

LEADING COURSES

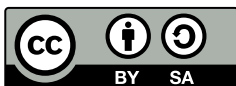
Answers for Deakin staff who offer students
a brilliant education where they are
and where they want to go

CHAPTER 3: COURSE DESIGN



First edition, June 2017





Unless where otherwise noted, all material presented in this document is provided under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>.

Requests and inquiries concerning these rights should be addressed to:

Deakin University
1 Gheringhap Street
Geelong, Victoria, 3220
Australia

[<leadingcourses@deakin.edu.au>](mailto:leadingcourses@deakin.edu.au)

Published by Deakin University
© 2017

ISBN 978-0-7300-0115-7 [print]
ISBN 978-0-7300-0112-6 [digital]

CHAPTER 3: COURSE DESIGN

This chapter explains:

- how to design the course to deliver the best learning for your students
- what University requirements must be met
- features of Deakin courses, including work-integrated learning, use of professional practice credentials and Deakin Hallmarks.

See also Chapter 5 covering assessment design and Chapter 6 covering minimisation of student cheating.

Deakin's courses are designed in accordance with the [Deakin Curriculum Framework](#) (set out in Schedule A of the Higher Education Courses Policy), the requirements of the [Course Design and Delivery Procedure](#) and [Assessment \(Higher Education Courses\) Procedure](#) and external professional and regulatory requirements.

The *LIVE* strategic plan is committed to empowering learners for the future, and Deakin is focused on excelling in learning design and delivery to create rich student learning experiences that achieve that goal. Course structures and learning activities emphasise flexibility of learning for local and international students. Whether on campus, online or a blend of both, course design considers the learning needs of diverse cohorts of students in order to welcome, support and inspire learners to achieve their potential.

COURSE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

How do I create a course learning design?

Deakin courses are a coherent program of study with defined course learning outcomes. Units fit within a course to contribute to the achievement of course learning outcomes. Course design is the starting point for learning and teaching. It requires course-level thinking that considers how assessment and learning activities across all the contributing units work together to achieve the course outcomes.

Deakin aims to apply the principles of **constructive alignment** and **backward design** to the development of course curriculum. At an early stage of course construction, it is important to work with your academic governance colleagues in your faculty. It is also very useful to talk to Equity and Diversity curriculum consultants during the planning stage to ensure that the course design is inclusive and does not present barriers for particular student groups.

Constructive alignment

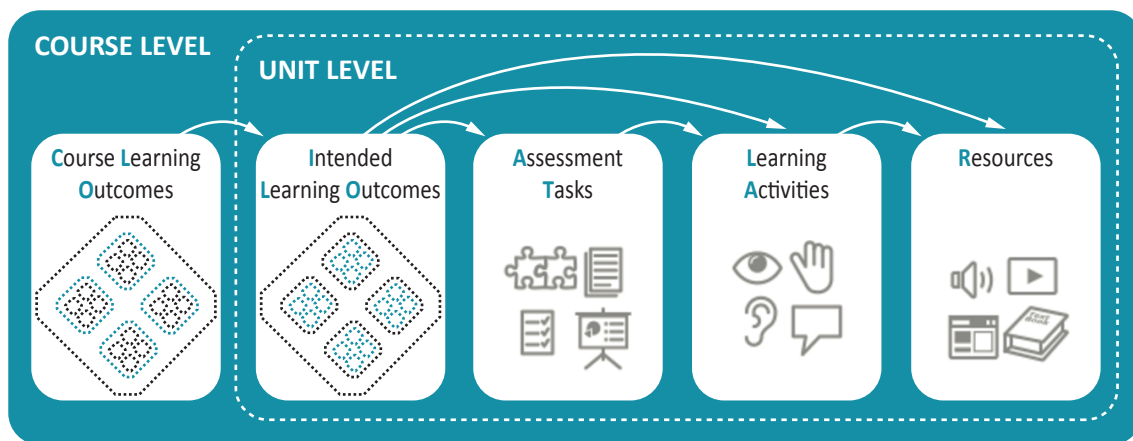
Constructive alignment starts with the outcomes that we intend students to achieve and aims to ensure that teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks within a unit of study are linked directly to the stated learning outcomes. There is a particular emphasis on what students will do to achieve the stated learning outcomes rather than what the teacher does to achieve outcomes.



Want to know more?

