

Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Course Guide 2026

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Welcome!

On behalf of all of us at Centre for Education and Innovation (CEI) it is a privilege to warmly welcome you to the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (GCHE).

The GCHE has been specifically designed for you. You are either an academic with a direct teaching role or a learning and teaching (L&T) professional with a role in learning and teaching. The purpose of the GCHE is to help you to develop a theoretical and scholarly basis to inform the progressive development of your academic and L&T practice. As such, the course is primarily designed for ACU staff.

You will find the course has a strong scaffolded learning and developmental trajectory. The first micro-credential in the course links with the next, allowing you to develop your learning and skills progressively, especially so for the first four micro-credentials. The course is structured in a way to improve student access, engagement and learning by offering **Mandatory** and **Elective** micro-credentials. This offers you greater choice of micro-credentials by offering all the micro-credentials concurrently in each professional term and paves the way for greater options for academic staff and providing greater efficiency with course progression.

The course aims to be relevant to you whether you are an academic of some years' standing or just starting out. It is designed so that you can draw upon your experience and apply what you learn to exploit synergies and maximise the links between work and study. The final two micro-credentials of the course in particular support you to undertake a scholarly project that integrates what you have been learning through the course.

The course is also entirely online, so you can access the course no matter where you are, and study at times that suit you, without the inconvenience of physical attendance requirements.

In keeping with its developmental narrative, the course has a theme running through which is to help you develop your own research and scholarship in learning and teaching. In this way the course aims to further equip you for ongoing learning and development.

I am confident you will enjoy this course, and that you will benefit from doing it for many years to come. My colleagues and I look forward to working with you, hearing about how the course helps you in your work, and seeing you graduate!

Dr Joe Campana
Course Coordinator

Course description

The GCHE is made up of eight micro-credentials. These are **each** 5 credit points in value, each taking nominally 75 hours of study time.

The eight micro-credentials must be studied **in sequence, one at a time**. We have designed each micro-credential to build on the ones that precede them. Each micro-credential period comprises eight teaching weeks. Each micro-credential includes only one summative assessment task. Your ability to do this well is scaffolded by formative assessment. You should plan on committing approximately 10 hours a week to study. There is a three/four-week break between each professional term to allow us time to finalise the marking of the summative assessments and grade entry in *Student Connect*.

The term dates for 2026 are:

Term	Term dates	Latest enrol date	Census Date	Micro-credentials offered
Professional Term ¹ 2	2 February to 27 March	9 February	23 February	UNMC510 UNMC520 UNMC530 UNMC540 UNMC550 UNMC560 UNMC570 UNMC580 UNMC581
Professional Term 4	20 April to 12 June	19 April	4 May	UNMC510 UNMC520 UNMC530 UNMC540 UNMC550 UNMC560 UNMC570 UNMC580 UNMC582
Professional Term 5	6 July to 28 August	21 June	6 July	As per PT2
Professional Term 8	28 September to 20 November	4 October	19 October	As per PT4

¹ When you enrol in a micro-credential, you will need to know the **Professional Term** number

You will find that there is some overlap with the standard semester 1 and 2 dates, but also that the study periods gives you longer to engage with your GCHE study than a standard unit. It is expected that this will provide you with options that allow you to engage more effectively. Full details of each micro-credential appear later in this guide.

Admission, course progression and course completion

When you start the course, you will need to enrol in the first micro-credential, UNMC510. At that time you should also enrol in the second micro-credential, UNMC520. To apply for admission, you should go to: <https://www.acu.edu.au/course/graduate-certificate-in-higher-education>

Please note: The application process assumes that you will pay tuition fees. Fees will be waived for your study in the first half of a year provided you are employed by ACU for 12 or more weeks between 1 January and 30 June of that year (usually through semester 1 and the subsequent marking period). Similarly, fees will be waived for your study in the second half of the year provided you are employed by ACU for 12 or more weeks between 1 July and 31 December of that year (usually through semester 2 and the subsequent marking period). If you have insufficient employment with ACU (or none), you have the choice to pay the fees or to defer your study to a later time when you do have employment with ACU. This applies even if you are part-way through the course.

A student has a maximum of 4 years from start to finish to graduate. Doing four micro-credentials each year means you will finish the certificate in two years (over eight professional terms).

A student can take a leave of absence / suspension of enrolment to extend the 4-year timeframe, but they must have these absences approved by the Course Coordinator, and they must be recorded on our records.

Course map and micro-credential details

Mandatory micro-credentials

Students must complete **all six** of the following micro-credentials (total of 30 credit points):

Micro-credential	Unit Outline
UNMC510: Foundations for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education	https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2026/unit/unmc510
UNMC520: Improving Learning and Teaching in Higher Education	https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2026/unit/unmc520
UNMC530: Good Practice in Higher Education – Curriculum Design	https://www.acu.edu.au/Handbook/Handbook-2026/unit/UNMC530
UNMC540: Good Practice in Higher Education – Assessment Design	https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2026/unit/unmc540
UNMC570: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in Higher Education – Ethics and Methods	https://www.acu.edu.au/Handbook/Handbook-2026/unit/UNMC570
UNMC580: Demonstrating Scholarly Practice in Higher Education	https://www.acu.edu.au/Handbook/Handbook-2026/unit/UNMC580

Elective micro-credentials

Students must complete **two** electives (10 credit points) from the following micro-credentials:

Micro-credential	Unit Outline
UNMC550: Evaluating Technology-enabled Learning Activities in Higher Education	https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2026/unit/unmc550
UNMC560: Designing and Implementing Technology-enabled Learning Activities in Higher Education	https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2026/unit/unmc560

UNMC581: What works in higher education: Evidence-based teaching practices <i>in</i> the 'classroom' ¹	https://www.acu.edu.au/handbook/handbook-2026/unit/unmc581
UNMC582: What works in higher education: Evidence-based teaching practices <i>that surround</i> the 'classroom' ¹	https://www.acu.edu.au/Handbook/Handbook-2026/unit/UNMC582

¹ UNMC581 and UNMC582 are offered in alternate terms as follows: UNMC581 is offered in Professional Terms 2 and 5, while UNMC582 is offered in Professional Terms 4 and 8.

