



TAFE NSW HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREE CONFERRAL AND GRADUATION PROCEDURE

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1. Document history and details

Version 5: 7 December 2023

Commencement date: Semester 1 2024

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This procedure outlines the TAFE NSW Higher Education rules for meeting course completion requirements, graduation eligibility, conferral of awards and certification documentation.
- 2.2 This procedure accords with the principles outlined in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), specifically the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.

3. Audience and applicability

3.1 This procedure applies to:

- all TAFE NSW Higher Education staff responsible for the management of students enrolled in higher education courses including academic and student administration staff; and
- all students enrolled in TAFE NSW Higher Education courses.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Academic staff	Dean of Higher Education, Course Coordinators, Teachers
Course Coordinator	The academic manager of a TAFE NSW Higher Education course, who has overall responsibility for course and student management at the delivering campus.
Dean of Higher Education	Responsible for overseeing and reporting to the Higher Education Academic Council on a range of TAFE NSW Higher Education academic matters, student management, course implementation and professional development of staff.
GPA	Grade Point Average
Graded Award	The overall grading assigned to a graduate's course of study, based on the averaging of all individual subject results. Course grades include Pass, Credit, Distinction and High Distinction. A student who has been awarded recognition of prior learning for more than 50% of subjects will not receive a graded award.
Higher Education Academic Council	Responsible for academic governance of TAFE NSW Higher Education to allow educational objectives to be achieved.
Senior Manager, Higher Education Quality	Overall responsibility for TAFE NSW Higher Education programs and point of contact between TAFE NSW and TEQSA.
Special Awards	Individual awards bestowed on students in recognition of academic achievement.
Student Management System	The digital system used by TAFE NSW to manage student records including student enrolment, academic progress, and course completion documentation. Often referred to as SMS.

Term	Definition
TAFE NSW Higher Education	Trading name for the Technical and Further Education Commission which is the higher education provider registered with TEQSA.
Ungraded Award	A student who has been awarded recognition of prior learning for more than 50% of subjects will not receive a graded award.

5. Eligibility to graduate

5.1 Students are deemed eligible to graduate if they:

- have satisfied course completion requirements by successfully completing:
 - core and elective subjects in accordance with the course structure; and
 - the requisite number of subjects; and
 - requisite number of credit points; and
 - within the mandated maximum study period;
- do not have any outstanding fees or debts payable to TAFE NSW.

5.2 A student who has not completed study requirements in accordance with the standard course structure may be deemed eligible to graduate if:

- the program of study was approved by the Course Coordinator; and
- the student has met the overall course learning outcomes; and
- the student has completed the requisite number of subjects and credit points.

5.3 Students seeking to graduate outside of the standard course structure must be approved to complete by the Course Coordinator.

5.4 The Course Coordinator reports non-standard course completions to the Dean of Higher Education.

6. Approval to graduate

6.1 Students in their final semester complete an application to course complete and graduate.

6.2 Once final assessments are published by Course Coordinators on approval from the Dean, student completion is actioned in the Student Management System.

6.3 The list of students eligible to graduate is generated from Student Management System by the Dean of Higher Education.

6.4 Course Coordinators confirm students have met course completion requirements.

6.5 A complete list of graduates is provided to the Higher Education Academic Council. The Dean of Higher Education recommends the list of Course Coordinator endorsed completers to the Higher Education Academic Council for approval to confer awards (degrees).

6.6 The Higher Education Academic Council approves the conferral of awards.

7. Conferral of awards

7.1 Awards will be conferred on students who have been approved to graduate at the next graduation ceremony with students receiving their award in person or in absentia.

7.2 TAFE NSW will not confer an award if:

- the student is the subject of a current misconduct investigation and that investigation has not been completed;

- the student has outstanding tuition fees owed to TAFE NSW or other outstanding administrative charges such as library fines.

7.3 TAFE NSW may publish graduates' names, awards conferred and conferral dates. Graduates who do not wish to be publicly identified must contact the TAFE NSW Higher Education Quality Team through the graduation acceptance application process, prior to their respective ceremony.

8. Graduation

8.1 Students approved to graduate (in accordance with Section 6 above) will be invited to graduate.

8.2 Students can elect to:

- attend the next scheduled graduation ceremony; or
- attend a subsequent graduation ceremony but must attend within 12 months of the original graduation date; or
- graduate in absentia.

8.3 TAFE NSW Higher Education may decline a graduand permission to attend a graduation ceremony in person if there are reasonable grounds for believing that the graduand constitutes a risk to any other person.

8.4 TAFE NSW Higher Education will determine the location of graduation ceremonies and the awards to be conferred.

8.5 A fee is payable by graduands to attend the ceremony.

8.6 A student who graduates in absentia will receive their testamur after the graduation ceremony.

8.7 In exceptional circumstances, a student can apply to the Dean of Higher Education to graduate in absentia earlier than the next scheduled graduation ceremony, subject to the provisions of Sections 5 and 6 above being met.

8.8 The Dean requests the Chair of the Higher Education Academic Council to approve out of session graduates.

8.9 The Chair of the Higher Education Academic Council approves the conferral of awards on behalf of the Higher Education Academic Council.