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011) *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, NY: Open University Press.* For more information see: Constructive Alignment on John Biggs' [website](#).

* Printed and digital copies in the Library.



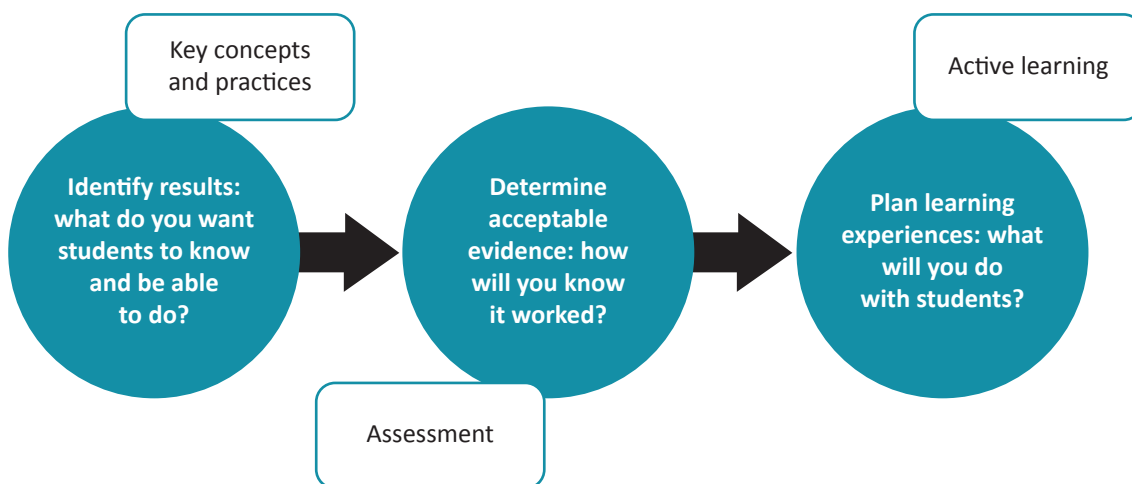
Constructive Alignment. University of Tasmania. (CC BY 4.0) Modified by Deakin University.

Backward design

Backward design is a term used by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins in the late 1990s in their *Understanding by Design* (UbD) curriculum approach and is consistent with a constructive alignment approach. The principles of backward design are to first identify desired learning outcomes, decide what students will need to do to demonstrate understanding of the learning outcomes (the authentic assessment task) and, only then, to design the learning activities and resources.

Backward design is also consistent with **constructivist learning theory** where there is an emphasis on learning activities and resources that *engage students by building on what they know already* so they move forward and achieve learning outcomes.

Backward Design



Source: Adapted from Wiggins, G. P., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

This backward design graphic is more easily applied to the work of unit chairs and a single unit of study. At course level, while the principles remain the same, there is a necessary process of collaboration between course directors and unit chairs to map the course learning outcomes, assessment and learning activities that are relevant over the length of a course, and importantly, ensure graduates meet the required standards at the completion of a course.

Active learning approach

Both constructive alignment and backward design support an **active learning approach** where **what the student does** is paramount to the learning design process.

At Deakin, active learning takes a variety of forms. It can be embedded in well-structured activities in a traditionally designed curriculum: some Deakin schools have adopted a specific learning approach for all units such as problem-based or project-based learning. For example, schools within the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Built Environment have adopted the following particular learning approaches: inquiry-based learning, project-oriented design, problem-based learning and a portfolio approach.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

How do I set clear learning goals for my students?

Learning outcomes tell students and staff what a learner will know and be able to do on successful completion. Achievement of learning outcomes is measured by assessment.

Development of learning outcomes is the starting point for course design (in line with the principles of constructive alignment and backward design discussed above).

Learning outcomes are statements of what students should be able to accomplish as a result of engaging with the process of learning. At Deakin there are three levels of learning outcomes:

Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes (DGLO)	<p>Are set out in the Deakin Curriculum Framework and specify the knowledge and capabilities that all Deakin graduates should demonstrate at the completion of their course:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discipline-specific knowledge and capabilities 2. Communication 3. Digital literacy 4. Critical thinking 5. Problem solving 6. Self-management 7. Teamwork 8. Global citizenship <p>(Discussed further in Chapter 2)</p>
Course learning outcomes (CLOs)	Specify what the graduate should be able to do on completion of a course (aligned to the Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes).
Unit learning outcomes (ULOs)	Specify what students are expected to learn from units in the course. These outcomes are developed and assessed with reference to course learning outcomes.

