



Australian Government  
Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment



Frequently Asked Questions on the  
Australian Higher Education  
Graduation Statement

## **Frequently Asked Questions on the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement**

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## General Questions

### **What is the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement?**

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) provides information on a student's higher education qualification, the institution at which the qualification was obtained and the Australian higher education system in a single document. The statement is produced by participating institutions based on nationally agreed specifications. It is presented to graduates in addition to other documentation such as testamurs and academic transcripts.

The purpose of the AHEGS is to describe a higher education qualification in an easily understandable way, providing greater transparency for potential employers and other stakeholders that may need to understand the substance and meaning of an Australian higher education qualification. It does this by including descriptions of the nature, level, context and status of the studies undertaken, as well as information about the units of study and a key to grading of those units. It includes a description of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and where the qualification awarded sits within the AQF.

### **What are the benefits of an AHEGS?**

The AHEGS was introduced to make Australian qualifications more recognisable around the world, enhancing the international mobility of Australian graduates and Australia's competitiveness in the international higher education market. It is the Australian equivalent of the European Diploma Supplement, which serves a similar purpose in the European tertiary education system.

### **Who has the authority to issue an AHEGS?**

Any accredited Australian higher education provider may issue an AHEGS. It is a legal requirement that each institution enter into a licence deed with the Australian Government prior to providing an AHEGS to students.

### **Why do we need to enter into a licence deed to produce the AHEGS?**

The words and logo for the AHEGS have been trademarked. To protect that trademark, any provider issuing the AHEGS must agree to use it for the purposes intended.

### **How can a student obtain an AHEGS?**

It is at the discretion of individual institutions to determine when and how the AHEGS is made available and to provide this information to students. Some institutions have provided this information to students via a covering letter or by

uploading the relevant information on institutional websites. However, it is expected that the AHEGS will be distributed with all other relevant documentation upon graduation. Students should contact individual institutions for further details.

### **What qualification types are eligible for an AHEGS?**

An AHEGS can be issued by a participating institution for any Australian higher education award, as defined under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*. Higher education awards include undergraduate certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, associate degrees, bachelor degrees, graduate certificates, graduate diplomas, masters degrees and doctoral degrees.

### **When should an AHEGS be given to candidates completing their qualifications?**

This is at the discretion of the individual institution. However, it is desirable that candidates who have completed their qualification be provided with their AHEGS as soon as possible, in order to provide them with a useful tool when seeking employment.

### **Can the AHEGS be handed out retrospectively?**

This is a matter for individual institutions. There is no expectation from the Australian Government that institutions provide retrospective AHEGS to candidates who completed their qualification before the AHEGS was implemented at that institution.

### **Can an institution charge for reprinting an AHEGS?**

Similar to academic transcripts, at least one copy of the AHEGS should be provided free of charge to a candidate upon completion of each award. Should the candidate request multiple copies, or subsequently approach the institution for a replacement copy, the institution can exercise discretion as to whether or not to charge for these additional copies.

### **Should a reprinted AHEGS contain updated information, for example, on the award in Section Two or the description of the Australian higher education system in Section Five?**

No. A reprinted AHEGS should contain exactly the same content as at the time of original issue. The AHEGS is designed to provide a snapshot of the candidate's qualification at the time of completion.

### **Do I have to store an AHEGS for possible future use?**

The Australian Government does not have a policy on the storage of each graduate's AHEGS. If choosing to store the AHEGS for future use, it is recommended that the institution captures a version of the AHEGS at the point of graduation and uses this to meet requests for additional copies. This may be stored as a PDF or Word document, or in electronic records management systems, such as TRIM.

### **How can institutions promote awareness of AHEGS to students and employers?**

Graduate Careers Australia has disseminated information about the AHEGS to employers and career advisers, at the request of the Australian Government. It is at the discretion of institutions as to how they promote the AHEGS to students and employers. Some institutions have included information about the AHEGS on their websites. Other institutions have contacted their employer lists to promote the AHEGS.

