

Course Completion and Awards Policy

1. POLICY STATUS AND DETAILS

Policy Number	AC20
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Date Implemented	May 2025
Current Version	1.1
Date of Review	February 2028
Contact Officer	Director Learning and Innovation
Related Policies, Procedures and Documents	Honorary Awards Policy Assessment Policy Academic Complaints and Appeals Policy Course Regulations Fee Policy – Domestic Students Fee Policy- International Students Qualifications Register NIDA Student Charter and Student Code of Conduct Research and Scholarship Policy

2. DEFINITIONS


Term	Definition
Accredited Course	A course that is recognised under the Australian Quality Framework (AQF) and is registered with one of the two main regulatory agencies, being TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality Standards Authority) for Higher Education and ASQA (Australian Skills Quality Authority) for Vocational programs. An accredited course is one that leads to the conferral of a degree or the award of a certificate or diploma.
Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS)	a Commonwealth-directed standard document issued to graduates that lists the description of NIDA, the Award, its AQF level, and the units of study for the whole of the graduate's candidature at NIDA until graduation for that award

Conferral	the administrative process by which your degree/qualification is awarded. You are a NIDA graduate once your conferral date (graduation date) is past
Course Complete Status	The student has completed the academic requirements of their course but the finalization of results is pending governance processes.
Course Regulations	The specific rules outlining the inherent requirements for successful completion of a course and the awarding of a qualification
Graduand	An individual who is eligible to graduate but has not yet graduated
Graduation	The conferral process by which you receive your qualification, usually at a ceremony called a Graduation.
Rescind	To take back or cancel
Statement of Attainment	A statement of attainment is issued when a vocational student has successfully completed a number of accredited units of study which do not amount to a full qualification.
Testamur	<p>The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) defines a 'an official certification document that confirms that a qualification has been awarded to an individual.</p> <p>They are legal documents issued to graduates by the authority of the NIDA Board of Directors under NIDA's Common Seal</p>
Partial Transcript	A formal document issued by authority of the Director Learning and Innovation to Students and Graduates when a student does not complete their course. It details the Student's/Graduate's entire NIDA enrolments and results and notes that the individual is not eligible for the award of the qualification in which they were enrolled.
Transcript	A formal document issued by authority of the Director Learning and Innovation to Students and Graduates on request at any time during enrolment or after graduation, that details the Student's/Graduate's entire NIDA enrolments and results and indicates if they are course completed, graduated, or withdrawn

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to the determination that a student has satisfactorily completed the requirements for the award of the course in which they are enrolled, and the conferring of awards for accredited courses at NIDA.

This policy applies to accredited courses:

Undergraduate Courses (BFAs)	Postgraduate Courses (MFAs)	Vocational Diplomas
		

4. PURPOSE

This policy sets out:

- a. the process of determining course completion and the conferral of qualifications, including governance and administrative practices.
- b. the protocols for graduation, including the composition of the official party and the NIDA rules for academic dress for staff and graduating students.

5. PRINCIPLES

The principles underlying the completion of a course, and the conferral of awards are:

- 5.1 NIDA's practices in relation to course completion and the conferral of awards are in line with its high standards of academic integrity.
- 5.2 NIDA confers the following academic statements:
 - a. Transcript of academic record
 - b. Testamurs for award courses
 - c. Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEG) for degree conferrals

6. POLICY

6.1 Course Completion

6.1.1 To be designated as 'Course Complete':

- a. Degree Students must have:
 - a pass grade or higher in all subjects prescribed in the relevant Course Regulations, and or an RPL grade for subjects in which credit or recognition of prior learning was granted, and
 - successfully completed the requisite number credit points for their degree within the maximum period, as outlined in the relevant Course Regulations:
 - Master of Fine Arts (MFA), AQF Level 9 - 180 credit points
 - Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), AQF Level 7 -360 credit points.
- b. Vocational Diploma students must have been assessed as competent for each Unit of competency in the qualification as prescribed in the Qualification regulations.

6.1.2 "Course Complete" status is determined by the Academic Board on the recommendation of the Examination and Progress Committee.

6.1.3 The deadlines for recording a student as “passed” will be as prescribed by the Director Learning and Innovation.

6.1.4 Notice of Course completion is available upon request from Student Services.

6.2 Graduands

6.2.1 “Graduand” status is conferred by the NIDA Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Academic Board.