Well-written learning outcomes clearly describe observable, achievable actions that are measurable. They help students know what they are expected to do and the standard that they are expected to achieve.

All assessment should be aligned with the learning outcomes (see Chapter 5) and learning activities, in turn, should align with assessment.

Curriculum mapping shows the relationships between unit, course and graduate learning outcomes, and assessment. Graduate learning outcomes are the cumulative result of learning in units and at course level. Curriculum/course maps are central to good course design.

Course learning outcomes

Course learning outcomes (CLOs) and minimum standards are developed for every award course at Deakin, aligned to the Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes, the AQF and professional requirements or discipline standards where relevant. Separate CLOs are developed for each course in a combined course and for nested courses that are subsets of other courses at different AQF levels.

The AQF descriptors for the relevant course type are the starting point for writing CLOs. For example, for a bachelor degree, the AQF states that graduates must have ‘well-developed cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies’ to:

- analyse and evaluate information to complete a range of activities
- analyse, generate and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems
- transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others.

Course directors coordinating the writing or reviewing of course learning outcomes with unit chairs should use the AQF descriptors to map their course-specific skills and knowledge to represent a graduate level outcome.



Want to know more?

Refer to [AQF levels](#).

Unit learning outcomes

ULOs should be consistent with the Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes and CLOs, reflecting the stage of learning where the unit occurs in the course. There should be a gradual increase in complexity of skills and knowledge over the term of the whole course and also an increase in complexity of work over the period of the unit. Importantly, assessment tasks must align with the unit learning outcomes (see Chapter 5).

Units should not incorporate too many ULOs or DGLOs. ULOs should be mapped across a course so that there is consistency and progression from a whole-of-course perspective.

Write ULOs from a student’s perspective. Ask yourself whether students will understand what is important to their learning and what they are expected to demonstrate. Written in the future tense, ULOs should:

- connect to the unit’s key messages
- be assessable
- use clear, plain English that reflects **actionable** outcomes and avoid abstract verbs that cannot be measured (e.g. appreciate, understand, explore).

The Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001) can assist with choosing the most appropriate verbs for specific ULOs. For example, ‘On completion of this Unit, students will be able **to identify** three major theories of ...’.

Abbreviated example: Bachelor of Property and Real Estate:

Introduction to Property, MMP111		
ULO 1 Explain and apply property valuation fundamentals including value principles and concepts, methods of valuation and market data	CLO related to ULO 1 CLO 2.1. Prepare a range of written reports on property concepts and information for diverse stakeholders	DGLO related to ULO 1 DGLO 1
ULO 2 Prepare a well-developed written report for a client	CLO related to ULO 2 CLO 3.1. Identify, locate, evaluate and synthesise information from diverse sources in a property-related environment	DGLO related to ULO 2 DGLO 2

Abbreviated example: Bachelor of Education (Primary):

Assessment: Ways of Knowing Learners, ETP401		
ULO 1 Explain, distinguish and design diversity in assessment processes and/or strategies used in primary schooling	CLO related to ULO 1 CLO 1. Acquire broad and coherent theoretical knowledge and understanding of education and the application of this knowledge and skills in teaching and learning, particularly for primary school contexts	DGLO related to ULO 1 DGLO 1
ULO 2 Critically review and analyse data from national and international assessment practices	CLO relating to ULO 2 CLO 8. Engage in professional, intercultural and ethical approaches that address social justice, equity, diversity and sustainability issues	DGLO relating to ULO 2 DGLO 8



Want to know more?

Check the following for further information:

- [How to Write a Learning Outcome](#)
- [Challenge Levels of Unit Learning Outcomes](#)
- For a detailed resource on writing course and unit learning outcomes see the 'Writing Learning Outcomes' module in the CloudDeakin (self-registration) course Curriculum Development for Unit Chairs, via the 'More' tab in your CloudDeakin site.

DEAKIN'S CREDENTIALS

What types of credentials does Deakin offer?

Credentials are issued by the University to warrant that students have achieved learning at or above the required standard. Recipients use them to communicate their achievement and seek advancement. Employers and the wider community see them as indicators of achievement and potential performance.

Deakin offers:

- **macro-credentials**—warranting successful completion of award courses leading to a qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- **micro-credentials**—warranting learning or achievement of components of macro-credentials.