8.10 Upon approval, the student is issued with a transcript of academic record and testamur.

8.11 A report of out of session graduates is provided by the Dean of Higher Education to the next meeting of the Higher Education Academic Council for information.

9. Special Awards

9.1 Graduates may be nominated to receive special awards to recognise academic achievement.

9.2 Awards are bestowed annually at the first graduation ceremony in the following year.

9.3 Award recipients who are unable to attend a graduation ceremony or who defer their graduation to a later ceremony will receive their award in absentia.

10. Embedded qualifications

10.1 A student who discontinues their studies but has completed the requirements of an embedded qualification will be issued with a testamur and transcript of academic record for the embedded qualification. They may be eligible to receive a transcript of academic record for the

higher-level qualification if additional subjects beyond the requirements of the embedded qualification have been completed.

- 10.2 Students exiting via embedded qualifications will be eligible to graduate in accordance with the provisions of Section 8 above.
- 10.3 A student who wishes to exit with an embedded qualification must complete the TAFE NSW Higher Education Withdrawal Interruption Application form and submit it for approval to the Course Coordinator.
- 10.4 The Course Coordinator will ensure the student has completed the course requirements for the embedded qualification before approving the student's course transfer and completion via the embedded qualification.
- 10.5 A student enrolled in a higher-level qualification cannot progressively graduate with the embedded lower-level qualifications.
- 10.6 A student who enrolls in and completes a lower-level qualification which is embedded in a higher-level qualification and who chooses to continue their studies in the higher-level qualification will:
- be issued with a testamur and transcript of academic record for the lower-level qualification on completion; and
 - be issued with a testamur and transcript of academic record for the higher-level qualification on completion however subjects completed in the lower-level qualification will be reported on the transcript of academic record for the higher-level qualification as having been achieved through recognition of prior learning and will be reported as 'By Advanced Standing' on the transcript of academic record of the higher-level qualification.

11. Certification documentation

- 11.1 Graduates will be issued with:
- a testamur and
 - transcript of academic record.
- 11.2 The transcript of academic record will indicate the course grade, course GPA and all subject grades.
- 11.3 Graduates who have received more than 50% of their subjects via credit (recognition of prior learning) will receive an ungraded course award.
- 11.4 Students eligible to graduate can apply for a transcript of academic record confirming completion prior to graduating if:
- they are applying for further study and require evidence of completion; or
 - they are an international student requiring evidence of completion for visa purposes; or
 - for other valid reasons as confirmed by the Dean of Higher Education.

12. Replacement documentation

- 12.1 The issuance of a replacement testamur and/or transcript of academic record is governed by the TAFE NSW Student Academic Document Issue Procedure and may incur a fee.
- 12.2 Graduates can apply for a replacement testamur or transcript of academic record as a result of damage, loss, theft or change of name.
- 12.3 Applications for a replacement testamur or transcript of academic record must be accompanied by supporting evidence which may include a statutory declaration.

12.4 The student applying for a replacement testamur due to name change must return the original testamur before being issued with the replacement testamur.

13. Withdrawal or revocation of awards

13.1 To ensure the integrity of TAFE NSW Higher Education, awards may be withdrawn by TAFE NSW Higher Education:

- if they are found to have been issued in error;
- if an error was made in determining the student's course award grade, and a replacement showing the correct award grade needs to be issued.

13.2 A student must return a testamur withdrawn in accordance with Section 13.1.

14. Posthumous awards

14.1 If a student dies, they may be considered for a posthumous award if:

- they had successfully completed 90% or more of course work; or
- where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.

14.2 Decisions in relation to posthumous awards will be recommended by the Dean of Higher Education and approved by the Higher Education Academic Council in accordance with 6.5 and 6.6 above.

15. Appeals

15.1 A student may appeal any decision made under this procedure. The only grounds for appeal are that the decision is inconsistent with this procedure.

15.2 Students wishing to appeal must follow the processes outlined in TAFE NSW Customer Complaints Policy.

16. Roles and responsibilities

16.1 The Dean of Higher Education and Course Coordinators are responsible for the effective management and implementation of these procedures.

16.2 This procedure does not replace or modify any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law.

17. Related documents

TAFE NSW Assessment Policy

TAFE NSW Customer Complaints Policy

TAFE NSW Higher Education Assessment Procedure

TAFE NSW Higher Education Progression, Exclusion and Graduation Policy

TAFE NSW Higher Education Progression and Exclusion Procedure

TAFE NSW Higher Education Tuition Fees, Payments, HELP, Refunds and Review Policy and Procedure

TAFE NSW Student Academic Document Issue Procedure

18. Monitoring and evaluation

This procedure will be reviewed and updated regularly in line with the TAFE NSW Higher Education Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework.

19. Publication of this procedure

The current version of this procedure is published on the TAFE NSW internet.

20. Approval

The TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Council approved this procedure on 7 December 2023.

Note: (17 March 2026) Accountable and Responsible Officer roles have been updated since publication, as part of an automated update associated with recent operating model changes. These updates reflect position title or organisational alignment changes only and will be captured in the version history when the document is next reviewed and published.