6.2.2 Only a graduand can be invited to a graduation ceremony.

6.3 Eligibility to Graduate

6.3.1 To graduate and receive an academic award from NIDA degree students need to have:

- a. satisfied all course requirements as outlined in the relevant Course Regulations, and
- b. been conferred the status of Graduand by the NIDA Board of Directors
- c. no outstanding library loans or be in possession of any NIDA equipment
- d. no current suspension, exclusion or expulsion penalty on their record
- e. good financial and conduct standing

6.3.2 A student will not be eligible to graduate if:

- a. they are involved in any student misconduct or appeals proceedings
- b. They are indebted to NIDA for tuition or other fees
- c. They have already graduated from that course, in person or in absentia

6.4 Graduation Ceremony

6.4.1 The NIDA Executive approve the date for the Graduation Ceremony on the recommendation of the Director Learning and Innovation.

6.4.2 NIDA will normally conduct a minimum of one graduation ceremony in an academic year.

6.4.3 It is a requirement of attendance at a graduation ceremony for Graduands to:

- a. Register to attend by the notified registration deadline,
- b. provide consent to being recorded and content being made available in digital channels either whole or in part, and
- c. abide by the academic dress regulations, students not in correct academic dress may not be permitted to graduate in person

6.4.4 If a Graduate does not register in accordance with the Graduation Invitation, NIDA cannot guarantee a place. If attendance at a ceremony is permitted, an additional late fee may be payable.

6.4.5 All formal documents associated with the conferral of an accredited award will use the legal name of the student. NIDA will however use a student’s preferred name in the following Graduation circumstances:

- a. The Graduate name called for the presentation
- b. In the Graduation Program
- c. On the slide show displayed as Graduates are presented for their awards

6.4.6 Graduates will be expected to attend the first scheduled Graduation immediately following their course completion and ratification as a graduand.

6.4.7 Excepting in extraordinary circumstances all Graduation Ceremonies will be held at the NIDA Campus in Kensington.

6.4.8 NIDA reserves the right to have to all Graduands recognised at a virtual ceremony due to circumstances

beyond its control resulting in the cancellation of an in-person graduation ceremony.

6.4.9 The Official Party for a Graduation will normally consist of

- a. Chair of the NIDA Board of Directors, or their delegate, (academic regalia is optional)
- b. NIDA CEO (in academic regalia)
- a. Chair of the NIDA Academic Board, (in academic regalia)
- c. Internal (ex officio members) and External Academic Board members (excepting student representatives) who wish to attend, (in academic regalia)
- d. Designated elder from the La Perouse Land Council (academic regalia optional)
- e. Director Learning and Innovation, (in academic regalia)
- f. Deputy Director of Learning and Innovation, (in academic regalia)
- g. Deputy Director Learning and Innovation (VET), (in academic regalia)
- h. Course leaders for all courses and other academic staff wishing to attend, (in academic regalia)
- i. Any recipients of scheduled honorary awards (in academic regalia)
- j. Any special guests awarding prizes or scholarships (academic regalia is optional)
- k. Others at the specific invitation of the CEO as advised by Director Learning and Innovation.

6.4.10 Course leaders will present their graduands to the NIDA CEO for the Testamur presentation.

6.4.11 The NIDA CEO will present the Graduates with their Testamurs.

6.4.12 Where a Graduate attends a ceremony, they will receive their Testamur at the ceremony and cannot elect to have it mailed to them.

6.4.13 Honorary awards may be conferred at any given Graduation Ceremony.

6.5 Graduating in Absentia

6.5.1 Graduates who either do not wish to or are unable to attend their Graduation will graduate in absentia. Their name and award citation will be read at the end of the relevant course cohort conferral.

6.5.2 A Testamur and any other relevant formal academic documents will be mailed to students who graduate in absentia.

6.5.3 The graduating student is responsible for ensuring they have a current valid postal address for registered with NIDA.

6.5.4 Students who have graduated in absentia are not eligible to attend and repeat their graduation at a formal ceremony in the future.

6.6 Vocational Diploma Qualifications and Award Documents

6.6.1 A Vocational Education Graduand who has completed all of the required units of competency or modules as specified in the training package qualification or accredited course is entitled to receive both a Testamur and a Record of Results.