### **Are we required to create a dedicated AHEGS webpage?**

It is not a requirement to have a dedicated AHEGS webpage, but you may find it useful to assist in communication with students and employers.

### **Do students who complete double or combined awards receive an AHEGS for each qualification?**

Where graduates receive more than one testamur for double or combined awards, an AHEGS is required for each qualification. If institutions are able to do so, each AHEGS should show the subjects relevant to that award. If this is not possible, you may include all subjects on both AHEGS.

Where graduates receive a single testamur for a double or combined award, a single AHEGS should be provided.

### **How do we report nested qualifications?**

Institutions should follow the same practices for nested qualifications as they do for the issuing of testamurs. If you produce testamurs at the Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters levels, you should also produce an AHEGS at each point. If you only provide a testamur at the exit point, then an AHEGS should be provided at this point.

### **How do institutions handle jointly-badged qualifications where multiple institutions are involved?**

In this instance, whatever is common practice with the issuing of academic transcripts and testamurs should be followed for the issuing of the AHEGS. If

students receive a transcript or testamur from both institutions, an AHEGS may be issued by both institutions. If one institution takes the lead and issues the documentation, only one AHEGS should be issued.

At a minimum, the AHEGS should include a description of the joint arrangements in Section Three. Institutions may choose to include both/all institutions' logos.

Ideally, the AHEGS should include all units of study completed as part of the qualification, regardless of the institution. If this is not possible, it is acceptable to include only the subjects completed at the institution which issued the AHEGS. The arrangement should be explained in the AHEGS.

If the partnership is with an overseas institution, the Australian institution will be the only provider issuing an AHEGS. The partnership arrangement must be briefly described in Section Three. The Australian institution may also elect to include the overseas institution's logo on the AHEGS.

### **How do students graduating from qualifications completed through Open Universities Australia receive an AHEGS?**

As Open Universities Australia (OUA) students graduate from an institution, and not OUA, that institution will issue the AHEGS. Details of the OUA arrangement should be included on the AHEGS in Section Three. Where students complete units of study from different institutions, there are likely to be existing arrangements in place to determine which institution issues a testamur and academic transcript. Institutions should follow these procedures to determine which will produce the AHEGS.

## **Layout and Details**

### **What is included in the AHEGS?**

The AHEGS presents the graduate's academic achievements relating to a particular award, and may include special awards and achievements beyond the course details. In addition, the AHEGS includes details on the type of award, the awarding institution, and a description of the Australian higher education system.

### **What are the mandatory sections of the AHEGS?**

In addition to the awarding institution's logo, the AHEGS logo and a description of the AHEGS, there are five mandatory sections:

1. The Graduate – personal details such as name, student number;
2. The Award – details of the award, including admission requirements, duration of study, language of instruction and Australian Qualifications Framework level;

3. The Awarding Institution – details of the institution, including establishment, provider category and listing on the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency National Register of Higher Education Providers;
4. The Graduate's Academic Achievements – details of the individual graduate's achievements, including details of units of study undertaken toward this award;
5. Description of the Australian Higher Education System – a comprehensive summary of the Australia system.

### **Can the five sections of the AHEGS be reordered?**

No. The five sections of the AHEGS are to remain in the order set out in the Guidelines. While formatting is at the discretion of the individual institution, the information must be provided in the approved order to provide consistency. Some institutions have indicated a desire to make Section Five an appendix to the document – this is permitted as it does not affect the order of the information presented.

### **Can we include web links on our AHEGS?**

The inclusion of web links on the AHEGS is at the discretion of the individual institution. It is advised to keep web links at a basic level, for example: **www.unix.edu.au**, rather than go into too much detail, as this will increase the risk of broken links.

### **Can institutions use acronyms on the AHEGS?**

As the AHEGS is intended to be understood internationally, the use of acronyms should be avoided. Terms should always be written out in full in the first instance and acronyms utilised in subsequent references only.

