

Academic Merit Awards Policy

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1. Purpose

Higher Education Leadership Institute (HELI) is committed to supporting students to be successful in their studies and celebrating their achievements during and after they have completed their studies.

This policy provides details on the eligibility criteria and procedures for awarding commendations, degrees with Distinction, and Institute medals which recognise and formally acknowledge those students and graduates who have demonstrated the highest academic levels of achievement in their studies at HELI.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all coursework postgraduate degrees offered by HELI.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Award course</i>	A course leading to a qualification that is granted or conferred by the Institute.
<i>Course</i>	A structured sequence of study leading to the award of an AQF recognised higher education award.
<i>Cohort</i>	The group of students enrolled in a particular degree in a year.
<i>Grade Point Average (GPA)</i>	The average result of all the grades achieved throughout a degree. The GPA is calculated on a 7-point grading scale where grades 5 to 7 are equivalent to graded pass grades of credit, distinction and high distinction respectively.
<i>Medal</i>	The Institute Medal of Academic Excellence which recognises outstanding achievement by a student across their degree.
<i>Study Period</i>	A defined period of instruction, typically a trimester.
<i>Unit</i>	A component of an award course with specified assessment requirements for which a final grade is awarded upon completion.

4. Principles

All awards listed in this policy will:

- recognise outstanding academic achievement,
- be allocated on the basis of a clear set of criteria, and
- be awarded on the basis of academic merit and ethical conduct.

5. Policy Statement

5.1 Letters of Commendation

At the end of each study period, a Letter of Commendation will be issued to students who:

- completed a minimum of two (2) units within the trimester;

- achieved an average mark across all units studied in the trimester of 75% or more; and
- have not been found guilty of academic misconduct.

5.2 Dean's Merit List

At the end of each study period, a Dean's Merit List certificate will be issued to students who:

- ranked in the top 10% of the cohort within their degree; and
- received a Letter of Commendation for their results; and
- have not been found guilty of academic misconduct.

The Dean's Merit List will be published on the HELI website.

5.3 Degrees with Distinction

Coursework Masters degrees may be awarded 'with Distinction' to students who gain a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 6.0.

Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma programs are not eligible to be awarded 'with Distinction'.

A student will be eligible to be awarded their degree 'with Distinction' when they:

- have completed a program that is eligible to be awarded 'with Distinction';
- meet all program requirements and be eligible to be awarded an ordinary degree;
- complete at least 50 per cent of their program at HELI; and
- achieve a minimum GPA of 6.0 based on all eligible units undertaken in the program.

A cumulative GPA will be calculated for each graduating student to determine their eligibility to be awarded their degree 'with Distinction', as per the HELI *Award of Grades Policy*.

The testamur and transcript provided to a student on graduation will include the relevant appellation, e.g. Master of eLearning *with Distinction*.

5.4 Institute Medal of Academic Excellence

The Institute Medal of Academic Excellence is awarded to the graduand who has the highest GPA of the graduating cohort.

Normally, one medal is awarded for the postgraduate graduating cohort.

For a student to be considered for the Institute Medal of Academic Excellence, the student must:

- have completed at least two-thirds of their studies at HELI;
- have completed all requirements of their degree;
- be eligible to graduate with a *with Distinction* appellation; and
- have demonstrated a commitment to the Institute that establishes them as an outstanding student.

Students who receive the Institute Medal of Academic Excellence will be published on the HELI website.

6. Procedure

6.1 Letters of Commendation

- a) At the Board of Examiners meeting for each study period, the Registrar will present a list of students eligible for a Letter of Commendation for review and approval (see section 5.1).
- b) The Dean (Academic) and Registrar's Office will prepare and issue Letters of Commendation to students.
- c) Where a student receives a 'Result Pending' grade for one or more units, their eligibility for a Letter of Commendation will be held until the grade for the outstanding unit(s) is/are determined.

6.2 Dean's Merit List

- a) At the Board of Examiners meeting for each study period, the Registrar will present a list of students eligible for the Dean's Merit List for review and approval (see section 5.2).
- b) The Dean (Academic) and Registrar's Office will prepare and issue Dean's Merit List certificates to students.
- c) The Registrar's Office will publish the Dean's Merit List on the HELI website.
- d) Where a student receives a 'Result Pending' grade for one or more units, their eligibility for the Dean's Merit List will be held until the grade for the outstanding unit(s) is/are determined.

6.3 Degrees with Distinction

- a) At the Board of Examiners meeting for each study period, the Registrar will present a list of graduating students eligible for receiving their degree with Distinction for review and endorsement (see section 5.3).
- b) The Dean (Academic) will present the list of graduating students eligible for receiving their degree with Distinction to the Academic Board for approval.
- c) The Dean (Academic) and Registrar's Office will prepare written notification to the successful students.
- d) The awarding of degrees with Distinction will be acknowledged at the Graduation Ceremony.
- e) The Registrar's Office will include the appropriate appellation on the student's testamur and the transcript.

6.4 Institute Medal of Academic Excellence

- a) Prior to each Graduation Ceremony, the Dean (Academic) and the Registrar will consider the graduating student(s) who meet the criteria for the award of the Institute Medal of Academic Excellence (see section 5.4).
- b) The name(s) of the eligible student(s) with the highest GPA will be presented to the Academic Board for approval.
- c) The Registrar's Office will prepare written notification to the successful students.
- d) The Institute Medal of Academic Excellence will be awarded at the Graduation Ceremony.
- e) The Registrar's Office will include the appropriate appellation on the student's testamur and the transcript.
- f) The Registrar's Office will publish the names of students who received the Institute Medal of Academic Excellence on the HELI website.

7. Records Management

All records related to all awards listed in this policy will be maintained in accordance with the *Student Records Management Policy*.

8. Student Grievances

Any student who wishes to appeal a decision under this policy may do so in accordance with the *Student Academic Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

9. Related Documents

- Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
- Assessment and Moderation Policy
- Award of Grades Policy
- Student Academic Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Student Records Management Policy

10. Related Legislation

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001
- The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (The National Code)
- Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

11. Version Control

Document ID	Academic Merit Awards Policy
Category	Academic
Document Owner	Dean (Academic)
Approved by	Academic Board

Version	Summary of changes	Approval date	Next review date
1.0	Harmonised policy across ECA HE	Academic Board: 12 December 2024	11 December 2026
1.1	Adjusted the criteria for Letters of Commendation	Dean (Academic): 16 January 2024	16 January 2026

	from minimum of 3 units to minimum of 2 units		
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