Faculties may also offer non-award courses that do not lead to an award of the University, including for professional development or admission purposes.

Macro-credentials

Deakin offers courses that lead to the award of qualifications (macro-credentials) at the following levels of the AQF:

AQF Level	Qualification Type
5	Diploma
6	Associate degree
7	Bachelor degree
8	Bachelor honours degree Graduate certificate Graduate diploma
9	Master degree (coursework) Master degree (extended) Master degree (research)
10	Doctoral degree

A course at a particular AQF level may be **nested** in a course at a higher level.

Approved combinations of courses at the same or different AQF levels leading to two separate awards may be offered. At Deakin these are known as **combined** courses. Some universities use the equivalent descriptor 'double degree'.

Courses may be developed and/or delivered collaboratively with a partner institution as follows:

Dual course	Two courses combined collaboratively with a partner institution leading to the separate conferral of an award each by Deakin University and the partner. The extent of academic or administrative interdependence may vary.
Joint course	A single course offered by Deakin in conjunction with one or more higher education providers in Australia or overseas, generally leading to the conferral of a jointly badged single testamur. Involves close cooperation between providers in course design, curriculum development, course delivery, assessment and requirements for awarding the qualification.

A full list of all awards that may be conferred by Deakin is located at Schedule 1 to [Regulation 5.2\(2\)—Higher Education Award Courses General](#).

Micro-credentials

Deakin also offers **micro-credentials** that warrant achievement of learning and are conferred using digital badging technology. These may lead to credit towards or be integrated into the design of an award course (macro-credential). Examples of Deakin micro-credentials (discussed in more detail below) are:

- **Deakin Hallmarks** recognising outstanding achievement of specific Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes valued in the workplace (distinct from grades awarded for assessment tasks)
- **Deakin Professional Practice credentials** warranting achievement gained through significant work experience.

Both are discussed further below.



Want to know more?

For more information about micro-credentials see:

- [Better 21C Credentials: Evaluating the promise, perils and disruptive potential of digital credentials](#), Professor Beverley Oliver, January 2016
- [Deakin Micro-credentials Policy](#)

COURSE BUILDING BLOCKS

How do I construct my course?

Units are the building blocks of Deakin coursework programs and are structured to:

- build academic skills of students in transition into the university learning environment
- scaffold progress towards the achievement of expected course learning outcomes
- monitor student progress
- manage learning workload.

Units may have particular roles in supporting student progress and achievement.

Foundation units	Support student transition by building foundation knowledge and skills and providing an introduction to the field
Milestone units	Provide students with opportunities at key stages of the course to integrate their learning and reflect on evidence of their progress and career aspirations
Capstone units	Provide students with opportunities at the end of the course to integrate their learning, demonstrate achievement of course learning outcomes and reflect on their career aspirations

Units may also include particular types of compulsory or optional activities that are integral to the course design, for example, work-integrated learning (including placements and field trips), research units or research-related study.

Units designated as core are compulsory and their completion is a requirement for completion of the course. Many courses also include elective units that provide students with an opportunity to broaden or deepen their studies in areas of their choice. Electives may be open or from a limited set. Some generalist courses include few or no core units but require students to select one or more sequences of units in fields of study that will constitute majors, minors or specialisations (see course design requirements below).

Professional practice courses also include the attainment of **credentials** that recognise learning acquired in the workplace (discussed below).

COURSE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

What policy requirements affect course construction?

Course specifications

The design for each course includes specifications that provide sufficient detail to judge their quality and allow prospective students to compare comparable offerings from different providers. Design specifications are listed in the [Course Design and Delivery Procedure](#) and include:

- award to be conferred
- duration
- structure
- modes of delivery
- entry requirements and pathways
- expected learning outcomes
- methods of assessment
- indicative student workload
- requirements for participation in compulsory learning and other activities at a physical or cloud campus
- compulsory requirements for completion
- exit pathways and pathways to further learning
- for bachelor honours or postgraduate programs, the proportion and nature of research or research-related study.

Course specifications are documented in a template that accompanies proposals for course approvals, revisions and continuations.