## **Section One – The Graduate**

### **In what order should a student's name appear on the AHEGS?**

The student's name should appear on the AHEGS in the same order it appears on the student's transcript and testamur to provide consistency of documentation.

## **Section Two – The Award**

### **What if the language of instruction varies between units of study?**

Where the language of instruction for the overall award is not English, information on the language in which the award is taught should be included in

Section Two. For individual units of study such as languages, this is not necessary. It is important to note where programs of study are taught in a language other than English.

### **Should admission requirements be included on the AHEGS?**

Yes, this is an important component of Section Two.

The level of detail will vary between awards, and is at the discretion of the institution. However, it is not appropriate to include cut-off scores or other measures of course demand. The information should simply list the general requirements for admission, not the selection process or outcomes. Institutions offering flexible entry pathways may choose to include this information in Section Two.

Institutions should aim to include admission requirements at the time of enrolment on the AHEGS. If this is not possible, it would be acceptable to include the current admission requirements.

### **Should institutions include information on course accreditation by professional bodies?**

While this is at the discretion of the individual institution, including information on course accreditation with professional organisations may be useful. Some institutions take information about accreditation directly from their student handbook. All items included on the AHEGS must be able to be verified by the institution.

### **Is it compulsory to report details of work placements?**

If work placements are an important feature of the award, this may be included in the optional 'Features' component of Section Two.

If the institution has a verified record of specific details of the placement completed by the individual graduate, these may be included in the optional 'Additional Course Details' component of Section Four. The Australian Government highly recommends all institutions include details of work placements in this section to highlight the graduate's 'on the job' experience.

The nature of the information included here is at the discretion of the individual institution. At a minimum, this information should include information about the dates, duration and location of work placements.

### **How much detail is necessary in the course description?**

It is acceptable to include a generic statement in the course description and not go into detail of majors or specialisations. It may be more relevant to include

additional details in Section Four when providing details of each graduate's academic achievements.

## **Section Three – The Awarding Institution**

### **How much detail is necessary in the description of the awarding institution?**

All information included in the description of the awarding institution must be able to be verified by the individual institution. Institutions may include their motto in the description. It is compulsory to provide information on the institution's inclusion on the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency's National Register of Higher Education Providers, including provider category. It is also compulsory for institutions listed on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) to include their registration number in this section.

## **Section Four – The Graduate's Academic Achievements**

### **Must fail grades be included in Section Four of the AHEGS?**

Yes. Fail grades must be included on the AHEGS. This issue was discussed at length during the consultation process. It was agreed that as it is common practice to record fail grades on academic transcripts, it should also be common practice to include them on the AHEGS in order to provide the reader with a clearer snapshot of each graduate's academic achievements. Ideally, withdrawals should not be included on the AHEGS.

### **Should credit points be included on the AHEGS?**

Yes. As per the Guidelines, credit points should be included in Section Four under 'Course Details'.

### **Is it always necessary to list units of study in Section Four?**

Yes. It is always necessary to list units of study in Section Four for all coursework awards. This is a core component of the AHEGS.

In addition, where credit or advance standing has been granted, as much explanation as possible should be included. If an institution is unable to include details of credit subjects, a statement explaining the circumstances is acceptable. However, this is not ideal, and should only be included in exceptional situations.

For Higher Degree Research awards with zero coursework components, only the thesis title and abstract are required. Individual institutions can determine



the contents of the thesis abstract contained in the AHEGS. Some institutions require abstracts to be written in plain English while other institutions allow thesis abstracts to be written technically and to include special symbols. This is at the discretion of the individual institution.

### **Can institutions include Grade Point Averages (GPAs)?**

This is at the discretion of individual institutions. GPAs are not uniformly used across the sector. Therefore, should the institution decide to include a GPA on the AHEGS, or a related approach to reporting overall grades, an explanation on how the GPA was calculated must be provided under 'Key to Grading' in Section Four.

