

ADVANCED STUDIES

The issue: Interviews and round table meetings frequently referred to declining numbers of honours students in Arts disciplines and attracting and meeting the needs of exceptional students

University of Sydney offers an Honours preparation program. This is a program that prepares undergraduate students for honours study in the second year of study

Students must complete the honours preparation or pre-requisite units of study to be eligible for Final Honours Year. These units are listed in the discipline honours web site and in the Faculty Handbook. Typically, pre-honours prerequisite units begin in the second year of an undergraduate degree and continue into the third year. However, not all disciplines offer pre-honours prerequisite units. Pre-honours prerequisite units can often count towards a major or extended major in the field of study. Students must complete a major in the area they intend to study their Final Honours Year. Students must check the particular discipline as to whether pre-honours prerequisite units can count towards a major or extended major.

A minimum weighted average mark (WAM) of 65% is required across all units taken within an undergraduate degree, but a minimum of 70% in subjects completed in the subject area of the discipline of intended honours study (pre-honours units or pass stream units). Contact the discipline honours coordinator for queries in relation to any variation from these requirements.

<https://www.econ.usyd.edu.au/content.php?pageid=2342>

In addition, **University of Sydney** also has a 3-year Bachelor of Arts (Advanced) (Honours), with students accelerated through first year so that the Honours year was integrated as the third and final year of the program.

The Bachelor of Arts (Dean's Scholars) program at the **University of Wollongong** is a restricted undergraduate degree with a quota and admission is subject to interview for those coming into the program at first year. A UAI of at least 93 (or equivalent for non-HSC admissions) is required for admission to the Degree High achieving students can enter the program after their first year provided they have an average of 80% and after interview. The Degree is available to single-degree Arts students only. Students must maintain a Distinction (75%) average to remain in this degree program. If, at the end of the academic year, the average is below 75, students will be transferred into the Bachelor of Arts degree. The degree program provides a facilitated path through the Bachelor of Arts, with 'value-adding' along the way. The Dean's Scholars Degree offers a challenge to high-achieving students. With the approval of Program Heads, students admitted to the Degree have the opportunity to attempt subjects not normally available to first year students, and to perform above the level normally expected at first year. They will be granted extended subject loads, enabling them, if they choose, to complete the degree in under the normal three years. On successful completion of the first part of the course Dean's Scholars will be guaranteed admission to Honours. The Honours year may be their fourth year, or it may begin in their third year of study.

Australian National University's advanced program is the Bachelor of Philosophy. It has limited places and so requires a high entrance score. It is structured so that students are treated as honours students from the start. It has a large research component; from day one students have weekly contact with a mentor/supervisor. In first year students do normal Arts courses plus the advanced studies program. In the first semester students work together and learn research skills as well as choose their majors. In the second semester students' work on their research projects, they work with their supervisor. Each semester students undertake a new research project.

The **University of Tasmania** has an Advanced honours cohort in the BA. These students are high level entry students and they can be very flexible with their program of study. For example they can overload or have prerequisites waived if there is something specific they wish to study. At the end of first year students must have a distinction average in order to continue in the program. Students who are not in the program and have achieved a distinction average are invited to enter the program. In 2008, there were 180 Advanced students in the Faculty. As part of the program, students have access to mentors and advanced seminars. This cohort is looked to form the basis of honours and postgraduate research positions. Students graduate with a BA Advanced Honours.

Disclaimer: The information described above emerged from interviews, discussions and observation of publicly available materials during the BA Scoping Project which commenced in March 2007 and concluded in August 2008. As a result, the practices described in this case study may not reflect current practices or institutional policy. They are a reflection of the understanding at the time the scoping project was in progress.



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