Higher Degree by Research Student
Coursework Requirement

Coursework is an important part of the School’s postgraduate research program. PhD students must complete at least two courses (one for MSc). The objective is to supplement the specialised research training with broader knowledge in physics and/or with advanced skills required to be a practising scientist. Course completions are recorded by the School and are discussed in the Annual Progress Review. Students are strongly encouraged to complete coursework requirements within the first three semesters. Failure to complete course requirements can prevent a student from being able to submit their thesis.

Courses may be selected from postgraduate and Honours courses offered within the School of Physics, especially any postgraduate courses that provide rigorous PhD-level training. Relevant courses offered by other schools may also be taken, but this requires prior approval by email from the supervisory team, the Physics Postgraduate Coordinator [physics.pgstudents@sydney.edu.au], and the course convenor/lecturer. Formal enrolment at the University level is not required.

Courses should generally be at postgraduate or Honours level, although it is sometimes appropriate for Senior courses at the Advanced level to be counted, if no equivalent higher-level course is available. A Senior (Advanced) course of 19-20 lectures will count as a half-course. The School’s Honours half-courses also count as a half-course towards the coursework requirement. Note also that a single course, even if unusually long, will not be counted as more than one postgraduate course.

All assessments must be completed satisfactorily (Credit or higher) in order for the course to be counted by the School. Exams may be done as take-home assignments, provided this is acceptable to the course convenor/lecturer. At the end of the semester, the course convenor/lecturer should report the result to the Physics Postgraduate Coordinator.

Workshops, summer/winter schools and discipline-specific training courses of at least two weeks duration will be counted as a half-course towards the coursework requirement. The course must include a robust and verifiable assessment process. This requires prior approval by email from the supervisory team and the Physics Postgraduate Coordinator. It is also subject to the condition that the student gives a talk on what has been learned to the research group (evidenced by an email from the Supervisor).