Mode of delivery and structure

In 2026 each micro-credential uses the University’s learning management system (LMS) **Canvas**. This capitalises on the maturity and capability of the students but also provides equitable access to a full provision of learning experiences within which a community of scholars can be developed.

Each micro-credential, and/or the course as a whole, is structured with a progressive, constructive, developmental narrative that supports students’ learning through a sequence of overlapping learning stages. In each stage, the nature of the learning and the nature of the teaching supports provided are different but complementary. Each stage builds on the next so that learning from one acts as necessary foundation for the next.

Reading and forwarding your course communication

You will be engaging in the GCHE study as a student. This includes the way you access the LMS: you will access Canvas as a **‘student’** not as a staff member. This has consequences when you are also a staff member of the university.

First, as a staff member you will access Canvas using your staff login details. When you leave Canvas, you should formally log off before seeking to login as a student. Your alternative is to use two browsers – for example Chrome while accessing Canvas as a staff member, and Firefox while accessing it as a student.

Second, all formal communications about your study will be sent to your student email account – not your staff email account. Rather than having to check your student email account each day, you can set up a “forward” for your student email to be automatically redirected to your preferred email account (your staff email address for example). Given this you may want to redirect your student email to your staff (or other preferred email). Here are some guidelines on how to forward your student email <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Forward-email-to-another-email-account-1ed4ee1e-74f8-4f53-a174-86b748ff6a0e>

Portfolios and ePortfolios

The GCHE provides you with a structured opportunity to collect and reflect on evidence for a teaching portfolio or ePortfolio. This is not a course requirement – but you might consider it a smart move because it is clear that ePortfolios are increasing in importance and also an efficient way to collate, store, organise and present information about yourself to multiple audiences for multiple purposes. You’ll find guides to help you to progressively produce and refine your portfolio in the various Canvas pages for each micro-credential.

A portfolio may assist you in different ways at different points in your career, for example:

1. meeting probationary requirements;
2. reporting to your supervisor in performance review and planning meetings;
3. preparing applications for promotions; or
4. supporting applications for teaching awards, grants and scholarships.

For example, if you prepare a useful portfolio by the time you graduate, it could help you with applying for a Fellowship with Advance HE. You’ll find that the GCHE is consistent with the UK Professional Standards Framework. The UKPSF is the basis of Advance HE’s Higher Education Academy (HEA)

Fellowship scheme. The HEA Fellowship scheme helps you to demonstrate a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education. It provides individuals with recognition of their practice, impact and leadership of teaching and learning. HEA Fellowships have been adopted by increasing numbers of higher education institutions globally, including most universities in Australia.

To that end, ACU is an Access Partner with Advance HE. The CEI (CEI) provides support for Fellowships applications, and you can read more here: https://staff.acu.edu.au/our_university/centre-for-education-and-innovation/scholarly-development-and-recognition/professional-and-scholarly-learning/advance-he-fellowships

Fees

ACU staff are eligible to have their tuition fees waived. To qualify, you must be employed by ACU in a role that involves direct teaching, supporting learning and teaching, or a leadership role in teaching for five or more weeks of the professional term. The fee waiver is awarded one professional term at a time. Provided you remain an ACU staff member, fees will be waived.

If you are awarded a fee waiver, you are respectfully requested to recognise its value by undertaking to keep to the expectations and time commitments of the course.

You should direct your fee enquiries to the course coordinator (Dr Joe Campana, joe.campana@acu.edu.au).

The purchase of textbooks (if any) and any equipment needed to access the online course materials is your responsibility.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy and procedures

<https://policy.acu.edu.au/document/view.php?id=235>

If you are applying for RPL, you are invited to liaise directly with the Course Coordinator for assistance in preparing your application. This is optional, but recommended.

Please note the following five points of ACU policy carefully:

1. Together with a completed RPL application form, it is your responsibility to write a 'case' that provides convincing evidence that your prior learning is equivalent of the learning outcomes of the unit you are applying for
2. ACU policy requires that your case relate to the whole of a specified unit of study (credit cannot be granted for parts of a unit). This is termed "specified credit"
3. You can submit an application for a maximum of two units. It is not possible to be given RPL for more than two units in the GCHE. In practical terms, you can submit two 'cases' prefaced by one RPL form, but each case and its supporting evidence needs to be able to stand alone so that each can be submitted for independent assessment
4. Each case must demonstrate a minimum 80% match with the content and learning outcomes of the unit you are seeking credit for
5. Policy also requires that the evidence you provide will be assessed according to the same standard as a student undertaking that unit. This means that there needs to be an appropriate level of detail in your case, along with supporting evidence

Points 4 and 5 above protect you and the institution by ensuring that credit is only given when the evidence presented sustains the argument that your prior learning is the equivalent of the units of study you apply for.

Course completion and Graduation

In your final professional term, as you undertake your final micro-credential, you must complete an *Application to Course Complete form* in order to be assessed for course completion, see <https://www.acu.edu.au/student-life/graduation/how-to-graduate>

This is an important last step to take before you can actually graduate.