6.6.2 As per the requirements of Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), students completing a Vocational Qualification will be issued with a Record of Results within 30 working days of the successful completion of the last unit/s of competency.

6.6.3 The Testamur will be conferred at a Graduation Ceremony.

6.7 BFA and MFA Qualifications and Award Documents

6.7.1 A BFA /MFA Testamur will be conferred at the Graduation Ceremony.

6.8 Testamurs

6.8.1 Testamurs will contain the following information:

- a. the name of the issuing organisation;
- b. the name of the Graduate;
- c. the qualification by its full title;
- d. date of conferral;
- e. authorised persons to sign the qualification (Chair of the NIDA Board of Directors and CEO).
- f. authentication or security devices to inhibit attempts at fraud.

6.8.2 Only one Testamur should exist for a NIDA qualification held by a NIDA Graduate. NIDA will replace a lost or partially destroyed Testamur using the Testamur design and signatures current at the time of the replacement version. NIDA will charge a fee for replacement Testamurs.

6.9 Transcripts

In instances where a student does not complete a course, NIDA will, on request, produce a Transcript detailing any subjects/units completed during the period the student was studying at NIDA. This will be approved by the Director, Learning and Innovation.

6.10 Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS)

6.10.1 An Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEG) may only be issued to Graduates completing their degree courses on or after 1 November 2010 on the approval of the Director Learning and Innovation or their appointed delegate.

6.10.2 The AHEG Statement will be formatted in accordance with AHEG guidelines.

6.10.3 All students graduating from a Degree course will receive a single copy of their AHEG.

6.10.4 All AHEGs Statements will be issued in the legal name of the student at the time of award conferral

6.10.5 Additional copies of AHEG Statements can be requested for a fee as set out in the NIDA Fee Schedule current at the time of the request.

6.11 Notice of Course Completion

6.11.1 Students can request a Notice of Course Completion prior to conferral via Student Services.

6.12 Post Nominals

6.12.1 Post-nominals for all awards must only be used after the NIDA Board of Directors has conferred an award and must be used only in the manner prescribed below:

Awards – Bachelor of Fine Art	Postnominal	Conferral term
Bachelor of Fine Arts (Acting)	BFA (Acting)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Bachelor of Fine Arts (Costume)	BFA (Costume)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Bachelor of Fine Arts (Design for Performance)	BFA (Design for Performance)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Bachelor of Fine Arts (Props and Effects)	BFA (Props and Effects)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Bachelor of Fine Arts (Scenic Construction Technologies)	BFA (Scenic Construction Technologies)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded

Bachelor of Fine Arts (Technical Theatre and Stage Management)	BFA (Technical Theatre and Stage Management)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
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Awards – Master of Fine Arts	Postnominal	Conferral term
Master of Fine Arts (Cultural Leadership)	MFA (Cultural Leadership)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Master of Fine Arts (Directing)	MFA (Directing)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Master of Fine Arts (Dramatic Writing)	MFA (Dramatic Writing)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded

Awards – Vocational Diplomas	Postnominal	Conferral term
Diploma of Musical Theatre	Diploma Musical Theatre	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Diploma of Live Production and Technical Services	Diploma Live Production and Technical Services	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Diploma of Screen and Media (Specialist Make-up Services)	Diploma Screen and Media (Specialist Make-up Services)	For Life unless otherwise rescinded
Diploma of Stage and Screen Performance	Diploma Stage and Screen Performance	For Life unless otherwise rescinded

6.13 Rescinding Awards

6.13.1 Awards can be rescinded by the NIDA Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Academic Board.

6.14 Academic Regalia

6.14.1 It is mandatory for Graduands to wear academic regalia to their Graduation ceremony commensurate with the award being conferred.

6.14.2 In recognition of First Nations peoples and NIDA's commitment to diversity and inclusion, where appropriate cultural clothing can be worn in conjunction with formal academic regalia.

6.14.3 Staff and Graduates of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent may also choose to wear an approved identifying stole in addition to their academic hood. NIDA will make the following stoles available:

- a. Aboriginal Stoles (three colours of the Aboriginal Flag)
- b. Torres Strait Islander Stoles (colours of the Torres Strait Island Flag)
- c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stoles (colours of both flags, one on either side)

6.14.4 Staff participating in a NIDA Graduation Ceremony should wear the full academic regalia that aligns most closely with their highest earned degree and the awarding institution.

