

FACULTY OF SCIENCE – CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION PROVISIONS 2020

1 Purpose and application

- (1) The Faculty recognises that some students may have a conscientious belief which is in conflict with learning activities or assessment tasks in units of study in which they are enrolled.
- (2) These provisions:
 - (a) set out how students with a conscientious objection make an application to complete an alternative activity or assessment task; and
 - (b) apply to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students enrolled in units of study offered by the Faculty.

2 Commencement

These Provisions commence on 9 September 2020.

3 Definitions

Words and phrases used in these provisions and not otherwise defined in this document have the meanings they have in existing policy, provisions and procedures.

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| conscientious belief | means a belief that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is an individual's conviction of what is morally right or morally wrong;• may be an ethical, cultural or religious conviction;• is genuinely held by the individual; and• is not influenced by obtaining a personal advantage or disadvantage for oneself or others. |
| conscientious objection | means an objection where an individual's conscientious belief conflicts with a learning activity or assessment in a unit of study. |
| inherent requirements | means tasks and activities that are essential to achieve the core learning outcomes of a course. Note: See Inherent course requirements . |
| learning activities | means activities that include any of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lectures;• seminars;• tutorials; |



- workshops;
- practicals;
- laboratories;
- online learning;
- field trips;
- work placements; or
- independent study.

learning outcomes

has the meaning given in the [Learning and Teaching Policy 2019](#) which at the date of these provisions is:

means statements of what students know, understand and are able to do on completion of a unit of study, a major, program, award course, or other curriculum component.

4 Principles

- (1) Where possible, the Faculty will accommodate students' conscientious objections. Students should understand that it may not be possible or reasonable to do so in every instance.
- (2) The Faculty will not:
 - (a) approve requests from students who conscientiously object to a learning or assessment activity that prevents the student from meeting:
 - (i) core competencies in their degree; or
 - (ii) threshold learning outcomes in their unit of study,

Note: See [Inherent course requirements](#).
 - (b) accommodate conscientious objections from students that breach:
 - (i) Australian anti-discrimination law, including objections based on age, disability, race, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation; or

Note: See the [Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy 2015](#).

 - (ii) University policies or procedures.

Note: See the [Policy Register](#).
- (3) Students with a conscientious objection to a learning activity or assessment will not be excused from completing the activity, but if approved, will be given an alternative learning or assessment activity. Alternative activities:
 - (a) must be as academically rigorous as the original activity;
 - (b) assess the same learning outcomes and graduate qualities as the original activity;
 - (c) do not have to be made available to all other students in the unit; and
 - (d) should not give an academic advantage or disadvantage to the student undertaking the alternative activity.

- (4) Students must make their conscientious objection to a learning activity or assessment before the activity or assessment is completed.
- (5) Students cannot appeal against a learning activity or assessment which they have already undertaken.

5 Request to complete an alternative activity or assessment

- (1) Unit of study co-ordinators should alert students at the beginning of the delivery of the unit to:
 - (a) any learning activities or assessments which may generate conscientious objections; and
 - (b) the procedure to submit an online request to complete an alternative activity.
- (2) Students who hold a conscientious objection to an activity in a unit of study in the semester in which they are currently enrolled and wish to submit a request to complete an alternative activity should:
 - (a) refer to the [Faculty of Science Handbook](#) and [current student canvas page](#); and
 - (b) submit their request through the online application process to the unit of study co-ordinator as soon as the objection is identified, and where possible, prior to the start of the teaching period.
- (3) Students who submit applications to complete alternative activities or assessments in advance are more likely to be accommodated (if possible) than those who submit an application closer to the date of the scheduled learning activity or assessment under objection.

6 Objection to specific degree requirements

- (1) Students who conscientiously object to an activity in a unit of study that is a requirement for completion of a specific degree or program that:
 - (a) will be taken in future semesters; and
 - (b) is an inherent requirement of the programshould discuss their objections with the degree co-ordinator or program director, and if required, submit a case for review to the Faculty of Science Associate Dean (Student Affairs) as early as possible.

Note: See [Inherent course requirements](#).

7 Considering alternative activities

- (1) Unit of study co-ordinators will consider the following factors in determining whether to approve alternative arrangements for students who have submitted an application to complete an alternative activity or assessment or a case for review set out in clauses 5 and 6 (check reference):
 - (a) professional requirements of external registration bodies;
 - (b) [meeting the inherent requirements of the course](#);



- (c) whether the learning activity or assessment is essential for the training of practitioners in a profession or field of study and for fulfilling the requirements of professional accrediting bodies;
 - (d) whether the student has met their basic [graduate professional competencies](#);
 - (e) whether the learning activity is:
 - (i) a required core unit; or
 - (ii) a selective or elective unit;

Note: Where the unit is a selective or elective unit, the student should enrol in an alternative subject instead of undertaking a resource intensive alternative arrangement;
 - (f) the Faculty's obligation to treat students fairly, honestly, transparently and with courtesy, regardless of gender, religion, race, sexuality or disability;

Note: See the [Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy 2015](#); [Student Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy 2018](#)
 - (g) disadvantage to other students enrolled in the same unit of study; and
 - (h) the cost of the proposed alternative teaching or assessment activity.
- (2) The unit of study co-ordinator, in consultation with the Associate Dean (Student Affairs):
- (a) will, within five workdays, notify the student that they received their case for review;
 - (b) may request more information from the student in writing, or in person;
 - (c) will consider whether the case constitutes a conscientious objection;
 - (d) will determine what, if any, arrangements can be made to accommodate the case; and
 - (e) will update the student with subsequent progress reports of the current status of the case.
 - (i) If the learning activity or assessment is due to take place imminently, then the unit of study co-ordinator will attempt to respond to the student as soon as possible.
- (3) The Faculty will retain records of applications in accordance with the [Recordkeeping Policy 2017](#).

NOTES

Faculty of Science – Conscientious Objections Provisions 2020

Date adopted: 25 August 2020

Date registered: 9 September 2020

Approved by: Faculty Board, Faculty of Science

Signature:

Review date: 9 September 2025

Rescinded documents:

Related documents:

Coursework Policy 2014

Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015

Academic Honesty Procedures 2016

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Provision **Amendment**

Commencing