Structural requirements

The [Course Design and Delivery Procedure](#) includes some specific requirements for the design of Deakin courses as follows:

Academic and research integrity	All courses include compulsory learning experiences to develop in students an understanding of the principles of academic and (where relevant) research integrity and how to apply them.	cl 14
Work-integrated learning	Bachelor degrees include opportunities for one or more specified work-integrated learning experiences (see further below).	cl 15
Majors, minors and specialisations	Sequences of units that constitute majors, minors and specialisations may be included in one or more courses as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bachelor degree major—6–8 credit points, with at least 2 credit points in each of levels 2 and 3 of the course • bachelor degree minor—4 credit points • Masters degree (coursework) specialisation—4–8 credit points 	cl 23, 24
Bachelor honours degrees	A bachelor honours degree may be an independent course completed following a bachelor degree in a related discipline (end-on) or integrated in a bachelor degree with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • entry following completion of part of a related bachelor degree (typically two full-time years of study) • entry directly into the bachelor degree, with or without an option to exit with a related bachelor degree. 	cl 26, 27
Masters degrees (coursework) structure	Unless otherwise approved by the DVCE, masters degrees (coursework): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have at least one nested graduate certificate or graduate diploma as an entry or exit point, where core units of nested courses: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. are core units of the associated masters course and/or ii. contribute to a specialisation in the masters course • in the case of 16-credit-point masters courses, enable guaranteed credit for four credit points where students enter with qualifications or experience in the same discipline area • have at least two possible entry points each year. 	cl 29
Research in masters by coursework	Masters degrees (coursework) or (extended) include research-related study (equivalent to at least one credit point) and independent research involving the planning and execution of a research-based project, capstone experience or piece/s of scholarship (equivalent to at least one credit point). Components of research and research-related study may be embedded across a number of units where student achievement is demonstrated in specific assessment tasks.	cl 30
Professional practice courses	Professional practice courses include credentials that recognise achievement of learning through professional experience. The principles for designing professional practice courses are discussed below.	cl 25
Combined or dual courses	Combined or dual bachelor and masters degrees may be offered in different or related disciplines with reciprocal credit arrangements in accordance with the Credit for Learning Policy . They may include courses at different levels of the AQF. Reciprocal credit may generally be granted for a maximum of one third of each Deakin course. See Chapter 9 for further details of credit requirements.	cl 32

Modes of delivery—the 25% rule affecting international students

Course design should make optimal use of learning opportunities at cloud and/or physical location/s to provide students with learning experiences that support the achievement of course learning outcomes. However, international students studying in Australia on student visas can currently undertake no more than 25% of their course in cloud campus mode and must undertake at least one unit that is not in cloud mode in any compulsory study period. (Note: proposed changes to the National Code may soon increase the allowed percentage of online learning to one third.)

The 25% is calculated on the basis of the number of units classified as cloud. A unit is classified as cloud where less than half of the scheduled learning experiences for the unit are delivered face-to-face at a physical site (including classes, seminars, regular consultations, field trips, placements and other supervised activities).



Want to know more?

For further information and case studies illustrating application of the requirements, check the [Course Delivery Guide](#).

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

How can I incorporate work-integrated learning into my course?

Deakin has developed a work-integrated learning (WIL) framework to assist staff to incorporate WIL strategies into courses.

WIL@Deakin Framework

WIL at Deakin includes professional placements, internships and workplace projects but also embraces a range of additional work-related learning activities which are expressed through authentic work-related assessments with varying degrees of the following characteristics:

Authenticity: learning activities and assessments requiring students to work on problems, processes, projects and the production of artefacts that they may encounter in their professions.

Proximity: learning experiences that occur in:

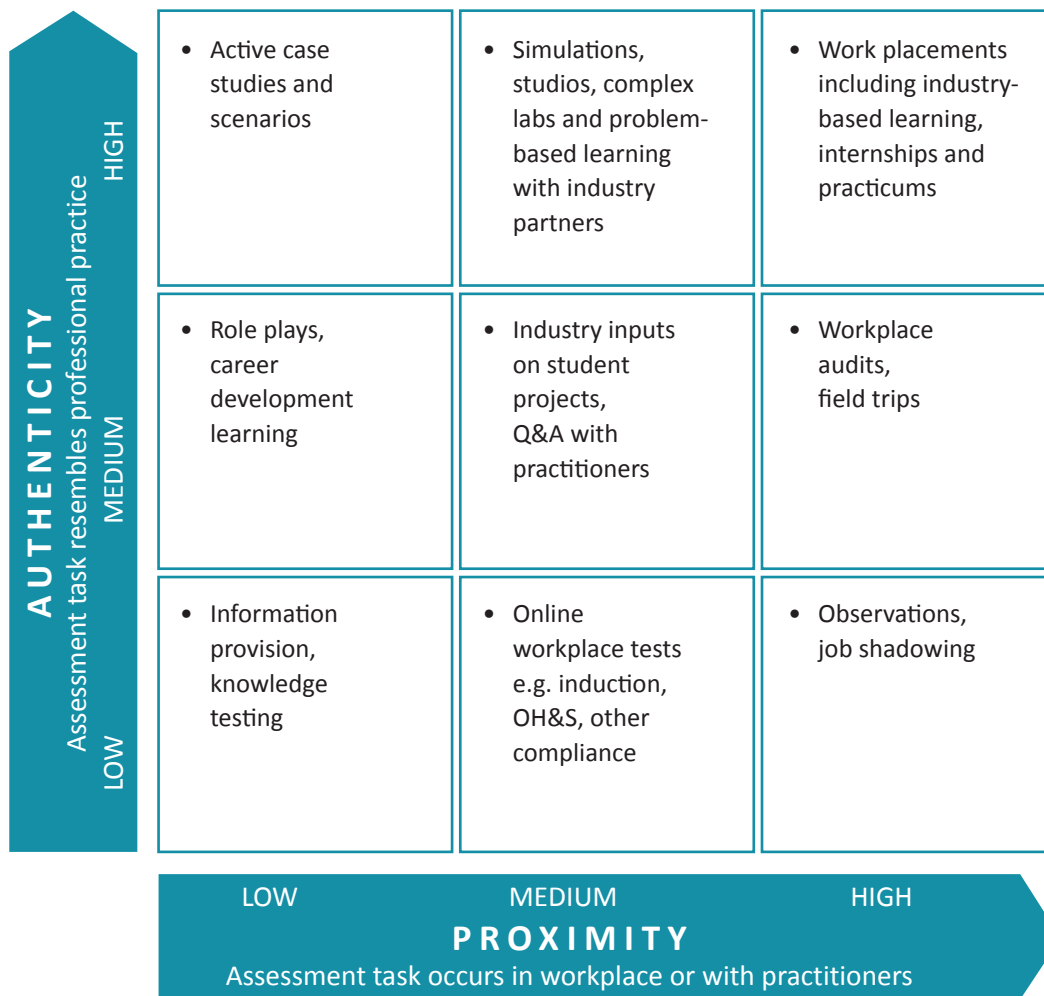
1. real workplaces and professional contexts
2. online or live, complex simulated workplace environments
3. which students interact directly with industry practitioners or community members on work-related activities.

See Figure 1, below.

Deakin policy requires that bachelor degrees include opportunities for one or more of the following WIL experiences:

1. work placements (such as industry-based learning, internships and practicums)
2. workplace audits
3. field trips
4. simulations
5. studios
6. complex labs and problem-based learning with industry partners
7. industry input on student projects
8. project work developed with or commissioned by industry
9. other work-integrated learning experiences approved by the faculty board.

Figure 1: Authenticity-Proximity Framework



Source: Kaider, Hains-Wesson and Young, 2015.



Want to know more?

Check the following further information:

- [Workplace learning](#) at Deakin webpage
- [Learning Outcomes in WIL](#)
- [WIL Leadership Framework](#)

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE CREDENTIALS AND COURSES

How can I design my course to recognise learning gained through industry experience?

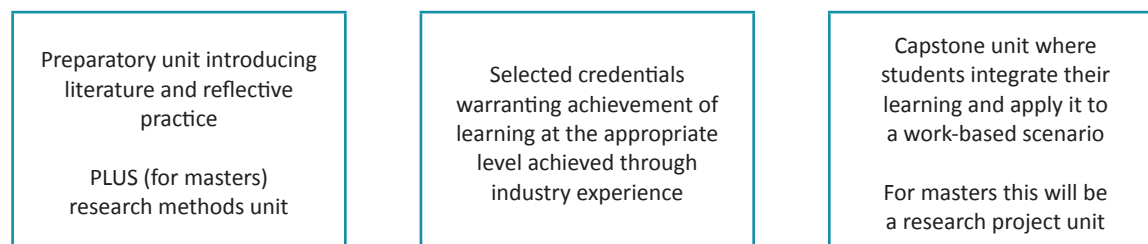
Deakin awards Deakin Professional Practice Credentials that are aligned with the Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes and warrant learning that is gained through significant industry experience. They are aligned with the AQF and recognised industry skills frameworks as appropriate and are awarded based on assessments approved and supervised by course teams.

Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes	Professional Practice Credentials
1. Discipline knowledge	Knowledge-related outcomes may be specifically warranted as part of the introductory and capstone units, rather than through explicit credentials. Credentials evidencing knowledge may be necessary to meet the requirements of an accrediting body or expectations in a field of practice.
2. Communication	Communication
3. Digital literacy	Digital literacy
4. Critical thinking	Critical thinking
5. Problem solving	Problem solving
6. Self-management	Self-management
7. Teamwork	Teamwork
8. Global citizenship	Global citizenship Professional ethics Emotional judgment Innovation

Deakin Professional Practice Credentials can be integrated into the following postgraduate courses:

- Graduate Certificate of Professional Practice (Field)
- Graduate Diploma of Professional Practice (Field)
- Master of Professional Practice (Field)

The structure of professional practice courses includes selected credentials bookended by Deakin units.



Credentials are selected by the course director, in consultation with relevant professional bodies and DeakinCo., to evidence achievement of course learning outcomes. Masters degrees require the following seven credentials: communication, digital literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, self-management, teamwork and global citizenship. Additional credentials, including credentials evidencing knowledge and professional ethics, may be selected to demonstrate outcomes necessary for particular areas of professional practice.



Want to know more?

For more information see the [Professional Practice Course Guiding Principles](#) covering naming conventions, entry requirements and structural requirements.

DEAKIN HALLMARKS

How can I use Deakin Hallmarks to enable students to demonstrate outstanding skills and capabilities valued by employers?

Deakin Hallmarks are micro-credentials awarded by the University using digital badging technology to recognise outstanding achievement of skills and capabilities that employers seek in new graduates. They warrant achievement specifically aligned to one of the following Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes particularly valued in the workplace—communication, digital literacy, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-management or global citizenship (not discipline-specific knowledge and capabilities).

Hallmarks are:

- associated with a specific course or major offered by Deakin and reflect the learning of students during their enrolment in that course or major
- developed at the discretion of the course director in partnership with relevant industry or professional groups
- awarded on the basis of holistic judgements about student achievement with reference to approved criteria, standards and evidence.

The achievement acknowledged is distinct from the grades awarded for assessment tasks. Likewise, the achievement of a Hallmark has no bearing on assessment marks in a unit. Any student enrolled in the course, regardless of their grade average, is entitled to apply.

The achievement of Hallmarks requires a big commitment from students, and it is important that they are given clear and accurate information about the criteria and standards for the Hallmark, the evidence required and how that evidence will be evaluated.

The processes for the approval, delivery, award and review of Deakin Hallmarks can be found in the [Deakin Hallmarks Procedure](#).

The [Deakin Hallmarks](#) website provides a wealth of information and resources to assist course teams to develop, document, assess and award Hallmarks.

Frequently Asked Questions (from Deakin Hallmarks website)

How many Deakin Hallmarks can be associated with a course?

At this stage we encourage course directors to develop one or two Hallmarks for each course.

Can a Deakin Hallmark be associated with more than one course?

Deakin Hallmarks are being developed in association with courses because research shows that graduate learning outcomes are best taught within a disciplinary context. However, if you are interested in developing a Hallmark across majors or related courses, the Hallmarks team would be interested in hearing your ideas. Contact us by emailing: hallmarks@deakin.edu.au.

What Deakin graduate learning outcome should I choose?

Consider which of the graduate learning outcomes is most important to the employability of graduates in your field. Is there a graduate learning outcome that is commonly criticised as lacking in recent graduates, or that is recognised as being particularly important in the workplace? We recommend consulting employers and professionals working in the field—such as those involved in course advisory boards or other industry connections.

What investment is required by industry partners?

Industry partners are encouraged to contribute to the development and assessment of Deakin Hallmarks, but as they are awards, not prizes, no financial contribution is required.

What information is available for students?

Course directors should create resources for students that explain the criteria, standards, evidence and assessment processes for each Deakin Hallmark. However, general information for students is available at the [Deakin Hallmarks](#) page on the public website.