6.15 Posthumous Awards

- 6.15.1 An Award may be granted posthumously where a student has completed the requirements of an award but is deceased before being conferred.
- 6.15.2 The proxy of the posthumous award recipient may choose to receive the Testamur at a Graduation Ceremony, by mail or by collection from the Student Services.
- 6.15.3 If the proxy chooses to attend the Graduation Ceremony and agrees, the Testamur is to be presented in the normal order of Graduates and the citation will acknowledge the proxy recipient and the posthumous award.
- 6.15.4 If there is no proxy, the posthumous award citation will be read at the end of the relevant course cohort conferral.

6.16 Replacement Testamurs

- 6.16.1 Graduates applying for a replacement Testamur will provide an original statutory declaration, duly authorised, stating that the Testamur has been damaged, lost, stolen or destroyed.
- 6.16.2 A replacement award Testamur is a legal document and requests are approved by the Director Learning and Innovation as the delegate of Academic Board.
- 6.16.3 The replacement Testamur will have a Unique document number different from the original copy.
- 6.16.4 A fee will be charged for a replacement Testamur, unless otherwise approved by the Director, Learning and Innovation.
- 6.16.5 If the original Testamur is subsequently recovered, it will be returned to NIDA.
- 6.16.6 Where a Graduate states that they have never received their Testamur, but NIDA records show that it was correctly sent, the Graduate must provide a duly authorised statutory declaration stating that the Testamur has never been received.

6.17 Change of Name Exceptions

- 6.17.1 Consideration will be given to the re-issue of Testamur in a name other than the legal name of the student at the time of conferral in the following circumstances:
 - a. gender affirmation,
 - b. witness protection
 - c. such other circumstances as are determined to be “exceptional” by the Director, Learning and Innovation (this will generally be to protect the health and wellbeing of the graduate).
- 6.17.2 If approved, the new Testamur will bear the notation (unless a variation is approved by the Director, Learning and Innovation: “This certificate has been re-issued on [DATE] in a new legal name, at the request of the Graduate. The name change has been verified through documentation”.
- 6.17.3 A fee will be charged for the re-issued award certificate, unless otherwise approved by the Director Learning and innovation
- 6.17.4 The original award certificate will be returned to NIDA.

6.18 Record Keeping

- 6.18.1 Minutes of all meetings where course completion and recommendation approval of graduands is discussed will be recorded and maintained by the relevant secretariat and filed according to the institutions established protocols for each committee.
- 6.18.2 The name of the recipient, date of conferral and the unique document number identification of a NIDA qualification is to be entered into NIDA's Graduate Register.
- 6.18.3 All applications to reissue award documentation and any accompanying statutory declarations or evidence of name changes should be saved to the relevant Graduate's student file.
- 6.18.4 Where a name change on a Testamur and Transcript is approved, the Graduate register will updated to reflect the name change and the new document ID.
- 6.18.5 Where the NIDA Board of Directors rescinds a qualification for any reason, the NIDA Graduate Register will be updated to reflect the effective date of the rescinding.

6.18.6 All documentation relating to the rescinding of a qualification should be saved to the relevant student record.

7. CHANGE HISTORY

Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Author	Version
December 2025	Editorial change to review date and policy titles	Revised policy review schedule approved by Academic Board October 2025	Academic Compliance Manager	1.1
March 2025	New policy	Needed to ensure clear guidance on policy and process	Learning and Innovation	1.0

8. CONSULTATION/BENCHMARKING

Benchmarked against policies and practice from a number of higher education providers and other sources
Relevant policy documents from the following are gratefully acknowledged:

- UTS College
- Western Sydney University
- University of New England
- Curtin University

Consultation: Academic Heads of Courses, students

Legislation and Regulatory Frameworks	<p>Australian Qualifications Framework</p> <p>Australian Qualifications Framework – Qualifications Issuance Policy https://www.aqf.edu.au/download/415/aqf-qualifications-issuance-policy/9/aqf-qualifications-issuance-policy/pdf</p> <p>HE Threshold Standards 2015</p> <p>TEQSA Guidance Notes</p>
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