Renewal of student visas

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

Deferral of study program

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

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