### **Is it always necessary to list a full 'Key to Grading' in Section Four?**

Yes. As marking and grading systems can vary from one institution to the next, it is always necessary to provide the institution's full 'Key to Grading' in Section Four, directly underneath the graduate's units of study. It is not acceptable to provide a link to the individual institution's 'Key to Grading' web page, nor is it acceptable to provide the key as an attachment to the AHEGS.

### **Can institutions add extra items that are on the transcript but not mentioned in the AHEGS guidelines for Section Four?**

This is at the discretion of the individual institution. Information contained in the AHEGS should be related to the candidate's academic achievements, as defined by the institution. All items included on the AHEGS must be able to be verified by the institution.

### **Can award, course and/or unit of study codes be included on the AHEGS?**

This is at the discretion of the individual institution.

### **Which prizes, awards and scholarship activities should be included on the AHEGS?**

This is at the discretion of the individual institution. As a general rule all prizes, awards and scholarship activities included on the AHEGS should be measurable, verifiable, recordable, centrally available and linked to academic achievement.

### **Do we need to include details of examiners, supervisors or assessment processes for postgraduate awards?**

It is not recommended that names of supervisors or examiners be included on an AHEGS for awards at any level.

It is an option to include a general explanation of examination processes for Higher Degree Research awards in Section Four under 'Key to Grading'.

### **How should credit transfer from pathways be displayed in Section Four?**

This is at the discretion of the individual institution; however most institutions display graduates' credit on the AHEGS in the same way they display graduates' credit on transcripts.

## **Section Five – Description of the Australian Higher Education System**

### **Can the length of Section Five be shortened?**

No. Section Five is compulsory and the content is provided by the Australian Government. All information must be reported in its entirety, without amendments

### **Does the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification level table and logo have to be included in Section Five? If so, does it have to be in colour?**

Inclusion of the full AQF qualification level table and logo in Section Five is compulsory. The AQF qualification level table and logo may not be reduced in size, but they may be printed in colour or in black and white.

## **Changes to the AHEGS**

The AHEGS was changed in 2011 to reflect changes to the Australian higher education system and again in January 2013 to reflect changes to the AQF.

### **What has changed in the latest version of AHEGS?**

The AHEGS has been revised primarily to update information in Section Five, including the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) table to incorporate the new Undergraduate Certificate type agreed to by the COAG Education and Skills Ministerial Councils in April 2020.

Since the AHEGS Guidelines have not changed since 2013, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (the department) took the opportunity to seek comments and suggested edits from external stakeholders, including the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency and AHEGS licence deed holders. These have been incorporated as appropriate, along with other edits, such as changes to the department's name and email address.

### **Will the changes to the AQF table in Section 5 be removed if the Undergraduate Certificate is no longer issued after 30 June 2022?**

Undergraduate certificates issued prior to 30 June 2022 will continue to be recognised as valid AQF qualifications. Therefore, the AQF table in Section 5 will need to continue to reflect the existence of these qualifications even if they can no longer be issued.

### **Where can we get a copy of the AQF logo?**

A copy of the AQF logo can be found on the AQF website at [aqf.edu.au/aqf-logo-and-copyright](http://aqf.edu.au/aqf-logo-and-copyright). Institutions have permission to use the AQF logo for the purposes of the AHEGS.

### **Will there be further changes to the Guidelines for the Presentation of the AHEGS?**

Periodic changes to the Guidelines for the Presentation of the AHEGS will be necessary to maintain the document's accuracy and relevance. All Australian higher education providers with an AHEGS licence deed will be notified of any changes via email.

### **Where can I find more information on the AHEGS?**

Information can be found in the publication Australian Government Guidelines for the Presentation of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement and Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement at <https://www.dese.gov.au/quality-and-legislative-frameworks/australian-higher-education-graduation-statement>.

Alternatively, contact your individual institution or the Australian Government AHEGS mailbox at [AHEGS@dese.gov.au](mailto:AHEGS@dese.gov.au) for more information.