

Resource 3: University Terminology Glossary

There are many new words and concepts you will encounter at university. It's important to understand the difference between these different terms – save this glossary somewhere you can find and search for definitions when you need them!

Term	Definition
Program	Your overall qualification or degree (e.g., Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science). This is what appears on your graduation certificate.
Course	Often used interchangeably with 'program' to refer to your whole degree, though some universities use it to mean individual units of study. Check your university's terminology!
Unit / Subject	An individual component of your program, usually studied over one semester or trimester. Different Australian universities use either 'unit' or 'subject' – check which term your uni uses!
Core unit / Compulsory unit / Required unit	A unit that is essential to your program and must be completed to graduate.
Elective unit	A unit you can choose from a range of options to meet your program requirements. Electives let you explore interests or broaden your knowledge.
Major	A specialised area of study within your program, usually requiring 8-12 units in that discipline (e.g., Psychology major within a Bachelor of Arts).
Minor	A secondary area of study, smaller than a major, usually requiring 4-6 units in that discipline.
Prerequisite	A unit (or qualification) you must complete before you can enrol in a more advanced unit. For example, 'Introduction to Psychology' might be a prerequisite for 'Developmental Psychology'.

Double degree	Studying two programs simultaneously (e.g., Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws). Usually takes longer than a single degree but less time than completing both separately.
Semester	A teaching period, usually around 12-15 weeks. Most Australian universities have two main semesters per year (Semester 1: February-June; Semester 2: July-November).
Trimester	A teaching period at universities using a three-term year instead of two semesters. Each trimester is shorter than a semester.
Credit points	The value assigned to each unit, representing the workload. Most units are worth 6 or 12.5 credit points. You need to accumulate a certain number (usually 144-192) to graduate.
Full-time study	Usually means studying 3-4 units per semester (around 37.5-48 credit points per year).
Part-time study	Studying fewer units per semester than full-time, which extends the time to complete your program.
Enrolment	The process of officially registering for your units each semester.
Census date	The final date to withdraw from a unit without financial penalty or academic record. After this date, you're committed to the unit.
Timetable	Your personal schedule showing when and where your classes are held.
Lecture	A large class where content is presented, usually to many students at once (sometimes hundreds!).
Tutorial	A smaller class for discussion, questions, and activities related to lecture content. Usually 15-30 students.
Workshop / Practical	Hands-on classes where you apply what you've learned. Format varies by discipline.

Assessment	The tasks you complete to demonstrate your learning (e.g., essays, exams, presentations, practicals).
Academic integrity	Following honest practices in your study, including proper referencing and submitting your own work.
Extensions and special consideration	Processes for requesting extra time or alternative arrangements for assessments, usually due to illness or unexpected circumstances.
Student portal / LMS	Your university's online system (like Canvas, Moodle, or Blackboard) where you access unit information, submit assignments, and find resources.

Your notes...